

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## AMBROSIA

Sometimes monotony would seize me and I would feel like going away somewhere. Master would at once read my mind and say, ‘Where will you go leaving the sacramental food at Dakshineswar? Do not yield to vagrancy. Do you not know with what difficulty do Sadhus procure food outside?’ Now and then, however, he would ask me to visit Calcutta to break the monotony. Sometimes I would go to Calcutta. But could I stay on there? I had to return quickly in a couple of days. I could not bear staying away from Master. Where could I enjoy such wide freedom as by the Master’s side? Calcutta appeared lifeless. This is what people say the grace of the Guru. It never crossed my mind why I should carry out his orders. This too is Guru’s grace.

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Swami Bhaskarananda advised us not to roam about. ‘It fetches nothing’, said he. I, Jogen, and others went to pay our respects to him at his garden. When he noticed our

young age he was exceedingly glad, treated us affectionately, and blessed us. Said he, ‘The Lord will surely be gracious to you. But stay at one place and call on Him earnestly, don’t be a vagabond. Listen to the story of my foolishness. Thinking pilgrimage will bring spiritual enlightenment I traversed (on foot) the length and breadth of the country visiting the four most important shrines at the four corners of India. Mind you, there were then no railways. You can well imagine the privations one had to undergo. Despite all these I received no light. There wasn’t the least decrease in miseries, they remained the same as ever. Then, in agony, I repaired to this garden and took the vow either to realize God, or to give up life in the attempt. And now I enjoy bliss.’ With a stick in hand he walked with us round the garden advising us lovingly. His image was then being worshipped. He was full of bliss and inquired of us what was going on there. In reply I said, ‘You are Nārāyaṇa, they are worshipping you

there.' He laughed and said, 'Bravo!' Just a child!

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Master's meal was ready. But he was seen returning from the village of Dakshineswar, and chewing betel after the meal. He had taken his meal in some house there. Hriday could not find him in the temple and was anxiously calling him at the top of his voice. Master appeared and told Hriday that he had taken his meal at the house of a gentleman there, as if that is of no consequence whatever. It cut Hriday to the quick. He said with sadness, 'Ah! How unlucky am I! Here delicious sacramental dishes are kept for you and you have taken your meal outside, Uncle!' Master told him softly, 'This is the state of Paramahansa (a man of realization). In that state nothing can be fixed. Every thing—where he will have his meal from—is uncertain.'

He was full of praise for food received in alms in the name of the Lord; it was very dear to him. He used to say 'It is holy and very helpful to *sādhana* (spiritual practice).'

\* \* \*

Mathur Babu spent a lot of money in feeding the poor when he took the Master on pilgrimage to Banaras and Vrindaban. On seeing Mathur using his purse so freely, Master said, 'Suppose your mother-in-law (Rani Rasmani) objects to it?' 'That lady,' answered Mathur Babu, 'will find it difficult to take exception to it because under my care her property has considerably increased.'

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Once Mathur told Master, 'What pious deeds have I done that I shall not be born again? So, let me now do good deeds to my heart's content.' Master was glad and said, 'Just look at his cleverness.'

\* \* \*

'Your chosen deity,' said the family preceptor to Mathur Babu, 'I see, will for ever be with you—will walk with you, sleep with you, take his meal with you.' Then he came in

contact with Sri Ramakrishna; see how everything came true. Look at the quality of the family preceptors of those days! I mean, deeds bring their reward, no matter if the agent be a monk or a layman. Only, the laity have family troubles and attraction for wife and children—this is indeed a drawback.

\* \* \*

Master would encourage his lay disciples thus: 'You have married. What of that? Have you committed a sin? No fear. I'm by your side; if my grace is there what are you to be afraid of? But, charmed with the joys of married life, don't forget God.'

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Paramahansa (the Master) had neither money nor property. Still great men would come to him. What's the reason? Whenever he found anybody chanting the praise of God, his joy would know no bounds. One day some men, while singing the glory of God, got fully absorbed in it, they lost themselves. When they returned to their normal consciousness they found Paramahansa fanning them. With regret they cried out 'Gracious Sir, what have you done, what are you doing?' At this the Master said, 'You took so much pain to sing the glory of God, and may I not render this little service to you?'

\* \* \*

Those who purposely evaded meeting Master are now repentant. At Dakshineswar one engineer went to see Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) along with the father of Yogin Maharaj. Swamiji inquired, in course of conversation, why he did not visit Paramahansa at Dakshineswar. He said, 'He and I went up to the door of the Master, when he (Yogin Maharaj's father) told me that he (the Master) was a madcap and exhorted me to go instead to the Panchavati (a few yards off from the Master's room) to see an ascetic there. And we repaired to the site of Panchavati. One cannot meet saints without their grace. Now I repent it very much, a casual word from another prevented me from seeing the Master!'



# “SOCIALISTIC PATTERN OF SOCIETY”

BY THE EDITOR

It has been resolved that the Congress wants to build our society on 'Socialistic pattern'. Whether it is 'a' pattern or 'the' pattern has never been explained to the satisfaction of anybody, not even to the majority of Congressmen including the Working Committee members. There are different kinds of socialism, Communism being one of them. And there are several Internationals, first to sixth, maybe more. When the father of the ideal has funk'd to use the world-recognized word 'Socialism' it may either mean that he has none of them in his mind or meaning one of them, he does not want to disclose it for one or more reasons. For a politician both alternatives are justified, for a moralist of the Gandhian type neither is. For a 'moral politician' sometimes both are, sometimes none may be. We are not concerned with the first and the third category. The country likes to judge the Congress by the second standard as long as it does not publicly repudiate the hitherto declared ideal. Hence we are entitled to ask the policy-makers of the Congress what exactly they mean by the phrase, if it is of the Gandhian brand, the *Sarvodaya*; and if it is, what the significance of this new coinage is, why '*Sarvodaya*' was found wanting. It is very important to have definite ideal before us, for in laying down rules and regulations about any group of people, particularly in bringing about social and economic reforms through our legislatures we are to see that they do not go against the declared ideal. There is a real danger in keeping an ideal in one's mind and getting it passed through personal influence by the most powerful organization of the country and allowing followers to do and declare what they like. Democracy requires that an ideal must be placed clearly in all its aspects before the country, and the press and platform must be given sufficient time to dis-

cuss it thoroughly before it can be resolved by an august assembly to be put into action.

The above remarks are called for inasmuch as we feel ourselves handicapped when trying to speak of it to the students of the country who need precise guidance in all matters. Not knowing whither social winds are blowing, whether to stand against or to support the trend, whether there are factors that are incompatible with or prejudicial to the goal, whether supplementation is required or desirable it is difficult for any conscientious man to deal with any matter beyond what is strictly personal. It has a paralyzing effect on the public mind. As we posed this question and waited in vain for more than six months for an answer through the columns of any paper or magazine we are compelled to put our own interpretation on the 'socialistic pattern of society', keeping as close to the Gandhian, i.e. the eternal (*sanātana*), ideal of India.

To deal with the negative side of the 'pattern' is comparatively easy, for in some of the speeches of important Congressmen it has been dealt with. It comprises the following points: 1. There will not be any caste-system dividing society in lower and higher groups but admitting horizontal divisions of equal status on 'Union' basis with open doors for exits and entrances. 2. There will be no disabilities on women in matters of service and opportunities. 3. Unequal possession of wealth leading to undue power by individuals or groups is to be prevented. 4. Religion must not be allowed to create division and dissension among the people; but political divisions and dissensions are encouraged for keeping up opposition, even though industry and education suffer owing to strikes, organized and encouraged by the opposition parties. All these negatives have been made amply clear. They have been repeated so often that



intelligent people smile when the leaders stand up to speak.

But they give us no picture of the society the Congress is going to build. We have a clear idea of the society Vinobaji wants to build but not of that which the vociferous Congress promises to do. This is the difference between talk and action, destruction and construction. From the amorphous Congress ideal when we come to discuss Vinobaji's ideal that is actually taking shape, despite Mira Behn's not too wrong criticism, we understand what society the deep unconscious of the Congressmen wants to create. This is the real 'socialistic pattern of society'. By this we do not mean the pastoral idyllic society that is taking shape in the various villages that have accepted the *grāmdān* ideal; we mean the pattern and not the actuality, for the latter is limited to small villages and therefore necessarily shaped by village circumstances and cannot be applied without major changes to towns and cities, to mills, factories, and corporations. The pattern however will remain unaltered and it will be socialistic in outlook and content. It is better to use the word which Vinobaji, the father of the movement, uses, viz. 'communistic', not red or yellow, but pure white of the Indian brand, which had been evolving from the Vedic period to the *panchayet* times but could not reach its culmination because of adverse political circumstances and of its preoccupation with absorbing diverse racial elements.

The most outstanding feature of the new social order will be the change of the centre of gravity from family to 'commune' without destroying the former but sublimating and orienting it to the latter. The parental affection of Kauśalyā-Daśaratha, Devakī-Vasudeva, or Yośodā-Nanda, the conjugal identification of Sītā-Rāma, the brotherly love of Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa-Bharata, the filial service of Rāma and Bhīṣma, and all the other beautiful social ideals will not only remain but will be infinitely enhanced in the new order. But the several and collective orientation being towards the higher and higher communes the

scope and extension of emotion, thought, and activity will be unlimited; hatred, jealousy, envy—in fact all kinds of narrowness will have no field to grow and expand; morality and spirituality will, instead of being pooh-poohed and wantonly broken, be in greater and more urgent demand at every step; caution and circumspection being needed in the complex surroundings, intellectuality will be forced to expand and deepen; expansion of outlook giving incentive to the sense of duty and activity, labour will be joyous and health-giving. Real communism is a joy for ever, for based on freedom of expression it expands and expands till it embraces the whole universe.

Our Congress leaders need not funk to give the true name to their unconscious ideal. Circumlocution is redundant, for the phrase 'socialistic pattern of society' has blinded none, neither the Western Bloc nor the orthodox Indian Hindu or Muslim. Had the leaders known their own minds or grasped the *āśrama* ideal of the Mahatma or understood the full significance of the *grāmdān* movement they would have had no cause to rack their brain for finding out a suitable expression for the ideal society. Sri Nehru might have thought that having returned recently from China if he had talked of 'socialism' bluntly he might have scared away some people, friends or brethren. That is because the picture of society that flashed up in his mind after his China visit was that of China plus something of his own, maybe, derived from his Bapuji but not wholly Bapuji's. But the future society of India was born with the birth of the twentieth century, which the new discoverer of India had failed to discover; and it is beautifully coming up with the splendour of the morning sun in the mind of Bhaveji. The future society of India, maybe of the world, is spiritual communism, based on absolute individual freedom of the spirit.

In fact if we properly study the growth of Indian Society from its very Dravidian-Aryan inception we would find, as Swami Vivekananda in the memorable last paragraph of *Modern India* has so vividly put it, that every



Indian lives a life of dedication—a life dedicated to God in society and humanity. But the ideal failed, as we have noted, to rise significantly above Hinduism, that comprises within it all the numerous Dravido-Aryan sects and denominations. Into its reasons we need not enter here. Even under the most adverse circumstances it never failed to produce saints and prophets and therefore sects and churches to embrace others, who, however, spurned the overtures. Even supposing ancient India, we mean Dravido-Aryan India did nothing for the last thousand years to throw open its cultural doors to others, no man with a grain of sympathy and a historical sense of how ideals grow and mature will have reasons to blame India for that. A race, a culture, that has evolved the ideals of Umā and Śiva, Sītā and Rāma, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa on the one hand and the Sanas and Kapila, Śuka and Nārada on the other and has ever since been throwing up men and women of those types and their more beautiful permutations and combinations up to this twentieth century has every right to brood over and enjoy this and remain forgetful of the universe for a petty period of thousand years. Now India is awakened to her sense of moral and spiritual duty to the world, irrespective of white and red castes. She is bound to transcend her family, clanish, and racial barriers and to embrace all humanity with a divine fervour. And the result is the evolution of this spiritual commune\*, founded on unrestricted individual freedom to grow, according to one's own law of growth, in dynamic love, amity, and fellow-feeling, until the distinction between *each* and *all*, the individual and the universe, vanishes completely.

## II

What is this spiritual commune? In what aspects does it differ from the red communes? We would not answer them directly, not because we want to shirk it but because it would

\* This expression was originally used by Sri Aurobindo when the communes of Russia were just being built after the First World War.

be more profitable: we would give descriptions of a few types and leave the matter to be judged by the readers. As there would be innumerable types with the growth of ever increasing complexity in society, we ought to be satisfied with a few types sufficient to be extended to newer fields and situations *mutatis mutandis*.

Before doing this, however, we would like to simplify the matter a little. Every adult man or woman feels a heavy burden on his or her shoulders because of four thoughts that prevent the natural joy of life from having a full play. They are: 1. employment, 2. maintenance and education of children, 3. care and treatment during illness and convalescence, and 4. means of maintenance after retirement or when disabled and, in the case of ladies, during maternity. To remove these four items of care and anxiety should be the responsibility of the State that aspires after being a welfare state. Money and establishments for these, as for all other items, it is needless to mention, must come from these very men and women; still their minds must be freed from these wasting thoughts. The enormity of these undertakings, superficially considered, sends a shiver through the spine. But with the solution of the first problem all the other problems would be automatically solved, provided banks and insurances become nationalized in due course, even before the new society comes into being throughout the country. Progress of India being traditionally evolutionary and not revolutionary, there is no need of forcing the country to adopt the new society—that will be against the genius of the people. People like Vinobaji and government are to create circumstances; and men and women, like water through canals, will come and settle and find themselves transformed into happy members of a new society, viz. of the spiritual commune. What India wants are servants. And what servants are they, Mahatmaji, Vinobaji, and host of others! Swami Vivekananda predicted the coming of the Śūdra Age. And these great men of India are true Śūdras.



The second universal characteristic of spiritual communes will be the hearty acceptance of the idea that the universe is an organism and not a machine, an immanent organizing force running through every part of it, throwing up, maintaining, and withdrawing individuals, helping them to expand and universalize themselves, to feel their oneness with the force itself. Man, being an evolute of this force with the most developed consciousness in this globe, has the capability of developing himself systematically into a stature where he will feel his oneness with the force and all its wealth and can draw upon it for the good and beneficence of various societies, whose ultimate aim is to help individuals to realize this force, which they call God. As all knowledge, power, skill, etc. are in God and as without an abundance of these no true help can be rendered to society, state, and other bigger human organizations, it is the most urgent duty of man to strive to realize God in life. Various religions of the world have indicated the ways of reaching Him. But all religions have got jumbled up with social rites and customs, which are to be carefully and scientifically separated from pure religions, which consist in communing with God, our substratum of being. Every man should regard this communing with God as his first and foremost duty in life; and no commune should be started in a way which may clash with this most important duty of man; on the contrary all its activities should be oriented towards this—they should be made subservient to it. The most precious quiet hours should be made available to all men and women constituting a commune. There must not be any exception to this. Rest must be immediately followed by such communings, before man jumps into activities, which, to prevent themselves from being degraded into suicidal Satanic movements, need the soothing touch of divine coverage. Man is in deep rapport with God when he is all alone, so personal communing is the best. But man does not daily find himself at fixed hours in the proper mood. Communal prayers, *Rāma-dhuns*, *Saṅkīrtanas*

etc. induce this mood. Hence appropriate time must be found for them too. Modern man must know that social rites and customs have but social values. Encased in a body and surrounded by limited forms of matter, man must remind himself that he is spirit infinite.

