

SUMMER 1970



# JOURNAL



PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY

# PRS JOURNAL

Published quarterly by THE PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY, INC.,  
3910 Los Feliz Blvd., Los Angeles, California 90027

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\$1.25 a Copy, \$4.00 a Year. Two subscriptions, your own and a gift subscription, \$7.00

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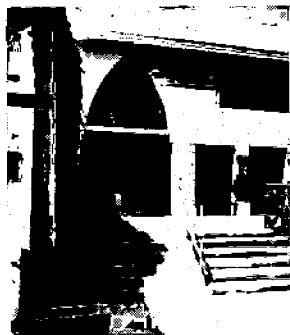
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SUMMER 1970

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Published by the

PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH SOCIETY, INC.

*A non-profit educational corporation dedicated to the dissemination of useful knowledge in the fields of philosophy, comparative religion, and psychology.*

Issued Quarterly/Vol 30, No. 1

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## THE EDITOR'S POINT OF VIEW

### THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD READING

**T**HOSE of my generation were brought up in an atmosphere of kindly scholarship. Most families had modest libraries featuring the writings of Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Tennyson, and Longfellow. There were no radio or television sets, and children were required to develop reading skills at an early age. The educational value of the home library can hardly be overestimated. We added many new words to our vocabularies and became aware of historical events which had transpired in former times. It would be difficult to improve upon the ability of Charles Dickens as a literary psychoanalyst. Those who read his books gained a broad understanding of the complicated workings of human nature.

We particularly enjoyed the long descriptive paragraphs which established the proper mood for events to follow. It seemed admirable to find appropriate terms to describe the meadows and forests, rivers and oceans, where human beings played out the comedies and tragedies of their lives. From such reading young people developed a maturity which prepared them for a formal education and the actual experiences of world affairs. An evening with a good book stimulated imagination and was usually beneficial to mind and morals. The hero was always noble and the villain despicable, and in the end virtue triumphed over plot and counterplot.

It may be that I have not known the right people, but as far as my observations have extended, boys and girls of the present genera-

tion are neglecting their birthright of good books. Radio and television do not encourage good spelling, and the programs we watch contribute little to the enrichment of our culture. Because few people have the time for heavy reading, modern literature is largely pictorial. It is probably true, as the Chinese have said, that a picture is worth a thousand words, but we miss the thoughtful contribution of an informed author. It is also noticeable that recent writers have had a tendency to cater to the mental resources of their potential readers.

Not long ago I purchased a very elaborate and expensive volume on Asiatic art. It was beautifully printed and bound. The first impression was breathtaking, and it was natural to assume that this was a definitive work by a capable writer. However, careful study revealed that the actual text could have been neatly contained in a thirty-two page pamphlet. There was a brief preface followed by a few words of introduction, comparatively useless captions under the pictures, and a glossary at the end. We had bought an album of colored photographs—little more. Even more annoying is the fact that most of these photographs, or variations of them, were available in other volumes of similar format. If the reader wishes to secure meaningful information, it may be necessary for him to seek out second-hand copies of works published fifty or sixty years ago. In these the illustrations are unpretentious, but the authors were profoundly learned and they developed their subject matter with due respect for the facts.

The body of literature has increased rapidly, but its soul has not enlarged correspondingly. Quality has been sacrificed to quantity, and a pathetic note of frustration is noticeable. One writer, having prepared an elaborate work, profusely illustrated, on the history of Oriental art, ends his book by noting that all the traditional styles of Oriental art seem meaningful until the Nineteenth Century, but that in the future Asiatic countries must derive their artistic inspiration from the masterpieces of contemporary international artists.

Young people's books above the level of *Winnie the Pooh* are likely to be overshadowed by the pessimism which has infected nearly all phases of light literature. No "sickly idealism" should be permitted to damage the adolescent mind. As a result young people are expected to accept the materialistic opinions which dominate the present gen-

eration. Even toys reflect the trends of the moment. The wonderful world of imagination is being thoroughly permeated by disillusionment and cynicism.

It would be difficult to bring back the quiet evenings with good books. Instead, we spend our spare time grouped about the television set, absorbing mayhem and exceedingly infantile commercials. It is rather discouraging, however, when someone announces in solemn tones that reading isn't really necessary. There are many books well worth careful study, but these are not the most popular at the present time.

A number of mystically minded folk have developed a complex against the written or spoken word. They insist that books are merely the receptacles of human notions, and are contradictory, confusing, and costly. They recommend that we depend entirely upon our own intuitions for insight and guidance. This is hasty judgment, but quite understandable. A great part of contemporary literature never should have been written, but there are other books which will continue to inspire the human soul for ages to come.

The printed word has made possible the preservation of knowledge, but it also has provided a means for perpetuating many errors and perversions. We do not possess the necessary internal resources at this time to enable us to attain enlightenment without recourse to the traditional wisdom of the human race. It is always our privilege to be selective, and by the use of acquired or innate judgment we should be able to choose from the available store of knowledge that which is most useful to us.

It would be a great achievement if we could each learn from ourselves. Some feel that they can, but it has been my observation that the self-taught are not noticeably better off than those who study an adequate text. Usually our inner lives are confused, and rather than a flow of enlightenment from the fountains of our subconscious there is a continuous stream of neurotic pressures and opinions. These endanger both the individual who propagates such beliefs and those who come under his influence. Our growth demands not only spiritual idealism, but also direct contact with the circumstances of daily living. Informative books tell us many things worthy of serious consideration. Edward Gibbon described the circumstances that led to the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. Thoughtful reading will

reveal that we are following very closely in the footsteps of the ancient Romans. We are making the mistakes that destroyed them, and it is doubtful that we could be aware of these facts without some recourse to the written word.

Some books are dependable, and others are not. The person who is willing to condemn the literature of the world may not wish to see the Holy Bible out of print forever. It is still one of the largest selling and most inspiring books of the world. The Moslem would be reluctant to give up his Koran, and we could scarcely expect the devout Hindu to condemn the Vedas and their numerous commentaries. Many have found great inspiration in the dialogues of Plato, the writings of Confucius, and the lofty sentiments of the Neo-Platonists. Man has labored diligently to preserve the records of his kind, and histories have been compiled for better or for worse. Writing has contributed much to history, for it has rescued old events from the uncertainties and inconsistencies of oral tradition.

In Europe, most works written or printed prior to A.D. 1500 were devoted to religion, philosophy, or history. Somewhat later, scientific books became more numerous, and what today we call the textbook made its appearance. In those days there was slight interest in ephemeral themes, and the printed word was cherished as the principal means of bestowing upon the future the wisdom of the past. Fortunately the best of the world's literature still is available, often in inexpensive paperback editions.

Another important trend has been the gradual increase in literary communication between East and West. There is now much interest in the wisdom of the Orient, and it cannot be denied that books have contributed to a better understanding in this area which will lead eventually to the enrichment of our literature.

Some say they have no time for reading, or that they are satisfied to scan digests of important articles. It is probable that in many cases the so-called lack of time is actually lack of disciplined concentration. Modern man finds it ever more difficult to focus his attention on any subject demanding mental effort. Reading is important because it brings a constructive release from daily pressures. The body is relaxed and a spirit of calm descends upon the person, unless of course the reading matter is inflammatory. An hour with great poetry, or even a few moments dedicated to a celebrated essay or

a gentle fragment from some inspired Church Father, can contribute greatly to peace of soul. Some long-neglected ideals within ourselves are revived and renewed in our hearts and minds. There is something a little disturbing about a person who gains no benefit from good reading. He has shut himself away from the experiences of his fellow mortals. He is alone, with no kindly spirit to soften his opinions or invite him to better attitudes.

It makes very little difference whether authors agree or disagree; it is part of our daily experience to observe differences of opinion. Very often we cannot resist the impulse to argue when in the presence of the proponent of a disturbing theory. In a few moments such an argument usually destroys all traces of good judgment. You cannot, however, argue with a book. The author may long have been dead and may not have spoken your language. It is frustrating not to be able to get at him to contradict him or to explain why your knowledge far exceeds his. All you can do to show your disagreement is to close the book. It might be well to read a little further before condemning, for in the next paragraph he may say something that agrees so closely with your own convictions that you will be inspired to praise his erudition.

Books permit us to pause and consider. Perhaps we shall require many days to digest a single paragraph. We can advance our program as slowly or as rapidly as we see fit or as is comfortable to our ability. In communion with our own thoughts we may be honest in admitting where our conclusions have been at fault, and thus benefit from a good text without embarrassment.

If children are taught to read, they will enjoy many pleasant hours in later years. After retirement the individual finds consolation in good books. He appreciates them more because his years of experience have brought him a mellowed attitude. As we grow older we are less interested in the gossip of the market place and more concerned with the enrichment of our inner life. To deprive people of good books or to encourage them to give up reading is both unwise and unkind. When we find a generation in serious trouble and inclined to bitterness and disillusionment, we also find scant interest in great literature. It has been said that in order to enslave Egypt, one of the most enlightened of ancient nations, its conquerors first contrived the destruction of the Alexandrian libraries. There is

an old saying that you cannot enslave an informed mind nor liberate a mind that is ignorant. An Emperor of China once wished to destroy learning and burned the ancient books so that his own ignorance could not be so easily discovered.

Good reading is a sovereign remedy for mental arrogance. Those who avoid direct contact with the thoughts of other men often overestimate their own knowledge. A Chinese proverb says, "there is nothing new under the sun." Every thought, every revelation, that comes to us from the depths of our natures is part of a universal wisdom. We are entitled to credit if we discover something for ourselves, but whatever path we follow, other men have preceded us. To underestimate the minds of our fellowmen works a hardship upon our own thinking.

Francis Bacon, in his essay "Of Studies," points out the dilemma of the individual who evades scholarship: "And if he Readde little, he had need to have much Cunning, to seeme to know that he doth not." It has been my experience that the uninformed usually are misinformed. They lack the cunning recommended by his Lordship, and quickly reveal their prejudices and intolerances.

Wisdom committed to writing is like a man who has made a statement under oath. He must live with his own words. Time becomes a censoring power which through the centuries divides essential wisdom from passing opinion. The ethical statutes and moral admonitions which have continued to guide mankind and have contributed to its improvement are worthy of our confidence. They should be passed on as a priceless heritage unto our issue.

The rivers of wisdom arise in the heights of distant mountains, and flowing down, make fertile the plains where men live and labor. It is quite possible for these streams to be polluted, thus contributing to that opinionism which is a desperate sickness of the reason. We have learned that most rivers become polluted in their lower reaches, but are pure at their source. If then we would know an author, it is best to read him in the original, otherwise his thoughts may reach us contaminated through poor translation or biased interpretation. The basic truths upon which we have built our intellectual concepts are few and essentially simple. Most men are argumentative, however, and insist upon imposing their own prejudices upon the works of



ancient authors. Thus the stream of learning is swelled into a torrent, without any increase of essential knowledge.

Bacon, in the essay quoted above, gives further clarification to this difficult subject: "Crafty Men Contemne Studies; Simple Men Admire them; And Wise Men Use them; For they teach not their owne Use; But that is a Wisdome without them, and above them, won by Observation. Reade not to Contradict, and Confute; Nor to Believe and Take for granted; Nor to Finde Talke and Discourse; But to weigh and Consider."

To divide knowledge into two kinds, the first originating within the self and the second gained from reading, is to set up a false dichotomy. The world of human affairs, the society of which we are a part, and the traditions that guide us, all originated in human consciousness. That which comes forth from the deepest part of a man appears in printed form for the benefit of other men. If we are inclined to assume that man is infallible, we may gain a better perspective by reading some of his worthless writings. Should it happen, however, that we conclude all men to be wrong, foolish, and corrupted, we may improve our opinion by reading some of the noble and inspired volumes which reveal the essential goodness and the modest dignity of human nature.

Standing in the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., we gaze into the face of the Great Emancipator. On the wall behind him is deeply carved the words of the speech he delivered on the battlefield of Gettysburg. Lincoln's words have inspired thousands of Americans, and it would be a pity indeed if they were lost or forgotten. Nor can we easily spare the words of Jesus which have come down to us as 'The Sermon on the Mount.' There is something hauntingly beautiful in Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and I have long admired *The Prophet*, by Kahlil Gibran. We would all be poorer indeed without the inspiration of such writings.

It is not literature that is at fault; it is our own discrimination that sometimes fails. If we allow our tastes to be overinfluenced by contemporary trends, we can waste much valuable time trying to learn that which must ultimately be unlearned. We read according to our own nature, and more books are published today than ever before in history. Some cater to our selfishness, others preach discord and violence, and still others make no pretense to significance. If we

cannot read all that has been written—and there is no good reason why we should—let us choose that which is best. Clinging to a gentle and kindly literature, rich in hope, deep in faith, and broad in tolerance, we shall add new depths to our studies and shall comfort our souls with immortal thoughts.

It is true that we cannot take books with us beyond the grave. The Egyptian of old carried with him to his final resting place the magical scriptures which would guide him safely to the green plains of Amenti. Much that we read in books is useful to us only in the society we ourselves have fashioned, but this does not mean that nothing is to be gained by scholarship. Good books ennoble our character while yet we live here, and this improvement which we have wrought within ourselves can go with us into the afterlife. If conduct determines future destiny, that which inspires good conduct and teaches us to live useful and constructive lives confers benefit upon those parts of ourselves which survive the grave.

It is not good to read too much, any more than it is wise to indulge in any other appetite excessively. Moderation is the virtue, and those who practice it lead the best and most useful lives. Good books bridge the ages. The past lives again, and the tired faces that gaze out at us from old copper engravings come to life, sharing with us their most precious thoughts and wondrous discoveries. Personally, I am grateful that I have read good books, for it has brought some information, but most of all it has helped me to respect with greater justification the larger humanity to which I belong.



### *The Tie That Binds*

There is, nevertheless, a certain respect and a general duty of humanity that ties us, not only to beasts that have life and sense, but even to trees and plants.

—Michael de Montaigne

### *The Darling of Nature*

Why may not a goose say thus: "All the parts of the universe I have an interest in: the earth serves me to walk upon, the sun to light me; the stars have their influence upon me; I have such an advantage by the winds and such by the waters; there is nothing that yon heavenly roof looks upon so favorably as me. I am the darling of Nature! Is it not man that keeps and serves me?"

—Michael de Montaigne

### *Courage*

I speak truth, not so much as I would, but as much as I dare; and I dare a little the more as I grow older.

—Michael de Montaigne

## YOGA AND NARCOTICS

In the past few years the incidence of drug addiction has risen sharply in the United States, England, and many other countries. Because hallucinatory drugs produce visions, symbolic dreams, and fantastic experiences, they have led to an unholy alliance between narcotics and religion. Those using LSD, especially, have claimed that their faith in God has been strengthened by the use of that drug.

It should be evident even to a child that so-called physical experiences produced by such means cannot be genuine. They have no more value than the distressing visions which plague the mind of the chronic alcoholic. It is becoming more obvious with every passing day that all psychedelic drugs are dangerous, even when used only occasionally. In some cases, the first experiment with drugs has resulted in tragedy or death. It is folly to defend drugs as being aids to spiritual growth, when they already have a most unsavory reputation. Hallucinogens, which are known to lead to moral degeneracy, suicide, crimes and violence, insanity, and even death, should never be used, and the sanctioning of their use for spiritual purposes results from a tragic misunderstanding.

Indian philosophy, including Yoga, Vedanta, Buddhism, and even Tantra, is based upon a firmly established concept of personal integrity. Every legitimate student is required to pass through a long period of probation before advanced mystical disciplines are taught. Esoteric instruction is given only at the discretion of the guru, or teacher. The path which leads gradually to the unfolding of man's inner consciousness and trains him in the use of his clairvoyant powers is always the way of self-discipline, and begins with the control and purification of his mental, emotional, and physical natures.

Most esoteric schools emphasized cleanliness as being the first requisite of an acceptable candidate. The body was to be bathed daily, and each novice was required to wash his clothing himself as part of his spiritual training. His living quarters were extremely simple — the old Ashrams were not luxury hotels. Each student cleaned his room every day, made his bed, and kept his personal belongings in perfect order. After each meal he was expected to clean

his plate or bowl, experiencing this action as symbolic of the purification of his own nature. It also was usual for disciples to have suitable tasks allotted to them. They were expected to contribute to the maintenance of the school to which they belonged. There was gardening and the continual beautification of the premises. Nearly all duties were exactly timed and were performed each day with punctuality and thoroughness.

In the cultivation of the emotional life, the emphasis was upon complete and unselfish devotion to Deity in whatever form it was venerated. All affections were sublimated, and a life of complete chastity was required. In some schools marriage was permitted, but it was assumed that human relationships would be so refined and ennobled that the family would be an expression of purity, dedication, and unselfishness. Promiscuity was forbidden completely, and the truth-seeker was bound by a high code of morality and ethics. A misdemeanor would be seriously reprimanded, and a major violation would be followed inevitably by expulsion from the school.

