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(All Unsigned Articles are by Manly P. Hall)

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THE EDITOR'S POINT OF VIEW

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF OPTIMISM

RECENTLY, I heard an interesting discussion dealing with America's contribution to world culture in the present generation. It was observed that the term *culture* has many meanings, and we have been inclined to associate it with art, philosophy, music, the drama, and the branches of moral and ethical education. An objection was raised, for according to the classical concept, America was not in the vanguard of cultural progress. One enthusiastic progressive suggested that we must find a new meaning for the old word and define culture as the spreading of the blessings of industry, economics, transportation, communication, and democratic political ideology. The opinion was stated that the present proof of culture is personal and collective uneasiness. We are cultured to the degree that we are dissatisfied, worried, and a little frustrated. The gift of Western man to the world in general is a desperate determination to raise the standard of living, increase wages, and bring to underprivileged areas the blessings of automobiles, freeways, high taxes, and unbalanced budgets. The cultured man of today must be under constant psychic stimulation. He must be a fighter. He must be resolved and determined to propagandize the blessings of scientific progress. He must bring joy to the world in terms of

atomics and electronics, and when everyone is thoroughly industrialized, and buying power is equal to appetite, all will be well with mankind.

To me, this sounds rather silly. It is doubtful if we can ever spend our way into a state of civilization, or unfold the latent graces of the soul better while plagued with monthly payments and a deluge of opportunities to live beyond our means. Our picture of the successful man is not reassuring. He is tired, bored, and disillusioned. One moment he quiets his nerves with sedatives, and the next he whips them with stimulants. He is critical, even cynical, and is rapidly passing into a state often referred to as sophistication. What is a sophisticate? The dictionary says that sophistication is the loss of genuineness. It is a false group of attitudes arising from experience or the misinterpretation of experience, as distinguished from our due and proper natures, which are essentially simple, kindly, straightforward, and modest. One of the proofs of sophistication today is disillusionment, leading to a broad pessimism. We have come to regard the worrier as one who has accepted fully the challenge of the modern muddle. He is head over heels in modern living. He has enthusiastically taken on every absurdity of society. It would follow that life takes on an ominous coloring. The path of human endeavor is strewn with obstacles, and it is quite easy to prove that we have little cause for rejoicing.

Experience has long been held to be a valuable teacher, but without insight, it profits little. Thinking and acting from false premises, modern man brings upon himself many ills and troubles which are unnecessary and non-productive. He therefore experiences a life which is highly discouraging, and which can become truly meaningful only when its mysteries are illuminated by the light of an adequate philosophy. It is this philosophy which must be identified with our cultural need. It is not what we have that refines us or ennobles our character; it is the insight which enables us to use well the privileges and opportunities provided by economics and industry that differentiates barbarianism from civilization. We are not an advanced people simply because we are wealthy barbarians.

On the ground that all intelligent people are worried to death with due cause, it is now customary to eye the optimist with pro-

found suspicion. He must be a superficial and thoughtless chap, feeble-minded or dim-witted. He cannot be living life for all it is worth and still retain a cheerful disposition. If he sees good in things, it is because he does not look in the right places. If he would change his focus a little, he would realize that things are getting worse every minute. I know many people who have settled down to the methodical task of listing and classifying both common mistakes and those splendid errors which occur only to the most distinguished misanthropes. We can all worry if we give ourselves half a chance. We must grow up to a hazardous future and instruct our children to be suspicious of everyone, including us. The rewards for a well-developed pessimism will be found in almost any basic textbook on abnormal psychology. The frightened and the disgruntled develop countless symptoms and find their point of view destructive of health and happiness. It is hard to understand why people are willing to make a career of gloomy and foreboding thoughts and emotions. One would think that any sane person would rather be cheerful than disconsolate, but in practice, the reverse seems to be true.

Let us try to find a practical working definition of an optimist. Certainly he is one who instinctively searches for the good in all things, convinced that it is there. He is able to remember that the sun is still shining, even when the sky is overcast. There are two basic levels of optimism: children and those of older years who have remained childish simply do not have much capacity for worry, and therefore remain comparatively cheerful. They forget troubles quickly, count their blessings easily, and leave heavy responsibility to those better equipped. There is also a mature kind of optimism which arises from convictions held firmly in consciousness. Most of the great teachers have been sustained by an inward realization that mankind is worth instructing, that people are essentially good-hearted and well intentioned, and that real progress can be accomplished by dedicated effort. Many who are very wise have developed a childlikeness of character which bestows a wonderful serenity of spirit. Mystics who have actually experienced a degree of inward illumination have always been distinguished by a quiet but enduring optimism. The principal end of religion is that man shall accept the presence of a Divine Power

everywhere at work in the world. It is virtually impossible to believe in a benevolent Deity and at the same time develop a chronic pessimism. We all have moments when we are unable to maintain our psychic equilibrium. We become discouraged, offended, and worried. If we are real people, however, with solid convictions, we soon rescue our thoughts from these negative associations and restate our primary beliefs.

The highest kind of optimism results from early and continuing contact with the best level of world understanding. Human culture has been enriched by several great idealistic philosophies which have comforted man for more than two thousand years. Can we deny that these sublime schools of enlightened belief are an important part of culture? Would it not be fair to say that hope and faith, supported by reason and judgment, are the enduring foundations of culture? Nature intends all creatures to rise above their own weaknesses and to develop resources by which they can maintain kindly and constructive attitudes under even the most trying conditions. How does it happen, then, that we remain cynics to the bitter end? Pessimism is closely related to fear, and a philosophy built upon fear exaggerated by imagination stimulates ominous notions. One way to check over-pessimistic tendencies is to become aware of the habit pattern into which our mind most easily falls. If we realize that we are inclined to be a bit gloomy, we can minimize our reaction to our own fears.

It is only fair to point out that the optimist also has difficulties peculiar to his instincts. The cultivation of an optimistic habit can be a cause of general annoyance. I have known folks who try to meet the difficulties of the day with a formula of cheerfulness. One of them admitted that he had no real reason to be cheerful, but he was determined to do his best. Some metaphysical groups have made much of a ritual of the broad, if somewhat frozen, smile. Real optimism is not a technique; it is an expression of an interesting and useful life, enriched with constructive overtones.

Each person must, in the course of his mortal career, arrive at certain general conclusions about himself and others. We live in an intimate environment of universal laws, continuously operating according to the principles inherent in spirit, mind, and matter. These laws are factual, and it would probably be an exaggeration

to suggest that they are essentially optimistic or pessimistic. Man, however, cannot live in his world in a state of continuous indifference. He cannot merely accept; he must interpret. From his relationships with his environment, he becomes hopeful or hopeless. To him, nature must appear either as friend or foe.

Savage man seems to have had quite a measure of optimism, even though his ways were hazardous. With the coming of civilization, the human collective entered a state of increasing confusion. Man's inconsistent purposes and projects obscured natural law and forced the individual to spend his years in a sequence of artificial situations. The immediate took precedence, and those more remote but nobler principles were generally disregarded. Even religion, though everywhere admired, was unable to cope with man's growing doubts about himself, providence, and the world in which he lived. It seemed safer to be suspicious, and in this way protect oneself against imposture and imposition. Chronic suspicion made life more difficult for all concerned, and contributed strongly to the building up of neurotic pressures.

Today, even psychologists might view the optimist with some apprehension. He does not seem to be adjusted. He is out of step with the majority and is therefore subject to various penalties imposed by society upon non-conformists. It is held, for example, that the optimist is more likely to be disillusioned or suddenly damaged by some disaster than the pessimist, who expects nothing but trouble. Here, again, we must try to understand the kind of optimist we are describing, and how vulnerable he may be to a serious disappointment. I know persons who have had a great sense of security over a period of years and a strong faith in the goodness of life. Then a tragedy occurred resulting in a loss of faith in both God and man. If, however, the original optimism was sincere and supported by enlightened convictions, the tragic incident was gradually accepted and assimilated, and a reasonable degree of optimism was restored. We must remember that optimism is not blind faith. If our attitude is false, we will come to grief even though we be cheerful.

Again, the final criterion of nature's wishes in this matter is revealed through a series of rewards and punishments. When we do what nature requires, keep the rules, and abide by the real and

unalterable facts, we are rewarded by a state of normalcy. As normal beings, we are able to administer our affairs with dignity, to live useful lives, to be good and faithful friends, and intelligent parents. Our attitudes work for us instead of fighting against us. Really cheerful people have better health and are less subject to depleting and depressing ailments. They recuperate from problems rapidly and intelligently, and all activities become more enjoyable.

It must be, therefore, that nature prefers that we be optimistic. It tells us in countless ways that the happy person is more successful in almost any area of endeavor. By the same token, nature and nature's God frown upon the pessimist. Even though he is right in some of his criticisms, he is even penalized for being right. I have known many prophets of real or imaginery doom, and they are a sickly lot. As they grow older, their tendency to criticism deepens, and their psychic acidity afflicts their body with countless infirmities. They lose friends, antagonize associates, and sacrifice the respect of their relatives. There is no visible reward or tangible gain from pessimism except a kind of masochistic delight in being miserable.

It would seem to me, therefore, that pessimism, rather than optimism, is a symptom of psychological disturbance. There is something wrong with the pessimist. There is a reason behind his attitude, and this reason is abnormal. Some experience has remained undigested; some fact has been cruelly misinterpreted, distorted, or twisted, to sustain bitterness. If we start seeing things that are not there, we begin to suspect that we are in need of psychological counseling. All pessimists are, to a measure, ghost-ridden. They have been conquered by shadows and clouds. If we must be conquered by something, it were better if the bright light of the sun be the victor. Most pessimists also have been defeated by environment. This can only mean that their inner resources are undeveloped. Paracelsus taught that there is a radiant miniature sun in the heart of every living thing. This light within is given to us that we may overcome the darkness of the world in which we live. If the flame in the heart burns bright, we walk in the light.

There are many paintings of old saints. I remember one of St. Jerome, in which he is depicted sitting at a table reading a great

book, possibly the Bible, by the light of a tall, graceful candle. Each of us must read the book of life with a proper light. This light must arise in spirit, for it was always believed that spirit is a flame, or spark, concealed in man, but made manifest through the constructive works of human endeavor. If we read the sacred book of nature by the flame of our inner hope and faith, the letters and the words are easily discerned, and the sentences reveal their true meanings. If there is no light within, however, the page is dim and blurred. The letters and words may be mistaken, and the text convey the wrong meaning. It is not just optimism that keeps the flame in man's heart burning bright; it is the desperate need for light, which we all realize and experience. We may be ridiculed a little if we try to keep the spark of happiness shining in the darkness of doubt and fear, but the ones who ridicule are far worse off than ourselves.

Optimism is best attained by a kind of basic education. If we become learned in values, we can build foundations under hopes. If we are mindful of the good that has been accomplished, we can be more patient under adversity. Education should be pointed toward an appreciation of the dignity and sublimity of the human achievement. Certainly we have had our Napoleons and our Hitlers, but we have also had Jesus and Buddha. We have had tyrants, but also great humanitarians. We have had corrupt politicians, but also noble rulers. Even in the most selfish of times, the world has brought forth idealists, philanthropists, great artists, musicians, and poets. If we have inherited ages of feuding and intolerance, we have also inherited the magnificence of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. For each tyrant who has profaned the pages of history, there have been thousands, even millions, of gentle people who have lived unhonored and unknown, keeping principles and living convictions under the most difficult situations. To see this good, and to know it, is to find a new courage and a new faith.

Perhaps the thing we need most is a philosophy of meaning. We read so much and study so much, yet it may mean so little. Meaning is not to be found merely in dates and names and places. Meaning is the movement of consciousness through the long history of human society. Meaning is the significance of what hap-

pens. The happening may be sordid or tragic, and the meaning may be sublime. If we cling too literally to the commonplace, pessimism is almost inevitable. It can best be dispelled by discovering the miraculous and the wonderful behind the commonplace.

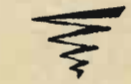
An old Chinese sage summarized this thought in his contemplation of a weed growing beside the door of his mountain hermitage. To the average person, there is nothing wonderful about a weed; in fact, it is rather troublesome. But the old scholar began to contemplate the mystery of life behind this common plant. Ultimately he was lifted up into a sublime experience of consciousness, for he realized that beyond acceptance or rejection was understanding. To understand even a weed is to share in the life of the cosmos. The weed has its proper destiny, its labor to perform, its right to exist. It is a weed only because we have made it a weed, but in the greater wisdom of things, it is just as marvellous as a rose or a lily. People sometimes appear like weeds, but if we understand aright, we can have some optimism about their ultimate natures and the purposes which they serve, and the confused way in which they are trying to grow. Optimism may often have to be patient, generous, and forgiving, but this is easier for an optimist than it is for a pessimist; for pessimism verges toward bitterness, where there can be little of forgiving or forgetting.

If you have a noticeable inclination to moroseness, or troubles have a tendency to cling to you, it does not necessarily follow that you must rush to an analyst to have your internal motivations examined. Before taking expensive and difficult measures, try developing what the Chinese call "the happiness plant." Plant a seed of joy in the garden of your soul, guard it, provide it with proper nutrition, and see if it will not develop into a handsome tree which will provide you shade and protection when need arises. When a streak of pessimism strikes you, sit down with a pencil and paper and list all the present or impending troubles. Make a nice, neat sentence, and keep on adding to the list until you cannot think of anything more that could possibly be unpleasant. After this, there are two courses of procedure. One is to put the list away for a week in some convenient place. When you go back to it, you may be properly surprised. After only seven

days, many of your doubts and perturbations may be obsolete. Of course, you will have fresh ones, but these will be obsolete next week. You may discover that you were just in a bad mood when you made the list, or that you were mistaken, or lacked certain facts which afterwards became available.

The second way of handling your list is to immediately analyze your griefs and grievances in terms of their own factual content. Are you sure that what you have written is the truth about your own deepest feelings or the conditions to which you refer? Are you certain that you have read the motives of others correctly? Have you been influenced by gossip or idle report? Are your sources of information trustworthy, or have you frequently found similar information incorrect? Did you prepare your list in a relaxed state of mind, or under some immediate indignation? Are you really the kind of person who normally indulges in such complaints as you have recorded? Are you a little surprised or disappointed in yourself? Would it be a good idea to think meditatively or prayerfully about the statements you have made? Are they proper to a really thoughtful and kindly individual? Proceeding in this manner, you may eliminate or modify several items on your list. Then go a little further; try to analyze in a simple and direct way the basic tendencies of your temperament which are revealed through hypersensitivity, worry, or a critical approach toward living.

Constructive optimism more often results from thoughtfulness than from thoughtlessness. We can follow impulses and instincts to negative conclusions or we can pause and reflect. This pause, this moment of suspending judgment, will often allow our optimism to reassert itself. If we are students of religion and philosophy, if we believe in the splendid tradition which has descended to us for our guidance and inspiration, this inner believing will come to our rescue if we can attain a few moments of poise and integration. Most folks can do this if they will try, but tension results in a kind of haste which denies us those brief moments in which we can gather our psychological resources and face the future with renewed enthusiasm.



THE WESTERN PARADISE OF AMITABHA

Part I: Introduction

Both the Chinese and Tibetans have long printed their books, charms, and religious pictures by a process called *xylography*. The text or designs were carved in shallow relief into the surface of a smooth slab or block of specially prepared and selected wood. If a slab was used, both sides were carved to conserve space and material. In the case of a block or cube, four surfaces were used. The lines from which the future prints were to be made were left raised, and the surrounding wood was cut away. This is the opposite procedure from engraving or stone rubbing, in which the significant areas were depressed. The xylographic procedure is the same as was used by such early European artists as Albrecht Durer in designing his celebrated woodblock prints. Refinement of the same method made possible the wonderful many-colored Japanese woodblock prints of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The development of woodblock printing in Asia was closely associated with the production of the sacred Buddhist texts, and examples as early as the 8th century show that illustrations were cut on the same blocks with the text. In China, Korea, Japan, and Tibet, the principal monasteries of Buddhism not only had impressive collections of block-printed books, but also adequate room for the storage of the original blocks from which new editions could be published as demand required. In all these countries, it was customary to prepare and keep separate blocks depicting the various deities of the religion, legendary scenes, mandalas, magical devices, and protective talismans and amulets. These were provided for the laity, much as Christian art was sold or distributed to the faithful in shops near churches or cathedrals. Buddhist pilgrims visiting celebrated shrines brought home these sacred prints as souvenirs or as protective objects, and especially handsome examples were provided for persons of distinction. The ofuda of Japan, available to visitors at both Buddhist and Shinto shrines, are examples of this practice.

