

1

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE AND THE ELIXIR OF LIFE

BY ANAGARIKA B. GOVINDA.

There are certain symbols the origin of which cannot be traced down to any particular place, tribe, or race and which are not bound to any particular period of human civilization or to any religion, but which are the common property of humanity. These symbols may disappear in one place only to reappear at another place, they may be buried for centuries only to re-surrect in a new and more brilliant garb, they may change their names and partly even their meaning, according to the emphasis that is laid upon the one or the other of their aspects without losing their original direction—because it is in the nature of a symbol to be as manifold as the life from which it grew and yet to retain its character, its organic unity within the diversity of its aspects. The most universal of these symbols are those which take a visible form, either as diagrams or as cult objects, but there are also invisible symbols which exist only as mental pictures, "eidos", from which our word 'idea' is derived, though we use this word in a very superficial, lifeless, more or less theoretical way.

"The Philosopher's Stone" is one of those invisible symbols, and perhaps one of the most interesting and mysterious, because it has given birth to many visible symbols, great thoughts and discoveries in the realm of philosophy and science. The eternal vision behind the Philosopher's Stone (in all its variations) is that of the *prima materia*, the original substance, the ultimate principle of unity of the world. According to this idea all existing elements or phenomena are only variations of the same force or substance which can be restored to its purity by reducing and dissolving the manifold

qualities which have imposed themselves upon it through differentiation and subsequent specialisation.

From the beginning of human thought the investigation into the nature of the world started from two opposite ends ; the one was the exploration of matter, the other the exploration of the human soul. Apparently these were two absolutely different things, but they were not so different as they sound to us. It was not man alone who was thought of being gifted with soul forces, but matter as well (not to speak of plants and animals). The belief in the 'psychic' influences of precious and semi-precious stones and metals survives up to the present day. It was therefore of secondary importance whether those forces were persued within the psychic realm of man or within the elements of nature, of which man, after all, was only a part. In both cases the result would be the same and would affect both sides. He who finds the *prima materia* has not only solved the mystery of nature and attained power over the elements but he has also found the *elixir of life* ; because having reduced matter to its origin he could produce whatever he desired through modification or addition of certain qualities. On this idea the Greek and later on the Arabic alchemists based their theory of transmutation of metals and other elements. On the other hand, he who finds that ultimate principle of unity within himself attains *siddhi*, the powers of transformation which act as much in the spiritual as in the physical realm. It is said, therefore, that highly advanced Yogins test their attainments by exercising their powers of transmutation in material elements.

Guru Nâgârjuna, one of the famous eighty-four Buddhist Mystics (Siddhas) in India (not to be confounded with the founder of the Madhyamika Philosophy) was said to have changed an iron mountain into copper, and that he would have transformed it into gold if Ârya Manjuśri had not warned him, that gold would only cause greed and quarrel among men instead of helping them as the Siddha intended.

Another Siddha, the Brahmin Vyâli, was an ardent alchemist who tried to find the *prima materia*, the elixir of life (amrita). He spent all his fortune in experimenting with all sorts of expensive chemicals and finally he was so disgusted that he threw his formula book into the Ganges and left the place of his fruitless work as a beggar. But it happened that when he came to another city farther down the Ganges, a courtesan who was taking her bath in the river, picked up the book and brought it to him. This revived his old passion, and he took up his work again. But his experiments were as unsuccessful as before, until one day the courtesan, who used to prepare his food, by chance dropped the juice of some spice into the alchemist's mixture,—and lo! what the learned Brahmin had not been able to achieve within fourteen years of hard work, had been accomplished by the interference of an ignorant low-cast woman!

The symbolical character of the story is plain. The essence of life and nature, the secret of immortality, cannot be found by dry intellectual work and selfish desire, but only by the touch of undiluted life: in the spontaneousness of intuition.

The story then goes on to tell, not without humour, how the Brahmin, who spiritually was not prepared apparently for this unexpected gift of luck, fled with his treasure into the solitude, because he did not like to share it with anybody or to let others know about his secret. He settled down on the top of an inaccessible rock that rose up in the midst of a terrible swamp.

There he sat with his elixir of life, a prisoner of his own selfishness—not unlike Fafner who became a dragon in order to guard the treasure which he had won from the gods!

But Nâgârjuna who was filled with the ideals of a Bodhi-sattva, wanted to acquire the knowledge of this precious elixir for the benefit of all sentient beings who were ripe for it. By his magic power (siddhi) he succeeded in finding the hermit alchemist and in persuading him to part with his secret.

The details of the story, in which the elements of popular phantasy and humour* are mixed with mystic symbolism and reminiscences of historical personalities, are of no importance here. But it is significant that the Tibetan manuscript in which this story is preserved, mentions mercury as one of the most important substances used in the experiments of the Brahmin. This proves the connection with the oldest alchemist tradition of Egypt† and Greece, which held that mercury was closely related to the *prima materia*.

In the mystic language of alchemy mercury was even identified with the *prima materia*, but in this case not the ordinary mercury was meant but "the mercury of the philosophers", which was the essence or soul of mercury freed from the four Aristotelian elements—earth, air, fire and water—or rather from the qualities which they represent.‡

To the Buddhist these four elements or elementary qualities (mahâbhûta) are well known as the solid, the liquid, the gaseous, and the radiating principle, in other words the qualities of inertia, cohesion, radiation, and vibration as the characteristics of the four states of aggregation in which the material world appears to us.

* Nâgârjuna, as the story tells us, reached the rock by means of his flying shoes, but knowing the greedy character of the alchemist, he was careful enough to hide one of them on his arrival. Vyâli's first question was how Nâgârjuna had come to his place. The visitor pointed to the shoe that was with him and after explaining its magic qualities, he asked for the alchemist's secret. Vyâli cleverly demanded the magic shoe in exchange. But Nâgârjuna, as soon as the secret had been revealed to him, put on the hidden shoe and flew off, to the great disappointment of the alchemist.

† Alchemists maintain that the ancient Egyptian king Hermes Trismegistos was the founder of alchemy as represented in the works of Roger Bacon, Alberfus Magnus, Valentinus, Paracelsus and others.