But mind will not peacefully settle on the object of thought unless it is freed from certain natural obsessions like hatred, jealousy, covetousness, etc. So in order to keep it away from such defilements some positive noble thoughts, sentiments, and activities are to be cultivated in our dealings with others as well as with ourselves when all alone. These qualities are of universal application; their beneficent effects transcend time, space, and circumstances, and they ennoble both the subject and the object. They are *ahimsā* (kindness), *satya* (truthfulness), *asteya* (non-covetousness) *brahmacharya* (chastity), *aparigraha* (non-acceptance of gifts or anything not honestly earned). They are the basic principles governing all schemes of honest, honourable, dynamic life. When alone and unengaged man's mind should dwell on them earnestly, and when in company and in service (for all activities are service) it should actively and scrupulously observe them, with the sole idea of converting them into his very nature and not of conferring benefit on others. Their incorporation in one's own being, life's habitual identification with them, is and should be the end of all thoughts and activities of man; beneficence, individual or social, is a mere by-product of this attempt. The West has put the cart before the horse, and the whole world following it has come to grief. The active cultivation of these qualities is the method and the identification of individuals with the universal organizing force or God is the end of human life. Individuals living in constant remembrance of this method and ideal are the fit pioneers of establishing the spiritual communes. These communes are the ideal fields for the application of the method with a view to attaining the goal of universal identity of all beings. If we miss this communes may be



established and prosperity may come; but they will be red or yellow, satisfied with matter and material arts and crafts; they will not bestow peace and happiness leading to the freedom of the spirit with an abiding feeling of an amplitude of unrestricted love, for which white communes alone are the field. From the pre-Vedic times up to the twentieth century India has been brooding over this grand ideal, preached and re-preached through the millenniums by her saints and prophets; it has assumed the full shape and size within, it is coming out—the white commune.

### III

Now we are in a position to consider the formation and growth of these communes in our present society in a natural course of evolution and without unduly disturbing whatever peace may be reigning in it. We shall start with the simplest ones, the rural communes. The people are voluntarily donating their villages, there are a good number of *grāmdāns*, some 800 of them by the middle of January. We can very profitably—economically, socially, culturally—utilize this unique sentiment of the villagers in developing these villages into spiritual communes. We have already got all the land as the common property, an opportunity that has come to us as a godsend. Without committing the folly of distributing and parcelling out these plots of land to individual tillers let us arrange for their cultivation with persons best fitted for the job and with best bullocks of the village or even supplied by government, with manure, seeds, and scientific knowledge made available by the State. The extra labour should be utilized for other village industries, providing types of work according to taste, age, sex, and other peculiarities and to the needs of the village or for which markets are available or can be easily created. All agricultural and industrial products should be collected in common storehouses, from which they are to be supplied to families liberally according to needs, and the excess to be sold and money deposited with the village bank after remitting government dues.

Basic schools, crèches, small hospitals or dispensaries, cooperative shops, arrangements for transit of men and articles and many more common-ventures should be organized. Incomes and expenditures should be operated through the common village bank; cheques, receipts, etc. being countersigned by the person in charge of the particular concern. Sports and games, recreations, socials, and religious gatherings, again erection and maintenance of temples, mosques, and churches are to be organized on the common basis with unrestricted participation by all in proper moods. The whole village should be guided by a general council of competent elected members who would seek and receive prompt government advice, help, and guidance. Under this general council there should be smaller groups of people for running various activities with a higher board of general supervisors, who, however, will not be idlers but active workers and earners in some field of activity or other. Justice will be administered by a body of sober elderly people who will meet daily in the evening when people will be free from their daily duties. These small rural communes will be the lowest units in a hierarchy of communes culminating in the national parliament.

A number of such rural communes will combine to form a higher commune into which the smaller ones will be organically integrated. This village will have its own commune just as other villages will have. But over and above that it will have a higher commune which will have its own organization, earning and managing its various branches and supervising and guiding the smaller rural communes. For example it will run a higher school and hostels where children, passing out of the rural communes, will be admitted and trained free; it will run a bigger and better equipped hospital; it will have higher technical and technological institutions—all for the whole group of primary village communes. This village will naturally be much bigger than the others. Consequently its farming and agriculture, its industries, its technical and technological insti-



tutions, its social and religious organizations, etc. will be bigger and complexer. These secondary communes will no doubt be receiving aids from the tertiary communes as well as from the primary ones, just as they themselves will send aids to those higher and lower communes. Each secondary commune will have various smaller bodies of representatives to look after its various activities. The elected representatives of all these bodies will form the highest executive of the secondary commune, which will similarly have its separate judiciary. Some of these secondary communes again will combine to form still bigger and higher communes, which we have called tertiary communes. They will take in more advanced men and women, train them for running these tertiaries, qualify them for more responsible activities in higher grades, open complexer industries, and thus provide activities for increasing population.

To guard against future reorganization and thus unnecessary emotional inhibitions of sections of people the various grades of rural communes should be organized, from the beginning, centring round a big industrial and university city. All the various grades of communes should be oriented towards the city, sending their best men for training and going higher up or returning to take up and run activities and organizations in the lower grades. This city again will be the natural market for the agricultural and industrial products of the villages under it. It should be the duty of the State to map out all such regions scientifically and guide the formation of the graded communes so as to have a city as their apex. Each of the grades, except the lowest rural commune, will thus have three definite kinds of duties, viz. to maintain itself, to help the next lower ones, and to feed the next higher one; the lowest will naturally have the first and the third.

Cities and big towns, unless especially founded for one factory or for one interconnected groups of industry, will have different communes, each growing round one mill or factory, which will be the common property of it, managed by and the profits distributed

among the members of the commune. Each such commune will have all the subsidiary organizations of a rural commune and many more according to its needs, such as schools (primary or/and secondary including technological), hospitals, crèches, etc. All such separate communes should be brought under a council of elected experts and organizers to form the over-all government or corporation of the whole city, under whose indirect help, guidance, and control all the big populace down to the primary village commune will grow and thrive.

The word 'indirect' is very important. To give real freedom of growth to individuals, to encourage variety of thought and activity, and to guard against suppression and oppression in future by a clique or a dominating personality there should be no governance from outside, from the higher groups or the lower; all governance must be internal. The elections and selections of representatives being from below upwards it is the primary villages or factories which, supplying all the men up to the highest government of the country, will control the vast complicated machine. And the higher groups will control the lower ones by training the latter's personnel, by advising and supervising the technical processes, and supplying knowledge of improved methods, but carefully keeping themselves aloof from interfering. So there will be a double control from below upwards and from above downwards, thus effectively minimizing tyranny by any group. There will be another kind of mutual control. Villages will control towns by their agricultural products and towns will control villages by means of their manufactures. Neither should be made so self-sufficient as to have the whip hand over either.

We use the terms 'control', 'government', etc. of the present politics, which bristles with factions and classes each having its ax to grind. Their interests contradict, which prevents an organic growth. Hence the necessity of checks and compromises. In the future society these classes will be eliminated and with that the clashes. The society will be a



natural organism where each individual's life will be a helpful contribution and an asset. Each individual, each ascending grade, will be oriented to the apex; and hand in hand the members of lateral groups will march on to it. There will be joyous cooperation, and not envious competition. Mr. Khrushchev glorified competition of his communist society. Compared to one of the present capitalist society that kind of competition is no doubt good. But, like too intensive cultivation, it exhausts individuals; artificial stimuli can stay exhaustion but cannot prevent it. To a cooperative society those terms are inapplicable. We apply

these terms here because we are talking of the transitional period, when a little lack of caution may destroy the whole future structure. Hence mutual checks and controls are necessary. When, however, such a society comes into existence, starts functioning on its own merits, people will not understand that some kind of guarding against is at all necessary at any stage. Finding help and guidance everywhere in the present, and future ensured by the State, people will change terminology indicative of rivalry and cheating to that of cooperation and *camaraderie*.

(To be concluded)

## MEMOIRS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY CORNELIA CONGER

Before the Congress (or Parliament) of Religions met in Chicago at the time of the Columbian Exposition in 1893, members of various churches volunteered to ask into their homes as guests delegates to it. My grandmother, Mrs. John B. Lyon, was one of these, requesting, if possible, that a delegate who was broad-minded be sent to us as my grandfather was much interested in philosophy but heartily disliked bigots! Our home was 262, Michigon Avenue, a pleasant somewhat old fashioned farm house, painted olive green with boxes of red geraniums across the front. It was full of guests all that summer as my grandparents were naturally hospitable and this World's Fair was a very exciting and fascinating affair. So all our out-of-town relatives and friends were eager to come to Chicago to see it. When word came that our delegate was to arrive on a certain evening, the house was so crowded that my grandmother had to send her elder son to a friend's house to have his room for our guest. We had been given no idea who he would be nor even what religion he was representing. A message came that a member of our Church—the First Presbyterian—would bring him after midnight. Everyone went to bed except my grandmother who waited up to receive them. When she answered the door-bell, there stood

Swami Vivekananda in a long yellow robe, a red sash, and a red turban—a very startling sight to her because she had probably never seen an East Indian before. She welcomed him warmly and showed him to his room. When she went to bed she was somewhat troubled. Some of our guests were Southerners as we had many friends in the South because we owned a sugar plantation on the Bayou Têche in Louisiana. Southerners have a strong dislike for associating with anyone but whites because they stupidly think of all people who are darker as on a mental and social plane of their former Negro slaves. My grandmother herself had no colour prejudice and she was sufficiently intelligent anyway to know that Indians are of the same Caucasian inheritance as we are.

When my grandfather woke up, she told him of the problem and said he must decide whether it would be uncomfortable for Swami and for our Southern friends to be together. If so, she said he could put Swami up as our guest at the new Auditorium Hotel near us. My grandfather was dressed about half an hour before breakfast and went into the library to read his morning paper. There he found Swami and, before breakfast was served, he came to my grandmother and said,



'I don't care a bit, Emily, if all our guests leave! This Indian is the most brilliant and interesting man who has ever been in our home and he shall stay as long as he wishes.' That began a warm friendship between them which was later summed up—much to my grandfather's embarrassment!—by having Swami calmly remark to a group of my grandfather's friends one day at the Chicago Club 'I believe Mr. Lyon is the most Christ-like man I ever met!'

He seemed to feel especially close to my grandmother, who reminded him of his own mother. She was stout and very erect, with quiet dignity and assurance, excellent common sense, and a dry humour that he enjoyed. My mother, who was a pretty and charming young widow, and I—who was only six years old—lived with them. My grandmother and my mother attended most of the meetings of the Congress of Religions and heard Swamiji speak there and later at lectures he gave. I know he helped my sad young mother who missed her young husband so much. Mother read and studied Swamiji's books later and tried to follow his teachings.

My memories are simply of him as a guest in our home—of a great personality who is still vivid to me! His brilliant eyes, his charming voice with the tilt of a slight well-bred Irish tongue, his warm smile! He told me enchanting stories of India, of monkeys and peacocks, and flights of bright green parrots, of banyan trees and masses of flowers, and markets piled with all colours of fruits and vegetables. To me they sounded like fairy stories, but now that I have driven over many hundreds of miles of Indian roads, I realize that he was simply describing scenes from the memories of his own boyhood. I used to rush up to him when he came into the house and cry 'Tell me another story, Swami,' and climb into his lap. Perhaps, so far from home and in so strange a country, he found comfort in the love and enthusiasm of a child. He was always wonderful to me! Yet—because a child is sensitive—I can remember times when I would run into his room and

suddenly know he did not want to be disturbed—when he was in meditation. He asked me many questions about what I learned in school and made me show him my school-books and pointed out India to me on the map—it was pink, I recall—and told me about his country. He seemed sad that little Indian girls did not have, in general, the chance to have as good an education as we American children. Imagine how interested I was when Swami Shankarananda, President, Belur Math, told me he founded a girls' School in Calcutta!

My grandmother was president of the Women's Hospital at home and he visited it with lively interest and asked for all the figures in infant mortality etc. So again it showed how much he was learning in our country to be used in helping his own people, because I was told that a maternity hospital was also founded later. How very happy that would have made my grandmother!

I was fascinated by his turban which struck me as a very funny kind of a hat, especially as it had to be wound up afresh every time he put it on! I persuaded him to let me see him wrap it back and forth around his head.

As our American food is less highly seasoned than Indian, my grandmother was afraid he might find it flat. He told us, on arrival, that he had been told to conform to all the customs and the food of his hosts, so he ate as we did. My grandmother used to make a little ceremony of making salad dressing at the table and one of the condiments she used was Tabasco Sauce, put up by some friends of hers, the Mrs. Ilhennys, in Louisiana. She handed him the bottle and said, 'You might like a drop or two of this on your meat, Swami'. He sprinkled it on with such a lavish hand that we all gasped and said 'But you can't do that! It's terribly hot!' He laughed and ate it with such enjoyment that a special bottle of the sauce was always put at his place after that.

My mother took him to hear his first Symphony Concert on a Friday afternoon.



He listened with great attention but with his head a bit on one side and a slightly quizzical expression. 'Did you enjoy it?' mother asked at the end. 'Yes, it was very beautiful', he replied, but mother felt it was said with some reservation. 'What are you thinking?' she asked. 'I am puzzled by two things', he answered, 'First, I do not understand why the programme says that this same programme will be repeated on Saturday evening. You see in India, one type of music is played at dawn. The music for noontime is very different and that for the evening is also of a special character. So I should think that what sounds suitable to your ears in the early afternoon would not sound harmonious to you at night. The other thing that seems strange to me is the lack of overtones in the music and the greater intervals between the notes. To my ears it has holes in it like that good Swiss cheese you give me!'

When he began to give lectures, people offered him money for the work he hoped to do in India. He had no purse. So he used to tie it up in a handkerchief and bring it back—like a proud little boy!—pour it into my grandmother's lap to keep for him. She made him learn the different coins and to stack them up neatly and to count them. She made him write down the amount each time and she deposited in her bank for him. He was overwhelmed by the generosity of his audience who seemed so happy to give to help people they had never seen so far away!

Once he said to my grandmother that he had had the greatest temptation of his life in America. She liked to tease him a bit and said, 'Who is she, Swami?' He burst out laughing and said 'Oh, it is not a lady, it is Organization!' He explained how the followers of Ramakrishna had all gone out alone and when they reached a village, would just quietly sit under a tree and wait for those in trouble to come to consult them. But in the States he saw how much could be accomplished by organizing work. Yet he was doubtful about just what type of organization would be

acceptable to the Indian character and he gave a great deal of thought and study how to adapt what seemed good to him in our Western World to the best advantage of his own people. I can see that Belur Math and his many charities are the result of this period in his life. I spoke earlier of his delightful slight Irish tongue. I recall that this came as a surprise to Swami Shankarananda. My grandfather used to joke him about it. But Swami said it was probably because his favourite professor was an Irish gentleman, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin.

After Swami left us, my mother was eager to do some studying along the lines of oriental philosophy, as she realized she had not enough background to understand his teachings as fully as she wished. A Mrs. Peake held some classes in Chicago that following winter and, in the course of them, mother discovered much to her surprise that if she held a letter torn up into fine bits between her hands, she received a brief but vivid impression of the writer, both physically and mentally. When Swamiji returned to Chicago a year or so later to give lectures, mother asked him about this strange gift and he said he had it also, and that when he was young he used to have fun doing it to show off, but that Ramakrishna had wrapped his knuckles and said, 'Don't use this great gift except for the good of mankind! Hands that receive these impressions can also bring relief from pain. Use this gift to bring healing!'

On this second visit, he only stayed with us for a short time. He knew he could teach better if he lived in his own regime of food and of many hours for meditation. It also left him free to receive many who came to him for help. So my grandmother helped him find a simple but comfortable little flat, but I do not recall that I ever saw it.

Swamiji was such a dynamic and attractive personality that many women were quite swept away by him and made every effort by flattery to gain his interest. He was still young and, in spite of his great spirituality and his brilliance of mind, seemed to be very



unworldly. This used to trouble my grandmother who feared he might be put in a false or uncomfortable position and she tried to caution him a little. Her concern touched and amused him and he patted her hand and said, 'Dear Mrs. Lyon, you dear American mother of mine, don't be afraid for me! It is true I often sleep under a banyan tree with a bowl of rice given me by a kindly peasant, but it is equally true that I also am sometimes the guest in the palace of a great Maharajah and a slave girl is appointed to wave a peacock feather fan over me all night long! I am used to temptation and you need not fear for me!'

