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Bharata Dharma

Magazine of Liberal Hinduism:

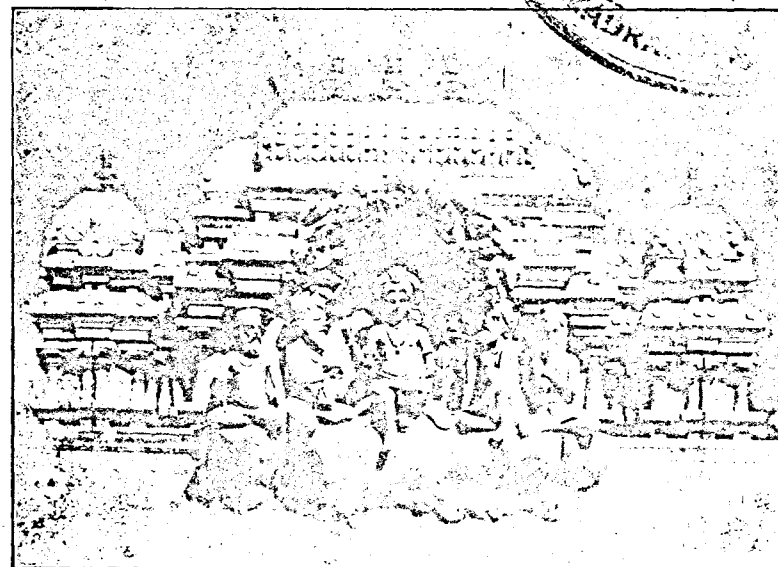
Editor; Mr. S. Raja Ram

Joint Editor Mr. K. V. Sesha Ayyangar.

VOL. VIII.

MAY, 1930

No. 2



On the front parapet of THE TEMPLE OF LIGHT, Adyar:

चित्रं वटतरोर्मूले वृद्धा शिक्षया गुरुर्युवा ।

गुरोस्तु मौनं व्याख्यानं शिष्यास्तु छिन्नसंशयाः ॥

Ah! The wonder under the Banyan tree! There sits the Teacher, a youth; the disciples, elders. The teaching is silence, and the disciples' doubts are dispelled.

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EASE for Aching Head and Painful Limbs

How delightful will a little relief be to the sufferer who has to sit up and let an aching head and painful limbs do their worst. Ease to such rests in the application of

LITTLE'S ORIENTAL BALM

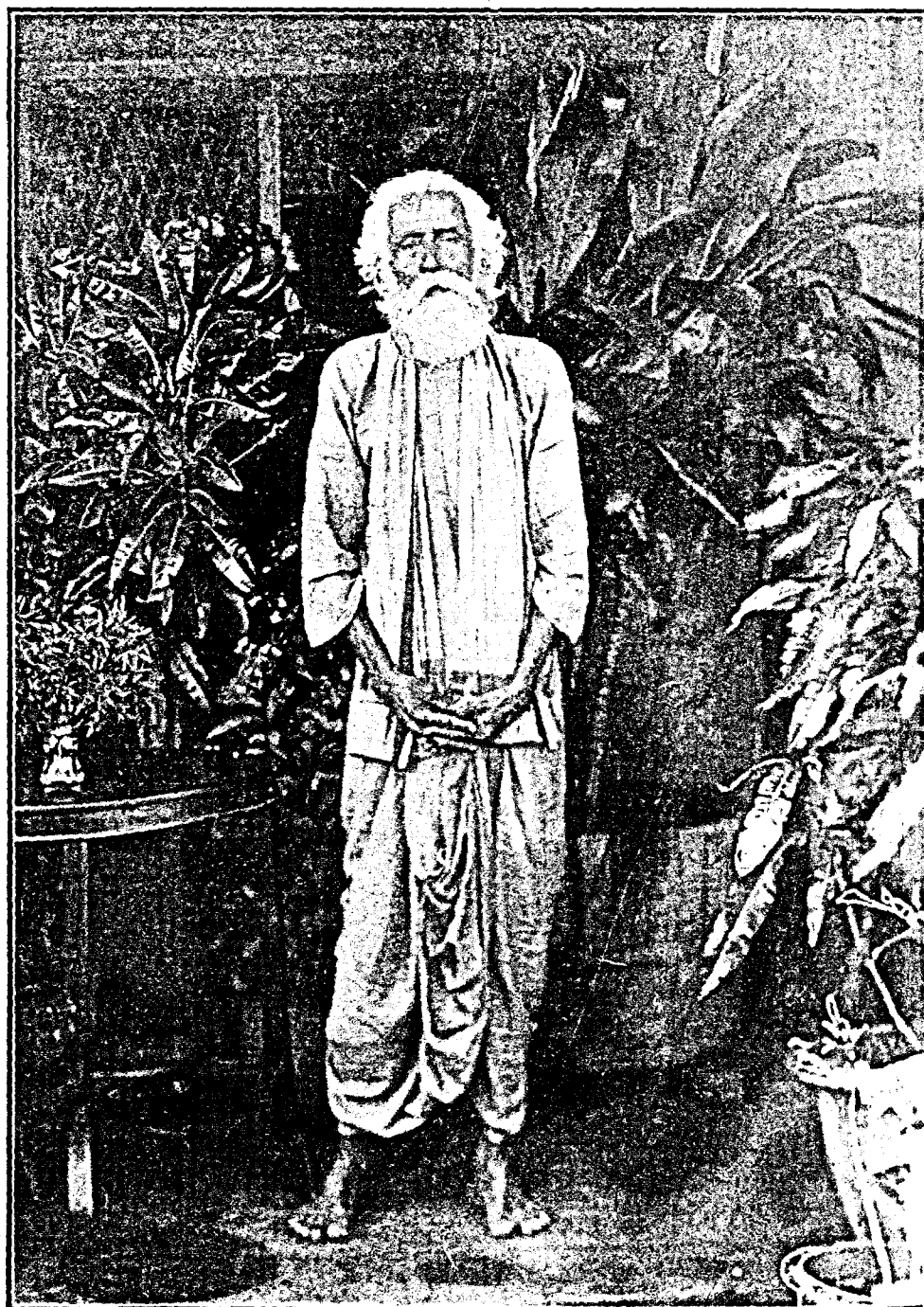
the World's Best Remedy for Rheumatism, Sciatica, Neuralgia, Headaches, Sprains, Strains—all Aches and Pains. Little's has been tested for 40 years and has stood it well. Grateful users are loud in its praise:

MRS. WHITNEY:—"I found it most soothing and pain relieving."