In Lamaist art, key woodblocks were sometimes used in the preparation of the colorful thang-kas or temple banners. These

Buddha Preaching

Two sections from the elaborately illuminated edition of the Buddhist Scriptures specially prepared for the 16th-century Emperor Wan Li. Thin silk was pasted over the woodblock print, and the coloring was added by hand and includes metallic gold and lapis lazuli.

were paintings of various sizes, usually bordered with silk or brocade, with a stick at top and bottom like the Japanese kakemono, or vertical scroll paintings. In the case of the thang-kas, the complete design could be first stamped in black or other convenient color on a specially coated cloth, and then the artist applied the opaque pigments that completely concealed the printed lines. As might be expected, the earlier examples of woodblock illustrations are comparatively crude, although some have great art value. They are collected as primitives, and certainly have an impact much greater than the more delicate work of later time. Editions of the Buddhist Canon published during the Ming Dynasty (1367-

1644) usually include elaborate frontispieces at the beginning of the accordion volumes. These designs represent Buddha seated in the midst of an assembly of bodhisattvas, saints, monks, and celebrated beings. When these sutras were placed in the Imperial Library, or presented as gifts to the Emperor, the frontispieces were handsomely colored by hand and further adorned with gold and powdered lapis lazuli, as in the example we reproduce herewith, which was made for the Emperor Wan Li (1573-1620).

The circumstances involved in the production of Chinese and Tibetan woodblocks are not entirely clear, and there does not appear to be a definitive work on the subject. It is possible that one of the old guilds which are known to have flourished in Eastern Asia may have been entrusted with the responsibility of this elaborate project. There is also evidence to suggest that many of the monks assigned to the various temples, who devoted their lives to contemplative pursuits, developed considerable artistic ability in the preparation of religious pictures and the illuminating of manuscripts. Some of them may have become expert in cutting the wooden blocks, as this labor would certainly have been regarded as a pious undertaking. In the monastery collections, these carved wooden blocks were held in the highest esteem, for they could provide moral and spiritual instruction when prints were taken from them. In areas of pilgrimage where visitors were frequent, the printing of these temple souvenirs was a regular part of daily activity.

The Mongolian city of Jehol, located about one hundred and twenty-five miles northeast of Peking, was one of the most important centers of Tibetan religious culture among the Chinese. In the year 1703, the Chinese Emperor Kang Hsi built at Jehol a summer palace which was named "Mountain Lodge for Avoiding Heat." It appears that he was also responsible for the building of several Lamaist monasteries on the slopes of the surrounding mountains. Later, his grandson Chien Lung (1736-1796) founded additional monasteries, until twelve in all were harmoniously situated against the rugged Mongolian background. There is a brief description of the Jehol monasteries in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society,* London, 1874, by a Mr. Bushnell, and his account certainly implies that the complex of buildings was intended to suggest the symbolical pattern described in the Western Paradise of Amitabha. In his work *Picturesque China,* Ernst Boerschmann writes:

"These [monasteries] were built according to Tibetan patterns, and some of them even bear the names of the originals: Potala and Tashilumbo. The twelve Jehol monasteries are situated on the slopes of the mountains on the other side of a broad valley and their axes are directed towards the imperial park, the residence situated in the middle, and accentuated by a slender pagoda. In the midst of a sublimely beautiful landscape the buildings are placed in such a manner as to be perfectly harmonious in their grouping. The construction of the details of the single monasteries clearly shows the symbolical trait of Chinese religious architecture, and at the same time the connection between the religious ideals of Central Asia and China.

"The main part of the most important Jehol monasteries is a central building in the middle of a square with arcades. [This] Has a door in the middle of each side. This is a representation of Buddha's spiritual world conceived as a sacred castle with four gates, four corner towers, and standing like a town with a sanctuary in the middle, and uniform with the division of the visible world according to the cardinal points. Sometimes the four gateways have four towers built above them, resulting in the symbolical number eight. In this, Buddhism and ancient Chinese conceptions meet. These Chinese always count the middle, and thus obtain five cardinal points, but also the important number nine. In Pu lo sze, the Monastery of Universal Happiness, a circular building rises over two square terraces. It is similar to the Temple of Heaven in Peking, and like it, is also covered with blue glazed tiles. The circle, as symbol of the male heaven, over the square, as the symbol of the female earth, points to the dualism of the moving forces that are yet joined in unity. On the lower terrace there are eight bottle-shaped pagodas made of varicolored terra-otta: one at each corner and in the middle of the sides. The surrounding arcade with the four doors stands for the castle in which we must conceive this system of the universe to be placed."

The impressive woodblock prints which form the subject of the present article are upon very thin tissue-like paper, and each has

Opening section of a Buddhist sutra of the 16th century, printed by woodblock process, and hand-colored for the Imperial Library. The sutra deals with the wonderful intercessions of the deity Kuan Yin.

a penciled inscription in English in one of the corners, declaring that it is from the Lamaist temple at Jehol. They form part of a considerable collection of such prints brought to this country many years ago by a traveler, obviously of scholarly inclinations and abilities, who had visited the monastic libraries at Urga and Jehol and made a systematic collection of impressions from blocks available in the temples. The larger prints have been frequently folded, (more correctly, crumpled), to the degree of considerable damage, and due to their size, the inking was extremely imperfect. I have long despaired of being able to preserve these pictures adequately or making them available to students. Through the kindness of a Japanese friend, an expert in this field, the thin prints were skillfully mounted on a heavier paper. Later, by a newly developed process, reproductions of extraordinary fidelity were made. Some retouching was necessary, but this in no way altered the original design, and the resulting copies are far superior to the original in clarity and contrast. Unfortunately, it is impossible, under existing world conditions, to verify the notations of the previous owner. It is reported that the Lamaist temples at Jehol have been pillaged and at least partly destroyed in recent years. The most

important fact is that these splendid examples of high religious art are now protected for posterity, not only in the library of our Society, but in the form of reduced facsimiles suitable to be distributed to thoughtful persons and learned institutions.

Definitions and Problems

For the sake of clarity, it seems advisable to explain and define certain terms as they are used in the present writing. These definitions will be based upon the tenets of the Mahayana School, long dominant in Eastern Asia. The word *Buddha,* for example, may mean any one of a number of perfected beings presiding over the countless Buddha-worlds (spheres of perfect enlightenment scattered through space), or it may mean one of the four historical Buddhas generally regarded as actual persons, of whom Gautama Buddha was the fourth and most recent. In the Mahayana sect, the term *Buddha* is also applied to several metaphysical beings, personifications of the various aspects of universal consciousness. The Buddha Amitabha is generally included in this group.

A *bodhisattva* stands on the level of enlightenment directly below a Buddha. In the Northern School, a bodhisattva would have passed beyond mortal comprehension and become a Buddha, had he not voluntarily renounced liberation in order to return and serve mankind. The bodhisattvas are often reflexes or aspects of the Buddha to whose order or class they belong. Thus, Avalokiteshvara is the spiritual son of Amitabha. A saint advancing upon the path of enlightenment will ultimately become a bodhisattva. In the Northern system, many of these bodhisattvas are considered also as metaphysical, or mystical, and cannot be identified with real or historical persons.

The term *arhat,* or *lohan,* signifies a Buddhist saint, or sanctified teacher, or missionary of the doctrine. The only cycle of arhats involved in the Jehol pictures is the group of sixteen, sometimes increased to eighteen, who were the most prominent of the defenders and expounders of the faith. There were also ten disciples of Gautama Buddha, occupying much the same relation to the teacher as the twelve apostles to Jesus Christ.

It seems most practical to follow the traditional policy of referring to the Buddhas and bodhisattvas as deities, gods, or divini-

ties. Such usage is almost necessary to prevent the continuous repetition of a few difficult terms. It should be remembered, however, that all the exalted beings discussed in the Pure Land Doctrine were actually originally mortals who, through the gradual attainment of personal merit, ascended through the various levels of consciousness until they attained the bodhisattva- or Buddha-state. Some were the products of previous rounds of existence beyond the memory of history; others are held to have achieved their spiritual exaltation in the early periods of the present world cycle. They are in no sense gods as creating powers, separate from the worlds in which they exist, but they are divinities in that they receive the veneration of the faithful and exercise a wide influence over the destinies of mortals. Some of the metaphysical Buddhas and bodhisattvas seem to approach very close to the divinity state, but they must still be regarded as of humble origin, and as having themselves experienced all the sorrows and burdens of humanity.

At this point we need a simple working definition of *Mahayana Buddhism*. This school arose in the 1st or 2nd century after the beginning of the Christian era. Some scholars believe that it resulted from the contact between India and Near Eastern schools of religious philosophy, including Christianity. The fourteenth Buddhist patriarch, Nagarjuna, is regarded as one of the first exponents of Mahayana (the Great Vehicle), as contrasted with the severity of primitive Buddhism. In some ways, Nagarjuna may be likened to St. Paul. As this Apostle transformed historical Christianity into a universal Christology, so Nagarjuna enriched the austerity of Buddhistic philosophy, transforming it into a powerful faith acceptable to persons in all walks of life.

Nagarjuna seemed to build his philosophy, at least in part, upon the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, which had come into existence slightly before his own time. This Sutra contained the statement: "The Buddha sitteth on his Lion Throne, yet dwelleth in every atom." By a process of metaphysical interpretation, the historical Buddha was gradually transformed into an all-pervading Presence, the power of truth in every creature, the light of reality shining in every particle of space. This unhistorical Buddhism, like St. Paul's unhistorical Christianity, permitted the faith to have immediate and vital meaning to the believers of later times, and provided a means

for spreading the doctrine among other races and in foreign nations. For centuries, the great Buddhist university of Nilanda was the center for the promulgation of the Great Vehicle. Many early Buddhist missionaries were educated at Nilanda, and they brought the glad tidings to primitive peoples like the Tibetans and highly cultured nations like China. The Buddha Gautama became a radiant principle, a personification rather than a person.

Of this transformation, Kenneth J. Saunders writes, in his *Epochs in Buddhist History*: "In this world, he is known as Sakyamuni, Victor, Savior, and by other great names, but in other worlds he is known by other names—Beloved Father, Path-Finder, Compassionate Lord, Brother of All, and Giver of All. Here, then, is a parallel to the later Pauline theology; the historic teacher is discovered not only to have cosmic significance, but to be the source of cosmic life, through whom, in whom, and unto whom are all things."

Into this enlarging framework, gilded with tradition, was incorporated the belief in blessed beings, spiritually enlightened teachers, perfected souls, illumined saints, and venerable scholars. These, in time, became a pantheon of divinities, elaborated almost beyond description. The increasing complexity was not entirely consistent with the earlier teachings of Gautama, but it emphasized principles which he had declared to be true. The austerity of the old school was vitalized and humanized by increasing emphasis upon the simple virtues of life. Spiritual security, according to the Great Vehicle, resulted from the virtues of charity and morality. The devout Buddhist learned the importance of resignation to the circumstances of existence. He was inspired to practice forbearance, truthfulness, and honorable friendliness. Most of all, he was reminded of the saving power of love, and that in the universe, there was a noble state or condition which could be attained by those of humble status who kept faith with the Law by keeping faith with their fellow men. More important than the attainment of Nirvana at some later time, was a good life lived here and now. More important than final absorption into the infinite mystery of existence, was to renounce perfection in the service of the needy. The godlings of Mahayana were exalted souls who had bound themselves to the salvation of their younger brethren and to the preservation

Amida with Kannon and Seishi. Japanese print designed in 1819 from an older painting.

of all life. In this School, therefore, compassion became a greater virtue than austerity, and the good of heart were rewarded equally with the sage and the ascetic. Buddhism was reshaped to become a great civilizing force during the period of Asia in turmoil.

Lamaism, or the Buddhism of Tibet, is a complicated religious doctrine resulting from the mingling of several streams of spiritual conviction. Lamaism is rooted in Mahayana Buddhism, which had already become deeply involved in yogic and tantric practices before it reached this remote land. The indigenous cult of Tibet is called *Pon* or *Bon,* and it survived as a modifying influence in the compound. Directly from the Mahayana came the elaborate pantheon of deified Buddhas and bodhisattvas, with its extravagant imagery and symbolism. From Yoga and Tantra came meditational and magical practices, the worship of shaktis or female polarities of the numerous deities, and many of the ferocious aspects of the

images as represented in sacred art. This includes the multiplication of the heads and arms on religious statues and paintings. From Pon came demonism, sorcery, witchcraft, and the working of conjurations and spells; also, a few grotesque godlings.

The study of Mahayana religious pictures, such as those now under consideration, presents a number of difficulties which the reader is entitled to know. The vast area of primitive country throughout which the doctrine was diffused, the long period of time—nearly two thousand years—during which the teachings passed through the numerous ramifications, and the prevailing lack of adequate communication on the religious and philosophical levels between the East and West, present almost insurmountable obstacles to even the most serious student. Although several valuable works on Tibetan iconography are available, and useful hints abound in pioneer volumes of travelers and scholars, there are many gaps yet to be filled, and numerous inconsistencies waiting to be reconciled.

Unless one were born within the structure of the Lamaist faith, and were intuitive to the real meaning of its countless abstract symbols, it would be difficult, if not actually impossible, for a person to identify directly and certainly the more than five hundred deities which make up the pantheon of Northern Buddhism. Many of the divinities are almost identical in appearance, differing only perhaps in the posture of a hand or some single attribute. In Christian hagiology, the problem would be much the same. If a saint were not properly named beneath his likeness, it would require intimate knowledge of the details of his life to recognize him solely by the type of the cross he is carrying or some other symbol intimately associated with his career.

In the identification of Tibetan divinities, it is necessary to depend heavily upon the types of garments and ornaments worn by the deity, the arrangement of the hair, the *asanas* or postures of the body, the mudras or the positions of the hands and fingers, and the attributes—that is, the ritual or symbol objects which they carry or which are incorporated into the general design. Unfortunately, in the course of time, many images have been separated from their identifying attributes, which are frequently fragile and removable. Paintings have been damaged or retouched so that the

key symbols can no longer be distinguished; or, more disastrous still, the artist, who fully knew his own intention, simply failed to depict the significant detail. Many of the deities are really aspects of each other, or embodiments or extensions of superior divinities, and their characteristics mingle in hopeless confusion. There is not too much difficulty, for example, in identifying the eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara; all that is necessary is to count the heads. But there are almost countless other forms of this bodhisattva which can lead to complete perplexity.

Color is also a valuable aid in identifying a deity, but in gold-bronze castings, and in black and white prints, this index is not available. Native inscriptions are not always mines of information. A laboriously translated phrase may prove to be merely a prayer or a flowery paean of praise. One cannot afford to be dogmatic, but the best approach is through a fair background knowledge of the subject or situations represented. The principal elements will then fall into place, and the approximate facts can be determined.

The Doctrine of the Pure Land

Buddhism as defined by Western hyper-intellectuals could scarcely have conquered the soul of Asia. The sensitive and beautiful examples of Buddhist art produced by more than forty nations in the last two thousand years, were not inspired by philosophical pessimism or emotional frustration. Surgeon-Major L. Austine Waddell, whose book *The Buddhism of Tibet* is still a basic text in the field, makes the following concise and factual statement: "Indeed, Buddha's teaching is not nearly so pessimistic as it is usually made to appear by its hostile critics. His Sermon on Love (*Mitra Sutra*) shows that Buddhism has its glad tidings of great joy, and had it been wholly devoid of these, it could never have become popular amongst bright, joyous people like the Burmese and Japanese."

Most of the popular accounts of Buddhism to reach the West were compiled by Waddell's "hostile critics"—soldiers, statesmen, merchants, and Christian missionaries. Some of these men were forthrightly antagonistic, and the sympathy and insight of others can be questioned. Actually, the early Buddhist sages who insisted that the original doctrine was instinct with those concepts which later were to flower as the teachings of the Pure Land, may have

been better informed than we have realized. One thing is certain: Buddhism did have its "glad tidings of great joy," and these were announced to the world in the first or second century of the Christian era, and were even then regarded as an essential part of Buddha's original teaching. Broadly speaking, the mystical idealism of the original philosophy became the inspiration and authority for the doctrine of the Pure Land.

Grousset points out that the concept of the Pure Land of Amitabha did not attain full popularity in China until the time of the Five Dynasties (907-960 A.D.) and the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 A.D.) (See *The Civilizations of the East,* Vol. 4). It seems to me, however, that the teaching of the Western Paradise was known and promulgated among the Chinese as early as the T'ang (618-906 A.D.). Elements of Mahayana symbolism are certainly present in the frontispiece of the *Diamond Sutra* printed in 869 A.D. and discovered at Tun-Huang by Sir Auriel Stein. It may be reasonable to say that the Amitabha Doctrine, which reached China at a comparatively early date, spread rapidly in the closing years of the T'ang Dynasty, and exerted a powerful influence upon Chinese culture through the early Ming Dynasty (1367-1644). The teachings of the Pure Land Sect were known in Japan as early as the Asuka Period (552-645 A.D.), when Prince Shotoku, the Regent of the Empress Suiko, became the patron of Japanese Buddhism. It was not until the latter part of the Heian Period 794-1185 A.D.), however, that Amidism attained spiritual and temporal leadership in the lives of the people. As might be expected, this ascendancy paralleled tragic circumstances in Japanese history.