After having talked with Swami Shankarananda and been encouraged by him I wished I had talked to my mother's younger sister, Katharine (Mrs. Robert W. Hamill) about her recollections of Swamiji. So when I reached home I asked her what she could add to my scattered memories. She was a bride and had her own home. So she was not at her mother's and father's so very much. She recalled Swamiji much as I did, but never heard him lecture. However, she and her husband were 'young intellectuals' and had a group of young professors from our university, young newspaper men, etc. around them. One Sunday evening she was telling them how remarkable Swamiji was and they said that modern scientists and psychologists could 'show up' his religious beliefs in no time! She said, 'If I can persuade him to come here

next Sunday evening, will you all come back and meet him?' They agreed and Swamiji met them all at an informal supper party. My aunt does not recall just what subjects were brought up, but that the entire evening was a lively and interesting debate on all sorts of ideas—Aunt Katharine said that Swamiji's great knowledge of the Bible and the Koran as well as the various oriental religions, his grasp of science and of psychology were astounding. Before the evening was over the 'doubting Thomases' threw up their hands and admitted that Swamiji had held his own on every point and that they parted from him with warmest admiration and affection.

When I was taken to meet Swami Shankarananda, I felt my memories were too childish and trivial to put down in black and white. I felt very humble and apologetic for taking up others' time. But the Swami said something infinitely kind and gracious which I shall never forget: That every great man is like a jewel with many facets. That each facet is important as it reflects a different aspect of his character. That I had come to him to offer a facet that was lacking in his records of Swamiji—of the weeks he had spent in our home when he first left India. So here is my very tiny 'facet' offered in memory of someone I have loved for all these 62 years—not as a teacher, nor a great religions leader—but as a wonderful and vivid friend who lived in our home.

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## PLACE OF ENGLISH AT THE INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

BY DR. AMAR MUKERJI

If education means the development of the spirit of tolerance and if the Indian universities are intended to impart this type of education as against mere cramping instruction, I may be permitted to discuss here a topic that has not always been discussed from the academic point

of view but on sentimental and parochial grounds.

It goes without saying that any true understanding of the implications of higher education and the realization of true national interests would make us unanimously affirm that higher



education at the universities in this country should be such as would not take us away from the best thought of the world and should develop in us a capacity of not merely understanding that thought but of expressing it and of adding to it in our own way and on the basis of our own understanding.

Taking this for granted and accepting the fact that all genuine education should be through the medium of one's own language, it has now to be considered if the present desire of changing over completely either to the regional or the national language is conducive to our best interests not only from the point of view of equipping our young men and women with the best thoughts of the world but of developing the regional or the national language whatever be the case.

It is true that the constitution of India has set a time limit to this process of change; it is also true that there are some excellent books on some subjects available either in the regional or the national language. But to keep continuing this process of change—in fact to expedite it efficiently—one has to take a few factors into serious and immediate consideration.

The first of these is that, right or wrong, we have inherited a tradition of Western thought and even Shri Jawaharlal Nehru had once to plead for the adoption of Western methods of research, analysis, and understanding not because that is the only method but because it is the method most tried just now all over world, and we in India have not yet been able to evolve a method of our own. In fact the evolution of the typical Indian method would be possible only when we have fully understood and exploited the Western method of study, of research, of analysis, of editing, of collation, of criticism, and of publication.

What I intend to say will be abundantly clear the moment we look into any modern Indian book that seeks to study a subject. Whether it is a book of Hindi criticism or Bengali ethnology or of Gujrati music, it will be immediately evident that the methods we are using are Western as against the Eastern method of putting everything as *sūtras* or of

seeing literature purely from the point of view of the *rasa* theory. Even when this theory itself is being studied either with reference to modern psychology or to modern aesthetics, the principle of study we are adopting is Western, and fundamentally, neither is anybody opposed to it nor is it worth while opposing.

When we come to the study of the sciences, the Western method holds the field: the method of observing the data, of putting together these observations, of collating and comparing them, and of arriving at a final conclusion after applying all kinds of tests—even the manner of maintaining the laboratory record book—all this is so typically foreign that it has become absorbed in us and none of us cares to go in quest for the ancient Indian methods. It is true that at many points we in India had methods that are similar to these: but the modern young man at the University does not bother about this as much as the modern authors of books in the Indian languages.

Such being the case and accepting the fact that we must ultimately have all the field of learning at our disposal through our languages, the question arises if we would have the best of it in the best possible manner or only the third and fourth best given to us in a half-hearted manner.

I do not, however, intend to say that all the books that are appearing in the Indian languages are of bad quality; what I may rather say without fear of contradiction is that if these very authors are called upon to confess honestly, they would say that their books do not come up to the standard of the classics in the European languages, primarily English, which are sought to be translated, adapted, abridged, or reproduced in some such manner.

This being so, are we entitled to thrust mediocre books down the throats of our students, young men and women, whose ultimate understanding of things is going to shape the destiny of India? To those of us who say that there is bound to be certain lowering of standards during the period of transition, I would like to ask, if this lowering will be con-



fined only to a small group of students and will not ultimately extend to a whole generation of students, creating ten or twenty years hence a vacuum that would be hard to fill in.

This would evidently mean a great loss to the country that no national-minded citizen would tolerate. But this is only one side of the picture. The other side relates to the group of unscrupulous publishers who would (as some of them are already doing) unhesitatingly take advantage of the situation and flood the market (i.e. the educational market) with incompetent versions or adaptations in regional languages of standard English books dealing with various branches of learning. Certainly there are always a few competent translators but their number is so much exceeded by those that are grossly incompetent that if a board were to examine some of the so-called renderings of well-known English books, it would be amazed to find how grossly ideas are confused and mis-stated. And to impose these ideas on the unwary but highly susceptible minds is nothing short of criminal negligence of education of the country.

I know that there are always some competent English authors who are so well-versed in the European languages, particularly English, and that they have such ability at understanding ideas that they can produce original works in the various learned subjects—works that can stand in comparison with the best in the world. But such authors are few and far between though, again, most of these are trained in the best of European tradition. And until this tradition is kept alive over a large number of years, the fountain source of knowledge will soon go dry, leaving the field to groups of incompetent people who will make the best use of the situation unmindful of the country's broad interests.

One cannot but accept the fact that if our regional languages are to grow, reliance on the European languages has to be placed over a large number of years. It is not in a period of five, ten, or even fifteen years that the best of European thought, or for the matter of that international thought, can be absorbed in the

Indian languages. On the contrary it would require a persistently stupendous effort spread over a large number of years to raise our languages to the level of some of the rich European languages.

But who can possibly do this? Certainly those alone who have a remarkable competence with these European languages. And since English is the only European language which we just now know with a certain measure of confidence, all those who intend to feed the Indian languages with the best of the world's thought must necessarily do so through the medium of English. This certainly implies that from today onwards there should be a whole generation of scholars well-versed in English and other European languages who should be available to us for reinforcing our languages with the cream of world's thought.

Accepting this fact, let us now look at things as they stand today. At the schools English has been or is being reduced to a position where practically nothing is learnt of it. One might not grudge this even and say that the school boy should be given a chance of reading through his own language. There cannot be two opinions about it. But what is the position when this group comes to college and to the University? Leaving aside those who will always have a natural aptitude for the languages, what about the majority of students whose knowledge of English will be so trifling that they can hardly discharge the function of understanding European thought and of restating it in their own languages? How can anybody suddenly brush up all their English at the college and university stage and make some of them competent enough to discharge a heavy responsibility? Especially when most of them are reading all the other subjects through the medium of their regional languages.

Here another point that seems to have been overlooked by many deserves attention. Anybody who knows a language well will bear me out that it requires an out-of-the-ordinary command over a language to reproduce in it something from another language. For instance, an author who seeks to translate a



standard English book into, say, Hindi must know both the languages much better than the best civil service man who uses one or both the languages for purposes of day-to-day noting and drafting. This means that a really able translator must have a firm grasp of both the languages without which he will misrepresent ideas both ways.

Efforts have recently been made to coin scientific vocabulary in the Indian languages. They are praiseworthy indeed. But does scientific vocabulary alone lead to the proper expression even of scientific ideas? One may state the equations and the formulae but these are hardly enough for a country which is destined to take its legitimate place in the world of scientific thought, for it is not merely the question of reproducing certain ideas but of contributing to them. The problem becomes all the more acute with the humanities, where we are in a way more concerned with ideas in Indian languages, the necessity of persons well-trained in English and other European languages is the greatest in India today.

For even if we may today write a few books on some of the more popular subjects in Hindi or in regional languages, it will soon be discovered by those persons who are initiated into these subjects and are anxious to pursue their studies further that these books were at best primers and that they suddenly find themselves facing an awkward situation. Neither will such persons whose tastes have been created remain satisfied with the mere elementary books that are available in the Indian languages nor will they be able suddenly to develop that competence in English which alone can satisfy their appetite. The result will be disastrous for it will mean the deviation of a man from his pursuit of knowledge and the total effect of such deviations will be great on the country. All scholarly minded persons will soon find themselves in a vacuum until authors in Indian languages do not rise to that level of writing which alone can bring to us the most abstruse thoughts of the world.

To write therefore only elementary or only slightly advanced books in Indian languages

would hardly meet the true educational requirements of a country and the necessity has already been felt of highly specialized books. And towards the writing of such books English has the greatest contribution to make. It is then that we come to realize that the utility of English language to-day does not begin and end with writing petitions and drafts and notes and orders but is vitally related to the very problem of our existence in thought. The better we (as many of us as possible) know the English language, the more efficiently can we enrich our own. That we are bound to know our own languages well is a foregone conclusion.

Such being the case and accepting the fact that we are not going to allow an entire generation of students to suffer, should we not make some arrangement for the efficient reading and cultivation of English along with, of course, our own languages? If to this we could add one or more European languages so much the better. Luckily there exists in the country a machinery for this which can be used for this purpose with a slight modification. In many States of India now there are universities run by the Centre and if these universities had English as the medium of instruction with a net-work of schools imparting primary and higher secondary education through English, the problem could be considerably tackled. This does not mean that these Central universities would have no departments of Indian languages; it would only mean that the emphasis in these universities would be on English and with only one university in each State fed by a set of Cambridge or public schools, we would easily train up a group of young men and women in the principles of European languages in such a manner that they can discharge the duty of absorbing the European thought in India as and when necessary.

It goes without saying that these young men have also been trained in their regional languages the only difference being in emphasis. For others who want to read through the medium of their regional languages there are the State universities which would also have



departments of European languages. And reciprocity between the two types of universities would always lead to the emergence of the best talent. Just now it is a matter of chance that several States in India have Central universities and that a few more are likely to be taken over by the Centre. In addition these Central universities would also be more cosmopolitan and feed the foreign services.

Such Central universities may have chairs of translation as much as the State universities may have chairs in regional languages. The duties of these two departments should be to come close together, select the most suitable books for reproduction in the regional languages and get the translation or adaptation done in the best possible manner. The holders of the chairs at the regional universities may look to these and keep a watch over the quality of the translation done, instead of leaving such a vital thing at the mercy of mercenary publishers who are mostly impelled by business motives.

There is another manner in which the flow of international thought may be perennially kept alive. If two such departments come together to publish a fortnightly where fundamental books written in the European languages are discussed in the Indian languages (and not merely reviewed as they are presently done in some Indian journals) workers in both the groups of languages would always be nourished with new ideas till the time when we have enough literature of our own.

The position of English at the universities therefore has to be examined in a fresh light not with sentiment but with reason, keeping the

best interests of the country in view. If we just throw English out simply because it is the language of the Britisher, we shall jeopardize our interests, first by lowering the standards of the present generation and secondly by preventing a perennial flow of ideas. There shall always be a group of men who are inherently gifted with the sense of language but we must discover and use a team of such men.

If the two language departments stated above provided a large group of men with first class training in linguistics and phonetics and if they looked to the proper selection of books and their translations, English would surely make its greatest gift to India. As the University Education Commission has appropriately observed:

'English, however, must continue to be studied. It is a language which is rich in literature—humanistic, scientific and technical. If under sentimental urges we should give up English we would cut ourselves off from the living stream of ever-growing knowledge. Unable to have access to this knowledge, our standards of scholarship would fast deteriorate and our participation in the world movement in thought would become negligible. Its effect would be disastrous for our practical life, for living nations must move with the times and must respond quickly to the challenge of the surroundings. English is the only means of preventing our isolation from the world, and we will act unwisely if we allow ourselves to be enveloped in the folds of a dark curtain of ignorance. Our students who are undergoing training at schools which will admit them either to a University or to a vocation must acquire sufficient mastery of English to give them access to the treasure of knowledge, and in the universities no student should be allowed to take a degree who does not acquire the ability to read with facility and understanding the works of English masters.'

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'Each work has to pass through these stages—ridicule, opposition and then acceptance. Each man who thinks ahead of his time is sure to be misunderstood.'

—Swami Vivekananda



# THE AWAKENED ONE

BY A. ISWARAN

It was the last watch of the night. The Upavattana Śāla grove of the Mallas near Kusinārā was lit with the radiance of the full moon. Between the twin Śāla trees, both abloom even at that hour, on a robe folded into four and spread as a couch, lay a venerable figure 'reposing on his right side in the posture of a lion, with one foot resting on the other, calm and composed'. Surrounding him stood a great multitude, disciples, with grief writ large on their faces. One of them, who now sat by the Master's side, had been weeping bitterly and the Master had called him, chid him affectionately and consoled him. Now the Master again looked encouragingly on all the assembled group, a tender look with evident pride in it, and he said, 'Of these five hundred brethren of mine, Ānanda, even he who is the most backward is a Stream-winner, one who is assured from Downfall, assured of reaching the Supreme Wisdom.' Then his voice changed, like a heaving wave the final moment came up and stood, the whole burden of the luminous exalted life pressed upon that pregnant point of time and burst forth in the exhortation, 'Come now, brethren, I do remind ye: *Subject to decay are all compounded things. Do ye abide in heedfulness.*' Those were the last words of the Exalted One.

That was 2500 years ago. Now when we celebrate the Sambuddha Jayanti those words ringing through the corridors of time reach the hearts of the world's millions and stir them up as profoundly as they did on the Vaiśākha Pūrṇimā of Kaliyuga 2558 (Tuesday, 26 April, 543 B.C.).<sup>1</sup> Whatever may be the uncertain-

<sup>1</sup> This date is given by Cyrus D. F. Abayakoon according to whom 'Indian, Ceylon and Burma inscriptions give B.C. 543 as the parinirvana. Buddha Gaya inscription gives B.C. 544. There are Pali sources to support this. As the (Bengali) year commences with the Mesha Sankranthi (the same as in Lanka) B.C. 543 should be taken as the correct year.'

ties regarding the exact date, no one seems to have contradicted the remarkable coincidence of the Thrice Blessed Day. In recalling the three great incidents one is struck by the similarity of their settings too. It is strange that Māyā Devī, in the tenth month of her pregnancy, should have chosen that time to undertake a journey. But so it was fulfilled that Siddhārtha, though born a prince, must be brought forth into the world in the manner of a Buddha, the paragon of *sannyāsins*, not in a palace on a golden couch but in Nature's spring-mansion, under the canopy of a wayside Śāla tree. Again, it was under a wayside tree that the Great Illumination came. That blessed tree, called since then the Tree of Enlightenment (Bodhi), has indeed become deathless having rooted itself in the spiritual history of the world; and today the whole world pays homage to it as well as to the other places which bear the landmarks of this great life. The Buddha himself is said to have named the four places which believing clansmen should look upon with emotion—viz. of the Tathāgata's birth, of his enlightenment, of his first preaching, of his final passing away.

In celebrating the memory of the Blessed One let us consider the three treasures which a Divine Incarnation invariably bequeaths to the world. They are: the word, the life, and the form. That is, a collection of teachings, the example of a life embodying those teachings, a personal form or personality as a perfect symbol of the teachings, so that the mind can dwell on them with ease and love and through constant meditation comprehend the truth of the Divinity that was manifested.