‡ "Thus the operator had to remove from ordinary mercury, earth or any earthly principle or quality, and water or a liquid principle, and to fix it by taking away air or a volatile principle." (Encyclopædia Britannica, XIth Ed.)

There can be no doubt about the source from which the idea and the definition of these four elements had come into Greek philosophy. And if we learn that the problem of the alchemist was how to remove from the object of his experiments the elements of earth, water, fire, and air, then we cannot help to be reminded of the Kevaddhasutta in the Dīghanikāya, where the very same problem, namely the dissolution of the material elements, troubles the mind of a monk, who in a state of jhāna travels through all the heavenly worlds without finding a solution. Finally he comes to the Buddha and puts his strange question before him: "Where do earth, water, fire, and air come to an end? Where do these four elements find no footing?" And the Buddha answers: "In the pure and radiant consciousness.* There neither earth nor water, neither fire nor air can find a footing." And he is alluding to the same state when saying in Udāna VIII: "Verily, there is a realm, where there is neither the solid, nor the fluid, neither heat nor motion, neither this world nor any

* "*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato paḍhaṃ Ettha āpo ca pathavi tejo vāyo na gādhati.*" (Dīgha-Nikāya—The term *anidassanaṃ*, lit. 'invisible, imperceptible'), alludes to the fact that consciousness, when differentiated or objectivated, steps into visible appearance, incarnates itself, coagulates into the material form which we call our body and which in reality is the visible expression of our past consciousness.

Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ, therefore, can only be understood as consciousness in its undivided *purity*, not yet or no more split into the duality of subject and object. The term *anantaṃ* confirms this idea, because consciousness can be infinite only when it is not limited by objects, when it has overcome the dualism of ego and non-ego. The purity of this state of consciousness is also emphasised by the expression *sabbato paḍhaṃ*: penetrating everything with light (*bodhi-cittaṃ*), radiating unhindered towards all sides. The Pāli Text Society's edition of the *Dīgha-Nikāya* reads *paḍhaṃ* instead of *paḍhaṃ*, and T. W. Rhys-Davids accordingly translates "accessible from all sides" which shifts the emphasis from the original subject, the consciousness, to an outside agent, thus obscuring the meaning.

other world, neither sun nor moon.”—“There is an Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed. If there were not this Unborn, this Unoriginated, this Uncreated, this Unformed, escape from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed, would not be possible.”

He who has realized this, has truly found the Philosopher's Stone, the *ratana*, the precious jewel, the *prima materia* of the human mind. This was the real aim of all great alchemists who knew that mercury stood for the creative forces of higher consciousness which was to be freed from the gross elements of matter in order to attain the state of perfect purity and radiance, the state of Enlightenment.

Already in the earliest forms of Buddhism the jewel (*ratana*) was made the symbol of the three vessels of enlightenment (*bodhi*) viz.: the Enlightened One (Buddha), the Truth in which Enlightenment consists (Dharma), and the followers of the Path of Enlightenment (Sangha). He who possesses this shining jewel overcomes death and birth and gains immortality and liberation. But the jewel cannot be found anywhere, except in the lotus (*padma*) of the human heart; hence the mantra: Om maṇi padme hūm! This is the real wish-granting gem 'cintamaṇi.'

In the later forms of Buddhism the diamond in the shape of the vajrā became the central symbol. The famous 'Diamond Sūtras' and the different schools of Buddhism which have been called Vajrayāna, give us an idea of the importance of the vajrā or diamond symbol. It stands for indestructability and mystic power, which are embodied in the ultimate stage of Buddhahood. Its absence of any colour, though producing *all* colours, its purity and transparency, make it a fitting symbol for the transcendental stage of voidness (*suññatā*) which the Buddha characterized as the "Unborn, Unoriginated, Uncreated, Unformed", because it cannot be described by any positive quality, though being present in all.

The relationship between this highest state and the ordinary state of consciousness was compared by certain

4

schools of alchemy to the relationship between a diamond and an ordinary piece of coal. One cannot imagine a greater difference, and yet both are carbon. This teaches symbolically the fundamental unity of all substances and their inherent faculty of transformation. To the alchemist who was convinced of the profound parallelism between the material and the immaterial world, of the uniformity of natural and spiritual laws, this faculty of transformation had a universal meaning. It could be applied to an organic form of matter as well as to organic forms of life, and to the psychic forces that penetrate both. It was therefore of great significance for him to discover that the human body, as all other forms of organic life, are built up by the same substance as the diamond and the coal, namely carbon. Thus the black and dirty looking coal was used as a symbol for the unenlightened human being which by the process of psychic transmutation (the higher path of alchemy) can be changed into the diamond of Illumination.

This higher path of alchemy was revived by the Rosicrucians in Europe who inherited this secret science from the Arabs, who in their turn had continued the traditions of Greeks and Romans and their predecessors. The Portuguese knight Francisco Almeida, who in his later years became the first Viceroy of India, played an important part in the transmission of the secret knowledge of Alchemy. He took part in the conquest of the famous Alhambra at Granada, the last stronghold of Arabian power in Europe at the end of the fifteenth century.

"In the hand of the Moors, who held Granada there was at that time a sacred treasure, with the possession of which a kind of hidden knowledge was associated. It was a sacred relic connected with a form of Alchemy. Destiny brought it about that this object and the knowledge associated with it fell into the hands of Francisco Almeida. Almeida felt that he had the right to dispose of it after his own insight, but the Order of St. Jago did not agree with him, and desired to keep

for itself the right of disposal, both of the relic itself, and of the hidden knowledge which went with it. Almeida insisted on his right and eventually passed on the relic and the knowledge to a certain man from Alsace, whose name was Stephan Rautter. This individual is known to history under the pseudonym Basil Valentine. His writings, preserved by his pupils and circulated in manuscript form, were at a later time collected and published by Tölde, secretary of the Rosicrucian Order.

Basil Valentine's work contains the great secret of Alchemy, which consists in the study of certain transmutations of carbon, referred to mysteriously as the *prima materia*. This secret is not revealed; it is only hinted at in a half-jocular form, where it is said that the disciple of Alchemy must not take it amiss if he be called upon to dirty his hands with coal.

