



THE BUDDHIST RAY

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

VOL. III.]

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[No. 3.]

THE CENTRAL SUN.

"The Sun we see is an inert mass of adumbrations, the unreal phantom of the real Sun, which, but for this veil, would consume our earth, and, probably, all the planets with its fierce radiancy."—H. P. BLAVATSKY.

IN a late number of the *Path* is a short article headed, "The Allegorical Umbrella," in which the writer says that, "in the buddhist stories there are numerous references to umbrellas.

When the BUDDHA is said to have granted to his disciples the power of seeing what they called 'Buddha fields', they saw myriads of BUDDHAS sitting under trees and jewelled umbrellas."

Hindu books, he says, speak of umbrellas as being held over distinguished personages, and hindu monuments represent such held over them. The invocation in the Upanishads,

"Reveal, O Pushan, that face of the True sun which is now hidden by a golden lid," refers to the Sun of whose existence, all occultists, from earliest times to this, have been aware; which is certainly correct. For Swedenborg, who had no knowledge of the existence of the Vedas, Upanishads, Tripitakas, or any other ancient, asiatic sacred scriptures (save the "Lost Word" in the hands of the buddhist Initiates of Central Asia), refers in his mystic writings, to a primary and a secondary sun,—the "Spiritual" and the "Natural",—the latter of whom is the one we see in the sky:—"Without a double sun, the one alive and the other dead, there is no such thing as creation."—W. 163.

The writer in the *Path* continues:

"There is a True Centre of which the sun

in heaven is a symbol and partial reflection. This Centre let us place for the time with the DHYAN CHOANS or Planetary Spirits. It is all-knowing, and so intensely powerful that, were a struggling disciple to be suddenly introduced to its presence unprepared, he would be consumed, both body and soul. And this is the goal we are all striving after, and many of us asking to see even at the opening of the race. But for our protection a cover, or umbrella, has been placed beneath it. The ribs are the Rishees, or Adepts, or Mahatmas [or Arhats]; the Elder Brothers of the race. The handle is in every man's hand. And though each man is, or is to be, connected with some particular one of those Adepts, he can also receive the influence from the True Centre coming down through the handle."

It is interesting to note that Swedenborg, too, believed the True sun to be a consuming fire, against which every soul needs an "umbrella"; for he says: "The GODHEAD [the Nirvanic Host] is pure love, and this is as fire more intense than the fire of the sun of this world; on which account, if Divine love, in its purity, were to stream in upon any angel, spirit, or man, he would quite perish." To prevent which, "every one is screened by some slight and suitable cloud, through which the streaming in from that Sun is tempered."—A. 6849. Note the interesting teaching put forth by Swedenborg, it being an echo of the older, asian, that the Celestial men [Arhats] see the Sun of the GODHEAD always, which is not the case with the men that are below them in spirituality.—W. 85.

He says in one place that he saw this Central Sun; and, in another place, that it is an emanation of the DIVINE MIND [MINDS] which is its centre and soul.

THE DYING RAHAT'S SERMON.

From the Pali for the RAY, by
C. SAMERESINGHA.

1. Bow ye, from head and heart, to that benevolent SUPREME BEING, who has been compared to the full-moon in the heaven of the solar-race, and who has pointed out the road to NIRVANA, receiving adorations from all and mastering the Ocean of knowledge.

2. Always bow down before the Supreme Law preached by SAKYA MUNI, and equal to a flight of steps leading to heaven, or to a vessel sailing across the Ocean of metamorphosis, or to a road free from infernal regions.

3. Bow ye to the Brotherhood of the Select, infinitely complimented by the BUDDHA Himself, similar to a field of rich soil for the seeds of the meritorious and possessed of qualities capable of bestowing ultimate happiness on those that make the least offering with pure hearts.

4. Beings! On account of the mighty influence of the Three Gems, myriads of tenants of the Three worlds have attained the blissful state of NIRVANA. There being no refuge equal to that in the Three Gems, contract a habitual acquaintance with them.

5. Shake off your dull sloth and attend to meritorious deeds, as the doctrine of merit and demerit is doubtless made known to the people through the sovereign of Lanka, who does not feel satisfied in doing good to the public and in spending the nocturnal hours on that account.

