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NUMBER TWO

## THE HERITAGE OF EASTERN ASIA

BY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO

AND

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THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON

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AMIDA  
Japanese

*Frontispiece to The Open Court.*

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THE NEW ORIENT SOCIETY MONOGRAPH SERIES

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## THE HERITAGE OF EASTERN ASIA

A. EUSTACE HAYDON

The University of Chicago

THE pulse of the planet has grown feverish in the last century. The leisurely ages of the past in which it was possible for cultures to incubate and develop during centuries in comparative isolation are forever gone. All the world's peoples find themselves hurried by science and the machines into a new cosmic climate where problems, hopes, ideas and ideals multiply, in the midst of which traditional culture patterns lose significance and vitality. East and West are at last interested, not by choice but by necessity, in common problems and tasks which involve the destiny of the whole human family. Attitudes of cultural superiority no longer avail. The imperative is upon Orient and Occident alike to find the path into the future together. It is not a question of imposition of cultures, nor of cultural syntheses nor merely of interpenetration of cultures. The future battles everywhere for emancipation from the past. In the new world cultures there will be a unity because of the nature of our problems and our knowledge: there will be diversity because of the cultural heritage of the ages. This then is an attempt to understand the heritages of culture with which the peoples of Eastern Asia enter the new age.

The drama of world history has a central theme—the irrepresible drive of human desires for fulfillment. The cultures of the peoples are the more or less successful means of leading the desires of men in society to their goal. The basic pattern is woven about fundamental physiological needs—of food, sex and security. Out of group solidarity in the satisfaction of these needs emerge the earliest approved moral values. But when man desires not only to live but to live well, when his understanding of the nature of his world is enlarged and his practical mastery of the material environment is more effective, his interest centers on the higher values of life. The way is then open for the nobler refinements of social

living, for more specialized organizations and disciplines, for philosophy and art.

Yet every culture has its own individuality, conditioned by the nature of the geographic environment, the peculiar problems of its history, the fortunate or unfortunate accidents of time, its relations with other peoples. Thus any culture that has a long history is infinitely complex. Some elements may have a depth of thousands of years, may carry the marks of a score of changes in emotional significance in the drift of the centuries; some may be mere relics carried in the stream of a larger complex; some may be primitive forms rationalized out of all relation to their original meaning and function; some are novelties of yesterday. There is a certain hardness about a cultural element—custom, ritual, symbol—so that to the observer it may seem to be the same for ages, though its cultural significance may change. This problem of depth and time, of rationalization and interrelation of elements in a complex whole is the *pons asinorum* which the outsider must cross to enter into the understanding of the soul of a people.

In the cultures of the modern world the problem of change is central. Structures that have stood the storms of centuries are now crumbling. Institutions which to the historian have had a clearly-defined cultural significance in the life of a people are now acquiring a new cultural meaning for the modern generation. Symbols have an altered emotional value for the aspirations of a new age. Modernism is a world-wide fact. Change in the historic past moved with a slower tempo. The influence and effects of trade relations were absorbed gradually. The thrust of a conquering army shocked a generation and then the old rythm of life was resumed, the conqueror and his gifts of culture added to the ancient pattern. When waves of ruthless destruction overwhelmed a high culture, the early world required centuries to build on the ruins a new synthesis.

But now change is swift and radical. Titanic forces crowd all the races of mankind together into one vast economic interrelationship. The grasping fingers of the machines reach into the most remote recesses of the earth for raw materials. The lines of trade cross all seas and all frontiers. Family habits, social customs, community organizations, traditional modes of living are altered over all the world. The ancient balance of the social order is disturbed. Evils increase and are more sinister because the source from which

they spring is unknown. Maladjustments appear in the individual, in the village life, in group, class, racial and international relationships. The old world is vanishing before the effective magic of the machine. A new cultural orientation is inevitable and it will involve the fundamental principles of philosophy and religion. Science has not only introduced the virus of change into the social organism but has also given us a new interpretation of the universe, of the place and status of man, of the evolution of morals, laws and religions, of the function of gods and institutions.

Under all the changing embodiments of culture through the ages runs the unconquerable drive of the desires of men for the satisfactions of the complete life. This creative force does not fail. The phoenix arises from its own ashes. Out of the dissolving cultures of the past new forms and structures based on new philosophies of life are emerging. To the observer of world change the most fascinating phase is the creative transformation of the "unchanging East."

The purpose of this sketch of the heritage of Eastern Asia is not to trace origins, nor to write history, nor to discuss theories concerning the culture problems involved, but rather to present the characteristic pattern of cultures in which the soul of each people has expressed itself in the past and to indicate the trends of re-orientation today.

## INDIA

**I**N the story of man, the human individual is a fragile and transient factor. The waves of the generations rise and pass swiftly. Two things continue, changing and immortal, the biological and social heritages. The first is the product of millions of years of biological evolution and, in the germ cells, transmits the learned experience of physiological adjustment to the kind of planet in which man lives. It is relatively stable and slow to change. The second, or social heritage, is the bearer of the learned experience of a people in their age-old struggle with the problems involved in winning the values of a good life. The generations are born into it, shaped, controlled, guarded and consoled by it. Their desires are patterned and channeled to goals approved by it. They make their contribution to it and disappear. It remains. Because of this quality of continuity of the cultural heritage, it is possible, in spite of the changes of the centuries, to speak of the soul of a people. The ages of ex-

perience produce a pattern of family, community and economic habits, symbols and ideals embodying hopes and dreams, organizations of religious and philosophic ideas adjusting the group to the total universe. A scientific history of any culture would indicate temporal accretions and changes in both content and meaning of the broad outlines of the pattern. Local studies would show great diversity of detail and endless variety of emphasis from place to place. But the pattern of the cultural heritage would be unmistakable.

The heritage of India differentiates this land not only from its great Asiatic neighbors, China and Japan, but from all the world. There is an Indian style, a cultural unity, its roots deep in a past of more than three thousand years. This is the more remarkable because a surface view of the Indian scene yields the impression of endless variety and irreconcilable diversity. It is a land of geographic extremes, running the gamut in rainfall, climate, temperature and altitude. Many races have mingled here or remain side by side—Dravidian, Mongol, Semite, and several strains of the Aryan family. Lack of political unity through the ages gives India the appearance of a loose, patternless mosaic of hundreds of separate blocks of population better described by their local names as Bengali, Telugus, Tamils, Marathas, and the rest, rather than as Indians. To this must be added the multiplicity of languages and the rich details of peculiarity of local customs, rites and occupations. The panorama of political history with its varied racial dynasties, the successive empires disintegrating or falling abruptly apart gives the feeling that in this land there is an incurable disease of disunity. In addition to all this there is the wealth of religions with their allied and varied systems of philosophy. Superficially there seems to be no relation between the naked ascetic and the great Shankaracharya, between the Shakti bhakta and the decorous Jain, between the village goddess and the ineffable Brahma, between the monistic Vedanta, the dualistic Sankhya and the pluralistic Vaisheshika. It is this variety that has given rise to the statement that no generalization is true for all of India. There are, indeed, in India spots that are not Hindu. The Moslems are Indians whose religion colors and alters the Hindu style. In a different way this is true also of the Sikhs. The Parsis are Indian but not Hindu. The Indian Christians illustrate how a foreign religion can ruin the indigenous cultural mode. Yet in spite of all this apparent diversity and disunity there is, underlying it all, a cul-

tural unity, the social and intellectual heritage of the ages. The warp and woof are common to all groups; the great design and motif of the weaving are also the same for all. Differences appear in peculiar emphases, in emotional coloring and in greater elaboration of special details of the pattern. It is this common pattern of cultural heritage, now confronted with incalculable factors of change, with which we are here concerned.

The all-inclusive word for the Hindu pattern is Dharma. It means the correct mode of conduct for each individual according to time, place, circumstances and status. Every phase of life is synthesised in the unity of Dharma. It includes law, morality and religion. The journey of the individual from birth to death in every rank and class of society has its appropriate guiding Dharma. Within the larger whole, the Dharma of humanity which is common to all, there is a special Dharma for age groups, for the sexes, for the ruler, the ruling class, the priests, the craftsmen and workers. Dharma covers the family, education, the village life, the guilds and the far-flung caste structure. Faithful obedience to the code from stage to stage of existence leads at last to the goal of all desires—the supreme bliss. From the inorganic to the absolute, everything is under the domination of Dharma. This locates the fundamentals of Hinduism in a pattern of behavior not in a system of beliefs. "Hinduism is what the Hindu does." All modes of philosophic ideology, all fashions of theological belief may be tolerated, for orthodoxy depends upon correct conduct not upon acceptance of authoritative dogmas. Since each phase of the Dharma is embodied in and sanctioned by intimate groups it makes for stability and conservatism, even rigidity, so long as the rythm of social life flows smoothly. It has made it possible for the masses of India to endure without difficulty and with little change the many and convulsive changes in political weather. But the very fact that the sanction for India's Dharma is in the various social groupings exposes the fundamentals of Hinduism to the danger of dissolution before the factors of change at work in the modern world, for one sure and ubiquitous effect of the new industrial civilization is to loosen the cement and undermine the foundations of the old, simple forms of social and economic organization.

For two thousand years at least the social system, in which social control was embodied for historic India, was unique and ef-

fective. It is unfortunate that the history of this achievement of social control is lost in the shadows of time. South India was apparently not brought under the influence of the Aryan dominated north until after the fourth century B. C. The Indo-Aryan pastoral culture seems to have met and blended with a very high form of indigenous civilization centering about the great rivers of the north. It was the combined product of these two types, different from each of the parent forms, which emerges into the light of later ages as the characteristic Indian social structure. The swift and easy spread of the general pattern over the whole peninsula without violence suggests, but does not prove, that the basic design was probably indigenous, overlaid and made orthodox by the ruling and priestly Aryan classes. This would explain the vast variety of local differences within the broad, general type.

The educational technique developed in the new situation of the late Vedic age was perfectly calculated to produce an attitude of submission to the accepted code. There were no castes in the Vedic period but functional groupings, the ruling class of Kshatriyas, the priestly Brahmans, the agriculturalists and traders, the Vaisyas. The Brahmans were the bearers not only of the sacred lore but also of the traditional social wisdom. They became the educators of the Aryan youth. From eight or ten years of age and for at least twelve years, every boy of all the Aryan classes was expected to live in the home of his teacher. There he learned the duties and responsibilities of his class. This practice of lifting the boy out of the environment of his social group during the impressionable years of his life undoubtedly worked as a democratizing influence but it also had the inevitable result of contributing to the progressive ascendancy and increasing influence of the Brahman class which still persists.

Theoretically life was divided into four stages, the Ashramas, each with its special duties. After the period of student life came the responsibility to society as a householder and father of sons. From the point of view of the priests of the early Vedic age this was the most important value. But India was soon afflicted with a nostalgia for an existence better than the best life in this world. As a concession to this new and powerful desire, a compromise was arranged in the interest of society and the priestly structure, by adding the Hermit and Sannyāsin stages as approved disciplines for the evening of life.

Another phase of the social pattern of historic India was the joint-family, which was a commune, sharing religious cult, food and property. The oldest living descendant was the head of the family having control not only of the common property but also of the moral and spiritual development of the members. The wife of the family head was responsible for control of internal affairs in the household including the arrangement and provision for marriages. Social pressure has demanded such lavish display in the celebration of marriages as to create a serious problem in the form of debt and impoverishment for innumerable family groups. The old code of Hinduism which demanded that every girl must be married at puberty often led to the evil of child marriages, while widow remarriage was forbidden to all except the lower classes. Here are two social problems inherited from the past with which modern India has been wrestling with some success in spite of the determined opposition of orthodoxy.

The social institutions that have molded human behavior in India for more than a score of centuries are the village, the guilds and caste. In the 750,000 villages flowed the slow current of Indian life. Under the leadership of the head man and village council or Panchayat, they carried on the affairs of living, indifferent to politics and concerned with government only when it was necessary to pay the tax or rent due on the village holdings of land.

The self-sufficiency of the village is one of the characteristics of India's history. Eighty percent of the activities of the people centered on the land. Elphinstone has said, "These communities contain in miniature all the materials of a state within themselves and are almost sufficient to protect their members if all government were withdrawn." Thus the storms of political conflict left them unchanged and the lack of efficient means of communication threw them back upon their own resources. The village pattern persists as the fundamental form of association for the millions of India but the old forms are changing, for now even the Indian village cannot escape the forces which are altering the social structures of all mankind.

In the village all trades were normally united in one guild, whose head was often the Headman of the village. This guild organization of craftsmen is twenty-six hundred years old. In the early days when the ruling class was described as "devourers

of the people" and the priests shared the spoils, these trade unions served as a protection for the middle class and became powerful enough to have their rulings recognised and enforced by the King. The guilds trained apprentices, acted as their own law courts, and cared for their members in times of distress. Occupational castes coincided with the guilds and had the same form of government. In modern times the guilds tend to disappear. Where they still persist the signs of the new age appear in the combination of the wealthy guilds of bankers, traders and business men over against the workers' guilds of artisans and craftsmen in the large centers. Modern economic forces thrust aside as futile the good old customs.

Caste is a distinguishing characteristic of Hindu culture. Like an indispensable thread it has been woven through the total structure of cosmology, philosophy, law, ethics and social relations. It binds individuals and families into a closed group marked off from all others. There is no entrance except through the portals of birth. Members are controlled by the peculiar dharma of the group. In all castes the laws are strict and inexorable in regard to diet and marriage. Indian society is thus divided into thousands of compartments with the Brahman claiming and until recent years being freely accorded the highest rank. The caste feeling is not, however, akin to the snobbery of class in the west, since it shuts out prince and plutocrat as well as men of lower caste with equal impartiality. It is as though some irrevocable fate of birth grounded in cosmic order had separated the individual in some activities of life from all but a small circle of his fellows. The institution has exerted an incalculable influence on the side of social stability and conservatism. The caste, acting as a primary group, compels uniformity and, through its sanctions, exerts a powerful moral control over its members. Only men of heroic mould, revolutionary reformers who attained status in a new group or saintly Sannyāsins who turned their backs forever on society could dare to relinquish the security and authority of the caste control. The ordinary individual was obedient to the point of self-sacrifice and in return was enfolded by a group providence which banished the fear of poverty and bolstered self-respect. This attitude of self-esteem and exclusiveness may, on the other hand, become a pride in status which, in the setting of Indian philosophy, inhibits all practical expression of human brotherhood and inter-

feres with all concrete programs of social cooperation. The extreme and pitiable illustration of this is the condition of the untouchables, one-fifth of the population of India, and one of the major modern problems. The caste pattern is so firmly entrenched in Indian culture as to be the despair of social reformers. But signs of disintegration appear. Even if the revolt against caste evident among the intellectuals and the radical popular groups should fail, modern industrialism has within it the threat of doom for this age-old system—but not today nor tomorrow.

The approved patterns of behavior involved in these traditional forms of social organization are dharma. They include endless details regulating life in family and community, orienting the individual to his fellows and to nature from birth to death. But the dharma as behavior is set in a larger background of philosophic ideas. Dharma is religion. Philosophy in India is also religious philosophy. For more than twenty-five centuries a common pattern of ideology has constituted the unquestioned groundwork of all systems of Indian thought. These fundamental ideas are—karma and its twin concept transmigration or reincarnation, the primary importance of a spiritual reality beneath or behind the endless whirl of the world phenomena on the wheel of time and change. This wheel of samsara, on which souls move through vast cycles of rebirth, is from a cosmic viewpoint beginningless and endless. Man's essential being is one with the perfect and blissful, ultimate Reality. The goal of life and man's supreme task, therefore, is self-realization, by means of which the individual may break the bonds of desire which hold him fettered to the karma-driven wheel of rebirth and win eternal bliss. To the superficial observer the maze of Indian religious systems and philosophies has seemed tangled as a jungle growth but through them all these ideas have been constant and inalienable until today. The seers and saints most revered in India for two thousand years are those who led the way from a world struggling feverishly in the web of desires to the ineffable peace of a deeper spiritual reality.

It was not always so. There was a time when the Indo-Aryans were lovers of life, a confident, yea-saying people with their eyes upon the joys of this world and an unshaken certainty of their ability to win them. The reversal of their attitude as they blended their blood and their culture with the older civilization of the land is one of the dramatic phases of India's cultural history. They

were not conquered by climate, nor adversity, nor reduced to despair by hopeless defeat. The ruling classes were amply enfolded in wealth and luxury. Yet it was this very group that was shaken by a "failure of nerve," for it is clear that the masses of the common people for many centuries were following the old Aryan path, seeking a good life here and a better one to follow it in an after life. Only intellectuals turned their backs upon earth and heaven to seek a more spiritual ideal. The key to the change seems to lie in the idea of transmigration which, coupled with the old concept of karma, became the starting point for every later thinker. Whatever the source of the karma-reincarnation formula, it altered their total world-view and life-view and cast a dark shadow over all life. The old "religion of light and gladness" was ruined. The inexorable law of the reward of the deed laid hold of the whole universe. The gods were caught on the wheel. Heaven could no longer be a refuge, for it too was infected with karma and could only be a transient abode. The priestly technique of sacrifices was reduced to futility since the best they could do was to guarantee a good life in the heaven of the fathers. Moreover the attitude of glad, yea-saying became a menace because the desires of life freely fulfilled made death a threat, for karma dictated the new birth status. And life in happy existence was so short when set against the background of the endless immortality on the wheel. But even to live in the highest human status in every successive life was too much if it must be faced forever, because in every life, even the best, there was suffering, sorrow, grief, lamentation, old age, despair and death. Even a king can say: "Sir, in this ill-smelling, unsubstantial body, which is a conglomerate of bone, skin, muscle. . . . what is the good of the enjoyment of desires? In this body, which is afflicted with desire, anger, covetousness, delusion, fear, despondency, envy, separation from the loved, union with the unloved, hunger, thirst, senility, death, disease, sorrow and the like, what is the good of desires? And we see that this whole world is decaying. . . . In this cycle of existence I am like a frog in a waterless well." (Maitri U. I 3, 4.) The only answer was escape from the round of samsara. From that far-off day until modern times this has been the central motif of India's religious quest. Yet there were some among the intellectuals, called in scorn Lokayatas, materialists, emancipated from the traditional Vedic orthodoxy who refused to accept the new karma-transmigration idea

and continued for a few centuries the earlier Aryan attitude toward life. But the pattern was too pervasive. It conquered not only all the intellectuals but reached even to the masses in the villages.

