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THE EDITOR'S POINT OF VIEW

SHIBUI AND THE GRACIOUS LIFE

THE Japanese word *shibusa,* or *shibui,* has now been accepted into the English language, and will probably appear in future editions of popular dictionaries. Actually, *shibusa* is the noun, and *shibui* is the adjective relating to this particular concept, but in current American usage, the word *shibui* seems to be preferred to cover both constructions. Like many Oriental terms, it is somewhat difficult to translate, for it is part of a way of life with which we are not familiar in the West. One writer has attempted to translate the term as *astringency,* or *artistic reserve;* another suggests *dynamic conservatism.* Perhaps we could use the concept of *artistic restraint* to represent the general idea. However considered, *shibui* is not a pose, a fashion, or a style. It is a basic attitude on the subject of rightness and fitness, founded in a long tradition of esthetics traceable to Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintoism. Each of these schools of religious or moral philosophy has contributed to the maturing of Japanese consciousness. From Taoism came a tradition of mystical appreciation; from Confucianism, conservative propriety; from Buddhism, detachment from ostentation; and from Shintoism, a profound ap-

preciation of nature and simple, natural qualities. The gradual rise of the *shibui* idea prevented the Japanese from falling into the complexity of decadent Chinese culture, and inclined them to cultivate the creed of noble simplicity.

For centuries, the Japanese people were convinced of the dramatic impact of understatement. To them, culture was not ostentation. Therefore, to a great degree at least, nobility was liberated from the idea of expenditure or extravagance. It was not necessary to be rich in order to exemplify *shibui*. Wealth was never allowed to support vulgarity of display. The cultured human being lived simply, dressed simply, and expressed his tastes through his character rather than vain display of expensive possessions. It is much more difficult to measure value in terms of merit than in terms of price. Our Western tendency is to consider the price-tag first. We assume that if it is expensive, it is valuable; and if it is valuable, it is good. As a result, we surround ourselves with meaningless objects which we feel will impress our friends, or we raise our reputation by lavish spending.

We also stylize by a series of arbitrary rules which the Japanese do not generally accept—although there is always a possibility that they will be infected by our policies to the detriment of all concerned. For example, we like to think in terms of new and old, whereas our Oriental neighbors prefer the standards of good and bad. To them, something extremely old, or something else extremely new, can both be *shibui*—that is, faultless in terms of good taste. We have inherited from the past both art treasures and worthless junk. Only discrimination can determine true value. It is the same in terms of the modern. It is unfair to say that we are not producing important artistic and literary productions in the present century. Again, modern things can be good or bad. If they are good, they are valuable; and if they are bad, they are worthless. To try to determine quality by age alone is to set up a lazy man's standard. We would let dating do our thinking for us, and a date is just as meaningless as a name or a price unless we are able to measure intrinsic merit because of the maturity of our own esthetic insight.

This brings us to the fundamental principle underlying *shibui*. Good taste is a revelation of character. The person with bad

judgment, poor discrimination, and undisciplined habits, is not likely to have good taste. To recognize that which is *shibui*, it is almost essential that our own natures have *shibui* through training, appreciation, and experience. The effect of an appropriate environment upon the individual is psychologically important. We are subconsciously influenced by our own possessions, and we have a strong tendency to project our psychic stress into our spending programs. Needless to say, the recognition of quality, and the firm resolution to spend only for that which is good, would have a remarkable effect on our entire Western economy. We are the world's greatest market for shoddy goods, worthless knick-knacks, and pretentious objects and materials of all kinds.

Shibui also tells us that style is eternal. There is no universal principle that makes an oracular pronouncement of what shall be fashionable this year or next year. It is not necessary to bow humbly before the dictatorial requirements of Parisian clothes designers, or to wear uncomfortable footgear because such is decreed by the arbiters of fashion. It is a perfectly obvious fact in *shibui* that if you decide to walk, your shoes should be comfortable. The universe made feet; men made shoes. The shoes should fit the feet, and not the feet be required to fit the shoes. Such direct thinking, completely devoid of the Western instinct of fashion, would be most discouraging to some people, but a vast relief to many others.

In studying Japanese art for a number of years, I have been impressed by the almost complete lack of jewelry. I have never seen a painting of a Japanese woman wearing a ring, or earrings, or a bracelet, or a necklace. Her adornments were limited almost entirely to hairpins, some of which are very beautiful, but mostly made of simple and inexpensive substances. It is also very rare to see any jewelry on a Japanese man, until the recent introduction of wrist watches. The Chinese wear a great deal of jewelry, but this trend did not drift into the islands of Nippon.

It has been noted in the Ukiyo-e School of Japanese prints that most of the artists were woefully deficient in their ability to draw the human body. With a few exceptions, these artists had trouble even with hands and feet, which are seldom up to the Western standard of structural perfection. On the other hand, kimonos, obis, and hair arrangements were gloriously presented. It should

also be remembered, however, that most of these prints are not considered *shibui,* and never were. The main point is that there was no attempt to exploit the human body in concepts of fashion. This was very helpful to those who did not happen to be born with the most approved proportions. If the lady was overly slender, or on the stout side, there was no possible way of this being an inconvenience to her peace of mind. *Shibui* went far beyond these considerations, attempting to interpret the character of the person as a projection of his mind and emotion, and not merely a by-product of his anatomical measurements.

In dress, there were several different degrees of propriety. Children and young people were permitted greater ostentation, and there was also some note of social level. Entertainers—actors or geisha—were expected to be flamboyant, but for others to wear their worldly wealth in the form of adornment, rich vestments, or flashy clothing was simply an indication of immaturity or lack of social standing. Any effort to impress or compete or dominate in a competition of display was avoided; and because this was the approved way of life, simplicity was cultivated, just as we are now inclined to cultivate colorful exuberance. One Japanese whom I knew years ago said that his people had not yet learned the Western technique of making themselves ridiculous in the name of fashion.

Shibui goes into the furnishing of the home, where again its simplifying influence adds not only to the dignity of life, but also the ease of maintenance of an establishment. Possibly one factor involved in this comes from Zen. It is assumed that we like to live with ourselves, that we enjoy our own company, and prefer aloneness rather than the development of an emotional dependency upon elaborate surroundings. When the Japanese host ushers his distinguished guests into the room thoughtfully prepared for them, it may be entirely devoid of furnishings, with the exception of a few cushions on the floor. Needless to say, the mats will be spotless; the materials used in the construction of the room, beautiful but simple; the workmanship superb; and the open shojis will reveal a gracious garden expertly cultivated. In the tokonoma of the room, a niche built for the purpose, will be one fine painting—perhaps selected according to the month of the year, a flower ar-

Interior of Japanese room showing tokonoma with winter flower and painting arrangement.

rangement appropriate to the season, and perhaps a small bowl or incense burner. The rest of the family wealth is safely stored away in the godown, protected as far as possible from fire and earthquake. It is assumed that the guests will enjoy quietude, and that they will appreciate the airiness and spaciousness of the room. It may well be that a guest will appreciate it so much that he will write a poem about it and leave it as a cherished memento with his host. Guests will also be given the privilege of dining in private, for life is a continual unfolding of inner experience. In quietude, each will find that most valuable to himself.

Hospitality centers around the pleasure of the guest. It is not an interlude of indoctrination; nor is it assumed that the visitor must adjust himself to the habits of others. There is very little problem involved, because there are very few artificial habits or attitudes which might cause confusion or bring discomfort. Thus, in a way, *shibui* is a wonderful freedom from bondage to artificial conventions; yet in no sense of the word is it a lowering of the level of propriety. The individual is free to be the best of himself. He has the precious right to relax, to think, to meditate, to be free from all artificial and unnatural cares. In practical experience, these simple and almost intangible rules are seldom violated, and even strangers rapidly accept with sincere gratitude that kind of hospitality which is not burdened with the desperate effort to entertain or amuse the favored guest.

Shibui derives from Taoism profound appreciation for universal harmony in form, color, texture, and materials. Tao, as universal motion—consciousness moving forever into manifestation—is revealed through the splendid but subtle harmonies everywhere visible in nature. The rushing waterfall, the snow on a pine branch, a flight of birds, and the stratification of rocks, are in themselves perfect expressions of the cosmic will and purpose. When man establishes a psychic sympathy with the things that Tao has fashioned, he comes very close to the heart of cosmic beauty and cosmic law. The continuing discovery of beauty is far more important than the frenzied effort to create beauty with the imperfect faculties with which man is at present endowed. Even the effort to create is largely a process of copying nature and imposing upon its products some little human discrimination.

The wise man lives where the wonders of nature are constantly available to him in his daily experience. He recognizes that the man-made world is merely an interlude in a God-made plan of things. He accepts the useful, is grateful for the genuine improvements which human ingenuity provides, but he preserves his own psychic poise by refreshing himself at the fountains of universal beauty and truth. He does not wish to obscure his contact with nature, or imprison his soul within some structure of his own creating. He is free because he is himself and allows Tao to move through him as well as around him. When the craftsman has this

Tao-consciousness, the simplest utensils which he fashions have a wonderful integrity about them. All is real; nothing artificial or contrived. Yet to our Western experience, the most difficult of all contriving is to achieve the natural.

From Confucianism came the severe code applied to the regulation and conduct of men. Here again, all the superficial proprieties are ignored, and the essential proprieties emphasized. Propriety of deportment comes from restraint. It arises in thoughtful consideration of action. We speak simply, but we tell the truth. We are discriminating, but never cruel. We expect no more from others than we are willing to give of ourselves. We can never afford to neglect the graces with which human nature has been endowed. Man is an animal with the capacity to be kind, forgiving, grateful, and gracious. To the degree that he fails to develop these attributes, he fails his own humanity. A person is great not because he is rich or powerful, but because he is civilized and simple. The secret of true superiority is the child-mind, which is not easily deceived because it does not practice deceit. Freedom from all artificiality, pretense, and unnecessary luxury reveals the natural dignity of the person. His smile becomes more important than the furnishings of his house. His thoughts are his greatest treasures, and he can bestow no gift more valuable than his own friendship. He moves with the nobility of an emperor because he is the governor of his own conduct. All his thinking has contributed its part to the *shibui* concept.

From Buddhism, Japan has gained a marvelous artistic insight. The great arts of the early Japanese were mostly devoted to the representation of sacred subjects. Buddhism is a doctrine of composure, of reflectiveness, meditation, and unworldliness. In Zen, particularly, it is a severe code, founded upon honor, the defense of principles, and wholehearted obedience to those who are born or destined to command. The code of the Samurai was one of bravery; but this bravery is no longer used in war or in the defense of feudalism. It is now the bravery of right courage, which is courage to sacrifice the non-essential, to serve unselfishly that which is necessary, and to remain true to principles, if necessary at the cost of life or worldly goods.

Buddhism has enriched the arts of Japan with its concept of universal life. It has also taught respect for all creatures, and surrounded the most simple objects and occurrences with a rich and whimsical legendry and lore. It has contributed much to a symbolic way of life by which the simplest circumstances are given deep and metaphysical meanings. Buddhism has helped the Japanese people to enrich their observing and reflecting powers and faculties. It has made humility the badge of highest honor, and has contributed to the idea that it is not useful nor necessary to cling desperately to the treasures of this world. All physical things are transient, passing, and changing. The most important of all is the refinement and ennobling of character. We leave our worldly properties behind, but we carry with us into Amitabha's Blessed Land our gracious instincts, our sensitive love of beauty, and our dedication to the eternal quest for that reality which extends beyond time and place.

From Shinto comes the unpainted wood, cherished for its grayed markings, and for all the scars left upon it by the ravages of time. From Shinto, also, comes the final surrender of the human to the natural. Men build great temples, but they crumble away, and only the forests remain. So it is with reputations and distinctions. We are here for a little time, and then depart; but the morning glory lives on, and the frog still splashes in the pool. The things we know are short-lived, but there will always be red carp flashing in the sunlight. To live quietly and inconspicuously, to be remembered gently and with some fondness, and to depart graciously, with as little inconvenience to others as possible—these achievements of disposition over circumstances are also *shibui.*

In Japanese thinking, the *shibui* concept is equally applicable to objects, persons, attitudes, and manners. One of my good friends is a Japanese gentleman who is the proprietor of a wonderful Oriental art shop. Wandering through his store one day, I found a miniature leaf from a Tibetan book. Handing it to my friend, I asked the price. Silently he took the leaf, reached into his desk for a sheet of note paper. He carefully folded the leaf into the note paper, and handing it to me, said quietly, "Please accept." To be correct, in terms of *shibui,* it was my duty to take the folded paper and place it immediately in my pocket without opening it. In a Japanese restaurant, gratuities for service are never handed to a waiter or left on the table. They are carefully wrapped in paper, and slipped to the recipient so that no other person will see the transfer. The idea is to prevent any embarrassment in giving or receiving presents or even payments for services rendered. The whole procedure is not an affectation, but an essential part of what has been called the "*shibui* syndrome."

Shibui is deeply involved in the concept of harmony. Things that are *shibui* fit together, regardless of the possible differences in traditional background. In decorating a home, articles of many different cultures harmonize perfectly if each has the *shibui* quality. In the same spirit, persons exemplifying *shibui* can mingle in all relationships of life graciously and compatibly; yet there is no compromise. The individual does not cease to be himself in order to harmonize with someone else. Depth of insight may be highly specialized, but persons of equal attainments in many fields have the essential quality of attainment in common. They respect and are in turn respected, and no question of tension requires consideration. We can therefore extend the term into all departments influenced by good taste. In the Japanese philosophy, the recognition of harmonic propriety is innate. No one takes a course in *shibui,* nor studies it as an advanced esthetic discipline. It is an expression of refinement, bearing witness to the characteristics of mature natural endowments.

Western people may feel that the involved code of Eastern courtesy is a waste of time and energy. Why be continuously thoughtful, when with a little luck, you can blunder your way through the problems of human relationships? Actually, however, the *shibui* attitude is not as time-consuming or non-profitable as might at first appear to the sophisticated mind. *Shibui* is a great preventive force. When practiced, it protects the individual from long and difficult situations resulting from thoughtlessness and lack of gentility. If we lose the respect of our friends, if our business manners are objectionable, our children undisciplined, and our own habits unpredictable, involvements naturally follow which may burden us for years. There is no attitude more profitable than respect for people, ideas, or the traditional deference which preserves us from the retaliating instincts of our associates.

From *shibui* we also learn to enjoy and appreciate the common tasks we must all perform. This is especially true in Japanese cooking. *Shibui* causes us to accept a pleasant meal, tastefully prepared, as a work of art. As a spiritual experience, it is just as rewarding as a beautiful picture, and requires just as much skill as an adequate musical performance. In terms of gastronomic philosophy, the Japanese meal avoids all the excesses which plague Western eating. There is no over-eating, no mingling of indigestible food elements. The meal is enjoyed as an artistic triumph. The eyes are pleased, and the digestion is not insulted. Friends do not gather simply to eat, and the well-balanced meal is a mental, emotional, and physical festival appreciated by all, each contributing in his own way to the success of the occasion. There can be neither haste nor over-indulgence, for if the esthetic patterns are violated, the meal itself is no longer *shibui.*

Another phase of this intriguing subject is its wonderful democratic overtone. On the level of *shibui,* all persons are self-respecting creatures. It is very bad taste to appear servile, to fawn or to cater to another person because of his wealth or station. The gardener is not less than the master of the house. He gives respect to his employer basically because he admires him, and not simply because he is working for pay. There is a story of a proprietor who required that one of his servants perform an action of no great importance, but contrary to self-respect. The servant courteously withdrew, and then committed suicide. He would not perform the action. *Shibui* therefore recognizes the dignity of the tinsmith, the skill of the fisherman, the patient labor of the artisan, the kindly wisdom of the priest, the fortitude of the soldier, and the honorable attainments of the professional man. Each of these, convinced of the essential value of his labor, has the dignity of this conviction. He lives according to it, serves it faithfully, and enjoys a good conscience.

It is a mistake to assume that the peculiarities of the Japanese language result in an exaggerated form of self-effacement. It is true that by the very construction of the language, references to ourselves, our family, and our possessions are in a modest form; whereas different and more splendid terms apply to other people,

their families and possessions. This politeness does not convey servility; it is merely built-in good manners in terms of language. If it seems exaggerated to us, we fall into an equally difficult and often disagreeable dilemma. Endless conversations about our own accomplishments, the value of our goods, the importance of our relatives, and the superlative excellence of our own ideas are often both ludicrous and embarrassing; no one is interested but ourselves. Out of the pattern arises a psychological self-centeredness which can be positively detrimental. *Shibui* is not competitive, and those who live by it are relieved of this endless struggle to be superior, to have more, and to talk louder than their neighbors. The mind, freed from these valueless excesses, has more time for solid thinking. The modern tendency in the West to mutilate the beauty of language, and to destroy the charm of relationships, must ultimately contribute to the rapid decline of Western culture. And when culture declines, the survival of civilization itself is threatened.