## THE FORM

Some of the world's most outstanding pieces of art, in painting and sculpture have gone in the immortalizing of the Buddha's image. But none of them were made in the



life time of the Buddha or his contemporaries. Though the Buddha declared his Buddhahood and at times insisted upon receiving the proper address and honour due to the Tathāgata, he never allowed himself to be worshipped as a god. It was only Kanīṣka who is said to have popularized the Buddha worship. The earlier writings, of course, do not record the physical features of the Buddha. So there is no strict consistency in the features of the various images nor do we expect to find in them his exact likeness as in a photograph—in all probability Siddhārtha was quite different from the classical figures the devotees carved and painted. But it is of no consequence in the light of the purpose, already stated, for which we regard a human figure. Inasmuch as the figures depict the spirit of the Buddha they are valuable and useful to the devotee. In this respect the figures have faithfully and in exquisite form brought out the impression of the Buddha one gets from the scriptures.

The Buddha was born a prince and, according to tradition, bore the thirty-two *mahāpuruṣa lakṣaṇas* (marks of a great man) on his body. His regal frame animated by the splendour of supreme spiritual beauty possessed such a compelling majesty and grace that when the Buddha approached the five ascetics who had abandoned him prior to his enlightenment, they, in spite of their determination to be indifferent and cold to him, were spurred to rise up and receive him in honour. There are many instances recorded in which the mere personality of the Buddha exerted tremendous influence.

From the preserved art relics we conceive of the Buddha in various ways, the Dhyānī, the Bhūmisparśa, the Padmapāṇi, etc., each one steeped in deep mystical import, suggesting various moods and ideas. But all of them are serene and smiling. As Sir Francis Young-husband puts it, 'Of the Prophet Mahomed no picture, statue, or bust is ever made. Christ is usually, but mistakenly, represented as a Man of sorrows, and nailed to an instrument of torture. But Buddha through the ages has been depicted seated calm and serene, gently

smiling upon mankind.' Indeed it is an outstanding fact in the Buddha's life from birth to *parinirvāṇa* that there was not a single incident of his having shown anger, not even the so-called righteous indignation. And this too was one of the main virtues he laid much stress upon in his teachings. In the *Majjhima Nikāya* (XXI) we have the extreme yet strict command: 'Even if, O disciples, brigands and assassins with a two-handed saw were to sever your joints and limbs, one who for this reason were to become angry would not be carrying out my teaching. Therefore you must, O disciples, thoroughly train yourselves: "our mind must not be troubled, no evil word must escape our mouth, we shall remain friendly and compassionate, with loving mind, without hidden ill-will we shall irradiate that person; passing on from him we shall then irradiate the whole world with loving mind, with ample, profound, unlimited mind, free of hate and rancour.'" Thus, O disciples, must you thoroughly train yourselves.' For such a training there can be no better inspiration and aid than the very figure of the Buddha. The *Amitāyur-Dhyāna-Sūtra* says: 'Since they have meditated on Buddha's body, they will also see Buddha's mind. The Buddha's mind is his absolutely great compassion for all beings.'<sup>2</sup>

#### THE LIFE

In this, as in the images, one who sets out to worship and meditate need not reject on grounds of authenticity the mass of legends and anecdotes that have accumulated in time; for, whether a genuine record or a devotee's fond imagination, each one of them reveal a characteristic of the true Buddha. Scholars and historians may be wary or even refuse to

<sup>2</sup> A striking proof of this has been given in our times by Swami Vivekananda who, it is said, in his student days had a vision of the Buddha. In later years as a *sannyāsin* when once he was meditating under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya he suddenly burst into tears and embraced his brother-disciple who was sitting near him. The Swami in meditating upon the Buddha was overwhelmed by his compassion.



accept most of them. But even they will have to admit that the scraps of information gleaned from reliable records about the life of the Buddha are quite complete and revealing for our purpose. The chief incidents are well known. A few of the characteristics alone need be considered here.

The Buddha's is a grand, composite personality, like a rare fine-cut diamond with many facets. In his life he demonstrated all the essential virtues to a high degree of perfection. The complete absence of anger has already been noted. Even in his early life he exhibited a remarkably keen intellect with power of discrimination. In later years as a teacher, though he usually conquered all by his love and spiritual eminence, many a time the power of his logic and eloquence swept his opponents off their resistance. The period of his *sādhana* in which he underwent intense austerities reveals a towering will power. In him there was not the least vestige of selfishness, wherefore some have ventured to call him the ideal *karma-yogin*. He achieved a phenomenal perfection in the balance of intellect and emotion. He was, according to Swami Vivekananda, 'the only sane man ever born.' Yet in spite of all these accomplishments the Buddha's life has remained hearteningly human. In the Hindu religion he is accepted as an incarnation of God. Yet unlike other incarnations the Buddha never claimed to be born perfect. He refers to the period of his ignorance, his struggle, and hard-won enlightenment. His austerities did not consist merely of superhuman endurance of hunger, cold, and the like physical conditions, in which none can dare to have a share of experience; but he suffered great mental agonies accelerated by what we may call the unsparing scientific attitude towards things. And in this he is intensely human. It is this human aspect of the Buddha that forms a sustaining background to his philosophy of self-reliance, which we shall see later on.

But of all these various qualities there is one that undoubtedly outweighs all else—compassion. It is the one predominant note resounding in the symphony of his life. It is the

golden thread that runs through every incident of his life, insignificant or outstanding. Between the young Siddhārtha who washed the blood off the wounded swan with his tears and refused, in the face of all threats, to surrender the bird into cruel hands and the dying Buddha raising himself to initiate the last convert Subhadda whom the others would have driven away, all the pictures of the Exalted One are painted in this one overwhelming colour—compassion. Did not his very seeking of liberation, his crowning achievement, spring from this instinct? Again, when the transcendental Truth was realized and the Buddha, conscious of its loftiness, thought of abstaining from expounding it to people at large, was it not the voice of this virtue that urged him to change his mind? Then it is to this trait that the world owes the blessings of the *Dhamma*, the Norm as taught by the Buddha, who otherwise would have lived and passed away quietly in some Himalayan forest, an unfound pearl in the stream of oblivion.

Yet having said so much about this compassion, it should also be noted that this is not to be mistaken as the essence of the Buddha, as the goal to be attained. To him it was but a rung in the spiritual ladder over which one passes to, and down which come to humanity the blessings and power of, the supreme Attainment. This love (*maitrī*) is not just the 'humanism' much talked of nowadays. '... it has nothing to do with a human "love for one's neighbour"', but rather with the irradiant and almost objective power which proceeds, in a natural way, from an integrated and liberated mind. This is evident from the Buddhist view that of one who seeks his own health rather than that of others and the one who seeks the health of others rather than his own, the former is judged to be superior: this takes us far indeed from "humanitarianism", but likewise from "egoism". The point is, that he who has not cannot give. Love, here, is not a matter of running after others with cures and solicitude and effusions, but is something which is based on "obtaining one's own health"—that is, one's own spiritual fulfilment—until it be-



comes "radiant", and like the light of the sun which shines equally, irresistably and impersonally upon the good as upon the evil, without any special "affection", without any particular intent.'<sup>3</sup>

It may appear paradoxical but all the same quite true and reasonable that such an impersonal love is capable of being very intimate and personal to each and every individual of the limitless group that basks in its shine. We cannot help quoting a touching incident in the Buddha's life that brings out his extreme solicitude and consideration to the least of his flock. When consequent on the eating of *sukaramaddhavam* (usually interpreted as 'hog's flesh') at the black-smith Cunda's house the Buddha was seized with dysentery and pains, he feared that people may revile poor Cunda because the Tathāgata passed away as a result of eating at his hands. So he called Ānanda and instructed him to banish such doubts and grievances from Cunda's mind by saying to him that he (Ānanda) heard the Exalted One say That meal after eating which the Tathāgata was enlightened with the Supreme Enlightenment and that meal after eating which the Tathāgata passed away with that utter passing away which leaves no basis (for rebirth)—these two meals are of like fruit. . . .'<sup>4</sup>

Fortunately we have a complete and reliable record of how the Buddha spent his normal day. He truly lived the middle-path he preached allowing himself the food, garment, and rest he needed. But all the same his was a strenuous life, most of his time and energies given to ceaseless preaching of the *Dhamma*, and particularly the thorough training of his monastic disciples. And he kept on moving all the time except the rainy season, walking

<sup>3</sup> p. 201 *The Doctrine of Awakening*. By J. Evola. Translated from Italian by H. E. Musson. Luzac & Co. Ltd., London, 1951.

<sup>4</sup>*Dīgha Nikāya*, ii. 135-6; udāna, viii. 5. The first meal here refers to Sujātā's offering of milk-rice porridge which, in comparison to hog's flesh, is considered very pure. Moreover it has the merit that after partaking of it and being refreshed by it, Gautama made a final attempt and attained Nirvāṇa.

fifteen to twenty miles a day, and living on alms. It should be remembered that fame came to him in his life time. After the enlightenment, it is said, his fame spread to all quarters 'like the sound of a great gong hung in the canopy of the skies'. Kings vied with each other to entertain him all his days in their luxurious palaces. But even as the sweet blowing south-wind cannot be confined, so the Tathāgata maintained his freedom to give himself up to the ideal, living under the sky for roof and sleeping on the couch of earth. He was indeed the ideal *sannyāsin*.

### THE WORD

The whole collection of the Buddha's teachings is gathered in the Tripiṭakas, the three 'Baskets' (sections) viz. the *Vinaya*, the *Sutta* and the *Abhidhamma*. These again are divided into books, the *Vinaya Piṭaka* containing seven, the *Sutta Piṭaka* fifteen, and the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* seven. All combined they form a prodigious collection. Much more literature in the form of commentaries and expositions has been accumulating over and above this. But there is no chance of losing the real teachings of the Buddha in this sea of scriptures if only we remember the direction he gave: 'Of whatsoever teachings, Gotamid, thou canst assure thyself thus: "These doctrines conduce to passions, not to dispassion: to bondage, not to detachment: to increase of (worldly) gains, not to frugality: to discontent, not to content: to company, not to solitude: to sluggishness, not to energy: to delight in evil, not delight in good"—of such teachings thou mayest with certainty affirm, Gotamid, "This is not the Dhamma. This is not the Vinaya. This is not the master's message".' (*Vinaya* II. 10) In this we have the guidance not only to the Buddha's teachings but to the teachings of all spiritual leaders.

It is strange that so much fierce controversy and metaphysical wranglings about philosophical and dialectical problems should rise in the name of one who scrupulously avoided them himself and strongly advised



others against them. The silence of the Buddha which has been variously interpreted was meant to be revealing rather than concealing the Truth. His great disciple Kassapa makes it explicit in his answer to Sariputta : 'This is a question not concerned with profit or with the first principles of the holy life. . . That, friend, is why it is not declared by the Exalted One.'<sup>5</sup> Though the Buddha built up a strongly reasoned and minutely analysed philosophy, he was severly practical; and if it is asked what did the Buddha teach we can only give the simple and well-known answer: The four Aryan truths, about suffering, the origin of suffering, the ceasing of suffering and the way leading to the ceasing of suffering, which last is the Aryan Eightfold Path, viz. right view, right aim, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, right contemplation. To put it in an easier form and in his own words it is this:

*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇam kusalassa upasampadā  
Sacittapariyodapanam etam buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*

'Not to commit any sin, to take to doing good, and to purify one's own mind (i.e. to cleanse one's inmost thoughts)—that is the teaching of (all) the Buddhas—the Awakened and Enlightened Ones'.

It is clear that these essential principles are not entirely new to the eternal (*sanātana*) *dharma* of the Hindus. The Buddha himself declared, 'I have seen the ancient path, the path trodden by all the Perfected Awakened Ones of olden times. This is the path I follow.' And this is the path he preached. Like all incarnations or great *ācāryas* he came to fulfil

<sup>5</sup> *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, ii. pp. 222-3.

and not to destroy. His function was to rediscover the forest path lost in the enormous overgrowth of superstitions, self-interests, and narrow-mindedness; and the method consisted of laying stress on certain aspects. The setting and atmosphere of the scene in which the Buddha made his appearance forced him to stress the fundamental ethics and shape a manly philosophy of self-reliance. The very first words that came out of his mouth after the great Enlightenment, when he broke his bonds 'as a tusker rends the twisted creeper-cords, as also the very last words he uttered just before *Parinirvāṇa* bear out this feature effectively. Naturally he abstained from the mention of God or gods as a third entity to be relied upon and prayed to. He gave up the authority of the Vedas. Nor did he spare himself and thrust the authority of his own words in place of the Vedas. His appeal was to the strength and worth of each individual: 'I will not force you, as the potter his raw clay. By reprov- ing I will instruct, and by urging you. He who is sound will endure' (*Majjhima Nikāya* CXXII).

Perhaps it is this feature that accounts for the unusual interest roused by Buddhism in the Western mind, which has to strain much in fulfilling the prerequisites to the understanding and practice of the Vedic religion. Be that as it may, the whole world today needs this internal strength, which will conquer the forces of mind and matter, men and animals, by the power of love alone; the whole humanity must open out its heart to this radiant message that will make each one 'a lamp unto oneself' and the world a carnival of lights.

'He is the eternal among the eternal, and the intelligent among all that are intelligent. Though one, He grants the desires of the many. One is released from all fetters on realizing Him, the cause of all, who is comprehensible through philosophy and religious discipline.'



# COLOUR PREJUDICE PAST AND PRESENT

BY DR. D. N. ROY

## I

It is unfortunate that differences in the skin pigment should have any great bearing upon the social attitude in our racial and international relationships. A little thinking may reveal to us that these differences are superficial. Beneath the varied skin colour there is the same man in all of us. Whether one is a black-skinned Negro or a brown Indian or a yellow Chinese or a what is known as white European, the internal physical properties are neither more or less in any of them. None has an extra special lobe in the brain or an additional gland in the trunk. They all respond to stimuli in a more or less similar manner. None of them feels happy when he is hurt or insulted. None cries in agony when he is praised or befriended. Their nature is the same in all essentials. Differences, of course, there are in respect of their physical appearance, but these are not only between races and tribes but even between members of each race, nay, between members of each family. As regards differences in skin colour, these are but too thin to mean anything to the fundamental unity of men.

Yet to a certain section of the human race the colour difference in the skin has somehow been a fissiparous obsession in shaping their social attitude toward others. Indeed it has assumed an overriding importance prejudicial to their sense of social equity and integrity. It has even served to excite the lower passions in some people to make them appear as if afflicted with a peculiar sort of bovine madness.

In talking about colour prejudice, none of us, I presume, has any doubt as regards where to locate it. My own countrymen may think of it with an air of disapprobation and disgust, because we do not feel very happy about it ourselves, having been victims of it somewhere sometimes. There may be some others elsewhere who are unhappy about it on a different

ground, I mean on the ground of possible embarrassment. It is thus a subject-matter which, as one may fear, is somewhat delicate in its bearings. But that is no reason why one should feel shy of facing the problem, knowing that it has become a veritable sore spot in our present international relationship—something which has got to be cleaned and healed. The ugly implications that make it so loathsome to us may lose their depressive weight to some extent, if we turn back to history and see that colour prejudice, as a cantankerous social phenomenon, made its first appearance in this ancient land of India, that it had its genesis in the thought of our Aryan ancestors.

The Aryans arose as a virile and adventurous people from their rugged original homeland in the Caucasian region between the Black and the Caspian seas. They subsequently became known as Indo-Europeans, because they divided themselves into two main streams, one driving to as far south-east as India and the other to the west later called Europe. Those who came to the fertile land of India found themselves in a favourable climate to settle down permanently and build the earliest Aryan civilization. Those who went west were not so fortunate in respect of natural climate and fertility of the land. They had to struggle hard for their bare existence against the rigour of cold climate and the arid land. Hence they took long ages in their new settlements to evolve from primitive social conditions of life.