The quest for release took many forms creating a religious and philosophic literature which India has treasured as her most precious heritage. Even now respect for Sanskrit as the sacred language and a desire to ground a new way on the authority of the scriptures are important items in Indian consciousness. In spite of the diversity of form and the separate streams of literature leading back to the fountain head in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Epics there is a unity underlying all these systems. They all

seek to realize the true and eternal status of the self which is at the same time the ultimate and perfect Reality. The teachers



MAITREYA  
*Japanese*

of India have gloried in the world-transcending quality of their religious and philosophic systems. For them it is an indication of the unique spirituality of the age-old culture of their land. It has been customary for even scholars in the West to refer to it as pessimism. Perhaps a better way to describe it is to say that it is the most amazing optimism to be found anywhere in the history of human cultures. When other peoples have despaired of the world and human powers, and turned away from the present to another age or another world for compensation of frustrated desires, they were egotistic enough to demand that the gods and the universe must guarantee to man sometime, somewhere, the perfect life. But man kept his place as a beneficiary of the High God. India went much farther and made the individual human soul the focus of the total meaning of the whole universe, and identified the soul of man with the Supreme Soul or with the ultimate spiritual nature of Reality. This is man's most glorious optimism.

To those who are able to realize its full significance it gives perfect peace in the midst of the sorrows of existence, crowns the lowliest with dignity, reduces the external world of time and turmoil to a transient dance of *Māyā*. The realm of the phenomenal becomes a secondary level of reality, in which the beginningless and endless procession of souls move on the wheel, or spiral, of samsara from life to life, driven by desires, fettered by habits which fulfill desires, blinded and bemused in the thick shadows of avidya (ignorance). It is the sphere of activity of prakriti and the gunas. Karma runs like a thread of order through it, but no one knows why this sorry drama in which *Māyā*-blinded souls must play their parts should ever have been begun. Indian optimism again asserts itself and suggests that it is the *lila* of the Absolute One, the Sport of God, the dance of Shiva, and that through it all runs the melody of joy and love and beauty. Nevertheless the quest of man is for release. Let him therefore realize that in eternal calm beyond the "snowstorm of illusion" is the primary level of reality, the realm of the Atman which is Sat-chit-ananda, perfection of being, consciousness and bliss. This is not only the status of the Supreme Soul but also a description of the true nature of every soul, and the final goal of every program of salvation. But in high philosophy it may not be defined, for this perfect Sat-chit-ananda is beyond all human experience, and therefore beyond all possibility of description in terms available to hu-

man intellect. It is ineffable. To all efforts at definition of this transcendent and divine state of bliss the philosopher answers: "Neti, Neti—It is not so." In Indian religions, however, the goal is pictured in human imagery, in symbolism that speaks to the emotions; and in the popular theisms, the ineffable nature of the philosophic Ultimate is translated into vivid visions of kindly gods and the human joys of lovely heavens. From the most refined subtlety of the Advaita Vedanta, however, to the lowliest, layman level of the bhakti cults there is a unity in the Indian pattern. There is the same evaluation of the maze of samsara, the same acceptance of the superior worth of the spiritual, universal acceptance of karma and rebirth, and the same goal, but the paths to the goal are many. They are conditioned by and adapted to the intellectual and emotional capacities of the millions with their diversity of traditions.

This brings to view other characteristics of the religious heritage of India. From at least the sixth century B. C. there has been a separation in religious thinking between the intellectuals and the masses. Yet the people were allowed to retain their own thought forms and their own modes of worship undisturbed. The principle of universal tolerance in belief which made it possible for Hinduism to include monist, dualist, pluralist, theist and atheist comfortably within its fold extended to the gods of the folk. The extension of the aegis of the Brahman over the vast variety of tribal and local forms of cult illustrated the same principle. There has, therefore, never been any necessity of quarrelling over the idea of god in Hinduism. It has been assumed that all ways of enclosing the ineffable One in a network of words must be merely approximations. While the philosopher defined Reality in abstract terms, others thought of a personal Supreme Being, or human Avatars of the Supreme, or god in functional forms, or god meeting his lowly ones in image or symbol or the human guru. And all ideas were tolerated and woven into the unity of the total god-idea. Their detached tolerance seems at times to be a rationalized indifference on the part of the intellectuals to the condition of the masses. At this point there is a great change in recent times. When social forms were stable there was no urgent demand upon the intellectuals to interest themselves in the ideas of the people but when the whole fabric of the social order begins to disintegrate and its maladjustments involve all classes of the popula-

tion, it becomes necessary for the intellectuals to leave their lofty heights and take their places among the folk to wrestle with the common problems.

Akin to this attitude of detachment and perhaps a phase of it, is the apparent loneliness of the individual in all the religious philosophies of India. The soul wanders in the labyrinth of samsara reaping the fruit of its own deeds and responsible for its own destiny. In the Vedanta, Sankhya, Vaisheshika, Jain and Early Buddhist systems the parting words of Gautama might express the exhortation of them all—"Be a refuge to yourselves, seek no other refuge. Work out your own salvation." There is no help of kindly gods here, and no sense of communal responsibility. But once more the severe austerity is softened in the religions of the people where savior-gods toil for man's emancipation.

This world of changing forms holds the soul by the fetters of desires. For the ordinary man beset by the problems of living and enfolded in the familiar routine of home and work, the task of winning liberation from the wanderings of rebirth by his own efforts must have seemed as remote as dreams of fairy lands. Consequently the saint, who severed all bonds, and undertook the travails of the spiritual quest, became the man most revered in India. The rishi who taught the sacred lore was more important than the ruler. The Sannyāsin who broke all fetters ranked above all other men. The householder has been willing through the ages to fill the begging-bowls of an endless procession of wandering saints. Self-torture, asceticism carried to fantastic extremes, violent distortions of natural impulses, suicide by slow starvation, could win awed respect, not because asceticism in itself was ever an ideal but because it was a sign of the detachment that means release. The householder's status had dignity and the approval of the sacred law. Moreover, by following his own dharma in the satisfaction of desire through the correct means, he might be confident of happiness even in the rounds of samsara. But only desirelessness could push open the door to the bliss of eternal release. This is the glory of the saints. India is proud of her great kings and learned scholars, but the heroes best beloved are the saints, whether they were royal rulers, ascetics, or wandering singers of the divine love. Even in the midst of the noises of an industrial era, the man who best embodies India's soul and is accorded unquestionable loyalty is one whom they can call—Mahatma.

The roots of the tree of Indian philosophy and religion, the Bharata Dharma, run back to the Vedic age, but like the banyan tree it has put fresh roots down in every age to embody the new influences and meet altered conditions. Through all the variety of the changing centuries runs the continuing pattern. According to the Hindu theory, with the cyclic turning of the Kalpa, there is the need of adjusting the truth of life and salvation to the changing capacities of men. Thus there is a transition from the Vedas (Shruti, revelation) to smitri (traditions), to the Puranas and the Agamas. This description of the grading of the scriptures corresponds to the recognized gradation of the modes of presentation of the truth—from the philosophic systems to the manifold, popular, sectarian divisions. The gradation and accommodation appears also in the many approved ways of salvation by knowledge, by works, and by loving devotion (bhakti). To each of these ways belongs a correct Yoga as a means of achieving the equanimity of spirit which brings the soul to Samadhi, the ecstatic, immediate experience of god. The Jnana Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga, the Karma Yoga are the three main forms, but there are other more specialized types to include all human needs. The first gives the perfect realization of the self as god, the second sees the whole universe as god manifested in love, the third identifies all practical dharma, all action in the everyday world, as service of god. But all are Hinduism, and all lead to the same deliverance in Sat-chit-ananda.

In the historic development of Vedantism a unity runs through the varied forms of the Upanishads, the Advaita Vedanta of Shankaracharya, the modified Vedanta of Ramanuja, the synthesis of popular religions of the Ramayan of Tulsidas and the Shakti cult of Tantrism. Sankhya, Jain and Vaisheshika seem to be complete variants, but examination shows that they are different only because of special emphases in the common Hindu pattern. They interpret differently the relation of the soul (Atman) to the material world but like the Vedanta they make it the ultimate reality, define its nature as Sat-chit-ananda, and make the goal of life and religion the realization of the eternal status of the soul in super-conscious bliss. Even Buddhism in its original form was Hinduism in its main premises though it repudiated both Atman and Paramatman. In its later Mahayana form it was so assimilated in the general Hindu pattern that the Vedantic system of the

great Shankara could be called "crypto-Buddhism." The bhakti groups have an integral place in the unified design. The Tamil Saivite sects of the south, the Krishna and Rama movements of the north, the Bhaktas of the Great Mother in Bengal are united in making devoted love to god the ideal way of release from the wheel. The symbols which stir emotion are different, the names of gurus are numberless, but beneath all, and the goal of all, is the unity of the One Supreme Paramatman. Under the influence of Islam, Kabir escaped the popular symbols of image and ceremonies as well as the avatar idea, proclaiming a blend of Vedantic idealism and Sufism. After him, Nanak and the Sikhs fell into the general bhakti pattern. Ramananda, Chaitanya, Madhva, Vallabha, Tulsidas, Kabir, Nanak, Tukaram cross the stage of Indian history as brilliant and colorful presentations of the one great theme—mystical, ecstatic union with god through love. On the philosophic level, from the Upanishads to Tagore, the same motif binds the centuries together—"Reality is One. That art thou. To realize this is bliss now and forever." Weaver, carder of cotton, Maharshi and philosopher all meet together in the unity of the mystic insight. Gathered into a single statement it would be—god is one in many, the universal soul of all existence, the ocean of which worlds and individuals are as waves and drops, the same in infinite forms; to the rapt vision of the saint appearing as glorious personal beings embodying the full perfection of love, light, wisdom, beauty, justice and power; for suffering, sinning humanity, lost amid the illusions of the phenomenal world, incarnated again and again in human form to teach the way of life by word and example; touching the lowliest and most ignorant in image, ritual and symbol; many-named mystery, soul of all souls, in whose blissful silence the turmoil of the ages comes to rest at last.

An all-pervasive spirituality, a nostalgia for the lost status of the soul, is the unique and outstanding characteristic of India's religious heritage. The world of material and social events in this age threatens to take a terrible toll from men who neglect it for another level of Reality. Spirituality as a flight from the actual and spirituality as a compensation for frustration are both futile today. Many-headed science has sounded a "lion-roar" which challenges the dreamy idealisms of the rishis.

Indian culture through the ages has been synthesised in religion. The religious literature of India is a vast monument to the genius

of the people. The sacred books of the various groups, enlarged by commentaries through the centuries and the popular religious writings in the vernaculars produced during the last thousand years constitute an immense library. The origins of Indian science are traced to the requirements of the ritual. The great universities, from the forest schools of the early days to the great centers at Taxila, Benares, Nalanda, and Vikramasila were schools of religion. But it would be a great mistake to overlook the fact that India, in the past, produced a great secular literature on the sciences, particularly, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine, on law and state craft, as well as drama, poetry, novels and popular moral tales. Over against the religious Shastras of austerities, may be set the Kama Shastra, the scripture of eroticism. While modern India may feel that her greatest heritage lies in the field of religions, literature, architecture and art, there is also a proud consciousness that in the far past the sciences and practical arts flourished as indigenous products.

During the last two decades Indian leaders of reform have complained of the quietism, resignation, submissiveness and "sickly refusal of life" of the people. Western writers, particularly Christian writers, have attributed these characteristics to the religious philosophy underlying Indian culture. Native interpreters place the blame upon the social-economic forces which have been at work since the eighteenth century when after the decay of the Mogul empire, India began to swing as a satellite under the influence of a foreign power. The truth probably lies in a combination of both factors. So long as the desires of life can be satisfied without too great anxiety and social hopes are not entirely frustrated, a religious philosophy remains peripheral and does not interfere directly with the attitudes and behavior of ordinary folk. Values that may be attained are not weakly refused or surrendered because religion teaches that man is helpless and his life a transient shadow. The Indian villager is as eager for life and as appreciative of happiness as any other human being if the joys of life are available. But when living is difficult, and freedom is denied, when ambition is thwarted and evils in social life multiply, then a religious philosophy which includes ideas of karma and world-denial is a dangerous invitation to an attitude of quiescence, resignation and patient endurance. It is all the more attractive because it rationalizes impotence as spirituality. And it must be admitted that the

ideal ethical codes of India's spiritual guides were calculated to produce an attitude toward life peculiarly susceptible to philosophies of spiritual compensation. They counsel restraint, self-effacement, the severe curbing of desire. The statement of the ideal in Manu (II 224) is healthy enough: "Some say that the chief good consists in the acquisition of spiritual merit and wealth; others place it in the gratification of desire and the acquisition of wealth; others in the acquisition of spiritual merit alone and others say that the acquisition of wealth alone is the chief good here below; but the correct decision is that it consists of the aggregate of these three." But all the teachers of the centuries exalted as virtues—patience, self-control, non-aggression, contentment, humility and love. Both poetry and popular story preached the ideal expressed in the Dhammapada—"Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love" (5). "Overcome anger by love, overcome evil by good, overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth" (223).

The doctrine of *ahimśa*, non-injury, is as old as Buddhism and was a dominant element in the social consciousness by 200 A.D. The Yogi who was able to follow the ascetic discipline was revered, and asceticism, as a technique of self-suffering, was an instrument of aggressive power capable of bending the will even of a reluctant god. Moreover, the *bhakti* cults stressed the value of disinterested action as a means of breaking the karma bonds. Moral ideals are never more than approximated in actuality, but in so far as these ideals of India's seers were embodied in the attitudes and habits of the people, they prepared them to suffer quietly and with infinite patience as victims of injustice and exploitation. A generation ago, wise men rationalized this suffering as India's karma and kept their self-respect. Suffering merely endured leads only to a slave mentality and loss of soul. Suffering consciously and gladly accepted for a cause gives dignity and heroism. This is the dynamite in the present Indian situation. These very characteristics which the West has found so difficult to understand—*ahimśa*, patience, non-violent willingness to suffer—become, at the call of Mahatma Gandhi, an incomparable power of compulsion in the cause of *Swaraj*. Their weakness transformed into heroism, India's silent masses become vocal.

To an observer a generation ago it would have seemed—as it did to Swami Vivekananda—a colossal task to rouse India from

the bondage of age-old ways. But the forces reshaping the modern world work swiftly. The educated classes in India have been exposed for a century to the influence of modern scientific and political thought. They are well acquainted with the writings of the West in the departments of natural science, economics and psychology, as well as with the new philosophies which have arisen from the new knowledge in the Western world. The intellectuals, who have been satisfied to rest in the all-enveloping security of an eternal Absolute, grow restless in the presence of a doctrine which insists upon universal change and relativity. It is no longer possible to hold the ancient ideas in exactly the same way. Books pour from the press attempting to reinterpret the traditional philosophies in the light of the new science. It is not an impossible task for a people, who have been able to welcome within the same Hinduism all forms of world-view, to come to terms with the new ideas by the rationalizing, modernist technique. There will be no insuperable difficulty in India to stand in the way of acceptance of a thorough-going humanistic naturalism if the demands of our modern knowledge of the universe and man's culture history make that necessary. Tagore says—"India is not afraid of naturalism." The renaissance in India may be expected to come easily in the area of thought.

The real transformation of any culture, however, is accomplished not by changes of ideas but by reconstruction of the social order. The shaking of the whole edifice of the past has centered in India about changes in social life brought about by the material fruits of the sciences. Western influences in the form of trade, the insatiable need of the new machines for raw materials, the pushing of great industrial plants for markets, the grasping of the arms of empire for wealth and power—all that the world has come to know under the name of economic imperialism—have so transformed the old India that a new dharma, a new way of life, is inevitable. Agriculture is no longer adequate to meet the needs of life, so disturbed is it by the new economic forces. The most remote villages are affected. Long ago the home industries were undermined. A slow poverty has settled down upon the masses. In the larger towns and cities the control of the home and caste is gradually lifted from the individual. It is not so much the shock of a new scientific vision challenging traditional ideas but the application of the products of science to the exploitation of

the resources of India that accounts for the revival of her sleeping spirit. The intellectuals began to see that the soul of India was threatened with death. They could no longer remain aloof in the isolation of spiritual superiority. The upheaval of the social foundation under them, compelled them to abandon their quietism and and subjectivity and to seek solutions for the problems of the social life.

The leaders are agreed upon many things. They call the people of India to remember the glories of the past; they remind them of the ancient grandeur of the land in material wealth, of the admirable achievements of the race in the realms of art, literature, philosophy and religion and especially of that emphasis in culture in which they feel India has stood above all other peoples—the age-long, self-denying quest for the values of the spirit. Contrasting this with their present servile degradation and poverty they call their people to the labor of recovering their soul. In the face of the threat of Western materialism and industrialism with its grinding, grasping greed for goods, they call India to assert the supremacy of the spiritual, to win wings for her spirit by breaking the bonds which have threatened to crush out her life, a goal that may be won only by a courageous idealism brave enough to overthrow all the barriers, not only of materialistic civilization, but also of the old social heritage. The battle is being waged on a score of fronts against the dead weight of inherited customs and institutions—the isolated and meagre life of the masses, their ignorance and illiteracy, the seclusion of women, child marriage, caste and caste restrictions, the supremacy of brahman, and especially against the social treatment of the untouchables. Economic and political problems for the moment are in the spotlight, but organizations are busy with all the crucial issues creating the new pattern of Indian society—the All India National Social Congress, All India Women's Congress, League of Indian Youth, Child Welfare Leagues, Widow Remarriage Associations, Social Hygiene Councils, Unemployment Leagues, Child Marriage Abolition Societies, Hindu Widow Reform League, Social Equality League—to mention only a few. A surprising thing is that the women of India, counted a decade ago as a force for rigid conservatism, are now among the most active workers for the new order.