When the spirit of *shibui* is strong in the heart and soul, the individual has a keen eye for the beautiful. He sees every little square of land as a potential garden. In Japan, miniature gardens can be found in kitchen sinks or in a little square no larger than a doormat. Nothing can be neglected; each struggling little flower is worthy of moments of loving care. There is no question of doing the gardening with a lawn mower, or trimming a hedge occasionally. The garden becomes a world of relaxed activity after the pressures of the day or the more serious duties of business or profession. Everywhere, the potential beauty of nature must be cherished. In a sense, man worships the universal power through living and growing things. In *shibui,* also, we reveal love for children through patient labor with tiny growing plants, and our respect for the aged is symbolized by our patient guardianship of great gnarled trees, and the continual expression of admiration for the beauty of all aging things—wood and metal and the soft beauty of dim and mellow pictures. This kind of appreciation certainly warms and enriches every phase of life.

The growing old of things is part of the *shibui* standard of value. In the West, we worship youth, although we all realize that it must gradually change. To meet this emergency, we continually

transfer our admiration to younger generations as they arise. The splendor of the aging of things has to do with the mellowing of their tones and colors. Age brings with it depth of character, rich meaning and fond memory. It is not uncommon, therefore, for new objects to be artificially aged to enrich their *shibui* quality. To the Eastern mind, perfection, as we understand it, is rather objectionable. When something shows signs of wear, we throw it away; but when a little tea bowl has been gradually mellowed to a warm orange-brown by the tea which it has so often contained, its value is enhanced. Natural wear and loving use give things a sense of belonging in our lives. They become more comfortable, and we are not suspected of lack of appreciation.

Sometimes we enter a formal living room in the West, and are literally afraid to sit down. Every chair gives the impression of being perpetually guarded against use. Every object in the room is so proper and so precisely placed that we fear to disturb the smallest item. The result is stilted and often uncomfortable. Actually, the objects in a Japanese room may also have been most skillfully and carefully distributed, but we are never aware of it. We feel perfect freedom to enjoy our host's accommodation because he has subtly conveyed to us a delightful informality. It is then our own conscience, or our own sense of rightness and fitness, that will prevent us from abusing his confidence and his courtesy.

Shibui is also called a "philosophy of understatement." This is especially evident in Japanese art, where the drama of unfinishedness is everywhere noticable. We are invited to use our own mind and our own imagination. A beautiful screen may reveal the dropping branch of the cherry tree. No tree is visible, nor a major limb from which this small branch might be suspended. Such literalisms are quite unnecessary. We see the tree in our own minds, and its shape is according to our own pleasure. All that is necessary is that our mental tree shall in some way or another connect with the depicted branch. Western artists have attempted to capture this stylization, but mostly, they have failed because they did not fully realize that you must have the whole tree in your consciousness before you can paint the small cluster of twigs on the gold

leaf background of the screen. Always, the represented fragment is a revealed part of a concealed completeness.

To conceal much and reveal only that which is necessary, to express the inner meaning of a thing, is *shibui*. Also, the adroit use of symbolism is valuable. The one lone bull frog, seated on a lotus pad, conveys the full impact of whimsical self-sufficiency. Most of us can associate this bull frog with some person whom we know. A Japanese poet might tie this idea with all the passing glory of the world—so much to the bull frog, and so little to anyone else. There is a hint of transitoriness in *shibui*. All things fade, but the love which causes us to guard and cherish the beautiful is immortal, and passes from one generation to another, bringing peace of soul to ages yet unborn.

MEDITATION DISCIPLINES AND PERSONAL INTEGRATION

Part I

In his school at Crotona, Pythagoras advocated certain mystical disciplines as virtuous practices suitable to the life of wisdom. According to Iamblichus, Pythagoras differentiated two kinds of virtue, which he defined as "public" and "private." Public virtues were such as applied to the conduct of the individual in his relationships with his fellow men, and private virtues were those principally concerned with the internal life. All virtue arises from insight and discipline. By *insight,* Pythagoras meant understanding enriched by study and contemplation; and by *discipline,* he implied the continuous control of conduct by reason and faith. He insisted that no person can unfold the richness of his own internal nature without imposing certain rules and regulations upon thought, feeling, and action. The undisciplined individual cannot depend upon himself even in his own emergencies, and his impulses, escaping from the sovereignty of enlightened understanding, lead in directions contrary to judgment.

The basic teachings of the Pythagoreans profoundly affected the descent of Western mysticism. Through Platonism and Neoplatonism and the Monasticism of St. Augustine, meditative procedures, under one name or another, came to be associated first with philosophy, and later with theology. It has been suggested that the basic concept of meditation may have arisen in Asia, was gradually transmitted to the Egyptians, reaching Greece about the 6th century B.C. In any event, the Oriental practices were considerably modified and adapted to the perspective of Western minds. It followed that scholars of the West were more aggressive, even in their devotional attitudes.

Meditation has been defined as "continuing thoughtfulness or reflection, usually of a devotional nature and concerned with the mysteries of the spiritual life." The Neoplatonists raised the structure of personal virtue upon the foundation of public virtue. The beginning of the holy life was the improvement of conduct. It was useless to affirm that a man deficient in the common graces of his

kind could experience the uncommon grace of God. On the other hand, as the Chinese sage Confucius pointed out, human relationships must arise from within character itself. It is the enlightened man who is capable of both public and private virtue.

Enlightenment begins with a recognition of the need for self-improvement. It extends through the study of universal laws and principles, leading in the end to the practice of the life of wisdom. Character thus begins with the resolution to improve character. If this resolution is absent, nothing further can be accomplished. Some men are born with this resolution; some achieve it through the experiences of living; some have it thrust upon them by the challenge of survival; but there are still others who, rejecting all natural inducements, depart from this world untouched by the benefits of contemplation.

Many circumstances can lead to the stimulation of right character. The child may gain insight from the conduct of its parents, from the instruction which it receives from its teachers, from the benefits of higher education, and from the rules governing the professions or crafts which are selected for their career. We are most likely to cultivate character if it is the fashion of our time, or if we are in the company of worthy persons or seek the counsel of the learned. Each step of the way, thoughtfulness is strengthened, and the powers of the mind become more readily available when problems arise.

Pythagoras was among those Grecian philosophers who inspired their disciples to strengthen character by confronting them with obstacles which had to be overcome before the student could advance to a higher degree of instruction. Among the obstacles imposed by the Pythagoreans was the obligation of five years' silence. This was a severe test of will power and dedication, and many failed to keep their vow, and were thus excluded from the school. Further obstacles included rejection of all worldly honors and such privileges as might arise from dignity of birth or family wealth. Also, menial duties were imposed upon those suspected of pride or arrogance. Later, most of these disciplines were carried over into religious austerities, and are clearly echoed in the holy fraternities of medieval Europe. The purpose of such obstacles was not merely physical detachment from personal attitudes and pos-

sessions, but the liberating of the mind from confusing and distracting preoccupations about self and fortune.

After discipline had clarified the code of conduct appropriate to the good man, the political virtues were assured. The judge would be just in his decision, the physician honorable in his dealing with the sick, the merchant fair in his weights and measures, and the workman sincere and forthright in his labors. Such honorable persons, in turn, defended the honor of the states in which they dwelt, were patriotic to just principles, and supported able and worthy leaders. After five years of silence, it was unlikely that a man could not control his tongue. He would not speak without due consideration for the facts, nor would he raise his voice in anger or reproach. Having judged himself, he would be slow to condemn other men, and would seek to advance the general welfare of his friends and neighbors. Thus, he would also gain a true and proper reputation for loftiness of spirit, and men would say of him, "He is a good man; therefore, his philosophy is good." Thus, also, he would bring honor upon the school which had instructed him, the teachers who had guided his mind, and the holy institutions that had been set up by the gods for the ennoblement of mortals.

One who had attained these public virtues would also, by this time, have advanced himself considerably along the path of private virtue. Public honesty supports private integrity, and the wise man has already come to enjoy an inner life free from the obsessions and vanities of the undisciplined. He is no longer afraid of his own impulses, for he has sublimated or subdued them so that they become the faithful servants of his true character. At this point, the schools of philosophy seem to divide or come to a forking of the ways. The Eastern mystics then devote their meditational procedures to an attempt to achieve unity with the divine consciousness which permeates the universe. The end of their quest is the total renunciation of self. No will remains, except the divine will; no purpose, except the divine purpose; no end except the divine end.

In the Western schools, the contemplative life was directed more immediately to the contemplation of universal phenomena. The end was that man himself should discover the answer to all questions, and even perhaps ultimately solve the mystery of immortality. Gradually but inevitably, Western philosophy, through Western religion, became the motivating power behind Western science. Man was a creature growing up in space; it was his destiny that he should ultimately become the ruler of all he surveyed. Within himself was a universal potential which he at first identified with God. It was anciently written that with God, all things are possible. God dwells in man, and by virtue of this indwelling Divinity, all things are also possible to man. It was an attractive concept, though some have suspected that it contained vestiges of human egoism. Be this as it may, the followers of the Western tradition accepted the challenge of extraordinary destiny and incorporated it into their religious and philosophical devotions. They meditated from this point of view and had the experience common to all seekers—they found what they sought, though in some cases their findings were projections of their intentions.

There is a certain difference between contemplation and meditation. To contemplate is to regard, quietly and intensely, something already known or believed. It is a thoughtfulness about knowledge by which we seek deeper penetration into some basic structure of ideas. We can contemplate about life, human relationships, policies, and prevailing customs. Or we can go deeper, comparing systems of abstract thought or the concepts upon which institutions are built. We can contemplate beauty, and seek to understand more completely the universal laws, the workings of which are partly apparent. Meditation, however, is held to be a detachment from all particulars. It is neither inquiring nor analytical. It seeks an experience of union with the unknown by a greater warmth of feeling than is common to intellectual penetration. It substitutes affection for analysis; it is satisfied with the simple experience of union with the over-soul. If contemplation seeks to explore the mind of God, meditation seeks to discover the heart of God. It respects universal Law and universal procedures, but believes that these arise first from a divine love, and that unselfish love is the common denominator of life and living.

The Pythagoreans were Western philosophers, although Pythagoras probably discovered many of the laws of meditation during

his travels in Egypt and India. His meditational techniques are familiar to most students. Each morning at rising, the disciple was to contemplate the work of the day to come, seeking for the weaknesses in his own nature which might be corrected in the day or days ahead. Before retiring at night, a retrospective exercise was required. In this way, the disciple reviewed his conduct, becoming more keenly aware of errors or failings and their consequences. These disciplines are still practiced in some mystical organizations, and are certainly beneficial.

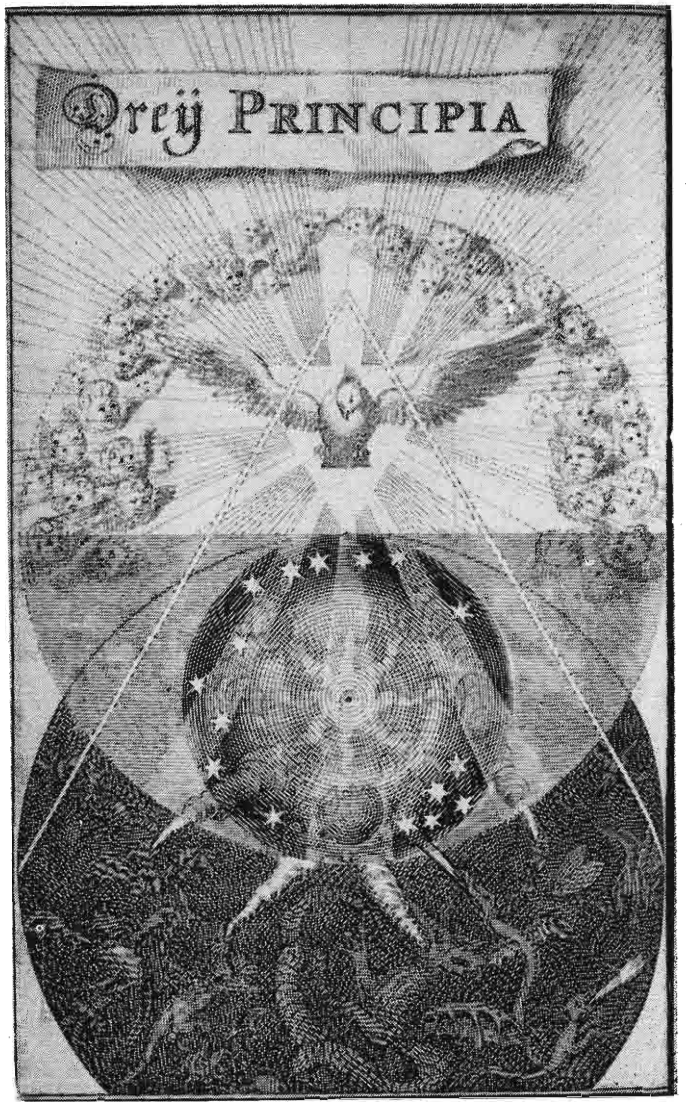
For modern Western man, prayer has largely taken the place of the old meditational practices. Properly understood, prayer is a form of inner communion by which man acknowledges his dependence upon the guiding power of Providence. He admits his own shortcomings, and seeks communion with a strength beyond his own. He asks the intercession of this strength in his hours of need and emergency, and if he is truly devout, he leans heavily upon his understanding of God. Too often, however, prayer loses its mystical overtones. It is sincere, but neither deep nor inspired. It does not incline the worshipper to become more fully aware of the will of God or his own responsibility in the maintenance of universal harmony. There have been efforts to restore the meditational quality of prayer, but in modern times the very meaning of meditation is clouded by doctrines and opinions. Again, the only answer is a measure of self-discipline. If we sincerely desire to experience inner harmony and peace, we must be prepared to practice the ageless rules associated with the mystical life.

The beginning of all good is thoughtfulness. We may interpret this as an invasion of our personal rights. We dislike to think that we must pause and consider, and not drift along according to instinct and impulse. The very moods which cause us public inconvenience also interfere with the proper regulation of our private lives. If we cannot control thoughts, we cannot control action, for action arises from thought. If we cannot control emotions, we cannot control appetites, for appetites arise from emotion. Control has to start somewhere, or its benefits can never be known. By a simplification of the Pythagorean rule, we can resolve that for one month we will plan each day before we arise in the morning, or as the first labor upon arising, and we will keep the plan, regardless of provocation to do otherwise.

Remember that this plan has to do primarily with attitudes. Therefore, we must not be dismayed at the possibility of interruption. Interruptions are merely tests of attitudes, and we must face them with tranquillity and insight. We can resolve that each day we will be more just, kindly, courteous, and understanding. We will not flare up at passing provocations. We will not assume the tragic appearance of unusual events. We will try never to act without a previous pause to weigh the consequences of action. We will neither prevaricate nor exaggerate. We will be slow to promise, but when we have committed ourselves, we will fulfill our obligation in every respect. We will also try to simplify living, thus relieving ourselves of some of that terrible pressure which is the burden of this generation. What is unnecessary, meaningless, or of slight value will not be attempted. The various labors of the day will be arranged in the best possible order, with reasonable allotments of time and energy to each. We will waste no energy in argument or contention, and will try to so regulate our conduct that we bring neither pain nor unhappiness to others.

Many will say that they do this all the time, but in fact, this is doubtful. Others say they cannot do it at all. This is actually untrue. It has been done, and what one man has achieved, another can also accomplish, even though he may be slower and less able. The Pythagoreans learned from experience that the regulation of the day was not a frustration upon the spirit. It was actually a simplification. They accomplished more, enjoyed life with greater zest, made fewer mistakes requiring repentance, and went to a more peaceful sleep. Thoughtlessness is a whip in the hand of fate which punishes every man. We are all thoughtless, but it is good to moderate the tendency as much as possible.

Once the habit of quiet planning toward purposeful action is fixed in the mind, the process becomes automatic. It may take a month or six months, or even a year to acquire this habit, but it is well worth the effort. We rescue many hours and days which would otherwise be lost, and find greater time and opportunity to do those things which we have secretly desired to accomplish. Most



An illustration to the mystical writings of Jacob Boehme, representing the activity of the Divine Principle in the three worlds. This suggests the Oriental meditation pictures, and presents the threefold nature of the universe and man in mandala form.

of all, we will begin to experience a sense of inner quietude. When we relax, we can really rest. When we turn to recreation, we enjoy our pleasures, rather than suffer from them. In our work, also, there is greater contentment of spirit. There is nothing more valuable in all the world than a center of calmness in our psychic core. When we move from calmness, the faculties of the mind and the qualities of the emotions respond normally and honestly, and are not distorted by false pressures. By this time, also, we may experience something of the meaning of meditation, for we are creating a zone of quietude suitable to gentle communion with truth and value.