MR. S. C. SEN:—"I have adopted it as a family medicine for all these troubles."

Always keep a bottle. — It is sold everywhere.





T. RAMACHANDRA RAO, B.A., B.L.
Born 12-8-1851. Died 5-5-1930

Registered No. 2196



BHARATA DHARMA

(The Official Organ of the Bharata Samaja)

N. B.—The Bharata Samaja is not responsible for any opinions expressed or statements published in this magazine unless they are contained in an official document.

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VOL. VIII.

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The Full Moon of Vaisakh

This issue of the *Bharata Dharma* goes out on the Full-Moon day of the month of Vaisakha which according to Hindu tradition is one of the four Full-Moon days dedicated to *Vyasa* and are called *Vyasa-poornimas*. This particular Full-Moon is regarded by the Buddhists as one of the holiest days, as it was:—

1. the birthday of the Prince Sidharta
2. the day on which he attained illumination or *Buddhahood* and lastly,
3. the day on which he left the physical body and attained Nirvana.

To this day the Buddhists all over the world believe that the shadow of Lord Gautama Buddha appears every year, at a particular place on the northern slopes of the Himalayas on that day at the exact moment of the Full-Moon, and pours out his blessings on the world. Occult investigations have also confirmed the belief. Bishop C. W. Leadbeater in his book "*Masters and the Path*" has given a full description of what takes place on the occasion.

Any one who is able to go to sleep, with this idea in mind, we are assured, can be present at the spot in his or her subtle body and receive Lord Buddha's blessings, though he may not be able to bring the memory down to the *jagrat* or waking state.

Those interested in the subject are recommended to read *Masters and the Path*. C. R.

Lord Buddha's Message

By Sadhu T. L. Vasvani

* The message of the Buddha, as I understand it, is not an *ism* but an attitude,—not a creed but a view-point. Speculative systems were built up after Buddha passed away. But the Buddha himself offered the people not a speculative system but his own life-experiences. His whole being vibrated in sympathy with the people. He saw them suffer and wander in the dark. He called himself a "physician of the soul." He claimed to have "attained to the Immortal." And he moved from town to town, from village to village with a message of the Light. "O, the benighted, should ye not search for a torch?"

"Know thyself,"—was the teaching of Solon and Socrates. "Conquer thyself,"—was the teaching of the Buddha. The self-conqueror is mightier than the world-conqueror. So we read in one of his 'Sayings':—"One may vanquish a thousand foes in war, but he who conquers himself is the greatest victor."

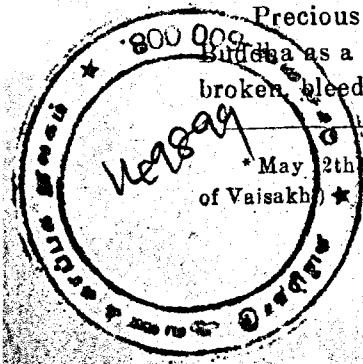
Buddha's message of the Brotherhood of Humanity, of Love for all beings, of purity, self-restraint and peace became a Liberator of Asia and sent her out on a world-mission. Buddha's message initiated a new Renaissance in India, China and Japan, in Syria and Central Asia. India under Buddha's leadership became a bearer to the nations of a Religion of Humanity.

In the modern era, Buddha's message has inspired thinkers and sages like Schopenhauer, Comte, and Emerson.

Precious to me more than my words may tell is the message of the Buddha as a witness to a New Civilisation of *Ahimsa*,—the hope of a broken, bleeding humanity.

—T. L. Vaswani.

* May 2th is sacred as the Buddha Anniversary Day. (See note on the Full Moon of Vaisakh) *



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True Freedom

By Sadhu T. L. Vasvani

Freedom, as I understand it is fellowship.
Fellowship with Humanity.

England is not free. Nor Soviet Russia.

For imperialism thrives on exploitation of the weak.

And Bolshevism with all its feeling for the poor is wanting in rich reverence for man as man. In Trotsky's book on *Lenin* is recorded a saying of Lenin:—"Do you think we can be victors without the most severe revolutionary terror?"

A new era will not open until Governments renounce repression and all worship of Lenin's God,—“the necessity of Terror.”

A new era will begin when nations resist wars and all counsels of hate and strife.

India's need is something bigger than "nationalism."

Non-violence is not enough.

Love is the need of the nation. For Love is creative.

Greater than Tolstoy and Thoreau are Krishna, Buddha and Christ.

India will be saved by a Movement of Love.

—T. L. Vaswani.

Late Mr. T. Ramachandra Rao

OF

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, ADYAR

It is with feelings of deep regret that we record the passing away after a brief illness at Trichinopoly, at the ripe age of 79, of Mr. T. Ramachandra Rao, B.A., B.L., retired Sub-Judge, and Joint General Secretary of the Indian Section, Theosophical Society, and a well known worker in S. India.

He was an Andhra Brahmana of the Nandavarika community and a native of the Anantapur District. He was born in August 1851, being the eldest son of a well-known and highly respected official in Kurnool, who is still remembered as Dewan Chowdappa. Mr. Ramachandra

Rao had his early education in the Government Zillah School at Kurnool, and in the Provincial School (Second Grade College) at Bellary, and joined the Presidency College, Madras for his B.A. course, and took a first class degree in Mathematicse of the Madras University, at the early age of 18. Soon after, he took his degree in Law. He entered Government service, first as a lecturer in the Government College and later as a District Munsiff and soon became a Sub-Judge. As a judge he earned a very good name and commanded the esteem of the public as well as of the High Court of Madras. He retired from Public Service, on account of failing health in 1899, at the early age of 48; but soon after, he found himself sufficiently fit to begin public work in the service of the Motherland. For some years after the starting of the Central Hindu College at Benares he travelled about all over South India collecting funds for the C.H.C. Later he began work as a Theosophical lecturer. To the last day he was an indefatigable worker, moving about from place to place lecturing and inspiring. His spotless life, his burning enthusiasm were a source of great inspiration to those who came into contact with him. His visits were always looked forward to with great eagerness by the many who knew him and had heard him. He was to have opened a camp of students at Papanasam, Tinnevely District, but an unexpected short illness snatched him away from our midst.

