

# The Philosophical Research Society, Inc.

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CONTRIBUTORS' BULLETIN -- JUNE 1966

Dear Friend:

This year we are going into the summer with a "spruced-up" look, as the result of industrious activity in the spring cleaning department. Visitors will note some painting where it brightened up dark corners, additions to the planting, new signs identifying the various buildings, new coats of varnish on the patio benches, wallpaper in my office, renovation of the ancient sofa in our upstairs lecture room, and one or two additions to equipment. Not so obvious, but highly important, was work on the auditorium roof, which we hope will add to the life and efficiency of this structure. All in all, the rejuvenation program has been effective, and a great many friends have expressed their approval.

The June exhibit (June 5 through 26) in our Library brings together probably one of the largest collections of Japanese Ofuda, or Temple Souvenirs, in the United States. Included in the showing is an original impression of the Vision of Kannon received by Dogen when the ship on which he was traveling was threatened with disaster. This print was made in the early Muromachi Period (1333-1573) and is considered the finest Ofuda in the world. There are also examples of amulet sutras, long scrolls of religious images provided by temples to pilgrims, who then carried them as protections against misfortune. This is an unusual and fascinating exhibition of rare and artistically important specimens of woodblock printing before the rise of the Ukiyo-e School.



On April 16th and 17th, the West Los Angeles Buddhist Church celebrated the Hana Matsuri, the annual festival to commemorate the birth of Gautama Buddha. On this occasion, we cooperated with the church, which belongs to the Amidist Sect, by supplying an exhibit of twenty-eight religious scrolls and a large antique figure of the Amida Buddha. A little pavilion had been erected on the altar of the church, and in it was placed an image of the infant Buddha proclaiming his destiny. The figure stood in a wide flat bowl of tea, under a canopy of flowers. As the worshippers walked by, they made a brief obeisance of respect, then took a small ladle and poured tea over the image. In Japan, tea takes the place of sacramental wine, and is always used in the eucharistic rituals. There was a beautiful display of flower arrangements, including several exquisite examples of the modern school. The accompanying photograph shows the infant Buddha standing in his bower of flowers.

We have had several interesting letters from our good friends, Dr. and Mrs. Bode, who have now reached their home in India, via Europe. Mrs. Bode writes: "We felt so happy in London. Had a grand time, and it was so nice to see our dear friends again. Paris too was kind to us -- her people and the climate. Surely Paris looked very prosperous. In 1958 people looked to us so tired and low in their spirits; now it is just buzzing with life, plenty, and her people once again the Gay Parisian. One has to be born there to drive in that city. I feel quite sure the drivers in Paris have not only

the 6th but 7th sense developed also. Freeway drivers of Los Angeles would be shocked to see the speed that these Parisians maintain in their little cars . . . In Geneva, too, we had a glorious time. Snow all around on the near mountain tops, shining like silver in the bright sunshine; climate just right and people so kind and friendly. Many delightful vegetarian restaurants . . . Bombay has certainly changed a little. Very, very tall buildings have come up everywhere; bridges to ease the vehicle traffic; the city is becoming ugly. In the past it was known as 'Bombay the Beautiful;' now it is beginning to look more like Tokyo. Shops and stores are full of goods and food; the prices have gone up tremendously. Yesterday evening was a reception for us from several organizations with whom Framroze is connected, and then a dinner at a friend's home. People are most anxious to know about U.S.A. . . . So far we do not feel the heat here; it is very pleasant. Next month we hope to visit Kashmir and later on South India. . . We think of all our friends at the P.R.S. Please give them our warm regards and best wishes."



Our art display from July 17th through August 28th will feature "Japanese Folk Art of Otsu." As a result of my trips to Japan, we are able to offer a far more comprehensive exhibition of Otsu material than in previous displays. Among the interesting items to be shown for the first time, is a large painting of the Parinirvana of the Buddha, in which all the figures in attendance are derived from the Otsu characters. In recent years, there has been a strong revival of folk arts in Japan, and several painters have chosen to perpetuate the Otsu style. They have been highly successful in creating a distinct art form, and we will have several examples of their work on themes that will rejoice the hearts of classicists and impressionists alike. One subject, "The Monkey, the Catfish, and the Gourd," (accompanying picture) is devoted to the improbable adventure of attempting to capture a catfish with a gourd. This is based on the old legend that the catfish, sleeping under the islands of Japan, causes earthquakes when he wiggles in his sleep. The monkey is trying to hold him down, so that he can do no harm. Our exhibit will include Otsu paintings and woodblocks from 1650 to the present, all of them in color. Much of the Otsu art has a delightful quality of whimsy that is bound to leave the viewer with a cheerful outlook on life.



Summer Open House will be held here at headquarters on Sunday, July 31, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. After my morning lecture, the Hospitality Committee will serve luncheon in the patio. Over the years, these luncheons have gained a well-earned reputation for being something very special. Another important feature on this occasion will be our annual Thrift Sale, to which you are all invited to donate material -- bring the things you don't want, and take advantage of bargains on things that you have always wanted. In our "Arts of the World" department, there will be a preview of our fall line of Christmas cards and decorations, useful and unusual gifts, including recent imports, and beautiful Oriental prints that make distinctive gifts or additions to your own home. At 2:15, I will give an informal talk in the auditorium about my adventures in Otsu, where the pictures on display in our Library were originally made. I have visited the Miidera Temple, where folk art of this type is still shown, and have gathered considerable new information on the philosophical and religious meaning of these pictures.

We certainly hope that you will plan to attend the Open House, which is a splendid opportunity for old friends to get together. In any event, my most cordial regards and best wishes for a happy vacation season.

Very sincerely yours,

*Manly P. Hall*



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by

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