



THE BUDDHIST RAY

"HAIL TO THEE, PEARL, HIDDEN IN THE LOTUS!"

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A UNIVERSAL RELIGION.



HY cannot all liberal thinkers in America", asks a writer in the *Universal Republic*, "unite their scattered forces and combine upon a popular religion, which will not only meet their diverse views, but which can also be understood and accepted by the masses; a religion that would be world-wide in its influence, and so simple in its principles that anyone could preach and practice it understandingly, without regard to what he may have been taught or may have believed in the past; a religion based upon and containing only that one truth which those that have sought earnestly and faithfully have found?"

Then he tells us that the benefit of a religion of this kind would be incalculable to the United States, and that the people here are ripe for it. The existence of the RAY tells better than words can tell, that we think as this writer. "But", he continues, "what shall this religion be called?—it must have a name. It shall be called *buddhism*; and should be buddhism, pure and simple! The pure buddhism of the BLESSED GAUTAMA, and free from all the gross and degrading materialism that has grown upon it [in some parts of the world] for more than two thousand years."

The bad character and reputation of christianism, from the day of its establishment by the collusive "fathers", to this day, makes it, he thinks, unsuitable as a universal religion. Which argument is good; but we intend, at an early date, to produce a better.

"The life of the BUDDHA", says the writer, "has, unlike the life of Jesus (as known in the church, of course) a perfectly defined purpose, which requires no credulity and only an ordinary intellect to comprehend. There is no feature of it that requires any belief in the supernatural, nor the acceptance of any theory calculated to violate the common sense of any intelligent, thoughtful man. Its principles are strictly in line with the developments of modern science—as far as the latter goes—and it presents to the truth-seeker a perfect model for his own life. It does not relieve him of personal responsibility for his own thoughts and actions, by telling him that the BUDDHA'S sacrifice and death more than 2,500 years ago made it possible for mankind to be sacred today by merely believing in those events as facts and supporting church and preacher."

The writer then says that buddhism teaches personal responsibility; that it explains the mysteries and incongruities of all existence; and that it "has already found a home in the hearts of many americans, who have found in it a degree of peace and joy and hope never dreamed of before." And he concludes by asking who will be the first american buddhist to stand up fearlessly for the truth and his fellowmen.

The RAY answers, Lo, he is here!

CONCENTRATION OF MIND.

We read in "Swedenborg the Buddhist" that spiritual indolence is the great characteristic of the animal man, and spiritual activity, of the spiritual man; that when a difficult question is put to the spiritual man he concentrates his mind with intensity upon it, to the exclusion of all else, and so obtains, or attracts to himself, sooner or later, light with regard to it; that Max Muller, the sanskritist, says that concentration of mind, or as the hindus call it, "one-pointedness" (*eka-grata*), is something almost unknown in the west, the minds there being like ever-changing kaleidoscopes in motion; and that onement with the Divine Life, or obtainment of NIRVANA, is impossible without this concentration (pp. 268—270). In it we read also that a high degree of concentration of mind and suspension of external respiration enabled Swedenborg to communicate not only with buddhist yogis in Asia, but also with beings on the so-called super-physical planes.

Bearing upon this subject, which is of the highest importance to every man that wishes to rise above the superficialities of our mental dancing-masters and the imbecilities of our religious jugglers, are the following paragraphs from the *Golden Gate*, in answer to some questions about concentration of mind:

"1. The great and wide-spread defect in the people of the present day is want of concentration.

2. It is this very want that causes them to ask the question, "How am I to acquire it?" For a little concentration of mind upon the question would partly answer it.

3. The defect is in a great measure due to the enormous amount of light [brainless] literature read by everybody. This is seen every day in the quantities of novels of a superficial sort that are published and read in the daily newspapers which record multitudes of small events occurring each twenty-four hours, and which the people scan with avidity because it in no way taxes the [feeble] mind, and may be all forgotten. Another cause

is to be found in the mad rush and roar of our american civilization.

4. This then brings about a weakness of the memory which is apparent in every walk of life. The national mind has been so diverted into a thousand different channels, that the memory fails to enclose an idea, or an object with sufficient power to prevent its slipping out.