He joined the Theosophical Society as early as 1882 and was one of the oldest members of the Society, and has been a most energetic propagandist. He was the General-Secretary of the Indian Section for 2 years and has been the Joint General Secretary for S. India and Director of Propaganda for more than twenty years.

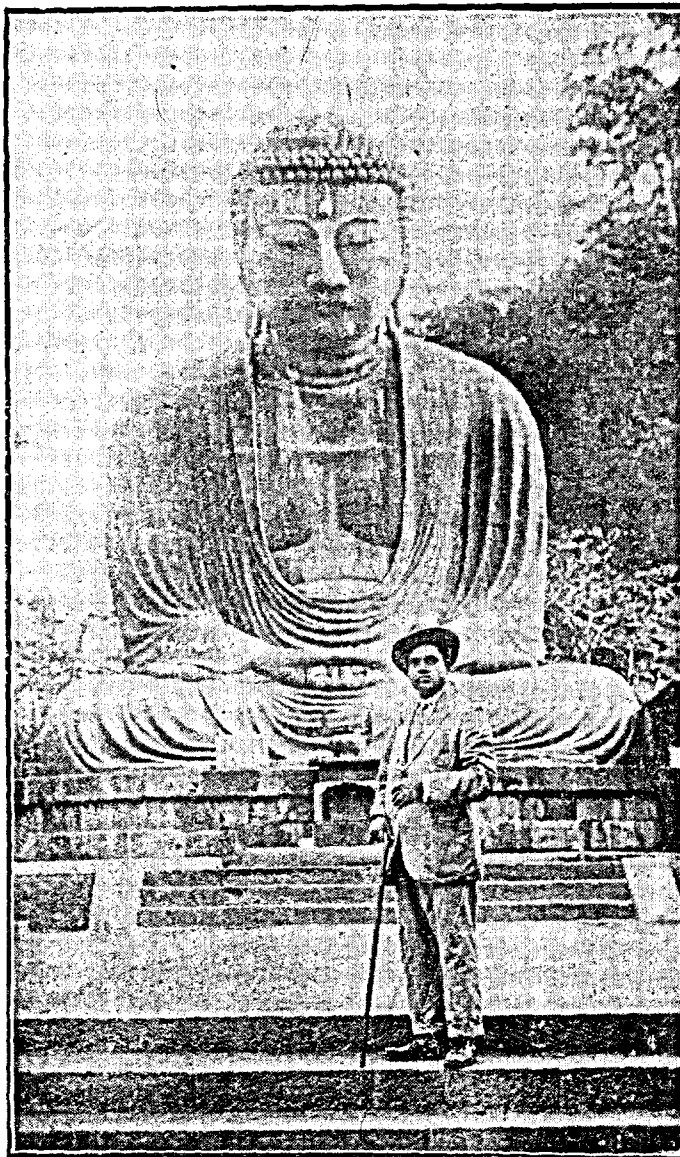
He was a deep student of the Vedantic literature in the original samskrit; and also made a critical study of the Theosophical literature. He brought his knowledge of the Samskrit literature to throw light on Theosophical teachings as he also used his knowledge of Theosophy to illumine many abstruse points in the Vedantic writings.

One characteristic of Mr. Ramchandra Rao was that once an idea entered his mind, he always fearlessly carried it to its logical end. With him thought, feeling and action were sought to be harmonised. He lived for the world. He was a real *Sanyasi*, who exemplified in his life the teaching of the Bhagavat Gita:

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्मकरोति यः ।

स सन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्रिर्न चाक्रियः ॥

He actually took the yellow robe by joining the Theosophical Order of *Sanyasins*; but just a few months before his death, he



DAI-BUTSU OR VAIROCHANA BUDDHA

thought that even that outer garb was a hindrance to real renunciation; and renounced the Order.

As a result of his Theosophical studies and their application to the Indian problems, the idea of broadening and liberalising Hinduism entered his head; with the result that the Bharata Samaja was brought into existence. Mr. Ramachandra Rao was literally the father of the Samaja which was founded in the year 1920. He also inspired the starting of the Magazine *Bharata Dharma* for spreading the ideas and ideals of the Samaja. He was also the first to take up and materialise the idea that the Theosophical Society should have within its home the shrines of all the living religions of the world. He obtained the permission of the President of the Theosophical Society to build a Hindu Temple at Adyar; and as a result of his exertions we have at Adyar a beautiful temple named ज्योतिरालयम्, "Temple of Light." It is an absolutely unsectarian temple, in which a perpetual light is the only symbol within the shrine to represent the One Supreme. Daily puja is performed in it at which all persons without distinction of caste, colour, creed or sex can take part provided they come with proper devotion and physically clean.

His is a life well lived to the last. He leaves a gap in the Theosophical Society, very difficult to fill. He leaves behind a son and three daughters, with many grand children and great grand children to feel the loss.

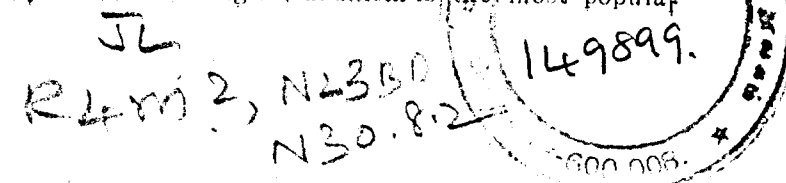
His life is entirely a life of service and he loved the service of the world as his highest happiness. We can confidently assert that he is one who renounced the pleasures of the Heaven world as completely as he did the comforts of this world and that, he is sure to have "a quick rebirth" to carry on his Master's work in a younger body with less limitations.

—C. Ramaiya.

