

The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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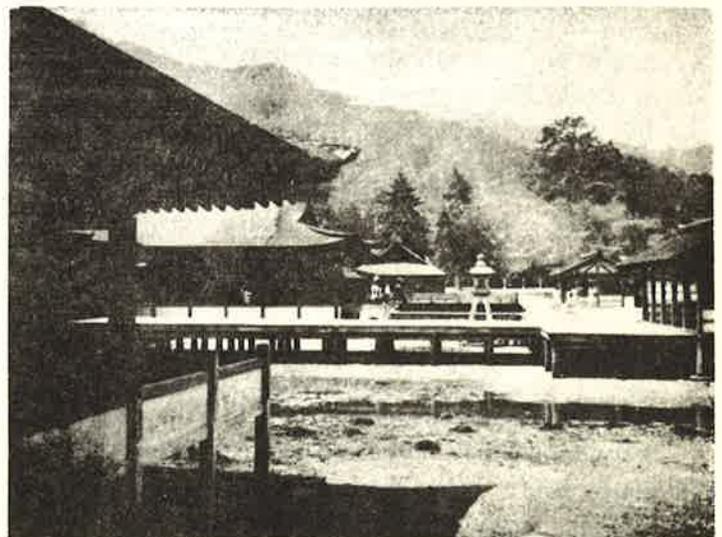
HENRY L. DRAKE
VICE-PRESIDENT

CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN - October 1971

Dear Friends

In our last Contributors' Bulletin we promised to tell you something more about the island of Miyajima. The name is derived from two Japanese words: *miya* meaning a shrine; and *jima* meaning an island. The real name of this unusual sanctuary is Itsukushima, and it is located on the west side of Hiroshima Bay. The island is five miles long and two and one-half miles wide. The terrain is rather rocky, and the highest point is about 1,700 feet above the level of the bay. The shrines on the island are dedicated to the three daughters of the mythological hero who ruled over the land in prehistoric times. The normal population is approximately 4,000, and in the course of time, their occupations have varied considerably. Naturally, various Shinto priests serve the shrines, and there are innkeepers to meet the needs of pilgrims and sightseers. Many shopkeepers sell folk art made by the local inhabitants, and as usual, most of the products are not available elsewhere. In older times there was a law forbidding births and deaths on the island. This ruling was difficult to enforce, especially as the population increased; but sick and decrepit persons are still taken to the nearby mainland if possible. A number of tame deer roam about to the delight of children, and mischievous crows attempt to convey the impression that they are the owners of the region. Even to this time, no dogs are permitted on the island.

The cluster of shrines is typically Shinto, with emphasis upon simple architecture and natural wood. The most unusual feature of the Miyajima Shrine is that more than half of its 888 feet of corridors are supported by pilings driven into the sandy beach of the Inland Sea. At high tide the corridors appear to be floating on the water. Unfortunately, at the time of our visit the tide was low, which detracted from the picturesqueness of the setting. The buildings are under the supervision of a Shinto priest wearing white and purple robes, and this venerable person contributed considerably to the general charm.



The original buildings of the Itsukushima are said to have been built during the reign of the Empress Regnant Suiko (593-628 A.D.). At that time, the celebrated Prince Shotoku was Crown Prince and Regent, and it is likely that the Empress and her nephew took an active part in the construction of the Miyajima Sanctuary. Since that time, the shrines have been rebuilt and restored so often that it is unlikely that any vestages of the original galleries have survived.

Among the most treasured art works of Japan is the great Torii which stands in the water 528 feet from the main temple. The first Torii to occupy the site was erected by Taira-no-Kiyomori 800 years ago, and the present structure is the eighth rebuilding on the same site. The Torii, which resembles a huge gateway, is fifty-three feet high, and the top crossbar is seventy-seven feet long. The huge vertical pillars, made from camphor trees, are thirty-three feet in circumference at the base. New camphor wood is periodically inserted in those areas which are exposed directly to the water at high tide.



There are several ways of reaching Miyajima, the most comfortable being by motorcar from Hiroshima--a trip requiring approximately one hour. Your car can be placed on a ferryboat, and the trip from the mainland requires about fifteen minutes. It is a considerable convenience to have transportation on the island, although the distances are not great. In addition to the main ferryboat, there is a colorful dragon ship with an elaborate figurehead, which is favored by children and natives from remote country districts. The Miyajima Hotel is convenient for those who wish to stay for a few days and--wonderful to report--it has semi-Western accommodations!

Last July while I was in Munich, I visited the Tinakophec and had the privilege of seeing the celebrated self-portrait of Albrecht Durer, which he painted in 1500. The great artist has been accused of basing his concept upon a picture of Christ, but more careful consideration would incline us to reject this accusation. Actually, the city of Nuremberg cast its lot with Lutheranism in 1525. Durer was convinced that he had a special destiny in the world of art. It was his moral duty to create a Protestant Christian interpretation of the ministry of Christ and the early Apostles. Moved by this inner religious compulsion, Durer attempted what proved to be the impossible. There was simply no ground upon which to build a new school of sacred themes or techniques. The genius of the artist, however, survived this mystical crisis, and Durer continued to publish works that transcended all sectarian barriers. In his later years he produced several valuable books relating to the proportions of the human body and optics for the use of the draftsman and painter.

Durer was born in 1471, and this year a special medal was struck in Germany to celebrate the 500th anniversary of his work. We are including herewith a picture of the obverse of this medal, with a powerful likeness of Durer. On the reverse are his heraldic arms and famous A.D. monogram. I am reminded of an anecdote which is perhaps worth preserving. The Emperor Charles V once asked Michelangelo what he thought

of Albrecht Durer. With the noble frankness of a man of genius who knows how to appreciate superior talents; Michelangelo instantly replied, "I esteem him so highly, that I would, if I were not Michelangelo, much rather be Albrecht Durer than even the Emperor Charles V."