It was Almeida, therefore, who withheld the knowledge from the Order of St. Jago and was responsible for giving it to Basil Valentine. The hidden knowledge, and the preparation in question, were preserved from thenceforth in the Rosicrucian schools of Alchemy. This knowledge is indeed very ancient, and in the last resort goes back to the time of Alexander the Great, who learned the secret of substance and of its medical use from his tutor Aristotle. The 'coal', the transmutation of which is the subject of Alchemy, is indeed none other than the carbon which is contained in every living substance. In the living body of man this carbon does, indeed, take on all colours, inasmuch as all the organs are made up of its compounds. Carbon builds up the human body, which is not only alive but permeated in its living substance by soul and spirit. What Basil Valentine calls the Philosopher's Stone is none other than the human being looked at from the three-fold aspect of Body, Soul, and Spirit. Therefore the Philosopher's Stone is represented as consisting of *three substances, though one in essence*. In the Mystery Schools of Antiquity it was always known that the human being must experience a

transmutation in body, soul, and spirit if the ordinary consciousness is to be changed into a higher clairvoyant consciousness."*

Almeida who thus saved the secret science from falling into the hands of an Order, which would have utilized it as an instrument of power for its own narrow purposes, had to pay for it with his life. He was murdered in a mysterious way on his return from India.

It may be mentioned here as a curious coincidence that Guru Nâgârjuna who had rescued the secret of the elixir of life from the selfish hermit alchemist, made no use of it for the sake of his bodily welfare, but passed it on to his pupils while he himself sacrificed his life for the benefit of his fellow-beings when great distress had come over his country. His main disciple, the king Śalabhâṇḍa tried to dissuade him from his sacrifice, but the Guru answered: "Whatever is born must die, all composed things must decay, whatever has come into existence must disappear, all phenomena and their aims are perishable; how could one enjoy them? Go thou and fetch the elixir of life!" But the king answered: "I shall only take it together with my Guru. If the Guru does not remain, what can Amrita help me?" (In other words: Life has no value without spiritual guidance). And when the Guru, who had sacrificed everything in his life gave away his body as his last gift, the king died at the feet of his Guru.

Thus the wise ones do not use the elixir of life to preserve the body but to attain the higher life which does not know the fear of death. Once they have tasted the elixir they can dispose of it and can hand it over to others who are ready to receive it. But those who use it merely for the preservation of their own bodily life will inwardly die and exist as living

* Dr. W. J. Stein in his remarkable historical essay "Portugal as Preparer for the British Mission", published in May 1936 in "The Present Age".

corpses. Amrita turns into poison in selfish hands, truth into falsehood in the mouth of a fool, and virtue into bigotry and hypocrisy in the heart of the narrow-minded.

But he who makes proper use of this elixir will transform the moral consciousness into that of immortality, the limited into the unlimited, samsâra into nirvâna.

*In Bahuka, at Adhikakka's Ghat,
Gaya, Sundarika, Sarasvati,
Bahumati, Payaga—there the fool
May bathe and bathe, yet never cleanse his heart,
Of what avail are all these ghats and streams?
They cleanse not heart or hand of guilt.
For him whose heart is cleaned, each day is blest
Each day is hallowed; pure of heart and mind,
He hallows each new day with vows renewd.
So hither, Brahmin, come and bathe as I:
Love all that lives, speak truth, slay not nor steal
No niggard be but dwell in faith and then—
Why seek Gaya? Your well at home's Gaya.*

Vatthupama Sutta.

HEAVENLY FORGIVANCE

BY BHIKKHU METTEYYA.

Padmāvati bore Asoka a beautiful son. His eyes emitted rays that vied with the beams of the morning sun. They were fairer than those of that aerial enchantress of India, the Kunāla bird.

And they called him Kunāla.

When the prince was in the bloom of his youth Asoka anointed Tishya-Rakshitā, that bewitching beauty, as Chief Queen.

And it came to pass that she became enamoured of her step-son, who was as virtuous as she was vain.

Her looks lured him not. Her charms charmed him not. He showed her the reverence due to a mother and the kindness due to a daughter.

All attempts failing, she was hurt. She vowed vengeance and conspiring with the ministers in whom the king put his trust, sent Kunāla as Viceroy to a distant province.

There he ruled the people even as a parent cherishes a child. They loved him.

Now Tishya-Rakshitā wrote a royal order that Kunāla's eyes should be gouged, and stealing slyly the imperial ivory seal, sealed it, and sent it.

"Not only these eyes, but this life too is my father's", said the prince to himself, "if he has need of them I will gladly give."

But no one had the heart to pluck out those innocent eyes that looked love on all the world.

At last, the prince proclaimed by beat of drum: "If there's any friend who will pluck me mine eyes, that friend will I honour with a royal reward."

And a man came, repulsive to look at.

He drew out one eye, and the multitude wept. When the second eye too was torn out, the noble prince said: "My father has forsaken me, but I rejoice that I am the son of the Buddha, the King of Truth." But the ministers soon understood that this was an act of the treacherous queen. They told him so.

Hearing which he blessed her with the words: "May she long enjoy happiness and power, she who helped me practise the highest patience."

Though Kunāla lost his bird-like eyes his mouth still made music like a lark. And secretly leaving his mansion he wandered along with his wife, earning a living by singing to the lute.

Come to the capital he passed the palace, piping his reed sweetly. Which music ravished the king's ear. He sang also.

"That is Kunāla's voice", said the king. "Behold! at last my long lost son is come. Bring him anon to me." When the king was expecting a beautiful prince, they brought him a blind beggar and his rustic wife in rags.

"He is not my son!"

Kunāla sighed. The truth was soon known.

"Kill that villainous woman!" commanded the enraged king.

But Kunāla, ever calm, pleaded saying: "It is not worthy of thee, father, to kill her. It befits thy grace to pardon her, for great kings are ever compassionate towards the weak. Benevolence is the best virtue. Father, has not our Lord commended us sweet sufferance?" Thus saying he fell at his father's feet. "I knew no anger when my eyes were gouged out. I bear no hatred of the Queen. I reverence her as your queen and love her as my mother."