The principal sources of the Doctrine of the Western Paradise are *The Larger Sukhavati-vyuha,* (Japanese, *Amitayus-sutra*) and *The Smaller Sukhavati-vyuha* (Japanese, *Amidakyo,* or *Amida Sutra*), which have been translated into English, and are available in *The Sacred Books of the East,* edited by F. Max Mueller, (see Vol. XLIX). These Sutras are attributed directly to Gautama Buddha. According to the Japanese account, the Master's teachings about the Western Paradise were composed in the last year of his life, probably his final work. Japanese Buddhists differ in their interpretations of these Sutras. The Shingon and Tendai sects

hold that Amida (Amitabha) abides in every human heart, and that this visible world in which we now dwell is the Pure Land. By this concept, all men must attain salvation by their own diligence. The Jodo sect, established by the sanctified priest Honen, teaches, however, that Amida, through his own attainment, already rules in the Western Paradise, and receives into this land anyone who simply and devoutly calls upon his name.

Honen accepted the teachings of the great Chinese mystic Zendo (613-681 A.D.), who promulgated the Doctrine of the Pure Land. This Pure Land was Amida's Western Paradise, and Honen taught that to enter the Palace of the Universe of Law, one must go in by the Eastern Gate of the Land of Bliss. This is because the mortal world lay to the east of Amida's Paradise. It was in this eastern region, the material sphere, that Gautama Buddha was finally to bring the perfect doctrine to all souls.

For practical purposes, it seems advisable to unfold certain aspects of the Amitabha Doctrine, according to the Japanese interpretation of the Mahayana system of Buddhism. The concepts are similar to those in Tibet and China, but they are presented in a more simple and direct form, and supported by a number of relevant paintings and sculptures. One of the earliest and finest representations of the Amida Triad in Japan adorns the western wall of the main hall of the Horyuji Temple in the Nara Prefecture. The frescoes, reminiscent of those in the Ajanta Caves of India, date from the Nara Period (645-794). The originals were virtually destroyed by a disastrous fire in 1949, but have been restored or replaced by recourse to early copies. On each of the four principal walls, a Buddhist Paradise is represented, with the particular Buddha and bodhisattvas associated with that region. In the scene of the Western Paradise, the Amida Nyorai is shown seated with the Kannon-bosatsu standing at his left, and Seiji-bosatsu at his right. The word *Nyorai* means "a physical embodiment of Absolute Truth," and is practically a synonym for *Buddha*. Kannon-bosatsu is the same as Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, and Seiji is the Japanese equivalent of Mahasthamaprapta. Thus, the depiction follows exactly the text of The Larger Sukhavati-vyuha.

To understand the complicated symbolism of the Jehol woodblocks, it is first necessary to comprehend the tradition upon which

they are based. The works of various artists, laboring at different times in widely scattered areas, must differ considerably; yet all derived their authority from the Sutras already mentioned. According to the degree of their artistry and inner perception, they fashioned their designs insofar as the subject allowed and skill permitted. There was no intention that the beautiful pictures, actually mandalas, should be regarded as literal representations of some remote celestial region. Such would be entirely contrary to the principles of Buddhist philosophy. The elaborate diagrams, for such they are, were to remind the faithful of the numerous details of the Blessed State as symbolically expounded by Buddha in his discussion with Ananda. Once the essential structure of the concept is grasped by the mind, the elements of the design will fall into place.

In its long journey of ministry, Buddhism found exceptionally fertile ground for the spreading of its teachings among the people of China. Confucianism had disciplined the Chinese way of life, and had established deep ethical and moral foundations. Taoism, with its obscure metaphysical speculations, intrigued the popular fancy, but offered little of immediate utility for the average man. The heart of China waited fallow to be stirred. There was great need for an emotional faith rich in symbols and allegories, and suitable to release the latent artistry of the people and to inspire in them those noble sentiments associated with a splendid religious experience. Buddhism provided all these inspirational elements, and as a result, supplied the impetus necessary to raise the Chinese to a high level of artistic and esthetic achievement.

The impact of Buddhism upon Japanese life was equally rewarding. The Buddhism of Japan is not merely a borrowing from China or India. In Japan, Buddhism attained a new maturity, contributing in countless ways to the enrichment and progress of its new children. Mingling with the native Japanese love of nature and beauty, the stream of Mahayana Doctrine appeared in its most attractive and understandable form, suitable for transmission to Western nations through the media of cultural exchange. The quiet dignity and strength of the Buddhist life-way is becoming of continually greater interest to Occidental peoples, harassed with the complications of an essentially materialistic concept of existence.

Woodblock illustration from the Kuan Yin Sutra of 1331 A.D., in which the Divinity is represented miraculously saving a devout believer from death.

In Japan and China, for example, Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva, the spiritual son of Amitabha, departs from his region of lonely immortality, loses most of his masculine attributes, gains feminine ones in their place, and appears in the regions of mortal mind as Kannon or Kuan Yin, the personification of compassion. As the gracious mother of all that lives, she comforts her children, and listens with the "Buddha ear" to all their supplications. The accompanying illustration from the *Kuan Yin Sutra,* dated 1331, shows a Chinese being cast from a cliff to a ravine below, where

upright sword-blades wait to destroy him. The victim, in his extremity, has called upon Kuan Yin, who appears surrounded by clouds, her hand miraculously enlarged, and rises to catch the falling man before he is impaled upon the knives. Accounts of the intercession of this deity have been published even in recent years. Jizo-bosatsu, protector of children and guardian of the souls of infants who have died, is a typically Japanese example of the extension of the Bodhisattva Doctrine. Jizo is represented as a shaven-headed monk, and the spirits of dead children find refuge in the long sleeves of his robe.

It has always been difficult to reconcile the extravagant symbolism of the Mahayana Sutras of Northern Buddhism with the simple austerity of Gautama's original teachings. The most reasonable explanation seems to be that the vision of the Western Paradise is the revelation of an archetypal consciousness-state, similar to the Apocalyptical writings of the early Christian Apostles and Fathers. The Buddhas and bodhisattvas of the Mahayana Doctrine are not gods, but illumined and perfected mortals who have vanquished all intemperances of the mind and body, and by the accumulation of merit through countless ages, have attained universal insight. During their vast periods of discipleship, they held steadfast, by interior visualization, the images of the wonderful mysteries of the Buddha, the Buddha Doctrine, and the Buddha-world. Having discovered in their raptures the perfect way for all creatures, and having brought countless souls to the noble path, these enlightened teachers of the Law became, in due time, resplendent rulers over the worlds they had instructed and redeemed. Their kingdoms are not of this world, for they abide in those wondrous dimensions of consciousness where the eternal plan for all life exists forever in solitary splendor. Somewhere, behind the clouds that obscure the sight of mortals, is a region of eternal peace. This is Sukhavati (the Happy), the Western Paradise of Amitabha.

In the Amitabha or Amida doctrine, Buddhism conceals most of its philosophical implications, and takes on strong devotional coloring. While this has been true in many systems of belief, the transformation wrought by the Mahayana School is in every way remarkable. The abstract metaphysical psychology of Gautama

was simply beyond the comprehension of the average convert. Those seeking spiritual consolation in troubled hours felt the need for a faith rather than a doctrine. The philosophy remained available for the philosophic few, but for the majority, law and justice must be tempered with benevolence and mercy.

The teaching of the Pure Land presented Buddhism as a gentle and beautiful faith, rich with compassion, and available to all mankind. The Arhats no longer trod the lonely path to Nirvana; they became radiant saints, renouncing the peace they had so worthily earned, to return and serve their younger brethren on the weary road of life. The serene face of Gautama was illumined from within by the splendid light of grace, and his form and appearance mingled with that of Amida Nyorai, the Buddha of Boundless Light. When the time came for a godly monk or a kindly layman to depart from earthly life, he had but to call the name of the Blessed One, and Amida immediately appeared, floating on a cloud, surrounded with bodhisattvas and heavenly musicians, to conduct the soul of the believer to the Blessed Land.

The first part of *The Larger Sukhavati-vyuha* is devoted to the life-story of the Buddha Amitabha and how he attained his exalted place among the benefactors of mankind. This account must be considered next, as it was communicated by Gautama Buddha to Ananda and other disciples.

(To be continued)

(*We recommend that you have this article available when studying the later installments of this series.*)

Beware of What Cometh Out of the Mouth.

The fool is known by two things: by his much speaking about that which benefiteth him not, and by his giving answers about subjects which men ask him not. —Plato

The Glorious Fourth.

Outside of Welford, at the edge of an old stone bridge which crosses the Avon, stands an Inn known as The Four Alls. Four characters are painted on its signboard: the king who rules all, the parson who prays for all, the soldier who fights for all, and the farmer who pays for all.

THE "UNWORTHY" ONE

A Matter of Reflection

THE weather was exceptionally fine, crisp and clear. Mr. Nakamura would say that it was a perfect day to take a picnic lunch and go out to some quiet spot and view Fuji-no-yama. What better time could be found for a brisk walk and a social call on my Japanese friend?

As I approached Mr. Nakamura's modest store, it became evident that he was being invaded by an enthusiastic group of tourists. The shop itself was crowded with sight-seers, and the overflow was gathered outside the door, chattering happily and viewing the treasures in the small window. Cameras were much in evidence, pockets bulged with travel folders, and several of the ladies were already carrying packages wrapped in the neat Oriental fashion, and displaying bright-colored parasols. It seemed the better part of valor to linger at a safe distance and watch proceedings.

After what seemed a considerable time, the members of the tour re-assembled on the sidewalk, and the guide, a handsome young Japanese in a gray tweed suit, was profusely thanking Mr. Nakamura, who stood smiling and bowing at the entrance to his establishment. As the tour marched off in a solid body to attack the next objective, Mr. Nakamura disappeared for a moment to return with his trusty broom with which he began sweeping vigorously around the doorsill. When he saw me approaching, he paused, murmuring, "Forgive, please; very ancient custom of sweeping out confusion left by nice but most noisy persons."

"But," I remonstrated, "Is that the way to treat the shadows of recent customers?"

"Excuse correction; wrong shop; no customers."

We were both laughing by this time. "It seems to me, Mr. Nakamura, that the young man in charge of the tour was most effusive in his appreciation. He acted as though he had received a substantial commission."

The art dealer nodded his head. "You are indeed observant, Haru San. The young man and I are both happy. I made him a handsome gift, with the understanding that in the future, he will conduct the tours to the shop of one of my competitors."

Motioning me to precede him into the store, my friend then resolutely locked the front door, and we retired to the peace of the wonderful back room with its wealth of treasures. Soon the teakettle sang merrily, and in due time the aroma of tea, mingled with sandalwood incense, enriched the atmosphere. As he passed a plate of Japanese confections for my enjoyment, he remarked quietly, "You know, Haru San, I am reminded of some wise thoughts that my father once entrusted to my keeping. There are two kinds of climate. Outside, for example, the sun is shining very brightly and the temperature is excellent. But I must confess that I rather prefer the climate of this humble room. Here I can retire from the busy world and enjoy the atmosphere created by the treasures of my house. I am warm and comfortable in the soft radiance of beauty, and I find congenial stimulation from those little mysteries that lurk among the wonderful works of human artistry."

Although he chose to discuss the weather and other trivial matters, I had the distinct impression that Mr. Nakamura was about to share with me another little adventure in the realms of fine art. After considerable lingering, he departed with the tea utensils and returned holding in his hand a black morocco case about a foot square and three inches deep. This he placed on the massive teakwood table in front of me, and, with a well-studied gesture calculated to impress customers and connoisseurs, raised the lid. There, imbedded in soft white satin, was a circular metal mirror of exquisite workmanship. From the boss in the center of the ornately decorated back hung a tasseled cord of yellow silk. As I gazed in admiration, Mr. Nakamura, seeing that I was sincerely interested, favored me with a quantity of unusual information.

"The Japanese name for a metal mirror is *kagami,* and because it is both useful and instructive, it is said to be alive. The Chinese character you see featured in the design means *soul.* It is useful, especially to the ladies, when they arrange their hair or put on cosmetics. It is instructive because in it each of us can see himself, his features and his general appearance. To see oneself really means to understand oneself. We have an old saying, 'When the mirror is dim, the soul is unclean.' Our people believe that the *kagami* embodies the feminine principle of the universe. It is proper to refer to a metal mirror as 'she' rather than 'it,' although I must admit that I have never cultivated this practice. You know, of course, that the kagami is the symbol of the goddess of the sun, the protectress of our country and the divinity from whom our Imperial family is descended. It was the custom of our people long ago to bury a sword in the grave of a man, and a mirror in the grave of a woman."

Lifting the mirror by the silken cord attached to the back, Mr. Nakamura turned it over to show the reflection surface, which was as perfect as any glass coated with quicksilver. "It is not an antique," he explained, "but a very fine quality of workmanship." Laying it back in the case, he continued. "It was sent to me recently by a merchant in Hong Kong who sometimes serves as my agent in collecting unusual works of art. He supplied me all the information he had been able to gather about this item in a letter. May I give you a summary of his findings?" When I nodded my head, he proceeded.

"This mirror once belonged to a Chinese noblewoman who cherished it as one of her most valued possessions. This grand lady had been in attendance upon the Emperor Dowager. It is reported that her Majesty, better known as 'The Old Buddha,' personally presented this mirror to her faithful friend and confidante. We should note that the Empress had a considerable reputation for her knowledge of magical arts, as did most of the old Manchu. All this is significant, but I am not yet certain of the meaning.

"In any event, the grand lady, at her death, which occurred in due time, left the mirror as a special gift to her youngest daughter. It is quite possible that certain instructions about its magical qualities accompanied the bequest, for the daughter immediately began practicing strange rites and ceremonies before the mirror, and spent many hours each day gazing into its silvery depth. She told

her father that pictures and scenes of distant times and places appeared in the burnished surface.

"The young lady had been following this curious procedure for about two years when suddenly the face of a handsome man formed in the mirror, and the impressionable maiden fell violently in love with this comely image. The attachment seemed most unnatural, and her family became alarmed. At the recommendation of an elderly aunt who had the authority of years, a Taoist priest was called in to exorcise the phantom. Apparently this holy man was successful, for the spirit-face was not again seen. The girl, however, became disconsolate, and could not be comforted. Finally, she committed suicide, leaving a forlorn little note saying that she was sending her soul into the mirror in search of her true love. Convinced that the mirror was bewitched, the family disposed of it as quickly as possible. Through my friend in Hong Kong, it now comes to my unworthy establishment."

After a thoughtful pause, I inquired, "Is it your opinion then, that this is really a magic mirror?"

"Instead of answering you, Haru San, I would like to repeat a small experiment which I made last evening. First, however, examine the burnished surface carefully, and see if you can discover anything unusual."

I looked into the polished field, and saw a perfect reflection of my own features. The polishing had been so carefully done that there was not the slightest visible imperfection. Mr. Nakamura rose from his chair and carefully closed the shutters, thus dimming the light in the room. Then he lit a small lamp, and picking up the mirror, he held its shining face close to the flickering flame.

"Observe, please, the reflection cast on the wall over there." In the disc of reflected luminance were the features of a beautiful Chinese girl. The expression was one of inconsolable grief mingled with fear. My friend turned the mirror so that the image moved from one part of the wall to another, but the portrait of the young woman never changed.

"I am forced to believe," announced the art dealer with all seriousness, "that we are gazing upon the features of the maiden who killed herself in China several years ago."

"Is there no other possible explanation for this phenomenon?" I asked.

Mr. Nakamura shrugged his shoulders. "There are always persons who try to explain such thing. Mirrors that cast pictures are uncommon, but not especially rare. Several European physicists have tried to solve the mystery. They have a theory that the pressure used to stamp the decoration on the back is sufficient to cause molecular disturbance in the metal, so that the finished mirror reflects a phantom image of the design on its reverse side. It is also possible to stamp two separate designs on the back, one over the other. The concealed pattern will then only be visible as a ghostly form in the reflection. It does not seem to me, however, that these learned findings, though ingenious, have much bearing on the present circumstances."

Holding the mirror close to his reading lamp, Mr. Nakamura examined every part of it with minute care. "Somewhere here there must be something," he announced sagely. "Let us give special attention to the ornamented back. The design is of two dragons, one ascending, and the other descending. Their bodies are partly hidden by clouds. In the center between them is a symbol meaning happiness and long life, and in the middle of this is the boss to which the silk cord is fastened. The only possible place where anything could be hidden is under the boss."