Dai-butsu or Vairochana Buddha

By V. Thiagarajan

That Buddhism has been the prevailing religion in Burma, China and Japan for the past two thousand years is a world known fact. It can easily be, therefore, realised that the artistic instincts of the gifted people of Japan would have raised some of the very best temples to the World Teacher from very ancient times; and greater and more inspiring than even temples are the figures of Buddha, the Enlightened, made and erected by them. Although Buddhism is the most popular



religion in Japan, yet a few people are still following the indigenous *Shintoism*, which consists in the worship of nature and of ancestors, otherwise known as the "Way of the Gods." The most famous image of Lord Buddha is located at the Todaiji temple at Nara, the first permanent capital of Japan between 709 and 785 A.D. It is the largest image of its kind in Japan and perhaps one of the greatest in the world. It was erected in 749 A.D. at the instance of the 45th Emperor, *Shomu*, a sincere Devotee to Buddhism, who built numerous monasteries and made large endowments to temples throughout Japan. The image is a worthy rival to the golden image set up by Nebuchadnezzar or the Colossus at Rhodes. It measures 53 feet high above the pedestal. It is kept in a temple with a frontage of 188 feet, a depth of 167 feet and a height of 161 feet, supported by 60 pillars of massive pines. This is considered as the largest wooden building existing in the world. The head and neck of the image were cast in a single mould, but the body and the lotus seat were formed of separate plates soldered together and gilded all over. The total weight of the image is 480 tons; and it is made up of 437 tons of bronze, 288 pounds of gold, 7 tons of vegetable wax, 168 pounds of mercury, and several thousand tons of charcoal, tin and copper, the gold and mercury being used solely for gilding. In the 12th century, the Dai-butsu was seriously damaged in a disastrous fire during the Civil War of those times. In 1190 A.D., the head was replaced by a new one; and therefore the head looks much darker than the body. The Temple was destroyed by fire a second time in 1567 A.D., and the Dai-butsu then stood without shelter for over 100 years. The reconstruction of the temple was begun in 1699 A.D., and completed by 1702 A.D. The expression of the face and the attitude of calm reflection in which Lord Buddha is sitting on an open lotus blossom symbolizes Buddha's Grace, Omnipotent and Omniscient. The left hand is open in the lap, and the right hand is uplifted indicating 'preaching.'

A few ancient festivals are celebrated in the temples, at the present day just as they were held many thousands of years ago and the classical dances are still performed. The Japanese are a more conservative people than the Hindus in India and they have therefore little changed in the rituals of religion, although the spirit of modern progress and western civilisation has taken a strong hold over the country. In Kyoto there is *sanjusangen do* or the 'Hall of the 33 Ken' with 33 spaces between the front pillars of the temple and this is also otherwise called "Temple of 33,333 images." There are 1001 Statues of Buddhist Deities, all gilded with gold; and they present a very striking appearance. India is a land renowned for its temples and even an Indian who is

familiar with them is struck at the neatness of the temple and the natural surroundings where the temple is laid and the simplicity of their mode of worship. The redlacquer work over the wood which forms the basis of the structure and the porcelain tiles over the roof make it really "The temple of Heaven" as in Peking. The site usually chosen for a temple is on a hillock. The pathways are of different heights nicely gravelled with variations of tall trees to form an avenue. Several flower beds and ferneries complete the grandeur of the temple grounds. The cherry trees present a lovely spectacle in the spring with their gorgeous hues and perfume. Men, women and children are delighted to dance their national dances under the shades of the cherry during the festivals which come off in April of every year. The many coloured lanterns provided for during nights at short intervals add to the beauty of the scene. Occasionally an underground stream is made to descend in a series of waterfalls. On the whole there are about 400 such temples in Japan of which I was fortunate to see over 250. Each temple has its own peculiar plan, and several thousands of visitors at a time could be seen on its grounds. In South India, the Madura and the Rameswaram and Srirangam Temples are considered the biggest with space enough to allow several thousands of pilgrims to move about at a time; but the temples in Japan are very much bigger than ours. They are maintained with the least expense. The high priest and other servants of temples are given accommodation, food, dress, etc., and they receive a nominal fee for their services. The sight of the priests with their dress is all pleasing and they command very great respect at the hands of the visitors. The purity of life they lead is such that a 'Halo' may be said to be present round their clean heads.

There are very many great images of Buddha throughout Japan. The second best of the kind is to be found at Kamakura in the grounds of the ancient temple, known as the 'Kotoku-in,' endowed by Emperor *Shomu* in 737-A.D. The image was cast only in September 1252-A.D. by the celebrated glyptic artist, *Ono-go-ro-ye-mon* in accordance with commands received from the *Shogun* (Prince Mune take) who assisted Idano No Tsubone to carry out her pious desire of fulfilling the dying injunctions of *Minamoto-no-uoritomo*. It is most artistically executed. "The expression and pose suggest a Philosophical majesty, the result of a wisdom attained through a long course of thought. The peaceful serenity of the face, the scrutiny from the half closed, all seeing eyes and the firmly closed mouth suggest a sublimity equalled by no other statue. In the perfect repose and passionless calm that so truly express the root idea of Buddhist doctrines, this colossal Buddha has

sat on the stone pedestal for over 677 years." In this image Lord Buddha is represented as sitting with thumbs touching each other expressive of "firm faith." In some other images the hands are held against the breast with fingers pressed together indicating "unification of the spiritual and material worlds." This image at 'Kotoku-In' was housed within a huge temple; but in 1369 A.D. a raging storm destroyed it. Again in 1495 A.D. a tidal wave washed the temple off its foundation. Since then the image has never been placed under a roof and notwithstanding the ravages of time and the fury of the elements, it is in excellent condition. Sitting 49 feet 7 inches high, against the dark green back ground of pine leaves under the open sky, the huge statue, a work of exquisite art, commands great love and respect from the beholders. The whole weighs several thousands of tons and is 12'89 m in height; 29.29 m in circumference; the length of the face is 2.33 m, of the eye 1 m, of the ear 2.01 m and of the nose 85 cm. The breadth of the mouth is 83 cm, the length from knee to knee is 9.09 m and the circumference of the thumb is 84 cm. The eyes are of pure gold and the image is hollow up to the shoulders; and one can mount up by means of winding stairways placed inside.