In the social forms of culture the traditional heritage is yielding to radical change. The thick jungle growths of inherited social

habits, as well as the oppressive or superficial new social ways of the West, begin to yield to the creative fire of the soul of an ancient people awakened to a new age of the world. The ideas of the past dissolve or grow into new vitality in the light of modern scientific insight. It may be that India will add to the religious philosophies of mankind, as a reinterpretation of her all-inclusive idealism, the most beautiful of naturalisms, an appreciation of the oneness of human life with the planet from which it has sprung, the oneness and solidarity of humanity in the quest for life values. Artistically and poetically the ancient theme of the dance of Shiva could so easily express the joyous and terrible rhythms of nature in the spiral of evolutionary change. Karma may mean in the future only the responsibility for the deed and the certainty of the inheritance of achieved values, from generation to generation, in the social structure of the race. Though the West may be mastered by mechanism and forget the higher life in the blind weltering of the whirl of things, India must still be India, and will keep her eyes ever upon the stars. Life and the world must, for her, find spiritual interpretation. True to her ancient quest, in winning emancipation for her own soul, she may be able to claim and win, for herself and for the world, that civilization in which economic, political and scientific instruments are servants of the higher life of man. Then her peculiar cultural emphasis on spirituality will take on practical and concrete meaning for the modern world.

## THE BUDDHIST HERITAGE OF EASTERN ASIA

INDIA'S cultural relationships with other peoples during the three millennia before our era will not be clearly known until the spade of the excavator has finished its work. From Mohenjo-daro come glimpses of relations with outside cultures interrupted and broken perhaps by the coming of the Aryans. After the third century B.C. there is increasing evidence of exchange with other peoples of goods, ideas and folk tales. The migrations of Indians after the first century A.D. to lands bordering on the bay of Bengal carried Hinduism, as religion and art, one step toward the East. But Hinduism thrives only in its native land. The essential spirit of Hindu culture, which dissolves time and space, nature and history in the ineffable peace of timeless spiritual Reality, belongs to India alone. But Buddhism, as a religion of salvation, could emigrate. It was India's great gift to the Orient. Transformed, assimilated, and finally absorbed in its own Hindu milieu, Buddhism in its many forms became, in other lands, a pervasive culture force, and for more than a millennium the one bond of cultural unity in all the farther East.

From the time when Gautama sent his disciples out, one by one, to preach the law, until today, when scholarly societies are spreading the gospel in Europe and America, Buddhism has been a missionary religion. Of Asoka's Buddhist missions in the third century B.C. the one sure result was the conversion of Ceylon by his son, Mahinda. After twenty-two centuries the modern Sinhalese Maha Bodhi Society is planning a campaign to reestablish the religion of Asoka in India. Missionary heroism adds glory to the history of Buddhism in all lands and ages. For wise tolerance, sympathy, patient endurance and willing self-sacrifice for a cause, many of the Buddhist missionaries deserve high rank among the greatest souls of the race. They included royal princes who exchanged a kingdom for the yellow robe, philosopher monks, popular preachers, translators and pilgrims braving the dangers of unknown lands in search of truth.

Sometimes through individual initiative, usually by invitation, Buddhism spread to Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia, Siam, Java, Sumatra, Kashmir, Nepal, Sikkim, Khotan, Bhutan, China, Korea, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia. To the peoples of lower culture it



WORSHIP OF BUDDHA  
Indian

brought the practical arts, education, medical aid, and a kindlier moral ideal. The written language was in some cases the gift of the monks who invented an alphabet in which to present the sacred texts. Monastic institutions, temples and representations of the divine figures which were the necessary accompaniments of Buddhism wherever it went, introduced new motifs to create or stimulate architecture and art. The philosophic and religious ideas of the Buddhist teachers gave an entirely new view of life to the people of these lands, opened wide vistas into the unseen, and even to the high culture of China added another level of transmundane idealism. Everywhere Buddhism was tolerant, adaptable, adjusting its ideas, techniques and ideals to the problems and needs of each variant social structure, so that in every case it became an integral phase of the culture of the people. And always, by its persistent stress on mercy, merit, and non-injury it created a warmer and more humane social climate.

As an ever-present influence on thought and manners, Buddhism has contributed depth, richness and color to the cultural heritage of Eastern Asia. It is difficult to visualize the Far East without Buddhism but it is equally difficult, in any culture area, to define exactly what elements belong to the Buddhist account. Culture is a product of action, reaction, interaction continuously giving rise to novel syntheses. Many elements blend and are lost to sight in the new unity. The material and intellectual contributions of Buddhism may be recorded; the Buddhist influence escapes all neat tabulation. This is particularly true because of the non-aggressive, assimilating nature of Buddhism.

From the beginning, this religion has recognised two classes of candidates for the joys of perfect enlightenment—the monk who is willing to devote all his time and energies to the quest, and the layman, who has his eyes toward the goal and his feet in the path, but must still remain bound to the duties of society and therefore in the round of rebirth. The monasteries and the nature of the temple rituals give evidence of this distinction over all Asia. The relationship of monk and layman was one of mutual dependence and service. The layman gained merit by supporting the monks and building religious institutions. By the terms of his vow the monk could not win his own salvation without diffusing merit to others. He served in many ways. He was the bearer and transmitter of the sacred wisdom, the educator of

the people. His attainments in learning and character were an inspiration and example. In spite of the theoretical individualism of Buddhism, the monk-priest was a mediator between the masses and the divine forces of the unseen world, turning the wheel of the law for the benefit of humanity near and far, bringing to bear upon the problems of the laity in field and home the magical powers of the great gods, at death guiding the soul safely through the awesome experiences of the intermediary ghostly afterlife. While it is certain that the intellectual and moral influences of Buddhist institutions have been very important, this psychological factor of hope, comfort, consolation and escape was and is incalculable. Not only did Buddhism quiet the pain of life's inescapable tragedies by its soothing anaesthesia, but the monasteries were an ever-open frontier when the world became wearisome, crowded or cruel beyond endurance. The restless intellectual, the visionary, the life-surfeited aristocrat, all thwarted, tortured, disillusioned souls could find there a refuge, hope of a new way of life, and the thrill of adventure in an unexplored realm. It was a democratic fellowship inspired by the tradition of Arahats, saints and Bodhisattvas who had walked the path before them. Sometimes, as in ninth century China, these religious institutions became so attractive and so numerous as to be a threat to the state and the economic order. Sometimes, as in Japan, they were nests of political intrigue. They were often infected with the miasma of idleness, corruption and cupidity, but at their best they were centers of light and leadership producing administrators, scholars and saints whose achievements give lustre to the cultural heritage of Asia. In modern times the monastic organizations of the various lands differ greatly in social values, political power and religious influence. Between the institutions of Ceylon and Tibet, Siam and Korea, Burma and Japan or China lie the differentiating experiences of more than a thousand years. For the most part they are a force for conservatism, but the aggressive leadership of the Chinese monk T'ai-hsü and those who cooperate with him in the World Conference for Buddhism may indicate advance. Whether and how the staid monastic institutions will make adjustment to the problems of the new age no one can predict with certainty. Modern science and industrialism confront them with the threat leveled at all old structures attuned to a different world and world-view.

The religious philosophy of Buddhism in modern Asia includes

all the historic types from the Hinayana in Ceylon, Burma, Cambodia and Siam to the most extreme form of the Mahayana in the Tantrism of Tibet. Modern critical scholarship, especially in Japan, has tended to revive interest in the original form of Buddhism. For export to the West this seems to be the most effective type. In China and Japan the Mahayana of the Lotus Scripture, the Meditation, and Pure Land Schools predominate. Buddhism is as inclusive and versatile as Hinduism in accommodating its truth to all classes of men. Salvation may be won by works, by knowledge, by mystic meditation, or by faith in the power and grace of another. The ascetic Yogi in a lonely cave on Everest, the master of magic mantras acting as a psychopomp through the realms of the dead, the Madhyamika intellectual, the Chan mystic, the layman trusting in the mercy of Amitabha or Kuan-yin, all are included. Historically these different Buddhisms are the result of creative adjustments to changing environing social and intellectual situations. Theoretically they are all the same truth accommodated to the varied capacities of mankind. According to the theory of reconciliation, popular in China and Japan, attributed to the founder of the T'ien-T'ai school of the sixth century, the represented stages in the exposition of the gospel of Gautama himself. Fundamental to all are the ideas of karma and reincarnation, the five precepts of moral living, and the confidence that there is a way of escape from the transiency and sorrowful futility of the worldly life to a state of peace and bliss. The Hinayana is a code of behavior, not a system of theology or metaphysics. The eightfold path, faithfully followed, creates the habits of thought and living which yield at last the poise, detachment, self-mastery and insight of the Arhat. There are no gods to help and no heavens to win. The goal is Nirvana, but the way is lonely and may be long. The Mahayana is easier and more generous. It assumes an eternal Reality, the Dharmakaya (Tantric, AdiBuddha), the ocean of Being in which individual souls are as drops of water, tossed and driven in the waves of the generations. Reality is ineffable, consequently many kinds of philosophic idealism, and many forms of mysticism are possible. The task of living is to lift the veil, to wear away the separations of individuality, to still the whirling figures of the dance of time, that the soul may rest in the great peace of Buddhahood where all distinctions disappear. Solitary souls may win to salvation alone, but the gospel of the Mahayana in-

volves a generous sharing of merit. The climb to Buddhahood by the Bodhisattva path implies the complete acceptance of love and responsibility for all living beings on the wheel. Because of the vow of Bodhi and the identification of the self with others through compassion, the merit of one may be turned to the help of all. Consequently the Mahayana has a galaxy of glorious personal Beings, not yet Buddhas, who not only toil for the emancipation of souls, but will listen to the cry of individual need. Avalokiteśvara (Kuan Yin, Kwannon) the embodiment of divine compassion, and Ti-Tsang (Jizo) who has vowed to empty all the hells, are dear to the hearts of the common folk in all the Far East. Amitabha (Amida) is a Buddha, and therefore quiescent, but the merit of the vow by which he attained Buddhahood continues to work as a cosmic magic to bring all those who trust and call upon him to the western Paradise of bliss. From time to time great souls embody the truth in human form and, like Sakyamuni, reveal to man the way of life by teaching and example. Thus the truth of the Mahayana is adapted to every need. But all the kaleidoscopic forms point beyond themselves to the ultimate truth which is beyond words. The wisdom of the Chan (Zen), Madhyamika and Yogacharya schools, and of all mystics, leads through reason and speech to silence and realization. Symbolically the truth may be expressed by the divine figures, embodiments of wisdom, light, love, power and mercy. The Saviors of the Pure Land are real to the emotions of the masses, as are also the multitude of lesser gods and guardians, but the truth is that Reality is one, and all representations are but broken lights of the ineffable.

As religious philosophy and institution, Buddhism has exerted a powerful influence on all far-eastern cultures. Political vicissitudes, economic and social stresses, brilliant personalities, chance and geography have weighted the scales for and against the Buddhists in different lands. In Tibet, where every third man is attached to the religious orders, and religion in the person of an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara, the Dalai Lama, controls the state, Buddhism has been a dominant force. In the Hinayana areas, the religion has greater influence and much brighter prospects for the future in Siam and Cambodia, where it is favored by state support and encouragement, than in Burma and Ceylon under foreign control.

The Japanese were still a primitive people when Buddhism en-

tered as the bearer of the elements of an advanced civilization and a higher culture. With the prestige of its conquests in continental lands, the support of the court, and its status as the official religion, it won the allegiance of the intellectuals in Japan to a degree that was never possible in China where it met an ancient and tested culture with a sophisticated philosophy of life. Its success in Japan was won through the versatile adaptability of the Mahayana forms. The philosophic Buddhism carried to poetic beauty the native Shinto naturalism. Zen was perfectly shaped to be the religious philosophy of the Samurai. The Amida gospel of the the Jodo and Shin sects flourished because it was able to meet the needs of an age of disorder, panic and social distress. The Nichiren sect drew its strength from alliance with the living force of Japanese patriotism. For twelve centuries Buddhism was the controlling influence in the development of the culture of Japan which shows its stamp of beauty and refinement everywhere. Yet there were always intellectuals who protested against it in the name of an idealized Shinto, or the common sense "gentleman's" code of Confucianism.

In China the intellectuals as a group were never captured by Buddhism. Its influence was with the masses to whom it opened the realms of heaven and hell, brought the help of powerful gods, and the psychological consolations of splendid ceremonies and magic rites. The basic pattern of life was the native Chinese family and community code. Buddhism deliberately set itself to reinforce the Confucian ethics, and building upon the central ideal of filial piety, adapted itself to the functional task of caring for the welfare of souls in the unseen realms beyond the gates of death. Its influence with the people so transformed the popular Taoism that it became a copy of Buddhism. Chucius noted the fact with sarcasm—"All that is valuable in Buddhism was taken from Taoism, and the Taoists in revenge have taken all the worst things from Buddhism." The magic of Buddhist ceremonial supplemented the stately Confucian cult of the seasons in times of agricultural distress, and Tantric Buddhism furnished innumerable spells for protection against the invisible forces of evil. From the fifth to the ninth century the influence of Buddhism was all-pervasive. Then it was checked by official decree, but has continued as an imponderable element in folk life until today. The colossal figures of Buddha cut out of the solid rock near Loyang

serve as a symbol for Reichelt's estimate of Buddhist influence—"For those who study the religious history of the East with spiritual insight these figures of Buddha, hewn out of the rock, speak a language of their own. In them we see a symbol of the profound impression made by Buddhism upon the soul of the Chinese people. Deep, deep have the lines been chiselled—in thought, in viewpoint, in hope for the future, in resignation, in unutterable pain and grief, in deep longing after enlightenment and peace, in inexpressible sympathy with all that lives, and in a quiet and strong hope for the salvation of all living. If one wishes to understand China, one must see it in the light of Buddhism." (Reichelt: *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism*, p. 340) This may be an overemphasis because it evaluates Buddhism as a "spiritual" influence, but it is clear that the two greatest Confucian philosophies after the tenth century, the Neo-Confucian naturalism of Chu Hsi in the Sung Dynasty and the pragmatic idealism of Wang Yang Ming in the period of the Ming were influenced by it. There are no means of measuring the meliorizing effect of Buddhism upon the life of the common people, but that it has been profound and lasting cannot be doubted.

To every culture Buddhism added the spiritual tone inherent in its own world-view and moral ideal. It was never intolerant and aggressive in its approach to existing customs. An easier and more successful way was to superimpose Buddhist ideals of behavior upon the approved indigenous code. The result was a humanizing and softening of human relations, because Buddhism continuously stressed the necessity of curbing passionate impulses, the repression of appetites, non-injury, sympathy, patience, pacifism, self-mastery and self-control even to the borderland of asceticism. Centuries of this intangible influence have been effective in producing a quality of life, a gentleness of manners, in all Eastern lands ranging from sensitive courtesy, through patient resignation, to quietistic self-effacement. Tibet is an illustration of the process.

Buddhist Tibet, with all its harshness, seems mild and attractive on the background of the Tibet of ancient times with its warfare, savage customs, fierce cruelty and the weird, terrifying magic of Pön religion. There, as elsewhere, Buddhism assimilated and transformed the earlier culture. This is the principle of *Upaya* (expediency) which Asanga praised as one element of the greatness of the Mahayana. It allowed Buddhism to seek truth everywhere

even disguised under the most absurd superstitions, to adapt itself to all conditions and use all means in the eager desire to save all. By tolerant sympathy and kindly pressure, the Buddhist idealism permeated all levels of society. In those lands where the monasteries have assumed responsibility as educators of the youth, the opportunity for developing attitudes and shaping social patterns of behavior has been much greater. This is particularly true of modern Burma and Siam.

The philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism has dictated the peculiarly indirect nature of the social influence of the religion. To the Western mind, accustomed to theistic dualism, the difference of nature between god and man, and an activistic program of social service, Buddhist religious activities seem strangely ineffective. When the practical world is taken at face value, and religious leaders emphasize the need of social reorganization as a means of winning the good life, it is difficult to comprehend the social significance of the chanting of sacred texts, the turning of prayer-wheels, the solitary meditation of monks and the hard, life-long discipline of lonely saints. Yet all these are effective, communal assets from the Buddhist point of view. In its Mahayana form, Buddhism assumes the solidarity of all souls in the unity of the ultimate Real. It takes as axiomatic the relative unreality and the real futility of life on the round of rebirth. To reform the practical world would be merely a palliative, for the root of our cosmic sorrow lies deeper. The goal of all souls is not happiness in the thraldom of desire but eternal bliss in emancipation. All are on a democratic basis in this quest. Distinctions of rank and caste are meaningless. The great leveler is the common need. Moreover to one who is able to see the truth, all souls are one in the togetherness of the eternal. This is the reason why ceremonies and meditations, apparently detached from the activities of life can help, and the attainments of solitary saints and Bodhisattvas may serve for the salvation of others. This is also the key to Buddhist compassion. The last words of the saintly Tibetan Yogi, Milarepa, spoken on the day of his death (1135 A. D.) will illustrate the point of view—

“Maintain the state of undistractedness and distraction will fly off ;

Dwell alone and ye shall find a friend ;

Take the lowest place and ye shall reach the highest ;

Hasten slowly and ye shall soon arrive ;

Renounce all worldly goals and ye shall reach the highest goal.