Inserting a paper knife in the hole in the side of the knob, he exerted considerable pressure, and the boss began to turn. Once it was loose, Mr. Nakamura untwisted it with his fingers. In the tiny cavity underneath were several short jet-black hairs. Mr. Nakamura gently removed the hairs with a pair of tweezers and laid them on the table, murmuring, "More Manchu magic. The love-sick girl placed these hairs in the mirror so that it could capture her soul, and now she is caught by her own sorcery. Let us see what happens when the spell is broken."

Again Mr. Nakamura turned the mirror so that its gleaming circle was reflected on the wall. We could still see the beautiful face of the Chinese girl, but as we watched, the expression seemed to change. The features relaxed, and a look of indescribable peace took the place of the sadness we had previously noted. Then, as

(*Please turn to page* 50)

ANIMAL SYMBOLISM IN RELIGION AND ART

Part IV: Insects and Fishes

Our early ancestors derived a considerable part of their philosophy from the observation of the forms of life which surrounded them. In the search for meaning, they learned much from the habits and characteristics of the various natural kingdoms that fulfill their life spans in the forests, streams, and deserts of the homeland. In the course of time, insects and fishes made important contributions to the advancement of ethical and moral codes. In Proverbs 6:6-8, Solomon, the wisest king of Israel, writes: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." In Chapter 30:24-28, Solomon pays tribute to the habits of the lesser creatures of nature: "There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; the conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; the locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; the spider taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

Butterflies and Moths

Because of the metamorphosis through which it passes, the butterfly has long been regarded as a symbol of the human soul and of regeneration and resurrection. The Greeks made use of this symbolism in the development of their philosophical speculations bearing upon the transformation of man from an ignorant and savage creature to a noble and transcendent being, capable of ascending into the higher atmosphere of light and truth. It was held that the soul was contained in the body as in a chrysalis, from which, in due time, it liberated itself, to become a creature of exquisite beauty, deriving its nutrition from the open blossoms of plants and flowers. The butterfly was usually regarded as a symbol of good fortune, but the moth, being nocturnal, was viewed with fear, and its appearance in a house was considered as an evil omen. The

death's head moth, for example, occurs as a symbol of fatality in the folklore of several European countries.

It has been noted that, including moths, the order Lepidoptera has more than fifty thousand different species of butterflies and related creatures. In both China and Japan, these insects are frequently used in painting and decoration. They are closely associated with young women as a symbol of grace, charm, and a degree of fickleness carried out in the poetic figure of the butterfly fluttering from flower to flower in search of sweets. The dress of Oriental girls, usually bright and highly ornamented, suggested the wings of the butterfly, and in spite of the numerous restrictions upon her private life, the Eastern maiden was noted for the inconstancy of her affections. In Japan, the geisha is usually referred to as a butterfly. She evidently enjoyed the compliment, for she arranged her hair ornaments and obi to resemble this insect. One curious belief among the Asiatics is that a human being, in danger or extremity, could temporarily transfer his soul to some animal, where it would remain safe even for a long period of time. Later he could reclaim the soul, when the danger had passed. White butterflies were held to embody the souls of living persons, and for this reason, when one entered a house, it must be treated with all consideration, for it might be a friend or near relative.

Katherine M. Ball, in her *Decorative Motives of Oriental Art,* gives a charming legend of "The White Butterfly." In substance, the story deals with an old man on his deathbed. Suddenly a large white butterfly flutters into the room and lights upon his pillow. Fearing that it might disturb the aged person, an attendant tries to coax it to leave, but it returns immediaely. At last, the door of the room is closed against it, and the butterfly flies to a nearby cemetery, alights for a short time on a woman's tomb, and then mysteriously vanishes. Research reveals that the tomb is in memory of the old man's sweetheart, who had died the day before their wedding. He had remained faithful to her memory, visiting her grave daily and praying for the repose of her soul. The legend implies that when her aged lover could no longer go to her, she visited him in the form of a white butterfly.

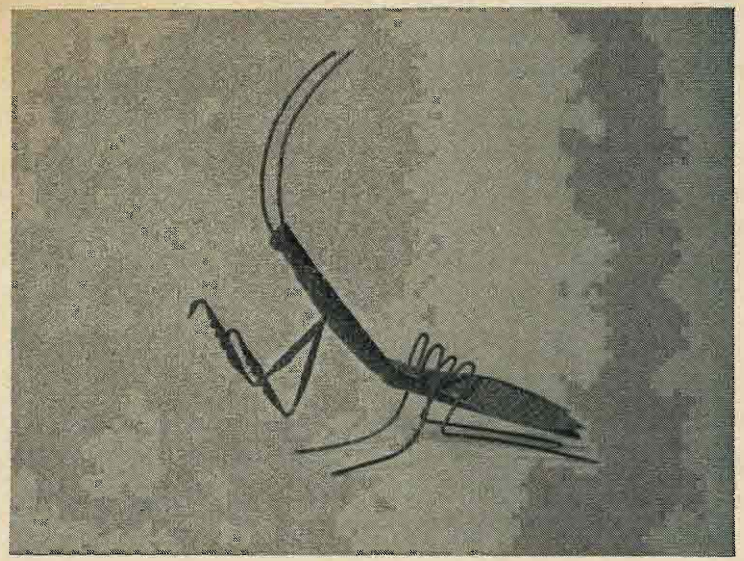
Butterfly dances were performed in Asia, and also among the American Indian tribes of North, Central, and South America.

Usually such dances have ritualistic importance associated with youth, happiness, and fecundity. The silence of this little creature is also noted, and as most older nations respected silence, and considered it a symbol of wisdom, it added to the reputation enjoyed by this insect. In Japan, it is frequently used as a *mon,* or crest, and the two great warring families of classical Japan, the Genji and the Heike both used this insect as a crest. In Chinese art, the butterfly is usually represented in combination with flowers, especially the peony, and in the Japanese theater, there is a classical dance in which a lion pursues butterflies which interfere with the dignity of his stately life. The butterfly and the bat are frequently contrasted, although both are regarded as appropriate symbols of longevity. Actually, the butterfly is not long-lived, but the great number of these insects which appear seasonally seems to have justified, in the popular mind, their continuous existence.

The Praying Mantis

This rather grotesque insect is found in the Western hemisphere, Europe, and Asia. Its appearance is such that it can conceal its presence among the small twigs and leaves of plants and trees. It remains motionless for many hours, until it discovers the approach of a potential victim. Then it strikes suddenly and surely, and seldom fails to secure its prey. It is easier to reproduce a figure of this insect than to attempt a description. It normally stands with the forepart of its body erect, with its forelegs apparently clasped in a posture resembling prayer; hence its popular name. There is a story that when St. Francis Xavier first saw a praying mantis, he was entirely convinced by its devout attitude. As final proof of its religious inclinations, St. Francis asked it to sing aloud, and the obliging mantis sang a hymn.

We are told that the Greeks considered the mantis as a sort of soothsayer. Its appearance heralded spring, but it was also said to announce disasters, especially those involving the failure of crops. The devout children of Islam also held it in esteem because of its prayerful posture, and to kill a mantis was a serious crime. Here a physical peculiarity has gained a noble reputation for an essentially predatory insect. Some cynics on religious matters have suggested that the praying mantis should be called the *preying*



THE PRAYING MANTIS
An example of Japanese folk art in wrought iron and brass.

mantis, and that it still resembled the clergy, which, with hands clasped in prayer, filched all it could from the common people.

Because of its natural camouflage, the praying mantis also came to be identified with worldly wisdom. The astute politician would wear the prevailing colors of the moment, conceal his true purpose with patience and silence, and then strike at the auspicious moment. In art, the mantis is often represented rather humorously, and several Japanese painters have caricatured the insect, bestowing upon it human attributes much in the spirit of Aesop's fables. Primitive man worshipped or revered not only good, but also evil. In many ways, he feared more vigorously than he loved, and he personified the dangers of nature and the weaknesses of his own character by means of natural symbols. The mantis comes under the heading of those inexorable forces that appear cruelly fatalistic and must be borne with fortitude.

The Scarabaeus

The small stone or clay reproductions of the sacred beetle of the Egyptians are called scarabs, and probably no other insect symbol is as well known in the realms of religion and art. The scarab was a popular ornament for the living, a charm against ill fortune

and sickness, and a popular religious insignia. It was also associated with the dead, interred with the mummy, and drawings of it adorned tombs and mortuary utensils. It was a symbol of the solar deity, as Ra Kepara, and is often shown raising the solar orb with its forelegs. Like the butterfly, it signified resurrection and the hope of a better life in the Elysian Fields.

I have noticed that the markings on the back of the scarab, conventionalized from those of the living insect, resemble closely the sutures of the human skull when seen from above. As the Egyptians believed that the soul departed through the crown of the head, this may have influenced the reverence for this symbol as a sign of immortality. The principal markings also closely resemble the astrological sign of Aries, the sign in which the sun is exalted and also the sign of the vernal equinox. This beetle concealed its wings under the hard shell of its back, again suggesting man's psychic nature hidden in his mortal body.

The Symphony Orchestra

In both China and Japan, and especially in the latter country, a group of insects known as "the musicians" were viewed with considerable sentimentality. These were cicadas, crickets, locusts, grasshoppers, and some beetles. If they concerted at night, the firefly might be invoked to illuminate the occasion. It has been noted that these insects should be regarded not as vocalists, but as instrumentalists, inasmuch as they produced their various sounds from different parts of their bodies, but not from their throats.

There are many legends about crickets. They are regarded as fortunate in the house, and convey an atmosphere of domestic felicity, as suggested by Charles Dickens in his story "The Cricket on the Hearth." It was considered a grievous fault to injure crickets or cicadas, and to dislike these little creatures was indicative of an ignoble disposition. In both China and Japan, small cages were provided for crickets. Some of these cages were exquisite works of art, being fashioned of ivory or precious metal, sometimes inlaid with jewels. There is a story that these tiny cages were attached to long hairpins and ladies might include such pins in their elaborate coiffures. Many efforts have been made to find out what the cricket says with his strange chirping sound. One conclusion

was that it was repeating again and again, "I want to go home." This suggested that a lonely cricket was in need of congenial surroundings, and it might be adopted by almost any kind-hearted person. Oriental artists have found the shape and proportions of the cricket highly intriguing, and have made many reproductions of this little creature. Usually it implied friendliness and solicitation for the health and happiness of acquaintances and loved ones. The cicada found great favor in China, where it symbolized one part of the human soul—the breath. Representations in jade were placed upon the tongue of the deceased as part of the ritual of ensuring life in the other world. In this detail, the cicada became, perhaps, the scarab of China.

There is a small black beetle, better known as the firefly, or in Japan as the *hotaru,* and as might be imagined, the wonderful attributes of this insect have rejoiced the souls of nature lovers throughout the world. Some of these fireflies are remarkably powerful, and the spark of phosphorescent light which they can generate, apparently at will, led to innumerable speculations. In some countries, ladies put a fine net over their hair and place fireflies under the net. When they go out of an evening, their heads seem to be a mass of flashing stars. This high fashion has not yet received proper attention in Paris. There are legends that large numbers of fireflies have been captured in glass bowls, and that old scholars have been able to read by the light thus furnished. Fireflies are difficult to represent satisfactorily in art, but some of the Japanese Ukiyo-e woodblock masters have attempted this with pleasing results.

It would be natural that fireflies would also be associated with the cult of the dead. The Japanese distinguish two kinds of fireflies, which they relate to the great clans of the Genji and Heike and the war of the Gempei, which contributed so much to Japan's romance of chivalry. The fireflies were the souls or ghosts of ancient warriors, and it is believed that these ghosts gather annually in a small town outside of Kyoto and renew the battle which they fought nearly eight centuries ago. In any event, masses of fireflies, in such number that the very air seems to be ablaze, gather on the night of this festival, and it might appear that they were two armies. The sight is most spectacular, and visitors come from

Japanese Ukiyo-e woodblock print by Nagayoshi, depicting a lady and child watching fireflies.

great distances for this occasion. So far as is known, such an assembly of these insects is not to be found anywhere else on earth.

Observation of the habits of insects has, on some occasions, changed the course of history. The Scottish king, Robert Bruce, is said to have gained courage and inspiration from watching the

patient labors of a spider. The bees of Solomon and Charlemagne signified the victory of providence and the storing up of virtue, which is the sweetness of life. It is reported that Deborah judged Israel and was a prophetess of the most High God. The name Deborah means "a bee," and these insects have long been associated with destiny. The word *honey* has become a symbol of truth, of powerful utterance, and of strong persuasion.

The Babylonians regarded the fly with more than ordinary respect. As a scavenger, the fly contributed to the health of the living by devouring corruption and keeping the earth clean and sweet. We may not so regard the insect, but they called it *baal-zebub,* "My Lord who hums," a reference to its constant buzzing. Later, the early Christian Church changed the name *baal-zebub* to *beelzebub,* a prince over demons, and an evil spirit.

The locust was regarded with considerable fear in areas where swarms of these insects laid waste the land like a ravaging army. The locust played an important part in the early Mormon settlement in Utah, and the Mormons were preserved by the almost miraculous appearance of sea gulls which saved them from the insect pests.

Much could be said about the habits of ants and the extraordinary intelligence these little creatures use in ordering and regulating their lives. Some naturalists have gone so far as to consider the empire of the ants as one of the most perfectly governed social structures in the world. Philosophy has emphasized the habits of the ant kingdom as indicative of an archetypal design to which these insects respond to an amazing degree. They certainly justify the conviction that intelligence is not limited to man, but exists in a highly developed form among even the smallest creatures of nature.

By way of broad summary, then, the ancients recognized insects as existing principally in the element of air, though some, like the ant, also burrow in the earth. As flying things, they came to be associated with thoughts and impulses which seemed to fly about in the mental atmosphere. They could be related to dreams and abstract fears; they could be helpful sprites or malicious little imps; but for the most part, they caricatured human tendencies. Man saw himself in all the forms of nature about him. Insects became

fragments of his personality, and he observed in their conduct traits which he himself possessed.

In ancient times, there was no scientific means for analyzing the insect or magnifying its form so that it could be carefully studied. This difficulty, however, was met with a spirit of wonder and veneration. As civilization advanced, admiration was transformed into a more mature thoughtfulness. The motives and purposes of human beings are strangely confused, but among the lesser kingdoms, instincts operate normally and obviously. Thus it seemed that God made his laws known through his smaller creatures. They fulfilled without question or reservation, and through the study of their activities, the human being could bring his own life into closer harmony with the universal plan. Thus, insects became instructors long before there were books. The early lessons are not forgotten, but have continued in folklore as ethical instincts.

The Symbolism of Fishes

More than two thirds of the earth's surface is under water, and this great area remains comparatively unexplored. While we are reaching out into space, seeking new worlds to conquer, we should remember that the greater part of our own earth is still a mystery. In the vast regions of the sea, there are submerged continents, ranges of mountains, incredible ravines and canyons inhabited by living beings far more numerous and diversified than those dwelling upon land. It has been reported that fish outnumber all other species of living creatures upon the earth. Yet we know comparatively little about the psychic processes operating through these strange and beautiful forms of life. Ancient man gazed in awe at the mystery of the ocean. In time, he came to depend upon the sea for at least a part of his food, but he was never able to estimate accurately the eternal wonders of the deep. All creatures upon land have certain habits in common. They have solid ground beneath them, and make their habitats in forests or deserts, or perhaps on the slopes of rugged mountains. They live in the light of the sun, and they breathe the air, and if they sink into the ocean, they die; whereas things of the sea cannot live long if separated from their native element.

It was probably some form of intuition that caused our remote ancestors to identify the sea with the principle of generation. They instinctively knew that life came out of the water, and the oldest sacred books of the world describe the universe itself as rising from the great sea of space. Creatures of the ocean, therefore, were early associated with the powers of reproduction, and were likened to the germs or sperms from which things were generated. The land was comparatively firm, with the exception of an occasional earthquake; the sea was in constant motion. There was not only the ebbing and flowing of the tide, but there were great rivers in the sea, which we call currents. Also, the ocean was strongly influenced by the moon, whereas it seemed that the sun ruled the dry land. It would be perfectly reasonable that water should come finally to be a symbol of mystery, of concealment, of strange depths, of illusion and appearances, of emotional instability, and, by extension, the psychic sphere and its creatures. Water also became associated with purification or cleanliness, and as such, survives in baptismal rites and ceremonies.

In Asia, water symbolism divided into two distinct schools of thought. To the Taoists, it became the embodiment of the universal principle, the pure energy of space; and in turn, space itself was conceived as a mysterious fluidic power, the waters of life of the mystical theologians. Among the Buddhists, water was always associated with *maya,* or the mirror of illusion, but they also recognized that the ocean had a distant shore, and that absolute consciousness, devoid of all attributes, could be appropriately described as the ocean of nirvana, to which all existence ultimately returned to be immersed in total being. These speculations influenced man's interpretations of the creatures living in the sea, but again, meaning was derived principally from recognized attributes. The sea life could not mingle with man as did birds and animals. As a result, the symbolism was more detached, and even a little austere.