6. Beings! Go to the king of Ceylon, the true friend of the meritorious and without hesitation lead a life in accordance with the doctrines of the Law; as it is absolutely rare to find people industriously active and rendering true friendship in promoting the good of the world.

7. Keep off from lethargic habits and observe the precepts of the Law, as it is evident that the Law is the guide of all. It tastes sweeter than the sweetest, surpasses in value all the worldly gems, and dispels the grief of those in the Three worlds.

8. Take no rest, absorb wholly in meditation on grief and on the inconsistency and soulessness of the five constituents of the body, put an end to the desires of existence of this rickety vessel of the body, and lead for good and all a life acceptable in the eye of the Law.

9. As there are in the Three worlds none, in fact, exempted from death, either in the past, present, or future, it is not right and proper to feed on procrastination, and to say, "there is no leisure for me to do meritorious acts to-day;" and, "I will attend to them to-morrow."

10. As it is evident that a stone thrown up is immediately attracted to the earth on account of its weight, so it happens most undoubtedly that every one born is destined to share the fate of death.

11. There is nothing that can intervene and prevent the fall of a man hurled from the edge of a precipice, nor is there any out of those in the Three worlds free from death. Hence do not adhere to life and wealth.

12. As it is natural to suppose that a shower of rain attended with lightning, whilst leaving the clouds in the upper regions descends to the earth; so living beings unerringly drop into the dreadful abyss of death, there being none permanent in the universe.

13. As the terrible, big waves of the ocean roll and dash to terminate at the sea beach, so living beings roll and dash, only to disappear in the mighty Ocean of death.

14. It is an admitted fact that the bull-like Death perpetually devours and consumes the field of living beings, escaping the vigilance of horses, elephants and armed men of valor, though guarded and protected by them.

15. Beings! As the bright light of a candle is extinguished by a violent storm; so, in this world, the shining lamp of age of living beings is put out by the strong wind of death.

16. In days of yore, valiant monarchs such as Rama, Ardjuna and others that had come off victorious in battle fields, dipping their bodies in

waters of mortality, were at last numbered with the dead. Thus in this world there is none excluded from death.

17. Neither one's wife, children, and friends, nor his wealth, youth and grace, nor the Goddess of Beauty, nor the earth diversified by elevations and limited by one sheet of salt-water accompany him that is at the point of death.

18. Similar to the fate of insects drawn toward the light of a burning candle the pre-eminent brahmins, the gods, antigods, demigods, nagas, rakshas and all the other beings are snatched away by the flame of death at the expiration of their term of life.

19. Like bright lights standing against a strong current of wind, the principal disciples of BUDDHA, such as Sariputta and others who had destroyed the four modes of desire and thereby attained a pure and holy state, at last plunged into the jaws of the tide of death.

20. Possessed of eyes equal to two full-blown lotuses, and of a constitution replete with two and thirty physical features, BUDDHA, Lord and Teacher of the Three worlds, who had made an end of all the desires, at last was dashed by the wild and mighty elephant of death.

21. As some wild-fire that has caught a jungle is never satisfied, so the elephant of death always makes an end of every one, betraying no mark of sympathy either with the sick, infirm, or young.

22. Neither the ocean is overflowed, though it receives the element of water from every river and source, nor the blazing fire gets tired of consuming the fire-wood. In like manner the unrelenting Angel of Death is never satisfied, though he has had immense work of execution in the universe.

23. The beings of the world, who are destitute of wisdom, merit and self-denial, and who are led away by the labyrinth of ignorance, sink into the most horrid grave, desiring the acquisition of wealth which is equal to waves or a transitory dream.

24. Unmerciful death being capable of destroying the Three worlds,

what benefit could be derived from sleep, and why any being born in this world and subject to decay and dissolution should adhere to wealth and existence, when they are no better than the imaginary prospect of a phantom.

25. Seeing that the beings of the world are continually subject to decrepitude, passion, envy, malice, disease, fear and grief, should there be any one that does not feel disgusted with existence in the universe, he must be a cruel being and death itself is not so cruel. Let him by all means be reproached.