If ye tread the Secret Path, ye shall find the shortest way;  
If ye realize the Voidness, compassion will arise within  
your hearts;

If ye lose all differentiation between yourselves and others,  
fit to serve others ye will be;

And when in serving others ye shall win success, then shall  
ye meet with me;

And finding me, ye shall attain to Buddhahood."

(W. Y. Evans-Wentz: *Milarepa* [the Jetsun-Kahbum] p. 273)

Buddhism now faces the greatest test of all time in the necessity of meeting the challenge of modern sciences and the insistent popular demand for solutions of the maladjustments of the social order. The answers of the past will not avail, for the premises on which they were founded are dissolved. In 1925 Y. Y. Tsu wrote: "The future of Buddhism will be one of two things. It will die a natural death or it will become reanimated through a process of adaption and evolution. Buddhism cannot go on as a religion unless it reforms itself." Grave doubts have been expressed by Buddhist intellectuals as to whether monasticism can have any function in an industrialized society, especially since the philosophic idealism which justified it is in the same difficulty as all prescientific ideologies, when confronted by modern knowledge and the refusal to accept a religious opiate as a cure for social ills. But Buddhism has behind it an inspiring history of achievement. It has shown a marvellous capacity for adjustment to new situations through more than two thousand years, and at the present time it has an international fellowship of great leaders who are awake to modern needs. In Ceylon and Burma there is an active group of scholars who are convinced that Buddhism is the one religion that is capable of meeting the demands of the scientific world. Japanese intellectuals are not only doing intensive work in research, but are transforming Buddhism into a social religion by establishing civic centers and organizing an educational program oriented to the new age. The secular clergy of the Amida sects are close to the problems of the people and therefore in a position to give leadership. In China there is a demand for a more genuine religious life, for reformation of the monasteries, and a better educational training for religious leaders. Probably the most active figure in Chinese Buddhism in T'ai Hsü, editor of an important journal, president of Wu-

chang academy and a leader in the formation of the World's Buddhist Union. He is a typical modernist, rationalizing the T'ien-T'ai philosophy to meet modern science and sensitively aware of social problems. He is the moving spirit of the Buddhist revival in China, and it is significant that his program for educating leaders of the movement lays especial stress upon the necessity of social reform. The future of Buddhism in China is uncertain, for the great philosophic heritage of Chinese naturalism is awaking to new life with a vast indifference to world-transcending idealisms.

### THE HERITAGE OF THE FARTHER EAST

**I**N the age-old culture of China the human spirit faced the issues of life with smiling frankness. There is a sane, earthy quality in the native Chinese mood that is alien to the spiritual climate of India and the ethereal atmosphere of Buddhism. The human scene is central and not some mysterious, unseen glory of the gods. Attuned to the spiritual motif, the sages of India snubbed the earth, their eyes deep with dreams of things divine. Buddhism endured the world but pointed beyond it. Both Hinduism and Buddhism have revered the saint as the pinnacle of human attainment. China, on the other hand, loving the earth, clinging to it, has exalted as her ideal, the scholar, the wise man, rich in the experience of the ages in the fine art of living. The indigenous culture of China is secular and humanistic. In both India and China there is the same sense of unity, of community, of the solidarity of humankind in contrast with the individualism of the modern West. These oriental cultures ground human happiness in an inclusive unity rather than upon the precarious quest of individual satisfaction. But India has ever been homesick for a lost bliss in another and spiritual realm. China long ago learned the secret of blessedness in the warm fellowship and security of close human groups in intimate contact with the good earth.

The basic pattern of Chinese culture was established in a past so distant that changing climate, altered topography and moving peoples have drawn a veil between us and its origins. Mythology tells of a long climb from animal savagery to the human level. Legend attaches to the mythical figures of Fu Shi, Shen Nung and Huang-ti the honor of progressive achievements in practical mastery over nature—the cultivation of cereals, sericulture, invention

of plough, wheel, nets and compass, the use of ox and horse, medicine, writing, music and the organization of society in orderly farming and functional groups. This is not history but it is a satisfactory way of saying that the elements of the earliest known culture of the people settled on the fertile lands in the valley of the Yellow River extend back into a dim prehistoric time. That they had relationships in material culture with a lost world in which Indo-Iranian and Mesopotamian peoples shared is probable. From the region of the Yellow River they extended their control East and South to the sea, blending in the Middle Kingdom peoples of different race and cultures. In spite of a common social pattern, the influence of natural environment and external contacts maintained a difference between North and South through all the centuries, a difference which has been accentuated during the last hundred years.

Chinese civilization has shown a marvelous capacity to resist the shocks of time. The wisdom of ages was funded for the harmonizing of human relations in the primary groups at the base of the pyramid of the state. From the dawn of history China has been a nation of farmers. All but a small percentage of the people have always lived in the villages drawing their sustenance from the family land. This was the broad foundation upon which the stable Chinese culture was reared. Autonomous family groups in village association and autonomous guilds in towns gave an essentially democratic structure to society. All the interests of life for the ordinary individual were provided for within the network of these familiar forms. There was no national or political consciousness. The interest of the farmers and guild men in politics and government was limited to the single item of payment of taxes to support the imperial court. Their contact with the government machinery was through the district magistrate, a dignitary on another level of living, who had attained his place by scholarly merit and who interfered in village and guild affairs only in extreme situations. Beyond the magistrate were higher officials still more remote. Filtered through these intermediary stages the omnipotence of the ruler might theoretically touch the villager. Practically, the total government of the people was in the hands of their own elected, local leaders who were selected for their wisdom and knowledge of community ways. The superstructure of a dynasty

might crumble through external violence or because the increasing burden of taxation gradually broke the patience of the peasant, but change of dynasty left the rhythm of village life unchanged. It was a self-sufficient unit, indestructible, a social organization perfectly adjusted to the conditions of agricultural economy in the ages before machines and technology began their revolutionary work in the world. An idyllic picture of the peace and self-sufficiency of the ancient village is attributed to Lao-tse who said that in the olden time a man might live to advanced age hearing the cocks crow and the dogs bark in a neighboring village yet never visit it in all his life.

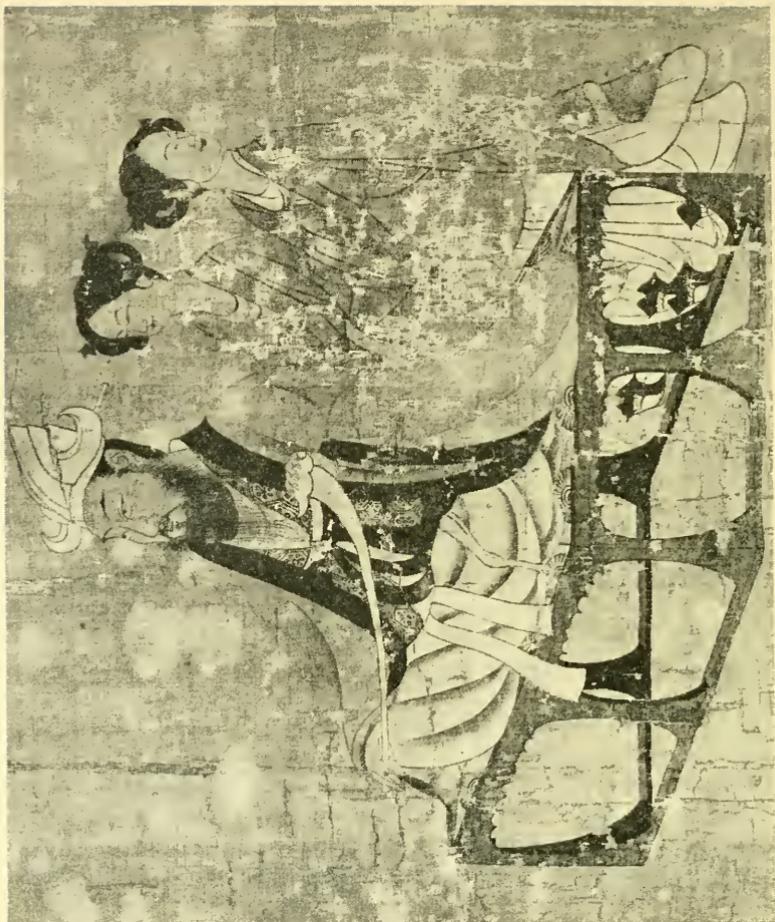
The village was composed of a number of families under the guidance and supervision of an elected headman or council of elders. Each family owned its land, was a self-governing unit and might include four generations. Within this circle there was a communistic sharing, a pooling of resources and a joint acceptance of responsibility for every member. The father was in authority. Age took precedence, and the younger members of the home yielded willingly to the rule of the elders. The family council planned a boy's training, determined his time of marriage and selected a suitable mate. This was a family matter involving responsibility to ancestors and therefore beyond individual control. What was lost in personal freedom was gained in security, for the family was an enfolding protection from birth till death. Moreover the experience of ages had defined the correct attitudes, duties and privileges in the various relationships within the family group. Filial piety was the central virtue because the unity and continuity of the family was the ideal. Relatively the individual was unimportant. The ancestral cult was a projection of filial piety beyond the barrier of death and a symbol of the continuity of the family in time. In the well-ordered Chinese family there was decorum, moral restraint, courtesy and the self-respect of accepted status. Always close to the borderline of subsistence, these compact family groups have opposed a stubborn vitality and a healthy inertia to all the storms of change.

From their ranks were recruited the aristocracy of scholars who formed the ruling class. China had no hereditary governing caste. The state examinations automatically selected those best fitted to rise to positions of responsibility. Since the learning which qual-

ified them for office was the traditional cultural lore treasured in the ancient writings—history, social ethics and philosophy, these scholar-officials were a living embodiment of China's heritage of social wisdom. At the same time their roots were in the common soil. A twofold action was at work. On the one hand the spirit of culture was diffused from above downward to the people and on the other the scholars drew vitality for literature, art and philosophy from the actualities of the folk life. In all types of literary production, from the amazing historical annals to philosophic essays and poetry, they have maintained a characteristic sanity and objectivity. China's scholars saw life with clear eyes, seeking that harmonization of fact and hope which would yield disciplined poise. The result is that their creative work is a precious heritage not only to research students but to all men interested in the wrestle of the human spirit with fact and fate.

Chinese society gave the scholar the rank of highest esteem. After him in order came the peasant, the merchant, housewives and menials and lowest of all soldiers, the "destroyers of life."

The organization of the merchants, artisans and their apprentices in trade guilds constituted another basic institution of Chinese culture. Some modern guilds claim an historic continuity of twenty-five centuries. As early as the Chou dynasty at least, the various branches of industry, concentrated in towns, were organized under elected officials corresponding to the village council of elders. These officials dealt with the district magistrate, mediating between the machinery of taxation and the towns. The guilds were self-governing and democratic, fixing prices, regulating working conditions and wages, settling disputes and fixing penalties. Since masters and workmen were in intimate personal relations resembling an artificial family, and there was no escape from the pressure of group control for either master or man, the common welfare and the security of each individual demanded just decisions. Chinese dislike of strife and disorder, the native virtues of group loyalty, reasonableness, and regard for the self-respect of a fellow human being contributed to the social efficiency of the ancient guilds. These institutions of historic China, the guild and the family, which have been the key to the indestructible nature of Chinese society and culture are now the very institutions most ruthlessly assaulted by the disintegrating forces of the modern world.



EMPEROR WEN  
Chinese

Of all the peoples of history the Chinese have been the most perfectly at home in the universe. They have the air of belonging. Neither Buddhism nor Christianity has been able to capture the leaders of China with the lure of another world. They have been called materialistic by those who saw them through the theological presuppositions of the West. Even De Groot complains that in their great religious ceremonies they have always sought practical and material values. It is true that they have clung persistently to the ideal of a good life in this world. In times of social tragedy and despair other races have turned to a transcendent spiritual realm, or a future age, for comfort and security. The Chinese, on the contrary, sought only to discover the means of restoring the harmonious adjustment of human life to the enfolding forces of heaven and earth. This may be materialism if the term is made to include not only the satisfactions of physical desire but also all the higher spiritual values of satisfying human relationships, for filial piety, faithfulness, veracity, equity, justice and benevolence were supremely important in China. And no Chinese would think them less valuable and sacred because they were the normal expression of the natural order on the human level.

This humanistic naturalism pervades all ages of Chinese culture and all levels of society from farmer to philosopher. The life of the peasant was keyed to the flow of the forces of nature. His patterns of behavior were inextricably interwoven with the changing phases of earth, sun, winds, clouds and rain. He was attuned to the year rythm. Not by conscious thought but emotionally he was one with nature. Every change of season was greeted by some ceremony, rooted in feeling, which recognized the dependence of human life upon the beneficence of earth and heaven. The farmer was too close to the fertile soil and too actively aware of the social securities enfolding him to become a lost soul seeking an unearthly paradise. Instead he sought blessedness in this world—health, wealth, long life, virtue and a good death. The simple ceremony at the village mound and the most gorgeous of all state ceremonies at the Altar of Heaven had the same purpose—to assure prosperity to an agricultural people by harmonious relationship with the orderly seasonal movement of nature. The imperial calendar was based on the same principle.

All the fantastic Taoist technique of geomancy, feng-shui and the search for elixirs implied this interrelation between the life of man and cosmic forces. The span of life was fixed by fate. Patient obedience and smiling submission were taken for granted, but at the same time it was possible to enjoy the security of destiny while life was good.

The philosophers formulated this relation of man to the universe in terms of order or harmony. Although they varied in emphases there was universal agreement that there was a Tao, a way, in which the cosmic forces moved in rhythmic orderliness bringing all things to the perfection of fulfillment involved in their name. The human social order was an integral phase of the larger unity of the universe. The realization of the values of human culture depended upon correct embodiment of the Tao of man—that is, the behavior appropriate to one's status in all five relationships of the social group. When every one, from the emperor to the members of the peasant's home, followed the Tao, as men did in the idealized age of Yao and Shun, peace, prosperity and blessedness followed. "When the great way (Tao) is followed, all under heaven will work for the common good. They will choose the virtuous and the able for leaders. They will advocate sincerity and cultivate peace. Men will not be friendly with their own relatives alone, neither will they love their own sons only. The aged shall have provision made for them; the able in body will serve; youth will have respect for its elders. There will be sympathy for the widows and orphans and care for the afflicted. The men will accept responsibility; the women will be properly provided for. There will be a dislike for the accumulation of goods, a refusal to store up for self, and a strong feeling against strength not put to use. No one will be for himself. Thus self-aggrandizement will not be known and robbery and thieving will cease. When this time comes it will not be necessary to close the outside gate. Then will be universal brotherhood." (Book of Rites—Li Yun P'ien)

The ethical ideals of Confucius and Mencius aimed not only at the harmonization of human society but the orientation of man in the universe. The ideal was to be natural and at the same time virtuous. "At seventy I could follow my desires without transgressing what is right," said Confucius. This was the goal of

discipline. Lao-tse had too much confidence in the Tao of heaven to depend on any system of moral training. He urged a complete naturalness, an utter surrender to the cosmic tao as the way to peace and perfection for both the individual and the state. Yang Chu carried this position logically to an epicurean fatalism. Wang Chung made of it a determinism and preached it to the people as a way of emancipation from anxiety and fear. Later philosophers were influenced by Buddhism, Chucius, reacting against it, developed the traditional Sinism into a thoroughgoing naturalism, while Wang Yang Ming yielding to it transformed the classical system into a naturalistic idealism but kept the ancient pragmatic quality.

The admirable characteristics of China's spiritual heritage are the fruit of this philosophy of life. It gave poise, resignation with dignity, group solidarity and individual submission, enjoyment without too much possessive clinging, love of life without fantastic hopes for the future. To the occidental reformer these characteristics carried to an extreme may appear as vices—an acquiescence in evil, an indifference to suffering beyond the immediate group. In reply there is the old wisdom of Lao-tse—"Nature treats men as straw dogs," that is, destroys them with utter indifference when their function is fulfilled. Perhaps modern science can show the way to a mastery of evils and a humanizing of all social relations which will make unnecessary this stoic poise learned by the Chinese through centuries of frank facing of cosmic actuality without spiritual anaesthetics. Then a new and more lovely culture will arise. Until that time it must be set down as a great cultural achievement that in China not only the philosopher but the peasant and artisan have learned to live with poise, dignity, and carefree gladness, as transient but necessary links in the passing generations marching to the inexorable rythm of the cosmic Tao.

Shut in by the sea, mountains, and deserts, Chinese civilization was self-sufficient for ages. The ravages of the treacherous Yellow River, "China's sorrow," and the periodic famines through district crop failures, the overthrow of dynasties and the necessity of absorbing foreign conquerors did not disturb the solid bases of Chinese culture. It was natural that the people of the Middle Kingdom should have considered their empire the center

of the world surrounded by a fringe of barbarian tribesmen. They could justly be proud of the results of their inventive genius in the realm of material culture, some of them reaching back into the legendary past—engineering, the magnetic needle, silk production, pottery, paper, gunpowder, printing, medicine, manufacture of tools for agriculture and the trades. They had attained distinction in mathematics, accounting, music, painting and literature of all kinds. Buddhism had lost its foreign flavor and added its vast literature to the great libraries of Chinese works.

Secure in the confidence of their own status, the rulers of China were not at all prepared to make a correct evaluation of the surprising new foreigners pushing at their doors a hundred years ago. They were given no time to learn. The untapped treasures of the Celestial Empire were an irresistible temptation to the grasping steel fingers of the machines. Rising economic imperialisms expected to find not only limitless raw materials but a vast potential market. The doors were torn down with rude violence and the flood of Western influences flowed into the quiet sanctuary of China's ancient ideas and customs to do their destructive and disintegrating work. The heritage of China was face to face with the severest test of all time.

