

The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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40th ANNIVERSARY
OF MANLY P. HALL'S
PUBLIC WORK
1960

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Dear Friend:

While much of the world has been suffering an extremely severe winter, California has had phenomenally warm weather, with temperatures, in many instances, breaking all previous records. As a result, trees began budding in late February, and by the first of March, the spirit of spring pervaded the community. This always suggests various improvements, and in harmony with the season, we have made several additions to our furnishings and fixtures. To improve the appearance of our Auditorium lobby, we have had the sofa completely rebuilt, and there are new chairs to add a bright note to the setting. A long table matching the design of the lobby furnishings has been specially built, and we have secured an attractive cabinet for displaying and storing publications. We were also able to make a most fortunate purchase of two second-hand cabinets for our gift shop, which will provide much-needed display space for art objects, and improve the general appearance of the room.



The May exhibit in our library (May 7 through 28) -- "Osaka Woodblock Prints" -- will comprise a colorful group of material produced in the Japanese city of Osaka in the period between 1800 and 1860. Osaka was the financial center of the Empire, and for a long time, was considered to be deficient in esthetic development. Actually, a very fine group of woodblock print artists, including Hirosada, Masanobu, Sadanobu, and Hanzan, created prints of remarkable strength and technical excellence. Almost exclusively devoted to the actors and themes associated with the Kabuki Theater, the Osaka prints are somewhat smaller than those produced in Tokyo, but show a high quality of workmanship. Today many collectors of Japanese prints are taking an interest in the Osaka masters, and exhibits of these beautiful works of art are included in most showings of Japanese artistry. In addition to the actor prints, there will be a group of surimono -- greeting cards and announcements of literary clubs, which are also the work of the Osaka artists and are among the largest examples known of this woodblock printing technique.

Our current art exhibit (April 2 through 30) is devoted to examples of modern Indian fabrics, including silks and cottons, with beautiful embroidered and printed patterns. The wonderful artistry of the Indian people, both in design and color, has made the products of their looms famous throughout the world. Ornate medallions, arabesques, stripes, and other designs are worked in gold, silver, and colored threads on backgrounds of thin silk. Many of the designs have symbolical meanings and are so pictorial that they can compete favorably with painted works of art. In addition to the fabrics, the exhibit features a selected group of small bronzes, miniature paintings, and brilliantly illuminated manuscript leaves. Altogether, this display is a tribute to the artistic skill of an ancient people who reached a high degree of civilization thousands of years ago.

It is difficult to realize that the April Lecture Notes (#97--"Marriage and the Law of Karma") begins the ninth year of this program of monthly publications. Many people have expressed their appreciation for this service and the hope that the project will continue indefinitely. Last year we made available loose-leaf binders, each of which holds twelve lectures, or a series for one year. These binders, covered in royal blue plastic, are gold-stamped on the spine: "Lectures by Manly P. Hall. P.R.S.," and will fit nicely on a library shelf. Supply is low, but some are still available at \$2.00 each.

On April 21st, I will address a joint meeting of the Orange County Masonic Board of Relief, hosted by the Huntington Beach Masonic Lodge #380. The subject on this occasion will be "Little-Known Facts of Masonic History." The talk is open to Freemasons and their families. . . . This year the annual Los Angeles Conference of the Association for Research and Enlightenment is set for May. The lectures, held at the University Women's Club at 6th and Catalina, are open to the public. I will speak on the theme of the Conference -- "For These Times" -- on Friday, May 12th, at 8:00 p.m.

Dealing with Oriental merchants is a completely delightful experience. In connection with our gift shop, mysterious packages arrive quite frequently. One package we opened recently contained a number of interesting lanterns of different shapes and sizes, finished in shiny black lacquer, trimmed with brass ornaments and silken tassels. Antique religious objects include altar ornaments, miniature shrines, netsuke, scroll paintings and woodcarvings of Jizo and Kannon in traditional poses. Among the unusual ceramic items are a group of old Seto plates made by farmers for their own use some two hundred years ago, with designs of extraordinary charm and interest.



The accompanying illustration shows an especially intriguing item. It is a figure of Ugajin, a mysterious serpent-deity with the head and face of a wise old man. The concept originated in India long ago, and was first introduced into Japan by the great Shingon priest, Kobo Daishi. The figure is a reminder of the saying, "Be ye wise as serpents," for throughout the world, the serpent has been regarded as a symbol of the saint and the scholar, the initiate priests of ancient mysteries and the wise men who are the instructors and protectors of mankind. Our little shrine of Ugajin is interesting because the figure itself is cast in pewter, mounted on an elaborate wooden base, and has a bronze cover in the shape of the sacred pearl that can be

locked over the image, since Ugajin is a secret deity. The complete shrine is about eight inches high, and experts in the field say that such examples are very rare, and almost unknown in this country.

We might also note that correspondence with Eastern art dealers results in some delightful flights into impossible English. On one occasion, an error had been made on giving the size of an object offered in a letter. A subsequent letter explained that "the size was misinformed, and it is hoped that you will kindly admit our misinformation." In one recent communication, we were assured that we had secured a very great bargain. The happy circumstance was stated as follows: "You would never again to get such at that price in the future."

You will be hearing from us soon with further news about our building program. In the meantime, please accept our kindest regards.

Most sincerely yours,

Manly P. Hall

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* it so many times and always
* find something 'new' of great
* value." -- M.P.

*
* "The more one studies 'The
* Zen of the Bright Virtue,'
* the more it unfolds to a
* most inspiring and uplifting
* medium. Truly a great work."
* -- H.C.

*
* "I have recently been reading
* 'Zen of the Bright Virtue,'
* and want you to know that
* never in my life have I come
* upon such clarity of expres-
* sion. You have given an ex-
* cellent explanation of some-
* thing that really cannot be
* explained." -- S.M.

*
* "I am entranced with the pub-
* lication I received recently--
* 'The White Bird of Tao.' I
* seem to have known it all my
* life. Thank you! Thank you!"
* -- W.M.

*
* "I must write to tell you how
* much I have enjoyed and appre-
* ciate 'The White Bird of Tao.'
* So many things were explained
* and cleared up for me in this
* book." -- M.G.

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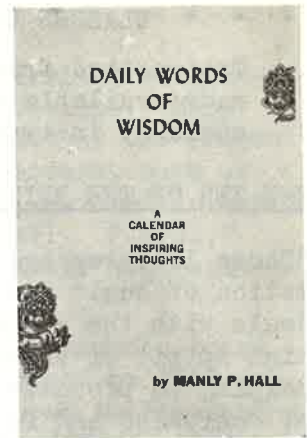
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