"If these my words be true, may my eyes return to me."

Immediately the room was filled with a radiance that was cooler than that of the moon, and the king wept for joy.

"Divine Forgiver," they called him.

IMPRESSIONS OF MY VISIT TO HOLY MIGADAYA (SARNATH)

(By K. KUMARAN, SECRETARY, MAHA BODHI
BUDDHIST MISSION, MALABAR).

Of all the lessons that I learnt in the course of my recent pilgrimage to Sarnath, the most impressive is how Buddhism had its fall in the country of its birth. Every statue or monument that is kept in the Sarnath museum by the Archæological Department of the Government of India should bring tears into the eyes of those who sincerely love and adore the sacred teachings of the Great Teacher. Every historian must admit that India was in the zenith of its glory, when true Buddhist culture was occupying a high position in the minds of the people.

Was it Brahmanism alone that throttled Buddhism? Was it Islamic sword that was responsible for checking its growth? Did Buddhism become too monkish? When we deeply think over these questions, flashes of light come to our minds trying to give us some answer or other. Whatever may be the havoc done to Buddhism by Brahminism and Islam, with all reverence to Bhikkhus who sacrifice every thing worldly to keep the Light of Compassion and Wisdom burning, I must say that in the course of the centuries many of them must have lived their lives far away from the people; and instead of doing something "for the welfare of the many, for the gain of the many" they threw more of their attention to some work suited to their leisure and found time for chiselling their love and reverence into mineral rocks instead of driving a spirit of Compassion, Wisdom and Peace into human hearts. Was this right? Will they commit the same mistake again if they were in the wrong?

Let us, however, be bold optimists and look into the future with all hopes and smiles. King Asoka sent his daughter Princess Sanghamitta with a branch of the Bo-tree of Wisdom to lovely Ceylon and planted it firmly there. It is a very happy sign that Ceylonese are in the fore-front in tending the Mother-tree in order to bring it back to its ancient glory. All honour and gratitude to the great man Late Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala, founder of the Maha Bodhi Society and his band of workers and successors, including the present General Secretary Mr. Devapriya Valisinha, and the great philanthropist, the late Mrs. Foster. I found Burmese, Japanese, Siamese, Chinese, Indo-Chinese and Tibetans at the Mulagandha Kuti Vihara festival, contributing their share of love and duty to the sacred land where Lord Buddha was born, and also among them a few Indian Bhikshus. Among the hard-working Indian Bhikshus the names of Rahula, Ananda, Kasyapa and Dharmaskanda deserve special mention. I was glad to make my acquaintance with Brahmachari Govinda and Nyanaketto. The suffering world is badly in need of peace and happiness—individual, national and inter-national. Let us all think every day of peace and happiness and meditate on them. Let us also try to get those around us to do it in a more practical and systematic way. When we succeed in creating an atmosphere of peace and happiness, we are bound to find peace-lovers to carry it on to the next stage in words and actions. The Maha Bodhi Buddhist Mission in Malabar will gladly welcome any remarks from readers on the views expressed in this short article.

But it is not in impurity but in purity that I take to a life of solitude in the wilds ; I am one of the Noble Brotherhood who in purity enter on such life. This consciousness of purity within, Brahmin, brace me with Confidence to live in the wilds.

Bhaya-Bherava-Sutta.

UPOSATHA CELEBRATION AT BUDDHIST HOUSE, BERLIN

The final Autumn Uposatha Celebration, organised by the Buddhist House, Berlin, which took place on the 1st November, 1936, was quite an exceptional success.

The members of the German-Indian Maha Bodhi Society Branch (Buddhistische Haus, Dr. Paul Dahlke, Berlin-Frohnau) had invited the European Representative of the Maha Bodhi Society, Mr. Daya Hewavitarne, from London, to assist at this celebration and to address the meeting. Mr. Hewavitarne was kind enough to accept our invitation and travelled here by aeroplane, as he was not able owing to his work in London, to be absent for very long.

Sunday morning, the day of the festival, Mr. Hewavitarne took great pleasure in helping us in our work of decorating the Hall with flowers.

In the evening at 8 o'clock five strokes on the gong announced the beginning of the meeting. The Hall was crowded and after some introductory remarks by a Friend of the "Haus", Daya Hewavitarne took the chair. He looked very impressive in his white national costume. His introductory remarks were made in English and translated by a German gentleman, but his chief address entitled "Uber Buddhistische Lebensfuhrung" (The Buddhist Way of Life) was delivered in German, very clearly and distinctly. It was astonishing to hear how well Mr. Hewavitarne, a born Ceylonese, spoke and pronounced the German language. A sure proof of our Aryan relationship!

After Mr. Hewavitarne came Dr. Von. Meng, the chief German representative of the Buddhistische Haus, who

delivered a very clear and instructive lecture on "Some Chief Buddhist Doctrines", based on one of Dr. Dahlke's works which is now out of print. This was followed by a recitation in Pali and German by Mr. Hewavitarne and those present very much enjoyed hearing the Pali language.

A short interval followed, during which a fire was lit at the bottom of the Temple slope and although the weather prevented people from going down to the fireplace itself, they were invited to stay on the platform and look at it. After this the whole audience went back to the Hall and the last part of our programme, the fire sermon, "the seven fires" and the "great sacrifice", taken from the Anguttara Nikaya, were very beautifully read by Ernst Schmoldt.

This brought the proceedings to a close.

The success of the celebration was chiefly due to Miss Bertha Dahlke, sister of the late Dr. Dahlke, who is heroically carrying on the activities of the House since his death.

If blemishes are seen, and heard, to be immanent, in a Bhikkhu, then albeit his abode be in the depths of the forest, albeit he begs his food from door to door just as the houses come, or is coarsely clad in rags from the dust-heap—not unto him do his fellows in the higher life show respect and reverence, devotion and worship. And why? Because bad and wrong desires are seen and heard to be immanent in him.

Anangana Sutta.