On the mental side of discipline, constructive attitudes also were compulsory. No hatreds, jealousies, fears, or anxieties were tolerated. The disciple did not have the right to practice righteous indignation. He was expected to follow the rules of his order, and if an extraordinary emergency arose, he was to abide by the advice of his spiritual preceptor. Violence on the campus, destruction of private or public property, crimes against private citizens, or any action calculated to bring criticism upon the spiritual teacher or his teaching could not be excused or forgiven. Any shirking of responsibility through fear or distaste was contrary to all rules.

To those who do not understand the training of a true mystic, it may seem that the Guru is a despot, controlling his followers by the strength of his own will alone. This is not true. The Guru has no interest whatever in causing discomfort to anyone. His position is scientifically unassailable. The development of man's spiritual life depends upon the regeneration of his character on all levels of activity. The novice who does not live the life never can know the doctrine. No one is standing between him and truth except himself. There are no shortcuts. The use of drugs is forbidden because it tears down that part of man's character which gives him the courage and insight to live well for the sake of truth alone.

There seems to be a popular misconception developing in the public mind about Eastern esoteric disciplines. This is due partly to lack of experience in metaphysical practices, and to some degree certain Oriental teachers also are at fault. In the West we assume that Yoga is a science, and this leads to the further assumption that it can be mastered by instruction and skill alone, without consideration for ethical and moral factors.

Man learns through the use of mental and emotional faculties. If his inner life is immature, he cannot develop the qualities of consciousness which are essential to genuine mystical enlightenment. The mind must first be purified, and most personal attitudes must be sublimated. In Northern Buddhism the disciple entering upon the Holy Path is required to make a solemn commitment. He must state clearly what use he intends to make of the enlightenment which he hopes to attain. The Bodhisattva vow is typical of such voluntary commitments: "May I not attain perfect knowledge or reach the ultimate Nirvana until I have guided all living creatures to emancipation from the tyranny of self and the suffering caused by pride, lust, avarice, and ignorance."

The Indian Gurus always have been more socially conscious than is generally believed. They expect their disciples to contribute to the improvement of their fellowmen according to their skills and capacities. It is only through selfless dedication that the ego ultimately is conquered. In Tibetan Tantra, reference is made to the Eight Cemeteries. These are the burial grounds in which the Eight Hindrances to man's growth must be interred before liberation from the pressure of self-interest is possible. It is the same thought found in Christianity when reference is made to the Second Birth. Unless the seed is buried in the ground, it cannot be born again. Boehme refers to the old Adam and the new Adam; in his mysticism, the former is of the earth, and the latter is the risen Christ.

In the Tantric Cemeteries all the processes of the mind bearing upon the world with its pressures and illusions must be disintegrated back into their rudimentary elements. That which remains will be the purified mind, freed from all negative entanglements and thereby qualified for the adventure of reality. The tendency today seems to be to regard freedom as an escape from that intangible structure called "the establishment." Perhaps this implies release from the

world, but it is more often interpreted as meaning freedom from responsibility and social conventionalisms. In Oriental disciplines, liberation is always freedom from personal imperfections. The student must prove his dedication by overcoming his own faults. If we expect the spirit of living truth to dwell within us, we must build its sanctuary according to its own laws. Each of us is a living temple, and in most cases this holy place is in the hands of the infidel. It is difficult to understand how any thoughtful individual can assume that he is entitled to cosmic consciousness when he has not yet learned to administer his human consciousness with dignity.

We must realize that self-discipline is the final proof of sincerity. The individual who changes himself has earned a better destiny. When we attempt to impose upon others doctrines which we have not been able to apply to our own needs we suffer from a form of egoism which, if tolerated, will lead to disaster.

Man's inner life is a compound of vibratory rates. We can conceal our weaknesses from other people, but the vibratory energy patterns of these weaknesses will continue to operate in our own magnetic field. So long as these discordances continue, harmony cannot be established. What we *think* about our own attitudes is of secondary importance. Efforts to exonerate or justify shortcomings have no effect upon the negative syndrome built up by conduct. The rules of spiritual growth either are obeyed or disobeyed. They were not created by man, neither by his conscious mind nor by his subconscious intensity, and no amount of wishful thinking can enable him to break them without incurring suffering and disillusionment.

In the world of illusion, the neophyte is the helpless victim of his own attitudes. He can build a complete concept of the universe which has no foundation in reality, and he can create his own paths to spiritual development which actually lead nowhere instead. Eliphas Levi (Abbé Louis Constant), the great French transcendentalist, described the astral light as an enchanted garden filled with beautiful flowers — and around the stem of each one is entwined a poisonous serpent. This is truly the fool's paradise, but when dramatized and sanctioned by false instruction and wishful thinking, it has ensnared many who should have known better.

All the experiences and phenomena of psychism, mysticism, metaphysics, and esoteric discipline can be duplicated in the subtle sub-

stances of the astral light. Even the most advanced type of Raja Yoga can be so duplicated by imagination that reputable teachers can be deceived. Obviously no high degree of development is required for the production of this pseudo phenomenon. It is little better than the product of wishful thinking and can cause a gullible student to become the victim of his own daydreaming.

The consequences of self-delusion are not always easy to endure. About the least of the negative results is disappointment. The hopeful disciple spends his entire lifetime on the verge of an enlightenment which never occurs. More serious are the fears arising in the mind of the misguided truth-seeker. He begins to experience dangers he has read about or which are supposed to beset the path leading to samadhi. Some unscrupulous teachers warn their followers that terrible things will happen to a member who discontinues instruction. Many persons in a condition of hysterical terror have sought my help in such emergencies. The astral light almost always brings those who have come under its enchantments to mental and emotional illness. The beautiful visions fade away, and in their place are terrifying dreams and nightmares. This negative phenomenon actually is the result of the uncorrected and undisciplined pressures of the individual confronting him as in Lord Bulwer-Lytton's description of the Guardian of the Threshold. It is most saddening to realize that well-intentioned human beings can be persecuted for the greater part of their lives by psychic forces resulting entirely from their own imaginations. It is even more saddening to find that such sufferers are not capable of accepting or understanding the actual facts even when they are explained to them by a qualified instructor.

The hallucinations of the narcotic addict belong to the realms of the astral light. They are part of a vibratory region corresponding to the astral, emotional, or desire body of the human being. The lower regions are the Kamaloka, which corresponds to the purgatorial sphere of Christian mysticism and the abodes of the terrible deities of the Tibetan Tantra. Here the symbols of man's imperfection take on appropriate likenesses and arise to frighten and torment him. The higher realms of the astral world are the paradise of the Western mystic. This is the realm of pleasure without permanence or significance, which if abused forces the consciousness back into the lower demon-infested region. Whether the visions be beautiful or

terrible, they ultimately must be dissolved and buried in the symbolic cemeteries of Tantric ritualism.

Because these experiences are not real, they have no valid similarity to the genuine states set up by Raja Yoga. There is no development without growth, and to fall into a sea of dreams is to retrogress into the shadowy regions of the primitive witch-doctor. As legitimate teachers always have pointed out, it is best to avoid a false start in metaphysical development. The more mistakes made, the more likely the student is to become addicted to sensory hallucinations. As the alcoholic gradually loses the moral courage to rescue himself from his dangerous habit, so false psychism has an almost fatal fascination. The delights of the sensory perceptions, the ecstatic moods and feelings, reduce courage and enervate the mental and emotional faculties. The victim drifts along until his illusions turn upon him and drown him in their own deceit.

Eastern teachers are not always responsible for the difficulties which may plague their followers. The teacher perhaps returns to an Eastern land, leaving a devotee to carry on his work; or even should he remain here, he is not always properly equipped to handle the undisciplined and unregenerated attitudes of his followers. He assumes that they understand the instruction he has given and that they are following it faithfully. The truth is, however, that they did not understand him, and to them growth was merely an adventure and not a serious business.

The question has been asked as to whether there is an essential difference between a metaphysical experience caused by drugs and one resulting from the meditation processes of the Zen monk or the whirling dervish. There is one immediately obvious difference: it is virtually impossible for the human body to resist completely the toxic properties of a drug which brings on various degrees of hallucination with no regard for the qualifications of the addict.

Zen meditation, on the other hand, can be practiced for a lifetime without any visionary or mystical experience. It is quietly assumed that when the disciple has earned enlightenment he will receive it, and not before. He is therefore patient, and if he is a good Zen man he looks forward to years of patient attendance at the Zendo.

As for the Moslem dervish, he belongs to a sect which believes that it is possible by following certain mystical rules to cause the



human body to move in perfect rhythm with cosmic motion. It is a symbolic acceptance that man is part of what Havelock Ellis calls "The Dance of Life." This is also the eternal tone or rhythm of Lao-tze. The dervish is not asking for a mystical experience, nor is he bargaining with the Infinite. He is not saying, "If I enjoy the phenomena I will take up the study seriously." He has given his whole life to religious devotion, has renounced the world, and leaves his spiritual destiny to the will of Allah. Having no material ambition and being of all Moslems the most dedicated to God's will, he can wait patiently without spiritual or emotional pressure interfering with his peace of soul.

Hallucination-producing drugs were used in ancient times in connection with religious practices. The Christian communion cup probably originated in Egypt, where sanctified alcoholic beverages were used to produce ecstasies and trances. Primitive people sought to communicate with their patron deities and deceased ancestors by means of hashish. The tragedies resulting from religious delusions led to the abolishing of such procedures.

Recently I drove through the Haight-Asbury district in San Francisco. Even though the civic and local groups have done everything possible to improve the appearance of the area, conditions there remain extremely depressing. Most of the stores are boarded up, and their stocks have been looted. The shops that remain open are dreary and dingy, a few display psychedelic paraphenalia, and here and there are placards featuring Oriental religious teachers. The streets are almost completely deserted. Those who are wandering about show clearly the degenerative effect of their way of life. It is a sad and sorry spectacle, and we must question the integrity of any conviction or concept which contributes to a situation of this kind. Most of the constructive-minded activists have left the area, and the greater part of those remaining are involved in narcotics.

A recent case came to my attention in which a university student discontinued the use of LSD after a roommate died from drug addiction. The young woman was in a serious state of anxiety and was disturbed by the fear that her own use of hallucinogens would destroy her hopes for a good marriage and might result in the birth of deformed or impaired children. She had read some scientific reports and found them far from reassuring. She admitted frankly that no

drug-induced exhilaration could possibly compensate for the mental, emotional, and physical hazards which confronted her.

I have talked over the problem of narcotics with several very well-respected Oriental teachers. There is not one who advocates the use of drugs or even such common stimulants as tea and coffee. Some Japanese Buddhists do use tea to keep themselves awake during long religious vigils, but never for psychic or psychological purposes. The men with whom I discussed this matter had wide acquaintance with exponents of Yoga and Vedanta, and were of the opinion that all legitimate religious groups in India are gravely concerned over the present trend toward the use of narcotics among uninformed or misinformed students.

The detrimental effect of LSD and marijuana upon the psychological integration of those making use of them is not the full picture. Many addicts have developed an almost total indifference to sanitation and hygiene. Many have become physically ill, suffering from a variety of ailments, including malnutrition and nearly all the social diseases. Many doctors are now extremely reluctant to treat these cases because it is evident that such patients have lost all self-respect and have no interest in living useful or constructive lives.

History is forever repeating itself. For centuries India has had a large group of wandering religious mendicants. When I was there years ago, a scholarly Hindu told me that the country was supporting nearly four million indigent holy men. Most of them were quite sincere and had renounced worldliness in their search for spiritual growth. I have seen many of these pathetic-looking men. Some spend several hours a day sitting on beds of spikes. Others crawl on their hands and knees for many miles to visit famous shrines. The majority of these mendicants have tangled hair and unkempt beards. Often they plaster their bodies with mud or clay. These holy men are respected for their sincerity. It is evident that they have renounced the world and, following the ancient examples of their sages, are seeking tirelessly for the eternal truths. They have left comfortable homes, good friends, and devoted families, and they will plod their weary way until death comes the them.

Europe once was infested with wandering friars, penitents, and religious beggars. It became such a heavy burden upon honest people that finally it became necessary to impose appropriate legislation to

curb the practices. This is one of the reasons why King Henry the Eighth of England moved so strenuously against questionable religious orders. It is contrary to simple ethics for those seeking escape from everyday burdens to expect family, friends, or the community to support them as a civic obligation. Many young Westerners who are indifferent to the responsibilities of good citizenship would not have come to their present condition had not narcotics undermined their morality and ethics. How did this condition actually come about?

Thirty years ago I prepared a program to help young people become intelligent and dedicated citizens. The plan was presented to the chairman of one of the largest educational foundations in the United States. After listening for a few moments, this gentleman stated with utter finality: "We do not believe that morality and ethics have any place in formal education." This trend has gradually taken over educational policy. The faculties of many colleges and universities include prominent so-called intellectuals who are atheists and who look upon integrity as being little better than an outworn superstition. Exposed to this indoctrination, young people—having had little experience with spiritual values—have received no encouragement toward the maturing of their own inner lives. If it is possible for a person to be a brilliant scholar and a skilled technician without moral orientation, why should it not be possible also to master the spiritual sciences without accepting ethical responsibilities? Having taught young people the blessings of a soulless universe and assured them that man is created to do as he pleases, why should we be surprised if they follow this instruction with appropriate enthusiasm? If science can do everything, even transplant hearts, why should personal virtue be necessary to survival?

The Law of Cause and Effect operates throughout nature. We have caused the problem which now confronts us, and if we wish it to be solved, we must cause the solution also. Give the individual a solid foundation in idealism, and he will not find it necessary to run away from himself or his world. If he has proper certainties, he will not need drugs to convince himself that there is more to existence than is generally supposed. Until man cultivates his spiritual resources in an honorable way he cannot attain the enlightenment which he now, in these difficult times, realizes is so very necessary.



## THE LOTUS SUTRA

The most important of the religious writings of Northern Buddhism is the *Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra*, or *The Lotus of the True Law*. It is available to Western students as Vol. XXI of *The Sacred Books of the East*, edited by F. Max Müller and translated by H. Kern. Generally referred to in the Orient as the *Lotus Sutra*, it has been described as the most precious jewel among all Buddhist sacred writings. The origin of the work is obscure, although it is traditionally supposed to be based upon the last discourse of the Buddha.

A study of the *Lotus Sutra* leads to natural doubts as to the traditional attribution. It is known with reasonable certainty that a Chinese translation was made between A.D. 265 and 316. Other translations followed in the 4th, 5th, and 6th Centuries, and these were frequently republished. It may be reasonable to assume that the *Lotus Sutra* was actually written or compiled from older sources between 200 B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era — almost certainly in India.

While devoted entirely to the concepts of metaphysical Buddhism, the sutra derives considerable inspiration from Hindu mysticism, and points of similarity to the *Bhagavad-Gita* have been noted by scholars. The world is indebted for this sutra to sages who undertook the difficult task of laying the groundwork for Buddhism as a universal religious philosophy. A parallel can be found in the early development of Christianity. St. Paul transformed Syrian Christianity by expanding the life and teachings of Jesus into elements of a cosmic mystery, and the system he inspired is now generally referred to as the Christology of St. Paul. India produced minds with a Pauline perspective, and these unfolded latent elements of Buddhist teaching into a grand scheme of cosmotheism.

A study of the *Lotus Sutra*, as Prof. Kern points out, while it does not refute the prevailing belief that Buddha was not a theist in the generally accepted meaning of the term, reduces the issue to inconsequential proportions. All the practical requirements of a true Buddhist religion are provided by the *Lotus Sutra*. At the same time one receives the strong impression that the basic teachings

of Buddha himself have not been violated. Rather they have been expanded and wonderfully amplified in meaning.

The *Lotus Sutra* has influenced all the Buddhist sects of Japan and has been especially venerated by the followers of the Tendai and Nichiren schools. The principal mandara devised by the Nichiren sect glorifies the *Lotus Sutra*. This design, called the Dai-moku, consists of an invocation to the sutra "Namu Myo-horen-ge-kyo" (Hail to the Sutra of the Good Law). The principal inscription is surrounded with word symbols of the Ten Worlds. These have been added to reveal the true nature of the original Buddha.

Like many apocalyptic writings, the *Lotus Sutra*, as Prof. Kern has noticed, is strongly theatrical in the presentation of its pageantry. The curtain rises, so to say, to reveal the Buddhist universe. We are reminded of the elaborate ritualism of the Greek Mystery dramas. The sutra, as now preserved, consists of 28 sections, although it is usually presented in 27 chapters in the Chinese version. This is due to the combining of the 11th and 12th chapters. An interesting peculiarity of the sutra is that in all but four of the sections both a prose and a metric form of the same text is included. The poetic versions, generally called *gathas*, may have originally been issued separately, or perhaps one form was developed from the other. This means that there is considerable repetition, and the text generally follows the extravagant form of Indian religious writing.