26. Beings, beings! Why do you not see the Angel of Death armed with the sabre of infirmity continually destroying the Three worlds; and why do you take your rest indifferently during the three-fold nights? Always lead, without hesitation, a meritorious life that will entail neither birth nor death.

27. Beings! In order to avoid the cold hand of Death, make it always a point to pass your time steadfastly in meditation on death. . . He that is given up to such meditation, finally puts an end to every mode of desire, that is inherently injurious to living beings.

HIS COURSE.

"He was born!"—"What of that? 'tis nothing uncommon.

"He lived, he loved, was loved by a woman, He gave form to six beings,—his children—and then

He died." "That's not strange, 'tis the custom of men.

But, say, while he lived, did he wrest from the sun

One bright, pulsing ray to illumine the dark In the cavern of ignorance? Saw you the mark

Of his axe in the thickets of error? Not one?

Then the man was not charged with the spirit of Good,

But served like the cabbage or turnip to feed Other physical structures self-bound to the sod,

For lofty endeavor he saw not the need.

Such block-heads are many." "Nay censure them not;

In Wisdom's economy all have their worth. Higher nature springs from them, all glowing with thought,

As Iris is born of the vapors of earth."

—EMMA SCARR BOOTH.

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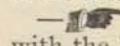
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"THIS ANCIENT ONE [THE BUDDHA] IS OUR ANGEL,
WHOM WE REVERE AND OBEY."—SWEDENBORG.

 UBHADRA BHIKSHU'S "Buddhist Catechism" has been translated out of the german original into english.

—THE *Medical Topics* says that the celebrated neurologist, doctor W'm A. Hammond, is a "believer in the religion of the BUDDHA," and that he has an image of the TATAGATHA in "the spacious hallway of his residence" in New York.

— Your subscription expired with the December number. We shall be pleased to receive it for this year.

—OUR last issue contained a notice of the work in Ceylon by Charles F. Powell. We have just received a message of his death. As we lack particulars we can only say that we regret it deeply. For, at this stage of the evolution of our race, the Good Cause can ill spare men of his character.

—THE chinese insert small images of the LORD, stamped out of metal, between the shell and the mantle of certain mollusks, which soon become coated with the pearl secretion and are cemented by it to the shell. These curiosities sell at good prices, and many of them have found their way into the museums of Europe.

—We have received a copy of the *Journal Du Magnetisme* (founded in 1845 by baron du Potet) the organ of the Magnetic society of France. It contains articles about magnetic lucidness, therapeutic magnetism, and kindred subjects. Personal experience enables us to say that a healthy human magnetism may play a great role in

the cure of disease, and that some of the most interesting experiences of our life has come to us through magnetic somnambules.

—THE scientists connected with the John Hopkins university are engaged in the investigation of the peculiar powers possessed by the fingers of Louis Hamburger, a young man living in Baltimore. When his hands are thoroughly dried and touched to any polished object they hold it like a magnet. He can thus raise a number of pins, which will dangle from them; his index fingers possessing the quality more than the other fingers. He can in this way raise a glass tube freighted with a six-pound weight. Prof. W'm Simon has him in charge, and purposes to give some scientific experiments before the John Hopkins Scientific Association.

—A lady friend sends us an advertisement from the *Ceylon Independent* [Dec. 5, 1889], and asks us, for the sake of the poor missionary, to publish it gratis. Yes, dear, we will! though not in so bold type! Here it is: "Household Furniture. We are instructed by the rev. H. R. Pigott, who is leaving the island, to sell at his residence, Baptist Mission House, Madarana, on Saturday, the 7th Dec., 1889, all his excellent household furniture, mostly in nandun and satinwood, made to order, handsome lamps, glass, and china ware, rattan matting, cooking stove, and general effects; choice ferns and flowers in pots; several fine milch cows, bulls and calves; a light pony dogcart; english and other choice poultry &c., &c., &c. Also, if not previously sold, a large american organ, Mason & Hamlin's, fit for a church. J. Auwardt & Co., Auctioneers." The et cætera include, we presume, the poor missionary's wine, cigars, and baptized, female idols. After all, it must be pleasanter to be a christian missionary in Ceylon, and have an elegant home, a well-stocked farm, and a call occasionally from some sweet idol willing to confess her sins, than it is to be a buddhist editor in America, and have nothing but a tired brain and an aching body! Brethren of the Baptist Mission, praise ye Jah!