BOOK REVIEW

LES BOUDDHISME, SES DOCTRINES ET SES METHODES by Alexandra David-Neel.

LE BOUDDHISME, SES DOCTRINES ET SES METHODES, is the title of the latest volume with which Mme. Alexandra David-Neel has enriched Buddhist literature in European languages. A few years ago she published—also in her native French—a valuable book on Buddhist Modernism; and now she gives her latest views on Buddhism in this one, yet not views only, but an interesting exposition of Buddhist doctrine and method as she has learned of them in northern as well as southern lands. Needless to say it is marked by the clarity that is a feature of all who use the French tongue ; there is nothing cloudy or vague about her exposition, albeit she deals in many of her concluding pages with some of the more recondite aspects of Buddhist thought and ways current in Tibet and its northern neighbours. She deals with Tibetan mysticism. But mysticism in her hands does not become a synonym for mistiness. Quite the contrary. She knows that the mystic—Buddhist or non-Buddhist—is the man who resolutely wants to know for himself what others are more or less content just to be told about. In short, she knows that the “mystic” is he who takes most seriously that word of the Buddha : “The Dhamma is to be understood by the wise, each for himself” ; and that other : “What you have yourselves seen and known to be true, that cleave to and follow.”

Her last chapter which deals with Nibbana takes considerable notice of that dictum which we used to hear ad nauseum years ago when in Sikkim, “Nibbana is Samsara.” Taken as it stands, such a statement is simply nonsense to a

Theravādist. (We take leave to reject the title of "Inferiorist"—Hinayanist—all the more readily that it is usually conferred on us by those who modestly take to themselves the name of "Superiorists", Mahāyanist!) But it would not seem nonsense to us if it were made a little more clear that the basis of such a statement is simply this,—that Nibbana and Samsara are both alike mere names for concepts that are each alike the products of the ratiocinative intellect. In that respect we can endorse Candrakīrti's utterance that there is not the slightest difference between Samsara and Nibbana. But the actual experience, Nibbana, simply cannot be the same as the experience, Samsara. It seems almost absurd to have to say so ; it is so obvious to any one who has looked with any keenness into the Buddha's words and what lies within them. But indeed, there is little profit in bandying words about a Thing like Nibbana. Of the South or of the North as we may happen to be, we all have to get it—or let it get us: whichever way we like to put it—and when we have got it, we shall not need to talk about it. It will not be a talk : it will be a fact. And facts just are ; say about them what we like with our Avijja-clouded brains and tongues, it makes no difference to Reality.

As Appendices, Mme. Neel gives the Sigalovada Sutta and a few others from the Pali Scriptures, also a choice selection of passages from the Dhammapada and other Pali writings ; so that her reader can well see for himself what Theravada is in its main features, and make his own comparison between it and the elaborations of it that find currency in northern Asia. On the whole this is a good book, and will help readers of French, Mme. David-Neel's own compatriots especially, to arrive at a fair picture of what the Teaching of the Buddha stands for, both in the world of thought and in the world of practice.

J. F. McK.

MOHAMMED IN ANCIENT SCRIPTURES by U. Ali, publishers, S. R. & Brothers, New Kotwali, Agra.

It is not always that one gets to read a book ridiculously original. In its 110 pages, the author has tried to prove that Mohammed was Maha-Metteyya—still expected Buddha of the Buddhists. We do not know how far the author's claims go against those of his own religion Islam, but as far as Buddhism is concerned the author's proposition is not at all worth considering. From the knowledge that some Buddhists believe in incarnations of Metteyya, the author concludes Metteyya to have been already born. Ignorant as one can be of any doctrine, the author may not be expected to know that the incarnation of Metteyya-Bodhisatva means only such a being as in future may become Metteyya-Buddha, and not a Buddha himself.

Again, a Buddha would never be the last-Buddha. Mohammed, we are told, is supposed to be the last prophet. Buddhists believe in "Buddhas of the past, in Buddhas of the present, in Buddhas of the future."

Again a Buddha would never be born in foreign countries such as Arabia. He is always to be born in Middle-country, in India.

Again a Buddha would never be the commissioned representative of anybody, even that of the Most Merciful One, as Mohammed is said to have been. He is always born as one of us.

Again, a Buddha would never claim to be the recipient of any knowledge, sent down to Him. His knowledge is always His own.

Will these few reasons suffice? Along with his attempt to show that Mohammed was Metteyya-Buddha, the author has also taken great pains to show that Jesus and

Sankaracharya were not. Both presumptions deserve equal treatment.

We are sorry that we cannot congratulate the author on bringing out such a treatise with such scholarly pretensions.

A. K.

THE ELEVEN BLESSINGS IN CHINESE

BY A. J. EDMUNDS.

When Anesaki was editing "Buddhist and Christian Gospels" he failed to find in the Chinese the well-known text in the Parittam:—

"He sleeps in peace
 And wakes in peace,
 He dreams no evil dream
 He is dear unto mortals
 And immortals ;
 The angels watch over him ;
 Fire, poison, sword, can harm him not", &c.

I have found it in the Taisho Tripiṭaka (Tōkyō, 1924—1929, 55 vols., quarto). It is in the Numerical Collection at Vol. 2, p. 806, and runs pretty close to the Pāli, but I cannot find the symbol for sword.

NOTES AND NEWS

Abdication of His Majesty King Edward VIII.

No event in recent times created so great a convulsion in the British Empire as the abdication of His Majesty King Edward VIII for reasons which have few parallels in history. His Majesty has renounced irrevocably the throne of the greatest Empire the world has seen for the sake of the love of an American lady, Mrs. Simpson. Though this act of renunciation has caused great sorrow to millions of his subjects, it appears there was no other alternative for him as it was pointed out to him by the Prime Minister that a majority of his subjects in the Empire would not accept an American lady as their queen. The difficulty caused was greater on account of the fact that Mrs. Simpson had twice divorced her husbands. His Majesty's insistence on marrying her and remaining on the throne would have divided the Empire into two camps. Such a calamity he has prevented by making the greatest sacrifice possible. His subjects, therefore, owe him a deep debt of gratitude. Soon after the abdication, he left for Austria and will not return to his motherland for years to come. Good wishes of all his subjects go to him in his exile for his future peace and happiness.