There have been mistakes about this procedure, and we have substituted symbols for facts. We have taken it for granted that the outer world is the symbol of confusion, and our inner lives, considered collectively, the symbol of peace. We have instinctively assumed that if we retire from the world to some hermitage where we can be alone and commune with nature, all will be well. This is a wrong point of view, for aloneness of this kind only confronts us with the dreary obligation to commune with our own natures. A good symbol of this is the familiar old engraving of the temptation of St. Anthony. The poor old saint is seated at the entrance of his cave, and every diabolical force in the universe is focusing its attention upon him. Most of the pictures are so badly overdone that they are whimsical rather than horrible. All disciplines must begin where we are—in that place in life which we now occupy. When we change ourselves, we change the world.

Meditation disciplines have long been associated with symbols, emblems, figures or devices calculated to direct the mind toward universal realities and principles. The Pythagoreans bestowed great thought upon the tetractys, or pyramid of ten dots, which they held to be the key to universal mysteries. They were much concerned with the study of numbers as symbols of mathematical certainties in time and space. They also admired the lute, the strings of which were so tuned as to produce the most pleasant and inspiring sounds. In the temples of the Egyptians, the various deities were depicted with symbolic attributes suggesting their powers and the principles over which they had sovereignty. The Egyptians

further worshipped the eternal divinities under the forms of symmetrical geometric solids, and purified their minds by gazing upon these balanced and orderly forms.

As religion came gradually to dominate philosophy in the experience of Western man, symbols of religious importance took the place of the more austere philosophical emblems. Among Christian peoples, devotion has centered around religious art, either physically represented or held as an idea in consciousness. It seems to me that this art, as generally accepted, is not entirely satisfactory. It appeals so completely to the emotions on an abstract level, that it has failed to remind man of his own immediate duties to his world and to himself. Also, many Christian symbols, such as the crucifix and the wreath of thorns, have melancholy associations. They do not free the mind from its fears and doubts, but merely direct these negative attitudes toward the religious sphere of beliefs. As a result, there has been heavy emphasis upon sin and penance, rather than upon the experience of God as the perfect presence of peace. This does not mean that we should seek only some degree of spiritual comfort and consider this to be enlightenment; rather, it is only when the thoughts and emotions are at rest from all stress—religious or secular—that we can penetrate the psychological barrier that stands between us and the God we worship.

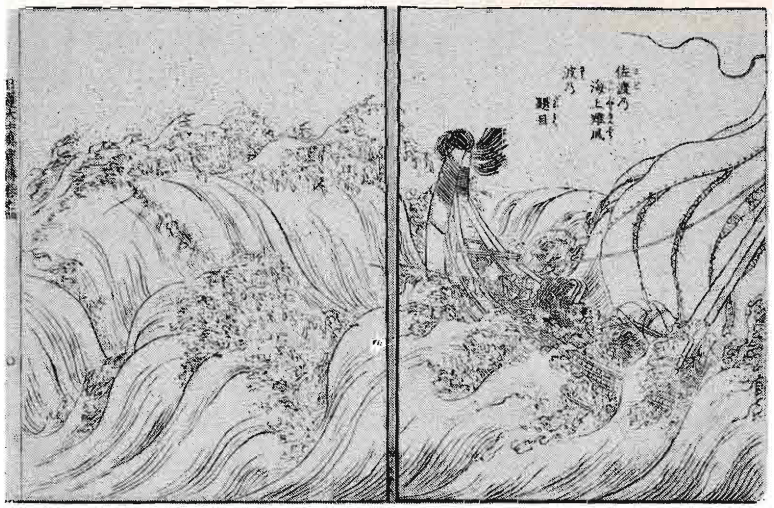
Throughout the world, men have sought appropriate symbols for their convictions. In the East, these are predominantly naturalistic. In Taoism, the yin-yang has come to be known as the symbol of universal motion. It is eternal life, eternally flowing from condition to condition and finally back again into its own inscrutable root. In Confucianism, the man-symbol is typical of the true dignity of the human estate. Man is a noble and gracious creature, and when he lives according to his divine birthright, his deportment is above reproach. He becomes the Superior Man, not because he is greater in worldly power or in physical possessions, but because he has learned to control himself.

In Japanese Shinto, composite nature becomes itself the total symbol. Mountains and valleys, forests and streams, are proper objects for meditation. Man, building his habitations in the quiet places of nature, fits into the general mood, and a universal peace

prevails. Hinduism has an elaborate pageantry of deities, some of which appear terrible and fearsome. Through long association, however, the Hindu has come to accept these images as the distorted aspects of the human mind, and he seeks to purify himself of the grotesqueness in his own soul. In Buddhism, especially in Japan, the symbolism is, for the most part, benign. Quiet meditating figures, with half-closed eyes, are seated serenely on the petals of an open lotus, or stand gracefully, shaded by nimbus or aureole. We could do a great deal to further inter-religious understanding if we could realize that all religious symbols are basically meditation devices. They are not intended to be worshipped. Even when a devout believer kneels humbly before some gilded figure, he is not worshipping, he is trying to feel and to understand. He is not praying for help or asking for some intercession in his worldly affairs; he is reaching out with his soul toward that invisible sublimity which is the substance behind the symbol. He is trying to unite himself, at least for a moment, with eternal value. He feels the constant need to claim his kinship with infinite realities. He is not asking to be enlightened. He is giving of himself, reaching out in a simple gesture of spiritual questing.

Most religions and religious philosophies have certain secret or mystical rites in connection with their more formal doctrines. They have taken the obvious symbolism of their faith and brought it into patterns or arrangements, as, for example, the mysterious inscription of Nichiren, or the elaborate mandalas of Tibet and China. In a sense, these devices stand not only for the transcendent end which consummates the spiritual search, but also for the particular path or school associated with the emblem. It is noticeable that the authentic mandala is always harmonious and balanced in its composition, its very design suggesting the nobility of the concept which is embodied. Meditation upon the mandala is therefore an experience of tranquillity. The psychic pattern in man is not offended, and no deformity arises in the mind of the worshipper.

Some schools reject the idea of the painted or carved device. They feel that the disciple should conjure his own mandala in the subtle stuff of his abstract mind. Perhaps he should meditate merely upon a thought, an aphorism or an adage, or build his devotion around the highest affirmation about God which he is



Nichiren, the great Buddhist priest, while in a ship on the way to exile, sees the great meditation formula of his Order written on the waves of the ocean.

capable of expressing. He may therefore say, with the Pythagorean, that God is light; or, with the early Christian, that God is love; or, with the devout Buddhist, that God is truth, Unfortunately, however, our objective consciousness can give us very little insight into the essential mysteries of light, love, and truth. They are words—rich, warm words—full of suspected value, but they bestow upon us no certainty of meaning, no clear insight into their substance or eternal value. Thus we must, to some measure, ensoul these words with our own comprehension. We must project upon them the shadowy form of such understanding as we may possess. If they are sufficient to impel us to the quiet cultivation of our own virtue, they fulfill their duty. But of this we cannot always be sure.

Meditation images were usually created by monks or mystics who received the substance of the symbol during a mystical experience. In most cases, also, these devices trace back either to the founder of the sect or to great teachers that arose through the centuries. The mandalas, therefore, are not subject to revision or emendation. They may be copied, and frequently are, and new elements are occasionally introduced, but for the most part, they are traditional forms, unchanging and untouched by the incon-

sistencies of mortal life. Some of these mandalas were inscribed upon small plates of wood or metal, almost like the leaves of a book. Others are huge paintings on the walls of temples. Even among the followers of sects using mandalas, it is difficult to secure any definite description of the meanings of the designs. Numerous evasions will be resorted to, but the real answer is that meanings, in the ordinary sense of the word, are not applicable to these figures; they cannot be explained. They can only be experienced, and each devotee gains from them a peculiar degree of insight immediately necessary to the continuance of his own growth. Obviously, the deities represented can be described, the symbols enumerated, and the colors defined. When these are brought together, however, a psychic quality is engendered, and it is the impact of this quality that constitutes essential meaning.

For the average Westerner, there are several convenient ways of approaching the actual meditation discipline. To understand these different paths, however, he must divorce his mind from many familiar preconceptions. I have noted that too many attempt advanced meditation who are entirely unaware of its primary requirements. I have always viewed with some anxiety the Occidental who considers Hatha Yoga the first step toward illumination. To me, it would be more reasonable to realize that the meditative quality is something that we carry about with us all the time, because it simply represents the level of our attained consciousness. The complete inner life must unfold together. We cannot attempt to discipline one appetite or emotion and neglect the others. Slowly but surely, meditation acts like a leaven in the loaf. Each morning we feel a little better, and gradually we experience greater strength to overcome obstacles. We are more patient, more just, and more unselfish.

If this transformation process does not reveal itself, specialized meditation for spiritual advancement is meaningless. If we meditate upon even one small fragment of the universal pattern, we gain a new totality of insight in ourselves. To regard the beautiful, admire it, and respect it, but remain untouched by its transmuting power, means that we are making a basic mistake of some kind. It is not good for the average Westerner to meditate by the hour, or to feel that every moment that is not spent contemplating In-

finity is lost effort. We do not gain insight by merely exhausting time and energy, even in a religious pursuit.

There is a story of an old monk in China who had a simple ritual. He lived in a little monastery on the side of a beautiful mountain. Every morning he went to the door of his cell, opened his eyes, and took a deep breath. Through his eyes he accepted into himself all the beauty of that wonderful scene, and he gazed just as long as it took him to inhale and exhale one breath. Then, filled with righteousness, he went about the labors of the day. His meditation was complete because in that brief time, he had inwardly experienced the infinite presence, the infinite love, the infinite wisdom, and the infinite beauty of the divine plan.

In true meditation, time is not a factor. The mystical experiences of great saints required only a few seconds of man's time concept, but they were infinities of experience in themselves. Meditation is not a using up of the day in mystic moods; it is a clarification so that we can live the day with greater insight. Only those peculiarly bound by the illusion of form, or limited by the concept of time, can measure achievement by these physical dimensions. The immediate comprehension of the truth is in a single glance. Whether that glance be directed to the rising sun, the altar of a great cathedral, a noble painting, or a delicate work of art, is not important; but Zen tells us that the clarity of that quick glance is all-important. If we are right in our understanding, even a momentary acceptance of great value nourishes the entire nature of man, both visible and invisible. We must therefore break away from this idea of desperate effort to visualize something meritorious, and realize that our consciousness is forever observant of all that is necessary, if we permit it to fulfill its proper function.

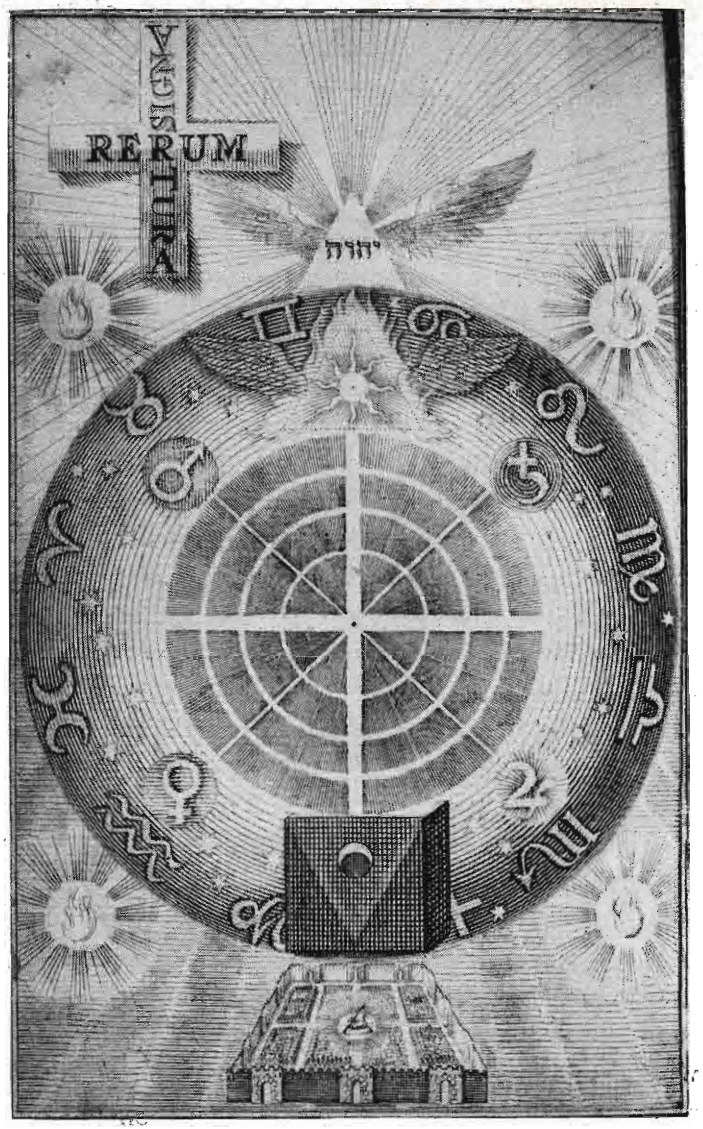
There has always been some confusion as to what constituted a holy life. Men did not dare to trust their own judgment, and in this emergency, turned naturally to the inspired leaders of their faiths. It seemed proper to assume that a prophet, overshadowed by God, would exemplify through his conduct those virtues which others should emulate. If the life of the prophet was well known, and his actions under various conditions clearly recorded, these served as the shining example to his followers. In some systems, therefore, the mystical devotions are determined by the example

of the founder of the faith. Christian and Moslem mystics are outstanding examples of this practice. It is the duty of the devout to meditate upon both the teaching and the conduct of the inspired man. This image provides the archetype for the virtuous life, and it is unnecessary to seek further. It is not enough, however, merely to copy good works. There must be an experience of unity by which the disciple comes to share in the consciousness of his venerated teacher.

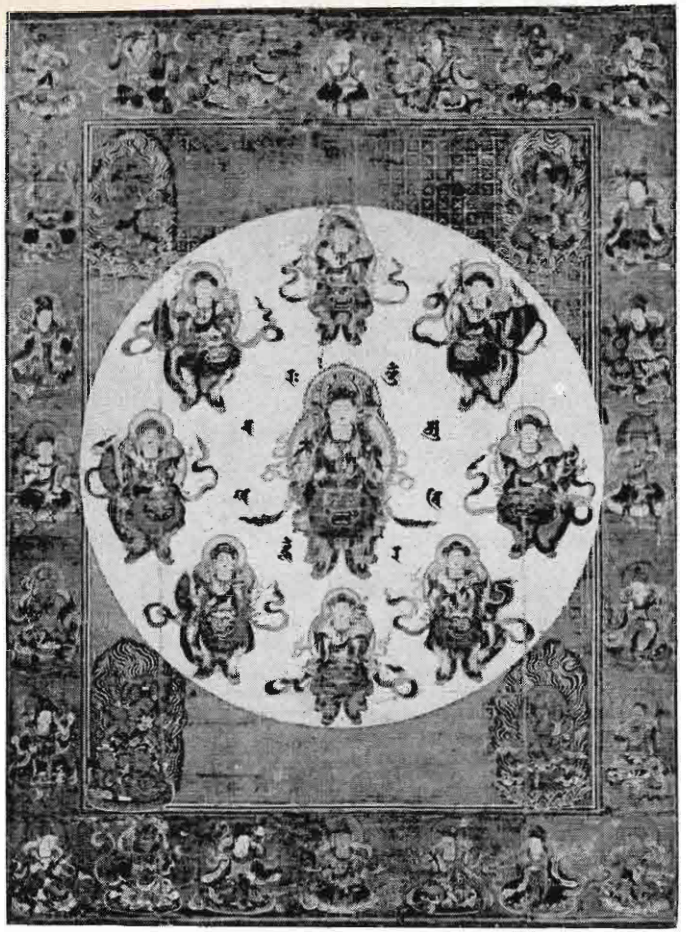
St. Francis of Assisi attempted to personally experience the suffering of Christ, firmly believing that if he could live every day as Christ had lived, he would truly understand both the Messiah and the ministry. St. Francis built his faith upon the complete renunciation of worldly goods, humility—even in the most difficult situations, selfless service to his fellow creatures, and complete obedience to religious superiors. His meditation was the continuous remembering of the example of faithfulness unto death set by Jesus and his disciples.

