

The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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Dear Friends:

One of our local auction houses recently announced a sale featuring a diversified collection by "several owners." Among the treasures were reproductions of Louis XVI furniture, a few heroic bronzes of the Second Empire, and pews and stained glass windows from a demolished church. Tucked in among these goodies were a few Oriental pieces, one of which was listed as a "standing figure of a Siamese girl." This was on display for several weeks in the window of the auction gallery, and so I decided to attend the third session, which included most of the Oriental art. Incidentally, the catalog was a masterpiece of misinformation, and it was often difficult to recognize an item from its description. In due course, the "Siamese girl" came into my possession at a very moderate price.

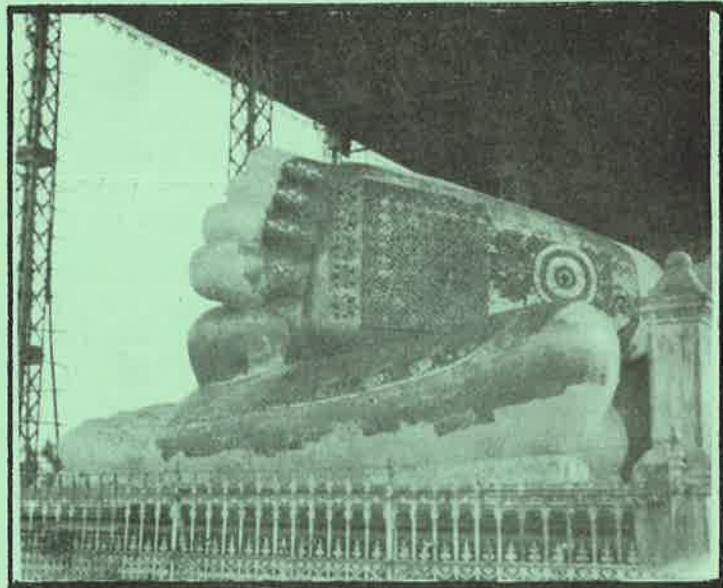
Actually, the figurine is of a very scarce and much sought-after type. It is a bronze figure of the Ayubha period (15th to 18th century) and measures twelve inches in height, not counting the base. It is in excellent condition and was probably cast in the 17th century. The accompanying photograph reveals clearly that the "Siamese girl" is actually a Walking Buddha. The headdress, with its flame-shaped finial, and the long ears of wisdom leave no doubt as to the identity of the casting. The auction gallery may be forgiven for suspecting that the figure was feminine. It was common practice in old times to suggest the Buddha image as androgynous, much as in the case of the Kannon likeness in Japan. Thailand is the only country which has produced images of Buddha in a walking position. These were first carved or cast in the 14th century and were probably based upon bas-reliefs on ancient temple walls. Two fine illustrations of this type are to be found in *The Arts of Thailand*, which was issued as a catalog to a loan exhibit from Thailand held in New York in 1960-62 and later shown in Los Angeles at the County Museum.



Images of the Walking Buddha are sometimes accompanied by impressions of Buddha's footprints. These may be directly behind or in front of the standing figure. The implication is that Buddha is either stepping forward or stepping backward from the footprints. The symbolism is most interesting. The walking figure suggests the pilgrimage of

Buddha throughout Asia, and the impressions of Buddha's feet represent the temples built by his migrating priests. The aforementioned catalog contains an intriguing observation which might not be considered part of a formal description. The feet of Buddha are ornamented with 108 symbols, a number associated with the number of Buddhist scriptures and the number of beads on a traditional rosary. The catalog observes that these signs are associated with divination by podoscopy, which is the reading of the lines on the foot, just as palmistry deals with the lines on the hand.

Many years ago, Count Louis Hamon, the famous palmist who wrote under the name of *Cheiro*, told me that he was convinced that a science of character analysis could be developed through the study of the feet. The principal difficulty was the thickening of the skin on the soles of the feet, which had a tendency to obscure the lines. *Cheiro* believed that the lines on the hands are strengthened and changed because major arteries from the heart terminate in the palms. This probably also influenced the mystical symbolism of the wounds in the hands and feet of Christ and the stigmata of St. Francis d'Assisi. Pursuant of this, a technique for the diagnosis and treatment of disease by pressure points on the feet is now widely used by physiotherapists. The experience proves that nerve centers on the feet are intimately connected with the principal organs of the body. In passing, it might also be noted that the old charts used by practitioners of bleeding indicate that the letting of blood between the toes is advocated for certain pulmonary ailments.



The markings on the soles of Buddha's feet may also have cosmological significance and probably were incorporated into a system of divination based upon the Oriental zodiac. I photographed an outstanding example of Buddha's footprint from the gigantic figure of the Nirvana of Buddha near Pegu in Burma. Here, the ornamentations are inlaid in fragments of glass or semiprecious stones. In any event, the Walking Buddha has left impressions of his feet from Adam's Peak in Ceylon to ancient Japanese temples in Nara.