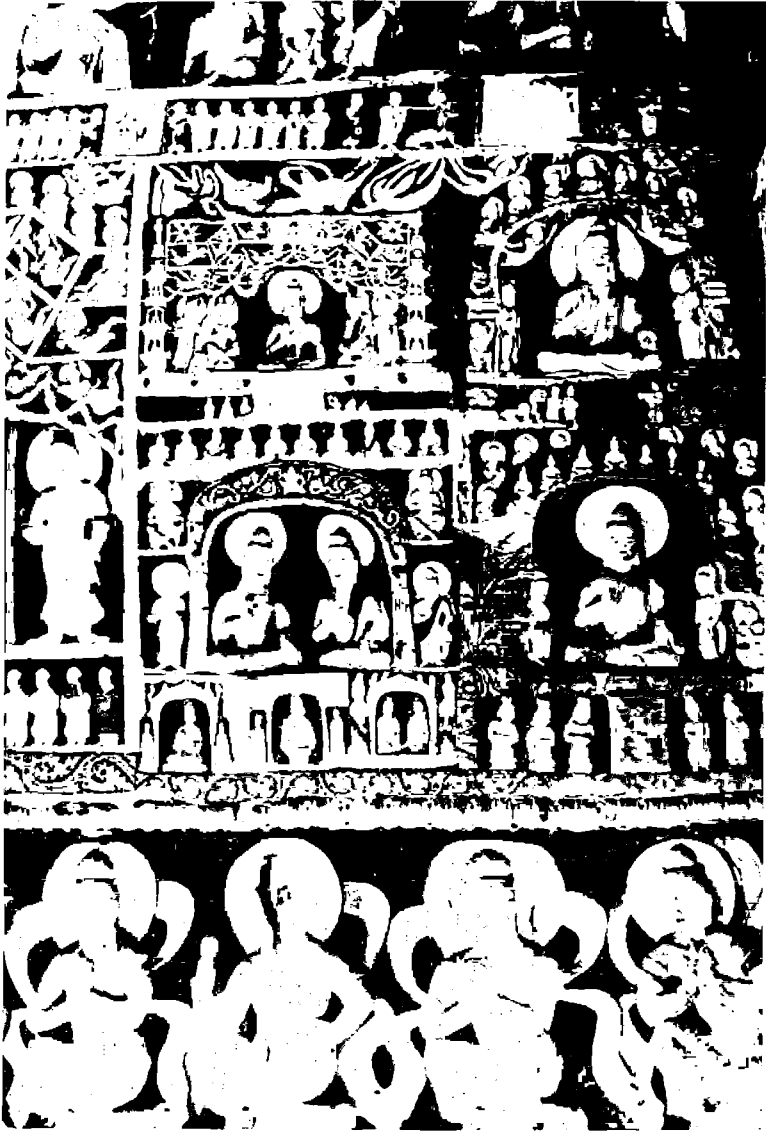
In the *Lotus Sutra*, as Prof. Kern explains, Buddha is presented as an ideal—a personification rather than a person. This explains several difficulties that have more or less appalled already skeptical scholars. It would be inconsistent with the whole spirit of Buddhism for the historical Buddha to declare himself infallible or eternal, or to claim perfection of knowledge in all the possible attributes of existence. Most scriptural writings, however, do at various times introduce utterances attributed directly to Deity. Whenever these appear they are invested with the ultimate authority of the Divine Will and Divine Wisdom. Under such conditions they are not regarded as objectionable, but merely as a proper means of conveying the omnipotence and omniscience of God. It has been argued that because of its magnificent pageantry, it awakens a

strong emotional response. The Buddha of the *Lotus Sutra* is passionless, revealing no evidence of human emotions. As the personification of the immutability of Universal Law, this detachment is perfectly consistent with Buddhist teachings. But what the non-Buddhist does not realize is that to the devotees of the *Lotus Sutra*, Law itself is the perfect expression not only of truth, but of Divine Love.

The *Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra* begins with the simple statement, "Thus I have Heard." The scene of the great discourse is the Vulture Peak, located in Ragagriha. The scene is so magnificent that it transcends even imagination. The Shakyamuni Buddha (Gautama) is seated upon the throne of teaching, surrounded by an inconceivable number of Bodhisattvas, Indic deities, and their numerous retinues. Suddenly a ray of light streams from the white curl on the Buddha's forehead and lights up all the innumerable hierarchies which make up the Buddha World. These are so numerous that their number cannot even be counted.

After Shakyamuni has declared his intent by permitting the luminous rays to shine from his forehead, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas from all the myriads of Buddha Worlds assemble at the Vulture Peak. They fly with the speed of light, each with hosts of followers, until myriads upon myriads seem to fill all the parts of the universe. Each of the Buddhas is seated on a lion throne and is shaded by a tree of jewels.

Thus has it come about that the Buddhas of the Ten Regions of Space have assembled to hear the perfect revelation of the Eternal Law. The Great Bodhisattvas in their splendid garments wait breathlessly for the words of the Perfectly Awakened One. The Arhats have gathered from all the countries, continents, and abodes where they have dwelt, each bringing with him a retinue of saints. The monks and nuns of the monastic orders, including the wife of Buddha and the aunt who raised him after his mother's death, are present. In addition to these are creatures of the invisible worlds, who have no likeness in the mortal sphere. The gods of India are in attendance, with the great Rajas who guard the four corners of the world. There are multitudes of the pious, extending to the very limits of space. The universe itself is breathless in expectation.



THE VISION OF THE STUPA

Detail from carvings in the Yun-Kang Cave, Northern Shansi. Work of the Northern Wei Dynasty. Ca. A.D. 500.

All the principal Bodhisattvas are included in this mighty spectacle. In their proper places Manjusri (Monju), Maitreya (Miroku), Avalokitesvara (Kannon), Mahasthamaprapta (Daiseishi), and Bhaisajyaraaja (Yakushi) wait silently for the wonderful moment. Manjusri tells Maitreya that Shakyamuni is about to preach the Great Discourse, the final revelation of all revelations, and the name of the discourse is "The Lotus of the Wonderful Law." It is the end of the tenth chapter before this pageantry has been fully described for the reader.

In the midst of this celestial assembly the earth seems to open. There rises up from the ground a *stupa* (pagoda or relic tower) of stupendous size, hung with garlands, and fashioned from precious stones. The stupa remains suspended in the midst of the sky, and from the innermost part of this sanctuary a voice as mighty as the rumble of thunder exclaims: "Excellent! Excellent! World Honored Shakyamuni." The assembly is filled with great wonder and delight, for the voice is that of Prabhutaratna, a famous Buddha of long ago. Before causing the end of his own existence, he had made a vow that he would appear when the Lotus Sutra was preached.

In the presence of the assembled throng, Shakamuni rose from his throne and ascended into the sky. Coming to the door of the stupa, he unfastened the lock, and as the inside of the tower became visible, the extinct Buddha was seen seated in meditation. Prabhutaratna invited Shakyamuni to enter the stupa and share his throne. The scene was so splendid that the Buddhas appeared like meteors in a star-strewn sky. At this point Shakyamuni, by his perfect insight and absolute power of consciousness, drew the entire assembly up into the sky with him and then delivered his discourse.

The presence of the extinct Buddha seems to suggest the invocation of the wisdom of past ages to support and sponsor the present revelation. All that which has ever been and all that which has ceased in the mystery of time gone by, is invoked to bear witness to the eternity of the Law. All periods of time are dissolved in the vision, as are all dimensions of space. The cosmos is suspended for a dramatic instant, which may properly be termed "the now," and to this instant, that which has been, is, and ever shall be, is drawn by the power of perfect enlightenment.



Primitive Buddhism, being essentially an ethical philosophy, gave scant attention to cosmological theories. Hinduism provided the larger concept of the universe as it was understood in those days. Hindu astronomers were well advanced in mathematics and were able to calculate the cycles of planetary motions and related phenomena. From the old scriptural writings a great deal of extraordinary lore bearing upon the creation, continuance, and final disintegration of the world was available to the thoughtful and the scientific minded.

It was believed that the universe was so immense that it transcended all human imagination. Time was calculated in thousands of millions of years, and space was immeasurable. Within both quantitative and qualitative dimensions, incredible distances were envisioned. The entire cosmic system was divinely fashioned, and its unfoldment was according to immutable law. The religious believer was never limited by any concept of creation. He was not, however, regarded as being unique, nor the only intelligent creature in space. Even the most distant stars were alive. It never occurred to the Asian that the constellations were chandeliers suspended in the dome of heaven for the amazement of human kind.

Old diagrams of the solar system, and the various divisions of the earth with its elements and regions, would not rejoice the mentality of the modern astronomer. These ancient universal maps were largely the product of intuitional processes striving to understand basic principles rather than to grasp the outward form of things.

The Hindu lived in a spacious concept of his universal environment. In cosmogony his thinking was large, deep, broad, and inclusive. There is no doubt that the religions of early India were strongly influenced by prevailing sidereal theories. It was not possible for the Brahmin sage to be completely exclusive or dogmatic when he contemplated the mystery of First Cause. Some believe that Hindu astronomy was strongly influenced by the anatomy and physiology of the human body. A careful reading of the opening sections of the *Vishnu Purana* supports such conclusions. The tendency was to assume that the cosmos was a vast being, and that worlds were generated within a matrix, even as the unborn babe develops within the maternal womb. The Hindus appeared to

believe that, by the use of highly complex analogies, they had explored the mystery of universal generation as diligently as mortal consciousness would permit. In the process they had reached a degree of philosophical knowing by which they could support their systems of metaphysical and ethical speculations.

There was something reassuringly precise in the thinking of the old Hindu savants. I remember in the state museum at Baroda, in West Central India, a remarkable chart that had been prepared by three generations of learned men. It was a complicated cabalistic type of diagram, setting forth in an orderly sequence the entire process of universal generation. Each of the Hindu deities was identified in its relationship to the Sovereign Divinity, and a series of diagrams, supplemented by texts, identified the universal processes as being dependent upon the activities of all the gods and godlings. It was an amazing composition which unfolded from First Cause to the generation of man and emanations of the lower kingdoms of nature, without any break in its formulas. The concept was amazing by any standard and might be stimulating to even the modern scientist.

Buddhism, inheriting the old wisdom of India, was not called upon to devise a new system of cosmology. A similar situation arose in Christendom, which found it convenient to unite the Old Testament with the Christian Gospels, thus providing an appropriate account to substantiate its own dispensation. Buddhism simply reinterpreted the Hindu system of cosmogenesis, harmonizing it with the ethical doctrines promulgated by Gautama Buddha.

Many Buddhist scholars were deeply versed in Hindu lore, and with the rise of the Mahayana system, the Arhats of Buddhism gained considerable comfort and inspiration from the earlier descriptions of the cosmos in their national literature. In the *Lotus Sutra* Buddhist metaphysics was caused to expand until it virtually filled the Hindu universe, but the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas took precedence over the deities of the older pantheon. According to the Mahayana philosophy, the Hindu universe was part of a material creation, and its deities suffered to some degree from delusions of self-importance. It was necessary that they be converted to Buddhism, and, this having been accomplished, the old gods became the defenders and interpreters of Buddhist wisdom. In this way, the

Hindu cosmology was regarded as a production of the human mind, albeit the thoughts of the Brahmanic Immortals. Therefore, the world of the *Vedas* was a realm which both existed and did not exist. For those who believed, including Brahma himself, the gods were divine autocrats. It remained for the advent of Buddhism to bestow proper humility upon these deities.

In its original thinking, Buddhism simply divided existence into two parts: reality and illusion. This can be symbolized by dividing a sphere into an upper and a lower hemisphere. The lower region is the world of illusion, the abode of suffering. The upper region is *nirvana*, the realm of the complete suspension of all mental-emotional activity—the void, or the unconditioned. Liberation was escape from suffering and release into the unconditioned state of eternal peace. There are many conditions of illusion, but only one reality. For practical purposes, there was only existence below and non-existence above, and the mind could choose from only these two possible allegiances. By accepting the reality of phenomenal existence, the *sattva* remained immersed in matter and subject to its innumerable infirmities. The alternative was to reject the world of transitory suffering and strive through inner discipline to attain the nirvanic reality.

It is appropriate to give some consideration to the nirvana concept. Such consideration has usually involved negative definitions, but there is no doubt that the concept of ultimates was modified as Buddhism unfolded. It is broadly believed today that the term “extinction,” as used to define nirvana, simply means the dying out of the three-fold personality. It is the extinction of illusion, but not the end of reality. Reality *per se* continues to have an eternal subsistence, and there is something in man capable of identification with reality without annihilation. The horizontal line dividing the hemispheres of being signifies only that human consciousness cannot comprehend or even imagine the upper world of pure existence. The Arhat passes through several degrees of attainment, which consists of progressive rejection of illusion. He becomes wise by relinquishing that which is not wise. The highest degree of wisdom, therefore, is the total extinction of ignorance. Truth cannot be immediately comprehended, but untruth can be known and rejected.



Title Page of a Ming Printing of the Lotus Sutra.

In the *Lotus Sutra*, Buddha is caused to unfold the deepest mystery of the heart doctrine. He does this most skillfully with the aid of parables and persuasive discourse. There is no doubt that in this sutra Buddha is presented as a concrete manifestation of the Infinite Mind itself. He embraces within his own nature all the mental phenomena of existence, and transcends them completely. There is a strange undercurrent that seems to imply that all this magnificent spectacle is strangely, even divinely, unsubstantial. It is the production of a cosmic dreaming, but it is a dreaming as near to truth as dreams can ever come. It is the ultimate expansion of the power to think, to know, or to reason. The spectacle is suspended in the midst of no mind, for beyond it there is only that which transcends and defies even the highest conceivable aspects of the human consciousness. The time and space factors are incalculable for even the greatest astronomer.

Buddha as the personification of the Eternal Mind becomes an eternal being. In the *Lotus Sutra* he is made to declare that he has existed for countless eternities, and that he will continue for the duration of infinity. His original enlightenment was not under the Bo-tree at Bodh Gaya, but occurred in some distant time and place beyond the power of man to calculate. His illumination dur-

ing his historical existence in India can be symbolized by his sacred footprint, for it was only one of innumerable occasions in which he took on the symbol of mortality and walked the earth as a man.

Here the sutra draws heavily upon the concepts of ancient Hindu astronomy. The cosmos is infinite and extends beyond the known, and is identical with space. Everywhere in the cosmos are worlds, and they are as numerous as the grains of sand along the shores of the Ganges. Man cannot calculate them, discover their beginnings, or envision their ends. The Buddhas are more numerous than the stars in the sky, and their number exceeds the glimmering galaxy of the Milky Way. Yet on the momentous occasion of the revelation of the *Lotus Sutra*, these Buddhas appeared in their mystical bodies, flying through the air on clouds and arriving from the ten directions, while over the great scene celestial musicians filled space with their cosmic harmonies, and angels dropped petals of heavenly flowers upon the assembly.

The burden of the *Lotus Sutra* seems to be the projection of the moral philosophy of Buddha into all the dimensions and regions of space. Creation itself is an inconceivable ethical mechanism, splendid with the beauties of wisdom. Throughout space the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas fulfill the eternal mystery of redemption. It is no longer assumed that they will retire into the Parinirvana and vanish utterly from the world of suffering. Their disappearance from the habitation of mortals is merely a veil to conceal their larger labors. Thus, the Great Teachers, although ever appearing to be born, are never born in the cycle of mortality. Although they may appear to suffer, they only voluntarily assume suffering as part of the labor of salvation, and though in the end they seem to vanish into the mystery of the void, in reality they never cease to exist.

One of the best known sections of the *Lotus Sutra* is Chapter XXIV in the translation by H. Kern. It is called "The All-Sided One, Containing the Description of the Transformations of Avalokitesvara." This section — called in Japan *The Kannon Sutra* — is frequently found published separately. It also occurs in Chinese printings as early as the Tang Dynasty. (See illustration page 28.)



MING PRINTING OF THE KANNON SUTRA

The Bodhisattva Kannon is represented at the left seated on a Lotus and at the right reaching out a hand across time and distance to bless a believer. This early Ming printing has been hand colored.

The Bodhisattva Mahasattva Akshayamati rose and assuming a prayerful attitude inquired of the Lord Buddha concerning the reason why the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Avalokitesvara is called the All Beholding, the Everywhere Present, and the Eternally Compassionate. Buddha then delivers a brief discourse in which he explains the efficacy of prayers addressed to the Arya Avalokitesvara. Regardless of dangers that may arise, of sorrows that may burden the soul, and of punishments that are too heavy to bear, Avalokitesvara (Kannon) will relieve the misfortune and protect with perfect solicitude all who call upon his name in love, faith and humility. This general statement is followed by thirty-three stanzas describing the intercessions of Kannon. There may be a definite relationship between this number and the thirty-three shrines of pilgrimage dedicated to various aspects of Kannon in Japan. There are at least two such cycles of pilgrimage and a third cycle in which thirty-four sanctuaries are visited by the faithful.

To the teachings of the older Buddhist schools is added a new dimension. The Buddhas, like the Bodhisattvas or Arhats, are ful-

filling vows they made before the creation of the world. The vows always included the labor of salvation, for the Great Ones can never rest until the tiniest molecule floating on a sunbeam has attained the true enlightenment.