In Eastern religious systems, especially Buddhism, there is greater emphasis upon the universal pattern of laws than upon individuals. Buddha is admired and respected, and regarded as a noble example of the enlightened life. But the concept of truth is larger than persons. Thus, Buddha and his disciples live together in a universal pattern, but both must obey. For modern aspirants, the good life is largely determined by a level of personal conviction. Traditional inspiration is not totally absent, but individual experience also has its place. Our codes still descend from revelation and example, but we are no longer inclined to select only one noble career as our inspiration. We desire to know more about the common good, and we acknowledge indebtedness to various persons whom we have come to regard with admiration. Thus we form in ourselves a mandala of righteousness, fashioned from the noblest ideals, the clearest statements, and the most beautiful thoughts with which we have come in contact. Always, however, we seek to discover better rules and ways by which we can improve both character and career.

One of the reasons why we have difficulty in organizing our internal resources is that we are inclined to hurry through the common happenings of the day. Superficial attitudes are always as-



This figure, representing the divine pattern of the "Signature of the Universal Divinity" suspended above the holy city of the New Jerusalem, suggests the eight spheres of Buddhism as shown in Tibetan mandalas, and may be properly regarded as a Christian archetypal mandala. Illustration from the writings of Jacob Boehme.



MANDALA OF THE BODHISATTVA MONJUSRI
From *Treasures of the Koyasan Monastery*

sociated with the habit of haste. We have not disciplined ourselves to pause and consider. Preoccupied by some obsessing endeavor, we lose sight of means as we strive desperately toward ends. A man, desirous of seeing the sun rise over a great mountain, drives many miles at dangerous speed to enjoy the view. Because of his attitude, he has no time or mind for the many wonderful scenes which unfold along the road. Another man, determined to attain a high place in his profession, ignores the immediate opportunities for friendship and affection which arise along the way of his ad-

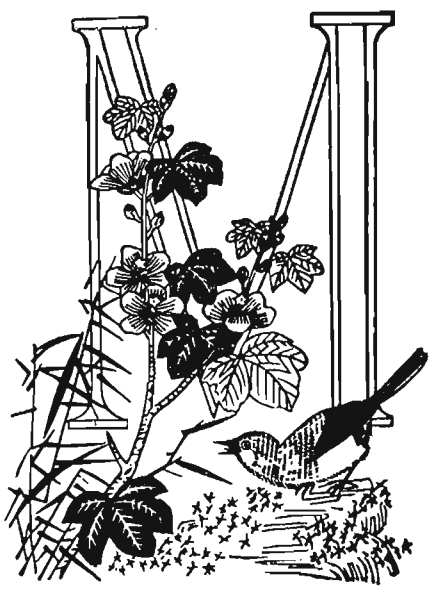
vancement. Having attained the success he desired, he then discovers that he lacks the inner maturity to enjoy the rewards of his years of struggle.

In meditations, therefore, we are not concerned primarily with some cosmic consciousness in the distant future. Rather, we are especially mindful of the flashes of insight that come each day to the thoughtful person. Meditation is truly, therefore, a gentle continuing in the experience of good; a continuous discovery, through all the symbolism of life, of both the Eternal Planner and the eternal plan.

(To be continued)

THE "UNWORTHY" ONE

MR. NETSUKE



MR. Nakamura glanced furtively at his watch. "I am so glad you came early, Haru San. There are some things I would like to tell you before the other gentlemen arrive." He hurriedly led me to the fabulous back room at the rear of his store.

There, on the great cherrywood table, stood a massive teak chest, heavily bound with hand-etched brass. The front of the box was open, and the interior was expertly fitted with two rows of shallow drawers. Mr. Nakamura laid one of the drawers on the table. It served as a display tray, and was divided into many little compartments, each containing a tiny piece of exquisitely carved ivory, resting luxuriously on padding of yellow silk.

The art dealer showed traces of pardonable emotion. "Are they not beautiful? It is seldom that such a collection can be seen in these days. They are netsuke. These are the toggles, or decorated button-like devices which Japanese gentlemen of the older generation used to attach to the cords of their inro, perhaps we can say purses, to hold them in their obi or sashes. Netsuke are quite common, but specimens of this quality, some by very distinguished artists, are rare and most expensive."

I could only assure my friend that I appreciated his good fortune in having acquired so many valuable treasures.

He continued. "About three weeks ago, these came into my possession. A gentleman of faultless taste passed on, and as I had helped him to assemble the collection, it seemed proper to the family, which was in need of funds, that they should turn to me in their emergency. I was deeply moved by their confidence. But

this is not why I called you, Haru San. Rather, it occurred to me that this might be an opportunity for us to enjoy together another little adventure in the strange world of art.

"While we are talking here, there is a connoisseur—I do not know his name or where he is—who has in his possession a complete list of all these little pieces of ivory. He knows when each was carved, the details of the designs, and the name of every artist. This group was collected before his time, and he has been waiting years for it to come on the market. If I should remove a single piece, or exchange it for one not on his list, he would know about it almost immediately. For practical purposes, we will call this very well-informed person Mr. Netsuke. He collects nothing but these ivory figures, and he may have thousands of them—all the finest of their kind.

"In my business, I am aware of several of these master accumulators, and each is known among dealers by some appropriate pseudonym. There is the 'Jade Emperor', whose holding are beyond calculation; the 'Prince of Pearls', the 'Lacquer King', and of course, 'Mr. Netsuke.' "

"Do you expect this Mr. Netsuke to call this afternoon and purchase the collection?" I asked naively.

"Oh, good gracious, no," chuckled the art dealer. "He would never make such a mistake. There is special protocol covering such transactions; so, of course, I am cooperating. As soon as I came into possession of this rare material, I informed a few agents who represent an elite clientele, that the collection would be available for inspection, and that I would accept sealed bids at four o'clock this afternoon. They have cabled their principals, and received proper instructions. Of this you can be certain."

"Do you think Mr. Netsuke will appear in person?"

My Japanese friend shrugged his shoulders. "Probably not, but who knows. For my own amusement, however, I shall bait a little trap. If I am a fox, perhaps I can catch a fox." He took from a nearby cabinet several netsuke belonging to his own personal collection, and arranged them in a row on a shelf at the far end of the room. "These have never been offered for sale before, so our mysterious friend may not know about them. We shall see. Watch

these closely, Haru San. Ah, it is nearly four o'clock. We should have guests."

Hardly had he spoken when the bell attached to the front door of his shop jingled violently. The sound was repeated a number of times, until seven rather nondescript-looking men were gathered in Mr. Nakamura's inner sanctuary. I learned later that three were Japanese, two Chinese, one Korean, and the last a European of Romanian origin. The only unusual note was the derby hat carried by the Korean.

I was introduced, but it was evident that the callers were concerned only with the chest of netsuke. Complete silence reigned, as the shopkeeper pulled out the numerous drawers and passd them around. The detailed inspection required over an hour, and near the end, the gentleman with the derby seemed to lose interest, at least to a slight degree. His gaze wandered to settle abruptly on the figures Mr. Nakamura had arranged on his shelf. Without appearing to hurry, the Korean worked his way over to the shelf, and examined each carving attentively.

At last the viewing was finished, and with appropriate bows and smiles the several gentlemen departed, each leaving a sealed envelope on the cherrywood table. As these were not written after the inspection, it was evident that the bids had been made in advance.

After he had sped his departing guests, Mr. Nakamura returned, smiling broadly and rubbing his palms together as though he were shaking hands with himself. "Before I open these notes, I will make a guess. The bids will not differ more than a few dollars. They will be very fair, allowing me about 50% profit. Everyone here knew exactly what I paid for the collection, although the transaction was quite confidential."

He opened the bids, and laid them side by side. "It is just as I suspected. Although many thousands of dollars are involved, there is only a difference of one hundred dollars between the high and low bids. The Romanian gentleman is the winner. Obviously it was his turn to complete the purchase."

"Do you mean this entire affair was pre-arranged?"

"Of course. All these appraisers were engaged by Mr. Netsuke. Each received a fee for being present. The larger commission will

go to Mr. Romania. Next time it will be claimed by one of the others. If Mr. Netsuke had not wanted this material, each of the buyers would have bid for his own use, and for other customers he might wish to supply. The offers would then have differed considerably, and according to our custom, I would have been at liberty to refuse any or all of them."

"But suppose you had decided to break up the collection and sell pieces to various customers you know?"

"With a group of this quality, that would have been a mistake. In the first place, such material should be kept together if possible. In the second place, I would have seriously offended Mr. Netsuke, who would have instructed his agents to buy no more choice items from me. You will learn to notice, Haru San, that whenever great collections of Oriental art are offered for public sale, the outstanding treasures are always gone. Your best chance to secure exceptional items is in a large country like the United States, where many dealers do not have contact with the secret masters of the art world."

"By the way, do you think that Mr. Netsuke was personally present among those you entertained today?"

"That is difficult to say, as he would not wish to be identified. Do you have any suspicions?"

"Did the Korean with the derby hat fall into the trap you had laid? He took a great interest in the netsuke you stood on the shelf."

"You are most observant. No doubt you also noticed that he was not as much concerned about the large collection as the other appraisers. This might mean he was already completely informed about the contents. Also, his bid was the lowest, so as not to appear especially anxious. He evidently appreciates netsuke, but he has never traded in my shop. None of the others noticed my own humble little row of carvings. If one of these agents should try to buy them in the next few days, it will be further circumstantial evidence. We can only wait and see. There is one netsuke, however, that he will not get, for I think you should have it as a memento of this delightful occasion." With a flourish, my Japanese friend placed in my hand a lovely little ivory image of Daruma San, glowering out from under the folds of his cape.

In Reply

A Department of Questions and Answers

QUESTION: *It is true that self-discipline is the secret of comparative happiness. But where to start—in eating habits, in anything that aggrandizes the senses?*

ANSWER: I would say that the term *discipline,* as used in philosophy, means, first of all, the controlling and directing of the life in accordance with convictions inwardly held to be true. One point should be made, however: convictions themselves are sometimes unreasonable, and it is through philosophy and the study of comparative religion that we gradually discover proper and reasonable convictions, and accept them with our hearts and minds.

Simple disciplines may include the development of patience, kindliness of spirit, and the controlling of such excessive attitudes as might lead to tragedy or serious difficulties. Socrates advised the discipline of moderation or, as he expressed it, "In all things not too much." We can also watch our habits so that we maintain order and neatness, finish projects which we have started, be punctual in our engagements, live within our means, resist temptations to extravagance and intemperance. We can set aside proper times for study, and having made rules which we feel are good, keep them, except in extraordinary emergencies. If we refrain from excess of all kinds, we remain pleasant, adjusted persons, avoiding all extremes or fanatical attitudes, even if they appear to be

virtuous. A well-planned, organized life is a testimony to self-discipline.

QUESTION: *Is it true that if a person cannot recall a dream upon awakening, he cannot be instructed or benefited by it?*

ANSWER: There is a point of psychological difference between a remembered and an unremembered dream. If the dream is remembered, it seems to imply that its content is to be brought out into objective focus, to have some real and immediate bearing upon the life or conduct of the individual. If it is not remembered, it does not communicate this instruction, but the circumstances or pressures causing the dream remain subconscious, very much as the psychic content that is carried from one reincarnation to another. We grow by rebirth, even though the past life is not remembered, but this is a subjective growth, quite different in its effect from the influence that would be exerted if we did remember. Thus, the unremembered dream content continues to affect us only subconsciously, and cannot give us immediate objective directives. But when it breaks through, then it operates in the objective life, impelling us to one course of action or another.

QUESTION: *Can prayers for the dead relieve the departed soul? If so, how does one direct such a prayer? Is the entity conscious of its earthly environment at the time of its transition?*

ANSWER: Most peoples, ancient and modern, have held that prayers for the dead were beneficial. It is quite possible that a degree of sensitivity can bind those who have departed to friends and loved ones still in this world. Certainly, moral encouragement, a strong inward statement of peace and understanding, and general constructive thoughts are the best attitudes, not only in terms of the departed person, but for those who survive here. I do not think that it is so important that the prayers be directed toward any person, or be of a special kind. If we follow any pattern of prayer, we can include our loved one in our usual procedure. It has also been generally assumed that the entity can be conscious of its earthly environment at the time of its transition, and is most benefited by a constructive attitude on the part of the loved ones. Just as we wish to comfort our friends in life, we like to know that we

leave behind understanding and adjusted loved ones. I am against sad funeral services of all types and denominations. If vibration is a fact, we should make every effort to make the funeral service a source of real comfort and inspiration to all concerned, including the deceased.

QUESTION: *Contrary to the practice of cremating bodies prevalent in India and lately in our own areas, there is the contention that the Self, inhabiting the dense physical body as a temporary vehicle, be a tenant. Hence, mortal minds presuming to burn down this allocated domicile, be committing a grave error, Gautama the Enlightened One included. Cabalistic sources maintain that those acquiescing to cremation of their bodies belong into the same category as suicides. What is your conclusion?*

ANSWER: Questions of this kind must be answered largely on the ground of personal conviction. I am aware that many religious groups are opposed to cremation, and each has its own reasons for the attitude it holds. It is my personal opinion that the cremation of the body, after it has been allowed to rest quietly for approximately seventy-two hours, is the most dignified, practical, and desirable way of concluding its physical existence. After seventy-two hours, processes of disintegration set in which are unpleasant in every sense of the word. Attempts to preserve the body by embalming are far from satisfactory, and accomplish no practical purpose. Neglected graveyards, or even well-decorated graves forgotten by survivors, contribute little to the dignity of existence. I see no reason why cremation should be considered as in any way parallel to suicide. Decay proves that the body is no longer inhabited by an animating spirit. Under such conditions, clean and proper disposal is the best for all concerned.

QUESTION: *Why was not one of the twelve Disciples a woman?*

ANSWER: This question can be answered partly by the term *social mores,* or customs. The conduct of both men and women was under a strong and severe social code, but there were also practical considerations. The labors of the disciples were arduous and pro-

tracted. It would not have been proper in those days for a virtuous woman to wander about the countryside with no place to lay her head; nor would it be expected that she could bear the hardships and indignities with which the ministry of the disciples was afflicted. This does not mean that the Jewish people did not admire or respect women. As clearly indicated in the Books of Ruth and Esther, which are included in the sacred writings, the Jewish people had the greatest regard for their women. A fruitful source for research might be the place of Mary Magdalene among the followers of Jesus. According to the Gnostic gospels, she was included in the inner circle of those who received the private instruction of the Master. There is much to indicate that she was accepted on a level of equality with the most favored disciples. Since the recent discovery of Gnostic books in Egypt, the literature in this field is enlarging rapidly.

QUESTION: *Would it be possible, astrologically, to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that reincarnation is an actual fact? Could a chart be set up at the time of death (which would be the birth chart of the entity entering the spirit world) and would it be possible for the chart to reveal the life of the entity and also the time and place of its rebirth on the earth plane?*

ANSWER: In Indian astrology, the problem of reincarnation has been given considerable attention. Efforts have been made to calculate the conditions of rebirth from death charts, but I am not in possession of enough information, and I have looked rather carefully, to be able to say that reincarnation could be actually proved by astrology. In the first place, the interval between births is usually so great that the astrologer could not live to check his own finding. Also, as the reborn entity would not have immediate recollections of a previous life, it would be doubtful if all the data necessary could be made available. Perhaps predictions of the type to which you refer could be made and would have some interest, but I doubt if the findings would be generally regarded as conclusive, especially as astrology itself has not yet attained general scientific acceptance.

QUESTION: *Why is an individual's horoscope fixed at birth instead of at time of conception? The birth time seems to me not the real beginning of an entity on this plane, but a more superficial date of origin that can vary due to many causes that are not really basic enough to establish a horoscope.*

ANSWER: This is considered in that branch of astrology concerned with the pre-natal epoch, and charts are set for this time. Actually, however, the theory is that birth is a physical occurrence, ushering the individual into the physical world, and bringing him into direct contact with the physical forces operating in the universe. Thus, it has a more direct bearing upon his daily living, and the objectives with which he is physically concerned. It is held that a pattern of universal energies stamps itself upon the newborn when it takes its first breath, and these energies affect his body and those faculties and functions which we call objective. It is very possible that the subjective life has a beginning even prior to the pre-natal epoch. Work has been done in this field, but the factors are so abstract that it is difficult to arrive at practical conclusions.

QUESTION: *We are told (Genesis) to produce our "own kind," and what penalty is imposed on a soul who breaks that law. Christ, representing our highest regeneration on this earth, we accept as inhabiting a white body—not black. Could a soul fully illuminated inhabit a black temple? We are told that Moses married a black woman . . . he could not enter the Promised Land . . . why was he kept out?*

ANSWER: It is understood, of course, that in trying to answer briefly your principal questions, I am expressing only my personal opinion, based upon the research that I have done in the fields under consideration. The reference to racial descent within the tribe or race is an essentially Jewish concept to preserve the blood line of the House of Israel. This admonition applied to all "strangers," and I do not think was aimed against a particular race or group. It is true that Christ, as the spiritual ideal of Western man, is generally represented as of light complexion and hair, our prevailing artistic ideal being a combination of Nordic and Anglo-saxon attributes. Needless to say, Jesus himself, being of Semitic

origin, is depicted in the earliest known representations as a swarthy, dark-haired man.