"LIFE IN SIAM."

The *Journal of Man* publishes under this heading an octavo page concerning Siam. There is scarcely aught of a good and interesting information in it; being of the usual kind current here about that land and its people.

Let us hear: The people are ignorant and superstitious; the king has 300 wives and 87 children, guarded by a female police; he is very rich; one of his sources of revenue are 22,000 licensed prostitutes in Bangkok; the monks are lazy and bad, as bad as the christian priests, who follow contending armies and pray Heaven for their success; the monks enter gambling dens and pray for their success; the noblemen are good-for-nothing fellows, who turn day into night, and night into day; the monks do not, like civilized men, ogle the women that give them food, but hide the face behind a fan; the king has a temple worth \$1,000,000; he and his brother[s] are rather progressive men.

This is the precise sum of this editor's knowledge of "life in Siam." It came to him, he says, through some american telegraph-operators, who went to that land to establish telegraphic lines.

A few days ago we met one of our subscribers, who had, with profit, read our summary of prince Chandrdhat's article. In the course of our conversation he remarked: "We have always been accustomed to look upon the people over there [in Siam] as barbarians and savages." It seemed to give him surprise that a prince of that land could harbor, and give expression, especially in the english language, to high and holy thoughts.

We have taken up this matter anent Siam, because the blame for all the real and fictitious shortcomings of that as well as of all other buddhist lands, is laid at the feet of the BUDDHA and His disciples; the BUDDHA being (thanks to the padres), by the *polloi* in the West, who have heard of Him, held to be a huge devil, who eats little christians (if he can get hold of them);

and His disciples, pitiable worshippers of "stock and stone."

If we turn from the newspapers to books about Siam, written by christian travellers, missionaries, and the like disinterested persons, the story is nearly always made up of the same stale stuff. We seldom see anything of the true and good, noble and uplifting pictured in them; but generally, in a dull, sensual, oriental haze, the phantoms of lewd despots, privileged criminals (noblemen), idolaters, concubines, immense royal treasures, and degraded, enslaved, and starving multitudes. Anything like the scene pictured in our last December issue, under the heading, "The Dying Buddhist", is a most rare exception, which does not get into the newspapers, because of the absence of treasures and concubines in it, but is hidden away on a few library shelves. And when the BUDDHA and His teaching are discussed, it is generally, as we shall see presently, done in a flippant and misleading way.

THE late king of Siam, being a student of the english language, and seeing the advantages to be derived from a knowledge of this widespread tongue concluded to have the members of his family instructed in it. To which end he invited an englishwoman to become governess in his family.

As might be expected from a nervous, hysteric woman, brought up under the influence of western self-esteem, hypocrisy and meddlesomeness, she got herself presently involved in the little amorous squabbles characteristic of most families east and west, north and south, of this planet, and had an occasional tilt with the king and his chief minister, about the punishment of refractory wives and concubines. To illustrate: a certain wife or concubine was in the habit of gambling away her property and slaves, which so enraged her royal lord that he had her put into the prison of the palace, to cool off the gambling fever. Of course, our governess had to interfere, and to protest against this "barbarous treatment of a woman"!—which protest was, as usual, followed by the liberation of the de-

linquent. It stands to reason that this constant meddling on the part of the englishwoman, with the family affairs of the palace, did not fail to produce unsweet blood and scenes. And when, some years later, she published a book about her experiences at the siamese court, it contained mostly social brutality, crime, and sexual stench,—relieved only here and there by a sketch of buddhism and the buddhists in Siam.

As might be expected, the government could not resist the desire to convert the king's family to christianism. The heir-apparent (the present king) seemed to her a good, docile youth, out of whom she hoped to make a true christian lamb (or ram),—we suppose, of the kind they have at the courts of Europe! But those subtle and subtle "pagans", the buddhistic monks, shattered her hopes, like as a potter shattereth a cracked vessel against a rock. For it came to pass, that the prince had, according to siamese custom, to enter a monastery, as a monk, for a few months, to learn the precepts of the Law; and that, when he came out of it, he was no longer the sweet, prospective christian of old, but an unsweet buddhist.

