

## NOTES

THE frontispiece to the present number of *The Eastern Buddhist* represents one of the great Buddhist statues, at least thirty feet high, from the famous rock-carvings at Yün-kang, in the province of Shan-hsi, China, where we find so many caves or grottoes artificially excavated out of the Wuchou mountain range running west of the village. The caves are filled with statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and other spiritual beings. The greater part of the carvings were executed towards the end of the fifth century during the Northern Wei Dynasty. According to the art critics, they are not only the oldest and most representative work of this kind in the East but deserve to be recognised as some of the most wonderful specimens of artistic perfection in the world.

Our frontispiece is the main Buddha in one of the ruined caves, and the whole statue is entirely exposed with the lower parts below the knees buried under the debris. It is hard to tell whether he is Śākyamuni or Amitābha-Buddha. While there is no perceivable influence of the Greek or Gandhara school in this statue, it is distinctly Chinese in conception. It is full of masculine virility, and life seems to be overflowing from every feature of the Buddha. Art must be said to have reached its culmination here.

It is interesting to notice that in this statue, indeed in all the rock-carvings of Yün-kang, there is nothing of pessimism or feminism which is frequently associated with the teaching of the Buddha. The impression one gets from this statue is that of the morning sun gloriously rising from the darkness of night, dispelling the mists of ignorance and the clouds of infatuation. It is the very symbol of radiance and fearlessness.

Mr Chujun Nakagawa, of the Department of Education, and Mr Taketaro Shinkai, a court artist, accompanied by the photographers, Messrs Yamamoto and Kishi, of Peking, made a special trip to Yün-kang this spring with the purpose of obtaining pictures of the rock-carvings, and our frontispiece is one of those pictures kindly permitted by them to be reproduced here. Owing to the destructive process of nature and to the degenerated taste of modern repairers, these precious remains of Buddhist art are, irrevocably in some cases, losing their original features, which is to be greatly lamented. The Bunkyūdo, Tokyo, and the Yamamoto Photographic Studio, Peking, are joint publishers of two hundred pictures of these rock-carvings.

The Tōyō University conducted by progressive Buddhists has decided to establish a branch school in Seoul. The University was founded by the late Dr Yenryo Inouye who first popularised the study of Buddhism hitherto more or less confined within the walls of the cloister. It is now presided over by Mr Tetsu Sakaino, an eminent Buddhist scholar, who is at present travelling in America. The new scheme of starting a university extension in Korea from where we got our first knowledge of Buddhism more than a thousand years ago, is supported by the Korean government, and the promise is reported to have been given by the government to secure a suitable site for the university. "The principal object of such a university in Korea," according to an official of the university, "is to develop the traditional culture of the Koreans and bring it into harmony with modern civilisation. Confucianism still occupies an important place in Korean culture, and part of the activities of the Tōyō university will be devoted to the utilisation of the doctrine in the attempt to lead the Koreans to enlightenment. That ancient Korean literature is worth the study of scholars is commonplace.

Fortunately our university is better fitted than any other institutions in the task of raising the spiritual standards of the Koreans and harmonising traditional Korean thought with modern ideas."

The study of the Āgamas has been greatly neglected in Japan. The scholars of the Mahāyāna have been too busy to pay due attention to this aspect of Buddhism, either because they regard the Āgama as Hīnayāna and therefore as not worth studying, or because the Mahāyāna is too absorbing a subject for its students. But apart from sectarian prejudice the Āgamas are one of the most important phases of Buddhism; and those who wish to trace the history of the Buddhist dogmatics to their sources and also those who want to come in contact with the historical Buddha as he appeared to his disciples can ill afford to ignore the Āgamas. Professor Akanuma's work on the *Buddhism of the Āgamas* corrects this deficiency in Japanese Buddhist scholarship.

The Āgama which means "holy doctrine" or "scripture," or "the goal of the teaching," is the name given to a collection of the Buddhist sutras, very much shorter than the so-called Mahāyāna Vaipulya Sutra, and generally consists of four groups known as Samyuktāgama, Dīghāgama, Madhyamāgama, and Ekottarikāgama, which respectively correspond to the Pali Nikāyas, Samyutta, Dīgha, Majjhima, and Anguttara. The author of the *Buddhism of the Āgamas* thinks it quite necessary—and we agree with him—to study this class of Buddhist literature if one wants to have a thorough knowledge of Buddhism, which will constitute the foundation of one's further and deeper understanding of it in its ever-expanding growth. The work was compiled primarily as a text-book of Buddhism for his students. It is divided, as in Warren's *Buddhism in Translations*, into three parts, Buddha, Dharma, and Saṃgha. While Warren's idea is to expound

Buddhism through his translations of the Pali Buddhist literature, Prof. Akanuma takes the Chinese Āgamas as the text, giving the corresponding English translations when they are available, but where they are not, his own translations in Japanese from the Pali canons. These parallel readings will prove a great help to Western Buddhist students who are desirous of comparing the Pali passages with the Chinese.

Each of the three divisions is preceded by the author's general remarks on the subject. For instance, as an introduction to Buddhology we have the following chapters: 1. "The Buddha's Renunciation"; 2. "His Attainment of Enlightenment"; 3. "The Signification of the Term Buddha";\* 4. "The Announcement of the Truth and its Transmission"; 5. "Buddha's Daily Life and Itinerary"; and 6. "Buddhology." After this, the passages are given from the Āgamas (in Chinese) relating to the Buddha's life at the palace of his father, the Renunciation, six years of penance, the uselessness of ascetic life, etc.

The second division goes on in a similar manner, explaining the Fourfold Noble Truth. The one thing that distinguishes the author from Western scholars of the Pali Buddhist texts reveals itself in the sixth chapter of the second part, in which he treats of Buddhism as a religion for householders. According to him, the too sharply defined dualism in the system of the Buddha's teaching was happily unified by Shinran, the founder of the Shin Sect; for with him Buddhism ceased to be an exclusive teaching for homeless monks and was so remodelled as to efface the dualistic distinction between the mendicant ascetic Buddhists and those engaged in worldly occupations and yet morally pure and destined for a better world after death. He also refers to the presence in the so-called primitive Buddhism of the esoteric elements which

---

\* A translation of this chapter appeared in one of the previous numbers of the present magazine.

later developed into the teaching of the Mantra or Shingon Sect. As the Mahāyāna student of the Āgamas, the author's standpoint is fully justified.

Part III concerns itself with the Brotherhood and its minute rules of conduct which gradually evolved and were finally compiled into a system of moral codes for the Saṅgha. It is interesting to see how such rigorous discipline was necessary in the beginning of Buddhism. The study of these disciplinary rules in detail will doubtless throw much light not only on the general culture attained by the Indian people of those days, but on some of the fundamental ideas that then governed the Buddhist view of life.

The author is to be thanked for his painstaking work on the hitherto much neglected department of Buddhist study. While the Mahāyāna scholars serenely went on with their special study paying no attention whatever to their brother's claims, Prof. Akanuma's first attempt in this field has been quite felicitous, and, let us hope, it will be followed by other works of like excellence in the same direction either by the author himself or by other scholars.