I do not believe that the color factor was regarded as important in the early Church. It was customary and accepted, but not a vital element of doctrine. For example, there are, in many Christian cathedrals, representations of the Virgin Mary as black or very dark-skinned. We may mention the Vierge Noire de Notre Dame du Pilier at Chartres in France. As the name tells us, this Virgin is entirely black in color; and it is one of the most popular images for worship and pilgrimage. The famous figure of the Virgin Mary said to have been carved by St. Luke is now preserved in the monastery of Montserrat, and venerated under the title "Our Lady of Montserrat, Patron Saint of Catalonia." This is described in the Encyclopedia Brittannica as "small, black, and carved of wood." Black images of the Christ child are also known and venerated throughout Europe, without question by the devout, and with full sanction of the Church. Had early Church tradition stigmatized black as an unworthy color, it would scarcely have so depicted its highest objects of veneration.

As to whether a fully illuminated soul could inhabit a black body, I can hold no dogmatic attitude. I presume that one of perfect spiritual enlightenment would choose a body most suitable to his ministry, and would certainly be beyond prejudice on this subject. That dark persons have attained a high degree of spiritual integrity and dedication to the good of humanity cannot be doubted. The whole world respects the devoted labors of Booker T. Washington and the scientific contributions of George Washington Carver. Many persons also have admiration for the present labors of Dr. Bunche.

The situation involving Moses offers no particular difficulty. First we should point out that the story that Moses married Tharbis, the daughter of the King of the Ethiopians, does not appear in any of the Rabbinical sources; therefore, was never under consideration by the Great Sanhedrin at the time of the editing of the Old Testament. This story appears in the historical writings of Josephus, probably on the authority of Alexander Polyhistor. There is nothing in the Pentateuch to imply that this marriage, if it occurred, has any bearing upon the reason why Moses was

not permitted to lead the children of Israel into the Promised Land. A direct statement covering the sin of Moses and the verdict of God is found in the Book of Numbers 20:12. There does not appear to be any racial implication.

It is my feeling that as God, operating through nature, has produced an infinite diversity of living things—minerals, plants, animals, and men—of different forms and colors, all of these forms are sacred and proper in his sight. He has fashioned them for his own purposes, and I would not like to believe that a large part of the earth should be regarded as inferior because of pigmentation. Not color, but conduct is important in determining the basic integrity of the individual. Shakespeare causes Othello, the Moor of Venice, to say, "Mislike me not for my complexion, the sable livery of the burnished sun." I think he had a good point.

QUESTION: *If we are all a spark of the Infinite, which is all Good, all Knowledge, all Perfect—why must we travel the road of reincarnation searching and trying to acquire all these attributes that we once possessed as part of the Infinite?*

ANSWER: Frankly, as you probably realize, all questions concerning the nature of the Infinite and the ultimate causes behind manifestations, are so abstract as to be essentially beyond the comprehension of man. We have only finite faculties, and even in the field of the most exact sciences, these are unable to cope with infinite problems. In this emergency, we must have recourse to the observation of nature, and reflection upon her procedures. We must also depend largely upon reason and the internal faculties of consciousness by which we can intuitively sense truths that are beyond our intellectual comprehension.

The doctrine of reincarnation, as taught originally by Gautama Buddha, was aimed particularly at the solution of immediate human problems. Buddha himself declined to discuss ultimate abstractions, but in the course of time, some insight has been gained in this direction. The universe in which we live appears to us as an unfolding, evolving creation. Infinite life, moving into manifestation, follows processes of growth that appear immutable. The seed of a plant, falling into the ground, remains for a time dor-

(*Please turn to page* 51)

THE PURSUIT OF UNDERSTANDING

Part 2

Dangerous attitudes of defeatism and futility are sweeping across the world. It has become fashionable to assume that no reasonable solution exists for the troubles of the times. Some even go so far as to insist that man does not, and never has, possessed the instruments for his own salvation. He must remain a forlorn creature, ever the victim, and never the victor.

It is my contention that we have always possessed the answers to all reasonable questions that we can ask. Perhaps these answers are not absolute or final, but they are sufficient to guide us in the direction we should go. We are defeated not by poverty of knowledge, but by impoverishment of insight. We live in the presence of solutions without recognizing them, or with insufficient courage to apply the facts we know to the emergencies we face. No generation has been left without adequate guidance and direction. There has never been a time when religious principles have failed, but there have been many times when man has failed his religious principles.

Three thousand years ago, wisdom could have saved the world. The sanctuaries of Egypt and India were the custodians of enlightened doctrines bearing upon the conduct of individuals and the administration of the public good. The common responsibilities of the governing and the governed were clearly set forth. Ethical codes were clarified, moral laws were enacted, and the essentials of religion were interpreted by illumined scholars and sages. A little later, the wisdom of Greece, as revealed through the lives and labors of such men as Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, became the glory of humanity. These wisest of men foresaw the vicissitudes of the people, counseling against the excesses from which we suffer, and setting forth the luminous pattern of the democratic commonwealth which alone could correct the corruptions of policy.

Two thousand years ago, love could have saved the world, for in that time there was born among men a Prince of Peace who established religion upon the simple but immovable foundations of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. This loving teacher spoke in simple words which all could understand, and

he told stories and parables which have been well remembered throughout Christendom. The words of this man have never been proved wrong; nor have we ever been able to escape the inevitable challenge that those who claim to love God must first love one another. Had we built upon the law of love, our civilization would now be secure, and most of the evils which continue to plague us would have vanished in limbo. We had the truth, but because of selfishness, we preferred to ignore the dictates of our own hearts.

Six hundred years ago, beauty could have saved the world. At that time, which we now call the Renaissance, art, architecture, music, and poetry were brought back to Europe. The ministry of beauty is a great power for peace. We could have learned to appreciate values beyond barter and exchange. We could have supported culture with a full heart, could have united it indissolvably with religion, and could have come to understand the beauties of character and the dignities of a gracious and gentle life. This period was climaxed when Gutenberg invented the printing press in 1445. Through the printed book, the experience of ages, the wisdom of all time, the philosophies of fifty centuries, and the skills of countless generations were available to the hungry minds of men. Tragic to say, this promise of a Golden Age was not fulfilled, and in its place came the age of gold.

Twenty-five years ago, science could have saved the world. In the memory of the living, the wonderful advancements in all branches of scientific learning won the admiration and even the affection of persons in every walk of life. There was new hope for the sick, the tired, and the frightened. Then came that terrible moment when atomic bombs, made possible by advancement in the physical sciences, fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In that instant, hope was transformed into a consuming fear, and centuries of cultural struggle disintegrated in a flash of consuming fire. We have not recovered from this frightening experience, and we will continue to pay for it in years to come in terms of spiritual, psychological, and emotional disorientation. We must live in the presence of death, never knowing when it will strike.

The most hopeful trend in current history is the rising tide of religious conviction. All the faiths of men not only report unusual activity, but there is a strong trend developing in the direction of

religious unity. It might not be too much to say that if the faiths of the world could unite firmly at this time, throwing all their resources of good will, numerical strength, and physical means to a common purpose, the spiritual convictions of the human race could save the world. It should be easier for groups all affirming universal brotherhood to achieve spiritual unity than for political systems which are divided into empires, kingdoms, dictatorships, and democracies. Such systems have very little in common; but all men have life in common, and this life comes from the Giver of all life. Men have faith in common, and this faith is strengthened by the sun, the moon, and the stars. All men have labor in common, and the glory of work is to build, not to destroy.

Religion, named or unnamed, defined or undefined, is the good in man seeking expression in thought, word, and action. In recent years, many faiths have sought to arbitrate their grievances, experiencing a larger sense of divine purpose through comradeship and fellowship. We do business with persons of many beliefs; we sit in council with men of the East and West. Only a true understanding of religious unity can invoke the spirit of the One God to these assemblies, so that this one and eternal Father can bless the works of all his children.

Man is endowed with wonderful resources of confidence and optimism, and even though these have been tested almost beyond endurance, we still depend upon them to make life enjoyable. The lesson has been forced home that we can no longer hope to find peace in the sphere of man's material attainments, and we are confronted squarely by the challenge of religion. Courage must come from within ourselves, and it must be sustained by values which alone can survive the holocaust of another world war. If these values come quickly, we may even avert war; but we cannot drift along in our old selfish habits and expect a better destiny than we have earned. Inwardly, we must come to some decision. In planning a conviction with which to live, and perhaps with which to die, we must choose between God and the bomb. As never before, therefore, we have every practical inducement to strengthen not only religious convictions in ourselves, but religious unity among human beings. It is only the spirit in man that can prevent him from launching an atomic war. If love can grow stronger than

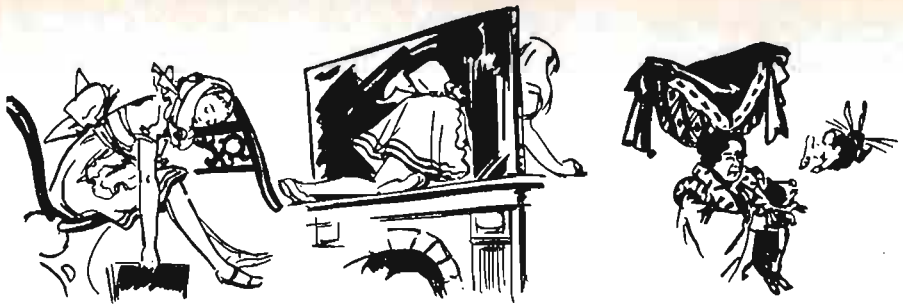
hate, faith greater than fear, we may yet be able to arbitrate those cross-purposes which may end in open conflict.

For us, the pursuit of understanding is a quiet, determined effort to know what is good, to appreciate what is right, to have faith in that which is real, and act according to the inner realization which we have found and experienced. The answers are here, if we want to seek them out and give them proper attention. If we can turn our minds from television for a little while, if we can rest the pressures of the struggle for success, we can do some simple but profitable research. The sacred books of the world are at our command. The great teachings of Buddha, Confucius, Lao-tse, Jesus, and Mohammed are near at hand, many of them to be obtained today inexpensively in paper-bound editions. The kindly thoughts of those revered and well-loved scholars and mystics are at our disposal if we are willing to give a little time to our own survival.

An understanding person must first seek out that which merits understanding. It is foolish to say that the Sermon on the Mount is too difficult for us to understand, or that the Ten Commandments are beyond comprehension. This generation has never known the deep satisfaction that comes to the thoughtful. We have forgotten that great thoughts build rich lives. If we would face our needs squarely and honestly, it would not be necessary for us to invent purposeless and worthless escape mechanisms or to run away mentally and emotionally from simple facts that could help us every day.

Let us, then, quietly and serenely face the fact. If we do not practice our religion, we may lose the right of free worship in a free world. We must get our religious convictions out of our heads and into our lives. We cannot keep them merely filed away as fragments of ancient history. They must become important through use. The proof of a spiritual doctrine is its power to change our lives for the better. Religion may be an intangible—something that cannot be analyzed by common methods; but it is the most dynamic force in the universe.

(This article is the text of Mr. Hall's radio talk given on September 17th, 1961, on the program "The Pursuit of Understanding," presented by Olive Conway on station KPRI-FM, San Diego.)



Curiouser & Curiouser

A DEPARTMENT DEDICATED TO ALICE IN WONDERLAND

SHARAKU

There are mysteries in every walk of life, but few are as completely unsolvable as those associated with the career of Toshusai Sharaku. He was a member of the Ukiyo-e School of Japanese woodblock artists, whose activities extended from about 1600 to the middle of the 19th century. Generally speaking, these artists, many of whom were posthumously accepted as masters in their chosen field, were forthright *Edoites* (men of Tokyo), and a fair amount of biographical information is available concerning them. They were hard-working, hard-living individuals, and few enjoyed general esteem outside of their own ranks. They supplied a market unconcerned with higher esthetic criticism. Their prints sold for a few cents each to shopkeepers and housewives, were taken home as souvenirs by travelers, and were finally pasted to the paper walls of modest homes, usually over the habachi, or cooking stove, where they were soon discolored with grease and smoke.

The classical and traditional artists of Japan hardly deigned to ignore the designers of popular prints. They were regarded as blatant commercialists, capitalizing on the capricious moods of the populace. The plebeian productions of the Ukiyo-e painters would have been forgotten, along with most of the trappings of the Tokugawa Period, had it not been for the opening of the

country to Western commerce. We may say that it was the French, the Germans, the English and the Americans who discovered the esthetic value of these Japanese prints. Examples reached Paris at a time when the art world was in violent transition. The revolt against classicism resulted in the rise of what we now call modern art, and many pioneers of this movement found comfort and consolation, and even a measure of inspiration, from the Ukiyo-e artists.

Of all the prints that reached Western centers of esthetic appreciation, the most controversial were the productions of Toshusai Sharaku. He had accomplished what the European liberals were attempting. He had impact, drama, tension, and dynamic. He was a master of some weird kind of fantasy, somewhat reminiscent of the earlier European masters Grunewald, Bosch, and Brueghel, whose unearthly compositions stirred the weary emotions of citizens of the 15th and 16th centuries. Sharaku has been compared to several Western masters. It has been suggested that he incorporated into his designs something of that rebellion against the dignity of art revealed in Rodin's portrait bust of Balzac. Efforts have also been made to parallel the psychological intensity of Sharaku with the ironical posters of Toulouse-Lautrec. It is quite possible that both these artists, like Van Gogh and Manet, studied Japanese prints. As European and American markets began competing furiously to own original Sharakus, the Japanese began to suspect that they had produced a long-neglected genius. Many Japanese connoisseurs, however, still decline to commit themselves, and when asked their opinion, quote an American or German author.

Obviously, when a man becomes famous, it is proper to inquire about his disposition and lineage. Here was an artist responsible for nearly one hundred and fifty prints, each of which today brings a higher price than most of the etchings of Rembrandt. Personally, I am not addicted to Sharaku, because I do not enjoy the continuous presence of the grotesque, but Western enthusiasts insist that the final proof of esthetic maturity is a devastating addiction to this artist. We cannot fail to respect, however, the feelings of many highly trained specialists, or the simple fact that an original Sharaku print, in good condition, now brings two thousand

dollars on the public market—more than the artist saw in his entire lifetime.

Speaking of lifetime, we come face to face with our mystery, for Sharaku is a name without a man. Although he lived in a time when abundant records were available about almost any man who did anything, absurdly little is known about him. Again, the Westerners stepped in and have filled the vacuum with high drama. Some very beautiful paragraphs have been written about the nobility of Sharaku's insight, but no one has yet discovered whether or not he actually possessed insight. The only man who probably ever knew him was the distinguished publisher, Tsutaya Jusaburo. He was a man of taste and wealth, and held many of the great Ukiyo-e masters under contract. He was the first, some say the only, important Japanese who became aware of Sharaku's ability. Substantially, no one knows when the artist was born or when he died. There is no record that he studied with any school or any master; it is not even known that he ever took a lesson in art. Some say that he broke the traditional rules because his vision transcended them; and others, that he never learned the rules. There is a lingering rumor that Sharaku was originally a dancer, a member of the Noh company under the patronage of the Daimyo of Awa. Unfortunately, he does not appear under any name in the list of these actors.

One day, in the spring of 1794, Sharaku must have made some contact with Tsutaya Jusaburo. Shortly thereafter, Sharaku's prints began to reach the public market where, according to most critics, they were a dismal failure. Some would-be biographers have suggested that Sharaku continued to produce his prints for several years, apparently hoping that some of them would catch the popular fancy. No one knows exactly what this popular fancy was or desired. Some feel that it was rather uncultured, although Hokusai, who liked to inscribe his prints with obscure poems from Chinese classics, was very popular.

Sharaku restricted his artistry almost completely to Kabuki actors. He designed no fair ladies in graceful kimonos, or gentle landscapes with birds flying against the moon. Some think that because he had started as a Noh actor, and thus belonged to the most aristocratic theater of his country, he looked down upon

ICHIKAWA EBIZO III
From the portrait by Sharaku

Kabuki theater, and tried his best to humiliate its outstanding thespians. Be this as it may, he never did a picture of anybody which had characteristics of intelligence, dignity, or charm. To the uninitiated at least, his portraits are grim and gruesome, but this has been explained away on the ground of tremendous psychological penetration. From one cause or another, his prints passed through very few editions, which explains their scarcity today.

There is no reason to detail all the possible circumstances that might have contributed to the discouragement of Sharaku. He either voluntarily discarded the career of print-designing, or was forced to do so by personal or political pressures. In any event, he simply disappeared, never to be seen or heard of again by anyone who cared to mention the fact. Critical investigation now leads to the belief that Sharaku's complete career extended for something less than ten months. During this period, he arrived, designed more than a hundred and fifty works, and quietly vanished. Nothing remains by which we can judge him, except the surviving prints. Actually, we do not know whether he was literate or illiterate. His signature on his prints shows no great skill in the art of writing.