In spite of the longshoremen's strike, we have received two very fine Ukiyo-e triptychs flown in from Japan. They will be shown in our October exhibit at headquarters. One triptych is by Toyakuni and is an old Japanese vampire myth. The pictures form a scene in a Kabuki story, called "Tamamononaye" in which a vampire fox runs and hides in the imperial palace. Here, he takes on the appearance of a court lady, but the disguise is penetrated by Ubeyasunari, who sees the true face of the fox in a mirror. The second print by Kuniyoshi is exceedingly dramatic. The action takes place in a deep cave where a goddess appears in a circle of light and saves General Kiro Nitta from a tragic death. Wood-block prints of this quality are now exceedingly difficult to find, and we are happy to be able to include these fine examples in our October showing.

We have recently added to our research library *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* by Giuseppe Tucci, published by La Libreria Dello Stato, Rome, 1949. This is one of the most important and rare works dealing with Tibetan religious tankas and is illustrated with nearly 300 plates. The set is complete in two folio volumes of text and a portfolio of plates. So far as we know, the nearest available copy has been the one in the reference library of the Brundage collection of oriental art in the De Young Museum in San Francisco. Professor Tucci not only describes a large group of old Tibetan paintings, but he identifies most of the deities and explains the concepts underlying this type of Tantric art. He also makes a comprehensive study of Tibetan history and provides information on myths, legends, and fables not to be found elsewhere in English. Those concerned with Tibetan religion will find this new set extremely helpful and informative.

We have had an unusually busy summer, and by the time you receive this letter, our fall activities will be in full swing. You will be hearing from us again early in December. In the meantime, we are continually mindful of your many kindnesses and generous help.

Always most sincerely,

Marilyn P. Hall

SPECIAL NOTICE FROM OUR BOOK DEPARTMENT

A number of important and scholarly volumes in our fields of interest are now available in attractive and accurate reprints. Most of those listed here are included in Mr. Hall's list of recommended reading and have long been rare and out of print. To these have been added selected works by outstanding modern authors. The Contributors' Bulletin will list additional works in future issues.

| <u>Title</u> | <u>Author</u> | <u>Price</u> |
|---|-------------------------|--------------|
| The Secret Tradition in Alchemy | A.E. Waite | \$ 13.50 |
| The Science of Becoming Oneself | H. Sayardarian | 6.00 |
| The Science of the Aura | S.G.J. Ousley (P) | .75 |
| Tibetan Yoga & Secret Doctrine | Evans-Wentz (P) | 1.75 |
| Toward a Contemporary Psychology of Intuition | Malcom Westcott | 7.95 |
| The Training of a Zen Buddhist Monk | | 6.00 |
| Two Essays on Analytical Psychology #7 | C.G. Jung | 4.50 |
| Two Legends--Oedipus & Thesus | Andre Gide | .95 |
| The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation | Evans-Wentz | 2.50 |
| Teachings of Tibetan Yoga | (Trans) Garma Chang | 5.00 |
| Thought Forms | Besant-Leadbearer (P) | 3.45 |
| A Textbook of Theosophy | C.W. Leadbeater | 1.75 |
| Transcendental Astrology | A.G.S. Norris | 8.50 |
| Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa | (ed) Evan-Wentz (P) | 2.25 |
| The Theory & Practice of the Mandala | G. Tucci (P) | 2.50 |
| The Turba Philosophorum | A.E. Waite | 8.50 |
| Taoist Yoga, Alchemy & Immortality | Charles Luk (P) | 2.95 |
| The Teachers of Gurdjieff | Raphael LeFert | 5.00 |
| Towards Aquarius | Vera W. Reid | 3.95 |
| A Treatise on Cosmic Fire | Alice Bailey | 16.50 |
| A Treatise on White Magic | Alice Bailey | 10.00 |
| This Universe of Space | P.M. Millman | 1.50 |
| You Are Not the Target | Laura Huxley (P) | 2.00 |
| The Unknowable Gurdjieff | Margaret Andersen | 5.50 |
| Varieties of Religious Experience - William James | William James | 2.45 |
| Vedanta for Modern Man | (Ed) C. Isherwood | 3.75 |
| Vocational Guidance by Astrology | Charles Luntz | 5.00 |
| Voice of the Silence | Blavatsky | 2.00 |
| The Wanderer | K. Gibran | 4.95 |
| The Way of All Women | Esther Harding | 7.00 |
| The Way of the Sufi | Indries Shah (P) | 2.45 |
| The Way to Christ | Jakob Böhme | 5.00 |
| The Way of the White Cloud | Lama Govinda (P) | 2.95 |
| We Japanese | Fujiya Hotel (P) | 12.50 |
| Western Psychotherapy & Hindu Sadhana | Hans Jacobs | 5.00 |
| The Will to Power | Frederich Nietzsche (P) | 2.95 |
| The World of Ted Serios | Jule Eisenberg M.D. | 6.50 |
| Writings of William James | William James | 4.95 |
| The Works of Thomas Vaughan, Alchemist & Mystic | | 15.00 |
| The Way of Zen | Alan Watts | 1.95 |
| Woodblock Print Primer | Tomikichiro Tokuriki | 4.25 |
| Wonderful World of Netsuke | Raymond Bushell | 3.75 |
| What is the Moon (Haiku) | Ruby Lytle | 1.00 |
| William James on Psychical Research | (ed) G. Murphy (P) | 1.95 |

These books may be ordered directly from the Philosophical Research Society, Inc., (address on first page). Please add 25¢ for handling on orders of less than \$5.00, and sales tax is to be included by California residents. Note: Prices subject to change.

2.95
1.2
25
3.32