If we assume that this apparently extravagant pageantry refers to the infinite manifestation of unfolding universal consciousness, it is comprehensible at least in theory. If each of the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Arhats is a personification of Infinite Mind, it is then possible to sense the mysterious meaning of the sutra.

The real message of the *Lotus Sutra* is not conveyed by the words of the speaker, for it should be obvious that the intention of the sutra could not be verbalized. The real message was the impact of the total scene, which takes on the dimensions of the ultimate mandala. This no doubt explains why various Buddhist leaders in both China and Japan evolved their interpretations by their own meditative and intuitive faculties. The words of Buddha merely state the essential structure of the concept; the rest must be experienced. The whole scene suggests a cosmic version of Buddha's own enlightenment under the Bo-tree. There is an incredible burst of light, as though a psychic atom had been split. The cosmos is revealed, like the unfolding lotus, forever evolving, forever maturing, and forever fruitful. Lives are bound together in an infinite pattern of mutual benevolence. The cosmos becomes in very truth the eternal teacher of all that lives.

The whole concept approaches as close to a theological revelation as would be possible within the structure of Buddhism. It is easy to understand how this Eastern philosophy satisfied the spiritual needs of the people of Asia, without introducing an anthropomorphic deity. As the psychological aspects of the *Lotus Sutra* are examined sympathetically, it becomes evident that it is one of the most extraordinary revelations of Will-Consciousness-Mind to be found in the religious literature of the world. It is appropriate that all students of comparative religion should study the cosmotheism of the Lotus gospel, which is accepted as the ultimate authority of the schools of Northern Buddhism.

## TECHNOLOGICAL ETHICS

A generation of intense scientific progress has made it possible for human beings to land on the moon. There is no doubt that this amazing exploit is properly acclaimed as the greatest scientific achievement in the history of the human race. All who contributed to this program well deserve the recognition they have received. The timing, however, is somewhat unfortunate. The flights occurred while most serious persons were profoundly concerned with conditions here on earth. The social upheaval through which we are now passing is unprecedented. It is only natural that worried mortals should compare the advancements in technology with the social dilemmas which seem to threaten the future of civilization on earth.

Even while news commentators were describing man's first moon walk, certain reservations were noticeable. To many it seemed regrettable that some of the specialized abilities and huge economic expenditures could not have been devoted more directly and immediately to the preservation of life and the natural resources of the planet.

This is a cynical and disenchanting generation and even a scientific miracle will not restore confidence in advanced technology. It is difficult for the average layman to understand how trained minds, supported by the most advanced scientific facilities, can overlook the immediate problems which disturb us all. We can hardly assume that those whom Dr. Margaret Mead calls "the weighty ones" are unaware of disquieting facts, but we are receiving no assurance that adequate solutions are being sought or programs appropriate to the difficulties are being implemented. Perhaps if it could be proved to us that scientific progress is dedicated primarily to the security and happiness of the human race, we would all be strengthened and inspired and have new incentives for self-improvement.

It should not be beyond our acquired skills to chart with reasonable accuracy the direction of civilization in the years that lie ahead. We must think not only in terms of immediate accomplishments, but reckon with the long-range consequences of policies and practices. It is essential to understand clearly what is meant by progress.



Are we here to sacrifice all else for the advancement of technology, or is it more reasonable to assume that it is the purpose of technology to protect us if necessary from the dangers of our own selfishness and immaturity? The moment the astronauts were safely back at home base, a new slogan echoed along the vaulted corridors of our institutions of higher erudition: "Today the moon, tomorrow Mars." The contrast between victory in the rarified atmosphere of interplanetary space and defeat on the campuses of our colleges and universities gives cause for concern. The whole world would feel better if it could rest assured that all the knowledge and skill which we possess will soon be dedicated to the solution of such practical issues as crime, narcotic addiction, racial conflict, and vandalism. The neglect of such immediate emergencies can scarcely be regarded as a proof of superior intelligence.

During the moon flights it was noted by several commentators that many years of technological progress contributed to this supreme achievement. The costs involved in terms of money were not so generally discussed, but everyone knows that the amount spent staggers the imagination. Unfortunately, a vast amount of debt was also created which must be paid for by our descendants in years to come. For one thrilling moment it seemed that the end justified the means, but sober reflection detracts from our enthusiasm. Space research has been supported by a complex of technological and industrial organizations, and these have some ignored the disastrous by-products resulting from their dedication to technological advancement.

A few lines from a poem by Rudyard Kipling seem to have extraordinary relevance:

"My privy and well drain into each other  
After the custom of Christiandie . . .  
Fevers and fluxes are wasting my mother  
Why has the Lord afflicted me?"

In the primitive world our remote forefathers were nomadic. Had they attempted permanent residence, they would have perished, destroyed by their own refuse. Later, with the establishment of towns and villages, problems of sanitation and hygiene had to be faced and solved. Older solutions were not adequate, and this sad state of affairs resulted in periodic visitations of plagues and pestilences.

In due course, human purposes took precedence over natural laws. Cities outgrew their aqueducts and sewers, with tragic consequences. In the great city of Florence, sometimes called the crown jewel of Italian culture, there were almost no sewerage facilities during the glorious days of the Medici, and smallpox extinguished many a noble family. At night, herds of swine were driven through the streets as scavengers, and later these same animals were quite properly butchered for food.

In those good old days bathing was inconvenient and such fastidiousness suffered the disapproval of the Church. About this time it was also considered hygienic to keep all doors and windows closed at night. During hours of darkness, air was regarded as poisonous, and evil spirits fluttered about in the atmosphere from the time the sun went down until the crowing of the cock heralded the dawn. Under such conditions, we may doubt the accuracy of the scientific pronouncements of that day, solemnly affirming that plagues were caused by comets, shooting stars, and heresy.

Among my friends was a gentleman recognized as an authority on sanitation engineering. Immediately after World War II, he was employed by a foreign government to restore the sanitation facilities of bombed-out cities. This work took precedence over all other considerations. A metropolitan area would be uninhabitable in a few weeks if war or natural disaster destroyed its sewerage system, or if water was permitted to be contaminated by contact with refuse. Certainly every scientist knows this, but the intensive program of technological and industrial progress has not taken proper means to protect the population of the world from dangerous waste products far more deadly than Florentine sewage.

Armies knew the pollution problem long before Caesar divided Gaul into three parts. It is doubtful if any ancient engineer would have permitted his nation to fall into the dilemma that afflicts us today. A recent note from Lima, Peru, tells of a friend who left the area because of the heavy smog. In Tokyo, oxygen vending machines are on the street corners, so that citizens and police can get an occasional whiff of fresh air. I have always loved Wagner's music for Siegfried's Rhine Journey, but according to latest reports the Rhine is now the most polluted river in Europe. Such conditions have been developing for some time and could have been foreseen by

any trained observer who was interested in preventing these conditions from getting worse.

The lesson we all have to learn is that nature advances its own causes by maintaining a delicate balance between life processes. That which nature will not sanction, man attempts at his own peril. In the course of the past twenty-five years, industrial expansion has been considered the final proof of progress. All other consideration should be sacrificed to the advancement of an industrial way of life. The individual has sacrificed his own consciousness, aspirations, and dreams. He has deprived his mind of ennobling thoughts and has allowed the more gentle arts to languish from neglect. Only technological progress was important, and those who doubted this solemn pronouncement were considered feeble-minded.

Nature, however, has not provided any adequate way of absorbing the wastes caused by the industrial explosion. If the plan for things had required the human being to think only in terms of physical expansion, the necessary means for neutralizing all forms of pollution would have been provided. Instead of that we are being silently but strenuously rebuked. Nature always accomplishes its corrections in the same way by forcing us to grow by experience.

This is the lesser part of the complete picture. The struggle for economic supremacy and the glorification of mass production have polluted both our hearts and minds. We have set up political systems which exist only to glorify industrial expansion. In order that man may not be corrupted by non-profitable ideas, it has been indispensable to glorify materialism and undermine faith in God and all those gentle sentiments by which we might attain happiness without over-addiction to wealth and luxury. By making profit the highest purpose for living, and science the noblest of all forms of learning, we have intentionally and relentlessly undermined ethics and morality. Even today we continue to promote godless codes, soulless arts, and worthless literature. Every nation in the world today that is remorselessly forcing industrial progress is legislating against religion, persecuting its idealists, and trying to force its citizens into hopeless servitude to material production. With one five-year plan after another, we have come to a state of pollution rather than a utopian state.

Why not re-evaluate man's relationship to the world he inhabits?

We are told that man was given a garden, a beautiful place free from all contamination, in which he could grow graciously as part of Nature, cooperating with its laws and anticipating its purposes. The only way in which we can live together in peace and good health is to correct certain false beliefs which have become dangerously prevalent. Perhaps the most important of these is the completely irrational assumption that man was born to rule the world and that the universe is merely a mass of raw materials which he can adapt to his own purposes with impunity. It is assumed that man is responsible to no one and nothing and is entitled to gratify his own desires regardless of the tragedies that result.

All of this is a glorification of Schopenhauer's "will to power," combined with Nietzsche's speculations about the constitution of the superman. It may be that sometime in the future we will find it possible to emigrate to other planets, or set up artificial worlds in space. Until that time, however, — and it will be some years before these schemes can be matured — we will find it necessary to get along on the planet which has been provided for us. As populations increase, there must be a corresponding maturing of man's mind. The only way in which we can survive is by the use of common sense and self-control. It is quite conceivable that some kind of austerity will be involved in the shape of things to come. The present evolution must change its course. We must become more, and be satisfied having less. Nature is moving against the extravagance and intemperance so fashionable today. There have always been ways in which we could slow down the dangers resulting from unreasonable conduct, but a little inconvenience, some loss of privilege, and a curb on the gratification of impulses and instincts is required.

Our relentless industrialists have already developed a number of vocational ailments. Success shortens life wherever it controls human conduct. While we are polluting our natural resources, we are also corrupting our minds, emotions, and bodies. The same intensity which is polluting air and water is also reacting upon the individual himself. Among the by-products of success are the coronary, the thrombosis, and the mental breakdown. We must then use all types of artificial means, developed also by science, to minimize the discomforts resulting from our own false procedures.

It is not difficult to find the answer, or least one that will operate

successfully for a number of years. Simply recover from the delusion that material expansion is progress, that wealthy nations are important, and rich people are successful. Slow down the tempo of world activity until it is safe for the people who must live in the various nations. We cannot assume that any program is correct, or worthy of adulation, which threatens to end man by destroying him in the effort to satisfy his ambitions. We used to think that there would always be some who could succeed at the expense of others, but it is now obvious that we can survive only with the help of others. The remedy for the present crisis is honest acceptance of facts and cheerful cooperation to accomplish the changes that are needed. We have procrastinated too long and we cannot afford to delay any further in the hope that we can escape the need for intelligence.

There is an ancient legend that may be worth repeating. Once upon a time the spirit of the plague approached the gates of a great city. While the populace waited terror-stricken, a holy man went forth alone and faced the unwelcome visitor. The spirit of the plague told the saint that it had come to claim nine out of ten of those who dwelt within the town. Because of the bravery of the wise old man, the shadow of death said that it would be merciful to the community and take only one in ten. The plague then entered the city and every living creature died except the holy man. Again the saint confronted the ghost of the pestilence and rebuked it for breaking its word. The spirit of the plague then replied that it had kept its word exactly. It had taken only one in ten. The other nine had died of fear.

One of the less publicized factors bearing upon the present world doldrums is anxiety. We are all becoming frightened, worried, or neurotic, by daily news reports of impending disasters. Anxiety has led us to emotional irritability, mental depression, and physical exhaustion. Our defenses against even the normal inconveniences of living have been so weakened that the slightest reverse of fortune assumes the proportion of a major calamity.

Conditions in general are certainly not good, but negative thinking is not making them better. Many emotionally unstable persons would have survived the years reasonably happy and secure had it not been for the deterioration of the society to which they belong. If those who

have good minds and can think well will set a more positive example, we can all approach the future with greater confidence.

Many persons bring their troubles to me, and it is noticeable that these folks are not worse off than they were ten years ago. They simply demand more, are willing to sacrifice less, and have undermined their health with narcotics, sedation, and alcohol. The worse they feel, the more certain they are that civilization has failed. Actually they are the ones who have failed civilization. Selfishness is a hunger that is never satisfied. When we are over-ambitious we injure others, and they turn upon us with their resentments and frustrate our plans. It becomes a vicious circle with otherwise kindly and well-intentioned folks embittering their lives with self-pity.

Most of us cannot directly change the policies of our own nation or of foreign powers. It is certain, however, that with proper resolution we can correct many of our own faults. By restoring mental, emotional, and physical normalcy, we strengthen inner resources and discover that we are more efficient than we suspected. With better health there is always an increase of optimism and a feeling that we are sufficient to the demands made upon us by the pressures of natural responsibilities. We also learn that it is possible to censor our desires and refrain from adding to the prevailing unrest.

Progress is a challenge to character and conscience. It is not necessary to surrender to our own excessive demands. If we will restore the virtues of our ancestors, we can enjoy modern advantages with greater safety. The pollution problem as we now face it is at least in part the result of industry catering to a luxury-obsessed generation. When we become better aware of the damage resulting from extravagance, wastefulness, and indolence, it is quite possible to develop a code of enlightened austerity without the feeling that we are being deprived of our inalienable rights. There are many wonderful things we can do which will not contribute to pollution, the destruction of natural resources, or possible bankruptcy. The more we cultivate good music, fine art and creative skill, the quicker we will escape from the boredom which impels to wastefulness and excess. There is still a good chance that right example can meet the present emergencies. By proving that we have a life within ourselves above and beyond the appetites of the flesh, we justify our own existence and clarify the objectives of the universal plan.

## A JAPANESE FIVE WORLD MANDALA

One of the delights of collecting Oriental religious art is the discovery of an unknown or unrecorded item. Recently one of our sources in Japan sent me what he described as "a hand-colored Japanese woodblock print of the Five World Diagram." I showed it to a Japanese friend here who has devoted many years of his life to the study of Buddhist sacred art. He stated that he had never before seen anything like it.

The woodblock print obviously derived its inspiration from the Tibetan *Bhava Chakra*, the wheel of transmigratory existence. (The *Bhava Chakra* is described in some detail in the *PRS Journal*, Vol. 14, No. 4.) In the Lamaist concept, this wheel is depicted as being supported by a huge stylized turtle, usually of demoniacal form. The Tibetans call the monster *Dag-zim*, and it suggests the horrible appearance of egoism, which destroys the spiritual life of man by attaching him to the delusions of the flesh. The wheel itself is divided into six compartments representing the divisions of the universe of phenomena. The upper three regions are the abodes of human beings, devas, and the Indic gods, respectively. The lower three regions are a place of punishment, the abode of ghosts, and the world of animals. In contrast, the Chinese, except for those who followed Lamaism, did not represent the universe as six-fold. They divided the wheel into ten segments, and this is the arrangement favored by the Japanese.

The Japanese Five World Diagram is supported by a type of demon called an *oni*. Although attendants upon the judges of the underworld, the *oni* are really rather whimsical creatures. There are two types: the red *oni* and the green *oni*. Both have been converted to Buddhism and have been rendered comparatively harmless. They play many pranks which may cause annoyance, but they do not resemble the Western type of demon, which is a relentless and remorseless adversary of both man and the heavenly host.

Buddhist philosophy does not admit the existence of a principle of evil or of any power or being seeking to frustrate man's search for truth. The only hindrance is the weakness of human nature, which man must overcome by self-discipline.



JAPANESE FIVE WORLD MANDARA

This unusual hand colored wood-block print shows the conditions of existence upheld by a demon or oni.

In our diagram, a white disc is shown above the head of the red goblin. Above the disc are four characters, not shown in the photograph, which translate, "perfect purity and nirvana." Below the disc, between the horns of the oni, are the words "great demon of impermanence." The long inscription to the right of the goblin's head reads: "If you wish to be liberated, you should practice the teachings of Buddha. Life and death are enemies which must be defeated as an elephant crushes grass beneath its feet." The corresponding inscription on the left also gives good advice: "In this sphere of doctrine, always practice good and do not be irresponsible. Diminish the ocean of desire and eliminate the bondage due to suffering."

Around the lower part of the wheel are a number of small figures engaged in various pursuits. These correspond to the twelve *nidanās* set forth on the border of the Tibetan diagram. Beginning



at the bottom of the wheel, between the feet of the oni, a single menacing figure is seen. It is called "Ignorance." Proceeding clockwise, the small drawings are labeled *Action; Conduct Arising from Ignorance; Consciousness of Delusion; Beginning of Existence* (man in boat); *The Six Senses; Communication in Relation to the World; Receiving; Perceiving; Love; and Attachment*. Beginning again at the bottom and reading counterclockwise, we find symbols and inscriptions as follows: *Worry; Sorrow; Suffering; Anxiety; Death; Sickness; Old Age; Birth; and Wordly Possessions*. It is obvious that the number of nidanas has been increased by the addition of supplementary designs elaborating upon the mystery of suffering.