Various modern critics have come up with conclusions which may be summarized as follows. In composition, Sharaku is not outstanding; sometimes he was downright bad. His color was fair, but the shades often clashed miserably; his draftsmanship was not distinguished, frequently mediocre; but the finished products were completely wonderful in a weird kind of way. It is understandable how such a conclusion could result in his being included among the great moderns.

As an example of Sharaku at his best, we reproduce herewith what is called his "Red Portrait" of the Kabuki actor Danjuro V, after he had voluntarily relinquished this great name, and was performing as Ichikawa Ebizo III. Certainly no one can say that the portrait is flattering; that is, if it may be called a portrait. Was the artist attempting to capture the villainous role that the actor was portraying? It is hard to believe that an Ukiyo-e artist would have attempted to deliberately insult a reigning favorite, nor is it probable that the public would have accepted this caricature of one of their great, if somewhat ancient, heroes. Some say that Ichikawa Ebizo III should have been highly flattered, and for all we know, perhaps he was. It is possible that he understood the dynamic mood which the artist was attempting to capture. Sharaku played no favorites, for his portraitures include many minor actors in whom there was little public interest.

Much has been made of the magnificent nose of Danjuro V. In comparison with other drawings by Sharaku, this nose has the same sublime proportions as that of Komazo Ichikawa II, which had been compared with Mount Fuji, and considered a national treasure. Did these actors really enjoy such amazing distortions, or did they band together and banish the artist from their midst? In all probability the mystery will never be solved, but Sharaku's career is unparalleled in the sober history of Eastern or Western art. There has never been anyone actually like him, and either he was a towering genius, or else he was so perfectly fitted into the artistic mind of 19th-century Europe that he has been boosted out of all proportion by the followers of the modern movement. His was a vitriolic brush, but whether moved by sincerity or the weirdest kind of irony, is an unsolvable mystery.

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(*Continued from page* 41)

mant, and then slowly breaks through, and by processes of growth attains its maturity and its fruitfulness. It appears that a seed of the Infinite exists as the cause and source of each creature. This seed, cast into matter, gradually releases its potentials. It creates forms and inhabits them. It departs from these forms and builds new ones, continuing to grow until its divine potential is fully released. Why this is, we do not understand in full, but that it is so, we are forced to admit by the facts we see every day.

Reincarnation is the law of evolution applied to the inner consciousness of man. As we see growth around us, we cannot deny it or doubt its reality. Thus, for practical purposes, we come to know that infinite life is subject to some process of unfoldment. Had it been the intent of the Infinite to retain its own completeness at all times, evolution as a principle would not exist. Because it does exist, we must assume that it is the divine way of accomplishing the divine end.

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The Most "Belle" of "Lettres"

In A.D. 1086, the ten subjects of examinations were appointed as follows: 1. Practice of righteousness; 2. Self-control; 3. Courage; 4. Intelligence; 5. Acquaintance with the classics; 6. Extensive learning; 7. Style; 8. Law; 9. Finance; 10. Government.

—From *Calendar of the Gods in China,* by Rev. Timothy Richard

HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD

This department has been added to our Journal to help thoughtful persons to evaluate some of the events of the day as these bear upon the lives of serious-minded individuals. It is right and proper to apply philosophical and religious principles to conduct, especially in times of unusual stress and confusion. Many religious leaders, clergymen, and educators have recognized the importance of spiritual directives, not on the level of sectarian instruction, but on the levels of moral and ethical insight. Most of these men have strongly recommended that a personal Christian philosophy should be based firmly on the admonition of Christ to love God with a full heart and labor for the realization of the brotherhood of man in this world. It is inevitable that such a creed will have constructive social consequences.

In recent years, there have been healthy signs of such idealism all over the world. We know from Indonesia, the sixth country of the world in population, that representatives of Islamic, Christian, Buddhistic, and Hindu-Balinese religious groups have united in an All-Indonesia Mysticism Congress for the preservation of the spiritual values in the lives of the people. President Sukarno has stated: "How can we believe that a government based on democracy is the best administration if we do not believe in the one and only God, and how can we fight to the death for social justice and humanity if we do not believe in the one and only God?"

From Pakistan, also, comes a strong statement of idealistic purpose. From *The Pakistan Times* of February 18th, 1962, we quote the following: "The culture of a people may be roughly described as the expression of a consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects: there is the side of thought, of ideal, of upward will and the soul's aspiration; there is a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthesis, intelligence and imagination; and there is a side of practical and outward formulation." Enlarging upon the religious phase, the article continues: "Its religion formulates the most intense forms of its upward will and the soul's aspirations towards the fulfillment of the highest ideal and impulse."

In the United States since World War II, a spirit of genuine interdenominational and inter-religious understanding has been increasingly evident, and has been a strong defense in our struggle to preserve a free world. In the last two or three years, however, a powerful and, in our opinion, dangerous reaction against idealistic thinking has arisen. This has been spearheaded by two groups: the intellectual materialists who attack the concept of the fatherhood of God as a superstition of the uncultured masses, and the religious fundamentalists who are assailing the doctrine of the brotherhood of man as far as this has any bearing upon inter-religious tolerance or spiritual liberalism. On my recent trip, I saw many evidences of the destructive results of this useless conflict, especially in smaller communities. Family unity is being damaged; long-established friendships undermined; gossip and slander are being encouraged; and in some areas violent outbreaks have been noted. This policy of fear, frenzy, and fury weakens our national and international prestige, and is certainly contrary to the spirit of our Constitution.

Peace cannot be built upon hate, nor faith upon suspicion, nor security upon a calculated program of negative criticism and condemnation. We are all interested in constructive ideas for the improvement of our personal lives and the strengthening of our community relationships. We cannot afford, however, to allow the prevailing neurosis, which has been markedly increasing for the last several years, to develop into a persecution complex or to encourage a tendency to paranoia. The wise person will continue to favor constructive attitudes, and will remain firm in his allegiance to those great idealistic principles and doctrines which have proved valuable and necessary throughout the long history of our struggle for human maturity.

While we appear to be losing ground in our struggle to protect our idealism, there is a marked and extraordinary reversal of attitude where we might least expect such an occurrence. Not long ago, Mr. Khrushchev proudly proclaimed himself to be a com-

munist and an atheist. Now it appears that trouble is developing in his sphere of influence where he can least afford such disunity. Top Russian scientists are declared to be seeking for a nonmaterialistic, spiritually vital concept of the universe. (*New York Times,* February 7, 1962).

Here is a real crisis for which the Marxians have no immediate remedy. Russia's place in world affairs today depends very largely upon its advance echelon of scientists. It might be possible for the Soviet to eliminate conflict on almost any other level of its economy, but it cannot afford to exile its physicists to some remote part of Siberia and let them languish there. The move seems to be gaining momentum, and recent bulletins, on the scientific level, from Russia include notes and comments on such fascinating subjects as extrasensory perception, telepathy, and the probabilities of the survival of human consciousness after death. The majority of the findings and opinions are broadly positive. The only conclusion seems to be that by its intensive program, communism has come to an impasse which more liberal Western thinkers have not yet reached. Continuing exploration of the universal mystery forces the recognition of the existence of a sovereign intellect or a rational principle of some kind at the foundation of cosmic procedure.

A recent astronomical discovery may have a bearing on this fascinating theme. It appears that there is a galaxy way out yonder that is galloping away from ours at the speed of 93,000 miles per second. Considering the condition of our present researches in nuclear physics, can it be suspected that this sudden departure of a galaxy indicates an *intelligent* effort to get as far away as possible?

The Clinging Vine

There is an old saying, "A friend is like ivy—the greater the ruin, the closer he clings."

In Absentia

In an old churchyard, the following curious epitaph was discovered:

Under this sod lies John Round
Lost at sea and never found.

In Fond Memory

The rolling pin was often carried by sailors, and hung in their cabins while on long sea journeys, as a token of affection for their wives or sweethearts at home.

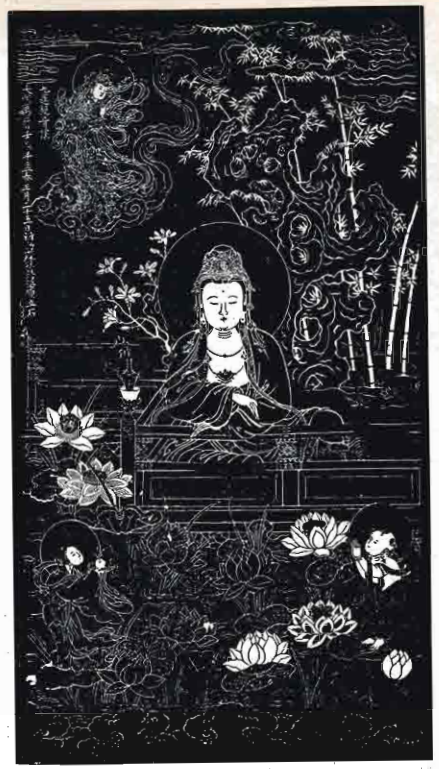
EASTERN ART FOR WESTERN HOMES

It is now nearly forty years since I began collecting Oriental art. In the early days, there was very little interest in the subject, and it was possible to secure outstanding examples of treasures that have now entirely disappeared from the market. Now the complexion of the art world is entirely changed. The trend is away from the sentimental productions of the 19th century and the comparatively meaningless abstractions which have perplexed the minds of contemporary art lovers. We seem to be maturing our esthetic instincts, and in the course of so doing have discovered the quiet satisfaction resulting from increased familiarity with the masterpieces of Eastern creative skill.

Take, for example, the stone rubbings of ancient China. Many exquisite works of Chinese masters from the Han Dynasty to the middle years of the Ming Period were engraved into the surface of enduring rock. Impressions were taken from these carvings by a simple process that more or less anticipated the development of printing. Strong thin paper was dampened and pressed into the carved hollows of the stone. This was done with the greatest care, until the paper was fitted into every unevenness of the original carving. Black ink was then rubbed over the raised areas of the paper, resulting in a perfect copy of the original design. The paper impression is therefore referred to as a rubbing.

After being carefully removed from the stone, the rubbing was usually mounted in the form of a scroll, either vertical or horizontal, according to the design. The mountings were often enriched with fine brocades, and the wood on which they were rolled was tipped with ivory or, in some cases, inlaid with jade. These rubbings were always comparatively scarce, because all the work was done by hand. With the passing of time, the stone tablets themselves became so weathered with age—for they often stood out of doors—that the designs could no longer be adequately transferred to paper. Needless to say, the difficulties in China during recent years have resulted in the destruction not only of the old monuments, but of countless rubbings and scrolls stored in the homes of merchants and collectors.

Chinese Intellectual on Horseback



Kuan Yin of the Eleven Lotus Blossoms

This type of art is highly favored by interior decorators. A good example of the simple dynamic artistry of these early pictures becomes the keynote of a room. It provides a center of attention, and helps to draw together the other elements of furnishing. Its dignity testifies to a genuine interest in culture, and adds refinement to the atmosphere in which we live. Believing sincerely in the importance of home environment as a stabilizing influence, it seems to me that all thoughtful persons should have good art in their most intimate surroundings, and not take it for granted that it belongs only in some museum or gallery.

With this thought in mind, I have selected three examples of Oriental art for reproduction—two Chinese stone rubbings and one Japanese woodblock print. One of the stone rubbings is a particularly beautiful representation of the deity Kuan Yin. The original stone was carved more than three hundred and fifty years ago, and the rubbing is rather too large for the average

home. By a very special process, we have had it reproduced in more convenient proportions, which, however, are still most impressive. The Chinese take their rubbings from stone in many colors, although the most common is black. We have in our collection fine examples in red, blue, orange, and green. As black is rather severe, and may cause inconvenience in combination with other furnishings, we have decided to use a deep slate-blue, suggestive of the original stone, on a warm-toned paper. The gracious subject of this rubbing is appropriate to all who are interested in the religions and philosophies of the East, and the quiet composure of the figure contributes to a peaceful and serene attitude toward living. The picture is 13-1/2 by 21 inches.

In contrast to this, we have selected another rubbing of somewhat later date. It depicts a Chinese cavalier mounted on a prancing horse, drawn with a strong sense of whimsey. One seldom finds so simple and yet striking an example of Chinese composition. We have printed this example in a dark, stony green, and the seal pendant above the head of the cavalier is in strong Chinese red. This picture has a tremendous impact on the viewer, and is really good art. The size is 10-3/4 by 21 inches.

For our third selection, we have taken a crude but delightful Japanese woodblock print, in which the design is cut into wood rather than stone, but prints are taken in much the same way. It was reproduced in a recent issue of the Journal, but we have added a remarkable vermilion seal belonging to the sect which inspired the drawing. Representations of the Buddhist ship of salvation are not common, and this one, by an outstanding artist, is extremely rare. The purpose of the ship is to carry the souls of the devout across the ocean of illusion to the Blessed Paradise of the West. In this example, however, the deck of the lotus-formed vessel is crowded with figures of bodhisattvas, and in the center rises Buddha, and, with its back toward him, is an image of the Bodhisattva Jizo, the patron of little children. In the sky at the upper right, Amida with his attendants is descending on clouds. Birds fly in the sky, flowers rain down, and the central images are shadowed by ceremonial parasols. This is distinctly a meditation picture, and we have reproduced it, as it was in the original, in black on toned paper.

THE SHIP OF SALVATION

A mandala or meditation figure of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, floating on the ocean of life in a ship fashioned to resemble a great open lotus. From an antique Japanese woodcut by Koseisen, formerly in the Bateson collection. A rare and curious print, horizontal, 14 x 17-3/4 inches.

We sincerely hope that many students of philosophy and mysticism will discover that these highly significant pictures will bring them an experience of deep esthetic satisfaction. It is an eternal truth of art that a picture is worth five thousand words. There are convictions and ideals which are most adequately released through the contemplation of meaningful artistry. If space in the home is not great, such pictures can be preserved in portfolios for occasional viewing; or we can follow the excellent Oriental practice of periodically changing the art in our rooms. A picture can be hung for a time and then put away, and another exhibited in its place. This adds variety to living, and provides a pleasant experience to visitors and even the members of our own family. When we become interested in good art, our joys are more numerous and our troubles more easily forgotten.

These fine prints are available only through our Society. Price: $3.50 each postpaid, or $10 for the set of three pictures (Plus 4% tax in California). Shipped in a substantial mailing tube.

Hint to Status Seekers

A mandarin, who took much pride in appearing with a number of jewels on every part of his robe, was once accosted by an old sly bonze who, following him through several streets, and bowing often to the ground, thanked him for his jewels. "What does the man mean?" cried the mandarin. "Friend, I never gave thee any of my jewels." "No," replied the other, "but you have let me look at them, and that is all the use you can make of them yourself, so there is no difference between us, except that you have the trouble of watching them, and that is an employment I don't much desire."

—*The Citizen of the World*

Happenings at Headquarters

The Spring lecture series at Headquarters opened on April 15th, just after Mr. Hall's return from his Texas tour. He will be speaking in our auditorium every Sunday morning at 11:00 a.m. through July 1st. Two Wednesday evening seminars are scheduled—both taught by Mr. Hall. The first, "Landmarks of Esoteric Literature," ends on May 16th, and the second, "The Mystery and Meaning of Ancient Rituals," begins on May 23rd and continues through June 27th, with no class on Memorial Day. The program of lectures will continue without interruption, with the Summer Quarter beginning on Sunday, July 8th.

On April 22nd, the P.R.S. Friends Committee hosted an Easter Festival at Headquarters. After Mr. Hall's lecture on "The Human Soul as the Great Physician," light refreshments were served in the patio by the Hospitality Committee, and visitors had an opportunity to browse at leisure at the various sales tables featuring special note cards, art objects, and jewelry, and, of course, our complete line of books, records, and pictures. At 2:30, Bonnie Templeton, Curator of Botany at the Los Angeles County Museum, spoke in the auditorium on "Nature's Designs in Flowers," illustrating her talk with fine color slides.

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The library exhibit for April, covering the Easter Season, featured religious medals selected from a unique collection of sixteen hundred examples of this beautiful art form. The exhibit included medals of the popes back to St. Linus, who was consecrated A.D. 67, continuing on down to John XXIII, the present Pope. Many of these medals were designed by the great artists of the Renaissance, and the detail work is exquisite. The collection also includes numerous other ecclesiastical medallions relating to important events in religious history, the saints and scholars of the Church, famous cathedrals, shrines, and the emblems of sacred confraternities. There are interesting examples of the shrine of Lourdes and other places of pilgrimage, and many beautiful

A Group of Japanese Folk Toys

pendants bearing witness to private devotion. It is doubtful if another collection of this quality has ever been exhibited on the West Coast. There will be an article on these medals in a future issue of our Journal.