5. I suggest to "Oakland" that the experiment be tried of selecting any word, object or idea for consideration, and then holding it firmly before the mind for five minutes, to the exclusion of everything else. If this can be done it should be kept up for six months, always repeating the exercise at the same hour.

6. I predict that "Oakland" will either (a) fail in doing this, or (b) give it up on the third day. This is because of certain tendencies inherent in the human mind. These are in the ancient hindu systems divided thus:

a. A tendency to fly away from the point selected.

b. A tendency to recur to something more pleasant, seemingly more advisable and useful.

c. A tendency to recur to something else that is unpleasant.

d. A tendency to total passivity — a mental blank.

These tendencies are always present potentially and must be controlled, or concentration will not be possible.

I would like to hear how "Oakland" gets on with this. The above ideas are not mine but those of the hindu philosophers and the real founders of the Theosophical Society.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE."

All true, deep searchers after lasting PEACE, are agreed that, whoever looks outside himself for it, looks to hell for it.

When the BLESSED BUDDHA seated Himself under the bo-tree to concentrate His mind for to obtain enlightenment as to the way of salvation from the sorrow and suffering of our earthly hell, He went truly in the path of his PREDECESSORS, and set an example which every one of His disciples should, according to the best of his ability, assiduously imitate.

SOME MONKS.

The reasoning power of some simple buddhistical preachers are so high, that we see a scholar like Gutzlaff, utterly silenced and put to great straits by them. Judson, the famous baptist missionary in Burmah, confesses in his "Journal", the difficulties to which he was often driven by them. Speaking of a certain monk, Ooyan by name, he remarks that his strong mind was capable of grasping the most difficult subjects. "His words", he writes, "are smooth as oil, as sweet as honey, and as sharp as razors; his mode of reasoning is soft, insinuating, and acute; and so adroitly does he act his part, that I with the strength of truth [christian 'truth', of course], was scarcely able to keep him down." It appears though, that at a later period of his mission, Mr Judson found that he had utterly misunderstood the doctrine. "I begin to find", he writes, "that the semi-atheism, which I have sometimes mentioned, is nothing but a refined buddhism, having its foundation in the buddhist scriptures." Thus he discovered at last that while there is in buddhism "a generic term of most exalted perfection actually applied to numerous individuals, a BUDDHA superior to the whole host of subordinate deities," there is also lurking in the system, "the glimmerings of an Anima Mundi—Soul of the World—antecedent to, and even superior to, the BUDDHA. —ISIS UNVEILED.

WILL AND DESIRE.

Will is the exclusive possession of man on this our plane of consciousness. It divides him from the brute in whom only instinctive Desire is active. Desire, in its widest application, is the one creative force in the universe. In this sense it is indistinguishable from Will; but we men never know Desire under this form while we remain only men. Therefore, Will and Desire are here considered opposed.

Thus Will is the offspring of the divine in man, the god in him; Desire is the motive power of the animal life.

Most men live in and by Desire, mistaking it for Will. But he that would achieve salvation must separate Will from Desire, and make his Will the ruler; for Desire is unstable and ever changing, while Will is steady and constant. Both Will and Desire are absolute creators, forming the man himself and his surroundings. But Will creates intelligently; Desire blindly and unconsciously. The man, therefore, makes himself in the image of his Desires, unless he creates himself in the likeness of the divine, through his Will, the child of the light. His task is twofold: to awaken the Will, to strengthen it by use and conquest, to make it absolute ruler within his body; and, parallel with this, to purify Desire. Knowledge and Will are the tools for the accomplishment of this purification.—LUCIFER.

[*"Light on the Way."*]

A BUDDHIST SONG.

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be,
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings of chance,
My head is battered, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears,
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, not afraid.

It matters not how straight the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.—CRUSADER.

THE religion which makes least show of "supernatural" authority, which keeps "miracles" and "revelations" in the background, which resorts to no desperate device of a mystery, but founds its claims upon its agreement with the facts of human consciousness and experience which any one may verify for himself,—a religion which is natural enough to be reasonable, and human enough to suit humanity, yet divine enough to satisfy man's highest aspirations—like buddhism—should be entitled to respect and reverence.