His Royal Highness the Duke of York, his brother, in whose favour he had abdicated, ascended the throne assuming the title of George VI. We wish His Majesty and Her Majesty the Queen long life and happiness. May His Majesty's reign, commenced under such extraordinary circumstances, prove to be a blessing to all his subjects throughout the Empire.

* * * * *

The late Sardar Bahadur S. W. Laden La, C.B.E.

Only the other day we had to mourn the death of one of our valued co-workers in the person of the late Pandit Sheo

Narain and never did we then anticipate that, in the course of a few months, we would be mourning the loss of yet another valued member of the Society like Sardar Bahadur Laden La who had been a prominent worker of the Society for many years. The news of his sudden death came to us as a great shock as he was apparently in good health inspite of his age. We had been looking forward to his election to the Bengal Legislative Assembly for which he was standing from Darjeeling. Mr. Laden La passed away peacefully while asleep in his residence. The sad news has been received with the greatest regret in his constituency where he was extremely popular. His death is an irreparable loss to the Buddhists, especially of the Darjeeling District, for there was no Buddhist activity in which he did not take a leading part. As the sole representative of the Maha Bodhi Society in Darjeeling and the Himalayas, he rendered invaluable service to the Society. He was proud of his connection with the Maha Bodhi Society and visited its headquarters at Sarnath almost every year. During his visits he made it a special point to guild the image of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara in gold with his own hands. He was a devout Buddhist and supported not a few of the monasteries in Darjeeling.

Mr. Laden La was a striking personality with such charming manners that to know him once was to like him ever after. He made friends with both the high and the low. While we deeply mourn his death, we convey our deepest sympathy to his widow and children in their great sorrow. May he find peace.

Historic Ordination at Sarnath.

On Friday, the 25th of December last, Brahmacharini Eveline G. Robinson, was initiated as a nun (*dasasil upasika*) by Revd. D. Sasanasiri Thera at the Mulagandhakuti Vihara in the presence of the residents and a number of visitors from

outside, including Mr Raja Hewavitarne, Member, Ceylon State Council, and Dr. and Mrs. Sahni of Lucknow. Brahmacharini Robinson came to Sarnath specially for the purpose from Ceylon where she had been preparing for it since her arrival there from England. The ten precepts were administered by Revd. Sasanasiri after which congratulatory speeches were made by Revd. Ananda Kausalyayana, Revd. Jagadish Kasyapa and Brahmachari Govinda. The ceremony came to a close with the chanting of pirith by the assembled monks.

Miss Robinson is the only daughter of the late Sir Ernest William Robinson and was born at Nainital. She was educated in England where she won many prizes in History and Religion. All members of her family are connected with India from the days of Seringapatam where an ancestor was Lord Cornwallis's private secretary. Brahmacharini Robinson first heard about Buddhism from her aunt Mrs. Perrin, the noted authoress on Indian life. Miss Robinson claims that it was her intuition which made her seek out the British Maha Bodhi Society, of which she became an active member later on.

Sister Vajira, as she will be known henceforth, left for Kandy, Ceylon, on the 27th December last. She has built a hut overlooking the beautiful Kandy Lake where she will reside during her stay in Ceylon. We wish Sister Vajira every success in the higher life she has chosen.

* * * * *

Our President As Law Member of the Government of India.

We are glad to announce that our President, Sir Manmatha Nath Mukerji, Kt., who had retired recently from the Bench of the Calcutta High Court, has been appointed to act as the Law Member of the Government of India during the absence on leave of the present Member, Sir Nripendra Nath Sirkar. His appointment has caused universal satisfaction as he was undoubtedly the most suitable person to fill the post. While

congratulating Sir Manmatha Nath on his appointment, we wish him every success in the new sphere of activities to which he has been called.

* * * * *

British Maha Bodhi Society and Buddhist Activities in Europe.

In our last issue we published the report of the British Maha Bodhi Society for 1936, and it must have been read with much anxiety by our friends who wish it to be a permanent institution in Europe. While the office-bearers have carried on the work with great energy, in spite of many obstacles on their way, the Society's financial position has unfortunately further deteriorated. If substantial financial help from Buddhist countries will not be forthcoming, the years to come will witness further decline in its activities. It is, therefore, to be hoped that Buddhists of all countries who can afford to set apart some money for religious activities will make it a point to come to the assistance of that Society immediately. The work in England is too valuable to be given up after so many years of strenuous efforts on the part of its members. Hence we make this urgent appeal to all our readers to contribute their mite in order to give a fresh lease of life to the Buddhist work in England.

Blemish, reverend Sir, connotes the domain of bad and wrong desires. The case may arise of a Bhikkhu who conceives the idea that, should he commit an offence, he may be reprov'd by equal and not by one on an inequality with him; and when reproof comes from one not his equal, he waxes angry and wroth. This anger and dissatisfaction are both blemishes.

Anangana Sutta.

FINANCIAL

Income and Expenditure of the Maha Bodhi Society for the month of October, 1936.