She narrates interestingly his initiation:

"The hair, which had been suffered to grow on the top of his young pate like an inverted brush, was now shorn close, and his eye-brows were shaven also. Arrayed in costly robes and ornaments, similar to those worn at a coronation, he was taken in charge by a body of monks at his father's palace and by them conducted to the temple Wat P'hra Keau, his yellow-robed and barefooted escort chanting, on the way, hymns from the buddhistic liturgy. At the threshold of the temple another band of monks divested him of his fine robes and clad him in simple white, all the while chanting. The circle being characteristic of a buddhistic ceremonial, as the cross is of their religious architecture, these monks formed a circle, standing, and holding lighted tapers in their folded palms, the abbot in the centre. Then the prince advanced meekly, timidly, bowing low,

to enter the holy ring. Here he was received by the abbot, and with their hands mutually interfolded, one upon the other, he vowed to renounce then and there [for six months], the world with all its cares and temptations, and to observe with obedience the doctrines of the BUDDHA. This done, he was clad afresh in sackcloth, and led from the temple to the royal monastery, Watt Brahmanee Waid. With bare feet and eyes downcast they went, still chanting those weird hymns."

Although the governess, in this way, lost her prospective convert, and although she thought, that, upon the whole, buddhism is a bad religion, not at all the less, she thought there might be something good at the bottom of it. She writes truly:

"Many have missed seeing what is true and wise in the doctrines of the BUDDHA, because they have preferred to observe them from a standpoint and in the attitude of an antagonist, rather than of an inquirer. To understand aright the earnest creed and hope of any man, one must be at least sympathetically 'en rapport' with him,—must be willing to feel, and to confess within one's self, the germs of those errors whose growth seems so rank in him. In the humble spirit of this fellowship of fallibility let us draw as near as we may to the hearts of these devotees, and the heart of their mystery."

As buddhism was preached, and buddhistic secret societies existed in Judea, and neighboring countries, long before Jesus (who, freed from priestly glamour, was nothing but a buddhistic ascetic), and so, long before the existence of the church alledged to have been founded by him, the good woman makes certainly the shadow exist before its object, when she writes:

"The lesson wherefrom I learn, in thanking god for the light of christianity, to thank him for its shadow too, which is buddhism."

Notwithstanding her entanglements in the sexual affairs of the court, her dislike of the prime-minister, her occasional indignation at the king, and her pity for the "benighted" monks, who walked in the shadow (!) of her

own religion, she thought she saw glimmerings of a sublime something in buddhism; for she writes:

"Buddhism cannot be clearly defined by its visible results to-day. There are more things in that subtle, mystical enigma called in the pali, NIRWANA, in the burmese, NIBAN, in the siamese, NIPHAN, than are dreamt of in our [christian] philosophy. With the idea of NIPHAN in his theology, it were absurdly false to say that the buddhist has no god."

Still, this sublime something is not as she imagined, a personal god, but a state, beyond all states which the human mind can conceive of.

She gives in one place an illustration of the chants of the monks, as they go to beg their food:

"Take thy meat, but think it dust! Eat but to live, and but to know thyself, and what thou art below! And say withal unto thy heart, 'It is earth I eat, that to the earth I may new life impart.'"

She gives in another place some of the maxims of the Brotherhood:

"Glory not in thyself, but rather in thy neighbor.

Cause no tree to die.

Kill no beast or insect.

Neither sit nor sleep in high places.

Eat nothing between meals.

Regard not singers, dancers, and players on instruments.

Use no perfume but sweetness of thought.

Be lowly in thy heart, that thou mayest be lowly in thy act.

Hoard neither silver nor gold.

Look not upon women unchastely.

Entertain not thy thought with worldly things.

Do not work but the work of charity and truth.

Give not flowers unto women, but rather prayers.

Contract no friendship with the hope of gain.

Borrow nothing, but rather deny thy want.

Lend not unto usury.

Keep neither lance, nor sword, nor any deadly weapon.