The Illuminists of the Middle Ages developed the beautiful imagery of the Pearl of Great Price. By this allegory, the ocean became a symbol of the mystery of mortal life. The human soul, seeking truth, descended into generation, and took on a physical

body, like a diver in quest of a treasure hidden in the sea. The pearl diver was in search of a precious gem, and for this he hazarded even his life. Man valued truth above all the treasures of the earth. It was the precious pearl, and to claim it, he had to undergo the trials and tribulations of material existence. If, however, his spirit was true and his quest was honorable, he would gain through experience the right to rescue his spiritual nature from the corruption of the corporeal state, and bring it back with him to the heavenly world from which he came. In Japan, the creator-god dipped the point of his lance into the mystery of ocean, and when he drew it forth, drops of mud were clinging to the lance-head. These drops became the islands of Japan, the land born out of the sea. Among the Chaldeans, their hero-god, Dagon, was a fish man who came out of the water to instruct them in the arts and sciences. The same story is found in the Western hemisphere, where Quetzalcoatl, the plumed serpent, rose from the ocean near Veracruz on the coast of Mexico. Fuhei, the primordial divine king of China, was part man and part fish, and among early Christian communities, the shape of the fish drawn in the sand was a means of recognition.

The Whale

The whale, though actually a mammal, seems to be appropriately included in this section. The most celebrated of all whales is the one reported to have swallowed the prophet Jonah. Even the most enthusiastic Bible student is now inclined to consider this account as symbolical. Not only is the whale so constructed as to make the story factually impossible, but whales have never been known in the area where Jonah was cast overboard. Actually, the Bible does not call this marine monster a whale; it merely describes it as a great fish. In those days, ships were adorned with extravagant figureheads in the shapes of dragons or other mythical monsters. The probability is that Jonah was picked up by another ship, perhaps of an unfriendly country, and was kept in the hold of the vessel until it reached land. Mythology, however, suggests further explanation. Christian writers attempted to prove that the story of Jonah was a prophetic reference to the death and resurrection of Christ. Early woodcuts of the gates of hell depict

lost souls passing into the underworld through the open mouth of a terrible creature resembling a huge fish, or dragon. Thus, the whale could mean the principle of embodiment, and, by extension, the earth itself, which was anciently depicted as an island floating in the sea. Souls entering bodies could be said to be swallowed up by the earth principle, and ethically, to be devoured by materialism, or the psychic sense of mortality. The earth, as monster, also received into itself the bodies of the dead, and it was anciently believed that Hades, or the underworld, was a vast region beneath the surface of the earth—the belly of the whale. This thinking was all the more reasonable and plausible because the whale was the largest of all creatures known to our remote ancestors. It was so huge that it could not be estimated in terms of other beasts or fishes. Its mass made it a proper symbol for the principle of substance, or material form.

As the idea of immortality gained favor in primitive thinking, it was affirmed that the earth and mortality could swallow man, but could not prevent his ultimate escape. Thus the great fish cast Jonah up upon the shore; and in the day of judgment, the earth shall give up its dead. The initiation rituals were also given in subterranean rooms and passageways. Here the symbolic death and resurrection were dramatically depicted. The Initiate was finally escorted back to the upper regions of light and warmth, after he had successfully passed through the mystery of mortality. In totem lore, the whale is also a protecting or saving symbol, for it brings survivors of the deluge safely to shore on its huge back. A great fish was believed to have guided Noah's ark, and in India, Vishnu first incarnated in a fish to preserve the righteous patriarch and his family.

The Dolphin

The Greeks have peculiar regard for the dolphin, and it occurs frequently on their coinage. The Romans adopted some of this symbolism, and it is to be seen in their sculptures and statuary. Substantially, the Greek respect for the dolphin resulted from the belief that this creature had a great fondness for man. Of all the beings that live in the sea, the dolphin seems to share in the attributes of the faithful dog. It made lasting friendships with

The dolphin and anchor device used by the Aldi, the celebrated printers, from 1490 to 1563. The dolphin was much used as a symbol of love and, when combined with the anchor, in Christian monuments or symbols. It usually signified the devotion of the Christians for Christ, especially as the result of the crucifixion of the Messiah. In some instances, the dolphin actually seems to represent Christ, especially on early signet rings combining this creature with a cruciform figure.

children who went swimming, and would return over a long period of years to sport with them. There are even authentic cases where dolphins have allowed children to ride on their backs. Not only is this creature friendly, but it is extraordinarily intelligent. It seems to understand almost intuitively the attitudes of human beings. It can be trained as well as, if not better than, a seal, and while it cannot leave the water for any length of time, it is a happy, sporting and gregarious mammal. It is most protective and solicitous of its young, and has come to be regarded as a symbol of unselfish affection.

Of the dolphins, General Furlong writes, in his *Rivers of Life*: "The dolphin, as a most peculiarly sacred fish, was called Philanthropist by the ancients, and said to delight in music. It saved the great bard Arion when he threw himself into the Mediterranean on his way to Corinth, which event is said to have happened in the seventh century B.C., or about the time the story of Jonah arose. The Greeks placed the dolphin in their Zodiac. Burckhardt says, in his *Travels in Nubia,* that no one is permitted to

throw a lance at or injure a dolphin in the Red Sea; and the same rule is enforced among most of the Greek islands." The dolphin was an emblem associated with Neptune, and the virtues attributed to the dolphin probably influenced the selection of the word *Delphin* or *Dauphin* as a title for the eldest son of the king of France.

The dolphin also figures in Christian religious art, much in the same way as it is associated with Dionysius in the Greek rites. As a printer's device, it appears on early books printed by the Aldine Press, one of the first great European printing establishments, and it is found abundantly in Renaissance art. It even adorns the baptismal fonts of some of the early churches and cathedrals.

The Carp, or Goldfish

The carp is certainly the hero fish of China and Japan. Not only is it highly venerated, but fish fanciers have created numerous types of this little creature, and regular exhibitions are given of these cross-breedings. The carp annually ascends rivers and streams to lay its eggs. Often this is a difficult and dangerous procedure, and the fish find it necessary to negotiate rapids and whirlpools, and frequently jump high falls. The legend of the carp jumping many times before it is able to reach the safety of the waters above the falls is used to typify courage, perseverance, and patience. As these qualities are the very basis of Bushido, the Japanese code of honor and chivalry, the carp has been intimately related to the proper qualities of a young man growing up to the responsibilities of maturity. The dragon carp, in the form of a kind of hollow kite, fish-shaped, is flown on high poles during the annual celebration of the boys' festival. There is always the reminder that the human being, with his various attributes, his powers of thought and perception, his faculties for intelligence and reason, is infinitely better endowed than a small golden fish. He should therefore never lack the courage of so small and helpless a creature. Human virtue should transcend, in all ways, that of the lesser kingdoms, and it is a shame indeed if man does not live up to his full heritage of ability and character. Because it was believed that the gods so honored the little golden fish that they gave him a place in heaven, it is right and proper that it should be cherished and fed and cared for in the pools of temples and in the

lakes and streams where it abides. It is also pictured in art, usually in the episode for which it is famous—leaping the waterfall.

The Devilfish, or Octopus

As late as the 19th century, the octopus was regarded as a mysterious and horrible monster, better suited for fantastic fiction than serious study. Countless readers thrilled to the account given by Jules Verne, in his *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea,* of the octopus that attacked the submarine Nautilus and nearly vanquished the hardy company of adventurers. Victor Hugo was openly ridiculed for his description of a devilfish capturing and destroying a human being, and it must be admitted that such occurrences are rare, but not impossible. In Oriental waters, the octopus, known to the Japanese as the *tako,* reaches great size, with tentacles fifteen or more feet long.

The octopus is valued as a food in several parts of the world, but for the most part the larger varieties are viewed with fear and abhorrence. It is associated with the mystery of the sea, with danger lurking in the shadowy depths of ocean. It is therefore a monster of negation, suggesting that the illusion of mortality is the abode of cruel and terrible dangers. The Greeks believed that the soul, entering generation and preparing for birth in the physical world, passed into a humid or water-like region, where the light of the sun was dimmed and consciousness of spiritual source was gradually obscured. In this psychic ocean, ruled over by the circumstances of mortality, the soul was subject to attack by corruption and the temptations of the flesh. Pride, avarice, anger, and hate dragged the soul downward and sought to devour its very substance.

The number eight played a part in this strange, negative symbolism. The soul had eight extensions, or attributes, according to both Pythagoras and Plato. The negative cultivation of these attributes resulted in hopeless entanglement in the spheres of sense and appetite. There was also an eighth sphere, believed by the Gnostics to be the abode of lost souls or of the principle of corruption. It was against this eight-fold disaster that Buddha established his Noble Eight-fold Path by means of which the human soul could be restored in its eight parts. Those crossing the sea of

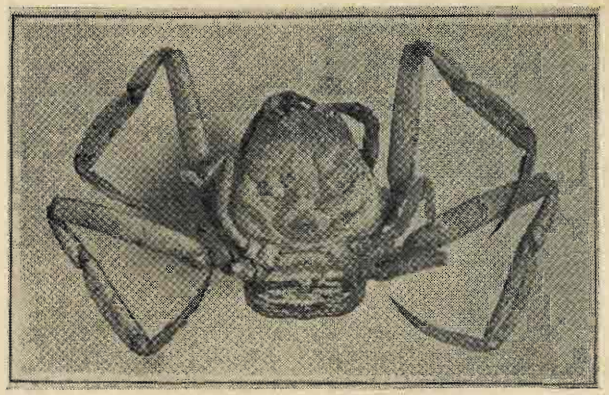
life might well be confronted with the eight-armed terror of the deep—temptations reaching out to drag the psychic nature into the darkness of a mysterious underworld where the light of reality could not reach. Thus, the octopus would represent the lower psychic nature with its intensities, pressures, and neurotic involvements. These, attacking the reason and judgment, deprived the person of his normal functions and condemned him to existence in the phantom-filled region of the psychic underself.

In Greek art, the octopus occurs in vase paintings and on medals and coins. Perhaps it symbolized the power of a maritime state. In Scandinavian mythology, a monstrous creature called the *krakan,* as large as a small island, and living in the deepest parts of the ocean, has been the subject of considerable folklore. While it might be an exaggeration to say that the krakan is actually an octopus, there are points of similarity in meaning, if we allow for local exaggeration. In mythology, there is also reference to a creature resembling the octopus, but with ten or twelve tentacles. Fiction writers have attempted to identify these monsters with the krakan.

There is some evidence that the devilfish with ten or twelve tentacles, has been used as a symbol of secret societies by older and primitive culture groups. This may explain the common practice of using the octopus to symbolize a subversive force in society, espionage agencies, crime syndicates, and narcotic rings. These are things of evil, extending their influences nefariously and capturing innocent people as potential victims. Broadly speaking, the octopus has come to be regarded as the embodiment of the evil side of man's nature, and, by extension, of insidious temptation leading to demoralization and self-destruction.

Other Creatures of the Sea

The crab, as a sign of the zodiac, is found in both Eastern and Western astronomy. Some associate it closely with the symbolism of the Egyptian scarab, which is alternately used to represent the zodiacal sign of Cancer. The curious motion of the crab associated it with the oblique and retrograde movement of the sun in the precession of the equinoxes. The fact that the crab usually proceeds sideways is said to have suggested to the Chinese and Japanese a proper name for the European method of writing, which proceeded



Photograph of a *Heike-gani* showing the face-like design on the body of the crab. From *Decorative Motives of Oriental Art.*

from left to right, whereas the native calligraphy was in vertical columns written from the top down. The oldest symbolism we have involves the hibernating habit of the crab. Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhists used the crab symbol to indicate the interval between embodiments in the physical world. This quiet state, in which the consciousness rested prior to rebirth, was a retirement into self—a kind of psychic hibernation. There was also an old legend that the crab was immortal, unless actually destroyed. It was supposed to renew itself, and to be able to grow additional legs if its original members were injured or lost. It was also a fecundity symbol, associated with generation and reproduction, linked with the feminine principle of life. Small land crabs were kept in specially prepared enclosures in the gardens of temples, where predictions were based upon any peculiarity of habit which these creatures displayed.

In the Japanese area, there is a small crab called the *heike-gani,* which is remarkable for the human face clearly visible on the shell of its back. This face is nearly always distorted, as though in great pain. We have already mentioned the wars between the Heike and Genji, which raged in the 12th century. In this battle, which was fought at sea, most of the Heike were drowned. It is supposed that their ghosts have taken up their abode in the crabs which have these agonized faces on their shells. It is obvious that such a natural curiosity would be quickly involved in mythology,

and this, in turn, would lend itself to a kind of totemism. The crab has magical implications in Japanese spiritism.

The lobster was commonly used in Asia as a kind of overgrown shrimp. The Chinese called it the "dragon-shrimp." In Taoism, some of the curious old saints travel about on lobsters, and in Japan, this crustacean is considered very fortunate, and is often represented on New Year's greeting cards. Sometimes the seven gods of happiness come sailing into the lives of fortunate mortals on a ship fashioned from a lobster shell. Probably the color has influenced the use of the lobster in Japanese painting and woodblock printing. It always adds a brilliant shade to the design. Representations of the lobster by paper-folding or other ingenious folk art are usually included in the household shrine during the New Year season. There is not much emphasis upon the lobster in European folklore, but there are cases where it seems to be confused with the scorpion, which was a creature of ill omen.

Shrimps are conspicuous in Japanese art; also, on surimono or festive cards for various occasions, usually mingling with aquatic plants in underwater scenes, where they give a spot of bright coloring. Generally, they signify good luck, but we find no evidence of deep mystical meaning. Crustacea in general may, by extension, be considered symbols of Bushido, the code of self-control and security arising from protection provided by consciousness or understanding. The shells are a defensive armament against the vicissitudes of life. Man, in an emergency, retires into his own shell, so to say. He closes out the world by a defensive armament of the mind. As most Asiatic peoples believe that each individual must earn his own destiny, guard his own fortunes, and protect his own character, they have chosen these armored creatures as symbols of this life-pattern.

Obviously, it has not been possible to consider all the various forms of life which have become symbolically important to man in his search for the meaning of life. Those we have listed, however, will provide a key to the universal practice of exploring self by projecting internal qualities upon external objects. All symbolism is a kind of mandala magic. We see what we are, what we hope for, or what we fear. The beings of the animal kingdom live their own lives, and we are unable to have direct contact with their

thoughts or emotions. Yet we perceive in them exaggerated expressions or caricatures of our own characteristics. Each seems to possess something that ties it to human life, and man, exploring his own interior psychic existence, finds that he, too, is bound to the kingdoms of nature around him by aspects of his own nature.

The silence of the animal world makes it especially mysterious. If it does not speak, men bestow their own speech, and our most primitive ancestors regarded animals as muted human beings, differing somewhat in appearance, but with the same essential needs and qualities. The animal world became a mirror of both God and nature. The functions of animals seemed to bind them to the Divine Power. They fulfilled the Will of Heaven, developed courage, sagacity, patience, and even strong friendships and affections. By contemplating the ways of nature, man discovered something of the divine plan and its universal operation. Thus, beasts of the fields and birds of the air became the teachers of men.

To modern man, an animal is only an animal, but to our remote forebears, an animal was a thing of wonder. The beauty of its form, the brilliance of its body, its fur and feathers and scales, all excited admiration and inspired serious reflection. Even more than through books or ancient monuments, or the tribal lore of the old and the wise, men seeking to understand life studied living things, and were richly rewarded.

(*Continued from page* 31)

we watched, the ghostly portrait seemed to slowly fade away. As the last traces of the image vanished, a point of intense light appeared in the center of the reflection. It seemed to unfold until it filled the entire field. Suddenly the radiance took shape, and a fully open lotus blossom, with shimmering petals, filled the space previously occupied by the features of the young woman.

"Namu Amida Butsu," whispered my Japanese friend reverently as he slowly laid the mirror back in its flat case. "It is a very good sign, Haru San. The captured spirit is now free to make its journey in the radiant heart of the lotus to the beautiful land on the other side of death. Tomorrow I will give these hairs honorable burial in sacred ground."