—ELLIOTT COUES.

THE BUDDHIST RAY.

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"THIS ANCIENT ONE [THE BUDDHA] IS OUR ANGEL,
WHOM WE REVERE AND OBEY."—SWEDENBORG.

 R Nakagawa is translating Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia" into Japanese.

—We have received orders for the RAY from His royal highness, the abbot, Krom Mun, and the reverend monk, Vajirananavarorasa, Bangkok, Siam. We hope these distinguished buddhists, as well as those of the newly formed Japanese propaganda, will assist us to extend the beneficent influence of the Good Law in America.

—The noted English writer, Laurence Oliphant, says, "A moral pall shrouds this earth's surface, and it is densest where our occidental civilization most prevails. Japan was a relatively pure country until she felt the demoralizing touch of western civilization, and now how sadly has she deteriorated." See how Mr Oliphant and some of our artless American correspondents in Japan, differ!

—The New York *Observer* says, "We are by the stern array of facts and figures compelled to believe that at the end of this boasted century of missions, while not 3,000,000, nominal and real, have been won to christianism, in pagandom; of heathens and Mohammedans there are 200,000,000 more than there were at the beginning of the century. Thus the votaries of these faiths increase seventy times faster than the followers of Christ. The church is outstripped on its own methods. They evince in these modern days a propagandism and aggressiveness far superior to that of us."

—The newspapers east and west are full of accounts of the inundation of Japan by western ideas and customs. They are, even to nausea, telling us that the Japanese are rapidly becoming "civilized": which means, that they are beginning to adorn themselves with the æsthetic (!) western trousers, bustles, corsets, shirts, and boots; that they are beginning to drink whisky, adulterate foods and drinks, gamble, butcher, lie, steal and whore; that they are becoming morally blunt and materialistic;—which means, also, that they are giving up whatever of ancient philosophy they may have for christianism and materialism. The emperor, we are told, imports not only European trousers and guns, but also European dancing-girls and christian preachers, having forsworn buddhism. In view of which statements a writer in the last November RAY says, "Don't if you are a prince, imitate the modern emperor of Japan, but the ancient king Asoka of India." It has escaped the worthy editors and correspondents who furnish us with these delectable news, that the Japanese are building a temple at the cost of \$8,000,000 and that they are forming societies for the propagation of buddhism in foreign lands. Our good contemporary, the *Bijou of Asia*, Kioto, Japan, which has just reached us, tells us, 1st, that the emperor of Japan "loves buddhism, and does not believe in christianism"; 2nd, that the christian missionaries are with great ado converting only a few ignorants; 3rd, that it is useless for christianism to "wrestle" with buddhism in Japan; and 4th, that a society for the propagation of the Good Law in foreign lands, has just been established. Now, "please, post this in a conspicuous place"; and, please, do not try to make us believe that one of the most refined, tasteful, intelligent, and cultured nations of Asia is made up of mere apes, idiots, and madmen! There is already at this day a reaction against the vile and vulgar trouser and bustle, and the brutal gun and morality of the west, setting in; and we may live to see even the apes return to Japanese elegance and the Good Law!

[Continued.]
SWEDENBORG IN THE LAMA-
SERY.

A SEQUEL OF "SWEDENBORG THE
BUDDHIST."

BY PHILANGI DASA.

For a second the preacher stood as if stunned; but when the worm raised his head, shot out his tongue like the forked strokes of lightning, like as if he would strike, he jumped from off the platform. The natives also, who stood about, being familiar with the venomous nature of the little creature, gave quickly wide birth to him.

"Take him up!" thundered the monk.

The missionary neither stirred nor spoke, so astonished and terrified was he.

"Take him up!" thundered the monk again. But when he saw that the missionary remained speechless and stock still, he went up to the platform, put forth his hand to the worm, which, in a wink, fastened his fangs in it. Then he raised his hand, the little creature hanging on to it, adjoined it unto his bosom, turned, and went slowly and silently away.