I have had the pleasure of seeing both the images described above during my peregrinations in the Far East in the summer of 1929, and the photo print* here given shows the beautiful image of Lord Buddha at Kamakura and my humble self standing on one of the steps. My visit to Japan which was originally intended for health and Education resulted in effect as a pilgrimage over the lands where the 'Teachings of the Blessed one', which originating in India, had spread far and wide.

Sarda Act and After

(Contributed)

With the 1st of April of 1930, India has entered upon a period when girls are given legal protection from the obligation of early maternity. It appears to be doubtful, however, whether the full implications of the new situation and its profound and far-reaching beneficent possibilities have been fully brought home to the people. There is undoubtedly scope for extensive and continued propaganda for explaining the purport of the Sarda Act, the advantages it is intended to secure and how those advantages can best be secured. There is need

* See Frontispiece.

for such propaganda in spite of the "Sarda" marriages of little children before the 31st March, 1930. These marriages however numerous and deprecable they might be cannot by any stretch be said to have exhausted the marriageable children even among the pre-puberty marrying communities.

The most pressing need of the day, however, is the provision of adequate facilities for the education of girls on lines consonant with Indian tradition and outlook. Without such provision the results of the Act are bound to be incomplete, if not disappointing. Parents will find it difficult to keep female children continuously at home without suitable occupation and are entitled to call upon the State to help them in solving the difficulty.

Equally important with the extension of educational facilities is the re-shaping of the course of studies in girls' schools. The imposition on such schools of the over-literary curricula prevalent in boys' schools is quite unjustified. It is capable of harm and is undoubtedly the cause of the complaint from the "orthodox" side that if the present day boys' education is what is desired for girls, it is not worth having. A definite effort will have to be made to save female education from excessive academic influences and to make it a useful introduction and preparation for the real life which Indian girls will be called upon to live in after years. It is to be hoped that in the consideration of the scheme of such studies the arts, sciences and accomplishments that will enable girls to maintain and manage clean, healthy and cultured homes and families will receive due attention.

The Madras Devadasi Bill

(By Mr. N. Lakshmana Mudaliyar).

For the last twenty years I have carried on propaganda, by writings and speeches, to awaken the social conscience of the Hindu masses and classes. This has been rendered easy by the precept and practice, for the last forty years, of social reformers of the type of my journalistic chief Mr. K. Natarajan, now of Bombay. I have also done considerable rescue work among Devadasis and their daughters. My humble attempt is pretty successful because, for one thing, I am their kith and kin; have not taken shelter under any 'protective colour'; and for another, I know where exactly the shoe pinches. I am firmly convinced that these fallen sisters are merely the unfortunate victims of blind

custom and of men's lust. They are indeed more often sinned against than sinning. My own experience is that, once they are freed from unwholesome external influences, they are willing to get their daughters married, like the rest of the community. Except a handful of Devadasis in the Madras city who have been misled into starting an artificial agitation against measures of social legislation, I have yet to come across Devadasis who favour the continuance of the present day degenerate and dangerous system of dedicating girls, ostensibly for temple service, but in practice, to a life of vice. Though this is the actual state of affairs, it is surprising to note, as Mr. (now Sir) B. N. Sarma, and Mr. (now the Rt. Hon'ble) V. S. Srinivasa Sastri have said with reference to the current practice in Andhra and Tamil districts respectively, that the trustees of temples are deliberately evading the law in many parts of Southern India by allowing the dedication of minor girls in their temples. (Vide my paper in the Proceedings of the South India Social Service Conference, 1925.)

Of all Provincial Legislative Councils, Madras has been the first to put an end to the practice of dedication of young girls as Devadasis for service in Hindu temples and to enfranchise the inams granted to them from the condition of service in this matter (vide Madras Act V of 1929). The next obvious and important step is to declare dedication itself as null and void in order to emancipate the non-inam holding Devadasis also. No age limit should be recognised by law. The evil is the same whether dedication is performed inside or outside temple. I am therefore of the opinion that in clause 2 of Bill No. 5 of 1930, the words "in the precincts of Hindu temples or other places of worship" should be omitted and consequential changes be made in other clauses and parts of the said Bill. Sections 372 and 373 of I.P.C. in spite of raising the age limit from 16 to 18 are, and will continue to be mere dead letters until and unless dedication as such is declared to be a penal offence. The Hon. Mr. (now Sir) Manekji. Dadabhoi in his Bill of 2nd September 1912 said that experienced opinion favours the idea of introducing in the Bill an express provision against dedication as such. He accordingly framed clause 3 of his Bill for the purpose principally of making penal by statute this offence on the part of the people concerned. He has also rightly pointed out that it is always difficult to prove the criminal intention of the party contemplated in sections 372 and 373 of the I.P.C. until the girl has actually adopted prostitution as a profession and her future is blasted. This is my own sorrowful experience.

The Hon. Sir Reginald Craddock, the Home Member of the Government of India in 1912 clearly pointed out that what is

required is not only punitive but also preventive action. "In order to secure these objects," the Home member said, "power must be given to take away minor girls from the custody not only of strangers but of guardians and even of parents who are bringing them up to a life of immorality." Such a provision is quite necessary because during my rescue work on behalf of the Sangunthar Mahajana Sangam, Coimbatore, and after presiding over the third conference of the Isai Vellalars of the Tanjore District I have come to the deliberate conclusion that arts of singing and dancing, as now practised by Devadasis inside and outside temples, are merely "a cloak" for immorality. I have emphasized this point in my paper on the Theory and Practice of Dancing in India read before the Festival of Fine Arts, Bangalore. My earliest letter on the subject was published in the *Indian Social Reformer* of October 5, 1913. I am glad to note that already such power to arrange for the custody of girls in immoral surroundings is granted to District Magistrates in the Naik Girls Protection Act recently passed by the United Provinces Legislative Council.