The adjustment of Chinese intellectuals to the new scientific thought and method was made early, eagerly, and with ease. Their total heritage had conditioned them for ready acceptance of the attitudes of objectivity, tolerance and democratic respect for the fact involved in the method of science. It was a simple transition from the Confucian naturalism to the naturalism of science. Father Wieger quotes Oe Bunjo, "Thanks to the real fusion in process of completion between Western science and the ethics of China, Confucianism is taking on a new vigor and its moral dynamic is acquiring an hitherto unsuspected power," and adds, with apparent regret, "not because of any intrinsic merit in the teaching of Confucius which the centuries have shown; but because this doctrine is a materialistic positivism and so is able to stand on equal footing with the materialism and positivism of the whole world without any extra effort on the part of the intellectuals. As Confucianists they have dignity and can join hands with the most advanced." Instead of materialism, it would be more correct to describe the new scientific philosophy of the intellectuals as a humanistic naturalism, since the emphasis is consistently placed upon social values

and the ideal of progressive social change directed by human intelligence served by science.

The stable structure of the Chinese patriarchal family is breaking down in this generation. Economic factors are involved but perhaps more important is the influence of new ideas, the result of cultural contact with the West. Students going abroad to study, the extending of the educational life, agitation of women for equal rights and equal occupational opportunities, delayed marriage and the ruthless critical analysis of traditional customs and folk ways, including the ancestral cult, contribute to the dissolution of the traditional family pattern. In its place the youthful social idealists seek to substitute a simple family form based on sex equality, democratic sharing and freedom which will remove the evils of the past and at the same time release the long-observed creative capacities of China's womanhood.

While Western science, education and democratic theory stimulated China to new cultural aspirations, the impact of industrial penetration created problems which disturbed the balance of the national life. The threat of foreign economic domination was a menace the old China was wholly unprepared to meet. For the first time the people were compelled to concern themselves with government. But the creation of a republic only increased their troubles. China was humiliated by the graft and corruption of officials in the hands of competing capitalisms. Her first attempts at militarism resulted only in added disorder through the personal ambitions of warring tuchuns. And the long-suffering peasants bore the brunt of the burden.

The first fruits of industrialization in the factory towns with their sweated workers, the ruthless disregard of human values, and the moral disorder owing to the release of the group controls of the past, created disillusion in regard to the superiority of foreign civilization. The world-war and the peace which followed it crystallized this attitude and carried it to the minds of the multitude. The intellectuals turned from the West to an increased appreciation of their own heritage of culture and of Confucius' ideal of the "superior man." They set themselves the task of reconstructing Chinese civilization by a practical program of graded steps which would remove the imperialistic war menace, conserve the values of the past, lift the level of education of

the masses, eliminate economic distress and make material resources and the instruments of industrialism the foundation for a higher cultural life. China is still in the agonizing pangs of that renaissance, involving her political, literary, social, educational, intellectual, industrial and religious heritage.

While this is being written, her Asiatic neighbor, driven by economic hunger in a distracted world, is tightening around her the strangling cord of military might. China's sorrow of a hundred years is renewed. But China's way is not the way of war. The ideal of peace is deep-rooted in the hearts of her people. A former prime minister, Liang-Shih-Yi summarized the Chinese reaction to militarism in the world—"Compelled against our will to turn our energies to the gigantic task of Western warfare, at a time when those energies should have been devoted wholly to education and acquiring the modern arts of peace, we have developed a hybrid system which results in neither defense nor industrial progress. For the consequent brigandage and lawlessness we blame ourselves; but we blame also those nations which have forced us to feel that physical power is the one and only prerequisite to independence. We welcome every change and turn which brings the world nearer to the time when vast armies will no longer be considered an essential of civilization. We do not want to be compelled to take the worst from the West, but its best and highest ideals. Our people are not facile learners of the arts of war, for we hate war and all the wasteful trappings of war." If all the agencies for the preservation of world peace to which China has committed herself should fail her in this emergency, she has still in the armory of her ancient cultural heritage of the well-learned art of passive resistance which may see her through.

China's historic respect for the scholar adds an element of hope to the tremendous labor confronting the young intellectuals who are working for her renaissance. They urge the people to follow the guidance of scientific knowledge, to accept responsibility for the common good and to concentrate upon the problems of the present as the best means to the attainment of the good life both for the individual and society. Their immediate task is to achieve national unity and autonomy, to emancipate the millions from economic injustice and illiteracy, to release the clinging hands of customs reaching from a dead past, to win the traditional religions

to a larger social vision, to create a social structure that will guarantee the values of the higher life. Their ideal reaches beyond a narrow nationalism with its accompanying militarism, to an internationalism of cooperating nations and world peace. The future of China's cultural heritage is in the hands of these young intellectuals equipped with scientific knowledge and scientific method and inspired by democratic ideals. Across the boundaries of race, religion and nationality they are united in a common quest with the social idealists of all cultures of the world.

Reclining like a giant above Eastern Asia with one hand dipped in the Pacific is Russia, blending in its own cultural past elements of both Europe and Asia. Stalin has said that Russia is Asiatic. The matter of supreme interest for the modern world is not what Russia has been but what it is to be. The culture which linked it spiritually with Europe of the long ago and materially with the new Europe of yesterday crumbled in ruins or was deliberately liquidated by the leaders of the proletariat. An experiment in culture building, unique in human history, is in progress. For the first time responsible rulers have undertaken to organize a total civilization around a central purpose and subject all phases of man's material environment to an intelligible plan. Usually a culture grows by the slow accretion of centuries, achieving reform out of agonies of maladjustment, finding a stable balance by trial and error, through waste and force, treasuring the precious heritage of the ages in the temple of experience, but always blundering forward into the uncharted future. The Russian ideal is the mastery, by intelligent control, of the economic evils that have tortured mankind since the dawn of time, in order that upon the solid basis of economic security, the life of higher culture may be enjoyed. The plan involves no retreat from the colossus of machine technology to the economic security of the oriental saint through the reduction of desire, but a whole-hearted acceptance of science and the machines that they may finally free man for the joys of creative, social living. The machines are to be the servants of the common welfare and economic values to be shared. The goal is to remove the social conditions which made private profit, competitive struggle and economic selfishness valuable for survival. Then security will no longer depend upon personal possessions, and status in society will be graded in terms of social worth. The ideal is

entirely human and this-worldly, with a fine scorn for all supernaturalisms and compensatory idealisms. It is purely a practical program for the creation of a cultural environment in which man may realize the good life. The preliminary phase of the plan is not yet completed. A religious devotion to the ideal and an ascetic self-sacrifice for the cause have been necessary to make endurable the labor and privation of the early years of the plan. If this fascinating experiment succeeds and releases Russia's millions for cultural enjoyment, it will have an incalculable influence upon the future of all the cultures of mankind.

Among the ancient culture peoples of the Orient, the Japanese are relatively youthful. India and China had behind them thousands of years of culture while Japan was still in the naive vigor of primitive life. The swift transition from pre-literacy to the level of continental culture was made thirteen centuries ago under the influence of China and Buddhism, mediated through Korea. The remarkable sensitiveness and receptivity of the Japanese have made it possible for wise leaders, backed by the authority of the divine emperor, to direct the currents of the national life toward desirable goals with comparative ease. On the other hand, the soul of Japan, with stubborn tenacity, has creatively molded and dominated every foreign borrowing that has touched the Island Empire. The attitudes involved in the political and social patterns of the native heritage underlying all the accretions of the centuries give its distinctive character to Japanese culture.

The influence of Buddhism during its more than twelve centuries of supremacy as the state religion has been all-pervasive. With the excessive enthusiasm of a devotee, Lafcadio Hearn said—"There is scarcely one interesting or beautiful thing produced in this country for which the nation is not in some way indebted to Buddhism." Before the coming of Buddhism, however, the Japanese naturalism was infused with a love of beauty. Buddhism gave a philosophic depth to the aesthetic attitudes, and with its doctrine of transiency gave poignancy to the native delight in watching the falling cherry blossoms. In intellectual discipline, painting, architecture and literary production Buddhism has had an incalculable influence. But the religion of non-injury and peace which was able to soften the manners of the Mongols and come under the censure of a Chinese minister for undermining the military strength of China, was powerless to tame the fighting spirit



JUNI SHINSHO  
Japanese

of Japan. The pattern of clan warfare was able to turn even the monasteries on occasion into armed camps. And the Samurai could combine Buddhism with their warrior code.

Japan's heritage of nature is her joy and sorrow. For beauty of landscape the islands are unexcelled. Poet and artist find endless themes in this favored land of the gods. But nature has been niggardly in the resources which furnish the economic basis of life. Only by the intensive application of scientific methods are the Japanese able to raise enough food for the rapidly growing population on the meagre acres of arable land. Moreover, the time-spirit did not call Japan to a place among the industrial nations until the lands of the world were preempted and economic imperialism was an over-played game. In 1894, in 1904, in 1915 and again at Versailles she was denied what in an earlier age would have been hers by the rules of the game. Her economic plight is desperate. She is in the unhappy state of being too late to be saved by military might and too early to be helped by a planned world economy and cooperation.

At the center of the Japanese social pattern is the divine ruler. In the words of the constitution he is "sacred and inviolable," the lineal descendant of "a line of emperors unbroken for ages eternal." There is a poetic quality about this theory of divine right that distinguishes it from others. Loyalty has been the pivotal virtue in the Japanese code. When Confucian ethics won a place in the life of Japan, the cardinal virtue of Confucianism, filial piety, gave precedence to loyalty. Scholars explained that the two were one, since the emperor is the father of his people and the most filial are at the same time the most loyal. During the feudal age of Japan, the military knights, the Samurai, exemplified in the purest form this spirit of absolute loyalty. Stories that have moved the emotions of successive generations relate the deeds of devotion unto death of the feudal retainers. During modern times loyalty has been blended with patriotism and nationalism. The public education of Japan has used the myths of the divine emperor, and the ever-watchful presence of the heroic dead as means of fostering loyalty to land and sovereign. The native cult of Shinto has, to a large degree, been secularized as an instrument for inculcating patriotism. This is in striking contrast with the Chinese situation. When the State cult of China was abolished the literati tried to preserve the figure of Confucius as a symbol of Chinese nationality, but to no avail. In Japan love of country and loyalty were beautifully blended with courage, self-sacrifice and self-respect. The Samurai were artists of loyalty. In

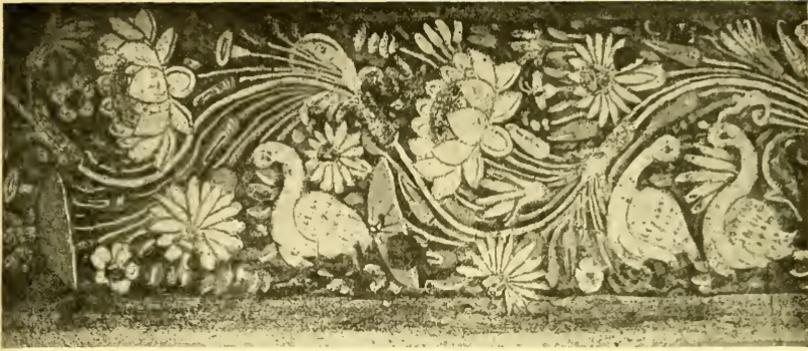
spite of all the efforts of the rulers of Japan to preserve this historic pattern it is being eroded by the tides of economic distress and "dangerous thoughts."

The old Japan is forever gone. The feudal, agricultural Japan of yesterday was transformed as if by magic into an industrialized world power. Universal education and scientific training replaced the traditional learning. The quiet, contented life and family control were infected by the new freedom. The ills of all industrial societies began to appear. Close to the lovely landscapes with their artistic buildings were the ugly mercantile structures which were fitting symbols of the new evils in the social life. Radical movements lifted their threatening heads. Oriental Japan entered into the heritage of the West.

A new act in the drama of human life is beginning. The era of isolation when separate peoples were allowed to develop their own peculiar motifs, embodying the universal human search for an ideal happiness in distinctive social-religious forms, is no more. The dividing curtains are withdrawn and for good or ill, the plan of the play must take account of the togetherness of all humanity. In this situation, understanding is a primary necessity. But the need goes deeper. The old cultural enfoldments were cosy and comforting. Thousands of years of triumph and tragedy, stubborn wrestling with inexorable fate, the conquest of nature, creation of the refinements of living, poetic flight into realms of a longed-for ideal, were woven into these traditional culture patterns of philosophy, custom and institution. If the searching sunlight of modern science does not destroy them, the maladjustments of a mechanized age reduces them to futility. Hence the necessity of sympathy, particularly for the peoples of the new Orient who are compelled to make the transition in a single generation. But the need is deeper still. The new world is a unity. The great problems of this age do not stop at any national frontier. They are international. Remote tribes in inner Africa are involved in the same tangle of interlocking forces that are altering the lives of the peasants of China. And the solutions must include the family of man. A common scientific knowledge, common ideals growing out of the universal nature of the new world problems make the cultural attitudes of superiority and the isolated nationalisms of the past meaningless. Hence the necessity for cooperation. Rabindranath Tagore called India to this larger

vision—"The problem is a world problem. No nation can be saved by breaking away from others. We must all be saved or we must perish together." Understanding, sympathy, and cooperation are essential for the creation of a new civilization in which the nations of the world may live in harmony. Then by mutual enrichment all cultures may flower into new life.

All peoples are adrift from their old moorings. All are being compelled to criticise and evaluate the ideals of the past. We are spectators and actors at once in the making of a new world. There is a fascination in following the research workers and archeologists as they unfold the long buried chapters of the history of cultures. There is even greater interest in watching the transformation of these age-old heritages into living embodiments of the hopes and desires of a generation conditioned by modern science and a new social idealism. The close interrelationships of material civilization, the unity in cultural diversity of our world, make inevitable a cross-fertilization of cultures. In the search for joy in living, the ancient Orient has much to teach not only the new Occident but the new Orient as well. There is no eternal truth and no infallible guidance to be transmitted, borrowed or appropriated. Institutions of the past do not stand transplanting to the soil of the new age. But there may be a deep wisdom in the long experience of the Orient in the art of life that may be valuable to the hurried and individualistic West.



LOTUS, DETAIL OF CEILING  
Ajanta

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ART OF EASTERN ASIA

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**T**HAT Asia, in all her diversity, is nevertheless a living spiritual unity, was first and eloquently affirmed by Okakura in 1904. This diversity in unity embraces at the very least one half of the cultural inheritance of humanity.<sup>1</sup> Yet it is still customary in Europe to compile histories of art, aesthetics, or philosophy in general with tacit claims to universality, while in fact such works are restricted in contents to the history of Europe. What has been learned about Asia remains at best a series of disconnected facts, apparently arbitrary, because not exhibited in relation to a human will. It will be self-evident then that the true discovery of Asia represents for the majority an adventure still to be achieved. Without some knowledge of Asia, no modern civilization can come into maturity, no modern individual can be regarded as civilized, or even fully aware of what is properly his own. Not that Asia can have importance for Europe as a model—in hybrid styles, Chinoi-

<sup>1</sup>Strzygowski's division of Asia into North and South, and exclusion (ZDMG., N.F....10, p. 105) of the South, seems to me to be based on a mistaken conception of the sources and significance of Mazdaism. It is valid only to this extent, that whereas in India the development of devotional (*bhakti*) theism involved a predominance of anthropomorphic imagery during the last two thousand years, the Far East, had it not been influenced by the iconographic necessities of Buddhism, might have remained predominantly aniconic from first to last. Thus Central and Far Eastern Asia (the "North") may be said to owe their anthropomorphic art to a movement of southern origin: but it has also to be remembered that an aniconic style of animal, plant or landscape symbolism, originated in a long pre-Aryan antiquity and was a common property of all Asia, and that this style has survived in all areas, the Indian "South" by no means representing an exception.

series, authentic forms are merely caricatured, whereas a genuine assimilation of new cultural ideas should and can only result in a development formally altogether different from that of the original mode. What Asia signifies for Europe is means to the enlargement of experience, means to culture in the highest sense of the word, that is to an impartial knowledge of style; and this implies a better understanding of the nature of man, a prerequisite condition of cooperation.

It must not be supposed that we can take possession of new experiences without effort or preparation of any kind. It is not enough to admire only what happens to appeal to our taste at first sight; our liking may be based on purely accidental qualities or on some complete misunderstanding. Far better to begin by accepting for the time being, the dicta of competent authority as to what is great and typical in Asiatic art, and then to seek to understand it. We must particularly remember that no art is exotic, quaint, or arbitrary in its own environment, and that if any of these terms suggest themselves to us, we are still far removed from any understanding of what is before us. It is hard for most people to appreciate even the art of mediaeval Europe. Science and art are nowadays so far confused that we often hear in a museum the remark, "That was before they knew anything about anatomy": handicraft so unfamiliar that we hear still oftener the inquiry, "Was that all made by hand?" Edification and theology are so far from the interests of the majority that the once indivisible connection of religion with art is now conceived as an infringement of human liberty. Modern academic experimental study of the psychology of art<sup>2</sup> seeks only to discover what kinds of aesthetic surfaces compose the most comfortable environment (it is hardly to be wondered at that tired business men are willing to endow researches of this sort). Moreover, to the modern consciousness, art is an individual creation, produced only by persons of peculiar sensibilities working in studios and driven by an irresistible urge to self-expression. We think of art, not as the *form* of our civilization, but as a mysterious quality to be found in certain kinds of things, proper to be "collected," and to be exhibited in museums and galleries. Whereas Christian art and the arts of Asia have always been produced, not by amateurs, but by trained professional craftsmen, proximately as utilities, ultimately *ad majorem gloriam Dei*.

<sup>2</sup>"It is lost time to converse with you, whose works are only Analytic."