INCOME.		EXPENDITURE.	
	RS. A. P.		RS. A. P.
<i>Sarnath Vihara a/c.</i>		<i>Sarnath Vihara a/c.</i>	
Donations ...	7 0 0	Salary of Durwans ...	20 12 0
Charity Box ...	51 12 3	Candles, Incense etc.	9 5 9
		<i>Vihara Garden a/c.</i>	
		Salary of Malies ...	31 0 0
		Mot, repairs, etc. ...	8 3 0
		<i>Vihara Library a/c.</i>	
		Newspapers etc. ...	3 4 0
		Fixtures & Fittings ...	13 5 9
<i>Book Agency a/c.</i>		<i>Book Agency a/c.</i>	
Sales ...	102 9 6	Post Cards ...	6 0 0
<i>Calcutta a/c.</i>		<i>Sarnath M. B. S. a/c.</i>	
Book Sales ...	82 13 6	Bank Commission ...	2 8 0
<i>Sarnath M. B. S. a/c.</i>		Miscellaneous ...	2 2 6
Sale of grass ...	3 12 0	<i>M. B. S. Free School a/c.</i>	
		Broomsticks ...	0 5 0
<i>M. B. S. Free School a/c.</i>		Salaries ...	49 0 0
Grant from Board for		<i>Hindi Middle School a/c.</i>	
September ...	20 0 0	Bricks, Sand, etc. ...	32 8 0
<i>Hindi Middle School a/c.</i>		Salary ...	25 12 0
Fees for October ...	8 0 0	<i>M. B. Vidyalaya a/c.</i>	
		Salaries, stationery,	
<i>M. B. Vidyalaya a/c.</i>		etc. ...	155 8 0
Fees for October ...	45 7 0	<i>Dharmaduta a/c.</i>	
Baba Raghavadas for		Postage, etc. ...	5 11 0
July ...	25 0 0	<i>M. B. Free Dispensary a/c.</i>	
<i>Dharmaduta a/c.</i>		Doctor's allowance ...	20 0 0
Subscription ...	3 6 0	Servant ...	5 0 0
		Sadananda's expenses	24 0 6
		Miscellaneous ...	2 15 0
		<i>Sarnath Institute a/c.</i>	
<i>Justice A. S. R. Chari</i>		Sripal a/c. ...	8 0 0
for dana ...	50 0 0	Rly. fare, Medicine,	
		Books, stationery,	
		clothes, soap, oil, etc	74 8 0
		Salary ...	10 12 0
		Food a/c. ...	147 8 0
		Tea set, etc. ...	31 10 0
		<i>Gaya a/c.</i>	
		Priest, Teacher,	
		Durwan, Rly. fare,	
		etc. ...	50 0 0
		<i>Anniversary a/c.</i>	
		Caution money for	
		lectures ...	20 0 0
		<i>Brahmachari Govinda's</i>	
		allowance ...	100 0 0
Carried Over ...	399 11 9	Carried Over ...	859 10 6

*Income and Expenditure of the Maha Bodhi Society
for the month of October, 1936—(Contd.)*

INCOME.	RS. A. P.	EXPENDITURE.	RS. A. P.
Brought Forward ...	399 11 9	Brought Forward ...	859 10 6
<i>Calcutta.</i>		<i>Calcutta.</i>	
<i>M. B. S. Donation :</i>		Stamps ...	20 12 3
Mrs. T. R. Sinha ...	5 0 0	Charity ...	2 10 0
P. Chandradas ...	1 0 0	Priest a/c. ...	13 13 0
Hall Rent ...	50 0 0	Iron Box ...	20 8 0
Charity Box Collection ...	1 4 6	Bimalananda a/c. ...	54 7 0
Deposit for Library		General Secretary ...	83 4 0
Books ...	30 0 0	Stationery, soap, tram	
Books ...	47 9 0	coolly, etc. ...	17 15 6
House rent in part ...	47 8 0	Photo framing ...	5 1 0
Food Account ...	5 0 0	Furniture a/c. ...	5 12 0
Dharmadutta Account ...	0 8 0	Library a/c. ...	30 9 9
M. B. J. Subscription ...	57 6 0	Gaya a/c. ...	10 2 0
		Bank charges ...	1 7 0
		Telephone Bill ...	16 14 0
		Electric Bill ...	20 5 9
		Sarnath clerk ...	130 0 0
		Trainfare to Sarnath ...	10 2 0
		Electric repair ...	5 8 0
		Salary & allowance ...	89 0 0
		Sarnath Dispensary ...	48 11 6
		Food a/c. ...	115 13 9
		Books a/c. ...	40 5 9
		<i>M. B. J. a/c.</i>	
		Stamps, Blocks, printing, paper, etc. ...	422 6 0
TOTAL ...	644 15 3	TOTAL ...	2,025 2 9

*Income and Expenditure of the Maha Bodhi Society
for the month of November, 1936.*

RECEIPTS.	RS.	A.	P.	EXPENDITURE.	RS.	A.	P.
<i>Sarnath Vihara a/c.</i>				<i>Sarnath Vihara a/c.</i>			
Charity Box ...	79	11	1	Salary of 1 Durwan ...	10	0	0
Ground rent ...	1	0	0	1 Bench ...	20	0	0
Mr. Jimmie Harvey for flowers ...	6	10	0	Incense, Candles, Polish, Oil, etc. ...	26	4	3
Mr. V. D. S. Fernando for brass railings ...	50	0	0	<i>Vihara Garden a/c.</i>			
Mr. Sikurajapati Medi- gas for bench ...	3	0	0	Salary of 1 Mali ...	11	0	0
Rev. Ratanapala Thero & Party for petromax lamp ...	20	0	0	Seeds, Hing, etc. ...	8	13	0
Miscellaneous donations ...	7	12	0	Delhi Vihara foundation stone laying expenses	104	9	6
<i>Book Agency a/c.</i>				<i>Book Agency a/c.</i>			
Sales & V. P. P.s ...	223	7	0	Post Cards ...	50	0	0
<i>Sarnath M. B. S. a/c.</i>				Freight on books ...	8	14	0
Mr. Shwe Tun ...	100	0	0	Postage, etc. ...	3	0	9
Sale of glass ...	1	4	0	<i>Sarnath M. B. S. a/c.</i>			
Sales of flowers ...	1	0	0	Postage & Telegrams	12	10	0
Rent of shops ...	8	0	0	Stationery, Carriage, etc. ...	13	1	9
For postage ...	3	0	0	<i>M. B. S. Free School a/c.</i>			
Donations (detail list to be published in the next issue) ...	290	5	0	Salary of 2 teachers	29	0	0
<i>Hindi Middle School a/c.</i>				Calcutta.			
Fees ...	8	0	0	<i>Hindi Middle School a/c.</i>			
<i>Dharmaduta a/c.</i>				For Hut & Prizes ...	15	0	0
Subscriptions ...	10	0	0	<i>M. B. Vidyalaya a/c.</i>			
<i>M. B. Free Dispensary a/c.</i>				Salary & Expenses ...	148	3	6
Mr. Burman ...	0	14	0	<i>Dharmaduta a/c.</i>			
Rev. Gunananda ...	2	0	0	Postage ...	0	13	6
Rev. K. Jinalankara ...	2	0	0	<i>M. B. Free Dispensary a/c.</i>			
Rev. Vimaladhamma ...	3	0	0	Doctor's allowance ...	20	0	0
Rev. S. Jotipala ...	2	0	0	Sadananda's Expenses	19	6	6
Mr. W. M. Kiri Banda ...	2	0	0	Fixtures, etc. ...	25	9	9
<i>Sarnath Institute a/c.</i>				<i>Sarnath Institute a/c.</i>			
A. D. Trust ...	200	0	0	Rly. Fare, Medicine, books, oil, soap, clothes, etc. ...	62	1	6
Rani Birla ...	10	0	0	Food, coal, etc. ...	336	0	0
Rev. Sumanasena ...	10	0	0	<i>Gaya a/c.</i>			
<i>For feeding Bhikkhus.</i>				Priest ...	25	8	0
Sjt. J. K. Birla ...	200	0	0	Teacher ...	10	0	0
Sale of provisions ...	8	6	6	Durwan ...	8	0	0
<i>Publication a/c.</i>				<i>Sripala a/c.</i> ...	14	0	0
Rev. S. R. Y. T. Gunamanju ...	6	12	0	<i>Sarnath Building a/c.</i> ...	51	3	6
Chittagong pilgrims	1	4	0	Anniversary expenses ...	98	11	6
Carried Over	1261	5	7	Carried Over	1131	15	0