The central wheel shows five spokes which converge upon the figure of Buddha. Beneath him are three creatures: a bird, a serpent, and a boar — indicating greed, appetite, and ignorance. These are the three causes by which the wheel is kept in motion. It should be noted that in this particular example Buddha is placed above the three animals, for by the practice of right discipline the animal propensities become the basis of liberation. The outer ends of the five spokes touch and pass through the gilded rim of the wheel, and at each of the five angles there are two small diagrams, one marked "life," and the other marked "death."

The five regions of the world are closely associated with the illusions of the five senses. The lower section is the abode of the most terrible punishment and is presided over by the Regent of the Underworld, who is seated behind an elaborate table. Here red and green demons carry out the sentences imposed by Emma-O. To the left is the realm of hungry ghosts who are unable to escape from the longing of unfulfilled appetites and sensations. Above this, in turn, is the sphere of human beings, showing people from various walks of life, including a great nobleman, a mother and child, coolies carrying baskets, a shepherd, a scholar, and a sage in meditation.

Continuing beyond the meridian, we reach the kingdom of the devas, a radiant and beautiful region populated with angels and containing wondrous palaces and clouds of rainbow hue. The fifth and last region is that of the animal kingdom, containing examples of birds, fish, reptiles, and mammals of many kinds.



#### TIBETAN BHAVA CHAKRA

A painting of the Early 19th Century for comparison with the Japanese version of the Five Region Diagram.

According to the concept of the Bhava Chakra, those passing out of physical life are drawn by their karma to one of the five conditions. Only the Buddha is completely free from the sequence of cause and effect. He remains tranquil in the midst of the spheres of impermanence.

In the corresponding Tibetan symbol, six worlds are specifically indicated: (1) the world of humanity; (2) the heavenly world; (3) the world of demons; (4) the animal world; (5) tantalus, a purgatorial sphere; and (6) hell, or the infernal sphere.



THE TEN REGIONS DIAGRAM

This 19th Century Japanese woodblock print shows the conditions of existence arising from the central Chinese character, meaning the ego or self.

In the Japanese form the world of demons is omitted. In the Bhava Chakra, Buddha is placed in each of the six regions and is represented by an appropriate standing figure surrounded by a double nimbus and placed upon a lotus pedestal. By this it is understood that truth is established in all the spheres of illusion, and that enlightenment releases beings in every condition of bondage. The center is ornamented by three creatures, each holding the other by the tail, forming an endless circle. Of these, the hog, or boar, represents stupidity; the rooster, lust or sensuality; and the serpent, anger or craftiness. It is the practice of these vices that binds all living things to conditional existence.

Another typical Japanese version of the Bhava Chakra is repre-

sented by two distinct types in our collection. One is a woodblock print from a temple souvenir belonging to the class *ofuda*; the other is a painting on silk belonging to the Nichiren sect. In both cases the center of the design consists of a single Chinese ideogram which means mind, self, or psychic entity. The Japanese version is called *Kokori-no-kagami*, which can be translated "the mirror of the heart." In this case the wheel is divided into ten sections, and the highest place is assigned to the Buddha, who sits on a lotus throne supported by clouds. Proceeding around the wheel in a clockwise direction, the second compartment is occupied by the Bodhisattva Kannon, and therefore signifies the realm or region of Bodhisattvic enlightenment. Then follows the world of master and disciple, where the novice is receiving instruction. In a sense this region is set aside for spiritual instruction and the experience of truth-seeking. The next compartment contains two figures representing humanity — a scholar or poet and his attendant. This is the gracious realm of natural beauty that we all inhabit. Below this is the purgatory of hungry ghosts, where dwell those who continually sought to satisfy their appetites for physical pleasure. They find that their sensuous delights have changed into flames and ashes. At the bottom of the circle is the deepest of the pits of perdition, where the evil-doer is tormented by his own conscience. Proceeding, we then come to the abode of animals, represented by beasts of different qualities and kinds, each fulfilling its own instincts. In the compartment which follows are various demons, a kind of realm of transcendental beings, which may under certain conditions become involved in human destiny. Further above is the heavenly realm of the devas, represented by angelic beings and celestial musicians. The deva world is also the realm of the Vedic gods, and such deities as believe themselves to be the creators and absolute rulers of the universe. Beyond this is the region of the Arhats, who have gone forth according to the Hinayana discipline, seeking their own enlightenment through the complete renunciation of all worldliness. Over these different conditions of the mind — for all these compartments reveal attitudes and their consequences — Buddha sits as master of the wheel of transmigrations and transformations. The nidanas are not included in this depiction; these particular figures are more generally found in Tibetan paintings.



A NICHIREN TEN  
REGION DIAGRAM

A painting on silk.  
Edo Period.

As indicated by the character in the center of this diagram, the wheel represents the ten major classifications of human convictions, dedications, allegiances, and attachments. The moment the mind becomes involved in an attitude, the world of conditions relating to that attitude comes into manifestation. When a cause has been set in motion, the effect must follow; but it is not to be assumed that the more enlightened Buddhist actually believes in the various heavens and hells occurring in the numerous old diagrams which have descended to us. The lowest region, or hell, is not a place to which the soul goes after death: it is a condition that the soul creates for itself by its excessive attitudes. Through the commission of crime, the *sattva* comes under the punishment of the Law, may be imprisoned, and suffers various humiliations. An individual is not punished for his mistakes, but by the retribitional processes he has set in motion.

The region of the hungry ghosts is also right here in our mortal world. It is the place of punishment for those who have become hopelessly enslaved by their own appetites and physical sensations. Striving forever to find pleasure, luxury, ease and contentment, they

come in the end to sorrow and disillusionment. Like the ghosts in the Buddhist fable, they find that water turns to flames in their thirsty mouths, food proves to be nothing but ashes, and no matter how continuously they strive to gratify their desires, everything ends in pain.

In the animal world, we are dealing not with our little brothers the birds, fishes, and beasts of the field, but with the animal excesses in our own natures. Those who strive to succeed by destroying others are predators, and all who live by the law of the jungle will themselves perish in the jungle. The animal-man lives primarily for the sake of survival and in the end is captured in the net of complacency. He is domesticated by the pressure of events, thus becoming a beast of burden with no way of rebelling against the monotony and meaninglessness of his condition.

In the next compartment we find a human being with his attendant, signifying the two principal conditions of mankind: the rich and the poor, the leader and the follower, the master and the servant. Theoretically, at least, the human state is the most fortunate of all conditions, and it is regarded as a reward for merit to be born as a human being. If, however, the merit is exhausted and the human state is perverted, the *sattva* falls into one of the lower conditions.

Across the wheel is the region of demons, which perhaps are best represented by the psychoses, phobias, and neuroses of mankind. This realm of demons is one of fear, terrible anxiety, and those secret hatreds and passions which fill the world with sorrow. Here are cruel and thoughtless attitudes, which bring misery to all and final tragedy to those who indulge in them.

Directly above is an angelic musician, a *tennin*, floating on clouds and playing upon a *koto*. This is symbolical of all the deities venerated in the religions of mankind. The gods are simply beings who believe that they are gods and enjoy their self-imagined authority. The moment, however, a deity becomes selfish, tyrannical, or perverts its imagined power, it is cast down into the sphere of illusion.

On the other side of the wheel a disciple sits with hands folded in prayer, listening to the instruction of his master. This is the realm of aspiration. It represents the truth-seeker becoming aware of the higher responsibilities that make up the real humanity of

man. This is the divine man rising triumphantly from his own animal nature by dedicating himself to the labors of the divine purpose.

Across the wheel on an outcropping of rock sits a lonely figure in meditation. He is making a secret hand *mudra*, but his hands are covered so that the positions of the fingers cannot be seen. In some systems he is regarded as the Arhat, the worthy one, who has attained the distinction of sainthood and belongs to the retinue of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. He can also represent the highest condition prior to absorption in Nirvana, as taught in the Southern school of Buddhism. He is the lonely truth-seeker, resolved to attain enlightenment by a complete renunciation of all worldly ambitions and attachments.

In the wheel he is balanced by the seated figure of the Bodhisattva Kannon, which represents the highest condition of consciousness according to the Mahayana system. The Bodhisattva occupies a region between heaven and earth. He has renounced Nirvana and returns to the mortal sphere for labors of compassion. Above all these states of conditioned consciousness the Buddha figure itself sits quietly in eternal composure.

This is the diagram of the psychic heart. All these conditions arise not by intellection but by the inevitable impulses originating in the emotional structure. It is said in the Christian Bible, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." The thinking of the mind creates more or less passing allegiances, but the attachments set up by the heart endure with tremendous intensity. It is by the nature of our affections, appetites, and desires that we find our place on the wheel.

The Ten World Diagram also exists as a horizontal picture scroll. It unrolls from right to left, and the after-death conditions are presented as a panorama. In our example, the pictures begin with diagrammatic representations of mortuary monuments. These appear in the traditional Japanese form of a square surmounted by a circle, which support a triangle from which rises a crescent with a radiant pearl in its center. This is followed by ghostly forms in the midst of flames, beyond which are various animals in their native habitats. Then come men engaged in different pursuits. The drawings become more beautiful as the scroll is unrolled, and the viewer comes into the presence of the benevolent Jizo, who in turn conducts souls to the enthroned Amida Butsu. (See illustration page 46.)



SCROLL OF THE TEN CONDITIONS OF EXISTENCE

A samurai is at the extreme right. To the left there is a *tennin*, or Buddhist angel, followed by the Bodhisattva Jizo. The panorama terminates with a painting of the enthroned Amida Buddha.

The *e-makimono*, or horizontal form, of the Ten Regions diagram is rather scarce, and in the development of its symbolism it shows strong influence from the esoteric sects. Such paintings usually are gifts to temples and are not kept in family collections. The purgatorial journey is similar to European representations of the same theme, but in Buddhism the wanderings in the underworld always come to a happy ending.

For a short time there was a tendency in Japan to depict the after-life as a region of torment and despair. This type of religious art was imported from China and is also found in the paintings of Tibet and Nepal. The Japanese discovered at an early time that such pictures did not markedly strengthen character or discourage wrong-doing. Most of all, it was contrary to the essential teaching of Northern Buddhism. If the material world is an illusion, the terrors beyond the grave are also unreal. It is permissible to use the imagery of the underworld symbolically, but the terrors exist in the mind only. The demon shadows which afflict us come from our own bad conscience, from which we will be rescued in due time and brought into the presence of the Compassionate Lord. But even heaven is not forever, and ultimately the soul will be reborn into the material world to work out its karma and perfect itself in the Buddhist virtues.



## FUJI-SAN

by MURIEL L. MERRELL, FRHS

One of the most beautiful, and yet least seen in the United States, Japanese flower arrangement is one emulating the famous profile of Mt. Fuji. For generations this highly stylized traditional form has been used as part of designs commemorating special events, such as the first grandson of Emperor Hirohito.

Because Mt. Fuji or Fuji-San is regarded as sacred by the people of Japan, the materials most used to depict this majestic mountain are pine, juniper, cedar and cypress. All of these tree materials, according to the Japanese method of interpretation, symbolize long life, strength, ability to withstand, and other comparable attributes. To the Japanese artist, there is no greater or more significant way in which to convey a wish for that which is good.

Mt. Fuji is the highest, as well as the most famous mountain in Japan. Variously she is called "Goddess Mountain," "National Mountain," and "Fuji-San." The Japanese character *yama* means "mountain." Therefore, one could properly say either Mt. Fuji or Fuji Yama. To most Japanese, *Fuji-San* is preferred as a more suitable title of honor for the long-lived immortal goddess, who — for so many generations — has been painted, duplicated, simulated, imitated, and written about by Japan's artists both great and humble.

Physically, she rises in a long slender curve of grandeur to a perfect eight-crater peak some 12,388 feet above sea level. At her base she is 28 miles across (North to South) and 19 miles from East to West. Glimpses of her regal beauty can be seen from 22 prefectures in Japan proper. In her climb, she embraces five lakes — none of them large to the Western way of thinking. The largest is Lake Kawaguchi, measuring some ten miles in circumference. On an islet, mid-lake, a shrine dedicated to Benten, the Goddess of Fortune, is located, covered with red pine and maple. The little islet itself is called "Cormorant Isle" for obvious reasons. On the lake itself, the much copied "reflection" of Mt. Fuji may be clearly seen — year round.



FUJI-SAN FLOWER ARRANGEMENT

Lake Yamanaka, the first lake to be reached on Fuji-San, measures about six miles in circumference, and is located at the 3,270 foot level — approximately one-quarter of the way up the incline.

Lake Nishi-no-umi (sometimes called Lake Saiko) is only seven miles in circumference. Lake Shoji, the smallest of the five lakes, measuring only three miles across, and Lake Motosu, the deepest of the five—going to a depth of 433 feet—are the shimmering jewels of the famous mountain. Lakes Yamanaka, Nishi-no-umi, and Shoji are thought by geologists to have been one body of water until A.D. 864, when a great eruption occurred in the towering peak, spilling lava in such a way that the one lake became three.

Along the volcano chain which begins in the South Seas with the Mariana Group and ends at Vries Island in Japan on the Izu Peninsula, Mt. Fuji is the highest, although she has not been active for well over 200 years. Her last major eruption occurred in A.D. 1707, from November 22nd to December 4th, leaving in its wake some six inches of ashes on Tokyo (then Edo) some 75 miles away.

The name Fuji, despite many fanciful conjectures, is believed to have come from the Ainu word for "fire." Fuji-San is a lady of many temperaments and appearances. Her upper portions are destitute of all forms of life and vegetation and are known as Yakeno or "burnt fields." Her west side is well wooded and she is encircled with a forest zone or Kodachi, meaning "tree standing," varying from one to six miles in width midway down her slopes. Still further in the descent is a near jungle of Kaya or *miscanthus* — the highly inflammable reed so commonly used for rooftops in old Japan. Never is the summit of Fuji-San without snow. In the winter she is completely covered from plain to peak. Depending on her mood, she sometimes appears faultlessly white and silvery against an unrealistically blue sky. Sometimes her peak seems to drift like a phantom floating above the clouds. At other times she wears purple robes against a rose-colored sunset. And, according to the season, her wrappings vary in color and in density. For instance, in the spring and summer, thread-like clouds and thin mists can be seen with tiny accents of luxuriant coloring from maples and field flowers. In the autumn and winter, accents of vivid maple coloring eventually give way to a dazzling white cloak of fathoms-deep snow.

Perhaps the most memorable sight for those who ascend the revered mountain on pilgrimage is that of the bright red sun rising slowly out of the clouds and the mountains to the east as these courageous ones stand in awe at her peak. To those who worship the sacredness of the mountain, Fuji-San is the very pillar of their nation. The brilliant orange-red rising sun is remindful of the national emblem. To them it is the welfare of their country, and the very beginning of heaven and earth.

When the outline of Fuji-San is used in Japanese flower arrangements, *all other materials are subordinate to it, in size, color and quantity.*



*A Little Overdone*

There are men that will make you books, and turn them loose into the world, with as much dispatch as they would do a dish of fritters.

—Miguel de Cervantes

*The Divine Architect*

Every man is as Heaven made him, and sometimes a great deal worse.

—Miguel de Cervantes

## PROBLEMS OF TENSION

In the course of years, I have assembled a number of notes bearing upon the emotional pressures that can afflict an individual. These notes may lack continuity, but they all relate to the same general area and may be useful to those seeking to cultivate a serene life.

The Chinese recognize that contact with nature is the most important type of therapy for those unable to relax away from their difficulties. It is valuable to cultivate serenity of spirit by experiencing the vastness of the universe and the gracious unfolding of the beauties of the natural world. This is also a good reason for practicing quiet meditation in a garden or sanctuary where there is freedom from the immediate impact of human intensities.

A man in anger strikes another man. The blow takes only a moment, but the destructive procedure is intensified in the psyche of the aggressor, and many small destructive incidents build up stress which in time endanger life and health. Other destructive practices also contribute to the problems of living, such as excessive criticism. The nagger reinforces a psychic pattern by permitting his unpleasant tendency to become habitual. An evil action can never impress good upon the human soul. It is especially important to remember that a direct action always deepens and intensifies the psychic damage. To think an unkind thought is certainly wrong, but to then speak this thought into words, or permit it to cause an unpleasant action, is to multiply its injurious effects and create a deep scar in the subconscious part of the mind.

A problem is met and solved not by fighting tension, but by cultivating relaxation. It is receptivity to universal order and the appreciation for universal beauty that heals the suffering caused by disorder and distortion.

To strengthen the positive processes of consciousness, many religions and philosophies have made use of symbols designed to impress constructive attitudes upon man's mental and emotional natures. Meditation is the discipline of receptivity to the impressions of order, beauty, serenity, and sublimity.

A universal realization is cultivated by the ensouling of objects with the conscious insight of the viewer. It is in this way that the

Chinese sage fashioned from his own mystical contemplation the structure of his transcendent being.

A symbol may simply be seen, thus leading to an appropriate experience of harmonious forms or blendings of color. A symbol may be experienced in an effort to discover more of its meaning, by focusing upon it the conscious resources of the heart and mind. A symbol by interpretation or extension may be applied to some immediate concern of the personal life. In many cases it can help us to live more graciously and strengthen our faith in the divine principles by which all beings are sustained.