While I sincerely believe that Government keep an open mind in the matter, I am forced to think that in the dilatory motion to circulate the Bill (No. 5 of 1930) for public opinion, it has unfortunately erred on the side of undue caution. The public agitation against the degenerate Devadasi system is nearly two generations old. For nearly twenty years the enlightened leaders of the castes to which the Devadasis belong (and to whose opinion particular weight should be attached, as suggested in the Secretary of State's Despatch dated 3rd March 1911) have become articulate and are clamouring for a bold and radical measure of social legislation. Such a measure is long overdue. Public opinion is ripe for a change. The Hon. the Home Member of the Government of India said as early as 1912: "Not only has there been that notable development in public opinion, but in the large expansion of Your Lordship's Legislative Council, we have provided here ready to hand an agency which we expect, and confidently expect, will never fail to counteract malevolent influences that may be used against us when measures of this kind are under contemplation." Subsequent to this, the possible effect of the Post-War Constitutional Reforms has been admirably anticipated in para 152 of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report. The Muddiman Committee Report refers to the Madras Government's admission that "the Council represents public opinion and to a certain extent also creates it." This is of course as it ought to be; and this has no doubt facilitated the passing of very many useful measures of social legislation during the past ten years. I see no reason why, under the circumstances, Govern

ment should still pause and consider. I heartily support the principle of the Bill to prevent the dedication of women to Hindu temples in the Presidency of Madras. I earnestly request that the Bill be passed into law at an early date.

Shakti Ashram Rajpur

(DEHRA DUN)

We have pleasure in publishing the following extracts from the prospectus, of the "Shakti Ashram" Rajpur, Dehra Dun, whose ideal is to produce a new type of manhood worthy of the great traditions of India, and capable of doing its duty to the motherland during the present times of travail which are but the prelude to the glorious destiny that is awaiting in the near future. We wish the enterprise of our brother Sadhu T. L. Vaswaniji every success.

The Ashram, its ideal & Programme.

The Shakti Ashram at Rajpur (Dehra Dun)—a hill station in the Himalayas—is a modest attempt to serve youngmen. The Ashram aims at physical, cultural and moral regeneration of Indian Youths. Its mantra is *Shakti*.

Youngmen who would serve the nation must grow in new strength of body, mind and character.

During the last three years, students and youngmen have travelled to the Ashram from every province.

The new session of the Ashram will re-open on Monday the 5th of May 1930 at Rajpur (Dehra Dun). The session will run from May 5th to June 30.

Situation of the Ashram

The Ashram is situated in a fine place between Dehra Dun and Mussoorie a few miles away from Hardwar on the large grounds of Dr. K. D. Shastri M. D. the late lamented President of the Ashram who presided at the Madras session of the Indian Youth Congress.

Home of Simple Disciplined life

The Ashram provides for physical culture which combines elements of ancient Indian and Modern Western systems. Yet the Ashram is not meant merely to be a health resort, nor purely a physical culture institute. Only those youngmen should come to the Ashram who wish to gain something physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually.

The Ashram is meant to be a home of simple life and every member is expected to live a life of simplicity and *self-imposed* discipline. The ideals of Brahmacharya and seva are also emphasised.

Daily Programme

The daily programme of the Ashram opens with worship and a short discourse in the dawn by T. L. Vaswani. Congregational prayers are also held.

In the physical culture section, students are taught Asans, Pranayam, muscle building exercises, Gatka lathi etc., For the purposes of exercise, youngmen are asked to arrange in advance for any dress convenient to them. On the cultural side classes are taken in dietetics, health, Indian history, Indian and world problems, Indian Ideals and the Bhagawadgita. Every member is expected to bring with himself a copy of the Bhagawadgita which the Ashram regards as the Scripture of Shakti.

Ashram Staff

During the terms of his stay at the Ashram, Vaswaniji will give lectures on the Gita and on modern movements. Lectures will also be given by others. The names of the members of the staff will in due course be announced after securing their approval. Correspondence regarding the same is being made. During the last three years, lectures have been given on a variety of subjects by Prof. Horutz of New York. Dr. Von. Weisl, founder of the Austrian youth movement, Prof. Dharmendra Nath Shastri M.A., etc. (Meerut), Prof. J. P. Sud, M.A., Meerut), Prof. J. P. Hazari M.A., (Patna) Prof. Sepaimelani M.A., (Benares).

The Ashram edits fortnightly manuscript journals in English and Hindi. The Ashram also celebrates every month a day sacred to a Rishi or Hero.

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"The Shakti Assram, Rajpur," wrote the Unity of Chicago "aims to make true men in these false days."

What is Sanatana Dharma?

ACHARYA VIVEKANANDA'S VERDICT

The orthodox section among the Hindus are now greatly agitated over the Sarda Act. What strikes us as very strange in their opposition campaign is their ignorant hue and cry, "Religion in danger!"

What then is Sanatana Dharma? In this age we cannot find a better man to speak with authority on this Subject than Acharya Swami Vivekananda, the Dharmasthapaka of this age, who embraced Hinduism in all its aspects and rejected none, but who gave to every idea and institution of Hinduism its own proper place. Speaking at Madura he said:—

"In India there is a tremendous revival of religion. There is a danger ahead, as well as glory; for revival sometimes breeds fanaticism, sometimes goes to extreme, so that often it is not even in the power of those who start the revival to control it when it has gone beyond a certain length. It is better therefore to be forewarned. In the first place we cannot become westerns, therefore imitating the westerns is useless...we must also remember that in every village god and every little superstitious custom is that which we are accustomed to call our religious faith. Local customs are infinite and contradictory; which are we to obey and which not to obey?.....The greatest mistake made is that ignorant people always think that this local custom is the essence of our religion.