In Reply

A Department of Questions and Answers

QUESTION: *There has been a great deal of discussion about the growing narcotics menace in our country. Do you think the English system of narcotics control could be successfully used in the United States?*

ANSWER: The number of persons in the United States addicted to the use of narcotics has increased considerably in recent years. Various statistics are available indicating that between 50,000 and 100,000 persons in this country are narcotics addicts. It seems to me that these figures are more than conservative. While it is true that addiction is greater in certain metropolitan areas than in rural regions, the evil is more widespread, especially among younger people, than we like to believe. Of course, these statistics also do not include a considerable number of products that are, to a degree, habit-forming, and which, if taken to excess, will result in a dependency approaching addiction. We might mention the various barbiturates, sleeping pills, relaxing preparations, a variety of hypnotic drugs, and even such common products as aspirin, and of course alcohol. The increasing dependency upon either sedatives or stimulants indicates the rising pressures of the modern way of life. Millions of human beings under tension seek escape or defense on the medical level. Many doctors prescribe sedation more generously than the strict needs of the situation may require, and the public in general, demanding relief without any intention of

correcting the defects of character which contribute to stress, wants this type of help.

It is difficult to isolate a social problem, for, to a measure, so-called upright and law-abiding citizens contribute to the very conditions which later disturb them. It is notable in industry that men are required to maintain levels of efficiency which must result in excessive fatigue. The tempo now regarded as proper and normal is unreasonable in terms of nervous and physical resources. The tremendous increase in the use of vitamins advertised as vitality builders reveals the direction of the present need, or at least the popular analysis of what is necessary to maintain efficiency.

While it is true that the aspirin addict may never become a morphine addict, there is a common denominator that should be analyzed. Modern man is experiencing a sense of defeatism which it is difficult for him to endure when in the full possession of his faculties. His life has become a mass of pressures and intensities. He finds a tendency to worry mounting within him. He is tired, disturbed, and frustrated. Success has become a burden rather than a benefit. He is sacrificing too much of what he is in order to accumulate and protect what he has. His inner resources are deficient. His philosophy of life is inadequate. He is not receiving real consolation or spiritual support from his religion. His entertainments are not relaxing. He is uneducated in those fine arts or cultural concepts which might bring him peace of soul. He has fears not only for his personal life, but for the very survival of the human collective. As never before, the private citizen is aware of the world dilemma. He is disillusioned in leadership, and is continuously bombarded with propaganda. He is encouraged to live beyond his means, and is so precariously poised financially that even a minor recession could spell disaster. Dominated largely by a materialistic outlook, he has little faith in the love of God or the laws of nature. Thus constantly undermined, he finds that he is unable to cope with mental or emotional emergencies. Instead of using his mind to integrate his life, he chooses to benumb his faculties so that he can forget what he cannot solve.

There is much to be said in favor of the idea that a narcotics addict is a sick man, but in most cases, he was sick before he indulged in the habit. The really normal person recognizes that his

mental and emotional powers are among the most valuable of his possessions. He uses them to build his life, to solve his problems, and to chart his course into the future. To voluntarily sacrifice what amounts to his own consciousness, simply means that he is inwardly resolved to destroy himself. Psychologically, he is catering to a suicidal complex. He will not do this unless death becomes preferable to life.

Juvenile narcotics addiction presents a somewhat different problem, but we should remember that young people must depend upon the older generation for moral support and intelligent guidance. The weakened home, the lack of sympathy between parents, the increasing selfishness of adults, and parental preoccupation, all contribute to the disorientation of the young. If the adult feels sorry for himself, looking upon parenthood as an interference with freedom of personal action, something is bound to happen. I have talked to many young people, and a good number of them do not regard life as important. One will say, "Why should I grow up to be shot or blasted to oblivion by an atomic bomb?" Another will say, "What is my future—to live on the verge of bankruptcy for fifty years, as my father has?" Still another will say, "Why should I build a home, when the one in which I was raised is nothing but a group of unhappy people ?" Young folks willing to hazard their lives at almost any moment in a sports car, or engage in vandalism which may leave a permanent scar upon their characters, are the products of a society lacking maturity and ethical stability. These unadjusted, uninspired young people are internally confused, spoiled and miserable at the same time. They are certainly more susceptible to thrills than to facts, and, being inexperienced, have little defense against temptation on any level.

It is probably too optimistic to attempt a formula for the stamping out of the narcotics menace, but many things can be done that will help. We can protect the weak to a certain degree, but this protection is not a substitute for personal strength. We can support, in all ways possible, programs to control the lawful use of narcotics and to discourage the illicit trade. One thought comes to mind which could have wide benefits. Research in pharmaceuticals is progressing intensively at this time. It is quite conceivable that if some of the money spent on far less important projects were

channeled in the proper direction, adequate non-habit-forming substitutes could be found to take the place of narcotics in medicine. This would end the narcotics market entirely from the legitimate standpoint, and permit a complete control of the production of habit-forming drugs. It would also end possible medical addiction, which is noticeable in some areas of the problem. It is not enough, however, to attempt to suppress addiction by legislative means. Psychologically, total suppression without cure might result in a transformation of the problem with even more critical consequences. If the neurotic cannot secure drugs, he may turn to more obvious and malicious compensations, bringing a steep increase in other brackets of major crime.

We can hope that much could be accomplished by a strong program of education about the facts concerning narcotics, but actually, the problem is social even more than it is educational. Certainly young people can be thoroughly equipped to recognize the dangers of addiction, but this will not dispose of the instinct to self-destruction, if life itself is not meaningful and basically encouraging. The slow but sure way of meeting this crisis is the enriching of human character and the maturing of our social system to the point where living is a reasonable experience—fruitful, purposeful, significant, and inspiring. As we have raised our economic level almost miraculously in recent years, we must now raise our moral and ethical levels to a similar degree.

Confucius observed, more than twenty-five centuries ago, that the foundation of national security is the home. This is as true today as it was then. The instruction the child receives in his home, the examples set by his parents, the close sympathy between the child and the adult, constructive enterprises in family living, the preservation of the dignity of human relationships, intelligent provision for the right use of the energies of the young—these are the vital needs of the hour, and will effect many remedies extending far beyond the narcotics problem. The average adult, however, is more willing to support legislation than to improve his own character. While this attitude continues, the life of virtue is little better than a platitude.

It has been recommended that we consider the English method of handling the narcotics problem. Some have advocated that the

so-called English solution be attempted over here. It is my opinion that this will not work, for several reasons.

First: According to available figures, there are less than four hundred narcotics addicts in England, out of a population of approximately forty-five million. This can only mean that the English temperament differs markedly from our own, which, incidentally, we know to be true. The English way of life is more sober and conservative, and it is strongly influenced by tradition. It is simply not traditional for a patriotic Englishman to become a narcotics addict. He considers it a disgrace, not only to himself, but to his country. He does not feel the same about alcohol, which is traditionally acceptable. But while many English drink, they regard drunkenness as disgraceful. This can only point out that, in general, the English have a basic pride of personal character. They have inherited certain levels of behavior. These they must perpetuate and pass on to their children.

Second: English community life is more closely integrated than ours. People know each other, and families have grown up in neighborly relationships. It is difficult to conceal any type of abnormalcy, and the breath of scandal is something to be reckoned with. Religiously speaking, the English people are also very close to their church. Though perhaps not as operative as might be desired, religion is still a powerful contributing force toward respectability. In education, the Englishman is raised to be proud of his nationality and his heritage. We may consider him somewhat "stuffy" in his attitudes, but there is a strong framework upon which he can depend and which continuously supports him in his determination to protect the honor of his country and prepare himself for a life of useful service.

Third: The Englishman is not subjected to nearly as much prosperity pressure as we know. He does not have to be rich in order to be a gentleman, nor does he have to outshine his neighbors. He appreciates quality above newness; the ancient homestead has lost none of its charm for him. Because his tempos are not so rapid and his ambitions not so immediately strong, his rewards are more attainable. He is prepared to work hard for what he wants, to advance himself slowly in business, to expand only when this expansion is actually necessary. He is not inclined to hazard

security, has fewer extravagant tastes than we have, and is more discriminating and critical of his entertainment. Naturally, these conditions are changing, but up to date, they have been effective in varying degrees.

Fourth: Money is not as plentiful in England as in the United States, and the average Englishman simply cannot afford the expense associated with addiction. This means, of course, that the distribution of narcotics is not as profitable in England as it is here. The dope syndicate and its "pushers" would have a hard time promoting and profiteering on drug addiction in a country where money is a scarce commodity.

Fifth: As narcotics are usually associated ultimately with crime, English law-enforcement agencies are more effective in preventing addiction than we might at first imagine. In England, the law moves rapidly and relentlessly. There is little probability of evading the penalties imposed by the courts. Crime is not an adventure to be widely publicized and glamorized, as it often is in the American press. It is a sordid matter from the beginning, to end in tragedy in the docks of old Bailey.

Substantially, therefore, I do not feel that the English problem is similar to our own; nor could it be successfully handled in our country. Because of the very small number of addicts in England, and the fact that they have not been inclined to exploit the policy established by the government, we must conclude that addicts in England are not abusing their privileges or conspiring to corrupt or exploit the system operating there. In light of temperamental and circumstantial differences, I believe that such would not be the case in the United States. This is a much larger country. Our people are strongly individualistic, and we are more likely to seek the temporary stimulating or relaxing effects of drugs.

The possible consequences, in our country, of providing drugs at some ridiculously low figure and dispensing them openly to all who require or demand them, can perhaps best be estimated by our use of minor but not necessarily unharmful sedatives and stimulants. Aspirin has become a standard article of diet in the American family, indicating our usual tendency to do everything to excess. Some have estimated that already more than fifty percent of our

people are taking some preparation inclined to excite or depress the nervous system or bodily functions. We can hardly crawl out of bed without coffee. We reach eagerly for various soft drinks which contain caffeine. We get a lift from the tannin in tea. We can hardly carry on a business transaction or meet socially without cocktails. In recent years we have even developed groups of professional, semi-professional, and amateur researchers experimenting with mescaline and similar preparations derived from the medical lore or religious traditions of primitive peoples. We are fascinated by the psychological consequences of munching certain types of mushrooms. Our curiosity is insatiable, and our self-control negligible. There seems no reason to believe that we would be more moderate with narcotics than we are with other preparations which we basically know to be injurious.

The principal deterrents to drug addiction in this country are the criminal code and the excessive cost. We are restrained because we are afraid of consequences. If the sale of drugs became legal, and the price were brought within the range of everyone, I strongly suspect that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to prevent a rapid rise in addiction. It would be more respectable, but in no way less detrimental. Addiction is not merely for the pleasure of evading the law; it is an escape from reality. Legalizing the sale of narcotics will not change a person's basic attitude toward life or reduce the psychic pressures that cause him to seek escape from his problems.

It is argued that if the profits from the sale of narcotics were removed, a vast underworld organization would be deprived of the advantages of recruiting new narcotics addicts. There would be nothing in it for the smuggler or the peddler, and the drug syndicate would collapse. We have already learned, to our sorrow, that the underworld cannot be put out of business by the suppression of a vice. It merely moves into other areas and takes over a new range of criminal activities. We know that crime, when frustrated in all other ways, may even attempt to take over the government of a nation. All criminal organizations exist because they are supported by foolish, ignorant, and vicious people. Only a remarkable outburst of honesty in all departments of life can effectively curb crime. To my thinking, reducing the price of nar-

cotics would be like trying to curb alcoholism by reducing the price of whiskey.

Statistics tend to prove that most folks, young and old, are happier, healthier, and more honorable when they are constructively engaged in useful activities. The majority of people would like to do something valuable, to help in building an enduring society dedicated to peace and the advancement of the common good. Give the citizen, young and old, a chance to really solve a problem, prepare for a vital and dynamic career, and he will naturally conserve his resources and guard his character.

Our nation was built by people who were far too busy to be neurotic. What we do not realize is that this country is still in the building. We are not a finished product, nor can we afford to settle back as masters of all we survey. The physical form of our country has been developed, but its culture is still undeveloped. We must mature what we have created. We must begin the real work of civilization, for the word simply means a state of society in which people work together, live together, and hope together in a peaceful and cooperative manner. It is perfectly possible to devise and organize projects which will bind our people with loyalties large enough and deep enough to inspire self-control and self-development. This must be the ultimate answer. We will live well because we want to live, and not because we wish to survive in a state of continual boredom. We can whip ourselves with artificial interests, but in the end, these fall away and leave us as miserable as before.

Until such time as we have a real solution—one that deals with human character and basic values—we can only enforce those rules and laws by which crime can be held to a minimum. Thus, adequate enforcement is an immediate necessity. This will curb, but never cure. Moderation, temperance, and emotional balance are the evidences of a mature culture or a mature person. We must accept responsibility and advance every opportunity to dedicate ourselves to the perfection of those traits of character with which we are naturally endowed, and from the neglect of which we have fallen into our present troubles.

ANATOL EFIMOFF

SOMETHING DIFFERENT IN ART

By ELIZABETH CONNELLY

An exhibition of scenes depicting Old Peking and the Forbidden City, by artist Anatol Efimoff, marked January 1961 as an outstanding month in the series of art shows in the library of The Philosophical Research Society.

This Russian-born artist spent more than thirty years of his life in this region of China, and considers himself more Chinese than Russian. He presented more than one hundred framed canvases, in varying sizes, for the consideration and enjoyment of friends of the Society and a public that returned Sunday after Sunday to view again this unique collection which Manly P. Hall has described as "probably unlike anything else anywhere in the world."

Mr. Efimoff has used every shading of every known color in his presentation of the palaces and pagodas, the stupas and temples of old Peiping and the Forbidden City. The same building is seen from different angles, so that the lovely architectural designs are seen to the utmost advantage, yet so correct in linear structure that this artist's meticulous work is important historically *now,* in his own time, and will undoubtedly prove more important as time flows on.

If this artist's representation of the Moongate gives the feeling of mystery and intrigue in the shadows of evening, then the viewer's impression changes to that of wonder when he sees the same entrance in the brilliance of the early morning sun. By the use of extreme patience and never-ending effort, Mr. Efimoff has given his public several hundreds of impressions in a mere one hundred canvases. Through studies made at different hours of the day, and in the varying seasons of a year, he has found it possible to give a bridge, a building, or a garden-scene as many as six different visual

effects. Even the trunks of the famed white cypress trees native to this locale are hardly recognizable when fully clad in the bark which is stripped away completely in certain seasons of the year.

Especially fascinating to art students is the luminous effect achieved by Mr. Efimoff, who explained to visitors that he uses French materials exclusively, and that he has made it a life-long custom to repaint scenes until he secures the imagery originally envisioned. His representation of the water lilies featured in the courtyard of the summer palace which stands in front of a Tibetan pavilion, is seen through a sort of misty haze, yet remains as memorable as the stark red of the Moongate. In the words of the artist himself, he felt that his glowing portrayal of the buildings and grounds of Peiping and the Forbidden City would be more pleasing, and therefore better remembered by more people, than a series of strictly architectural paintings, however technically correct they might have been.

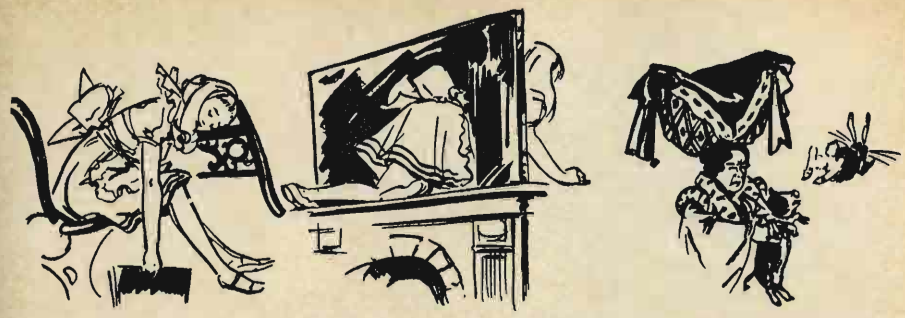
Mr. Efimoff was allotted one day in 1940 to secure the materials he needed for the delicate, restrained paintings included in this collection, depicting the Emperor's Palace where Mao-Tse-Tung now resides.

He feels that this and other palaces now occupied by the Communist hierarchy will eventually fall into decay, as have many of the pagodas and temples. Since the revolution of 1912, many were destroyed deliberately and others allowed to fall into ruin for lack of government-supported maintenance and the utter lack of religious feeling or respect for artistic merit. The possibility of such a fate makes Mr. Efimoff's collection historically valuable, while providing, at the same time, a romantic vision of a Chinese capital once held in reverent awe.

Pei Hai Park, long familiar to Chinese painters, has been refreshingly reproduced by Anatol Efimoff in the original colors, conveying the particular meanings peculiar to the use of each one as that color was first applied to wall, gate, or door.