*Income and Expenditure of the Maha Bodhi Society
for the month of November, 1936—(Contd.)*

RECEIPTS.	Rs.	A.	P.		Rs.	A.	P.
Brought Forward	1,261	5	7	Brought Forward	1,131	15	0
<i>Anniversary a/c.</i>				Brahmachari Govinda's allowance	100	0	0
Rent	2	0	0				
A. Dharmapala Trust	300	0	0	<i>Calcutta a/c.</i>			
<i>M. B. Journal a/c.</i>				Stamp	5	12	3
Subscriptions	28	4	0	Cahrity	0	14	0
<i>Calcutta.</i>				Stationary, soap, cooli and small repairs	6	14	3
M. B. S. donation	35	0	0	Priests a/c.	12	1	6
House rent	82	8	0	Wimalananda a/c. ...	8	15	9
Books	2	12	0	D. W. a/c.	68	11	0
Hall rent	3	0	0	Electric bill	12	8	0
				Telephone bill	17	12	0
				Publication a/c. ...	250	0	0
				Bhollanath Datta on a/c.	50	0	0
				Salary and allowance	89	0	0
				Food a/c.	74	0	3
				Books	2	15	9
				M. B. J. a/c.	31	3	6
TOTAL	1,714	13	7	TOTAL	1,862	11	3

BOOKS ON BUDDHISM.

MAHA BODHI SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS.

English.

	Rs.	A.	P.
Dharmapala, Anagarika—			
What did the Lord Buddha Teach? <i>Third Edition</i> ...	0	4	0
Psychology of Progress or the 37 Principles of Bodhi. ...	0	4	0
Relationship between Buddhism and Hinduism ...	0	4	0
World's Debt to Buddha ...	0	4	0
Repenting God of Horeb ...	0	4	0
Sheo Narain, Pandit—			
Buddhism ...	0	4	0
Asoka ...	0	2	0
Sarnath ...	0	4	0
Das Gupta, Dr. Surendranath— Message of Buddhism ...	0	4	0
Buddhist Student— Origin of Christianity ...	0	2	0
Sumangala, Suriyagoda—			
*Mulapariyaya Sutta ...	0	4	0
Sangiti Sutta ...	0	4	0
Bhikkhu Nyanatiloka—			
Paticca Samuppada or The Law of Dependent origination ...	0	4	0
Haldar, Sukumar— Lure of the Cross ...	1	0	0
* Barua, Dr. Benimadhab— Religion of Asoka ...	0	4	0
Hindi.			
Rahula Sankrtyayana—			
Dhammapada with original Pāli, Sanskrit and Hindi ...	0	8	0
Majjhima Nikaya (Hindi translation) ...	6	0	0
Vinaya Pitaka (Hindi translation) ...	6	0	0
Digha Nikaya <i>In the Press</i> ...			
Dharmapala, Anagarika— Buddhaki Siksa ...	0	3	0
Sirinivasa, Bhikkhu—			
Buddhajika Pratham Upadesh ...	0	1	0
Bengali			
Dharmapala, Anagarika— Buddhadever Upadesh ...	0	4	0
Banerjee, Haricharan— Pali Prabesh, A grammar indispensable to students of Pali ...	0	6	0
Tibetan.			
Rahula Sankrtyayana—			
First Tibetan Reader ...	0	6	0
Tibetan Grammar ...	1	4	0
Sanskrit.			
Rahula Sankrtyayana—			
Vartikalankara of Pragnakara Gupta ...	3	0	0
Vadanyaya ...	3	0	0

20% Commission will be allowed on orders of 6 copies or more of each publication.

* Out of print.

Apply—

MANAGER, MAHA BODHI BOOK AGENCY,
4A, College Square, Calcutta.

हिन्दीमें सबसे अच्छा मासिक पत्र

कानसा है ?

“विशाल-भारत”

को ही

लोग सबसे अच्छा कहते हैं ।

एक अंक ॥]

वार्षिक मूल्य ६५ रु०]

[छमाही मूल्य ३५ रु०

मनेजर—विशाल-भारत

१२०१२, अपर सरकुलर रोड, कलकत्ता ।

JUST OUT!

JUST OUT!

DHAMMAPADA

In Bengalee with Original Text

(4TH EDITION)

BY

CHARU CHANDRA BOSE

This work had been out of print for sometime but has been reprinted on insistent demand of the reading public.

Price

Board Rs. 2/-

Paper ,, 1/12/-

Apply : Maha Bodhi Book Agency.