There are two sorts of truths we find in our Sastras, one that is based upon the eternal nature of man—the one that deals with the eternal relation of God, soul, and nature; the other with local circumstances, environments of the time, social institutions of the period, and so forth. The first class of truths is chiefly embodied in our Vedas our scriptures; the second in the Smritis, the the Puranas, etc. We must remember that for all periods the Vedas are the final goal and authority, and if the Puranas differ in any respect from the Vedas that portion of the Puranas is to be rejected without mercy. We find then that in all these Smritis the teachings are different. One Smriti says this is the custom and and this should be the practice of this age. Another one says, this is the practice of this age. Another one says, this is the practice of this age and so forth. Now this is the most glorious doctrine you have that eternal truths being based upon the nature of man will never change so long as man lives, they are for all times, omnipresent universal virtues. But smritis speak generally of local

circumstances, of duties arising from different environments, and they change in course of time. This *you have always to remember that because a little social custom is going to be changed you are not going to lose your religion, not at all. Remember these customs have already been changed.* In course of time other laws had to be made. These in turn will have to go, and other smritis will come. As time rolls on more and more of the smritis will go, sages will come, and they will change and direct society into better channels, into duties and into paths which are the necessity of the age and without which it is impossible that society can live. Let us be progressive as any nation that ever existed and at the same time as faithful and conservative towards our traditions as Hindus alone know how to be. In plain we have first to learn the distinction between the essentials and the non-essentials in everything. The essentials are eternal, the non-essentials have value only for a certain time, and if after a time they are not replaced by something essential they are positively dangerous." (Extract from the complete works of S. V. Vol. III).

No society has ever remained stationary and yet lived on for ages and Hindu Society is no exception to the rule. Our Acharyas of yore knew this and so they were bold to change these non-essentials and we too must be bold in initiating all necessary reforms. It is therefore vain for the orthodox to say that no changes shall be made. Those who weep that no changes shall be made, those who weep that with the changes of *deshacharas*, *lokacharas*, and *smarthacharas* the sanatana dharma will go are anything but sanatanis; they are only *acharis* and all those who pin their faith to the eternals called Vedas as the essentials, leaving a margin for social changes are the real Sanatanis. True Sanatanis therefore will not be misled by these acharis with their silly cry of "Religion in danger," "Sanatana dharma in danger."

Ordeal of Yudhishtira's Virtue

By S. Raja Ram

The incident related below forms the subject of the last four chapters, Nos. 312 to 315, the closing chapters of Vana Parva of Shri Mahabharata called Aranya Parva.

'Duryodhana' did not cease his plots against the Pandavas; but no ill that was planned against them took effect. And now the end of the twelve years of exile in forest drew nigh. It was marked by a sharp

From an article by Swami Iswaranand in the Social Reformer 26th April, 1936.

ordeal of the virtue of Yudhishtira. A deer, butting with its horns, caught up the fire sticks and the churning staff of a Brahmana and carried them away on its antlers. The Braamana cried to the Pandavas to recover for him these implements of sacrifice, and they started in pursuit of the deer. They failed to shoot or overtake it, and at last losing sight of it, sat down weary and exhausted with thirst. Yudhishtira sent Nakula to look for water, who, finding a fine lake, disregarded a voice that warned him not to drink until he had answered certain questions, and drinking, fell dead.

स दृष्ट्वा विमलं तोयं सारसैः परिवारितम् ।

पातुकामस्ततो वाचमन्तरिक्षात् स शुश्रुवे ॥

यक्ष उवाच—

मा तात साहसं कार्षीः मम पूर्वपरिग्रहः ।

प्रश्नानुक्त्वा तु माद्रेय ततः पिव हरस्व च ॥

अनादृत्य तु तद्वाक्यं नकुलः सुपिपासितः ।

अपिचच्छीतलं तोयं पीत्वा च निपपातह ॥

As Nakula did not return, Sahadeva was sent, to seek for him, and met the same fate. Arjuna followed. He challenged the unseen voice, and discharged showers of keen arrows, marking the direction of the sound.

प्रववर्ष दिशः कृत्स्नाः शब्दवेधं च दर्शयन् ।

कर्णिनालीकनाराचानुत्सृजन्भरतर्षभः ॥

यक्ष उवाच—

किं विधानेन ते पार्थ प्रश्नानुक्त्वा पयः पिव ।

अनुक्त्वा च पिवन् प्रश्नान्पीत्वैव न भविष्यसि ॥

Heedless of the warning, Arjuna drank and fell. Bhima followed and met with the same fate. Then, Yudhishtira himself went to seek and found his four brothers lying dead on the ground. He became much overcome with grief and lamented.

स ददर्श हतान्भ्रातृलोकपालानिव च्युतान् ।

युगान्ते समनुप्राप्ते शक्रवैश्रवणोपमान् ॥

विनिर्कीर्णधनुर्वाणं दृष्ट्वा निहतमर्जुनम् ।

भीमसेनं यमौ चैव निर्विचेष्टान्गतायुषः ॥

ननु त्वया महाबाहो प्रतिज्ञातं वृकोदर ।

मुयोधनस्य भेतस्यामि गदया सक्थिनी रणे ॥

नास्य जेता रणे कश्चिदजेता नैप कस्यचित् ।

मोयं मृत्युवशं यातः कथं जिष्णुर्महाबलः ॥

अश्मसारमयं नूनं हृदयं मम दुर्हृदः ।

यमौ यदेतौ दृष्ट्वाऽद्य पतितौ नावदीर्यते ॥

'He then sought for the enemy who had slain them; and as he began his ablutions in the lake, he heard a voice declaring that the speaker had slain his brothers, and repeating the warning given them. Yudhishtira enquired, wondering who he was; and the speaker, a crane, answered that he was a Yaksha, and again bade Yudhishtira not to take of his water till he had answered his questions. Ever self-controlled, the young king replied that he did not covet what belonged to another, and that he would answer the questions to the best of his ability. The Yaksha then put to him question after question, and Yudhishtira answered them wisely and well.'

Here are a few of the important questions and answers:—

माता गुरुतरा भूमेः स्वात्पितोच्चतरस्तथा ।

मनः शीघ्रतरं वाताच्चिन्ता बहुतरा तृणान् ॥

To the questions—which is weightier than earth, loftier than the sky, speedier than the wind, etc., Yudhishtira answered 'mother is weightier than earth, father loftier than sky, mind speedier than the wind.

विद्या प्रवसतो मित्रं भार्या मित्रं गृहे सतः ।

आतुरस्य भिषज्मित्रं दानं मित्रं मरिष्यतः ॥

Similarly, to the traveller in unfamiliar places, learning is the friend; to the righteous the wife, the good friend at home; to the afflicted, the physician; to the dying, charity.

दाक्ष्यमेकपदं धर्म्यं दानमेकपदं यशः ।

सत्यमेकपदं स्वर्ग्यं शीलमेकपदं सुखम् ॥

Virtue rests on consideration; fame, on charity; Heavenly bliss, on truth; happiness, on good conduct.