There was also a showing of whimsical and amusing Oriental folk toys. Most of these follow traditional patterns that have descended in families or communities for hundreds of years. Though primarily intended for the amusement of the young, the sophisticated quality which many of these toys exhibit has caused them to be collected by specialists of what has come to be called "peasant art." The accompanying picture shows a group of Japanese folk toys. The tall slender dolls, with their quizzical expressions, are produced largely on simple lathes during those seasons in which ordinary labors of the people are restricted by climatic conditions. The two little egg-like shapes represent the Zen patriarch Daruma and an entirely fanciful consort, "Mrs. Daruma." Daruma has become a symbol of equilibrium, both spiritual and physical, and his images are usually weighted at the bottom so that if tipped over, they will right themselves automatically. The whale is a miniature of a large float that is drawn through the streets in festivals. In the full-size float, there are persons inside the body of the whale who manipulate a device that causes water to spurt from the top of the whale's head. In Japan, there is a collection

of Daruma dolls with more than ten thousand examples. Toys of this kind are sometimes employed in connection with informal flower arrangements and to key various art displays.

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The P.R.S. has cooperated with the Otis Art Institute of Los Angeles County in a special exhibit presented under the title, "Pisces—Fish and Fossil," from March 15th through April 21st. The show emphasized the use of the fish symbol in the art concepts of the world, and we provided eighteen examples from our collection. These included an unusual Chinese bannerhead in brass featuring a fish, a retablo from New Mexico depicting San Rafael carrying a fish, and Persian and Indian paintings and fabrics with fish designs. Items from the exhibit were also at the disposal of students of photography.

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We acknowledge with gratitude a magnificent portfolio entitled *The Holy Experiment*. The work is devoted to the series of mural paintings by Violet Oakley, A.I.A., A.N.A., Litt.D., in the Governor's Reception Room and in the Senate Chamber of the State Capitol at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The manuscript for this impressive portfolio was originally written and illuminated by Violet Oakley from her notes made in preparation for the paintings from 1902 to 1922. Her original manuscript was reproduced in facsimile, and is accompanied by a complete set of the paintings, reproduced in full color. The work is dedicated to the memory of William Penn and to the cause of peace, and the title refers to the great work of Penn and his associates, who founded in the Western hemisphere a settlement dedicated to honor and brotherly love. This impressive publication was limited to five hundred copies. We plan to have an exhibition of the plates and selections from the text in our library in the near future.

The Superstitions of Seamen

It was an old belief of sailors that the first Monday in April was unlucky because that was the day Cain was born and the day Abel was slain. The second Monday in August was unfortunate because on that day Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed. December 31st was a bad day to go to sea because it was the birthday of Judas, who betrayed Christ. There are, of course, no historical facts to support any of these dates.

LOCAL STUDY GROUP ACTIVITIES

In harmony with the spirit of current events, we have received a number of letters from Local Study Group leaders and members reporting an increase in attendance and deeper interest in the serious aspects of living. Mr. Byron Bird, leader of the Headquarters Study Group, notes that the friends are turning out in good number and having such interesting sessions that they linger long after the time allotted to the meetings. Those present are learning to take active parts in the discussion and are gaining valuable experience in self-expression.

Mrs. Mary Dunning, leader of the Portland Study Group, writes that the group there expressed satisfaction with its year of study, and that attendance is always good. The members are especially appreciative of the Monthly Letters from Headquarters. They are presently working with our book *Self-Unfoldment,* and are also making use of articles in the PRS JOURNAL.

Reporting on the St. Louis, Missouri, Study Group, Mrs. Kathryn Henry writes that they are having most interesting discussions and activities, including plans for an International Tea, and that there is a general feeling that the study meetings have resulted in actual improvement in daily living.

We are happy to let you know that Miss Alice Fischelis of New York City wishes to organize a P.R.S. Local Study Group. Friends in the area interested in this activity are invited to contact Miss Fischelis at 155 E. 96th Street, New York 28.

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: *SHIBUI AND THE GRACIOUS LIFE*

1. Consider the Japanese concept of the dramatic impact of understatement. Think of practical examples in such areas as dress, home furnishings, and creative art expression.

2. Explain the philosophy of *shibui* according to the Taoist teachings of China. Relate good taste to universal motion and cosmic processes.

3. What did *shibui* gain from the Shinto doctrine? Consider the intimate association between fine art and the aging processes everywhere evident in nature.

Article: *THE PURSUIT OF UNDERSTANDING* (Part 2)

1. In your practical thinking, why do you believe that the wisdom of two thousand years ago was unable to bring peace and fraternity to the world?

2. Discuss, in your own terms, the basic problem of Christianity. The teachings of Christ are universally admired: why have we been unable to apply them in our daily lives?

3. Trace the circumstances which have led to the gradual drift of scientific progress toward materialism, and discuss why education has been unable to preserve us from the present world crisis.

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

LECTURE  NOTES

THE INFERIORITY COMPLEX

Solving Subconscious Problems by Conscious Effort

The term *inferiority complex* is now used very broadly to cover a wide variety of symptoms and peculiarities of behavior. In all probability, this psychological complex has been essentially natural to the human being from the very beginning of his contact with environment. Even after thousands of years of advancement in various fields of activity, man regards himself as living alone in a mystery. The universe, although he tries to conquer it, eludes him, and most of its phenomena are beyond his control; he is unable to protect himself adequately against the hazards of natural conditions. In more recent times, this has been further complicated by man's fear of man.

By degrees, the child coming into life becomes aware of his own futility. The small child, growing up through a conditioned family relationship, has at the beginning a sense of his own inadequacy. In size, he is at a certain disadvantage; in his comparative helplessness, he must lean upon the strength and resources of others. As he develops gradually into social adjustment, he also becomes increasingly bewildered at the confusion of conditions around him. He is forced to cope with personalities, an infinite diversity of individuals, each wearing, over the surface of his inner life, a different mask with which he hopes others will accept him.

If the child is raised in a comparatively secure family, strong positive emotions are also developed. Affection takes the edge off "tyranny," or the domination of his elders. Where, however, the

emotional factors are not adequate—and this is increasingly true in our society—the child has very little constructive insight with which to cope with this strange elusive world of appearances, that is essentially not dependable. He must learn that words do not always speak truly; that individuals with various protestations of devotion do not really feel these emotions or attitudes; that deceit, subterfuge, and exploitation are always lurking beneath the surface of relationships. So the child grows up to feel very much alone, for against each person is the group, and the group tremendously outweighs and outnumbers the person. He therefore finds it more and more necessary to take a distinct attitude toward the group. He must either accept the leadership of others, or he must rebel against it; and somewhere in this struggle, the effort to preserve individuality comes into focus.

This problem of preserving individuality is a mixed blessing. Many people apparently do not have individualities that are really worth preserving, but they still like them because they are their own. Very often, also, this attempt to remain oneself does not carry with it the implication of developing that self into something worthwhile. As a result, we become defenders of mere conditions, without analyzing the merits of these conditions. As we go along, we observe that under the surface of society, there are great movements or motions—tides or currents, so to say—and these play an important part in the development of personal character. We observe, for example, that there are habits and traditions and policies and patterns which we are expected to accept. If for any reason we do not accept, then we experience a kind of isolation; we are not accepted. This comes sometimes as a powerful moral challenge.

Most smaller children or young people growing up, are exposed to some measure of religious influence. Even in homes where the parents are comparatively lacking in religious insight, there is this sense of moral responsibility that the child shall have some religious training. This training, again, causes a division of allegiances. The child observes one way of life advised in the church or religious community, and he observes that this way of life does not always affect the members of this religious group. He finds that the mere fact that these people are religious does not make them

dependable or understanding, or forgiving or thoughtful. He does, however, receive a considerable indoctrination, and he may take this out into life; and to the degree that he tries to apply it, he finds himself in further trouble. He observes around him that his well-intentioned efforts are either discredited or ridiculed; or later in life, he may find that these attitudes bring with them the exploitation of his own resources.

Thus, as we go along through the years in our personal growth, there is a large measure of bewilderment. As we get old enough to consider the whole planet and its problems, we come upon further possible sources for fear, doubt, or uncertainty. We observe the condition of nations and of communities. We come face to face with the different strata or levels of worlds that seem to interpenetrate to create human society. We read every day in the newspaper of atrocities, of the misuse and abuse of the human potentials. Little by little, these pressures move in upon us, and it is a strong individual, indeed, who can escape all of them. In fact, many persons feel that to achieve such an escape is itself little less than a pathological experience; that if we are oblivious to these pressures, or appear not to react to them, there may be something else wrong more serious even than our tendency to react.

Generally speaking, complexes come into the lives of people who are essentially sensitive human beings. There is a certain type of individual who can go on through the years upon the surface so completely that he is very little moved by any profound consideration for anything. Such people live a happy-go-lucky kind of existence, accepting fate rather as it is, and gain their escapes and defenses by very positive actions of their own. But the sensitive person, the individual who from early life is thoughtful, is likely to suffer considerably.

It is hard to know just what constitutes the source of thoughtfulness in a person. Psychologists try to explain it in a thousand ways, but I suspect the real fact is that some folks are born thoughtful. Some individuals are born with more highly specialized natural sensitivities, which expose the child, at an early age, to problems of rationality. Long before he is able to actually think things through, he reacts factually to the various stimuli that come to him. We notice that small children are frequently very reasonable. It requires years of education to destroy this common sense, and to adjust them to the peculiar confusion of our prevailing way of life.

Generally speaking, we look back over history, and we find golden ages of reason—brief periods in the development of mankind in which it seems that philosophy, arts and letters, music, and religion dominated human concerns. These more fortunate years were later swallowed up in the common chaos that marks the interludes between the peaks of culture among men. In looking back over the life of the person, also, there seem to be these golden periods where the person was essentially right in his interpretation of value. Then, by degrees, this rightness fades out, and the person is forced to reconsider his attitude in the light of the experiences that come to him; and in this reconsideration, something of beauty usually dies—life becomes more matter-of-fact, less idealistic. The golden age of childhood, this fairyland of internal emotional acceptances, fades away, and the person finds himself moving further and further into a pattern of futilities which is going to dominate him through most of his years.

Occasionally, we find an individual, however, who does not lose these early memories, but clings to them, enables them to survive in him, so that throughout life he remains the dreamer, the idealist, the mystic, the poet, or the artist. He finds that these subtle emotions are so important that he cannot afford to lose them; so, in one way or another, he supports them and sustains them and builds them into character. If he is forced into too great an intensity to do this, he may also develop other psychological difficulties. Psychological normalcy in our kind of world is a razor edge, and it is very easy to fall from this very thin line of normalcy into some aberration or other, which will ultimately bring its sorry consequences.

The problem of inferiority, then, probably originates in fear, which is one of the most basic of human emotions. It is further developed by confusion, and it is intensified by the limited perspective by which we attempt to judge values. By degrees, we lose the ability to think through the rightness of almost anything. We thought we had certain clear lines on which we could build, but one by one, these fail us, and we slip more and more into this

morass of confusion. So the inferiority complex, as it unfolds in the life of the adult person, has its roots in the ancient soil from which so many things seem to spring.

In examining an inferiority complex, we first have to ask ourselves a simple question: Is the person actually inferior, or does he only think that he is? This is a fine point, because if he never thinks that he is, we are inclined to regard him as an egotist. We say that this individual overestimates all parts of his own nature. He may become self-centered, despotic, arrogant, opinionated, and in these ways develop further difficulties for all concerned. On the other hand, is it really true that individuals can be inferior? Within a certain limited range, this is probably true. All human beings have their humanity in common. We all share in the possession of human attributes, faculties, and powers. We all possess a human potential, and within each of us is much more than we ever call upon. Each person has an innate excellence of one kind or another, and there is no one who is unable to grow, unless he is actually subnormal in the sense of suffering from some pathological situation. For almost all people, then, growth is possible, and growth is merely a release of a power that we all possess. Some human beings are better in their developments and attainments than others. Some seem to have better memories; some have quicker judgment; still others are more capable of self-expression. Some individuals seem more suited for learned professions; others for crafts and trades. All of these differences, however, are within a narrow range, and superiority or inferiority is therefore only a small percentage of difference.

Actually, we never know when the genius that is innate in man will break through a pattern of mediocrity and affirm itself. Some individuals achieve late in life; others have spectacular careers in youth, and then seem to disappear from the public scene. It is quite possible for superiority to break through in very advanced years. As long as the person is trying to grow, trying to improve, has an awareness of goal or purpose, the problem of unfoldment is never beyond his reach. Superiority, therefore, simply means that the individual is making more use of his own potential, and this type of superiority has nothing to do with egotism or the glamorized attitudes of status seekers. It is simply the Confucian concept of

the superior person who attains to this level by gradually overcoming his own inferiority—that is, anything within himself that is not satisfactory to the development of his own character.

Generally speaking, growth results from purpose. The individual is able to unfold to the accomplishment of ends which are very real and near to him. Behind growth, therefore, must be the push of purpose. The person who chooses something of a higher nature, something beyond his present capacity, and works continuously and with dedication toward the expression of this, is the one who grows most rapidly. A person with determination can accomplish many things, all of which are possible simply because all human beings are capable of accomplishing.

What we term a condition of inferiority is simply a condition of non-accomplishment of something that we regard to be so necessary that the lack of it depresses us mentally or emotionally. To meet this challenge, there has to be a high measure of industry in man, and human beings in general, of course, are not inclined to overwork. They prefer easy and simple ways of doing things. They wish to have the advantages that result from labor, but are not particularly anxious to do the work. This, again, limits potential. The person who is not willing to work with himself, who is not willing to dedicate his time and his efforts to the release of his own nature, cannot expect to attain the level of achievement which he regards as desirable, and he goes through life feeling jealous of those whose attainments are greater than his own.

The individual with an inferiority complex generally has an exaggerated attitude toward his own shortcomings. Realizing, as he must nearly every day, that what he knows is not quite sufficient to what he needs to know, finding that there are problems that he cannot face successfully and many things that he cannot do adequately, he is not able to enjoy the sense of security or achievement which he would like to enjoy. Many folks, however, take this situation in a rather constructive manner. Very few persons who attend a great concert, for example, could possibly equal the performer. If they understand and know their music, they are there because they recognize the superiority of the artist; but instead of this superiority causing them to disintegrate in a sea of grief, it causes them to applaud the artist, to become tremendously

enthusiastic, and to feel that it has been a real privilege to be present when a genius did something of extraordinary quality. We do not all leave the concert with our heads hanging down because we cannot perform like the artist. We probably go out with our heads a little higher because we have had a wonderful experience that has brought richness and achievement directly to our attention. It is perfectly possible to applaud achievement, rather than to be in a state of jealousy about it.

We might divide humanity largely into two kinds of people—those who applaud the achievements of others, and those who resent the achievements of others. Those who resent, develop a kind of psychic acidity that becomes a very serious detriment to their character and to their growth. If we are normal people, we become aware of the fact that man's achievements are so numerous as to be almost infinite. We are duly impressed when we realize that a man like Leonardo da Vinci could attain mastery in sixty arts and sciences; this is a phenomenal achievement. We are even greatly impressed if a person achieves mastery in one or two. We also realize that for the span of life that we have, with the conditions that surround us and move in upon us continually, and the responsibilities we must carry, it is inconceivable that we can compete with all other men in the achievement of greatness. So we are impressed by a certain kind of futility. We cannot know everything; we cannot do everything; we cannot be everyone. To accept this, is not too difficult. Yet some persons resent even the acceptance of this broad generality. They are still mortally insulted in the presence of any individual whose achievements seem to excel their own. Out of this type of attitude, of course, a variety of neurotic pressures and tensions can develop.

A normal life must consist of a series of reasonable acceptances. We must learn to be really glad about the beauty of the world. We are not always going to be able to conquer all these beauties, but we can enjoy them. We can be very happy in reading a good book, or seeing a great play, or observing some beautiful garden which a neighbor has built. These things can bring us happiness, because they can tell us something about the soul of man and all the wonder and beauty that is locked within it. This kind of appreciation is more or less unselfish; it takes our minds away from

ourselves and causes us to find sincere pleasure in the recognition of universal good and achievement, wherever it may appear. Some persons, however, can never find the security of this attitude. They never seem to be able to be glad about what good things happen to others. Always the question arises in their minds, "Why does it not happen to me?" And little by little, such a person comes to regard himself as a kind of stepchild of the Infinite—one who is underprivileged, who was born under an ill-fortuned star and was predestined and foreordained to mediocrity. This kind of thinking gradually builds the problem of the inferiority complex.