The ancient Aryan settlers in India were no doubt fortunate to find the natural conditions favourable but, unlike their racial cousins in Europe, they came to confront large masses of indigenous people who were very different from them. Inevitably there were initial frictions in the contact between the different races—people who were perfect strangers to one another in many respects, especially in respect of



their physical appearance including their skin colour. We find stories of these race frictions and strifes depicted graphically in the pages of the Vedas. In course of time the virile Indo-Aryans got the upper hand through their compact organization, skill, and bravery. But then they also realized the need of establishing peace with the native inhabitants to start building their civilization unhampered. Peace arose through a social adjustment in which the different races came to live together and cooperate in their common interests to uplift their life on a higher and higher level of civilization.

The great society, which thus arose in ancient India out of a variety of races different in form and colour and built up a splendid civilization under Aryan leadership on the solid foundation of universal principles, should have been a perfectly ideal one to inspire later the whole of mankind. But could one regard it as an ideal society? Here we should pause and ponder without allowing any relational sentiment to weigh upon our judgement. An ideal society is one in which there is perfect equality between man and man—equality based on their fundamental unity in all essential qualities and on the recognition of their differences as purely accidental. Apparently the Indian society did not evolve on this conception. In their social adjustment the Indo-Aryans were over-conscious of the differences in the skin colour among the constituent racial groups. They gave their own lighter or what is known as white colour the best place and the rest were graded according to their proportional differences from it, the black skin receiving the lowest place in their social stratification. The colour prejudice revealed itself at the very beginning of their contact with the native inhabitants. This was evident from the ugly epithets they used to describe the latter—epithets like Rākṣasas, Asuras, Piśācas, Dānavas, and so forth. In the modern West's social vocabulary we may find their echoes in such abusive terms as 'black niggers', 'yellow chinks', 'greasy baboos', etc. to describe the non-white people. The caste system of India arose

with an emphasis on colour differences. The blackmen were the Śūdras or the servant caste at the bottom of the social ladder. The intensity of colour prejudice might be seen in the scriptural injunction that a Śūdra or blackman should be treated as a slave whether bought or not. (*Śūdrantu kārayet dāsyam kṛitamakritameva vā.*) The *Bhagavat-Gītā*, no doubt, sought to interpret caste in terms of inner qualities. (*Cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇakarma vibhāgaśaḥ.*) But this did not seem to reject the main fact that *varṇa* or colour was the basic criterion. On the contrary the statement that the *varṇas* or colour divisions were created in reference to specific inner qualities and deeds of men, made it virtually a confirmed assumption that within lighter colour were associated better qualities, while with the darker colour lower qualities. This went to lend its support to the caste as a hereditary position, and the colour prejudice received its greater impetus when the die-hard braggart of the white (Brāhman) caste got it incorporated in a scriptural text that 'even a degenerate Brāhmaṇa was honourable, but not so a Śūdra however pure in character'. (*Patito'pi dwijaḥ pūjyo na ca Śūdro jiten-driyaḥ.*)

The Indo-Aryans thus exhibited their obsessing colour consciousness even when it became necessary for them to receive the non-Aryans into their own social system. The white skin arrogated to itself all the privileges. It was the white Brāhmaṇa who assumed, like the pontifical authority of the Roman Catholic Church, the pious role of an intermediary to save a man from his act of sacrilege or sin by receiving valuable gifts from the latter as a measure for his atonement. But the darker the skin, the lesser was the man who possessed it. The man with the black skin was a man almost in name only. What should have been deemed as purely superficial in the life of a man was given an inordinate importance to create barriers in genuine social cohesion. This was even sought to be upheld with philosophical fervour.

One wonders why the great Indo-Aryan people allowed this peculiar narrowness of mind to flourish in their otherwise noble and glorious



civilization. Few people on earth at that ancient time rose to such a sublime height of thought in terms of universality, as they did. Few people showed the wisdom of their liberal outlook to receive many quaint faiths and beliefs of the none too friendly native races and harmonize these with their own profound metaphysics for a healthy cultural synthesis that the latter might be peacefully drawn to coalesce with them in a bold and remarkable experiment of social assimilation. Few people gave God's entire creation, not to speak of all men, the halo of divinity as they did. Yet they failed to overcome the hollow prejudice against certain *varna* or skin colour and found it all-right to form a society in which men were rigidly kept divided on the fear of *varna-saṅkara* or colour blending. It exposed the peculiar Aryan weakness of social egotism.

It won't do to say that inner qualities of men determined their caste, although there were vigorous efforts at interpretation to that end. In actual practice the qualities did not count. The hereditary nature of caste proved it. The rogue son of a Brāhmaṇa did not cease to be a Brāhmaṇa. Nor did a saintly man of the Śūdra caste become a Brāhmaṇa. Food taboo, marriage interdiction, and even untouchability continued to keep them in their fixed hereditary positions.

Could such an arrangement based on an unreal conception work well for long? How could it? Those who came together to form a great society might be different in race and colour, but they were men after all. Their social instincts and impulses could not be curbed for long by stringent caste restrictions when within the same social framework they lived as neighbours and lent their daily co-operation to one another to achieve their common welfare. Human nature worked behind their occupational intermingling and neither the difference in skin colour nor the restrictions attached to the caste could stop the inevitable *mésalliance* here and there resulting in an ever increasing number of hybrids. Colour blended with colour and the time came when the white Brāhmaṇa found his son to be brown or black,

just as the black Śūdrāṇī got a nice white son. Then there was a greater bewilderment when the same family, whether Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, or Śūdra, had among its members a remarkable variation of skin colour ranging from white to deep black. All colours appeared in each caste and threw a challenge to the orthodox standard proving the utter hollowness of colour pride and prejudice.

India saw the failure of her stratified society based on colour differences and then talked of inner qualities as the sole criteria for social distinctions. That certainly was a wise awakening since the idea was consistent with her universal outlook in the higher sphere of life. If inner qualities determined men's social status, then one might find both the best and the worst of them under the same skin colour in any country of the world. Could then any particular race or community of people have any justification for colour prejudice knowing that the skin colour made no criterion for men's actual social position.? India got a lesson good for the whole world.

The sages of India took up the lesson and sought to impress upon the people that the skin colour of a man did not matter at all, only his inner qualities did. The best evidence of this was in the fact that the various deities of the Hindu pantheon, those whom the people were enjoined to worship in their daily life for moral and spiritual growth, appeared in all variety of skin colour. If the highest Brāhmaṇa worshipped in deep devotion a deity in black or yellow colour, how could there be any prejudice against the same colour of a man? If Kṛṣṇa himself could appear black and still be loved and worshipped as Lord of the universe, why should a man be hated or slighted when his skin bore that colour? The same impression certainly arose from the popular worship of such coloured goddesses as Kālī and Durgā and such incarnations as the Buddha, Rāma, and others.

Time came at last when the passion of colour prejudice practically ceased to affect any of the Indian people. The caste changed its



front and continued under modified social interpretation based on economic ideas.

The proud Indo-Aryans boosted a social blunder and the irresistible human nature aided by natural climate brought them to their senses. But here some allowances should be made before one raised one's finger of condemnation against them. The caste system arose in a very ancient time when the races of mankind lived in distant regions more or less isolated by natural barriers. The Aryan people who came to India found themselves surrounded by large masses of people belonging to diverse races and tribes and all looking strange to them. It was not an easy task for them to have an understanding with these native races and settle down for constructive social and cultural undertakings. With lofty idealism they sought to form a single social organization in which each class of people, however low in levels of civilization, found a useful place. In this remarkable experiment they had to depend entirely upon their own resources and initiative. They could

look to no outside countries for a little suggestion or consultation. They could hear no comment or criticism from anywhere, except at a later stage from some of their own people. They formed their own generalizations about races and tribes from their local knowledge. The caste embodied these generalizations. The basic idea behind the caste divisions was to maintain the purity of each racial type within the large society. The general qualities which, in their opinion, characterized each racial type were abstract ideas, not visible at sight. The thing that struck most at sight was the skin colour and this they took as a criterion assuming that the characteristic qualities of each caste were invariably associated with it.

Here was their mistake. Perhaps they would not have committed the mistake, if they had known some other people elsewhere with better impressions of coloured men. Only time proved to them their mistake, and they gave it up.

*(To be concluded)*

## ART IN LIFE AND LIFE IN ART

BY P. SAMA RAO

*(Continued from the April issue)*

Idealism in Indian art consists in the conception as well as in its execution to the extreme degree of edification that is possible to the human. While the Hellenistic type of art-culture, upon which most of the western principles of art are based, 'is the flower of the human aspect of the Divine', the Indian type 'is the finest flower of the divine aspect of the human.'<sup>29</sup> LACON, PERSEUS HOLDING MEDUSA'S HEAD, VENUS, etc. illustrate the western; while Rāmacandra, Kṛṣṇa, Sītā, Śakuntalā among the literary, MAHĒSAMŪRTI NATARĀJA, DURGĀ, KĀLĪ, composite figures of ŚIVĀ-PĀRVATĪ among the statuary, and PADMA-PĀNI, SANDHYĀ-GĀYATRĪ, GAJĒNDRA-MOKSA,

GOLDEN RAIN, etc. among paintings, the Indian type. *Vīṇā* among the musical instruments *Subha-Pantu Varāḷi* rāgas may be added to the latter. This idealism has been possible because the Indian artist like every other *sādhaka* (spiritual aspirant) is mystical and subjective while his western brother is realistic and objective. In Indian art the 'what of it' is the essential element; the 'how of it' is immaterial and of no account. Besides, the Indian product was the result of a great tranquillity and dispassion, and reflected only a divine intimation obtained by yoga as already described. The Indian artist was, further, only a vehicle or a conduit to the Divine will; and like his very Source, he was but an eternal witness

<sup>29</sup> K. S. Ramaswami Satriar.



(*nitya-sākṣī*) to the happenings in the various worlds of sense and spirit. No better illustrations than the BUDDHA and Dhyānaśiva types in Indian sculpture could be ventured in this connection.

The *Bhagavad-Gītā* (XII. 12-19) describes this yogic poise and tranquillity of the Indian *śilpin*; 'Hateless towards all born beings, void of the thought of *I* and *My*, bearing indifferently pain and pleasure, before whom the world is not dismayed and who is not dismayed before the world; who rejoices not, desires not, grieves not, is indifferent in honour and dishonour, heat and cold, joy and pain, free from attachment.' In the most poetical language and in the same text, the poise is likened to a drop of water on the lotus leaf seemingly resting but not verily thereon, and reflecting in its own transparent glow the radiances of creation around it.

The process of reproduction of a divine intimation by the Indian artist has been charmingly described: 'To get a focus within the mind, to discover a psychological standpoint, and from there, and in accordance with the subtler laws and conventions of an inner vision, create a world that is unique and stands by itself. His aim was to build from within and not from without not even from without inwards. It is not the physical nature but the psychological nature, that the Indian artist represented.'

The function of symbolism as conventionalized by our ancients is to heighten the effect of the beauty, or form or create the atmosphere and the necessary environment for the shining forth of the subject or content of art. The subject may be an immortal deity or a mortal man or a nebulous melody or an abstract idea. So it has a dual purpose: firstly, to make the artist realize in himself in an idealistic concrete form his abstract idea before setting it out in an art-form; and secondly, to make people with the use of these emblems realize to the same extent his abstract conception.

These symbols do not in any way deter or impede or detract the Indian artist from a free

realization of his conception. They are necessary for the great 'Economic of the Spirit'. These emblems range from the natural to the arbitrary with transitions in between. Most of them are concerned with our Indian cosmogony and religion, for Indian art is mostly hieratic. Lotus is the symbol of the finite universe and also stands for *ākāśa* or space, its different layers of petals suggestive of different worlds, gross and subtle. The white lotus, like the white swan, is a symbol of purity that is innate and undefiled by the muddy surroundings amidst which it is born and has its being. Its leaves and flowers in bud, widely opened, and dying down is an image of the ebb and flow of *samsāra*. It is the seat of *amṛta* to which bees adjourn. The simile is extended to souls aspiring for *mukti*. It represents also the bodily centres of consciousness such as the solar plexus, navel, heart, and brain. A blue lotus is symbolic of beatitude or divine repose. A drop of water on the lotus leaf stands for perfect detachment. The use of the lotus motif on the image-pedestal (*pīṭha*) or beneath the feet of standing idols pictures the fact that they are not earthly, while the same employed over temple domes is emblematic of the dedication of the builder's heart opening out ready to receive divine grace. In the realm of romance the petals of the flower, are the ideal for the eyes, hands, and feet of beautiful women, just as their pinks are the glory of every lake and pool. The lotus stalk connecting Nārāyaṇa with Brahmā stands for the umbilical cord and is symbolic of the flow of *rājasic* influence from the higher to a lower world, without which flow of life in all *Prakṛti* becomes inane. As the *Chāṇḍogya Upaniṣad* (VI. 8.2) has it, 'The inner body rises out of the physical and is yet tacked on to it through *Prāṇa*, like the kite flown to the skies by a string. In the words of Herbert Spencer, the four faces of Brahmā may represent the quadruple rhythms of the universe. *Haṁsa* (Swan): According to the *Dhyānabindu Upaniṣad* *jīva* or *ātman* goes out with the sound *ha* and gets in with the sound *sa*. Thus the soul always utters this *Ajapā Gāyatrī*, *haṁsa, haṁsa, haṁsa*. According to



another interpretation *ham-sa* is made of *aham* and *sah*, that is 'I' and 'that' respectively. 'I' is the ego and 'That' is the Absolute. So *Hamsa* represents the craving of the individual self for absorption in the Universal, the *Nāda-Prakṛti*. The *Hamsōpaniṣad* confirms this interpretation:<sup>30</sup>

'Muttering always "*Hamsa, Hamsa*" as though in meditation, *Hamsa* exists as fire in the fuel, as oil in the sesamum, having known that, one does not reach death.'

*Hamsa* also stands for *vijñāna* (logical thought). The beauty of its poses and the purity of its white feathers symbolize auspiciousness. In the realm of romance the beautiful are said to possess its graceful gait. The 'Swan-song' employed in the western figurative speech may distantly suggest the *ajapā gāyatrī* mentioned above. This *Hamsa* has not the form of the swan seen in the zoological gardens. Like its compeers *Gandabheruṇḍa* *Yāli*, etc. it has its own idealistic form compounded of the characteristics of fish, dog, fowl, and *sāradā* leaf:

'The *Hamsa* has dog-nails, fowl's eyes, with a deep red beak, and a face like that of a fish; and a tail like the *sāradā* leaf.'<sup>31</sup>

Just as there are seven primary colours in the colour scheme so there are seven notes in the sound scheme. Just as you get white, a non-colour in perfect combinations of the elements so in the sound-scheme the notes when perfectly combined result in *Om*, the sound-symbol of the Supreme. *Tamoguna* is represented black, *rajoguna* red, and *sattvaguna* speckless white. In the *Purāṇas* the white and the black are generally made to be exchanged by *Śiva* and *Viṣṇu* to mark their oneness. Goddess *Kāhī* is black, while *Viṣṇu* of the twilight period is *śyāmala* (greyish blue of the monsoon cloud) the colour of the pearly twilight. The passional or the *kāmic* tendency of the *rajoguna* is red. So *Brahmā*, the creator, as well as his seat, the lotus, are represented red in colour. For the same reasons deities

have complexions of their own consonant with and corresponding to their different qualities. To instance *Agni*, *Mitra*, *Rudra*, *Sūrya*, *Durgā*, *Puruṣa*, *Vaivasvata*, etc. are in different grades of the red; *Saraswatī*, *Pārvatī*, *Candra*, etc. are pure white, while *Vāyu* is green.