Hardly had he gone, before the preacher came to his wits again, sprung up on the platform, and shouted, "Hell-son! with the help of hell you take up a devil!" And turning to the bystanders, he continued, "Look ye, that was no serpent, but the appearance of a devil! In league with hell, a devil is always at hand to serve a selfrighteous idolater! Besides, the passage read should not be taken in its literal sense, but in its spiritual..."

The preacher was here broken in upon by a loud laughter. A young man sprung forward, and cried out laughingly, "A minute ago you told us that truly, and from your heart, and *literally*, you believed in the words read to us; now you tell us they have a spiritual sense! A shift indeed! An amazingly cowardly and sophistic shift! direct, I warrant you, from the theologic seminary! I have not for a great while seen so lewd a prank! Now

turn, I pray you, to another part of that book; to Acts xxviii. 3—5, and read it to us; and I'll not be behind-hand with you in courtesy!"

The preacher obeyed mechanically. But when he saw the words there written he hesitated, and became crimson in the face; which, when the quick eye of the young man detected, he called out,

"Read it, read it! or give it to me and I will read it!"—and therewith he snatched the book out of his hand. Then he turned to the bystanders and said to them,

"Listen, ye barbarians!—buddhists, if I have my wits and senses about me, ye are not!—or ye would not stand here all agape and drink in this man's froth!"

A man named Paul, a reputed follower of the Jewish ascetic, Jehoshua, or Jesus, on a voyage to a city called Rome, in Europe, suffered shipwreck, and was, with his companions, cast upon an island called Melita. The 'barbarians' of that island showed them kindness, in that they kindled a fire for them, to dry themselves by.

Now, note what happened to this same Paul on that occasion. I'll translate it to you:

And the barbarians treated us with no ordinary philanthropy; for having kindled a fire, they brought us all to it, on account of the falling rain, and the cold.

And as Paul was collecting a bundle of sticks, and placing them on the fire, a viper having come out from the heat, fastened on his hand.

And when the barbarians saw the serpent hanging from his hand, they said, to one another, "This man is certainly a murderer, whom, though saved from the sea, JUSTICE [Karma] has not permitted to live."

Then, indeed, he shook off the serpent into the fire, and suffered no injury.

But they were expecting him about to swell up, or to fall down suddenly dead; and waiting a long time, and seeing nothing extraordinary happen to him, changing their minds they said, "He is a god!"

When the young man had ended the reading, he closed the book, and, as he handed it to the missionary, said with a forthright laugh, "Why do n't *you*, take up serpents?" And without waiting for a reply, he swung upon his heel, and went away, in the direction of the monk.

The bystanders looked at one another, and at the crestfallen missionary; then they turned and went away; discussing among themselves what they had seen and heard.

The poor missionary also, went to his home, near by; and having cast himself into his hammock, wept bitterly. It repented him that he had left the heathens in Boston, Massachusetts, for the heathens at Mandalay, Burmah.

CHAP. II.

Let us now follow and look at the man that had so opportunely read the story of Jewish adept and the viper:

In years young; say, about forty; in face and bearing younger; say, about twenty; of middle stature; neither strong nor weak; neither fat nor lean; his face small and roundish; forehead broad and prominent, overshadowing a pair of small, quick, deep-set, half-hidden, dark eyes, which nevertheless, to the superficial observer seemed dull, heedless, and non-observant. His nose was nearly straight; nostrils wide, betokening good breathing capacity; mouth small, and not illy shaped. His hands were small and broad;—characteristic hands: the fingers were not broad, club-shaped and spatulate; thus not of the kind that makes their owner a better digger than leech, law-monger, or beadsman; they were not smooth, slender, and pointed; thus not of the kind that make their owner a better poet, painter, or dreamer than tradesman, husbandman, or handicraftsman; they were knotted and slightly tapering.

A chiromancer said they were those of a reasoner, a philosopher. Now, all reasoners are philosophers, and all philosophers are reasoners.

(Sophists are oftentimes taken for reasoners or philosophers, but without good ground, since they are mere black-mouthed gabblers, fit to awhape only the unthinking throng; fit to make one three, or three one, or one two, or two one; and so by damned spell to bewilder sorry pates; as we see especially in Christendom.)