Psychotics often create or release symbols among themselves that reveal the nature of personality problems. It is quite possible to reverse this procedure. The sufferer can be presented with symbols that, through study and acceptance, provide guidance for self-improvement. The end to be gained is the stimulation of constructive reactions, which then become available to meet critical situations. The person who has instinctively learned to see or experience good is in better health than one who instinctively sees or experiences evil.

If children can be led into delinquency by motion pictures, television programs, and modern literature, it is foolish to say that these media cannot be used to improve character. As it is not possible to hope that in the immediate future all social problems can be solved, the good life for most of us must result from the personal correction of our own mistakes.

Anything that increases tension lowers self-control. Beauty does not increase tension, but that which is not beauty does. Violation of conscience creates tension. Exposure to hate and violence creates tension. Immoral or psychotic art and discordant music creates tension. That which is not good cannot create good. When we try to overthrow evil by revulsion or destructive tension, we will only create situations which will lead to further tension. War will never cause peace, and dishonesty will not cause or sustain an honorable career.

Tension is not synonymous with action or the state of aliveness. Tension is merely stress moving into action. Anything that can apparently be accomplished by tension can be more safely, swiftly, and constructively accomplished by disciplined action without tension.

Tension is the quickest way to make our problems bigger and ourselves smaller.

A head-on collision with tension only creates more tension. If, however, the faculty of attention is directed to other activities, the tension will naturally subside.

The absence of philosophical guidelines which ennoble living permits lesser concepts to gain authority and impel to action. Life must move from conviction, not from pressure. A constructive state of believing can rescue a person from countless negative beliefs. We learn from experience that true and lasting values can never be discovered or sustained under tension. Ways can be found by which constructive values can be communicated with enthusiasm and dedication.



## **TWELVE WORLD TEACHERS**

by Manly P. Hall

This convenient publication includes the founders of most of the major world religions, but adds several important spiritual leaders who have received comparatively little general recognition. Among the lesser known teachers are Akhnaton, Hermes Tresmegistus, Padma Sambhava and Quetzalcoatl. Each of these sages had at one time a broad sphere of influence and should be understood and appreciated by serious thinkers.

Each of the teachers listed is introduced with appropriate biographical material establishing the circumstances involved in his ministry. This is followed by a summary of his philosophical teachings, with emphasis upon those beliefs which still have relevance at the present time. Wherever possible the chapter concludes with quotations from the sage or extracts from writings associated with his ministry. The book is illustrated with twelve pictures from authentic works. The volume contains 237 pages, is substantially bound and stamped in gilt. The price is \$4.50, plus prevailing sales tax in California. Please add 25c handling charge.



## *In Reply*

### **A Department of Questions and Answers**

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*QUESTION: Is philosophic detachment to be interpreted as indifference to the needs of others?*

*ANSWER:* Some persons find it difficult to believe in Universal Law and Order and at the same time hold a kindly and compassionate attitude toward the mistakes of their fellow human beings. There have been a number of organizations which have advocated total detachment from all material concerns. Eastern mendicants and Western saints have sometimes followed this practice, but the severity of such procedure has found very limited acceptance.

Most of the world's religions and philosophies have advocated compassion for the sorrows of our fellowmen and unselfish service to those grief-stricken or in need of help. Ashvagoshā, in his beautiful exposition of Buddhist mysticism, declares that the discipline of helping others is an essential part of enlightened living.

While generosity is a virtue, we should pause, however, and consider to what degree our gracious intentions are supported by insight and understanding. To grant every wish of a child would probably result in irreparable psychological damage. The art of helping has few wise exponents, and those who would be of the greatest service to others must be trained in practical generosity.

Detachment has no effect whatever upon our charitable inclinations. It will, however, protect both ourselves and others from the giver who can never let go of his gift. We all know how unpleasant it becomes to feel that we are under obligation to someone whose charity is merely a form of ego satisfaction. Many neurotic folks try to compensate for loneliness and frustration by catering to their

friends, relatives, and neighbors. Detachment means that you do not perform a gracious act for which you expect appreciation, effusive outbursts of gratitude, or a gift of equal or greater value at some future date. The detached giver performs a good deed in secret, with no desire for personal approbation.

We all appreciate sympathetic understanding, and may occasionally bestow the same. It is a mistake, however, to consider an emotional outburst a genuine example of spiritual involvement. Thousands of persons every day exhaust their nervous resources, waste their emotional energies, disturb their minds, and deplete their physical vitality by worries, fears, and wasteful uncertainties. If a friend unfolds a tale of woe, it is perfectly proper for us to listen. In fact this may be the greatest service we can render. But of what value is it to assume an emotional attitude, becoming completely immersed in the psychological suffering of another person? This is a splendid opportunity to protect our own center of equilibrium. We cannot help our friends if we cannot even control ourselves. By remaining uninvolved we preserve perspective. We hope that a judge will not become emotionally disturbed while he is rendering justice in a case in which we are involved. If we are honest, we want him to be honest and not be affected by the emotional outbursts of our opponents. It is only when an individual is quiet and composed that he can estimate the merits of a situation and offer the best suggestions possible at that moment.

Detachment does not mean disinterest, but it should help us to act more constructively in an emergency. We help others most when we can impart some philosophic insight which has probably not been considered. It will do no good to tell anyone that he has been viciously injured, terribly disillusioned, and miserably unfortunate, and that all his troubles are due to other people and therefore he is a victim of universal injustice. This is exactly what he wants to hear, and those who cater to this wish gain a reputation for wisdom and great-heartedness. Cleared of all responsibility for his difficulties, the foolish person continues his folly, and having sown a whirlwind, he reaps a whirlwind.

Somewhere along the line, we must gain the courage to face our own weakness and moral dishonesty. We must not turn from a sorrowing friend, but we can assist him to see that basically we are



the ultimate source for our difficulties. If we care enough for someone to discipline him, or show him why he must discipline himself, we have served him both wisely and well. Emotional involvement neither inclines us to face facts, nor to search in our souls for the causes of our discontent.

There is nothing in the ministry of Christ to indicate indifference to suffering. There is, however, a quiet strength free of maudlin sentimentality. Jesus taught a way of life by which a person could work out his own salvation with diligence. He sacrificed his life for the good of his world, but he never catered to weakness, or justified wrong action.

The radiant figure of Sri Krishna is represented in Hinduism as a most romantic personality. He presides over music and the dance, and his romance with Radha is one of the loveliest stories in Indian literature. He does not, however, go about the earth becoming psychologically involved in the sorrows of mortals. In the great classic, *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna is represented as delivering his great sermon to Arjuna, the Prince of Men. Arjuna was so emotionally involved with his sympathies, anxieties, uncertainties, and remorse that he was ready to compromise the immutable laws established by the gods. Krishna clarified the situation by pointing out that the so-called tragedies of living are part of a divine program through which the human soul becomes aware of its own eternity.

In Buddhism, we have the gentle story of a young Indian prince who gave up his kingdom and his family to serve mankind. Upon the foundation of the faith and philosophy which he established rose the radiant superstructure of Mahayana Buddhism, often referred to as "The Heart Doctrine." In Japan, Buddhist mysticism is personified in the Buddha Amitabha, The Lord of Enlightened Love, and his beloved son, The Compassionate Lord, Kannon Bosatsu. There is probably no more gracious religious ideal in the world than the Mahayana concept: Liberation results from complete self-forgetfulness in the service of all that lives. This is taught without conflict or compromise by the religion that declares the laws of reincarnation and karma to be absolute and immutable.

There is no need to become disturbed if we see a person practicing charity in order to gain merit necessary for personal redemption. Death and reembodyment break the pattern of any personal scheme.

It is said that even the Bodhisattvas have no conscious memories of their dedications. They practice the truths they understand, because of an inward level of insight which will not permit them to act otherwise. Ulterior motives ultimately destroy themselves, but the fact still remains that salvation must be earned. Detachment can help to clear the mind of its personal ambitions, but the instinct to react constructively to the needs of others is so deep-seated that it will ultimately triumph over self-centered purposes.

The principle behind the doctrine of detachment is the Law of Cause and Effect. Nature does not want us to be deflected from our principal purposes by continuous interruptions. The hopeless romanticist, whose life-span is devoted to falling into or out of love, is deeply involved, but not wisely occupied. Consider the young person of today who has allowed himself to become involved in campus violence, narcotic addiction, and antisocial projects. He is in serious need of detachment from false notions. If he were quiet inside himself and seriously concerned with the advancement of society, he would not be involved in situations that might damage his entire future life and possibly harm others.

To a considerable extent, this is the burden of Zen. The gruff old Arhats who taught and practiced this philosophy refused to permit themselves to take on the follies of their contemporaries. They were ever willing to instruct those who deserved knowledge. Aspirants were tested to discover the degree of mental honesty they possessed. Zen had no time for hypocrisy, and unless the truth-seeker was willing to stand on his own feet and face a certain amount of self-discipline, he was not ready to renounce self-interest and follow the path revealed by the old wisdom. Zen never catered to weakness, but rewarded strength.

In these days of extreme permissiveness we are losing most of our more rugged virtues. We wish to be helped and supported in every way possible. We not only are dependent, but are for the most part ungrateful. We take charity for granted and see no reason why we should not live as foolishly as we please at public expense. This idea is, of course, wrong, but when we try to correct this unreasonable situation, we are accused of cruelty.

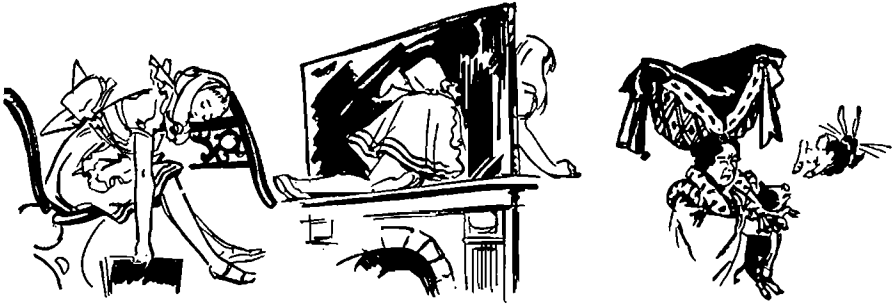
What, then, is the difference between detachment and indifference? In the area of our present thinking, detachment is liberation

from negative thoughts and emotions which damage our ability to be intelligent citizens, loving parents, and sincere friends. Perhaps the highest form of detachment is to liberate our minds from self-interest. Certainly it is the release from selfishness and the practice of any apparent virtue for some ulterior motive.

Indifference is not the result of discipline, but is, rather, the neglect of discipline. It is almost synonymous with ignorance. To look upon a great work of art without appreciation is indifference. To look upon the same work and appreciate it without the desire to possess it is detachment. To so passionately desire the painting as to be willing to commit a crime to possess it, is excessive emotional involvement. We may also reverse the situation. To look at a bad painting and pay no attention to it is indifference. To recognize that it is an inferior work of art and therefore not suitable to our esthetic needs, is detachment; but to be so violently unhappy about the picture that we lead a crusade to discredit the artist is negative involvement. When we hear of individuals spending much of their time attacking and tearing down the social structure to which they belong, seeing corruption only and remaining indifferent to the goodness in man and his creations, we are witnessing wasteful living. Those who talk the most, groan the loudest, and become the most involved are seldom the actual builders of a better world.

The attitude of indifference can scarcely be associated with any great benefactor of mankind. If we are indifferent we do not try to help others, we do not bother to teach them, and their improvement is of no concern to us. There are a few totally self-centered individuals of melancholic belief who insist that nothing is important, and that the wisest course is to make ourselves as comfortable as possible. Despite such attitudes, evolution continues to operate, and in time we all must recognize and accept the wisdom of unselfish activity.

It is inevitable that each truth-seeker should work out his own basic formula for conduct. We are in the world, but we are not required by destiny to make every possible mistake. It is entirely proper for us to be kindly, thoughtful, and unselfish. Let us make the most of every opportunity to assist others, not because of emotional involvement, but because we recognize constructive action as part of Nature's way to assure mutual growth and protection.



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## *Curiouser & Curiouser*

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

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### THE EARTHQUAKE FISH

There is a very old Japanese legend that a huge catfish lies under the Islands of Japan and that earthquakes are caused by the wiggling of this fish. In the precincts of the Kashima Shrine in Hitachi Province there is what is called the *Kanameishi*, which literally means "rivet stone." This is supposed to hold the catfish in place, and all efforts made to find out the depth of this stone have failed. It is therefore supposed that it goes all the way through the earth and rests on the head of the catfish.

In the Nineteenth Century a great many woodblock prints were issued dealing with the subject of the earthquake fish. In an attempt to investigate this legend, the Tohoku University developed quite a research program to discover, if possible, whether catfish do sense the coming of an earthquake before it can be registered scientifically.

All this is very interesting, but is actually the least fascinating part of the legend of the earthquake fish. More significant is the attitude of the people toward this fish. It is considered both a benefactor and an adversary. It is venerated for its nobility, and feared for the depredations which it causes. In other words, the catfish is the bringer of both good and evil, and it seems that at a remote time the Japanese developed an interesting and possibly significant philosophy relating to disasters of various kinds. It may be noted in passing that the five terrors of the Japanese were earthquakes, thunder, floods, fires, and father.



THE CATFISH CARRYING AN EARTHQUAKE  
ON ITS HEAD

Detail from an old woodblock print.

There are old cartoons showing earthquakes shaking gold coins out of rich men's pockets, and it is known that there were many important changes wrought in Japanese society by earthquakes and their attendant fires. Cities were destroyed and dynasties were impoverished by these cataclysms. If the catfish scattered the fortunes of the rich, it brought wealth into the coffers of those artisans who had to rebuild their communities. Possibly because of the belief in the Law of Karma, it was felt that earthquakes were punishment for corruption, especially abuses of power by the ruling classes. They were karmic events to remind simple people that Universal Justice was real and inevitable.

Having been in Tokyo and Yokohama shortly after the great disaster of 1923, I was able to witness personally the devastation wrought by one of the most terrible earthquakes in history. In Yokohama, a city of half a million inhabitants, not one building remained standing. The destruction was unbelievable, but looking back, I remember a number of remarks made by the Japanese themselves. They actually expressed the belief that the earthquake came to retard the development of a vast militaristic program. One thing is certain. It did delay the ambition of the military aristocracy to gradually gain control over the Japanese Empire.



THE CATFISH CAVALIER

Detail from old woodblock print.

It was affirmed that the earthquake came to restore religion and to remind the faithful that life and glory are transitory and that men should purify their own hearts and remain true to the precious teachings of their ancestors.

The Japanese were the first, apparently, to note the effect of seismic disturbances upon magnets. Shortly before one disastrous earthquake in Tokyo, a magnet in a jeweler's shop discharged a number of small watch parts which were attached to it for safe-keeping. This would seem to support the belief that at least some types of earthquakes originate in the atmosphere around the earth.

Several efforts have been made to associate natural disasters with the destructive mental activities of human beings. It well may be that planetary influence is the link between man and the natural forces of the world. Planetary aspects which are likely to excite rebellion, social and political disorders, wars, treasons, and private crime may also contribute to plagues, floods, famines, and earthquakes.

One thing is certain: Nearly all social upheavals are followed closely by natural disasters. Cities like Pompeii and Herculaneum were among the most corrupt of their time, and both were destroyed by Vesuvius in A.D. 79. Our intention is not to press this point but merely to consider the possibility that folklore may arise from centuries of practical experience.

Subconsciously, we all know when we are doing wrong. We will not admit our faults to others and dislike to acknowledge them even to ourselves. There is a relationship between offended conscience and the psychological disturbances which are burdening the present generation. As we lose self-control and our ethics become compromised for pleasure or profit, we secretly develop fears about the future. We have so long assumed that evil deeds are punished that we develop a negative expectancy.

There can be no doubt that mental attitudes have their effects upon ourselves and others. When all three and one-half billion human beings on this planet share selfish and destructive habits and view each other with hatred and suspicion, of course the atmosphere of the planet is polluted. We are gravely concerned over air pollution and the increasing danger to our water supply. It has not occurred to us, however, that our mental and emotional atmosphere can likewise be poisoned by injurious attitudes. Actually, the deterioration of our ethical and moral lives is as dangerous as any physical smog.

If the catfish does "wiggle" occasionally, what is the real cause for its unrest? Has it become weary of man's abuses and perversities? We know that we are wasting our natural resources at a dangerous rate. Our forests and farmlands are being transformed into urban centers, with little consideration for the balance of nature. We think only in terms of immediate advantage to ourselves. If we continue this process, we may get into serious trouble. Scientists, biologists, and various experts in the fields of anthropology and sociology are taking a dim view of our wastefulness.

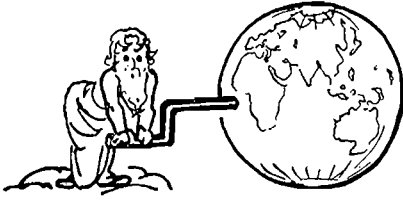
We are not endangering the habitability of our planet because of some desperate need. It is little better than foolhardiness that is causing the problem. Lack of proper community planning and a total disregard for natural laws are the most powerful contributing factors.