Judge not thy neighbor.

Labor not for hire, but for charity.

Give no medicines which contain poison, but study to acquire the true art of healing, which is the highest of all arts, and pertains to the wise and benevolent.

Love all men equally.

Perform not thy meditations in public places.

Make no ido's of any kind."

Judaism has its ten commandments; which its imposturous priests pretend were given in thunder and lightning on Sinai,—though they existed beforehand among the other idolatrous nations. Buddhism, on the contrary, has no commandments. Commandments are the ukases of despots (devils) for human beasts. The BUDDHA, being love and reason incarnate, and teaching human beings, gave no commandments. He taught them why it would be good for them to do so and so, and left them to do it, or not, as they saw fit. He used no foolish clap-trap, a la Jehovah, wherewith to awe an already wretched mankind. He desired no fulsome worship. He did not threaten born and unborn generations. Our authoress seems to be ignorant of this, for she gives the "ten commandments of the siamese buddhists":

"1. From the meanest insect up to man, thou shalt kill no animal.

2. Thou shalt not steal.

3. Thou shalt not violate the wife of another, nor his concubine.

4. Thou shalt speak no word that is false.

5. Thou shalt not drink wine, nor anything that may intoxicate.

6. Thou shalt avoid all anger, hatred, and bitter language.

7. Thou shalt not indulge in idle and vain talk.

8. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

9. Thou shalt not harbor envy, nor pride, nor revenge, nor malice, nor the desire of thy neighbor's death or misfortune.

10. Thou shalt not follow the doctrines of false gods."

She could out of the buddhist scriptures in Siam, easily have compiled ten more "commandments", just by pre-

fixing, "Thou shalt not," to the rules governing the members of the Brotherhood.

A man enters the Brotherhood of the Select by taking certain *vows*, as; "I vow not to kill any creature, steal, lie, whore, and drink intoxicants;" but he is not commanded nor threatened. By breaking these vows, he excludes himself, and so punishes himself. He has no devil-gods with commandments to fear. He fears not even the SUPREME BUDDHA. He fears only his own ignorance and selfishness and grossness. When, therefore, the blessed truths of the ADORABLE fall into the receptive mind, they develop through it, by a short or a long process, according to its inherent karma, a manly, enlightened, self-denying, self-respecting nature, antipodal to that which is the outcome of the commandments and threats of the devil-gods of the nations.

In conclusion: It would be pleasant, and useful, too, to have better information about the princes and peoples of the semi and real, buddhist lands of the East, disseminated in the West. We are tired and disgusted to hear of nothing in connection with them save gold, pearls, silk, concubines, despots, and degraded, enslaved multitudes of "heathens,"—the burthen of the songs of the newspapers in this country. We know that nobler and higher matters might be recorded and published. A friend,—not a buddhist,—who travelled in Burmah, a few years ago, told us that he had never, anywhere in the world, received so much kindness as he received at the hands of the buddhists there. "If you get acquainted with the burmese buddhists," said he, "you will love them." He did not visit their near neighbors, the siamese; had he, we should, probably, have learnt something more useful and elevating than that contained in the current literature about that country.

We hope our brethren in Siam will awake to see the necessity for action in this matter.

We should like to see a buddhist quarterly, with regular contributors in all buddhist lands, published here in

America; a quarterly that would represent the whole buddhist world.

Brethren in Siam, shall we live to see it?

FRAGMENTS.

—"LIVE, O Saints, hiding your good works and showing your sins."—THE BUDDHA.

—"THE martyrs to vice far exceed the martyrs to virtue, both in endurance and number."—COLTON.

—"SCIENCE is madness occupied with tabulating its own hallucinations."—AMIEL.

—"I look upon indolence as a sort of suicide; for the man is sufficiently destroyed, though the appetite of a brute may survive."—CHESTERFIELD.

—"THE great inequality of all things to the appetites of a rational soul appears from this, that in all worldly things a man finds not half the pleasure in the actual possession that he proposed in the expectation."—SOUTH.

THE BUDDHIST.—A weekly journal in english, devoted to buddhism. Price a year, 10 sh. Address, Manager, Colombo, Ceylon.

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