His hair was brownish, but heavily sprinkled with gray. (Sorrow had done the sprinkling.)

In human society his face seemed austere; in the society of children and animals it often beamed and laughed, and set forth the hidden soul in fulness and with power.

He was wont to reason that, since the animal soul is always itself, it is safe for a man, in its society, to be himself; and that, since the human soul (the "civilized", especially) is seldom itself, is not safe for a man, in its society, to be himself; not in fulness, at least.

He had fared so ill in the world that he had, as he himself said, withdrawn to the "unseen depths within"; and from these he came unoften forth. So that is safe to say that his neighbors knew him not.

To be sure, many of these believed they knew him; but for that this belief was not bottomed upon anything save their own fancy, it was not worth a farthing. Nay, a woman might have lived her life in wedlock with him, and been none the wiser as to him, if he had thought best to stay in the "unseen depths within."

One knave said he was selfish; another, he was ungrateful; a third, he was unsympathetic; but not a bit were they in the right of it. For the clear-seeing men, in whose fellowship he delighted, and who could see and talk with him in the "unseen depths within", said he was unselfish, grateful, and sympathetic; and they said also he had a pretty thorough knowledge of human nature; was in a way wise; too wise to cast pearls before swine; and loved his fellows more than he could or would utter.

His love was well seen in this, that he did not look upon the brutes about him as soulless, insensible machines, fit only to slave for him or to find an untimely grave in his maw; but as upon fellow-creatures, cast with him upon the windy, billowy Sea of Transmigration.

It was well seen also in this, that he did not shun the castaways of the world, but gave them his hand and heart. In which deed he brought to light that tender charity of which there is overmuchness on men's tongues, up

and down the world, but of which there is lenten store in their hearts. He would not, as some asians, have pilgrimized it to Puri, and at the shrine of Jagannatha, or Juggernaut, have eaten rice in the society of unhallowed sudras, and then, elsewhere, have shunned them.

Yet, mark well, he seldom spoke of kindness, charity, and love, lest he might as it were, profane things holy. The very sooth of it was that he would not so much as open a book or a paper, or give ear to a discourse on these subjects.

With the chinese sage, Laou-tsze, he held that when a man professes to be humane and loving, it is a sure sign that the substance of humaneness and love has disappeared, and that only the shadow remains. "The pigeon," said Laou-tsze, "is not white on account of much bathing, nor does the crow need to paint herself black. If the pigeon should begin to bathe itself, and the crow to paint itself, would it not be a sign that they had lost their original colors? He that possesses a treasure conceals it, lest it be taken from him; he is careful about publishing everywhere that he has it at his disposal. The truly virtuous man makes no parade of his virtue; he does not announce to the world that he is a virtuous man."

So averse was he, out of season to show forth the treasure of his heart, that he would at times, purposely speak abruptly and harshly; and so it came to be noised abroad, by superficial observers, that he lacked sweet charity.

In his youth and early manhood he had loved; but his love had been of an unusual nature; a refined, æsthetic-sensual love; bordering upon the divine in man; in which he had dreamt of his "child-wife" as one in heart with himself.

It had been a long dream; the very burden of his soul's song; calm and strong, realistic and fantastic, possible and impossible. Possible in his soul's subjectiveness, in its heaven; impossible in his soul's objectiveness, on its earth. But, alas! the dream had a be-

ginning, and so, according to buddhism, had to have an end. And the end came: sultriness, rain, storm, thunder, lightning, and death!

Alas, alas!

It is a fine and profound buddhist verse that says:

All things are transient;
They being born must die;
And being born are dead;
And being dead are glad
To be at rest.

His father was a buddhist; his mother, a member of the church of England, though, at heart, a christian swedenborgian. And so it happened that he came to be sent to christian missionary schools; where he proved an obedient, reverential, and industrious scholar; indeed, his teachers had nothing but what was good to record of him.

He had been an unusually sensitive child: a word, or even a look of displeasure, would cut and burn his heart and sometimes leave an indelible scar there. Still, no matter how much he had been wounded, he showed no sign of suffering; no, not even by the faintest motion of his countenance.