An added distinction to this collection of aquatints is the fact that Anatol Efimoff was the only artist permitted to paint inside the Forbidden City containing the formal gardens of the former Empress. He managed to do the required ground-work in the one

(*Please turn to page 69*)



Curiouser & Curiouser

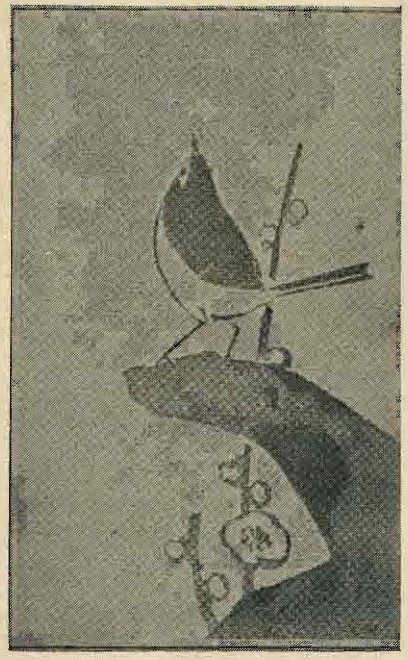
A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

THE BIRD THAT BECAME A BUDDHIST

In China, those faithful arhats of Buddhism who wandered about the world chanting the mysteries of the Heart Doctrine were called the "singing lohan." In Japan, there is the belief that once upon a time, a little bird was converted to the faith of Buddha, and is now entitled to be included among those sweet-voiced singers of the eternal truths. The *uguisu,* or Japanese nightingale, is actually the bush-warbler, and its note is not the same as that of the European nightingale. The uguisu is found in all parts of the empire, and its low musical tones are heard from February to September. In art, it is often associated with the plum blossom. They both appear at the same season of the year, and the bird seems to have a strange affinity for the plum tree. To destroy one of these trees is to deprive its feathered friend of a favorite perch. The uguisu, being a good Buddhist, adjusts well to circumstances, and continues to sing even when captured and kept in a cage.

Lafcadio Hearn gives a touching description of the Japanese nightingale in his book *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*:

> The *uguisu* is a holy little bird that professed Buddhism. All *uguisu* have professed Buddhism from time immemorial: all *ugusiu* preach alike to men the excellence of the divine sutra, *Ho-ke-kyo!* in the Japanese tongue *Ho-ke-kyo,* in the Sanskrit *Pundarika,* the divine book of the Nicheren sect. Very brief in-



Nightingale and plum blossom. From an original design by Korin.

deed is my little feathered Buddhist's confession of faith: only the sacred name reiterated over and over again like a litany, with liquid burst of twittering between, *Ho-ke-kyo!* Only this one phrase, but deliciously he utters it! With what slow, amorous ecstasy he dwells upon its golden syllables! It hath been written, 'He who shall keep, read, or write this sutra shall obtain eight hundred good qualities of the eye . . . . *Ho-ke-kyo!*' A single word only. But it is also written: 'He who shall joyfully accept a single word from this sutra, incalculably greater shall be his merit than the merit of one who shall supply all beings in the four hundred thousand Asankhyeyas of worlds with all the necessities of happiness' . . . . Always he makes a reverent little pause after uttering it and before shrilling out his ecstatic warble—his bird-hymn of praise. First the warble; then a pause of about five seconds; then a slow, sweet, solemn utterance of the holy name in a tone as of meditative wonder; then another pause; then another wild, rich, passionate warble.

The 13th century brought many tragedies to the people of Japan. The Mongols were determined to conquer the empire. There were

strange portents of evil things to come; the sky was dark with the shadow of death. The heavens foretold catastrophe, and there were comets to disturb the night. Crops failed; earthquakes destroyed towns and villages; storms broke over the land; and the voice of conscience whispered into the ears of the feudal lords that they must mend their ways and cease their fratricidal struggle for domination over the country. It was in the midst of this spiritual and temporal confusion that the priest Nichiren proclaimed his ministry. Either men must return to the righteous way of life, or perish for their misdeeds. He taught that the truths necessary to the salvation of Japan were most perfectly set forth in the sutra of The Lotus of the Good Law. In all emergencies, in every hour of peril and in every extremity in life, men must remember the promise of this wonderful book by reciting the holy title "Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyo," which means "Adoration of the Lotus of Perfect Truth." In direct reference to the sutra, Myoho-Renge-Kyo, or Ho-ke-kyo, properly means Lotus of the Good Law.

Each year when the spring comes, the Japanese nightingale brings this message of faith and remembrance. It sings in quiet groves and along busy roads. It takes up its abode in the grounds of old temples, and even in the gardens of the Imperial Palace. The rich and the poor alike receive the promise of the Doctrine that brings peace to the soul of the troubled and the heavy-laden. Who can resist the message of this happy little creature? Some say it was fashioned in paradise to make music for the great ones in their meditations. Following the rules of the Bodhisattva Doctrine, the uguisu renounced its heavenly estate to descend into the troubled world of men to sing the glad tidings of redemption.

The Mortal Blemish

When Timur the Lame had conquered Asia, an orator came to compliment him upon the occasion. He began his harangue by styling him the most omnipotent, and the most glorious object of the creation. The Emperor seemed displeased with his paltry adulation, yet still he went on, complimenting him as the most mighty, the most valiant and the most perfect of beings. "Hold there, my friend," cried the lame Emperor, "hold there, till I have got another leg."—*Citizen of the World*

THE JAPANESE HOME AND GARDEN

Perhaps some of the most delightful and charming expressions of Japanese artistry are to be found in the Japanese house and garden. These concepts have gained great and unusual favor in the West. We use them more and more as an escape from the limitations of the four-wall house which our ancestors brought with them from a much more rigorous climate. The original reason for small windows, for example, was to prevent your enemies from shooting you from the outside. This apparent need has passed, because now the enemy comes in the front door. In any event, we no longer need this form of protection. Actually, the climate in Japan is not so balmy as one might think; heavy snows and frosts occur quite frequently. The Japanese, in creating a house and garden, are therefore not so much influenced by climatic conditions as by another important idea; namely, that the house should walk into the garden, and the garden should be an honored visitor in the house. This involves a series of modifications in living which we do not fully understand as yet, and which, while highly artistic—as truth must always be—present a series of symbolic challenges to us.

The Japanese house is usually comparatively bare of furniture, such as we know it. The floor of the house is covered with mats which are of standard size, three-by-six feet, and the size of rooms is discussed in terms of the number of mats required to cover the floor, not the number of square feet of floor space. The mat is bound with a cloth edging, an inch to an inch and a half thick, and is suitable for floor covering only because the Japanese do not wear shoes in the house. They wear a sock-like slipper called *tabi,* which will not damage this delicate matting. It is interesting that a mat should be three feet wide and six feet long, because this, in Western symbolism long ago, was called "the measure of a man." It was the amount of earth that was given to him when he died. And this concept of the mat, in some way, has something to do with the earth, for the earth upon which we walk is the grave of everything that has ever lived, and we may gently symbolize this by the mat. We may also remember that, as we are walking upon the shadows of the dead, it would be kindly to take off our shoes.

This kind of symbolism pervades much of the thinking of these people. There is always a meaning, going back through tradition, art, history, and religion. Nothing is ever planned a certain way just because it is convenient or useful; it is always planned a certain way because it is better; and it is better because it is more thoughtful. You can outgrow a carpet, but you can never outgrow the symbolism of a mat, for it goes on as you grow, becoming more and more meaningful.

The house usually has movable partitions—an interesting feature because to the Japanese mind, rigid walls are correlated with rigid minds. The individual who lives in a house of five rooms, each with a wall of its own, is telling us that he lives in a world of five senses and keeps them carefully separated. He must go from one to another. He has a room in which to sleep, a room in which to eat, and one in which to take a bath. He has rooms for purposes. To the Japanese mind, all these partitions and divisions are arbitrary and, to a degree, imaginary. When you wish to entertain many guests in your house, you therefore simply push aside all these movable partitions, and your house is one room, which indicates that you share all of yourself and your consciousness with your guests. Also, your walls are such that you can make rooms when you want to, so that if you want to go off sometimes and be quiet, you simply arrange the walls to suit your inclination.

The Japanese house, therefore, is a Buddhist symbol—a complete universe of meaning—and within this house, every action and propriety also has its natural and inevitable significance. The garden is the house extended out into the universe. It is man moving away from himself into those things which are not man, but which are bigger than man. And beyond this, in turn, is the great world outside.

Thus, the familiar Japanese triad of heaven, earth, and man is created out of this situation. Obviously, the owner of the house is the man-symbol. The house must be the earth-symbol, because the house contains him, and the earth must always contain. Therefore, everything outside of the house is heaven, because it contains the house. The air we breathe, the mountains—all the great pageantry around us—these larger things are the containers of villages, of houses, and of men. Heaven supplies man with food along the

road that leads to his house. It grows on trees around him, and he brings it into the house in order that he may eat it and live. Therefore, the universe around him is heaven; the house is the earth; and he, as a dweller in the house, is man.

Man has two ways of extending his consciousness. He may either go out of his house and look around him, or he may open all the doors and windows and let the world come in to him. The Japanese, being a Buddhist, is also a person of quietudes and acceptances. Therefore, it is perhaps better for him to think in terms of heaven moving in, so that the garden comes into the house, and becomes part of it. Gradually, also, the barriers between heaven and earth are removed by man. He is therefore the gardener—the one who makes the earth like heaven.

Thus, in his garden, the Japanese works with a great deal of symbolism. Of course, in Japan, land is a very precious thing. Gardens cannot be as they are in this country, for there are nearly a hundred million people living on a group of islands, the land area of which is less than that of California. So the little land must be made to seem great. It must be captured in miniature, and the gardener must become an exquisite artist, capable of rare symbolism. The universe must be symbolically represented, and to do this, the Japanese uses three elements: water, rock, and plants, or living things. Wherever possible, he will have the appearance of a little stream, or a little pool with a bridge across it; something to symbolize water. He will have something to symbolize earth—a rock, stones, pebbles. With devices of this kind, he will make particular representations of earth. He will also have growing things, in their natural setting of rock and water. In his own way, he will then triangulate these symbols. He will have water as the symbol of the universal nutrition, like the water of Tao in China. The rock may be a representation of earth in the midst of ocean. And upon the rock, or around the rock, as circumstances permit, he will build clusters of living things, all carefully triangulated.

The gardener-artist may also wish to capture other symbols. There are many gardens in Japan—some of the most beautiful—that do not have a living thing in them. The garden may be a beautiful area, set aside, in which a number of rocks will be placed

—from *Ehon Yamato Hiji*

Woodblock showing a Japanese home and garden. Drawn by the great artist Sukenobu, printed in Kyoto, 1742.

in a geometrical or highly artistic pattern. The garden, by its shape, will be a kakemono, or a painting lying flat. In the midst of this picture, will be these rocks—not centered, perhaps all at one end, maybe scattered, perhaps looking a little like the scattered islands of Japan themselves. And then there will be a perfectly level area of sand which has been combed into ripples, curves, elaborate patterns, as though tossed by the wind. The artist will make out of sand an infinite ocean, and the rock and the sand will be all that he has in his garden; unless, as is sometimes the case, he will add to this combination a broken piece of deadwood. If there is wood, we know immediately that this symbolizes man. If there is no wood, then we study the rock formation, because man will be hidden there somewhere. In the arrangement of the rocks, there must be triangulation.

There must also be another triangulation—one that represents active life; something growing or moving. So we have the rock, the sand, and something else, and that is the *motion* of the sand, represented by the sweeping or the raking. This has been done by man; this is the thing that shows that man has been there. I have also seen a Japanese garden in which the sand was untouched, the rocks were without any ornamentation, and way out near one

end of the garden, was a footprint—nothing else—to indicate that man had been that way. It looked as though it was an accident, but it was not. That footprint was as much a part of that garden as any other element in it.

Another pattern might be to have rocks, some beautiful little trees, and a stone lantern. A Japanese garden is almost unthinkable without a stone lantern. In this lantern, there may be an oil lamp, as there was in ancient times, or sometimes it may be wired for electricity, or a candle may be used. Rising in the midst of the garden, the lantern is a miniature temple. It is a symbol, for it is a lantern like those which light the way to the shrines and ornament the graves of the illustrious dead. The lantern is a kind of dagoba, a little pagoda. And when it is combined with rocks and living things, and has the light shining in it, then we may say that this lantern represents heaven. It is the sacred thing. The light does not belong to man; he cannot create the light; but he can create the lantern, and in it, he can hold or capture the light.

Very often, in the Oriental gardens that are of sufficient size, you will find a cluster of bamboo. This is not just a meaningless grouping of plants, because the bamboo has a symbolic significance. It is a great life-symbol among these people. Usually, if you study the bamboo rather carefully, you will find that it is planted either in a kind of rough circle, or in two thirds of a circle, or as a kind of curtain, dividing one area from another. The bamboo curtain, or the grove, as it was in the time of the classics, was a symbol of scholarship. It was the symbol of poetry; the symbol of the all-sufficient man. Why? Because the height of culture was to be able to go and sit quietly in your bamboo grove. If you could do this, you could write great poetry.

The bamboo grove became a natural symbol of man's ability to retire into nature, and to contemplate its mysteries. To go to the bamboo grove, was to go to aloneness, to think, to meditate. It was a sign of leisure, and of detachment from all worldly things; man retiring, like the hermits of old, into the forest. The forest, in this case, might be six feet square, and the whole garden not twenty feet square, but that was not important. As one Japanese poet points out: you do not go to the forest; you carry your forest with you. It is always your sanctuary, and the bamboo is simply

a pleasant setting in which you can retire into the quiet depths of your own solitude, and there enjoy life to its fullest.

In the Japanese garden, you may also find the pool of carp, or what we call the goldfish. The carp is an important symbol in Japan because, due to the wisdom and courage of this creature, the great Buddha leaned down from heaven, and bestowed upon it immortality and lifted it into the sky to be forever a bodhisattva. The carp is therefore the compassionate teacher of the fish. It is to the fish what the Buddha is to man. It is the Lord of that order of things, and because of that, it was given the color of the sun, and made glorious and radiant. So where the fish appears, it is a symbol of tremendous interior meaning, and in a way, the pool, with the fish, is the symbol of Samadhi, or the Land of the Blessed.

The old alchemists in medieval Europe had a saying, "Art perfects nature." The Japanese, therefore, is an artist, helping nature to reveal itself through all its attributes. He takes the beauty of the natural life of things and exemplifies this beauty by his own ingenuity. And again, we have a triad: the man, the garden, which is earth, and the beauty that man seeks to capture, which is heaven. To the Japanese, a man's house is his little universe, and into it he tries to bring the light of truth and the light of Heaven.

(*Continued from page* 60)

day allowed, and has produced five paintings to show for that special privilege.

Close consideration reveals this dedicated artist as an ardent portrayer of nature at her best, an artistic painter determined to preserve for posterity the true history of the architecture of the elegantly beautiful Peiping of Old China, despite the destruction of the country to which he exiled himself voluntarily. Here he found whatever consolation was possible for the loss of family and friends; here he found rewarding work, and in return has given to the world a lasting record of one civilization's culture.

Happenings at Headquarters

Our Spring Quarter of activities opened on Sunday, April 9th, with a lecture by Dr. Framroze A. Bode, "Tagore—Poet, Philosopher, Artist," in which Dr. Bode, who has taught at the International University founded by Dr. Tagore, paid tribute to this great Indian mystic on the centenary of his birth. On April 16th, Dr. George R. Bach was guest speaker in the Auditorium. His subject was "What Can Psychology do to Ease East-West Tensions —the Importance of Communication and Group Psychology for World Peace." Dr. Bach is president of the Group Psychotherapy Association of Southern California, and is on the faculty of Claremont Graduate School and Pomona College.

Mr. Hall resumed his Sunday morning lectures in Los Angeles on April 23rd, after a most successful lecture tour in Portland, Oregon. His Sunday morning lectures in the Auditorium for the Spring Quarter end on June 25th. His Wednesday evening classes opened on May 17th, and will continue through June 14th, the subject of the seminar being "Mysteries of the Cabala." In addition, Mr. Hall gave two Wednesday evening lectures at the Pasadena Church of Truth in April and May.

Other classes at our headquarters include a Friday evening seminar of ten classes given by Dr. Bode, and a Wednesday evening seminar in April and May by Mr. Byron Pumphrey. Mr. Pumphrey's class covered the "Survey Course in Philosophy," made available last fall in mimeographed form, which consists of the Introduction to Mr. Hall's *Encyclopedic Outline of Symbolical Philosophy*. Dr. Henry L. Drake continued his group counseling sessions during the Spring Quarter on Saturday afternoons. The Hollywood Shakespeare Festival, in association with Theatre Universal, again presented three plays in our Auditorium, the last of this group, "All's Well That Ends Well," to be presented on Friday evening, June 16th, at 8:15.