Our Fall Open House comes on Sunday, November 12th, and our headquarters will be open from 10:00am to 4:00pm. A feature of this occasion is the White Elephant Sale, and our friends bring in many interesting items and find unusual bargains. Those living in the vicinity are invited to contribute suitable material as a means of assisting in the support of our activities. Books dealing with our several fields of interest are welcome, and books of this kind may find a permanent place in our library. If you happen to have back issues of our magazine (*Horizon*, or *The PRS Journal*), these are most acceptable, as we are trying to assemble a few complete sets for special collectors of our books or scholarly institutions. There will be light refreshments, and Mrs. Pearl Thomas, our librarian, will discuss our books and exhibits during the special lecture at 2:00pm.

The November exhibit at the Philosophical Research Society will feature Eastern folk arts and crafts and material especially suited for use in the Western home. There is

increasing emphasis upon conversation pieces, which is an excellent trend, for at this time, conversation is almost a lost art. Textiles lend themselves to many usages. Rare examples may be framed and are as attractive as paintings. Runners, mats, and hangings add color and charm and are suitable to either conservative or ultramodern decor. There will be a group of photographs showing the interior arrangements of Japanese homes, and books and manuscripts on the tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and the incense ceremony. Folk potteries have a very modern look and a whimsy that is completely delightful.

Chinese charms are picturesque and "protect" their new owners from being accused of lack of originality. Curious Chinese paintings on vegetable ivory depict the lives of the proletarians and also quaint bird and flower scenes. Shadow dolls and puppets have always delighted Easterners, and in ancient times were believed to be the ghosts of the dead. The designs on clothing were of sacred origin and protected the wearer from evil spirits. Great scholars and saints were esteemed in the East, and rare material dealing with Confucius, Mencius, and Lao Tse, can be viewed at this exhibit.

Folk arts in general are referred to as the "lesser" arts, or the "little" arts, but they were probably more widely diffused throughout Eastern society than the productions of the classical schools. These "little" arts are the ones which are especially adaptable to the modern home. They have all the impact of the ultramodern but at the same time a basic integrity which is too often missing from the productions of contemporary Western artists. Folk arts open a way to profound appreciation for the "skills of the neighborhood." A parallel can be found among the Pennsylvania Dutch who ornamented their barns with mandala designs to protect cattle from evil spirits. Collectors of folk art also have a keen appreciation for the old carved figureheads of ships as well as the wood carvings of Indians that once stood by the door of tobacco shops.

A program is now underway to preserve the traditional arts of the American Indian tribes and the Spanish-American communities along the Rio Grande. We feel that understanding is built upon appreciation, and the instinctual arts, uncorrupted by commercial consideration and free from the sophistication which is usually associated with decadence, will help us all to live in more gracious surroundings, refreshed by the charming productions of minds that are child-like but never childish.

In the next issue of our Contributors' Bulletin, we will have something to suggest the importance of the Christmas season. At that moment, I think I shall also call upon memories dealing with my venerated grandmother, who could always be depended upon for remarks appropriate to her Scottish ancestry and Wellesley education. Until then, we want to thank you again for your continuing support of our activities, your valued friendship, and your constructive thoughts.

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>
Human Potentialities	Gardner Murphy	\$ 7.50
Hume on Religion	R. Wolsheim, (Ed) (P)	2.50
Hymn of the Universe	T. de Chardin	3.50
Hypnosis and Suggestion in Psychotherapy	H. Bernheim, M.D.	10.00
The Heart of Buddhist Meditation	Nyanaponika Thera	3.00
Hanafuda--The Flower Card Game	Japan	3.95
Hara, The Vital Center of Man	Karlfried Durckheim	7.50
That Hideous Strength	C.S. Lewis	5.95
Out of the Silent Planet	C.S. Lewis	4.95
Perelandra	C.S. Lewis	4.95
Hatha Yoga	Shyam Sundar Goswami	8.50
The History and Origins of Druidism	Lewis Spence	7.50
The Heart of Confucius	Archie J. Bahm	4.50
Hidden Channels of the Mind	Louisea E. Rhine	6.00
How to Interpret Your Own Dreams	Tom Chetwynd	6.95
Human Magnetism, Its Nature, Physiology and Psychology	H.S. Drayton (P)	4.00
Iamblichus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians	Thomas Taylor (Transl.)	12.50
I Ching--Book of Changes	Baynes	7.50
In the Hope of Nibbana, the Ethics of Theravada Buddhism	King	6.00
The Image of an Oracle	Ira Progoff	7.50
Imitation of Christ	Kempis	2.45
Indian and Christian Miracles of Walking on the Water	W.N. Brown	2.00
The Ink Smearred Lady	Shio Sakanishi	2.95
The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo	F. Spiegelberg, (Ed)	8.50
In Search of the Miraculous	Ouspensky	10.00
Introduction to St. Thomas Aquinas	Anton C. Pegis (Ed)	2.45
Introduction to Tantra Sastra	Sir J. Woodroffe	3.00
The Iron Flute	Senaki and Shouy, (Ed)	3.95
Isis Unveiled, Volumes I and II	H.P. Blavatsky (P)	10.00
It's Better with Your Shoes Off	Ann Cleveland	2.50
Initiations and Initiates in Tibet	Alexandra David-Neel	2.45
In the Pronaos of the Temple of Wisdom	Franz Hartmann	3.00
Imaginative Ikebana	Meikof Kasuya	4.50

These books may be ordered directly from The Philosophical Research Society, Inc. (address on page 1). Please add 25¢ for handling on orders of less than \$5.00, and sales tax is to be included by California residents. Note: Prices are subject to change.