*Mudrās* are said to have originated from the Tāntric ritual of the Vedic age. The *Śāktopaniṣads* contain them. There are three post-vedic important texts, the *Bharatanāṭya*, *Abhinayadarpaṇa*, and rather spurious *Hastalakṣaṇadīpikā* in this connection. They contain their different kinds and manipulation. These *mudrās* are the most graceful attitudes of the hands and fingers employed to depict various *bhāvas*, to hold weapons, flowers, musical instruments like the flute, *damaru*, *viṇā*, etc. and indicate the yogic poise of gods and other superior types of mortals like the *Buddhas*, *Tirthankaras*, *Bodhisattvas*, etc. These *mudrās* are singlehanded and composite. The most authoritative of these three texts is the *Bharatanāṭyaśāstra*. In Buddhism some new types like the *Vitarka*, the *Dharmacakra*, *Mahārāja-Līlāsana*, the *Dhyāna*, *Bhūsparśa*, etc. are introduced. Weapons like the *triśula* *khadga*, *paraśu*, etc. have their own symbolic significance. *Triśula* stands for the three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in *Prakṛti* and indicates the creative, preservative, and destructive functions of *Śiva*. The *khadga* and *paraśu* stand for valour in the destruction of ignorance. The *ghaṇṭā* and the conch are symbolic of the eternal *Oṅkāra*, while *vajra* stands for eternal wisdom.

The adornment of the images was not engineered by our ancients for simple pleasure. This was not simple superimposition added for effect. The jewels, garlands, flowers, skulls, etc., besides possessing their symbolic significance, were sought to express the essential traits of the deities. All these together with the hand poses were utilized most economically to assist true and correct conceptions of them. Slightest deficiency or excess of ornamentation was deemed blasphemous and sinful.

A few samples of *dhyānas* of deities which helped the artist to execute the images correctly

<sup>30</sup> *Hamsōpaniṣad*: 4.

<sup>31</sup> '*Kukkatapada-nakhākṛti-yuktam*.

*Kukkuta cakṣusah tuṅḍasuraktam,*  
*Matsyamukhākṛtiriva mukham syāt,*  
*Pucchavi sāradāpatra-viśeṣam.'*



are here given. The *yogi* and the preceptor aspects of Śiva are compound in Dakṣiṇāmurti, whose body is whitened with *bhasma*, whose lotuslike hands shine with symbols of knowledge (*Jñāna-mudrā*), *jaṭamālā* (rosary), *vīṇā* (melody), and *pustaka* (book or palm leaf); who is three-eyed and decked with serpent (eternity) and gems (Claritas), and seated beneath the banyan in *yōga-bandha* (*yogic* attitude), expounding knowledge; who is handsome what with the luminous crescent in his *jaṭamakūṭa* and smiling and clad in elephant hides; and is ever attended on by a group of ardent disciples like Suka, and ever glowing with his transparent white complexion.<sup>32</sup> Gaurī, the Divine Spouse of Śiva, has been depicted thus: With two eyes and two hands, 'Śyāmā' wearing the coronet known as the *karandā* or *kirīta*, or having her hair tied up in a knot, with all the limbs fully developed, wearing ornaments on the feet, bearing the lotus in her right hand, her left hand hanging down, standing or sitting in the centre of the lotus—such is Gaurī<sup>33</sup> Viṣṇu on the other hand is gracious and four-armed, with two lotuslike eyes; is clad in *pitāmbara* (yellow-silk) shot with gold-lace; is complexioned like the blue-glowing sky; is decked with Śrīvatsa on his spacious chest; the front right hand is in *abhya-mudrā* (protective pose) while the back right hand holds *cakra* (discus); the left back hand holds *pañcajanya* (conch) while the left front hand may rest on his *gadā* (mace) or fashioned into *varadahasta* (giving pose of the hand).<sup>34</sup> These images were done in varying scales of proportion in wood, metal, stone, etc. as duly prescribed by *śāstras*.

The birds, like the babes, 'are God's apostles every day sent out to preach of love and hope and peace' (Lowell), and so their symbolic significance cannot be slurred over. The homecoming of birds and cattle after their day's singing and toil respectively, is very much celebrated in our literatures that depict *sandhyārāga* or the evening song. The feathery

set of life cloudens the sunset skies with their various tiny bodies prattling mayhap of the problems of the morrow, while the other robust set kicks up clouds of fiery dust closing, as it were, the eye of day. The one is remindful of the poetry of life, while the other the drudgery of it. The one suggests the Beyond that is above; while the other the mundane that is below. Man is benefited from them both. *Garuḍa* is an emblem of eternity; *śuka* of pretty talk; *śakunta* of modesty and pretty talk; *kohila* of melodious voice; *cakora* of an ideal lover longing for his beloved; *cakravāka* of a similar yearning; *cātaka* of an *abhisārikā* (woman keeping tryst); and *mayūra* stands for (1) vanity when it plays with its tail spread out, (2) the wail of the individual self to join the Universal, (3) its heavenly blue for 'manas', (4) its gait for the ideal gait of a *padminī* type of woman, and (5) of Śiva in that it has conquered the snake, which is an emblem of eternity.

In Indian tradition architecture of the temple specially is an ensemble of painting, sculpture, etc. while drama is a blend of all these, plus dancing, music, literature, etc. Just as the temple is designed in the manner of heaven's glory to house the Divine, the theatre is designed in the manner of the material universe to contribute to a successful reminiscing of human and divine passions through plays mimicking the foibles of humanity or imitating the Divine in His triune functions of creation, preservation, and destruction. The drama is an illusion in its inception, being, and end. It is a *māyā* of the human based upon an imitation of that of the Divine. Its justification lies in its power to purge the soul of all dross and ignorance.

Dance is the art of setting out an intangible *bhāva* with the movement of eyes, ears, mouth, lips, face, neck, hands, legs, feet, and other limbs into tangible and glamorous patterns. There is always a co-ordination and correspondence in the manipulation of these parts for a desired effect.<sup>35</sup> Music, costumes, paint-

<sup>32</sup> *Dakṣiṇāmurtiyupaniṣad*: 3, 5, and 8.

<sup>33</sup> *Kaśyapa-Silpa Śāstra*.

<sup>34</sup> *Mānasāra-Vastu-Śāstra*.

<sup>35</sup> Nandikeśwara: *Abhinaya-Darpaṇa*: 26-30 and 34-35.



ing, and background create the necessary atmosphere and contribute not a little to its artistic expression and consummation. Nowhere is rhythm so successfully rendered or realized in graceful forms of melting lines and luscious poses as in this art. Hence Mārkaṇḍeya regards this art as the fountain for painting and sculpture.<sup>36</sup> The female dancer should be learned in the art, clever and graceful in the manipulation of the movement of her limbs and portrayal of emotions, and charming what with her middle-youth, and smiling appearance, and sensuous temperament, proud hard breasts, large and lustrous eyes, middling height, sleekness of body, and rhythmic gait. She should not be stout, or humped, or short, or of inferior im-melodious voice; or of whiteness in her pupils; sparse in tress, or with hanging breasts, or thick lips. The male dancer should also be handsome, learned in *Bharatanāṭyaśāstra*, charming, sweet of speech and deportment, of respectable birth, sleek-bodied and clever in the arts of music, *tāla*, and *nṛtya*. He should have been gifted with a melodious voice and creational genius.<sup>37</sup> The art of dance next to that of drama is the best means for self-effacement.

The art of music has its birth, being, and finale in the primeval *nāda*, *Om*, the symbol of Brahman. From the Inchoate (*pinda*) is born the choate (*pada*) song, thence the sonal form; beyond this form is the all clear Absolute (Claritas, the Divine Effulgence). Real knowledge lies in apprehending the nuances of *svaras*.<sup>38</sup> This *Om* is the parent of the Vedas, *svaras*, and every form of creation,<sup>39</sup> and represents the Trinity. According to the Vedas all fine arts are for the culture of the soul' (*Atma-saṁskṛti-bhāva-śilpāni*), for the *bhāva* and the *rasa*, which have to be depicted in them, are verily the essence of God Himself.<sup>40</sup>

Music is composed of the *sapta-svaras*—

<sup>36</sup> *Viṣṇu-Dharmottaraḥ* Part III, relating to Painting and Iconography.

<sup>37</sup> *Nandikeśwara; Abhinaya-Darpaṇa*.

<sup>38</sup> *Mātrāsvara-Cakram*: and *Uttara-Gītā*, 41-42.

<sup>39</sup> *Dhyānabindūpaniṣad*: 16.

<sup>40</sup> *Taittirīyopaniṣad*: 2, 7.

Ṣa, Ṛ, Gā Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni (the Indian septave corresponding to the Western octave)—each of which is symbolic of a pristine quality of the Divine. They are all embodiments of the five life-principles, bestowers of the four *puruṣārthas*, ever charming, variously armed, clad and decked in different kinds of raiments and gems, and possessing, however, different expressions all in conformity with their individual potencies. For instance, Ṣa who is white in colour and smeared all over with white sandal-paste, is two-eyed, two-armed, red-eyed, clad in white raiment and bedecked with pearl necklaces and wreaths, and the bestower of the *aṣṭa-siddhis* and bliss to her devotees, dazzles with the intensity of ten-million lightnings.<sup>41</sup> In the same way the melodies composed of these *svaras*, some male and some female, have also their own picturesque forms which conform to the various *bhāvas* they represent. Mālava, the king of melodies, has the complexion of the green parrot, and a face impaled by the kisses of his beautiful wife. He is like a lotus drained of its honey by the bees. He is music-mad, wears resplendent earrings and is decked with garlands of flowers in evenings. Rāmakiri (keli), has her face glowing like the full-blown moon. She wears a lotus in her ear. She holds a bow, and arrows strung of flowers, and (she is) complexioned like that of molten gold. Bhairava Rāgā's form emanates from a face of Mahādeva. He is a handsome sannyāsin smeared all over with shining *bhasma* and wears *Jaṭāmakuṭa*, from which Ganges flows down. He is decked with the half-moon on his forehead and bangles round his wrists. He is three-eyed and adorned with serpents. He is clad in deer skin with an elephant-hide across his powerful shoulders. He has a garland of skulls round his neck. He holds in one of his hands *triśūla*. His conveyer, the bull, is always with him eagerly awaiting his desire.<sup>42</sup>

There is nothing like the ugly in life; for every object has its own essential beauty of

<sup>41</sup> *Kāmadhenu* and *Varnodhāra* Tantras.

<sup>42</sup> *Sabda-Kalpadruma*.



form, of fragrance, of hue, of line, of goodness of quality, that reflects the Divine. The ugliness as it appears is only a discordance born of imperfection either in its own constitution, or in its having been swayed by influences contrary to its own *svabhāva* or *svadharma*, or the object itself being unable to discharge its own proper function. To extend the analogy in Browning's words,

'Small and great are merely terms we bandy here;  
Since to the Spirit's absoluteness, all  
Are alike.'

So the chief function of a genuine artist is to allow in his representation, every object to sing its essential glory solo, or in harmonious combination just as the *bhāva* warrants, and to desist from the contrary even in a most distant way. The canons prescribed by Vātsyāyana, namely, (a) the knowledge of appearances, (b) correct perception, measure, and structure, (c) action of feelings on form, (d) infusion of grace, rhythm, and artistic representation resulting in a suggestion of the Eternal (*dhvani*), (e) similitude, (f) artistic technique in the manipulation of colour tones, should be scrupulously followed. Hsieh Ho,

the great Chinese artist, confirms these in his 'Flight of the Dragon'.

Art in Life and Life in Art are the two sides of the same medal. One has no being without the other. Life in Art is artistic existence and is sometimes restricted to the creation of artefacts alone. It has to include the participation of delight in the process and the yielding of it to others with an abandon that is tantamount to the feeling of exaltation in the act. Even the Absolute could not enjoy himself alone (*ekākī na ramate*).

The artist is a perfect devotee and is alone perfectly qualified for the participation of Bliss, what with his supreme selflessness, benefaction, and capacity to live other existences in his own ardour for spiritual progress!<sup>43</sup> In every way he alone knows both the Real and the unreal, and crossing death through the unreal can attain immortality through the Real;<sup>44</sup> for verily he alone is duly qualified to lift the golden bowl from over the face of Truth in order that others may behold It.

<sup>43</sup> Saṅkara : *Sataślokī*, 12, and *Sivānandaḥari*, 47.

<sup>44</sup> *Īśā Upaniṣad*, 11 and 15.

(Concluded)

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

'Memoirs of Swami Vivekananda' by Carnelia Conger is a pretty treat to those who love the Swami's many-sided personality. It also draws in profile the maternal heart of the American ladies which the great Swami was never tired of describing to his Indian friends and disciples. When the writer came to Belur Math (India) and met Swami Shankarananda, the present President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, the latter was greatly impressed by her stories of Swami Vivekananda, especially by the zeal and fervour she put into her narration. The present article is the result of his requests to her to share her memories with others. . . .

'Place of English at the Indian Universities' from the learned pen of Dr. Amar Mukerji of the University of Saugor poses a very important question, viz. 'if the recent desire of changing over completely either to the regional or the national language is conducive to our best interests.' If India is to live and thrive it must keep pace with the modern world with its new ideas and discoveries, needs and aspirations. And they are all enshrined in the European languages, of which we know English alone. Cut off from this source and fed by necessarily third-rate 'translations and adaptations', our youths, who are already lagging behind their Western counterparts, will find



themselves under an ever increasing disability. Dr. Mukerji's solution of the problem is quite easy and practicable. He wants to retain English as the medium of instruction in all the Central universities throughout the country allowing the States universities to experiment with the regional and national languages as their media of instruction. He would have 'chairs of translation' in both kinds of universities. In mutual collaboration, especially trained experts will produce fine books in regional and national languages, which in due course, will replace English books and the English medium of instruction. The suggestion deserves serious consideration by our educationists and policy-makers of education. . . .

'Colour Prejudice, Past and Present' by Dr. D. N. Roy, M.A., Ph.D., is a balanced and unbiased historical estimate of a race prejudice that might one day threaten the peace of the world if the problem is not tackled in time. Dr. Roy has not spared his own race and nation. Writes he, 'The Indo-Aryans thus exhibited their obsessing colour consciousness even when it became necessary for them to receive the non-Aryans into their own social system. The white skin arrogated to itself all the privileges. The darker the skin, the lesser was the man who possessed it. The man with the black skin was a man in name only.' Again speaking of Dr. Malan's South Africa, he asserts, 'The notorious apartheid policy of the white man there is too rabidly primitive, and yet there is no shame of it. Nay, it is worse than primitive. It represents a grave mental perversion, which, . . . may sooner or later call for a drastic remedy . . .' Yet the writer is 'not a pessimist'; he sees 'the signs of happy change . . . slowly glimmering in the dark horizon.' We are not so sure about it. The colonial powers' furore in the U.N. Social Committee on the Self-Determination issue in November last may give strength to Malan's elbow, at least indirectly.

#### BENGAL-BIHAR MERGER

Even granting the criticism that the Bengal-Bihar Merger proposal has its origin in the

Congress despair at the ugly scenes the country presented at the government decision on the S.R.C. report, we are to see if the proposal has any intrinsic value of its own. Any merger, to be successful, must be preceded by its willing acceptance by the parties concerned. Have the Bengalis and Biharis done so? Communists should not be taken into consideration, for they are anti-national, and creating trouble for troubles sake is their creed and method. Lohia's Socialists sail in the same boat. Can we say others have supported it? The general public are sceptical though not vocal. The Congressmen of both the States are divided though they are made to support it. Under such circumstances would it be successful if the proposal becomes a fact?

There is a fair chance of its success. For the saner section of both the States see the benefit that will accrue from it. Industries will flourish. Labour will have better days. Common projects will eliminate foolish frictions. But the results will take time to manifest themselves. In the meantime who will keep the fomenters of discontent in check? Who are the likely agitators? The labour and the students, as in all other matters. The Congress and the intelligentsia must work among them.

