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It is generally known that Buddhism has two aspects, the philosophic and the practical aspect. Both are equally important, and you cannot call yourself a Buddhist without paying equal attention to both of them. In our modern world two problems stand foremost, the problem of knowledge, and the problem of character building. Without up-to-date adequate knowledge life becomes impossible, and to meet the challenge of the modern world man needs character. Both these needs were stressed in Buddhism from its very beginning. Buddha placed ignorance or inadequate knowledge - *avidyā* - at the very root of Phenomenal Existence, and showed us the path to uproot it, and to transform us into true seekers. Fearlessness or *vīrya* was one of the main characteristics of a true seeker. Right knowledge and right discrimination, constant awareness or mindfulness, and above all a fearless and open-minded attitude towards the problems of Life, were essential conditions on the path of progress. To achieve it the follower of the Buddha was told to study, to study constantly and master thoroughly the Doctrine. Even nowadays, in the Buddhist countries beyond the *Himālayas* which faithfully preserve the priceless heritage of their faith, three things are ordained to a Buddhist. In Tibetan the threefold duty of a Buddhist is expressed in a short and terse formula - *thos-bsam-sgom-gsum*. *thos-pa* means the ancient Indian *śruti*, or study; *bsam-pa*, means pondering, thinking, and stands for the critical study of the Doctrine, and *sgom-pa* means meditation, mental concentration, *dhyāna* or *bhāvanā*- the highest degree of mastering the Doctrine. These are the main duties of a Buddhist. The Buddha has again and again declared that the study of the Doctrine and its proper exposition was the highest form of worship of a Buddha. In comparison to it the offering of flowers and offering lamps were not considered to be real means for honouring a Buddha. The very idea of ritual was foreign to Buddhism and at best was accepted as a help to men-



tal concentration. It is not surprising that this aspect of Buddhism and its ever-present stress of the importance of right knowledge, should appeal to the modern man. For as said by the Founder "in knowledge lies man achievement, and through knowledge man conquers the darkness of ignorance, and opens the door of progress.

Buddha, the character builder, the great unifier, ordained to his disciples to abstain from idle-talk, and above all to avoid slander and blame. The Buddhist Vinaya, a document intensely human in its character, has preserved many a precious page relating how the Blessed One strove towards the solidarity of the Buddhist Community and through it of the entire mankind.

Buddhism which once preached the unity of mankind, has still a great deal to teach us, and, I think, is destined to play again an important role in the country of its origin.