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Through the cooperation of the Friends Committee, we have been able to make arrangements to step forward in the cataloguing

and classifying of Chinese material in the Library of the Society. The services of Dr. Huang Wen-Shan were engaged to translate the inscriptions on stone figures and tablets, the dating of early manuscripts and printings, the identification of religious charms and items of folklore, and the examination of the extensive collection of rubbings from ancient tablets and historical monuments. Dr. Huang was very favorably impressed with many of the pieces in the library collection, and declared that such works could no longer be seen in China, and some might prove to be unique. In due time, the notes of Dr. Huang Wen-Shan will be fully transcribed, and we will exhibit the original art works with his descriptions. There has been a great need for this type of expert assistance, and we hope that it will extend into several other language groups and culture areas. We are grateful to the Library Committee for their insight and understanding in advancing this research.

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On Friday, March 26th, our Vice-president, Henry L. Drake, spoke before members of the Southwest Counseling Center on "The Nature of Man." He emphasized the importance of comparative religion and philosophy as specific disciplines to assist the individual in the understanding of himself and his problems. Dr. Drake pointed out the hopeful indications of the present trend in psychology to emphasize the need for religious and philosophic insight. He feels that in the near future a division devoted to philosophic psychology, with its strongly idealistic implications, will become a part of the American Psychological Association.

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Last fall, Mr. Hall made a series of dramatic readings of stories from his book *The Ways of the Lonely Ones* for radio broadcasting. They were heard in San Diego and Glendale during the Christmas holidays. Interest in these readings was so great that friends arranged to have two of them permanently available in a twelve-inch, long-playing phonograph record. The stories on the record are "The Master of the Blue Cape" and "The Face of Christ." A limited number of these records have been made available to our friends, and they can be ordered directly from our Society. The price for the two stories on one record is $4.00 (plus 4% tax in California.)

LOCAL STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES

We have had word from Mrs. Greta Carey of Ridgewood, New Jersey, that she would like to start a P.R.S. Local Study Group. We urge our friends in this area to contact Mrs. Carey, at 393 Van Emburgh Ave., Ridgewood, if they are interested in this activity.

Mrs. Kathryn Henry of St. Louis, Missouri, reports that her study group planned a special evening meeting so that the men could attend, and that this meeting was entirely successful, with even the "skeptics" enjoying themselves. This group studied *The Mystical Christ* and *Old Testament Wisdom* in April, and plans to take up *Twelve World Teachers* and "Oriental Flower Arranging" later on.

The following questions, based on material in this issue of the PRS JOURNAL, are recommended to Study Groups for discussion, and to readers in general for thought and contemplation.

Article: *THE PSYCHOLOGY OF OPTIMISM*

1. Define an optimist in terms of your own experience.
2. Why do many psychologists feel that an optimist is not a well-adjusted person?
3. How can philosophic insight help us to become practical optimists?

Article: *THE WESTERN PARADISE OF AMITABHA*

1. Explain in your own words the difference between the original teachings of Buddha and the Mahayana School which now dominates most of Eastern Asia.
2. Mahayana Buddhism is sometimes referred to as "The Doctrine of the Pure Land." What is the "Pure Land"?
3. Discuss the circumstances which prepared the way for the success of Buddhism in China.

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

MATURE PREPARATIONS FOR A FORTUNATE REBIRTH

By A. J. Howie

Any person achieves a greater measure of purpose in living when he resolves the fear of death into a conviction that there is something more dynamic beyond the veil of the grave. There need be no heroics or crisis. For the Christian the moment of conviction arrives when he can say *"Credo!"* with unquestioning confidence that there is a resurrection of the flesh. We live in a predominantly Christian portion of the world, where a belief in the resurrection of the body is broadly held, but we find also individuals and groups that hold different convictions that are just as soul-satisfying—and which may be subject to more valid reasoning.

In 1927 W. Y. Evans-Wentz published the first edition of a translation from a Tibetan manuscript into English of the *Bardo Thodol,* which he titled *The Tibetan Book of the Dead.* He claimed to be only the editor, the actual translation having been made by a Lama Kazi-Samdup in close collaboration with the editor, who had been his disciple for some years. This unusual book has gone through several editions, which indicates a continuing interest in and demand for its contents, and during 1960 a paper-back edition was published by the Oxford University Press.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead provides a reading background for discussing the subject of death without morbidity. This book will help any reasonable person to face the inevitability of death without foreboding, gloom, brooding, or fear. The textual translation is directed to various levels of thinking by the editor's several prefaces, a psychological commentary by Dr. C. G. Jung, a foreword: *The Science of Death* by Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon), and the copious notes accompanying the text.

The *Bardo Thodol* is not depicted as an esoteric treatise, but as a "treasure" left hidden by Padma Sambhava, according to the tradition, to be "discovered" when it would be helpful to mankind. The text is read by a lama—preferably the individual's *guru,* a friend, or any reader to the person at the time of death and to the corpse for a prescribed number of days thereafter. The purpose of its instruction is to fix the attentive awareness of the surviving

principle of the dying, later dead, man at each successive stage of delusion and entanglement, on the ever-present possibility of liberation from the cycle of *Sangsara,* and to explain to him the nature of the illusory activity at various stages of the after-death state.

However, the *Bardo Thodol* is not just a funeral ritual. The Lama Anagarika Govinda, in an introductory foreword, says: "It has value only for those who practise and realize its teaching during their life-time." He continues:

"There are two things which have caused misunderstanding. One is that the teachings seem to be addressed to the dead or the dying; the other, that the title contains the expression 'Liberation through Hearing'. As a result there has arisen the belief that it is sufficient to read or recite the *Bardo Thodol* in the presence of a dying person, or even of a person who has just died, in order to effect his or her liberation.

"Such misunderstanding could only have arisen among those who do not know that it is one of the oldest and most universal practices for the initiate to go through the experience of death before he can be spiritually reborn. Symbolically he must die to his past, and to his old ego, before he can take his place in the new spiritual life into which he has been initiated."

"In applying the *Bardo Thodol* teachings, it is ever a matter of remembering the right thing at the right moment. But in order so to remember, one must prepare oneself mentally during one's lifetime; one must create, build up, and cultivate those faculties which one desires to be of deciding influence at death and in the after-death state—in order never to be taken unawares, and to be able to react, spontaneously, in the right way, when the critical moment of death has come."

Dr. Jung's psychological commentary should be read in its entirety to get its own intrinsic impact. But we should like to mention several of his observations:

1. The events of the after-world experience described in the *Bardo* are given in reverse order when compared to the initiation rites of the Western World.
2. The Catholic Church is the only institution in the Western World that makes any provision for attending the souls of the departed.

3. Our Western philosophy and theology ignore the fact that "metaphysical assertions are *statements of the psyche,* and are therefore psychological." Hence, the psyche, psychology, is the authority for statements regarding the soul.

For those who have difficulty in reconciling thoughts of a hereafter with the cold logic of science, there are many suggestive ideas in Dr. Jung's commentary.

We shall not intrude on your first impressions on reading this book by quoting too freely. All of the ideas seem pertinent to serious and constructive thinking during our maturer years. The reading is not easy or light, so it would be unwise to wait for the urgencies of the various emotion-packed crises, when the mind is not free to reason, to turn to this book for comfort and understanding.

We come from a generation, a tradition, that spoke of death in hushed tones, that shielded youth from exposure to it. Even Buddha's family tried to shelter him from all knowledge of sickness, old age, and death. When he first observed the existence of such inevitabilities, he changed his way of life and that of countless millions who followed after him. Everywhere there is violent sorrowing over the death of loved ones. Many modern sects never use the word death, but refer to it with polite euphemisms.

There seems to be a universal, though often tacit, acceptance of the fact that there is some sort of life beyond the grave. With the Christian teaching, that life takes the form of a bodily resurrection into an ideal state. The Greeks, Egyptians, and the American Indians all recognized an after-life. The Hindus and Buddhists affirm a karmic rebirth; and there is a wealth of inference and evidence that belief in rebirth has been much more universal than we can prove today. Yet nothing concerning death has ever been proved. Gnawing doubts and uncertainty regarding death and what follows have inspired fear, worry, horror, defensive disbelief.

Regardless of the conflicting details of the testimony to a life hereafter, one fact is certain—the only gateway from this life is through the shadowy veil of death. The funeral rituals and treatment of the dead vary, but universally the survivors mourn and regret the departure of the loved one. A cold, unemotional analysis suggests that those who mourn are far more concerned

with their own loss than for the welfare of the wayfarer hurried beyond the bourne of death. The world of people and things seems so much more real, important, than any tenuous world of spirit.

In the *Bardo's* invocation of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, after naming the individual, the reader recites the sentence: "He hath come upon a time when he hath to go alone." It is as simple as that. And the words are reminiscent of tales of the mysteries and rituals of more modern fraternal orders.

The reader affirms that in the physical world men are wandering in a world of *Sangsara* and invokes the guidance of the Congregation of the All-Good Conquerors, Gurus, Devas, Dakinis, the Faithful Ones. He cites the various errors that cause men to wander in the *Sangsara*: illusion, violent anger, intense pride, great attachment, intense jealousy, intense stupidity, intense propensities—but always coupled with the affirmation that liberation from all of these causes of *Sangsara* can be accomplished at any stage of the *Bardo* cycle.

Such a recital of the weaknesses of man would seem purposeless, at least untimely, unless the reader were only reminding the departing entity of something it already knew, prompting it to hold on to a consciousness of these facts.

One stanza indicates that the text must have been familiar during life:

> "[O] procrastinating one, who thinketh not the coming of death,
> Devoting thyself to the useless doings of this life,
> Improvident art thou in dissipating thy great opportunity;
> Mistaken, indeed, will thy purpose be now if thou returnest
> empty-handed [from this life]:
> Since the Holy Dharma is known to be thy true need,
> Wilt thou not devote thyself to the Holy Dharma even now?"

There is no year schedule for the maturity of a person's life. Youth has been accepted always as the period when, in full vigor of vitality, an individual may shape the physical future of his life. The laws of nations vary as to when a person becomes legally of age; but the ripeness of mind is an intangible, unmeasurable quality. Some individuals are mature in judgment from the cradle; others have not achieved it at the time of death. But a rule of thumb might be to gauge the approach of that maturity during the forties or fifties. After 40 or 50 years of life-experience, even though too often by the trial and error method, the conscious memory has a sufficient number of associations to render all decisions a little bit more considered. The results of early snap judgments are known. Friendships have been subjected to trial and weathering. General information has been accumulating.

At this point some of the inevitabilities of life are beginning to assert themselves. The sphere of individual activity has altered. The weaker organs of the body are evidencing themselves. Overeating, over-indulgence, organic weaknesses, all are beginning to take their toll. Eyes and ears may not be as keen as earlier. Endurance versus fatigue limits our projects.

These inevitabilities are not new. Through the ages they have sent men on quests for a fountain of youth, a panacea that would cure ills—bonanzas, elixirs of love, any number of correctives for the misfortunes of life. Man continues to hope that he will be able to halt the ravages of time with no thought of meriting the added life span.

We can defer acceptance of our responsibilities; we can put off facing the inevitabilities of life—most often, we do. But who should better be able to meet and overcome these psychological dragons than students of religion and philosophy? And the ones who are prepared are the older people who have achieved a perspective on the problems of life, who have had an opportunity to reason out their own convictions from the conglomeration of hearsay, oral traditions, religious lore, superstition, fantastic and wishful thinking. When the fires of life begin to burn with a mellower glow, when desires become less imperious, and when the spirit begins to listen to an inward blending of reason and emotion, that is the time to begin planning for a fortunate rebirth, to liberate the essential spirit, soul, life-flux—or whatever it may be that animates man—for the constructive purposes of life itself.

Death is not a subject about which one can become "preachy," nor platitudinous, nor smug; nor should it be fear-inspiring. The *Bardo Thodol* is quite realistic about the problems of living, the importance of guiding our actions in the physical world, the character and discipline that man needs in order to face the realms of

illusion that comprise the after-life experience, and the importance of the most alert awareness possible during the transference of that which persists as it passes through the bright radiance of the *Primary Clear Light* seen at the moment of death.

There are many things about the *Bardo Thodol* that should recommend it to the consideration of Western students. It speaks with a quiet assurance and authority, but entirely without dogmatism. Although the activities of the after-death state are depicted according to the Tibetan traditions, it is constantly asserted that all of the situations are the creations of the individual's own mind and imagination. Thus, for Western peoples, the *Bardo* would agree that these activities could very well re-enact the familiar portrayals of purgatory, heaven, hell, angels, and demons according to the most orthodox traditions and teachings of the Christian churches. Nothing that man can think or do would be incongruous to the events of the *Bardo* worlds.

But more important, there is a constant repetition that during "the transference of the Consciousness-Principle," liberation by remembering can be achieved at any stage. This should not be interpreted as the nirvanic liberation of the saints and Buddhas, but "a liberation of the 'life-flux' from the dying body, in such manner as will afford the greatest possible after-death consciousness and consequent happy rebirth." (Evans-Wentz.) Such a concept bestows greater significance and dignity on the experiences and activities of the physical world and their relation to, or continued effect in, the after-death state. It should help to reconcile the differences in the various beliefs and teachings of all mankind, and permit an acceptance of the essential unity of mankind through that leveling experience of death according to some more universal law, even though it be only partially discovered or revealed to the mind of man.

Since nothing has been proved indisputably concerning the after-death state, no one can assert that any thought or preparation directed to a fortunate rebirth represents wasted energy, especially since such attention is likely to render the remainder of the present life much more positive, purposeful, fruitful.

People ask many questions regarding death and the after-death state, but most of the questions are relatively personal and unimportant. For example, people seem to be most curious about the length of time between death and rebirth. There are a number of teachings disseminated that give reasoned explanations for various cyclical periods. None agrees in detail with the others. None has been proved. The teaching of the *Bardo* will appeal to those who see in nature unseen forces that alter the seasons, hasten the ripening of the grain, affect long-range geological changes. The *Bardo* indicates that rebirth can be hastened by the rate at which the surviving principle liberates itself from the illusionary spheres of the after-death state. We have a comparable problem with schooling and experience—consciousness, understanding, maturity or reasoning are not dependent on merely a span of years or months.

In our generation, there has occurred a lengthening of the physical span of years during which the vital spark continues to animate an increasing number of people in their physical bodies—some strong and healthy, others frail, failing, and diseased. The ability of doctors to preserve and prolong this spark has brought new problems to the aging individual and the families concerned. There is an increasing literature, including a number of government pamphlets, that deals with how to provide for the older people, how to adjust a household for the convenience of the elderly, recommending hobbies and recreations, telling of drugs and medicines to quiet nerves and promote energy. There is very little mention, however, of preparation for the stark facts of the transition we call death. There are many reminders to make wills to dispose of this world's goods, but no thought for disciplining the thoughts for facing the after-death state.

Individuals have been flattered into trying to preserve the appearance of youth, of trying to equal or repeat the physical prowess of youth, into following and imitating the fashions of the moment. There is nothing wrong with such a program that would keep older people abreast of the times and enable them to enjoy this life to the full. But it would seem more purposeful if, instead of emphasizing play and recreation, we would give full incentive to expression of maturity in all departments of this life, and give intelligent thought to plans for the after-death state.

It is not easy to formulate a concise statement of what we might consider the terms of a fortunate rebirth. Essentially, it is the free

choice of the individual. Yet that understanding is what the *Bardo* urges as important during the first few minutes after death—some 15 or 20 minutes—during which the dynamics of the future is determined. One generality is expressed in the "Prayer for Right Knowledge:"

"O now, when the Bardo of taking Rebirth upon me is dawning!
One-pointedly holding fast to a single wish,
May I be able to continue the course of good deeds through repeated efforts."

It seems appropriate to close these comments with a quotation from Suzuki's translation of Ta-hui's prayer as given in *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk*: "My only prayer is to be firm in my determination to pursue the study of Truth, so that I may not feel weary however long I have to apply myself to it; to be light and easy in the four parts of my body; to be strong and undismayed in body and mind, to be free from illnesses, and to drive out both depressed feelings and light-heartedness; to escape every form of calamity, misfortune, evil influence, and obstruction, so that I may instantly enter upon the right way and not be led astray into the path of evil; to efface all the evil passions, to make grow the *Prajna,* to have an immediate enlightenment on the matter that most concerns me, and thereby to continue the spiritual life of the Buddhas, and to help all sentient beings, to cross the ocean of birth and death, whereby I may requite all that I owe to the loving thoughts of the Buddhas and Patriarchs. My further prayer is not to be too ill, or to be too suffering at the time of my departure, to know its coming beforehand, say, seven days ahead, so that my thoughts may dwell peacefully and properly on Truth; abandoning this body, unattached to any tie at the last moment, to be reborn without delay in the land of the Buddhas, and seeing them face to face to receive from them the final testimony of supreme enlightenment, and thereby enabled to divide myself infinitely in the *Dharmadhatu* to help universally all sentient beings in their fording the ocean of birth and death."

The Postgraduate Course

Study books to know how things ought to be; study men to know how things *are.* —*Old Saying*