But the real causes that led to the separation of the peoples who had lived for centuries together must be eradicated before they can reap the very rich harvest that is sure to grow. Bihar consists of two cultural groups, Maithils and the others. Here the division is horizontal. Bengal too has its division of exactly the same type; but the division, being vertical, eludes our notice. The Maithil type of culture is more orthodox in the sense of being Vedāntic, while the Patna type of culture is more Islamic. Both the types are noticeable in Bengal. The types of brain, heart, morals, and spiritual expressions are equally available in both the States. It is not a fact that Bengalis are more intellectual or of better quality, whatever that may mean, than the Biharis as such. The Jhas, Mishras, Lalas, and Singhs are of exactly the same kind as Mukherjis, Chatterjis, Ghoses, Boses, Senguptas, and Dasguptas. There is no



qualitative difference between them. Geniuses are born and they are national, not provincial. When peoples are judged they ought to be judged by the brilliant products of training. Judged by this standard no unbiased man will find any difference between Bengalis and Biharis. There is, however, a difference—a difference in quantity of quality, if one may use such an expression. And that is based on opportunity and financial condition, and Calcutta happening to be the capital of British India for long. These are all changing circumstances having no permanent bearing on the character of a people. And the circumstances have already changed with marked changes in the character of the people.

Real well-wishers must not hide facts, for that is not the way to bring about desirable reforms. Hobnobbing with and imitating the manners of the Sahibs, the Bengalis developed a *hauteur* that was quite unbearable not only to the Biharis, Orissans and Assamese their neighbours, but to all Indians except the Parsees of Bombay and Kashmiris of Allahabad, for the last two were as good *chota Sahibs* as the Bengalis. This *hauteur* brought, in reaction, a contempt and hatred for the Bengalis throughout India. None of these has vanished from the scene. The Partition of Bengal gave back their souls to the Bengalis and imitation of Sahibs is now a thing of the past. But the haughtiness remains and with it its reaction, though more Sahibs are now to be seen in India outside Bengal than in Bengal during the Sahib rule.

For two generations the Bengali students wasted their energies in dabbling in practical politics and lost thereby the advantage of the initiative in the intellectual sphere. In all national competitive examinations Bengali names are to be found at the bottom of the lists. The lights of great writers, artists, philosophers, and scientists of Bengal are almost all put out. What remain of Bengal are poverty, pettiness, and pique. But that old *hauteur* still persists. Talk to any young man, especially a student, of Calcutta about other provinces, which, by the way, he has never visited

and with whose literature and current history he is not acquainted, and you will find in five minutes an ugly expression of this overbearing haughtiness.

If Bengalis are to survive and rise again to their proper place of glory they have to be first conscious of this great defect in their character and next direct all their energy in eradicating it thoroughly. Their conduct has generated enough hatred for them. If this poison is to be neutralized they are to act first, cease to be overbearing in their conduct towards others, and learn humility born of genuine culture. The moment the Bengal of Sri Caitanya and Sri Ramakrishna regains her birth-right of humility all other qualities will reappear and she will get back her position unasked. For let us tell Bengal, especially the Bengali students, that deep down the contempt and hatred for the Bengalis throughout India there lurks a genuine love and respect for Bengal's culture, art, and literature, for her emotional abandon, for her spirit of sacrifice for any noble cause, and, shall we say, for her inability to come down to the level of earning money under the too mean circumstances of the immediate past and the still lingering present.

This pride is an accretion that has no organic connexion with Bengal's character and culture. The sooner Bengal cuts it out the better for her in every respect. If she studies the development of her modern culture a little below the surface she will find that it is something to be given in joy, humility, and service and not withheld and enjoyed in selfishness, *hauteur*, and bossing over others. Her culture is meant for all. Born of fine *rasa* and *ānanda* she is to gladden the heart of all and take away gloom and sorrow of the world. How can this mission be fulfilled if she develops exclusiveness and frowns on others? No mission can be fulfilled except through the spirit of service and sacrifice. Sacrifice she has acquired, service she has to learn. And let her learn it as quickly as she can. But you cannot serve another without entering into his being, without gladdening his heart; and pride and vanity are the least qualities to serve this purpose. Is it not amaz-



ing that such a catholicity of culture can ever lodge in an exclusive race? Of the character of the culture there is not the slightest doubt. And if that is so the exclusiveness is chimerical, it cannot be true. If that is eating into the vitals of the people, spoiling their destiny, and depriving them of their best and noblest achievements, is it too much to expect the people to drive off the devil and hearken to the divinity within? Their Self demands it, the nation expects it.

The Biharis are warm-hearted, jovial people—not merely the Maithils, who cannot be distinguished from the Bengalis even in the latter's faults; but the Patna type of people who combine in themselves the Vedāntic and Islamic cultures with a little bias for the latter, like the people of Lucknow and Delhi-Agra. Because of this complex character of their culture, the Biharis are quick to learn and assimilate anything novel; and because of the Islamic strand of their culture they are as proud as the Bengalis. And they take slights to heart, as every self-respecting person should. Rub them not in the wrong way and they are your friends for life; and in times of danger you will find them in front of you and there they stand on their honour like true Rajputs, that many of them are.

Unlike the idealist Bengalis, the Biharis are realists, and like the roughs of life, in which respect they are akin to the East Bengal people. This realism of Bihar is a too well-known factor in Bengal to be ignored. But it has been resented. The fault, however, is Bengal's. You have directed your best energies to the development of finest idealism to the neglect of your economy, and if somebody comes in and fills up the vacuum you should have no cause for resentment. With you it was a choice between high idealism and economic realism. You have selected the first and you have not erred. You could not have possibly succeeded in spending your days right up to late hours at night in thinking of little pies, which, according to the fast departing method of earning money, was the only way of worshipping Lakṣmī. The brainy Biharis were not your

competitors on the soil of Bengal. Your culturally low levels have either been decimated by malaria or have been sucked up by the higher levels. You are not responsible for the former; and the latter phenomenon is a glory to Bengal—the socially raised Dulias, Koleys, Sahas, and others are shedding lustre on the society of Bengal.

The Biharis are not only more industrious, they are healthier too, thanks to the excellent climate of many parts of Bihar. While the skeletonized Bengali, suffering from indigestion, griping stomach, and diabetes broods with a wry face in his room on problems above the earth, the healthy Bihari joyously goes about his mundane business. But the robust Hindus from East Bengal are coming by thousands; we welcome our oppressed sisters and brothers. In Bengal proper there is however no space left for them while in south Bihar and on the eastern border adjacent to Bengal there are enough healthy places for them and they with their simplicity and industrious habits would be good neighbours to the Biharis. Unlike the Babus of West Bengal, they will be assets to wherever they will go. And they will be indistinguishable from the local people except for their language. They could have been keen competitors in economic fields; but with the state economy gaining grounds, competition is fast yielding place to co-operation, and co-operation of industrious people is profitable to all concerned.

The quarrel about languages is really not for languages at all but for the apprehension that the Bengali-speaking areas may go to Bengal. And this has led to some of the worst tyranny perpetrated on a section of the populace—a tyranny that was unknown during the British rule. Breaking of heads is nothing compared to the terror the people were held in in some of the border territories. The present writer still remembers the anxious and terror-stricken faces of his Bengali audience in a part of Bihar when he, in course of his speech, was thought to be telling something on the language problem, for the occasion was Rabindra Jayanti. And what was their joy and relaxa-



tion when they found him treading on nobody's corn! Those days were the ugliest chapters in the annals of the two provinces. And yet the same writer remembers how joyously the two communities had lived together as good neighbours in the pre-partition days. The quarrel, as we have said, has its basis not on language so much as on land-lust, though it must be admitted that there are language fanatics who are helping the cause of neither language. The other day, on the occasion of a meeting of *littérateurs* in Bihar, one of the great poets of that State made the preposterous suggestion that Hindi be made the State language of the merged States. Such people, both Bengalis and Biharis, defeat the cause they want to serve. If proud Bengalis think that by wounding the feelings of their neighbours they would extend the frontiers of their beautiful language they must be living in a fool's paradise. The result of haughtiness and force is revulsion and enmity, not love and liking. The cause of the national language will not be enhanced by fanaticism, which is never justified. Given love and sweet reasonableness, the cause of both the languages will be served to the enrichment of both. If the provincials of one State succeed in entering into the inner life of the other through love, sympathy, and understanding we will have enriched our languages, for we will have unlocked the treasure houses of reason and emotion of both of them, and these are the materials of all literatures. Bengalis through the affectionate eyes of the Biharis and Biharis through those of the Bengalis would be different from those through their own eyes; that makes for enrichment. The living together in peace, amity, and brotherliness would be an incentive to the study and mastery of one another's language.

The economic, linguistic, and cultural benefit of both Bengalis and Biharis are reasons for the merger which is hailed by all India even in the proposal stage. Would not the prodigal brothers and sisters warmly welcome one another home as in olden days? How we long to see the smiles of reunion on their faces! Such a day will surely be regarded as a red-

letter day in the annals of India, for its repercussion will indeed be great.

Merger or no merger, what is noble and desirable is this change of heart, the replacement of meanness and narrowness, of pride and presumptuousness by broadmindedness and generosity, by love and humility. If this happens in the eastern parts of India, where the Austric, Dravidian, and Vedic, the Indo-Aryan, Islamic, and Christian, cultures have the finest amalgamation and synthesis India will have gained a unique success in the first round of the international game of cultural unity of the world. As this cannot take place without sacrifice of selfishness, Bengal and Bihar cannot get the credit of the great initiative if they stick to their 'pound of flesh' or vow, like Duryodhana, never to part with that little of earth which can be pierced by the pin-point. The merger is the realistic test of this sacrifice. Each is to sign a blank cheque to be handed over to the other. Higging will kill the spirit.

### BRAVO AHMEDABAD!

Ahmedabad has added another feather to its cap. All villages of India should take note of it. P.T.I. gives the following news:

'The people of Athor village in Mehsana district have taken the decision never to take any dispute to a court of law. The entire population of the village at a meeting . . . pledged to follow a four-tier system of "gramraj" for the settlement of any dispute. The system . . . includes: 1. to avoid raising disputes by trying to understand the other people's views, 2. if any dispute arises it should be taken to the "panch" elected at the meeting, 3. if the panchas failed to solve the dispute help of the village leaders of the neighbouring villages will be sought, 4. if even this combination of arbitrators fails to settle a dispute the leaders of the near-by town of Unza should be approached and their award will be binding on both parties.'

We bow low to these villagers who have set an ideal method of settling disputes which is as easy and natural as it is difficult to better it.



But Ahmedabad has something still better to teach the country. The P.T.I. reports from Ahmedabad under date January 20 that 'nineteen independent members of the Bombay State Legislature have', in a memorandum, 'urged Mr. Nehru, Chairman of the Planning Commission to accord a pivotal place to the village community as a "socio-economic union" in the planning for agriculture and small-scale industry.' We wish we had space to quote the whole report. The memorandum is a well thought-out document that deserves implementation in toto; and we implore Sri Nehru to give his best consideration to it.

We quote below the general framework of the scheme and a few salient points therein, so that other leaders engaged in active constructive work may take the cue and improve their fields of activity on the lines suggested. Many of the suggestions are of a nature that unless they are backed by the authority of the Planning Commission and the government, villagers by themselves cannot implement them. But there are others, and they are by no means unimportant or less important than the others, which the villagers can very easily put into action to their great benefit both moral and economic.

'The village community should be in charge of the entire village life including the organization of credit, purchase of implements and sales of produce. . . . The village community could plan its food and other crops, its fodder, fuel, discover local talents and crafts, meet the revenue and other charges and generally work as an active agent of the planning authority. "A practical system of setting up and running the economy on self-sufficient and self-governing framework could be devised and operated under a union village community council with its State establishments functioning through district and taluka administrations. Agriculture, co-operative and educational departments could be associated for active co-ordination and avoid red-tape." The memorandum also made suggestions for the organization of rural credit, banks and insurance . . . , for the re-organization of the

educational system and the organizing of youths under a national youth council for national reconstruction.

What we like to emphasize here is the community outlook. Individual villagers must combine themselves into communes and work and function collectively directing talents and muscles to proper fields of activity for the well-being of the whole village. All the actual and potential sources of income should be thoroughly investigated, with or without the government help, and settled and then best available persons should be drafted to suitable fields to yield the best results for the whole commune. Given this outlook and determination in the villagers all the other items in the memorandum are of easy implementation, and the government aid is but a matter of course. All energy should be directed in inculcating the collective outlook in the people. An imperfect voluntary organization is far more desirable than an imposed perfect one.

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#### LET US COMPARE AND HANG OUR HEADS IN SHAME

The government's attempt at re-organization of States let loose at important places of the country some of the ugliest acts and sentiments of the people concerned. That reasonable people can give such an easy go-by to their conscience and sense of decency is something unimaginable. In a sense these acts are far worse crimes than those perpetrated during the partition of the country, for the latter were committed in a frenzy of religious fanaticism—systematically roused by propaganda spread over a number of years on the one hand and whipped up into a spirit of retaliation on the other. But the former are all cold-blooded crimes and against the followers of the same religion, against those with whom their neighbourly relation will never cease, for whom the question of transfer of population will never arise. And what is worse is that the memories of those terrible days are still so fresh in the minds of all. The



worst part of it, however is that people belonging to one party for more than a quarter of a century and wedded to non-violence are involved in these beastly things.

The reason for these ugly occurrences is not land-lust, is not love for any particular strip of land or a city, nor for the inhabitants of those places, for whom normally these instigators of bad blood never cared a straw, but the deep unshakable distrust in the character and the plighted word of the people under whom the others are to live. This shows that all the common sufferings and humiliations of centuries, all the knowledge of and researches into the causes of India's degradation, and the martyrdom of the Father of the nation were vain to change the spots of the leopard. And yet human nature is not so hopelessly perverse. Let us remind ourselves of what happened just the other day in Russia, the much despised and vilified Russia, and hang our head in shame, if any is still left in us.

'*Pravda* said a recent session of the Kazak Supreme Soviet had decided to hand over to Uzbekistan part of the best "pak dala" or "hungry" steppe and a portion of the Voshtandky region. The "hungry" steppe is north of the present Kazak-Uzbek frontier between the Aral Sea and Lake Balkash and the exchange reported by *Pravda* appears to eliminate the deep southerly sweep of the Kazak border which almost cuts Uzbekistan in two. The Uzbek capital, Tashkent, is virtually a border town and the territorial adjustment will now place it well inside the Republic's frontier'—Reuter.

The violent and irreligious Russia has administered a resounding slap on the cheek of the vociferously non-violent and God-intoxicated India. If this conduct of India be indicative of its ideal of renunciation, why, people would like to exchange it for Russia's ideal of enjoyment. All the waters of the sacred rivers and of the Indian Ocean will not wash the blackened face of India.

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## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY. BY DAYA KRISHNA, M.A., PH.D. *Prachi Prakashan, Calcutta, 1955. Pp. 233. Price Rs. 10/-.*

This interesting work originated as a thesis for the Ph.D., degree of the University of Delhi. The subject proposed is to find out the nature or function of Philosophy by an analysis of the various systems of philosophy that have been propounded in the past. In the first part Dr. Daya Krishna brings out some of the presuppositions which are of interest to him and which have been the guiding assumptions in the philosophies of the past. He has been busy understanding the presuppositions governing the system of the idealists, as though the nominalists, conceptualists, and realists had none. The second part is devoted to the examination and clarification of these presuppositions which do not however exhaust all the leading systems. The third part offers a discussion of the views of contemporary thinkers on what philosophy is. Whitehead, Croce, logical analysis, phenomenology, and existentialism are flayed alive. He is scrupul-

ous enough not to touch the assumptions of the logical positivists. In the last part the author seeks to offer what he deems to be the nature and function of philosophy. The function of philosophy, according to Dr. Daya Krishna, is only 'to clarify, certain conceptual confusions in which the philosopher finds himself involved when thinking about certain problems', whatever may be those problems. This is the very purpose for which Prof. Ryle wrote his *Concept of the Mind*; and it is not surprising that Prof. Ryle, one of the examiners of the thesis, talks well of this work. On this view philosophy has no definite subject-matter to study. It is a discipline underlying every branch of knowledge. As the friends and admirers of Carnap tell us, Philosophy can survive only as unified science.

Such a definition or description of philosophy takes us to the Chinese school of names and to the medieval nominalist-and-conceptualist quarrel. When this standpoint is consistently carried out, it will land us either in pure solipsism or in utter scepticism. We cannot afford to equate philosophy



with semantics or semiotics. It is not identical with a linguistic or grammatical or formal analysis of statements. However, Dr. Daya Krishna gives us a spirited defence of his own variety of logical positivism. His exposition is clear and concise. The book reveals an independent and effective thinking. It is distressing, as Prof. Broad once said, to find such minds diverted to linguistic or semantic problems in the name of philosophy.