Sometimes this complex arises in wonderful people. I have known a great many persons who have really been outstanding, but who continuously sold themselves short. Perhaps this is because in each of us, there is a peculiar relationship that we can never hold with any other being; that is, we know ourselves a little better than others can know us, or than we can know others. If, therefore, we measure ourselves by our own dreams, our own hopes, our own sincerity, we sometimes can honestly feel that we have almost failed; and often this sense of futility can arise in a person who has achieved much. And if you ask such a person how he feels about his achievements, he will nearly always tell you how little he has really accomplished. His achievement has opened a larger world, so that growth goes on forever, and he can never quite catch up with it. Actually, we never reach that degree of growth where we can sit back and say, honestly, that we know all that we really want to know, or can do all that we really want to do. The only way we can get this attitude is by stopping and in some way crystallizing our point of view, and then settling down into a kind of rut. We can never really be happy apart from continual growth, for this is our order of life; this is the way it was intended for us to react.

(To be continued)

"A Hen On"

Action is the parent of results; dormancy the brooding mother of discontent. —Mulock

The Tree that God Made

Much of the confusion concerning the role of science in modern society arises from the over-emphasis of the material fruits of science and disregard of the cultivation of the tree which bears these fruits. —Spoehr

Library Notes

By A. J. Howie

KOREA—HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Part II

In the first paper we noted the earliest recorded contacts of Koreans with Occidentals—shipwrecked sailors interested only in survival. They became prisoners of the State—problems because no foreigners were permitted in the country; but once in, they never could be allowed to leave. There is no record indicating that any of the sailors attempted to preach Christianity.

The first interest in Christian doctrine sprouted spontaneously within a very small group of young Korean intellectuals, meeting to discuss the refinements of Confucian teachings, who became intrigued with the contents of a few Jesuit pamphlets, written in Chinese, which had come to their attention. The following dates will orient you in time:

1627 Wettevree and two companions wrecked off shores of Korea.

1653 Dutch ship *Sparwehr* wrecked off Quelpart Island.

1777 Confucian seminar at which Jesuit tracts inspired observance of Roman Catholic disciplines of prayer, fasting, etc.

1783 Senghuni, son of a Korean ambassador to China, smuggled letter from one of the group to Franciscan Bishop at Peking. He was converted to the faith and baptized with the symbolic name of Peter. He returned to Seoul with supply of tracts and holy articles.

1784 First public document in Korea officially directed against Christianity.

1791 Paul and Jacques Kim, the first Korean Christians martyred for destroying their ancestral tablets.

In 1794, a Chinese priest, Jacques Tsiu, twenty-four years old, strong of body and faith, was sent to Korea with extraordinary

ecclesiastical powers. In appearance much like a Korean, he easily reached Seoul, where he began his labors. After only six months, through treachery, the official spies got on his track. He managed to elude them, but three of his associates lost their lives protecting him. In September, 1796, he wrote a letter to the Bishop at Peking in which he requested that the King of Portugal should send an embassy to Korea to obtain a treaty of friendship and allow the residence of physicians, astronomers, and scientific men in Korea. In 1801, a decree of general persecution was issued, and a public proclamation named the Chinese priest as an outlaw. To protect those who had been sheltering him, he voluntarily surrendered and was sentenced to death. His action did not save his friends.

During the excitement, an Alexander Wang wrote a letter in sympathetic ink on silk to the Bishop of Peking, proposing an appeal to the Christian nations of Europe to send sixty or seventy thousand soldiers to conquer Korea! The letter was intercepted and deciphered. What else could the officials think but that there was a general conspiracy among the Christians? In 1811, Korean converts addressed two letters to the Pope in which they invited help, not only of a spiritual nature, but aid in ships and envoys to treat with their king. Obviously they had been imbued with the temporal as well as spiritual power of the Church.

The position of the Korean government with respect to Christianity is understandable. The laws and customs of the country were long established after Chinese and Confucian patterns. Buddhism had had to be suppressed because its hierarchy had overstepped the boundaries of spiritual activity into the realm of politics and the power of wealth and military strength. The country had preferred to isolate itself from any intrusion by all foreigners—Oriental as well as Occidental. Existing rights, privileges, and status had come to be accepted unquestioningly by all classes. The proletariat knew no other way of life. Wars, devastation, oppression, suppression, cruelty, corrupt officials, political intrigues within their own little world were the way of life. Those in power had no intention of relinquishing any of their prestige.

At the time of the first public proclamation against Christianity, there were only several thousands of nominal converts, and those

mostly among the intellectual and official classes—hardly qualifying as a representative minority group. But the facts that came to the attention of the Government certainly did not substantiate harmless intentions. The public affectation of Western names after baptism alone would have outraged a strong nationalism, but when these same people began advocating the abolition of ancestor worship, they were undermining one of the foundations of the existing social order.

In their enthusiasm and zeal, the Christian converts did not hesitate at the unlawfulness of their smuggled correspondence to the missionaries in Peking, but invited teachers and priests in defiance of Korean law. While the letters that got through encouraged the interest of the Roman Church, those that were intercepted worried the Korean Government. When the Chinese priest, Jacques Tsiu, was discovered in Seoul, he stirred up an international problem. Those who had assisted his entry into the country and had hidden him during his stay in Seoul were traitors to Korea, an offense punishable by a horrible death. But in order to punish Tsiu, they had a delicate diplomatic problem of executing a Chinese national, even though he was in the country illegally and they had proof he was urging the arrangement for an embassy of Europeans to Korea. Later, intercepted letters of Koreans revealed appeals for the armed intervention of Europeans—out-and-out treason that branded Christians as a dangerous menace to the Korean State.

When government agents began inspecting the controversial literature, a literal interpretation of the Roman Church doctrines did not help to encourage tolerance. The subject matter of the tracts that had interested the Confucian scholars sounds inoffensive: the existence of God, divine providence, the immortality of the soul, the conduct of life, sins and virtues. The several Koreans who had been to Peking reported the "ritual splendors of the Peking cathedral, of altars, lights, vestments, solemn masses, music, processions." But when it came to prohibiting the worship of ancestors, this seemed the equivalent of hating one's parents. Monogamy might have been acceptable as a personal preference, but the doctrine which taught that celibacy is a more perfect state than marriage seemed to question the sanctity of the family. And obviously, somewhere, the converts became convinced of the temporal

as well as the spiritual supremacy of the Church. All of these problems have been controversial even among Christian nations, and it would be inconsistent to condemn the Korean Government for taking defensive actions in accordance with its own traditions.

As if religious problems were not sufficient, the trading ambitions of the Occidental world initiated more aggressive explorations. Thus began a series of "incidents" involving wrecks, honest trading efforts, hydrographic expeditions, and armed intervention.

In 1832 the British ship *Lord Amherst,* sent out by the East India Company, arrived at Chulla. "On board was a Prussian gentleman, the Rev. Charles Gutzlaff, under the patronage of the Netherlands Missionary Society, though travelling at his own cost." He was a good Chinese scholar and well equipped with medical knowledge. He landed on several islands and on the mainland. He distributed presents of books, buttons and medicines; he planted potatoes and taught their cultivation. He sent a number of presents to the king which were refused and returned. He could discover no trace of Christianity or converts. The magistrates denied any knowledge of the Christian faith, though they must have been aware of the various edicts that had been issued against it.

With the respite in Europe after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the Roman Church renewed its missionary zeal and resolved to found a mission in Korea through the Society of Foreign Missions at Paris. The first appointee died en route to his post October 20, 1835. Pierre Philibert Maubant stepped into his place and succeeded, after several attempts, in eluding the border sentries and getting in and out of the frontier city of Ai-chiu through sewer drains in the city walls. Aided by friendly converts, he arrived at Seoul, the first Frenchman to violate the Korean borders. In January of 1837, Jacques Honore Chastan crossed the border disguised as a mourning Korean widower. By December, 1838, Bishop Laurent Marie-Joseph Imbert joined the first two.

The mission tallied numerous converts; renewed persecution followed quickly and all three were martyred September 21, 1839. "With the foreign leaders there perished no less than one hundred and thirty of their converts . . . . . Six bitter years passed before the Christians again had a foreign pastor."

In 1841, Louis Philippe of France sent out the war vessels *Erigone* and *Favorite* commanded by Captain Cecile to occupy, if possible, some island to the south of Japan which would be valuable for strategic and commercial purposes, and to make treaties of trade and friendship with Japan, and especially with Korea. The ships turned back before reaching Korea because the Opium War, which had favored the venture, was concluded. The two Korean interpreters carried by the ships, Andrew Kim and Thomas Tsoi, joined up with two French priests and aided in many attempts to assist the missionaries to get into Korea. The adventures of Kim in reconnoitering and arranging border crossing attempts, both by land and water, most of which failed, are amazing. Subsequently, he was ordained to the priesthood, and finally succeeded in landing Bishop Ferreol and Father Daveluy in Korea. Kim was martyred in 1845.

During the same year, Captain Cecile, with three French warships, was trying vainly to find the mouth of the Han River and the channel to Seoul. He had orders to hold a conference with the Korean ministers and demand satisfaction for the murder of Imbert, Chastan, and Maubant in 1839. After making some coast surveys, he dispatched a threatening letter to the Korean king and withdrew. The same year, the frigates *La Gloire* and *La Victorieuse* sailed for Korea with Thomas Tsoi and a missionary, Mastre, aboard for an answer to Captain Cecile's letter. Both vessels grounded simultaneously on an island off the coast of Korea and became total wrecks. The largest of *La Gloire's* boats was sent to Shanghai for help, and the crew of 600 men made camp on Kokun Island. Although treated kindly and furnished with provisions, the group was guarded closely by the Koreans against any possible communication with the mainland. Thomas Tsoi acted as a mute interpreter, with pencil, in Chinese, while he was able to understand every word of the Korean magistrates. He met fellow Christians, but was unable to escape to the mainland.

The Korean government, fearing further visits of the outside barbarians, sent an answer to Cecile. Their letter explained the Korean policy toward members of foreign nations. Survivors of shipwrecks would be rescued and helped to return to their country. But persons in disguise who had "changed their names and garments, sleeping by day, going abroad at night, associating with rebels, criminals and villains, and entering the kingdom clandestinely, the . . . . were put to death; and no comparison could be drawn to mitigate their sentence between them and innocent shipwrecked men."

A bald recital of events affecting Korea sounds as contrived as a motion picture script. During the second half of the 19th century, "incidents" increased in frequency and seriousness. European nations stepped up their intriguing throughout the East for exclusive treaty port rights and privileges. With heavier traffic along the treacherous shores of Korea, the extreme changes of the tides took more frequent toll in wrecks; the natives had reason to fear punishment from their magistrates for helping the foreign survivors, and the Occidental sailors were inclined to take by force anything that was not given freely. Any resistance on the part of the Koreans was reported as "inhuman treatment;" and if they showed any fight, the landing force was quick to "resent an affront to national honor." The primitive weapons and defenses of the Koreans were ineffectual against the guns and cannons of the "civilized" intruders. The whitewashed reports were always accepted by the home offices at face value; kindly folk filled with hopes of prosperity to be gained from foreign trade were undisturbed because of slain Koreans, burned villages, demolished forts left in retaliation for some alleged "affront to national honor" incurred in expanding a world market.

England, Germany, France, Portugal, Russia, vied with each other in their efforts to expand their spheres of influence. Suave diplomats enlisted the connivance of corrupt native officials; the opposing forces of native politics were utilized. Any portion of the earth unexplored by European nations was assumed to be open territory to be claimed for the sovereign of the flag carried by the ship that planted its standard on "new" shores. "Backward" and "impotent" governments had to be "protected" against the "aggressions" of contending—and competitive—powers.

Ostensibly the missionary activities of the many Christian sects were independent of the problems of national politics and commercial ventures. There were millions of souls in Korea to be saved. The biographies of the many noble men and women who

devoted their lives to ministry in Korea are inspiring. The rapid spread of the "Jesus religion" seems to have been unaffected by any sectarian problems or differences.

The Roman Catholic pioneers were invited by a small group of intellectuals in defiance of Korean law. The Church was never openly aggressive, but its representatives were dedicated, persistent, and committed to the policy of the "end justifies the means," which unfortunately led to making traitors of their converts, to initiating and promoting acts of treason, and to dividing families and friends over doctrines that were contrary to Korean traditions.

The Protestant missions did not enter Korea until after the first treaty opening the country to foreigners was signed in 1883. The Presbyterians were first, followed by the Methodist and Anglican churches. They combined medical and educational features in their programs of spreading the Gospel. They established hospitals and schools. The Protestant efforts were supplemented by the organization of a Young Men's Christian Association in Seoul and the activities of various Bible societies.

In his *The Mastery of the Far East,* Arthur Judson Brown discusses the question: "Why did Christianity make such rapid growth in Korea, far outstripping, in the number of converts, the results of missionary effort in Japan and, in proportion to population, in China?" The rather definite missionary policies and program used in Korea were no different from those followed in other areas. He offers the following:

"First: Koreans are temperamentally more docile and emotional than Chinese and Japanese, so that it is easier to make an impression upon them.

"Second: For centuries Korea was a vassal of its powerful neighbors and was subject to foreign domination. Politically small and weak in comparison with the strong adjoining nations, the Koreans had become accustomed to being led from the outside.

"Third: While ancestral and demon worship were formidable obstacles, there was no powerful state religion as in most other Asiatic countries, so that there was no influential and strongly intrenched priestly class to oppose the missionaries. The real religion of Korea was Animism, and animistic peoples are usually the readiest to respond to the gospel message. Their lives are spent

in constant fear of demons . . . . . When the missionary went among them with his message of emancipation from fear, the tidings seemed almost too good to be true.

"Fourth: Poverty, oppression and distress, resulting from excessive taxation and the corrupt administration of justice, had begotten in many minds a longing for relief, and a hope that the missionary could secure it for them."

He continues with several other suggestions to the effect that because of the few interests of the average Korean, it was easier to induce converts to become personal workers among their own people. The succession of wars and devastations during which their homes and fields were destroyed provided a dramatic opportunity for the missionaries to prove their unselfish devotion as they stayed at their posts during all the strife and hardship and continued to minister to the natives. The medical missionaries were especially effective. And, fortuitously, Dr. Allen had been able to render signal medical services to members of the royal family, thus insuring favor at court for all missionary activities.

Every volume treating the history of Korea reveals new facets of a unique people. Racially, the Koreans have been integrated into a well-defined nation with ancient traditions, habits, traits, and an acceptance of things as they are—that is, they did until the Western World started demanding admittance into their lives—religious, economic, political.

For centuries China and Japan wrestled with each other for suzerainty of Korea without positive outcome. When Russia began encroaching on Korean territory, Japan decided to settle the problem as affecting her own security and survival. A convenient "incident" precipitated a war with China. No nation in the world expected Japan to win, but she did. After a few years in which Japan rallied her forces and improved her armament after Western models, she engaged Russia. Again none of the world powers expected the issue to be decided in favor of Japan. But again Japan emerged from the conflict a victor, and now a major military and naval power in the family of nations.

On paper, Korea was and is an independent nation; but international politics determine its actions. There is a terrific story in the steady modernization of Korea by Japan at the same time that

a school of patriots in Korea arose crying for a Korea for Koreans, stirring up hatred for all foreigners, especially the Japanese. Russian diplomatic intrigue, American and British intervention, and a network of secret alliances among and with European nations, committing Korea's natural resources of mines and fisheries, military bases, railroads, harbors, precipitated the Korean conflict of World War II. Enough time has elapsed for the student to observe the relation of events that dramatize the farsightedness of Russia's Peter the Great, the continuation of national policies of expansion regardless of political domination or titular governments. The seeds of World War II were sown by Peter the Great of Russia in the 17th century; the Soviet Republic merely has inherited a pattern that recognizes Korea as a focal area geographically, regardless of whether China is ruled as an empire by a Manchu dynasty or as a republic dominated by Marxist doctrines; whether Japan had remained a hermit island ruled by the shoguns or as a modern major military world power; whether Formosa has become the home of a Free China Army; whether Russia controls Manchuria for the effective use of the Trans-Siberian Railroad.

The recent gift of Korean books to our library has suggested that students of philosophy and religion may benefit by considering the political and economic factors of history. It is not enough to bring to a spiritually hungry world a message of good tidings of a better world to come which no man ever has seen; nor is it enough to make life more tolerable in a material world by alleviating the ills to which man is heir. History records the pattern of cause and effect, without a knowledge of which the idealist can waste his energies on impractical issues. There is a constructive plan, and there is a middle path. The violence of nations echoes the violence of the individual members of the nation.

We shall devote one more paper to things Korean—Korea's cultural contributions, papers in which no subject has been exhausted. The books that furnished the information for the three articles now will be available to the public in the P.R.S. library.

Lay the Footings Deep

Take care of the base; the superstructure will take care of itself. Take care of what you are today; tomorrow will take care of itself.