We approach the essential problem, What is art? What are the values of art from an Asiatic point of view? A clear and adequate definition can be found in Indian works on rhetoric. According to the *Sāhitya Darpaṇa*, I, 3, *Vākyaṁ rasātmakam kāvyaṁ*<sup>3</sup> "Art is a statement informed by ideal beauty." Statement is the body, *rasa* the soul of the work; the statement and the beauty cannot be divided as separate identities. The nature of the statement is immaterial, for all conceivable statements about God must be true. It is only essential that a necessity for the particular statement should have existed, that the artist should have been identified in consciousness with the theme. Further, as there are two Truths, absolute and relative (*vidyā and avidyā*), so there are two Beauties the one absolute or ideal, the other relative, and better termed loveliness, because determined by human affections. These two are clearly distinguished in Indian aesthetics.

The first, *rasa*,<sup>4</sup> is not an objective quality in art, but a spiritual activity or experience called "tasting" (*āsvāda*); not affective in kind, not dependent on subject matter or texture, whether lovely or unlovely to our taste<sup>5</sup> but arising from a perfected self-identification with the theme, whatever it may have been. This pure and disinterested aesthetic experience, indistinguishable from knowledge of the impersonal Brahman, impossible to be described otherwise than as an intellectual ecstasy, can be evoked only in the spectator possessing the necessary competence, an inward criterion of truth (*pramāṇa*); as competent, the true critic is called *pramātr*, as enjoyer, *rasika*. That God is the actual theme of all art is suggested by Saṅkarācārya, when he indicates Brahman as the real theme of secular as well as spiritual songs.<sup>6</sup> More concretely, the master painter is said to be one who can depict the dead without life (*cetana*, sentience), the sleeping possessed of it.<sup>7</sup> Essentially the same conception of art as the manifestation of an informing energy

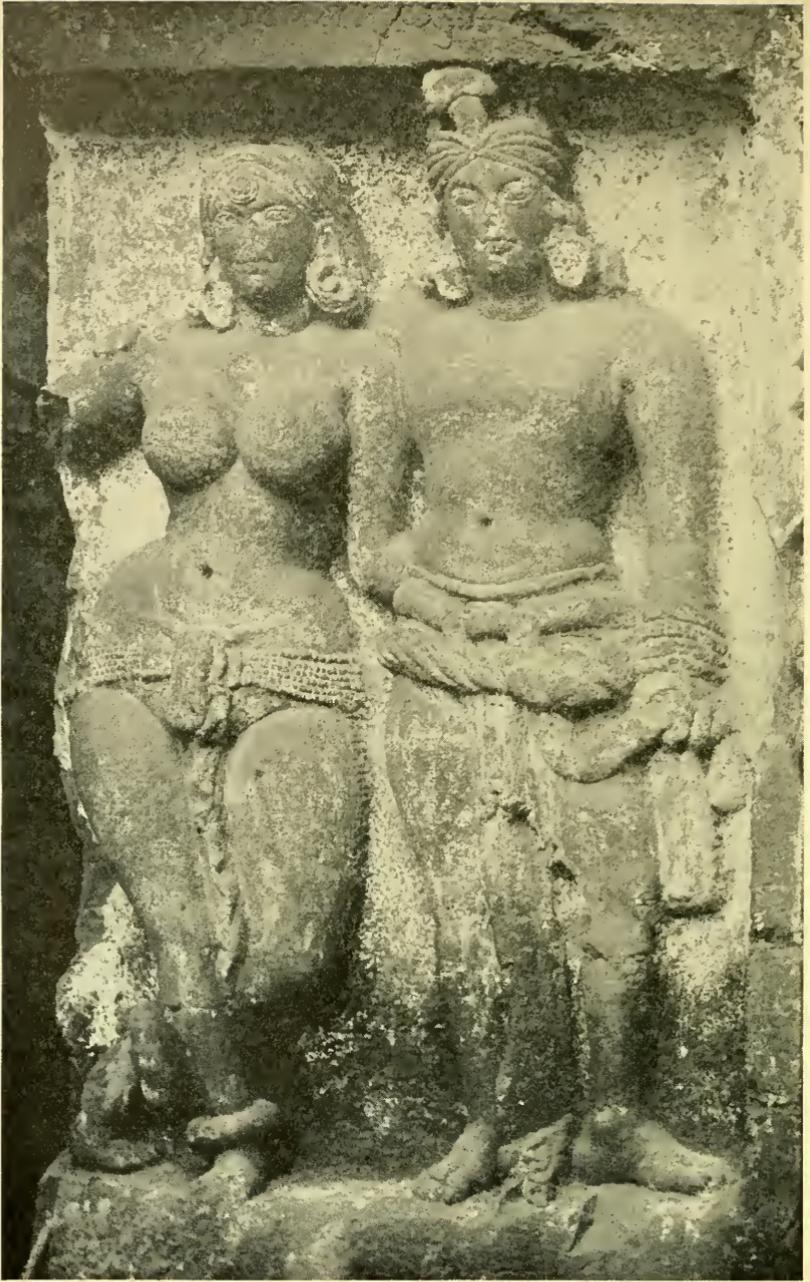
<sup>3</sup>*Kāvya*, specifically "poetry" (prose or verse) can also be taken in the general sense of "art." Essential meanings present in the root *kū* include wisdom and skill.

<sup>4</sup>*Sāhitya Darpaṇa*, III, 2-3. See also Regnaud, P., *La rhétorique sanskritte*, Paris, 1884, and other works on the Indian *alaṅkāra* literature. It should be noted that the word *rasa* is also used in the plural to denote the different aspects of aesthetic experience with reference to the specific emotional coloring of the source; but the *rasa* which ensues is one and indivisible.

<sup>5</sup>Dhananjaya, *Daśarūpa*, IV, 90.

<sup>6</sup>Commentary on the *Brahma Sūtra*, I, 1, 20-21.

<sup>7</sup>*Viṣṇudharmottara*, XLIII, 29.



ROYAL DONORS  
Indian

is expressed in China in the first of the Six Canons of Hsieh Ho (fifth century), which requires that a work of art should reveal the operation of the spirit in living forms, the word here used for spirit implying rather the breath of life than a personal deity. (cf. Greek *pnucma*, Sanskrit *prāṇa*.) The Far Eastern insistence on the quality of brush strokes follows naturally; for the brush strokes, as implied in the second of the Canons of Hsieh Ho, form the bones or body of the work; outline, *per se*, merely denotes or connotes, but living brush work makes visible what was invisible.<sup>8</sup> It is worth noting that a Chinese ink-painting, monochrome but far from monotone, has to be executed once and for all time without hesitation, without deliberation, and no correction is afterwards permissible or possible. Aside from all question of subject matter, the painting itself is thus closer in kind to life, than an oil-painting can ever be.

The opposite of beauty is ugliness, a merely negative quality resulting from the absence of informing energy: which negative quality can occur only in human handiwork, where it plainly expresses the worker's lack of grace, or simple inefficiency. Ugliness cannot appear in Nature, the creative energy being omnipresent and never inefficient. Relative beauty, or loveliness (*raṇya*, *śobha*, etc.<sup>9</sup>) on the other hand, that which is pleasing to the heart, or seductive (*manorama*, *manohara*, etc.) and likewise its opposite, the unlovely or distasteful (*jugupsita*), occurs both in nature and in the themes and textures of art, depending on individual or racial taste. By these tastes our conduct is naturally governed; but conduct itself should approximate to the condition of a disinterested spontaneity, and in any case, if we are to be spiritually refreshed by the spectacle of an alien culture, we must admit the validity of its taste, at least imaginatively and for the time being.

Aesthetic ecstasy, as distinct from the enjoyment of loveliness, is said to arise from the exaltation of the purity (*sattva*) of the *pramātr*, which purity is an internal quality "which averts the face from external appearances (*bāhyameyavimukhatâpâdaka*)"; and the knowledge of ideal beauty is partly "ancient," that is to say, innate, and partly "present," that is to say matured by culti-

<sup>8</sup>Tomita, K., *Art: Far-Eastern methods*, Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th ed.; and *Brush strokes in Far-Eastern painting*, Eastern Art, III, 1931.

<sup>9</sup>*Śobha*, for example, is defined in drama as the "natural adornment of the body by elegance of form, passion, and youth" (*Daśarūpa*, II, 53).

vation.<sup>10</sup> This ideal delight cannot vary in essence, or be conceived of as otherwise than universal. Apprehended intuitively, without a concept, that is, not directed to or derived from specific knowledge (Kant), *id quod visum placet* (St. Thomas Aquinas), and consisting, not in pleasure, but in a delight of the reason (*nandicinmaya*, *praharṣa*), it cannot as such be analysed into parts, discoursed upon, or taught directly, as is proved both by the witness of men of genius and by experience. In any case, the ecstasy of perfect experience, aesthetic or other, cannot be sustained. Returning to the world, its source becomes immediately objective, something not merely to be experienced, but also to be known. From this point of view, a real indifference to subject matter, such as professional aesthetes sometimes affect, could only be regarded as a kind of insensibility; the "mere archaeologist," whose impartiality is a positive activity far removed from indifference, is often in fact nearer to the root of the matter, humanly speaking, than is the collector or "lover" of art.

The work of art is not merely an occasion of ecstasy, and in this relation inscrutable, but also according to human needs and therefore according to standards of usefulness, which can be defined and explained. This good or usefulness will be of two main kinds, religious and secular; one connected with theology, adapted to the worship and service of God as a person, the other connected with social activity, adapted to the proper ends of human life, which are defined in India as vocation or function (*dharma*), pleasure (*kāma*), and the increasing of wealth (*artha*). Even were it maintained that Asiatic art had never attained to perfection in its kind, it would not be denied that a knowledge of these things could provide an absorbing interest, and must involve a large measure of sympathetic understanding. It is actually a knowledge of these things which alone can be taught; explanation is required, because the mind is idle, and unwilling to recognize beauty in unfamiliar forms, perhaps unable to do so while distracted by anything apparently arbitrary or capricious, or distasteful in the work itself, or by curiosity as to its technique or meaning. All that man can do for man, scholar for public, is to disintegrate those prejudices that stand in the way of the free responses and activity of the spirit. It would be impertinent to ask whether or not the scholar himself be in a state of grace, since this lies only in the power

<sup>10</sup>*Sahitya Darpaṇa*, III, 2-3, and Commentary.

of God to bestow; all that is required of him is a humane scholarship in those matters as to which he owes an explanation to the public. Only when we have been convinced that a work originally answered to intelligible and reasonable needs, tastes, interests, or aspirations, whether or not these coincide with our own (a matter of no significance, where censorship is not in view), only when we are in a position to take the work for granted as a creation which could not have been otherwise than it is, are conditions established which make it possible for the mind to acknowledge the splendor of the work itself, to relish its beauty, or even its grace.

If then we are to progress from a merely capricious attraction to selected works, possibly by no means the best of their kind, we shall have to concern ourselves to understand the character (*svabhāva*) of the art; more simply expressed, to learn what it is all about, to comprehend it in operation. This is tantamount to an understanding of our neighbor; he alone, for and by whom the art was devised, affords a valid explanation of its existence. To understand him, we require not merely a vague good will, but also real contact: "Wer den Dichter will verstehen, muss in Dichter's Lande gehen." But the homelands of the Poetic Genius are often remote in time as well as space, and in any case mere travel on the part of those who have neither eyes to see nor ears to hear is rather worse than useless. Generally speaking, one who has not been educated *for* travel, will never be educated *by* travel; he who would bring back the wealth of the Indies, must take the wealth of the Indies with him. We are not making too great a demand; in any case the man of today can hardly be called educated who knows no other literature than his own, can hardly be regarded as a "good European" who knows only Europe. The normal man, without proposing to become a professional scholar, or what is essential for research, to control any Oriental language, can obtain what he most needs merely from the reading of Oriental literature in the best translations (despite their inevitable shortcomings), and certain selected works by more specialised scholars. As Mencius said in giving advice to a pupil, "The way of truth is like a great road. It is not difficult to know. Do you go home and search for it and you will have an abundance of teachers."

"Who paints a figure, if he cannot be it, cannot draw it." These words of Dante (*Canzone*, XVI) utterly alien to the assertions of

those who now maintain that art can be successfully divorced from its theme and from experience, are alone sufficient to establish a fundamental identity of European and Asiatic art, transcending all possible stylistic difference, and all possible distinction of themes. But whereas Europe has only rarely and rather unconsciously subscribed to this first truth about art, Asia has consistently and consciously acted in awareness that the goal is only reached when the knower and the known, subject and object are identified in one experience. In European religion, the application of this doctrine has been a heresy.<sup>11</sup> In India it has been a cardinal principle of devotion that to worship God one must become God (*Nadevo devam arcayet: Śivo bhūtṛvā Śivam yajet*).<sup>12</sup> This is in fact a special application of the general method of Yoga, which as a mental discipline proceeds from attention concentrated upon the object, to an experience of the object by self-identification in consciousness with it. In this condition the mind is no longer distracted by *citta-vṛtti*, perception, curiosity, self-thinking and self-willing; but draws to itself, *ākaraṣati*, as though from an infinite distance<sup>13</sup> the very form of that theme to which attention was originally directed. This form, *svarūpa*, imagined in stronger and better lineaments than the vegetative mortal eye can see, and brought back as it were from an inner source to the outer world, may be used directly as an object of worship, or may be externalised in stone or pigment to the same end.

These ideas are expanded in the ritual procedure which we find enjoined upon the images in the mediaval *Sādhanāmālās*. The details of these rituals are most illuminating, and though they are enunciated with special reference to cult images, are of quite general application, since the artist's theme can only be rightly thought of as the object of his devotion, his *devatā* for the time being. The

<sup>11</sup>When Eckhart says "God and I are one in the act of perceiving Him," this is not orthodox doctrine.

<sup>12</sup>Yoga is not merely rapture, but also "dexterity in action," *karmasu kāuśalam*, *Bhagavad Gītā*, II, 50. The idea that creative activity (*citta sañña*) is completed before any physical act is undertaken appears also in the *Atthasālinī*, see my *Early passage on Indian painting*, *Eastern Art* III, 1931.

<sup>13</sup>The remote source may be explained as the infinite focal point between subject and object, knower and known; at which point the only possible experience of reality takes place in an act of non-differentiation. (Cf. *One hundred poems of Kabir*, No. XVI, "Between the poles of the sentient and insentient, etc.").



"COWDUST"  
Indian

artist, then, purified by a spiritual and physical ritual, working in solitude, and using for his purpose a canonical prescription (*sādhana*, *mantra*), has to accomplish first of all a complete self-identification with the indicated concept, and this is requisite even though the form to be represented may embody terrible supernatural features or may be of the opposite sex to his own; the desired

form then "reveals itself visually against the sky, as if seen in a mirror, or in a dream," and using this vision as his model, he begins to work with his hands.<sup>14</sup> The great Vision of Amida must have revealed itself thus, notwithstanding that the subject had already been similarly treated by other painters; for the virtue of a work is not in novelty of conception, but intensity of realisation.

The principle is the same in the case of the painter of scenic, animal, or human subjects. It is true that in this case Nature herself provides the text: but what is Nature—appearance or potential? In the words of Ching Hao, a Chinese artist and author of the T'ang period, the Mysterious Painter<sup>15</sup> "first experiences in imagination the instincts and passions of all things that exist in heaven or earth; then in a style appropriate to the subject, natural forms flow spontaneously from his hand." On the other hand, the Astounding Painter, "though he achieves resemblance in detail, misses universal principles, a result of mechanical dexterity without intelligence. . . when the operation of the spirit is weak, all the forms are defective."<sup>16</sup> In the same way Wang Li, who in the fourteenth century painted the Hua Mountain in Shenshi, declares that if the idea in the mind of the artist be neglected, mere representation will have no value; at the same time, if the natural form be neglected, not only will the likeness be lost, but also everything else:—"Until I knew the shape of the Hua mountain, how could I paint a picture of it? But even after I had visited it and drawn it from nature, the 'idea' was still immature. Subsequently I brooded upon it in the quiet of my house, on my walks abroad, in bed and at meals, at concerts, in intervals of conversation and literary composition. One day when I was resting I heard drums and flutes passing the door. I leapt up and cried, 'I have got it.' Then I tore up my old sketches and painted it again. This time my only guide was the Hua mountain itself."<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup>From a Sanskrit Buddhist text, cited by Foucher, *L'Iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde*, II, pp. 8-11. Cf. Śukrācārya, *Sukranītisāra*, IV, 4, 70-71 translated in my *Aesthetic of the Sukranītisāra*, Mélanges Linossier, (Paris, 1932.)

<sup>15</sup>For Ching Hao's Divine Painter see below, p.

<sup>16</sup>A modern teacher in a school of art would say, when the pupil's forms are defective, "Look again at the model."

<sup>17</sup>The extracts from Ching Hao and Wang Li are from versions by Waley. However, the character *i*, rendered as "idea," does not as Waley makes it, refer to an essence in the object, but to the "motive" or "form" as conceived by the artist. The reference of "idea" to the object affords a good example of the misapplication of European (ultimately Platonic) modes of thought in an Oriental environment.