आनृशंसं परं धर्मात्त्रेताधर्मः सदाफलः ।

मनो यम्य न शोचन्ति सन्धिः सद्भिर्न जीर्यते ॥

Greater than Dharma is non-injury; controlling the mind man does not grieve; Company of the good does not wear away.

मानं हित्वा प्रियो भवति क्रोधं हित्वा न शोचति ।
कामं हित्वाऽर्थवान्भवति लोभं हित्वा सुखी भवेत् ॥

Giving up self-esteem, one becomes affable; giving up wrath, one avoids misery; possessions flow unto him who gives up desires; giving up greed, one becomes happy.

तपः स्वधर्मवर्तित्वं मनसो दमनं दमः ।
क्षमा द्वन्द्वसहिष्णुत्वं हीरकार्यनिवर्तनम् ॥

Austerity consists in being established in one's own duty; self-control is the control of the mind; endurance consists in taking equally the pairs of opposites; withdrawal should be deliberate from unworthy actions.

ज्ञानं तत्त्वार्थसम्बोधः शमश्चित्तप्रशान्तता ।
दया सर्वसुखैपित्वमार्जवं समचित्तता ॥

The imparting of the essence of wisdom is *gnana*; the tranquility of mind is *shama*; enabling others to realise their desires is compassion; straightforwardness is born of equal-mindedness.

क्रोधः सुदुर्जयः शत्रुः लोभो व्याधिरनन्तकः ।
सर्वभूतहितः साधुरसाधुर्निर्दयः स्मृतः ॥

Wrath is the unconquerable foe; greed, the incurable disease; the good is ever intent on the welfare of all beings; the wicked, the unsympathetic.

स्वधर्मे स्थिरता स्थैर्यं धैर्यमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
स्नानं मनो मलत्यागो दानं वै भूतरक्षणम् ॥

Strength should be exhibited in keeping to one's own duty; courage, in the control of the passions; cleanliness, consists in ridding the mind of impurities; charity in the helping of the weak.

हृत्तापो मत्सरः स्मृतः ।

Envy is the heart-consuming fire.

The well known familiar and practically important declaration even to-day is the following:—

यक्ष उवाच—

राजकुलेन वृत्तेन स्वाध्यायेन श्रुतेन वा ।
ब्राह्मण्यं केन भवति प्रब्रूहेतत्सुनिश्चितम् ॥

युधिष्ठिर उवाच—

शृणु यक्ष कुलं तात न स्वाध्यायो न च श्रुतम् ।
कारणं हि द्विजत्वे च वृत्तमेव न संशयः ॥
वृत्तं यत्नेन संरक्ष्य ब्राह्मणेन विशेषतः ।
अक्षीणवृत्तो न क्षीणो वृत्ततस्तु हतो हतः ॥
पठकाः पाठकाश्चैव ये चान्ये शास्त्रचिन्तकाः ।
सर्वे व्यसनिनो मूर्खा यः क्रियावान्स पण्डितः ॥
चतुर्वेदोऽपि दुर्वृत्तः स शूद्रादतिरिच्यते ।
योऽग्निहोत्रपरो दान्तः स ब्राह्मण इति स्मृतः ॥

Q. The Yaksha asked:—

"Declare, Oh King, the true and well-enunciated answer as to how a Brahmana is recognised. Is it by birth or conduct, vedic recitation or knowledge?

A. Yudhishtira replied,—Hear, Oh Yaksha, the considered opinion in the matter. Neither birth (*Kula*) nor vedic recitation, nor knowledge is the reason for (द्विजत्व) Brahmanahood. The conduct truly is the cause. A Brahmana particularly should keep his conduct, with great care. He who has fallen from his conduct is indeed fallen. The readers, the preachers and others who simply discuss the shastras are all miserably unwise. He who practises the precept, he is the पण्डित. He, who is vicious in conduct, though learned in the four vedas is worse than a Shudra. He, who tends the fire and is self controlled, is considered a Brahmana.

Other well known and important answers to the questions, 'What is wonderful?' and 'What is the path?' are:—

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्तीह यमालयम् ।
शेषाः स्थावरमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ॥
तर्कोऽप्रतिष्ठः श्रुतयो विभिन्नाः
नैको मुनिर्यस्य मतं प्रमाणम् ।
धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां
महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ॥

Every-day created beings depart to the abode of Yama (die). The remaining, however, desire eternal existence. What is there more wonderful than this?

Arguments are unreliable; scriptures differ; there is not one sage whose declarations are final; the truth of dharma lies in the cave of the heart; the path of the Great Ones is the path.
To the question, 'who is the all-rich?' the answer is:—

समत्वं यस्य सर्वेषु निस्स्पृहः शान्तमानसः ।

मुप्रसन्नः सदा योगी स वै सर्वधनी नरः ॥

He, who is balanced under all conditions, void of desire, tranquil in mind and ever pleasing, such a Yogi is all-rich.

Then follows.

'THE TEST'

(To be concluded)

Reviews

KRISHNA AND THE WORLD QUEST—By N. R. Shenai.

This small book is written on the lines of Sadhu Vaswani's famous books. Indeed the author claims the contents to have been psychically delivered to him by Sadhu Vaswani himself, who writes (not psychically, but in the ordinary way) a brief introduction to it. We add, as Vasvaniji has himself said, that the message should be accepted or rejected on its own merits, and that such psychic communications are possible between two souls quite *en rapport* with each other.

ALL INDIA WOMEN'S CONFERENCE REPORT 1930:—85 pages of Cr. Quarto crammed with interesting material of the work of the All India Women's Conference of 1930 indicate the earnestness, devotion and brave work carried on by a handful of ladies in the social, educational, and political uplift of the women of India. The report contains the opening address of Lady Sykes, the Welcome Address of Lady Fate, and the Presidential address of Shrimati Sarojini Naidu besides the annual report of the All Indian Women's Conference 1929-30 and the reports of the subsidiary sections like the Educational, and Social.

That the report is out so soon after the Conference in January of this year unlike other reports which take a year to be brought out is probably one of things which other organisations may copy from the ladies.

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