There is an old Eastern proverb which says the Great Mother (the earth) has already shaken many civilizations from her back. When perversity becomes obnoxious to both man and the universe, the laws of retribution take over and a general housecleaning results. This does not mean that we are likely to be the victims of another deluge, or that we should dispose of our possessions and, holding cash in both hands, await the end of the world. It does mean, however, that the ancient pattern of cause and effect is likely to operate. When sickness becomes fatal the patient dies; but if diagnosis is made early in the course of a disease, recovery is probable. Actually, the best time to correct a mistake is before we make it. The next best time is the moment when we realize that we have been wrong. Small ailments neglected become dangerous to the entire organism, and numerous passing delinquencies that do not seem especially important can add up to a massive misfortune.

As already noted, the catfish was not regarded simply as a karmic deity dedicated to catastrophe. It was really a rather likeable monster, for it always cleared the way for a general reformation. War, crime, and disorder are not inevitable, but they will continue so long as man causes them by his own conduct. When he builds some top-heavy monument to gratify his own ego, nature will certainly bring it down in ruin. When policies become so corrupt that the average person can do nothing about them, nature comes to the rescue of afflicted virtue.

However we look at this process, or try to interpret nature's way of neutralizing the foolishness of mortals, it may be difficult to explain to the satisfaction of the materialistic scientists. If you speak of universal integrity, he is outraged; and any reference to karma or natural retribution upsets him deeply. He wishes to live in a universe in which there is no moral meaning for anything. There are no purposes but those man makes for himself, and no God to sit in judgment upon the curious conduct of human beings. For such a man, dedicated to the meaninglessness of cosmic processes, perhaps the catfish is as good an explanation as any other. It has its charm and is better than no answer at all. To be on the safe side, let us live discreetly, so as not to irritate the powers that manifest their displeasure in natural disasters.





## HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD

### *The Childrens Hour*

Pre-teen age children are most likely to watch television programs between five and seven-thirty in the evening. Except for Saturday and Sunday, entertainment aimed at the smaller child is scheduled for this time. It should be noted therefore that this time is also especially favored for news broadcasts and various news commentaries. From Mondays through Fridays there are seventeen or eighteen news programs between five and seven-thirty p.m. At five o'clock, news is featured in Los Angeles on five channels simultaneously. The situation is a little less congested on Saturdays, when only ten news broadcasts are listed in the T.V. Guide. Sunday presents the minimum for the week with only four broadcasts scheduled between five and seven-thirty. News is also available on T.V. at various hours throughout the day and evening, but one-half of the entire coverage is during the children's special listening time.

It might seem that this is excessive. It is hard to imagine why it is necessary to have five newscasts running at the same time, especially as most of them subscribe to the same news services and many of the programs are almost word for word repetitions. Most of the news today is far from inspiring, and the present tendency is to glamorize and dramatize events which will contribute very little to the improvement of small children. The idea that parents should monitor their children's programs is utterly unrealistic. Such censorship will only increase the generation gap, especially when the parents are avid listeners and viewers of current events. In years gone by, it was generally considered sufficient to record with dignity happenings in the world. Now, however, before a child can read or write, it is already subjected to sights and scenes which even adults find bewildering, depressing, and frightening. Why not use some of this air time to present information that will help small children to face the future with courage and greater insight? Parents also would find such programs highly beneficial.

### *A letter from Seoul*

It cannot be said of old hotels that they never die. At the moment they seem to be fading away very rapidly. As a result of a brief mention of Korea in a former issue of our Journal, we have received a letter from the Korean Information Service, in Washington, D.C. The Service thanks us for our comments and passes along the word that the Chosun Hotel in Seoul, where I stayed so many years ago, will be torn down in the near future to make room for a thirty-story skyscraper. Things have changed considerably since I registered into that hotel on December 28, 1923. The new hotel, which will probably be most efficient but may be lacking in rustic charm, is being built jointly by the American Airlines and the Korean government. The world will miss the cheerful atmosphere of the old hostelry, but progress must be served. Seoul in those days was a most interesting city, and although the Koreans have been heavily influenced by both China and Japan, they have retained their unique characteristics. They are different from any other people of the world, but are most kind and lovable, and even a short stay among them helps us to restore our faith in human nature.

A few years ago our library received a donation consisting of a small but interesting group of books in English, dealing with the history and culture of Korea. Many of these reference works are extremely scarce, and we hope that those interested in Korean culture will make use of these unusual items.

### *Sex Segregation in Schools*

Ceylon became an independent nation in 1948. Since that time it has experienced much of the unrest that has disturbed most of the countries of the civilized world. The principal religion is Buddhism, but there are also a number of Hindus and a fair sprinkling of Moslems and Christians. According to a recent announcement, Ceylon has decided to discontinue its coeducational system. There will be separate schools for boys and girls, in the hope that this segregation will inspire young people to give more attention to their scholastic obligations and less to vanity and pleasure. The outcome of the program is not yet in sight, but a number of countries may watch the experiment with profound interest.



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## Happenings at Headquarters

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Our Spring 1970 program of activities at headquarters included Mr. Hall's regular Sunday morning lectures. His opening talk on April 5th, "The Doctrine of Abrupt Enlightenment," was inspired by Zen philosophy. Other topics chosen by Mr. Hall were "Levels of Christian Consciousness," "Some Aspects of Tibetan Metaphysics," and a special talk on "Mohandas Gandhi and the *Bagavad-Gita*." Dr. Drake spoke on two Sunday mornings. His lectures were entitled "A Life of Constructive Attainment" and "Measuring Your Potential for Happiness." On the Sunday mornings of June 21st and 28th Dr. Leroy Davidson, Chairman of the Department of Art at U.C.L.A., will speak on "The Beginning of Buddhist Art in India" and "Latest Buddhist Art in India." Dr. Davidson, who received his Ph.D. at Yale, specializes in the history of art and has been a gracious friend of the Society for several years.

On Wednesday evenings, beginning April 1st and continuing through April 15th, Mr. Hall gave an informative seminar on "The Modern World's Debt to the Wisdom of Ancient Egypt." He also presented another Wednesday evening seminar, from May 6th through May 20th on "A Philosophical Interpretation of Psychic Phenomena." Beginning May 27th and continuing through June 17th, Dr. Drake presented four Wednesday evening lectures. His opening talk was on "Socrates." On June 5th his subject was "The Brave New World Within Ourselves." His topics for June 10th and 17th are "Pythagoras—the Scientist of Divine Truths," and "Plato—the Architect of Enlightened Self-Government."

In the Spring Quarter, Dr. Zipporah Dobyns presented two seminars on Astrology. For nine Monday evenings, beginning April 6th her instruction focused upon "The Meaning of Astrology in Human Events." The emphasis in this series was upon the influence which astrology has exercised in the lives of individuals and in the development of nations. On Thursday evenings Dr. Dobyns presented a class for those interested in learning how to erect and delineate a horoscope. In each session the chart of one of those attending was briefly interpreted.

On Tuesday evenings, Dr. Douglas Low gave a seminar of ten classes on "Geniuses of the Spiritual Quest." This was a most unusual series, including discussions of such mystics as Jetsun Milarepa, the Tibetan Yogi; Jalal-Uddin Rumi, the Sufi dervish; Sri Ramakrishna, the Hindu saint; and Dante Alighieri, the mystic poet of Florence. Those who attended this series were deeply impressed by Dr. Low's insight.

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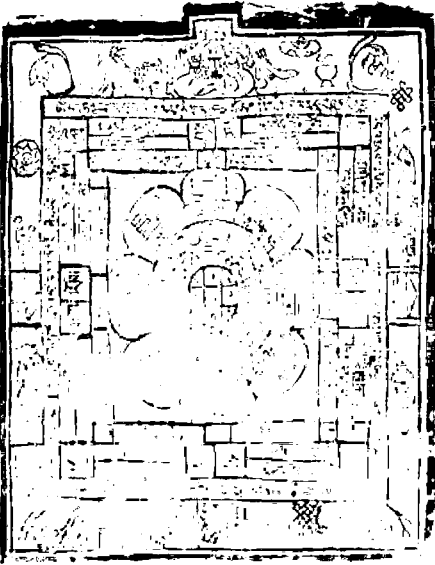
On May 16th there was a special seminar on the subject of "Zen Methods and Practice for the West." On this occasion Dr. Henry L. Drake acted as coordinator in a workshop presenting Koryu Osaka Roshi, one of the foremost Zen masters of Japan. Koryu Roshi received his degree in Indian Philosophy at Tokyo University, and later received training under the Zen master Joko Roshi. For the past forty years he has practiced and taught in Tokyo. Koryu Roshi's seminar emphasized the practice of meditation, with special consideration for the needs of American students.

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The Spring Open House, held on March 22nd, was so outstanding that it should receive special mention. At Mr. Hall's Sunday morning lecture, our auditorium was insufficient to accommodate the many friends who had assembled. The Hospitality Committee provided unusual refreshments, and the homemade pumpkin bread was highly praised. Many folks viewed the exhibits in the Library and browsed through the Gift Shop. Mr. Hall gave his afternoon talk on Chinese Astrology to a capacity audience. Open House at P.R.S. has become a very popular event, and we are most grateful to the good friends who volunteer their time and energy to make these occasions so successful.

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Many Tibetan refugees have settled in Nepal, which has always had a substantial Buddhist population. Among those forced to leave their own country were many Lamaist monks, some of whom were able to bring with them such books, manuscripts, and ritual objects as they were able to carry. World interest in the preservation of Tibetan culture has encouraged the distribution of surviving artifacts among learned institutions, where they can continue to serve the needs of scholars.



## TIBETAN DIVINATION CHART

Impression from old carved wooden block in Nepal.

Recently a person desirous of assisting Tibetan victims of religious persecution made arrangements to take prints from a number of woodblocks preserved in a Tibetan monastery near Swayambhu Natha. Through the cooperation of the Abbot, some rare and early woodblocks were made available, and we are fortunate in having in the Library of the Society prints taken from fourteen of these blocks. These were on exhibit during April along with other material.

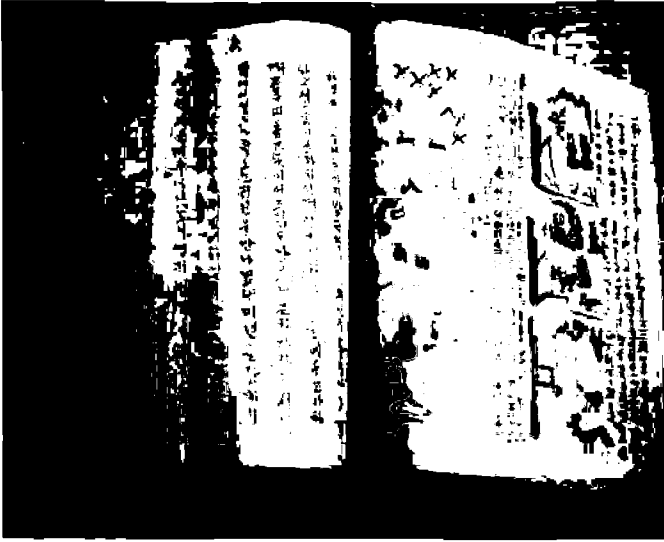
Among the prints from Swayambhu Natha was an interesting divination chart similar to the one reproduced by L. Austine Waddell in his valuable book *The Buddhism of Tibet*. (Surgeon-Major Waddell was a member of the expedition which entered Tibet in 1904 under the leadership of Sir Francis Younghusband.) The accompanying illustration shows a diviner's diagram, which theoretically is inscribed on the shell of a tortoise. In the center of the figure is a *mewa* consisting of the numbers one to nine arranged in three rows so that each row—horizontal, vertical, or diagonal—adds up to a total of fifteen. In Europe such arrangements were referred to as "magic squares." On the petals of the lotus flower are the eight basic trigrams of the *I Ching*. In the first division outside the lotus

are the days of the week, represented by their Tibetan symbols. Outside this band is a still larger band containing in written form the twelve zodiacal animals of the Orient. The actual use of this chart is very complicated and requires a profound knowledge of esoteric Buddhist astronomy. Calculations traditionally are made with grains of rice, which are placed in various positions and moved about according to prescribed formulas. Although their techniques have no resemblance to those of Western astrology, Tibetan priests are remarkably accurate in their predictions. There are numerous levels of interpretation, some relating to mundane affairs, others to the spiritual development of the individual, and still others to details of future rebirths. Certainly we were fortunate to receive a print illustrative of this remarkable art. According to recent reports, the program of making prints from ancient blocks will be expanded.

The May exhibit consisted of prints selected from an extensive series designed and published in Japan in 1923. The subject matter was the Noh drama, and each picture showed an actor in full costume as he actually appeared in one of the plays. The issuing of this set of pictures was interrupted by the great Tokyo earthquake of 1923, but eventually it was completed. Occasionally single prints from this edition can be found, but the complete set, as we have it in our collection, is almost unobtainable. Recently we have also secured a number of sketches and drawings by Japanese artists, including a number dealing with the Noh theatre. Some of these also were displayed, together with recent Japanese books devoted to the Noh theatre, its masks and its costumes.

In June, from the 7th to the 28th, there will be a showing of brush paintings by Dr. Hisashi Ohta. The pictures include still life, free style calligraphy, and Zen-inspired symbolic designs. This one-man show reveals clearly the range of *sumi* painting and demonstrates the importance of combining pictorial forms and the written word.

Monday evening, March 16, Mr. Hall addressed The Chinese Culture Society of Los Angeles, Inc. His theme was Chinese stone rubbings, and he exhibited several examples of this ancient art. In the course of the evening it was noted that Mr. Hall, who is an honorary life member of The Chinese Culture Society, has addressed this group annually for twenty-nine years.



#### THE BOOK OF TANG

Korean manuscript on divination recently acquired by the Library of the Society.

Recently the Society acquired a curious Korean manuscript on divination. It is in three volumes of folio size, written in Korean, and illustrated with hundreds of symbolic diagrams. The accompanying illustration indicates the general appearance of this manuscript. Each volume has a label which is translated as *The Pillar of Tang*. It is doubtful, however, that "Tang," in this case, has any reference to the Chinese dynasty of that name.

Fortunetelling works of this kind are known in several Asiatic countries, including China and Japan. Usually they are products of peasant life. Calculations are made by astrological rules, the casting of coins in a turtle shell, or the use of the *I Ching* sticks. After the numbers have been added up, the fortuneteller turns to the complicated illustrations, which he interprets much in the same way as a modern gypsy gives readings from a deck of cards.

This particular Korean manuscript is extremely rare, and we are happy to make it available to scholars in the field. Judging from the paper and the general type of workmanship, the manuscript probably was written in the 17th or early 18th Century.



## LOCAL STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES



It is always a privilege to announce the formation of a new P.R.S. Local Study Group. Our newest group is in San Pedro, California, and we certainly wish for the members a happy and valuable association. At this time especially the disciplines of religion and philosophy are of the greatest importance. It is only through broadening and deepening our understanding that we can face the problems of our time in a constructive way. Those interested in the new group should communicate with Charlotte Gilmore, 716 West 33rd Street, San Pedro, California, 90731. Our very best wishes to the leader and members.

News from New York comes to us regularly in a special Bulletin issued by the New York Local Study Group. We learn that the program for the next several months is a discussion of *The Secret Destiny of America* by Manly P. Hall. As this book is at present out of print, members of the group are looking for copies in second-hand bookstores. The New York Local Study Group is active and combines its discussions with dinners and other well-planned social events. We are grateful to our good New York friends for their dedicated helpfulness.

We have a handsome photograph of the Downey, California, P.R.S. Local Study Group, under the leadership of Mr. Gilbert Olson. In the front row from left to right are Mr. Orville Perkins, Mrs. Thetis Perkins, Mr. Douglas Dunbar, and Mrs. Grace Smith. In the back row are Mrs. Catherann Schrader, Mrs. Meredith Olson, Mr. Gilbert Olson, Mrs. Florence Robertson, Mr. Don Pratt, and Mrs. Wilma Fisher. It is always a pleasure to publish group photographs of our Study Group members. We will be happy to receive pictures from other groups.





THE DOWNEY P.R.S. LOCAL STUDY GROUP

Many friends have expressed appreciation for the questions based upon articles in our *P.R.S. Journal*. These questions have been especially prepared to stimulate Study Group discussion, but are equally useful to all readers who would like to give a little special time and attention to the contents of certain articles.

### *The Importance of Good Reading*

1. What do you consider to be the most important book you have ever read and why have you selected this particular work?
2. Do you feel that reading has enabled you to expand your internal consciousness?
3. What books would you recommend for young children and teenagers?

### *The Problem of Philosophic Detachment*

1. Can you reconcile the instinct to help other people with the doctrine of Karma?
2. Does detachment imply indifference to human suffering?
3. Why do we say that indifference results from the lack of self-discipline?