Similarly in literature. When the Buddha attains Enlightenment, in Yoga trance (*samādhi*), the Dharma presents itself to him in entirety and fully articulate, ready to be uttered to the world. When Vālmiki composes the *Rāmāyaṇa*, though he is already quite familiar with the course of the story, he prepares himself, by the practise of Yoga until he sees before him the protagonists acting and moving as though in real life. As Chuang Tzu has said, "The mind of the sage, being in repose, becomes the mirror of the Universe, the speculum of all creation": nothing is hidden from it. Though the idea of literal imitation is in no way essential to or even tolerable to Christian art, it has played a large part in popular European views about art, and further, it cannot be denied that European art in decadence has always inclined to make of literal imitation a chief end of art. In Asia, however, views about art are not propounded by popular thinkers; and decadence finds expression, not in a change of principle, but either in loss of vitality, or what amounts to the same thing, excessive elaboration, rococo. It will be useful then to consider just what is meant in Asia by words denoting imitation or resemblance, used with reference to art, though the discussion will have a familiar ring for students of Aristotle. Just as in Europe, from the time of Aristotle onwards, "imitation" has had a dual significance, meaning (1) empirically the most literal mimicry attainable, and (2) in aesthetics the imitation of Nature *in sua operatione* (St. Thomas Aquinas), or "imaginative embodiment of the ideal form of reality" (Webster's Dictionary): so in Asia, Sanskrit *sādrśya*, "resemblance", and *loka-vṛtta anukaraṇa*, "making according to the movement of the world," and Chinese *hsing-ssü*, "shape-likeness," are used both empirically and in aesthetics, but with an essential difference.<sup>18</sup>

The proper connotation of these words as used in aesthetics can be deduced from the actual procedure of artists, already alluded to, from actual works of art, or from their employment in treatises on aesthetics. As to the actual works, we may be deceived at first sight. When Oriental art impresses us by its actuality, as in Japanese paintings of birds or flowers, in Pallava animal sculpture, or at Ajañtā by what seems to be spontaneity of gesture, we are easily led to think that this has involved a study of Nature in our sense,

<sup>18</sup>Sanskrit *loka-vṛtta* and Chinese *hsing* are the equivalents of English "Nature," including human nature an expression often used is "By means of natural shape (*hsing*) represent divine spirit (*shên*)."

too ready to judge the whole stylistic development in terms of degrees of naturalism. Yet, if we analyse such work, we shall find that it is not anatomically correct, that the spontaneous gestures had long since been classified in text books of dancing, with reference to moods and passions equally minutely subdivided in works on rhetoric; and that with all these matters the artist had to be familiar, and could not have helped being familiar, because they formed an integral part of the intellectual life of the age. We may say indeed, that whenever, if ever, Oriental art reproduces evanescent appearances, textures, or anatomical construction with literal accuracy, this is merely incidental, and represents the least significant part of the work. When we are stirred, when the work evokes in us a sense of reality akin to that which we feel in the presence of living forms, it is because here the artist has become what he represents, he himself is recreated as beast or flower or deity, he feels in his own body all the tensions appropriate to the passion that animates his subject.

\* \* \* \*

Because theology was the dominant intellectual passion of the race, Oriental art is largely dominated by theology. We do not refer here only to the production of cult images, for which India was primarily responsible, but to the organization of thought in terms of types of activity. Oriental art is not concerned with Nature, but with the nature of Nature; in this respect it is nearer to science than to our modern ideas about art. Where modern science uses names and algebraic formulae in establishing its hierarchy of forces, the East has attempted to express its understanding of life by means of precise visual symbols. Indian Śiva-Śakti, Chinese Yang and Yin, Heaven and Earth, in all their varied manifestations are the polar opposites whence all phenomenal tensions must arise. In this constant reference to types of activity, Oriental art differs essentially from Greek art and its prolongations in Europe: Greek types are archetypes of being, *Ding an sich*, external to experience, and conceived of as though reflected in phenomena; Indian types are acts or modes of action, only valid in a conditioned universe, correct under given circumstances, but not absolute; not thought of as reflected in phenomena, but as representing to our mentality the informing energies to which phenomena owe their

peculiarity. Historically, the latter mode of thought might be described as an improvement of animism.

The corresponding Indian theory of knowledge regards the source of truth, not mere perception (*pratyakṣa*), but an inwardly known criterion (*pramāṇa*)<sup>19</sup> which "at one and the same time gives form to knowledge and is the cause of knowledge" (Dignāga, *kārikā* 6); it being only required that such knowledge shall not contradict experience. We can make this doctrine clearer by the analogy of conscience (Anglo-Saxon "inwit"), still generally regarded as an inward criterion which both gives form to correct conduct, and is its cause. But whereas the Occidental conscience operates only in the field of ethics, the Oriental conscience, *pramāṇa*, *chih*, etc., orders all forms of activity, mental, aesthetic, and ethical: truth, beauty, and goodness (as activities, and therefore relative) are thus related by analogy, not by



DURGA  
Pallava

likeness, none deriving its sanction from any of the others, but each directly from a common principle of order (*ṛta*, etc.) which represents the pattern of the activity of God, or in Chinese terms, of Heaven and Earth. Just as conscience is externalised in rules of conduct, so aesthetic "conscience" finds expression in rules or canons of proportion (*tāla*, *tālamāna*) proper to different types, and in the physiognomy (*lakṣaṇas*) of iconography and cultivated taste, pre-

<sup>19</sup>English "measure," "mete," "metre," etc. are connected etymologically and in root meaning with *pramāṇa*.

scribed by authority and tradition: the only "good form" is *śāstramāna*. As to the necessity for such rules, which are contingent by nature, but binding in a given environment, this follows from the imperfection of human nature. Man is indeed more than a merely functional and behavioristic animal (the gamboling of lambs is not "dancing"), but he has not yet attained to such an identification of the inner and outer life as should enable him to act at the same time spontaneously and altogether conveniently. Spontaneity of action can be attributed to Bodhisattvas "because their discipline is in union with the very essence of all Buddhas." (Aśvaghosa); Ching Hao's "Divine Painter" indeed "makes no effort of his own, his hand moves spontaneously"; but short of this divine perfection, we can only aspire to the condition of the "Mysterious Painter" who "works in a style appropriate to his subject." Or as expressed with reference to the strictly ordered art of the drama, "All the activities of the gods, whether at home or afield, spring from a natural disposition of the mind, but all the activities of men result from the conscious working of the will; therefore it is that the details of the actions to be done by men must be carefully prescribed" (*Nāṭya Śāstra*, II, 5). Objection to such rules has often been made, ostensibly in the interest of the freedom of the spirit, practically however on behalf of the freedom of the affections. But rules such as we speak of, having been evolved by the organism for its own ends, are never arbitrary in their own environment; they may better be regarded as the form assumed by liberty, than as restrictions.<sup>20</sup>

An admirable illustration of this can be found in Indian music. Here we have an elaborate system of modes, each employing only certain notes and progressions, which must be strictly adhered to, and each appropriate to a given time of the day or particular season: yet where the Western musician is bound by a score and by a tempered keyboard, the Oriental music is not written, and no one is recognized as a musician who does not *improvise* within the given conditions; we even find two or more musicians improvising by common consent. In China and Japan, there are detailed and elaborate treatises solely devoted to the subject of bamboo painting, and this study forms an indispensable part of an artist's training. A Japanese painter once said to me, "I have had to concentrate on

<sup>20</sup>"Representations become works of art only when their technique is perfectly controlled" (Boas, *Primitive Art*, p. 81).



DEER  
Indian

the bamboo for many, many years, still a certain technique for the rendering of the tips of bamboo leaves eludes me." And yet a finished bamboo painting in monochrome, executed with an incredible economy of means, seems to be wet with dew and to tremble in the wind. It is only when rules are conceived of as applied in an alien environment, when one style, whether of thought, conduct, or art, is judged by another, that they assume the aspect of regulations; and those modern artists who affect Primitive, Classical, or Oriental mannerisms, are alone responsible for their own bondage. What we have said by no means implies that anybody else's rules will serve to guide our hands, but rather that in any period of chaos and transition such as the present, we are rather to be pitied for than congratulated on our so-called freedom. A new condition of civilization, a new style, cannot be said to have reached a conscious maturity until it has discovered the criteria proper to itself.

Let us now consider how the doctrine of *pramāṇa* can be recognized in art itself. We have seen that the virtue of art does not consist in copying anything, but in what is expressed or evoked. The conception of a naturalistic art, though we know what it means in



BAMBOO IN THE WIND  
Chinese

popular parlance, represents a contradiction in terms; art is by definition conventional, and it is only by convention (*samketa*) that art is comprehensible at all.<sup>21</sup> Oriental art, all pure art, though it uses inevitably a vocabulary based on experience (God himself, using convenient means, *upāya*, speaks in the language of the world) does not invite a comparison with the unattainable perfection of Nature, but relies exclusively on its own logic and on its own criteria, which logic and criteria cannot be tested by standards of truth or goodness applicable in other fields of action. If for example, an icon is provided with numerous heads or arms, arithmetic will assist us to determine whether or not the iconography is correct, *āgamārthahāvisainvādi*, but only our own response to its qualities of energy and characteristic order can determine its value as art. Krishna, seducer of the milkmaids of the Braja-maṇḍala, is not presented to us as a model on the plane of conduct.<sup>22</sup>

Where Western art is largely conceived as seen in a frame or through a window, from a fixed point of view, and so brought toward the spectator, the Oriental image really exists only in our own mind and heart, and is projected thence onto space; this is apparent not merely in "anthropomorphic" icons, but also in landscape, which is typically presented as seen from more than one point of view, or in any case from a conventional, not a "real" point of view.<sup>23</sup> Where Western art depicts a moment of time, an

<sup>21</sup>*Sāhitya Darpaṇa*, 11, 4. Dogs and some savages cannot understand even photographs; and if bees are reported to have been attracted by painted flowers, why was not honey also provided?

The conventionality of art is inherent, not due either to calculated simplification nor to be explained as a degeneration from representation. Even the drawings of children are not primarily memory images, but "composition of what to the child's mind seems essential"; and "artistic value will always depend on the presence of a formal element that is not identical with the form found in nature" (Boas, F., *Primitive Art*, Oslo, 1927, pp. 16, 74, 78, 140)

<sup>22</sup>See the *Prem-sāgar*, Chap. XXXIV.

<sup>23</sup>See March, B., *Linear Perspective in Chinese Painting*, Eastern Art, III, 1931. Cf. also Bachhofer, L., *Der Raumdarstellung in der chinesischen Malerei*...., Münchner Jahrbuch für bildende Kunst, VIII, 1931.

The two methods of drawing, symbolic and perspective, though often combined, are really based on distinct mental attitudes; it should not be assumed that there really takes place a development from one to the other, or that a progress in art has taken place when some new kind of perspective representation appears. The methods of representing space in art will always correspond more or less to contemporary habits of vision. But perfect comprehensibility is all that is required at any given time, and this is always found; if we do not always understand the language of space employed in an unfamiliar style, that is our misfortune, not the fault of the art.

arrested action, an "effect" of light, Oriental art represents a continuous (though as we have seen, not eternal) condition. The Dance of Śiva takes place not merely as an historical event in the Tāraka Forest, nor even at Cidambaram, but for ever in the heart of the worshipper; the loves of Rādā and Krishna, as Nīlakaṇṭha reminds us, are not an historical narrative, but a constant relation between the soul and God. The Buddha attained Enlightenment countless ages ago, his manifestation is still accessible, and will so remain. The latter doctrine, expounded in the *Saddharmaṣuṇḍarīka*, is reflected in the sculptured hierarchies of Borobudūr. It is impossible that the same mentality should not be present equally in thought and art; how could the Mahāyānist, who may deny that any Buddha ever in fact existed, or that any doctrine was taught, have been interested in a portrait of Gautama? The image, then, is not the likeness of anything; it is a spatial, but incorporeal, intangible form, complete in itself; its aloofness ignores our presence, for in fact it was meant to be used, not to be inspected. We do not know how to use it. Too often we do not ask how it was meant to be used. We judge as an ornament for the mantelpiece what was made as a means of realization, an attitude hardly less naive than that of the Hindu peasants who are said to have converted a disused steam plough to new service as an icon.

The Indian or Far Eastern icon (*pratimā*), carved or painted, is neither a memory image nor an idealization, but ideal in the mathematical sense, of the same kind as a *yantra*;<sup>24</sup> and its peculiarity in our eyes arises as much from this condition as from the unfamiliar detail of the iconography. For example, it fills the whole field of vision at once, all is equally clear and equally essential; the eye is not led to range from one point to another, as in empirical vision or the study of a photographic record. There is no feeling of texture or flesh, but only of stone, metal, or pigment; from a technical point of view this might be thought of as the result of a proper respect for the material, but it is actually a consequence of the psychological approach, which conceives God in stone or paint otherwise than as God in the flesh, or an image otherwise than as an Avatāra. The parts are not organically related, for it is not contemplated that they should function biologically; they are ideally related, being the elements of a given type, "Ingredienz

<sup>24</sup>A *yantra* is a geometrical representation of a deity, composed of straight lines, triangles, curves, circles, and a point.

einer Versammlung wesensbezeichnender Anschauungswerte." This does not mean that the various parts are unrelated, or that the whole is not a unity, but that the relation is mental rather than functional.

All this finds direct expression also in composition. Even in the freer treatment of still definitely religious themes, at Ajañtā, in Vaiṣṇava (Rajput) painting, or in Chinese landscape, the composition may seem at first sight to be lacking in direction; there is no central point, no emphasis, no dramatic crisis, apparently no structure, though we are ready to admit that the space has been wonderfully utilised, and so call the work decorative, meaning, I suppose, that it is not offensively insistent. Similarly in music and dancing, where the effect on an untrained Western observer is usually one of monotony—"we do not know what to make of music which is dilatory without being sentimental, and utters passion without vehemence" (Fox-Strangways). The paintings of Ajañtā, certainly lacking in those obvious symmetries which are described in modern text books of composition, have been called incoherent. This is in fact a mode of design not thought out as pattern with a view to pictorial effect; yet "one comes in the end to recognize that profound conceptions can dispense with the formulas of calculated surface arrangement and have their own occult means of knitting together forms in apparent diffusion" (Binyon).

What has been said will also apply to portraiture, little as this might have been expected: here too the conception of types predominates. It is true that in classical Indian literature we frequently read of portraits, which though they are usually painted from memory, are constantly spoken of as recognizable and even admirable likenesses; if not at least recognizable, they could not have fulfilled their function, usually connected with love or marriage. Both in China and in India, from very ancient times onward, we find ancestral portraits, but these were usually prepared after death, and so far as we know have the character of effigies rather than likenesses.<sup>25</sup> In the *Pratimā-nāṭaka* of Bhāsa, the hero, though he marvels at the execution of the figures in an ancestral chapel, does not recognize the effigies of his own parents, and thinks the figures may be those of gods. Similarly in Cambodia and Farther India generally, where a deified ancestor was represented by a statue, this was in the form

<sup>25</sup>True portraiture, as remarked by Baudelaire, is "an ideal reconstruction of the individual" The Chinese term is *fu-shen*, "depicting character."

of the deity of his devotion. It is now only possible from an inscription to tell when a portrait is before us.

The painted portrait functioned primarily as a substitute for the living presence of the original; still one of the oldest treatises on painting, the *Citralakṣaṇa* contained in the Tanjur, though it refers the origin of painting in the world to this requirement, actually treats only of the physiognomical peculiarities (*lakṣaṇas*) of types. Even more instructive is a later case, occurring in one of the *Vikramacarita* stories: here a king is so much attached to his queen that he keeps her at his side, even in Council; this departure from custom and propriety is disapproved of by his courtiers and the king consents to have a portrait painted, to serve as substitute for the Queen's presence. The court painter is allowed to see the queen; he recognizes that she is a Padminī (Lotus-lady, one of the four physical-psychological types under which women are classed by Hindu rhetoricians) and paints her accordingly *padminī-lakṣaṇa-yuktam* "with the characteristic marks of a Lotus-lady," and yet the portrait, spoken of not merely as *rūpam*, "a figure," but as *svarūpam*, "her very form," is felt to be a true likeness. Chinese works on portrait painting refer only to types of features and facial expression, canons of proportion, suitable accessories, and varieties of brush-stroke proper to the draperies; the essence of the subject must be revealed, but there is nothing about anatomical accuracy.

Life itself reflects the same conditions. At first sight even the most highly evolved Asiatics look all alike to a Western eye, presenting the same aspect of monotony to which we have referred above. This effect is partly a result of unfamiliarity; the Oriental recognizes actual variety where the European is not yet trained to do so. But it is also in part due to the fact that Oriental life is modelled on types of conduct sanctioned by tradition. For India, Rāma and Sitā represent ideals still potent, the *svadharmā* of each caste is an ascertained *mode* of conduct; and until recently every Chinese accepted as a matter of course the concept of manners established by Confucius. The Japanese word for "rudeness" means "acting in an unexpected way." Where large groups of men act and dress alike, they will not only to some degree look alike, but are alike—to the eye.

Here then, life is designed like a garden, not allowed to run wild. All this formality, for a cultured spectator, is far more attractive



FLYING FIGURES  
Ajanta, Indian

than can be the variety of imperfection so freely shown by the plain and blunt, or as he thinks, "more sincere" European. For the Oriental himself, this external conformity, whereby the man is lost in the crowd as true architecture seems to be a part of its native landscape, constitutes a privacy within which the individual character can flower unhampered. This is also particularly true in

the case of women, whom the East has so long sheltered from necessities of self-assertion: one may say that for women of the aristocratic classes in India or Japan, there existed no freedom whatever, in the modern sense. Yet these same women moulded by centuries of stylistic living, achieved an absolute perfection in their kind, and perhaps Asiatic art can boast of no higher achievement than this. In India, where the "tyranny of caste" strictly governs marriage, diet, and every detail of outward conduct, there exists and has always existed unrestricted freedom of belief and thought. It has been well said that civilization is style. An immanent culture in this way endows every individual with an outward grace, a typological perfection, such as only the rarest beings can achieve by their own effort (this kind of perfection does not belong to genius); whereas a democracy, which requires of every man to save his own soul, actually condemns each to an exhibition of his own irregularity and imperfection; and this imperfection only too easily passes over into an exhibitionism which makes a virtue of vanity, and is complacently described as self-expression.