His fear of wounding those whom he loved or respected had been almost morbid. So that for months and years he would suffer silently for having uttered what he held a harsh word, though this, when uttered, might not have caused any great hurt.

For having a few times in his boyhood been cruel to animals, he would at the thought of it, in after-years, weep and curse the causes of it—his own ignorance and the pernicious influence of the jewish scriptures, which inculcate no reverence for sub-human life.

At home and at the mission schools he had received a careful religious education: knew by heart all the fables and stories in the jewish-christian scriptures, the westminster catechism, and a good deal of christian swedenborgianism to boot.

[To be Continued.]

THE buddhists hold that nothing that is contradicted by sound reason can be a true doctrine of the BUD-DHA.—INMAN.

[“The Bijou of Asia.”]

A BUDDHIST PROPAGANDA.

This society is a new movement in Japan. It has been established under the presidency of Mr Akamatsu to spread buddhism in foreign lands. With which object in view, it purposes,

First,—To correspond with foreign buddhists, and others that may be interested in buddhism: to answer questions about doctrine. Second,—To publish buddhist books, and journals in english, and translate sutras and sastras. Third,—To do buddhist missionary work in foreign lands.

The society intends to promulgate the great truths taught by the BUDDHA; not any special form of buddhism.

Beside the fund given by the founders for the purposes of the society, other native buddhists are also generously contributing toward it.

THE BRUTE AND HIS DOG.

A strange scene occurred the other day at Sireck on the Moselle. A brute named Schmidt had a dog which he wished to get rid of. Rowing out into the middle of the river, he fastened a stone round the dog's head and threw him into the water. The poor creature sank at once, but during his struggles the rope slipped the stone,—and he rose to the surface and tried to get back into the boat. The brute, however, continued to push him back; but as the dog persevered he lost his patience, and striking at him with his oar, lost his footing and fell into the water himself. He was unable to swim; but the dog, seizing him by the coat, succeeded in bringing him safely to the land, after having been washed away by the current. Strange to say, the dog's life was spared.—*Ex.*

Kill not—for pity's sake—and lest ye slay
The meanest thing upon its upward way.
—THE BUDDHA.

A CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY HYMN.

From Greenland's icy mountains, from India's coral
strand,
Comes no distinct appealing for England's helping
hand;
The poor, benighted buddhist, compelled, unclothed,
to dwell
Without our cost-price bibles, enjoys life very well.

What, though the spicy breezes are very nice and dry,
And every prospect pleases a missionary eye?

In vain with lavish kindness the gospel tracts are
strewn,
The buddhist in his blindness does better left alone.

A happy, soulless creature, he lives his little day;
Directly on conversion it seems ensues decay.
Why seek the cheerful buddhist to tell him he is vile?
Ah! leave him gay and godless upon his palmy isle.*

From England's greatest city, through all her pomp
and pride,
One bitter cry rings ever, unsilenced, undenied;
From Stepney's crowded alleys, from Bethnel
Green's close lanes,
Men call us to deliver soul's from the devil's chains.

And women call,—our sisters,—blind, mad, with
want and wrong;
They call on us for succor, poor, driven, goaded
throng.
By all their griefs and curses, by all our joys and
prayers,
They call on us to save them from death-in-life like
theirs.

Oh, women, sister women!—do you not hear the cry
Of those who sin and suffer—are doomed in life to
die;
O! these whose lives are withered, whose youth is
trampled down,
The victims and the scourges of every christian
town?

Women who have no chances, women with chances
lost,
The outcast and the branded, the weary tempest-
tossed;
These call to you forever—“Help! for in life we die!”
What foreign dreams can stifle that everlasting cry?
[*Ceylon.] —E. NISBET.

—“WHEN a true genius [like Blavatsky] appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that all the dunces are in confederacy against him.”—SWIFT.

[Advertisement.]

“SWEDENBORG THE BUDDHIST OR, THE HIGHER SWEDENBORGIANISM, ITS SECRETS, AND THIBETAN ORIGIN.” By Phlangi Dasa. 322 octavo-pages.

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