*(Please see back cover for a list of the P.R.S. Local Study Groups.)*

# *Library Notes*

## THE SAINTS AND LITERATURE OF THE WESTERN PARADISE OF AMITABHA

### Part I

by A. J. HOWIE

The elements of the ideas upon which the doctrine of the Western Paradise of Amitabha is based are inherent in the earliest Buddhist traditions, but these became major articles of faith primarily in certain later sects representing particular descents of emphasis. Gradually during the missionary teaching of Buddhism, the idea of a Western Paradise of Amitabha captured the imagination of converts and scholars, and awakened a widespread response in the hearts of the common laity who reacted to the zeal of outstanding teachers. Throughout the expanding Buddhist world, devotees from all walks of life came to revere the Amitabha Buddha, and have intoned the *Namu Amida Butsu*, or its equivalent, with full faith that at the moment of death he would appear accompanied by an assembly of disciples surrounded by a host of countless Bodhisattvas to welcome the new arrival to Sukhavati. The lives of generations of simple folk have been enriched with the faith that the labors and uncertainties of this transient life will culminate in blessed transition to that happy land.

Gautama, the Buddha, throughout the many years of his ministry wrote nothing — nor did his immediate disciples. The art of writing, or what there was of it, was confined principally to government records and proclamations. In that age men were disciplined to listen intently and remember accurately. Later they would be able to repeat verbatim what they had heard. Those especially skilled in the art of remembering many things, thus transmitted to succeeding listeners important discourses for the instruction of those who came after. This was how all knowledge was preserved before the art of writing became more widely disseminated.

After Gautama's death in 543 B.C. it became apparent that means would have to be taken to insure the purity and integrity of his exact teachings by recalling and agreeing on his words and instructions. The details of how this was accomplished is lost in tradition, uncertain dating, and relative anonymity.

Gautama taught in Magadhi, a local Indian dialect. Pali, in which the *Tipitaka* was written, is said to be probably a literary derivative of the Magadhi, although that is open to dispute. The first council called to agree up on the doctrines was convened within a year after Gautama's death, but it was centuries before the earliest canonical writings are mentioned. And these are all there is upon which to determine the original doctrines taught by Gautama and the extent of agreement as to the disciplines and rules of the brotherhood. Since these were monastic manuscripts, successive copyists during the centuries had no hesitation in intruding interpretations and/or explanations until later generations had difficulty in discriminating between original text and later commentary, and began to accept both without distinction.

There were inevitable heresies and dissensions, even during the ministry of Gautama, but for centuries there were no major schisms. Individuals and teachers were mostly preoccupied in striving rather for personal attainment of *samadhi* and *arhatship*. As the teachings spread beyond the immediate sphere of Gautama's labors, converts from alien environments experienced their own intuitions resulting from meditation and discipline in the Dharma, which they identified with the simple original doctrines. Buddhist sects represent areas of emphasis rather than essential doctrinal differences. The distinction of Hinayana and Mahayana arose when large bodies of disciples began to assert loyalties to particular ideas and make important distinctions between the original doctrines and later extensions, interpretations, intuitions, and emphasis — the greatest of which was the concept of salvation for all sentient beings through the vows of the various Boddhisattvas.

The subject of this paper is concerned with the descent of a tradition based on the expansion of the vows attributed to one particular evolving Buddha who renounced salvation until a way was found for the salvation of all sentient beings who would invoke his name — even if but once — with unwavering faith. The Christian world

should recognize a kinship for any doctrine that provides salvation for “whosoever will may come.” The goal is not a competition for converts to a name, but to inspire the hope of salvation in all sentient beings all of whom some uncertain day must approach that “bourne from which no man returns.”

Contemporary interest of occidentals in Mahayana doctrines has progressed beyond a fascination with strange and foreign novelties. Buddhist disciplines no longer represent mere fads. Many sincere westerners sense in Buddhist doctrines a message that is timeless, and yet especially timely for helping students to interpret and adjust to current turmoil and conflict. The texts written in ancient Pali dialects, translated and preserved in neighboring Asiatic languages, while most of the original documents have been lost, leave some ideas incomplete or controversial, and greatly in need of modern western restatement as a simple, adequate introduction to the canonical literature, suitable to inform friendly and serious members of occidental culture.

The ancient sutras were accepted with uncritical faith throughout the Buddhist world, even when authorship and commentary were doubtful. The oft repeated phrase “thus I have heard” aroused few doubts or questions, while the faith continuously grew and spread during the fleeting centuries — so short a time in comparison to the uncounted ages, kalpas, eons, and vast time cycles beyond human comprehension, through which the procession of successive Buddhas are understood to have evolved their perfections and performed their good works. Sublime as is this faith, its simplicity and limitless extension into time and space easily arouses psychological conflict for western students steeped in scientific materialism, which is a well nigh insuperable obstacle to complete understanding. The Buddhist doctrine has to be experienced in order to understand it.

A constructive interpretation of Buddhist doctrine requires scholarship that is openminded, without prejudice or preconception. It would be helpful if there were a generally acceptable vocabulary with consistent spellings — which unfortunately does not exist — which would help in confronting the language barrier. The original doctrine was in an unliterary dialect that had to be interpreted in the Pali. The earliest manuscripts have been lost for some two thousand years. The translations into Chinese, Tibetan, Sanskrit, Korean,

Japanese offer their own problems to an understanding of modern English (German and French) translations. Those apparent misapplications which we see being experimented with in our modern Western culture may prove to have legitimate origins in human intuitions, which have been awakened in countless converts throughout the evolution of Mahayana Buddhism to its present complexity. Who is to predict in what spiritual directions awakening intuitions may lead modern converts in our times?

Describing several Jehol woodblocks that pictorially represent the physical and symbolical appearance of Sukhavati and its inhabitants, Mr. Hall discussed the doctrine of the Western Paradise of Amitabha in two articles that appeared in the *PRS Journal* for the Winter of 1961 and Spring of 1962, which later were republished as a pamphlet. We shall try to avoid the intrusion of unnecessary repetition as we emphasize the descent from early oral traditions of the sixth century B.C. The dynamic force of an expanding faith in an "other" or "higher" power has been the vital strength of the largest Mahayana Buddhist sects.

All Buddhist sects claim to trace their origins to the original teachings of Gautama. The transmissions often are confusing, but the essential archetype of the early oral tradition has overshadowed all diversity of human interpretation for almost 2500 years. The miracle of the archetypal ideas of Buddhist faith is that they retain a great measure of integrity in spite of the fact they took shape before manuscripts and books existed to assist human memory. There are few specific datings when the earliest sutras were compiled, written, and accepted, to become the original canonical literature now identified with Hinayana schools. The various texts gradually became classified into the three "baskets," the *Tipitakas* (also *Tripitaka*). In spite of the fact that all later literature claims authority because of its elaboration or extension of statements in these texts, the works themselves are not as familiar to occidental readers as the later Mahayana writings.

It may prove useful for further reading and study to outline some of the more familiar *Tripitaka* texts.

- I The *Vinaya* (discipline) (to walk in isolation)—statutes, precepts of moral asceticism and monastic discipline.
  - a) *Suttavighanga*—rules of conduct for monks and nuns.

b) *Khandaka (Mahavagga)*  
 (*Cullavagga* — contains account of first Council at Ragagaha c. 542 B.C.)

c) *Parivara*.

II *Suttas* — dialogues, consisting of the five *Nikayas*.

a) *Digha Nikaya* — long dialogues, which include among others:

*Mahidana Sutta* — law of causation and arhatship,

*Mahaparinibbanasutta* — Book of the Great Decease — described as the most authentic account of the life of Buddha.

b) *Majjhima Nikaya* — suttas of middle length — sermons and dialogues.

“Whoso shall turn to me with faith and love shall reach one of the heavenly worlds.”

“Put aside these questions of beginning and end. This is the *Dhamma*—*that* being present, *this* must follow: from the rising of *that* *this* arises. *That* being absent, *this* does not come into being. From the cessation of *that*, *this* too ceases.” (79).

c) *Samyutta-Nikaya*—mixed dialogues.

d) *Anuguttara Nikaya*, or “adding one collection”—late, recapitulating matter found in early collections.

e) *Khuddaka Nikaya*—mostly in verse, prayers, charms. Contains mention of the doctrine of reversible merit which teaches that merit gained by one may be shared with others—an important source of a major Mahayana doctrine.

*Dhammapada*

*Itivuttaka*

*Khuddakapatha*—for neophytes

*Jatakas*—former birth of Buddha

III *Abhidhamma*—“third basket of higher religion”—recapitulates in form of catechism the doctrines of earlier books, explained by tradition, overcoming the law or conquering law. Asvaghosha characterizes it as that dharma which goes beyond the law.

The *Tripitakas* were preserved primarily in Chinese translations. According to Saunders, the Pali canon is in “a later literary diction

and is clearly derived from a different source than the Chinese version." This outline of the *Tripitaka* literature has been compiled from a variety of sources none of which seemed to relate it for ready reference. There probably are better and more scholarly analyses, but this may help an interested student in the meantime to orient his reading in variously named and spelled texts.

There are landmarks and names that are useful in gaining some perspective on the growth of the Mahayana doctrines and the periodic renewal of the faith. After the convocation in the year following the death of Gautama, there was the Council of Visali about one hundred years later. Then there were the edicts of King Asoka written in a Kosalan dialect (Patali-putra, c. 250 B.C.).

During the first century A. D. when Kanishka, King of Gandhara, reigned, his capital was Purusapura, the seat of the University of Taxila. It was during this period when the great Mahayana sutras seem to have their origin. Kanishka granted a request to convoke an assembly of sainted men who were conversant with the exoteric doctrines of the *Three Pitakas* and the esoteric doctrine of the *Five Vidyas*. There is no evidence the council actually met, nor was it called to establish a new Buddhism, but rather to protect the orthodox from hostile schools. At the University of Taxila, "Indian, Greek, and Persian cultures met and mingled, and here Buddhism took on a new and more liberal phase." It was under this influence that Asvaghosha wrote the *Buddha-karita*, and this environment was the inspiration of the Gandharan Buddhist art.

Another great source of Mahayana doctrine was the University of Nalanda which grew up around the monasteries of Ragagaha and Patali-putra. "Fire and sword of Islam have long since destroyed the venerable university . . . . But for a thousand years it did a noble work and a detailed history of Nalanda 'would be the history of Mahayana from the time of Nagarjuna in the second century A. D., or possibly even earlier, until the Muhammadan conquest of Behar in 1219 . . . . All the most noted scholars of Mahayana seem to have studied at Nalanda.'" Chief among them is Nagarjuna, a native of South India, who seems to have found his way to the Himalayas where he became engrossed with the cult of Amitabha, as set forth in the *Sukhavati-Vyuha* indicating that it was written early. Saunders discounts the legend that Nagarjuna

met in the south with an aged teacher dwelling in an iron tower who revealed to him the supremacy of Vairocana and gave him the mystic rite of Abhisekha or baptismal ordination.

Nagarjuna was involved in establishing the early Mahayana doctrines, but the resolution of the many and various speculations that troubled early Buddhists is a larger subject than this paper. We are here concerned with the emphasis as expressed in the *Avatamsaka Sutra* (Sutra of the Diadem of Buddha): "He is beyond moral comprehension, but he takes earthly shape and appearance to those who seek him. Let them but think of him for a moment and they will be forever saved from evil and misery; his for all eternity is the task of enlightening the world."

Asvaghosa (also Asvaghosha) was a contemporary and spiritual advisor of Kanishka during the first century of our era. He was author of several important works, but it is his *Buddha-karita-kavya* which is still widely read and studied by the Mahayana faithful. It was translated into Chinese in the fifth century. The *Buddha-karita* recounts in epic style the life of Buddha up to the time of his enlightenment. Several sections were added by a later pen during the 18th century to carry the biography through the founding of the brotherhood.

Throughout the *Buddha-karita* there is recurrent emphasis on salvation. All the dramatic incidents of Gautama's life are motivated by compassion, concern for salvation, escape from sickness, old age, and death. Immediately following his miraculous birth from his mother's side when he took the seven firm steps, he declared that he was born for the welfare of the world. Because of the prophecies made by the seers at the time of his birth, that he was destined for supreme spiritual achievement and the ascetic life, he was protected against all knowledge of the vicissitudes and troubles of life. When he first beheld a dead man, he immediately was overwhelmed with the realization of the end toward which all humanity was destined. "If this is the end appointed to all creatures, hard indeed must the hearts of men be who can be self-composed in such a road."

Upon previous instruction from Gautama's father, the king, his companion drove him to a pleasant sylvan retreat where a bevy of beautiful women sought to divert his thoughts from the impact of



his first awareness of death. But no sensuous response was possible for him while he was engrossed with the terrors of old age, death, and disease, "I can find no peace, no self-command, much less can I find pleasure while I see the world as it were ablaze with fire."

Shortly thereafter he drove out to the outskirts of town with friends, accidentally witnessing for the first time the sweating toil of man and beast in tilling the soil and the subsequent destruction of lower forms of life. Tearing himself away from his companions, he plunged alone into the solitude of the forest. He seated himself beneath a rose-apple tree and began the meditation that led to his attainment of the first stage of contemplation, during which he comprehended the meaning of the dharma and set his mind on the manner of the accomplishment of man during the cycle of rebirth.

The poem sweeps along with an intense sense of the drama of his flight from the comforts and luxury of the palace during the deepest silence of the night, the futile vigils with the forest ascetics, and his subsequent lonely search for the true dharma. The lure of power to swerve him from the path of duty is first tendered by King Bimbisara who offered him half his kingdom in joint rulership.

Without hesitation Gautama rejected all. "I have been wounded by the enjoyment of the world, and I have come out longing to obtain peace. I would not accept an empire free from all ill even in the third heaven, much less amongst men . . . . But that world in which there is no old age, nor fear, nor birth, nor death, nor anxieties, that alone I consider the highest end of men, where there is no ever-renewed action . . . . . When death stands ready like a hunter with old age as his weapon, and diseases scattered about as his arrows, smiting down living creatures who fly like deer to the forest of destiny, what desire can there be in any one for length of life? . . . . I desire not that fruit which is sought by causing pain to others . . . . Even that happiness which comes to a man while he stays in this world, through the injury to another, is hateful to the wise compassionate heart; how much more if it be something beyond our sight in another life?"

Excelling all others in the disciplines of asceticism none of which accomplished a stage of contemplation even remotely resembling that attained beneath the rose-apple tree years before, he con-

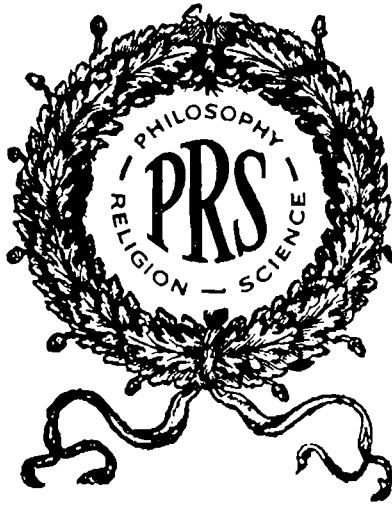
cluded that starving the physical body was futile. Passionlessness nor perfect knowledge nor liberation can be attained by one who has lost his strength. "True meditation is produced in him whose mind is self-possessed and at rest. To him whose thoughts are engaged in meditation the exercise of perfect contemplation begins at once." Having bathed and eaten, accompanied only by his own resolve, he came to a clean grassy spot at the roof of an *asvattha* tree (pipul tree, *figus religiosa*) and seated himself in a posture immovably firm. Having fixed his mind on the attainment of perfect knowledge, he declared: "I will not rise from this position on the earth until I have obtained my utmost aim."

The tempo of the narrative increases. Mara, the enemy of the good law, the enemy of liberation, aided by his three sons, Confusion, Gaiety, and Pride, and his three daughters, Lust, Delight, and Thirst, hasten to attack him with every wile at their command to distract his mind. He rebukes and conquers every phantom they can raise until "some being of invisible shape, but of preeminent glory, standing in the heavens addresses Mara: 'Take not on thyself this vain fatigue . . . . this sage cannot be shaken.'"

Longing to know the supreme end foremost in his thoughts, Gautama resumes his meditation. Each watch of the night brings some additional stage of awakening. Thus he, the holy one, pondering by his own efforts, attains at last perfect knowledge . . . . He becomes the perfectly wise, the Bhagavat, the Arhat, the king of the Law, the Tathagata.

His exalted achievement of purpose is depicted in the words: "My aspiration is thus fulfilled; this birth of mine has borne its fruit; the blessed and immortal knowledge which was attained by former Buddhas is now mine. *As they through the good Law achieved the welfare of all beings, so also have I.*"

The foregoing is tradition for all Buddhist sects. I hope that the brief digest from the emotion-packed *Buddha-karita* will arouse the urge in many readers to read the full text of this magnificent epic—also to look forward to the continuation of the Library Notes on the story of the *bhikshu* named Dharmakara who became the Buddha of the Western Paradise, which was the fulfillment of his vow to renounce Buddhahood until some means were found to insure the salvation of all sentient beings.



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