We have then to realize that life itself, the different ways in which the difficult problems of human association have been solved, represents the ultimate and highest of the arts of Asia: he who would comprehend and enjoy the arts of Asia, if only as a spectacle, must comprehend them in this highest form, directly at the source from which they proceed. All judgment of the art, all criticism of the life, by measurement against Western standards is an irrelevance that must defeat its own ends.

\* \* \* \*

Everyone will be aware that Asiatic art is by no means exclusively theological, in the literal sense of the word. India knows, if not a secular, at least a romantic development in Rajput painting, China possesses the greatest landscape art in the world; Japan has interpreted animals and flowers with unequalled tenderness and sensibility, and developed in Ukiyoye an art that can only be called secular. Broadly speaking, we may say that the romantic and idealistic movements are related to the hieratic art, which is on the whole the older art, as mysticism is related to ritual.<sup>26</sup> Allusion may be made, for example, to the well-known case of the Zen

<sup>26</sup>Perhaps it should be added, as relativity to Euclidean geometry.

priest, Tan-hsia, who used a wooden image of Buddha to make his fire—not, of course, as an iconoclast, but because he was cold; to the Zen doctrine of the Scripture of the Universe; and to the Vaiṣṇava conception of the world as a theophany. But these developments do not represent an arbitrary break with hieratic modes of thought: as the theology itself may be called an improvement of animism, so Zen represents an improvement of Yoga achieved through heightened sensibility, Vaiṣṇava painting an improvement of *bhakti* through a perfected sensual experience.

In a "Meditation upon Buddha" translated into Chinese in A.D. 420, the believer is taught to see not merely Gāutama the monk, but One endowed with all those spiritual glories that were visible to his disciples; we are still in the realms of theology. A century later, Bodhidharma came to Canton from Southern India; he taught, mainly by silence, that the absolute is immanent in man, that this "treasure of the heart" is the only Buddha that exists. His successor Buddhapriya codified the stations of meditation: but Zen<sup>27</sup> was to be practised "in a quiet room, or under a tree, or among tombs, or sitting on the dewy earth," not before a Buddha image. The method of teaching of Zen masters was by means of symbolic acts, apparently arbitrary commands or meaningless questions, or simply by reference to Nature. Zen dicta disturb our complacence, as who should say, "A man may have justice on his side and yet be in the wrong," or "to him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath." Logically inscrutable, Zen may be described as direct action, as immediacy of experience. Still, the idea of Zen is completely universal: "consider the lilies," "a mouse is miracle enough," "when thou seest an eagle, thou seest a portion of Genius," illustrate Zen. There are many Indian analogies: for example, our conduct should be like that of the sun, which shines because it is its nature to shine, not from benevolence; and already in one of the Jātakas, (No. 460), the evanescence of the morning dew suffices to enlightenment.

The sources of the tradition are partly Taoist, partly Indian. One might say that the only ritual known to Zen is that of the tea ceremony, in which simplicity is carried to the highest point of elaboration: but Zen is equally demonstrated in the art of flower

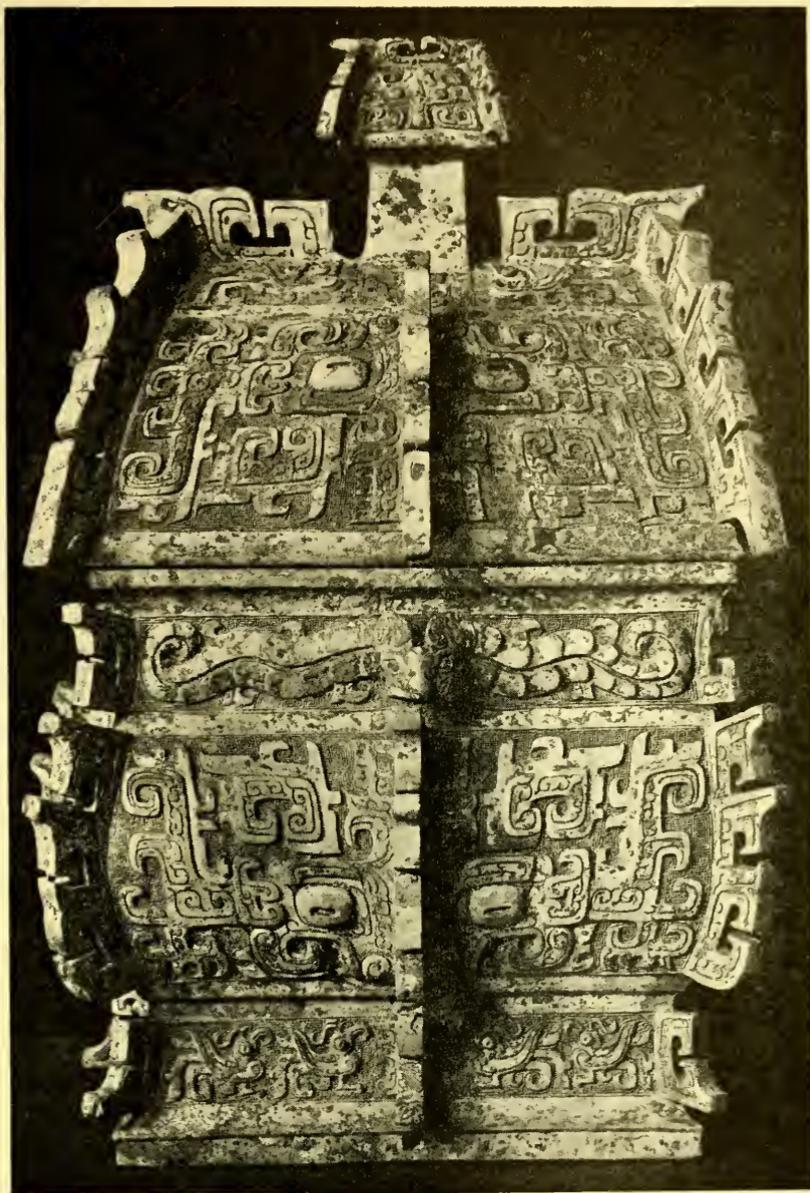
<sup>27</sup>Japanese *Zen*, Chinese *ch'an*=Sanskrit *dhyāna*, a technical term in Yoga, denoting the first stage of introspection, in Buddhist usage (Pali *jhāna*) referring to the whole process of concentration.

arrangement; Zen priests lead an active and ordered life, and to say, "This is like a Zen monastery," means that a place is kept in the neatest possible order. After the tenth century it is almost entirely Zen terminology that is used in the discussion of art. Perhaps a majority of artists in the Ashikaga period were Zen priests. Zen art represents either landscape, birds, animals, or flowers; or episodes from the lives of the great Zen teachers, of which last a very familiar aspect may be cited in the innumerable representations of Daruma (Bodhidharma) as a shaggy, beetle-browed recluse.

Zen, seeking realization of the divine nature in man, proceeds by way of opening his eyes to a like spiritual essence in the world of Nature external to himself. The word "romantic" has been applied to the art only for want of a better designation; the romantic movement in Europe was really quite otherwise and more sentimentally motivated, more curiously and less sensually developed. In Europe, Christianity has intensified the naturally anthropomorphic tendencies of Aryan Greece, by asserting that man alone is endowed with a soul: the more remote and dangerous grandeurs of nature, not directly amenable to human exploitation, were not considered without disgust, or as ends in themselves, before the eighteenth century. Even then, the portrayal of nature was deeply colored by the pathetic fallacy; Blake had only too good reason when he "feared that Wordsworth was fond of nature."

But from a Zen point of view, every manifestation of the spirit is perfect in its kind, the categories are indifferent; all nature is equally beautiful, because equally expressive, consequently the painting of a grasshopper may be no less profound than that of a man. The use of plant and animal forms as symbols goes back to very early origins in sympathetic magic: even in Asia the full comprehension of animal life represents the result of a long evolution in which the most ancient ideas survive side by side with the expressions of an ever heightened sensibility. The two points of view, symbolic and sympathetic, are clearly seen together in a statement on animal painting made by an anonymous Chinese critic in the twelfth century:

"The horse is used as a symbol of the sky, its even pace prefiguring the even motion of the stars; the bull, mildly sustaining its heavy yoke, is fit symbol of earth's submissive tolerance. But tigers, leopards, deer, wild swine, fawns, and hares—creatures that



BRONZE VESSEL  
Chinese

cannot be inured to the will of man—these the painter chooses for the sake of their skittish gambols and swift, shy evasions, loves them as things that seek the desolation of great plains and wintry snows, as creatures that will not be haltered with a bridle nor tethered by the foot.. He would commit to brush-work the gallant splendor of their stride; this would he do, *and no more.*"<sup>28</sup>

The greater part of this exactly corresponds to Zen; the same point of view is clearly presented in India still earlier, in the poetry of Kālidāsa and in Pallava animal sculpture. Centuries before this the sacredness of animal life had been insisted on, but mainly from an ethical point of view.

When at last Zen thought found expression in scepticism—

Granted this dewdrop world be but a dewdrop world,

This granted, yet. . . .<sup>29</sup>

there came into being the despised popular and secular Ukiyoye<sup>30</sup> art of Japan. But here an artistic tradition had already been so firmly established, the vision of the world so *approfondi*, that in a sphere corresponding functionally to that of the modern picture-postcard—Ukiyoye illustrates the theatre, the brothel, and the *Aussichtspunkt*—there still survived a charm of conception and a purity of style that sufficed, however slight its essence, to win acceptance in Europe, long before the existence of a more serious and classical pictorial art had been suspected.

In Vaiṣṇava mysticism, the Indian analogy of Zen, the miracle of human love reveals itself in poetry and art not merely as symbol, but as felt religious experience; the true relation of the soul to God can now only be expressed in impassioned epithalamia celebrating the nuptials of Rādhā and Krishna, milkmaid and Divine Bridegroom. She who for love renounces her very world, honor and duty alike, is the very type of Devotion. Moreover, the process of thought is reversible: in the truly religious life, all distinction of sacred and profane is lost, one and the same song is sung by lover and by monk. Thus the technical phraseology of Yoga, the language of bhakti, is used even in speaking of human passion: the bride is lost in the trance (*dhyāna*) of considering the Be-

<sup>28</sup>Version by Walley. Italics mine.

<sup>29</sup>A Japanese *hokku*: in poems of this kind, the reader is required to complete the thought in his own mind: here, "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may."

<sup>30</sup>*Ukiyoye* means "pictures of the fleeting world"; the Japanese color print is its typical product.

loved, love itself is an Office (*pūjā*). In Separation, she makes a prayer of the name of her Lord; in Union, "Each is both." The only sin in this kingdom of love is pride (*māna*).<sup>31</sup> In Rajput painting the life of simple herdsmen and milkmaids is denotation (*abhidha*), the Sports of Krishna connotation (*lakṣaṇā*), the harmony of spirit and flesh the content (*vyāñjana*). These, operating in the media available, have made the paintings what they are. If we ignore these sources of the presented fact, the painting itself "unique in the world's art," how can we expect to find in the fact any more than a pleasant or unpleasant sensation—and can we regard it as worth while (*puruṣārtha*) merely to add one more to the abundant sources of sensation already available? "Not bread alone"; is art a mere matter of aesthetic surfaces?

"What is it to God that man should be born and grow and  
wallow in his own sensations?"

\* \* \* \*

If we are to make any approach whatever to an understanding of Asiatic art as something made by men, and not to regard it as a mere curiosity, we must first of all abandon the whole current view of Art and Artists. We must realize, and perhaps remind ourselves again and again, that that condition is *abnormal* in which a distinction is drawn between workmen and artists, and that this distinction has only been drawn during relatively short periods of the world's history.<sup>32</sup> Of the two propositions following, each explains the other: viz., those whom we now call artists, were once artisans; and, objects that we now preserve in museums were once common objects of the market place.

During the greater part of the world's history, every product of human workmanship, whether icon, platter, or shirt button, has been at once beautiful and useful. This normal condition has persisted longer in Asia than anywhere else. If it no longer exists in Europe and America, this is by no means the fault of invention and machinery as such; man has always been an inventive and tool or machine-using creature. The art of the potter was not destroyed by the invention of the potter's wheel. How far from

<sup>31</sup>Not *māna*, "measure," referred to above, but etymologically related to *mens*, mental, mind, etc.

<sup>32</sup>Cf. Groslier, *Notes sur la psychologie*, p. 125, "la différence que nous faisons entre l'artiste et l'ouvrier d'art—toute moderne d'ailleurs—ne semble pas être comme en Cambodge."



HARIHARA  
Cambodian

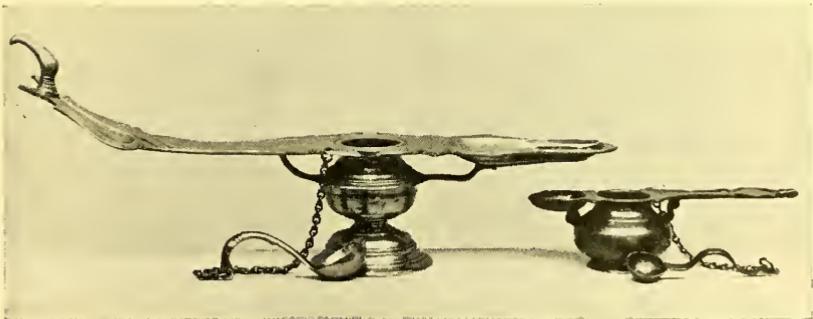
reasonable it would be to attribute the present abnormal condition to a baneful influence exerted on man by science and machinery is demonstrated in the fact that beauty and use are now only found together in the work of engineers—in bridges, aeroplanes, dynamos, surgical instruments, the forms of which are governed by scientific principles and absolute functional necessity. If beauty and use are not now generally seen together in household utensils and the business man's costume, nor generally in factory-made objects, this is not the fault of the machinery employed, but incidental to our lowered conception of human dignity, and consequent insensibility to real values. The exact measure of our indifference to these values is reflected in the current distinction of Fine and Decorative art, it being required that the first shall have no use, the second no meaning: and in our equivalent distinction of the inspired Artist or Genius from the trained

workman. We have convinced ourselves that art is a thing too good for this world, labor too brutal an activity to be mentioned in the same breath with art; that the artist is one not much less than a prophet, the workman not much more than an animal. Thus a perverted idealism and an amazing insensibility exist side by side;

neither condition could, in fact, exist without the other. All that we need insist upon here is that none of these categories can be recognized in Asia. There we shall find nothing useless (Fine Art) on the one hand, nothing meaningless (Decorative or Servile Art) on the other, but only human productions ordered to specific ends; we shall find neither men of Genius nor mere laborers, but only human beings, vocationally expert.

Asia has not relied on the vagaries of genius, but on training: she would regard with equal suspicion "stars" and amateurs. She knows diversities of skill among professionals, as apprentice or master, and likewise the products of different ateliers, provincial or courtly: but that anyone should practise an art as an accomplishment, whether skillfully or otherwise, would seem ridiculous.<sup>33</sup> Art is here a function of the social order, not an ambition. The practice of art is typically an hereditary vocation and not a matter of private choice. The themes of art are provided by general necessities inherent in racial mentality, and more specifically by a vast body of scripture and by written canons; method is learnt as a living workshop tradition, not in a School of Art: style is a function of the period, not of the individual, who could only be made aware of the fact of stylistic change and sequence by historical study. Themes are repeated from generation to generation, and pass from one country to another; neither is originality a virtue, nor "plagiarism" a crime, where all that counts is the necessity

<sup>33</sup>"That anyone not a Śilpan (professional architect) should build temples, towns, seaports, tanks or wells, is a sin comparable to murder" (from a Śilpa Śāstra cited by Kearns, *Indian Antiquary*, V, 1876). Cf. *Bhagavad Gītā*, III, 35.



TWO BRASS LAMPS  
Indian



PORCELAIN BOWL  
Chinese

inherent in the theme. The artist, as maker, is a personality much greater than that of any conceivable individual: the names of even the greatest artists are unknown.<sup>34</sup>

"What are the paintings even of Michael Angelo compared with the paintings on the walls of the cave temples of Ajanta? These works are not the work of a man: 'they are the work of ages, of nations.'" Nor would the biographies of individuals, if they could be known, add anything to our understanding of the art. What the East demands of the artist, as individual, is in-

<sup>34</sup>This statement is almost literally exact so far as sculpture, architecture, the theatre, and sumptuary arts are considered. The chief exception to the rule appears in Chinese and Japanese painting, where a somewhat fictitious importance has been attached to names, from the collectors's point of view.

tegrity and piety, knowledge and skill, let us say order, rather than peculiar sensibilities or private ideals for man is a responsible being, not merely as maker, but also as doer and thinker.

In all these ways the freedom and dignity of the individual, as individual, have been protected in a way inconceivable under modern conditions. Where art is not a luxury, the artist is on the one hand preserved from those precarious alternatives of prestige or neglect, affluence or starvation, which now intimidate "artist" and laborer alike.<sup>35</sup> Where ability is not conceived as an inspiration coming none knows whence, but rather in the same light as skill in surgery or engineering, and where eccentricity of conduct is neither expected of the artist nor tolerated in him, he is enabled to enjoy in privacy the simple privilege of living as a man among men without social ambition, without occasion to pose as a prophet, but self-respecting, and contented with that respect which is normally due from one man to another, when it is taken for granted that every man should be expert in his vocation.

<sup>35</sup>On the status of the craftsman in Asia, see my *Indian Craftsman*, and *Medieval Sinhalese Art* (Ch. III); Birdwood, Sir G., *The Industrial Arts of India*; Groslier, G., *Notes sur la psychologie de l'artisan cambodgien*, in *Arts et Archéologie khmèrs*, Vol. I ("élevé et grandi dans le renoncement...s'il est artiste, c'est pour obéir") and *Le fin d'un art*, in *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, Vol. V; Hearn, L., *Japan, an interpretation* (esp. pp. 169-171, 440-443).

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