DR. P. S. SASTRI.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE. BY DR. PRAVAS JIVAN CHOUDHURY. *Progressive Publishers, Calcutta 12 Pp. 182. Price Rs. 7/-.*

The recent discoveries in nuclear physics and biology have produced a revolution in the outlook of many leading scientists. The results of these sub-microscopic investigations have led the more thoughtful students of science to venture into the realm of metaphysics for a true explanation of the baffling phenomena. Thus scientific thinkers like Jeans, Eddington, Schrödinger, and even Einstein found that sometimes the classical scientific concepts were inadequate to deal with the behaviour of the ultimate constituents of matter, and hence they searched anxiously for new concepts with a distinct metaphysical tinge for handling the situation. We are now familiar with the works of Western scientists in the realm of Philosophy of Science. But so far, apart from stray articles in journals, we have not had a systematic treatise from the pen of an Indian thinker in this new field. Dr. Pravas Jivan Chaudhury is a pioneer in this realm, and his brochure is a very valuable contribution to the literature in Philosophy of Science. Concerning himself specifically with the philosophy of physics, Dr. P. J. Chaudhury, deals with the fundamental problems of methodology and ontology of this most advanced branch of science. The book is in two parts. The first part containing 8 chapters, is mainly concerned with the methodology of science and philosophy of science. Noteworthy among the topics discussed here are Science and common sense, the consequences of New Physics, and Physical Science and Normative Ethics. The second part has 3 chapters and is, in some senses, the more important part as it deals with the new concepts and results of modern physics. The great question of Indeterminism in science and its bearing on Free Will is discussed here. And fittingly enough the concluding chapter is devoted to the discussion of the idealistic trends in contemporary science. Analysing the modern concepts of matter and causality, the author concludes that 'science cannot directly be used to back an idealistic thesis. But it may be shown that science supports, if it does not prove, such a thesis' (p. 175). The entire

approach of the book is challenging. It is no easy reading, but it will serve as a powerful stimulus to keen minds willing and able to enter into the rarefied atmosphere of the region of Philosophy of Science. The reviewer has no hesitation in saying that Dr. P. J. Choudhury's notable book should be read by every post-graduate student in the Departments of Physics and Philosophy.

P. S. NAIDU.

BRAHMANADHARMAH THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION. BY R. N. SURYANARAYANA, M.A. *Published by the author, Brahmarshi Gurukulam, 200, Fort Bridge Road, Shivamoga, Mysore. Pp. xix+283. Price Rs. 10/-.*

The book under review is the outcome of erudition, acuteness, and a large awareness of the trends of modern thought joined to patriotic and religious zeal. It is an instance of the periodic urges of the Brahminic genius and tradition to adjust itself to a changed environment. Adjustment or adaptation, as Swami Vivekananda said, is the outcome of the self pitted against external forces tending to suppress it. While absorbing the conclusions of Indian socio-religious thought as accumulated during the last century and a half, the author has carried them a step further in the direction of asserting and rehabilitating the *Sanatana-Arya-Manava-Baudha Dharma* in the context of present-day world-conditions. Two impulses seem to be running parallel in the exposition—expansion or liberal interpretation of tenets of the Brahminic faith and vindication even of those elements which are often generally though summarily accounted as superstitions with a view to a spiritual unification of the different religious cults of the world.

It is interesting to follow the correspondences in Hindu orthodox thought on the vital issues of the age in different parts of India which prove how the genius of the race has been wrestling with the forces of the times. The main thesis of the learned writer that *Brāhmaṇa dharma* is good for all times and places and that the Brahmin is the ideal of humanity looks back to Manu of the hoary past and to Swami Vivekananda in recent times. But the position has been advanced with a circumstantial sweep and a bold extremism which bear the impress of South India as the age-old stronghold of Sanskrit culture and religious tradition. The author avows his inspiration from His Holiness Sri Yogananda Bharati known as Vedamurthy Sri Ahobala Narasimha Brahmarshinah of Srīngagiri. He would substitute *Brāhmaṇa* and *Brāhmaṇadeśa* in place of the much abused Hindu and India. All living and moving beings are classified into two sections—animals (*go*) and human beings (*Brāhmaṇa*). *Brāhmaṇas* of



today according to their birth, virtue, and profession should be styled as *śrotriyas*. The other divisions of the community may be termed as Kṣatriya-, Vaiśya-, and Niṣāda-Brāhmaṇas, etc. even as the Portuguese were sometimes known as European Brāhmaṇas and some American devotees of the *Gītā* and Hindu religion called themselves Boston Brāhmaṇas.

Brāhmaṇa culture is claimed to be unique and the only world culture. The idea of one state, one nation, and one Absolute Brāhmaṇa Dhrama can be easily materialized, says the writer, under the single perfect political institute, i.e. World Government working to the tune of the Divine *Brāhmaṇa Dharma*. All the religious cults are held to be derived from the Vedic by ingenious (though a little far-fetched) philological links. Thus Zoroastrianism is rendered into Sarvahoṭrācāra, Zend Avesta is Sandhyā Apastha or Apastama—the holy work of prayer during twilight, Tao is Dyaus (sky or heaven), Shintoism is śāntyācāra, Semitism is Heberācāra or Sabarācāra, Judaism is Yodhācāra, Buddhism and Christianity are Bauddhācāra and Kṛṣṭācāra, and Islam is Mahammadācāra—all traceable to the same source. Dharma has been conceived in the broadest sense as any work involving sacrifice and suffering for the sake of social benefit or service—renunciation of some good or other being its essence and the *Puruṣa yajña* being the one archetypal model. The underlying conception is *ṛṇa* (debt or obligation)—made up of two letters which are ingeniously taken to suggest that without it there is no progress or truth or sagehood or knowledge. The fundamentals of universal religion are the source of politics in general. Even Communism is a kind of religion—a form of negative worship. The Brāhmaṇācāra favours the cause of Labour and the natural life.

The learned writer's views on the consequences of machine civilization and industrialization, the menace to individuality from a 'collective-central state-devil-force', on overhauling the system of studying Sanskrit, the reconstitution of the castes on spiritual principles, on the Institute of Brāhmaṇācāra evidence at the same time his communion with the critical thought of the age and the reaction of the orthodox mind to the inevitable conditions of modern life. The book compresses within a limited compass an enormous store of varied learning and subtle thought as in the concluding chapters on *Amṛita manthana* and the exegesis of the Vedas. And this account for the emphatic and colourful though somewhat turgid diction in which some of the strikingly original ideas are couched.

PROF. BATUKNATH BHATTACHARYA.

THE DIVINE NAME. BY RAGHAVA CHAITANYA DAS. Published by the author, A/5, Anandasaram, Proctor Rd., Bombay 7. Pp. 456. Price Rs. 5/-.

This nice little book serves as an introduction to the Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava literature of India. It records in soul-stirring language the life story of Haridās Thākura and his whole-hearted surrender to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He made Kṛṣṇa the goal of life. Chanting His Holy Name even at the risk of life had become a second nature with him. His life is a searchlight on devotion. This self-sacrificing nature of his, won over the heart of Mahāprabhu Śrī Caitanya, who revived the Prema path of Hindu Religion after the Rādhā pattern. His love for humanity knew no bounds of race, caste, or creed. The learned discourses given by Mahāprabhu and Nāmācārya (Haridās Thākura) reveal how gradually the devotees reach the supreme heights of Knowledge. Quoting appropriately from authoritative Bhakti texts like the *Bhāgavatam* both try to impress the greatness of Bhakti and its advantages over the other paths of God-realization. Their words speak the glory of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and do not fail to rouse in the readers' heart love of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His Holy Name. The learned author has done a laudable work in preaching the *Nāmasaṁkīrtana* aspect of Hindu religion among the English-knowing public. We recommend this book to the beginners of the religion of Devotion. But the author's contention 'the non-believers in the Holy Name will in no way attain salvation—never, never, never,' seems little fanatic, since Hindu scriptures advocate many equally fruitful avenues to Liberation. The emphasis of Hindu *śāstras* is on life more than believing or chanting of Names. They even go to the extent of telling that those who, without performing their respective duties, simply say 'Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa!' are the haters of Kṛṣṇa. Realization and self-surrender should be brought to bear on the daily activities of life.

B. R.

STOLEN LEGACY. BY GEORGE G. M. JAMES, *Philosophical Library, New York, Pp. 184, \$3.75.*

The main purpose of this book is the uplift of African people—Quite laudable indeed! But the means employed is rather amazing. It is the formulation of a new philosophy of African redemption through discrediting Greek Philosophy and Greek Culture. The author vehemently contends that Greek Philosophy has been 'stolen' from Egypt. He quotes chapter and verse in support of his strange contention. Well-known standard works on Greek Philosophy, and not so well-known books on Ancient Egypt and theosophy are press-



ed into service to show that the so-called Greek thought and Greek Weltanschauung were alien to Greek nature, and that the Egyptians were the real *gurus* of Greeks. And so all the false notions of the indebtedness of Modern Civilization to Greek Culture should be blown up. Both black and white people should be re-educated, and the former should claim their rightful heritage.

The reviewer is forcefully reminded of the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy of his student days, and of the strange claim which a certain South Indian Scholar made two or three decades ago that Christ was really Kṛṣṇa and that Jews had 'stolen' him from India. History repeats itself indeed! Had the author of the book under

review consulted Professor Urwick's *Message of Plato*, he would have seen that Greek Philosophy owes its origin not to Egypt, but to India. Be that as it may, is it to be believed that the Greek mind was so barren that it could not transform, and transmute out of all recognition what it 'stole' from Egypt? The book is less than kind to Greece. And surely there are other means for uplifting the Africans. That the book is published in the Philosophical Library is perhaps the one reason why it should merit our attention. Such books should be read by serious students of ancient civilization in order that they may see both sides of the medal.

P. S. NAIDU.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### UNESCO TRANSLATES NEW SERIES OF CLASSICS

'One of Unesco's tasks is to encourage and facilitate translation of the great works of different countries into the languages that are most widely spoken. This has been part of the Organization's programme since 1948 when it was confined to translations from and into Arabic. It was later extended to the literatures of Latin America, Iran, Italy, and Asia—particularly India, China and Japan.

The purpose of this programme is to contribute to mutual understanding between peoples by making the masterpieces of other literatures available to them. Thirty works have now appeared in this collection and another 60 are in preparation.

A committee of experts invited by the International Council of Philosophy and Humanistic Studies met at Unesco House from Dec. 14 to 16 to advise Unesco on the choice of translators and of further works which, in their opinion, are in most urgent need of translation and publication.

The variety of languages in which the literature of India is written complicated the task of Messrs. Georges Coèdès, C. S. K. Pathy and Jean Filliozat who finally suggested over 30 works to be translated from Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu—not to mention Sanskrit.'

(Unesco News)

### INDIAN BIOCHEMIST TO WORK IN BAGHDAD

'Prof. T. N. Seth, Indian scientist and Head of the Biochemistry Department of Patna University for the past two decades, will be on a mission for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to work at the College of Arts and Sciences in Baghdad.

Professor Seth is the seventeenth Indian national to be sent out by Unesco under its share of the United Nations world programme of technical assistance for economic development now operating in more than 90 countries.

In Baghdad, he will aid in developing a Biochemistry Department at the College of Arts and Sciences, the core of a future University of Iraq. Unesco has already sent specialists in mathematics, physics, and chemistry to work with Iraqi authorities at this college.

Professor Seth joined the faculty of Patna University in 1927 and, ten years later, he became Head of the Biochemistry Department of the University's Medical College. From 1953 to 1955, he was on mission for the World Health Organization in Indonesia where he served as an Associate Professor of Biochemistry at Gadjah Mada University in Jogjakarta.'

(Unesco News)

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION FLOOD RELIEF WORK IN EAST & WEST GODAVARY 1953-1955

*History of Work:* Rajahmundry town being on the banks of the river was one of the worst



victims of the unprecedented floods in the Godavari on the fateful night of August 15th, 1953. The local branch of the Mission was under six feet of water for a week. Regardless of its own losses the Mission organized a feeding centre on the second day after the floods in the Mission garden where the number rose from four hundred to five thousand. A week after the event the Government entrusted its ten feeding centres in the Rajahmundry town to the Mission and the Mission managed them for a fortnight after which the feeding was discontinued. The dislocation of life and misery throughout the district was so vast that the Mission felt itself called upon to organize relief measures on a district-wide scale.

*Distribution of food:* Two batches of volunteers were sent, one to the Bhadrachalam area and the other to the Central Delta to open food centres forthwith. In Bhadrachalam uncooked food was distributed while in Allavaram and Konaragiripatnam of the Amalapuram taluk, cooked food was arranged. In Rajahmundry town where the people had returned almost to normal, six milk centres were opened and milk prepared from skimmed milk powder or from condensed milk was supplied to children and expectant mothers.

*Distribution of Cloth:* This was a task of colossal dimensions and it involved three stages: enumeration, giving of token cards and then the actual distribution. The Mission chose handloom cloth, both sarees and dhoties as that will indirectly offer relief to the poor weavers who had been thrown out of work for a long time. In addition to sarees and dhoties, thousands of ready-made dresses for students, children, and adults were also distributed.

*Cooking utensils:* Nearly 6000 aluminium cooking utensil sets, one set consisting of two cooking pots, two eating plates and two tumblers, were distributed to displaced families throughout the district.

*Mats and cots:* Tunga mats was another item of relief given to the flood victims. This was found more necessary in the agency areas. In the Bhadrachalam area, the Mission worked up a cot-subsidy and distribution scheme by which small amounts of money were advanced to families to manufacture cheap cots, which were purchased by the Mission later and distributed free to the same people. This was a double relief as it afforded work and also the benefit of cots to the distressed families.

*Educational help:* More than half of the student population in the flood affected areas was found without text books, exercise books and other

educational accessories after the floods. Hence the Mission felt it necessary to distribute the above materials to enable them to pursue their studies. As many as 15,000 slates were distributed to the children of the Central Delta schools alone. In some deserving cases, the students were helped with tuition fees also. The Mission also gave substantial help in the form of building materials like cement and bricks to two educational institutions in the Rajahmundry town.

*Housing and Rehabilitation:* The Mission constructed three colonies, one at Kotilingalu, Rajahmundry town with 28 houses with fire-proof asbestos roofing to accommodate 56 families. The second colony is at Katavartm in Rajahmundry taluk with 53 houses and the third at Gummagoyagudem, 10 miles south of Bhadrachalam with 22 houses. A well was dug at the Gummagoyagudem colony and the water problem was permanently solved. An elementary school building at Yenugumahal in Kothapetta taluk which was completely washed away was newly built by the Mission at a cost of Rs 18,000/- Five acres of land were acquired at Vanapalli at a cost of Rs 14,075/- and distributed as house sites to 64 families. Housing materials in the form of bricks, cement etc. were given to roughly 750 families in Rajahmundry town, mostly to middle class families, supplying half their requirements for the reconstruction of their houses. In addition to these, the Mission had distributed earlier, bamboos and leaves to the labour classes for the construction of their huts in Rajahmundry town in the Lankas of Central Delta and in Kapileswarapuram of Ramachandrapur taluk

*Workers and the Progress:* In the beginning of the work, the problem of workers was as usual very acute. It was to a large extent solved when an energetic band of students of the local Arts College offered their services and joined as volunteers. They were found to be of immense service and for ten long months they were in the field. Progress was slow and arduous due to lack of proper roads in the interior and want of communications. But the Mission put more workers on the tasks and the cloth distribution work for the whole district was more or less accomplished by January 1954. The second stage of work, viz. Rehabilitation by giving houses or house sites took more time as the acquisition and purchase of land could proceed only slowly and the work of the four colonies was finished by the early part of 1955. Thus the Mission was in the field nearly for eighteen months.