

# The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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## CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN -- OCTOBER 1966

Dear Friend:

The days hasten by like leaves carried on the wind, and the busy fall season is here again. It is time to examine the roofs, check the furnaces, and make certain that the paint is weatherproof. Soon the cool weather will come, and most Californians look forward to clear skies and abatement of smog. I have just returned from a two-week lecture tour in San Francisco, my new book on "Buddhism and Psychotherapy" is typeset, the fall program has been mailed, and the manuscript for the Winter issue of the Journal is in the hands of the printer. So now is the proper time to have a chat with our good friends whose assistance and encouragement help to make possible these activities.

The program of Workshops in Philosophical Psychology and Psychotherapy, under the direction of Dr. Henry L. Drake, brings two prominent men to our headquarters this fall. Both are internationally recognized as progressive idealists in psychological research. Dr. Hobart Mowrer will conduct his workshop beginning Friday, October 28th at 8:00 p.m., and Dr. Ira Progoff will give three 2½-hour sessions opening on Tuesday, November 29th at 8:00 p.m.

We are happy to say that Dr. and Mrs. Bode have returned from India and are continuing their close association with our organization. Dr. Bode will be lecturing at our headquarters on Tuesday evenings through the fall, and Mrs. Bode has rejoined our office staff.

On Sunday morning, August 28th, Dr. Drake, our Vice-President, and John W. Ervin, Secretary of our Board of Directors, discussed our Society and its activities on radio station KLAC. The program lasted an hour and a half, and included audience participation by questions via telephone. The station cooperated in a dignified and constructive manner to make sure that the public was well informed about the educational functions of the Society, and we appreciate the courtesy and interest shown.

Our November art exhibit (6th - 27th), "Oriental Stencils and Shadow Pictures," includes some unique material, recently added to the permanent collection, that will be of special interest to artists and puppet theater admirers. Among the unusual items displayed will be Chinese and Javanese shadow dolls used in the dramatization of sacred themes and folklore. The two figures in the picture on page 2 are Chinese puppets on animal skin, cut out so that the light passes through various designs, and elaborately hand colored in transparent pigments. These dolls are about two hundred years old and quite rare.



There is a story that long ago, a Chinese emperor was prostrated with grief when his empress died. Fearing for their ruler's life, his counselors prevailed upon a famous puppeteer to make a shadow doll resembling the late empress. The puppet master was so skillful in handling this doll that the emperor was convinced that the shadow which it cast was the spirit of his beloved wife. This brought him great consolation, and he gradually adjusted to his loss. From that time on, the puppet theater was supported by imperial favor and patronage, and became an important form of Chinese entertainment. It has sur-

vived to the present time. Troupes of puppeteers still attract large audiences, and outstanding exponents of the art receive wide acclaim.

Modern Chinese folk designs will also be included in the November exhibit. These carefully cut out pictures, although small, are amazing in their detail work. They were made in the home as a kind of family craft, and many are beautifully colored. The bird and flower subjects are especially effective. The Japanese stencils to be shown are used mostly to make designs on cotton fabrics from which the summer kimono of both men and women are manufactured. So skillful are the operators in the use of these stencils that points of junction or overlapping of the designs are completely invisible. Some of the stencil patterns are so elaborate and delicate that the various elements are held together by human hair.

November 6th will be Fall Open House day at P.R.S. After the morning lecture ("The Mind in the Heart and the Heart in the Mind"), the Hospitality Committee will serve luncheon in the patio -- the usual delicious refreshments that always receive strong expressions of approval. Interesting things will be on display in our library, offices, and gift shop from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. We hope that many friends will take this opportunity to do their Christmas shopping in pleasant surroundings and avoid the stress and strain of last-minute shopping in congested stores. We have distinctive Christmas cards and gifts that will delight even the person who has everything. At 2:15 I will give an informal talk in our auditorium on "Art Appreciation as Hobby and Therapy," in which I will discuss a number of simple ways to make appreciation for beauty a more dynamic force in the life of the average person.

The December-January exhibit will feature original material relating to the art of the Penitentes, a mystical religious confraternity which flourished in New Mexico from the 17th to the middle of the 19th century. The organization still survives as a fraternal order. Penitente art is one of the most intriguing forms of indigenous American folk art, and is almost exclusively religious. It consists of retablos (paintings on sheets of wood), and bultos (woodcarvings in the round). Deprived of all contact with the outside world for many years, the Spanish Americans of New Mexico prepared their own church altars and private religious icons, and venerated them with the utmost sincerity until contact with other areas enabled them to import the religious art of Italy and France.

A number of the santeros, or "saint-makers," as the artists were called, have gained considerable distinction, and there are some important collections of their material. Our group of paintings and images includes several very famous





subjects: a fine Penitente Crucifix, a Death Cart image used in the Good Friday observances, a St. Joseph and the Christ Child--both figures dressed in cloth garments, and a large retablo, framed, of the saint of farmers and agriculturists accompanied by oxen and a plough. This exhibit is especially appropriate to the Christmas season, and we hope that many will enjoy the collection. Please note that the library will be closed over the Christmas and New Year's holiday weekends.

A typical example of this naive and entirely charming artistry is the accompanying retablo of San Juan Nepomuceno, a hero of the early Church who was drowned in the Moldau River in 1383 for refusing to reveal the secrets of the Confessional to the King of Bohemia, and was canonized in 1728. He is represented with the symbol of his death as a martyr -- a palm branch. The work is in the style of the old santero Miguel Aragon.

It is said that the santero pictures were produced as a cottage industry during the long winter nights when the mountainous areas of New Mexico were blanketed with snow and travel was almost impossible. Wood was obtained from all possible sources, including pieces of discarded wagons and containers in which goods were brought up from Mexico. After the country was opened to trade with the eastern parts of the United States, most of the retablos and bultos were literally thrown away. They were piled in old barns, where they were damaged by water leakage, and a good many probably perished as firewood. About fifty years ago, a few pioneers in American folk art "discovered" these religious objects as delightful and even inspiring works of art.

For the benefit of our friends in the Los Angeles area, we will mention that the current exhibit in our library (through October 30) features a group of photographic enlargements of pictures I took in Japan in 1964 and 1965, a number of which will appear in my new book. At the same time, we are showing several new arrivals from Japan consisting of shrines, religious paintings, and ritualistic objects, which have not been on display before.

Instead of making a separate mailing of the Fall Friends Fund Letter this year, it seems practical to combine it with this issue of the Contributors' Bulletin. You will find the usual summation of our publishing program on the following page of this letter, and we hope that you will give it very careful attention. Actually, one of the principal objectives of our Society is to see that our various books and publications reach as many persons as possible. Therefore, the more rapidly the supply dwindles, the more successfully our endeavor is being advanced. We have a very unusual situation this fall, which I am sure you will want to know about, but rather than say more, we invite you to examine the report that follows.

As it seems that space is coming to an end, and furthermore, because we do not wish to delay your consideration of the Friends Fund report, we will save other interesting items for the next letter. In the meantime, we wish for you a very pleasant and productive fall season, and hope that you will find the opportunity to attend our activities as often as possible.

Always most sincerely yours,

*Marilyn P. Hall*

Dear Friend:

The time has come to remind you of our Friends Fund, which is devoted to our publishing projects. Each spring we send you a report of work in progress and needs that are likely to arise during the year. In the fall we inform you of any unusual situations that may arise and require special attention.

This is one of the years in which we find ourselves under extremely heavy expense. Our "Encyclopedic Outline of Symbolical Philosophy" is again out of print, and we have ordered a new edition so that we will have copies to offer in time for Christmas. With each new edition, printing costs are higher, but this year we have one encouraging note. We have been able to contact a binder who specializes in books of an institutional type, from whom we have a bid slightly below the price we have previously paid. This is most helpful, as we feared that the cost of binding would rise. To make the saving, however, we must have a larger quantity of books bound at once, which means a higher binding bill at the present time. This book is the most expensive item in our line, but it is gratifying to realize that the steady demand for it has continued for more than thirty-five years. So many persons have told me that it has brought them insight and understanding, that we feel it is essential to keep this book in print.

At the same time that we are faced with this budget problem, my new book, "Buddhism and Psychotherapy," is going to press. This is also a substantial volume of more than three hundred pages, profusely illustrated. We plan to have a fairly sizeable edition, and will have a thousand copies bound immediately. After careful consideration, I decided that the nature of the text and illustrations required an especially good grade of paper, and while this adds to our costs, we do hope to stay within the low retail price range that we have always tried to maintain for our publications.

In addition to these exceptional items, there will be the continuing need for the binding of other books and the re-publication of smaller items. As it looks now, our printing bill for the fall of 1966 will be more than double the normal requirements, and we will therefore be especially grateful for your generous support of our Friends Fund.

Several friends have already sent their fall donations, and this we deeply appreciate. If you were an "early bird," please accept our sincere thanks and consider this letter a news report. If you have not yet contributed to the Friends Fund, it will be of very real and immediate assistance if you will make it a special point to remember us this year.

We know from the numerous letters we receive that many of you are mindful of the perils and problems that beset non-profit organizations in these materialistic times. It is wonderful to know that we have kind friends to whom we can turn for cooperation in the spreading of our message and the support of our printing budget. For your past favors, we are most grateful, and we hope to hear from you in the near future.

Very sincerely yours,