

NOTES

BULLETIN of the School of Oriental Studies, London Institution, Vol. II, Part 1, issued recently, contains a short note on "Mr Anesaki and a Zen Poem" (pp. 171-172), by an unsigned writer. As the original Chinese which is written in the cursive style over a picture of Bodhi-Dharma, the first patriarch of Zen Buddhism in China, seems to present some difficulties to read, we try our hands too. The poem appears in *Buddhist Art* (Plate 30), by Mr Anesaki, Professor of the Science of Religion, in the Tokyo Imperial University. The original Chinese, transcribed into the printed style, runs as follows:

只 將 不 識 鼓 唇 牙 胡	言 如 何 亂 得 華 若 使	老 蕭 皮 有 血 定 應 趨	過 流 沙 逐 天 目 文 禮	目天	翁滅	禮文
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--	----	----	----

Mr Anesaki's translation in *Buddhist Art* is:

O thou solitary sage! hast thou a skin?
Then surely blood is streaming in thee.
Canst utter words?
Given a flower, what wouldst do?
Thy lips would be a drum, thy cheeks a banner, eh!

The writer in the *Bulletin* translates:

Saying nothing but "Don't know," he drummed his lips on
 his teeth;
 For how could he turn his Indian speech into Chinese?
 If he is to cause old Hsiao (i. e. the Emperor) to have any
 blood under his skin,
 He will have to drive him across the desert sands.

There is no doubt that the writer in the *Bulletin* is far more correct than Professor Anesaki in the rendering of the Chinese, but still there are some points requiring further light, especially the last two lines. In fact, one, however great in Chinese scholarship, will find such a poem as the present one difficult to understand without some knowledge of Zen Buddhism. My reading is this:

Only with "I know not" he drummed on his lips and
 teeth;
 The barbarian's language, how could it be confused with the
 civilised [tongue]?
 If old Hsiao under his skin had any blood,
 He would, passing over the Stream of Sands, have chased
 Dharma to Mount Tien-mu.

The first line of course refers to Dharma's answer to the Emperor of Liang. The first question of the Emperor, when he saw Dharma, was, "What is the first principle of the Holy Doctrine?" "In vast emptiness there is nothing holy," replied Dharma. Not understanding this, continued the Emperor, "Who is he that stands facing me?" "I know not," was Dharma's quick response. The subject of the picture being Dharma, the verse naturally begins with the reference to this famous dialogue. "To drum on one's lips and teeth" simply means "to speak," or "to utter." 蔣 is wrong and should be 將, without "grass" on the crown.

胡 in the second line applies generally to foreigners, or barbarians in the original sense. It has however a slighting

sense, especially when it is used in combination with 亂 in such phrases as 胡說亂道 or 胡言亂語. Before the term 梵語 came into general use, 胡言 or 胡語 was applied to the Sanskrit or any cognate language from the west. Dharma was frequently called by the Zen masters 胡人 or 胡僧 or 赤鬚胡 (the foreigner with reddish beard). In the present case, 胡 may be taken implying something of slight, as it stands contrasted with 華, refined Chinese language. This apparent slight, however, is the usual Zen way of appreciation. The whole line then means: How could Dharma who spoke a foreign tongue pretend to use the Chinese in its purity and refinement? In other words, "I know not" does not fully express the truth of Zen, which really transcends the understanding.

The third line is: Old Hsiao, Emperor of Liang, was stupid enough not to understand Dharma; but if he were intelligent and alive enough so that his blood ran warm under his skin (this phrase, "to have blood under the skin" means to be a real man full of vigour and daring spirit), he would have done what follows in

The fourth line, in which the true meaning of Dharma's "I know not" is expressed in a paradoxical form. That is to say, the old Emperor would have passed through the desert and cornered the crafty Dharma at Tien-mu where the author of the poem was residing. To understand this, we must remember that Dharma, after his death and burial, escaped from his grave and went back to India via the northern route, naturally crossing the great desert in central Asia. The poet refers to this, but he makes old Hsiao run after Dharma in the North and catch him in the South. After all Dharma did not go back to India after his death, but he is still hiding himself in the poet's own monastery at Tien-mu, which is situated in the south of the Yang-tzu Chiang.

One or two things to be noticed about the poem is that the two concluding words of the fourth line "tien mu" is better read as belonging to the line itself; for not only the sense requires it but the way in which they are written plainly indicates that they are part of the verse. Ordinarily, the fourth line ought to have seven words as the preceding three lines; and if the poem is to be a regular 七言絕句, the last character of the fourth line must rhyme with 牙 (*ya*) and 華 (*hua*), but 逐 (*chu*) is altogether out of question. The word that belongs to the same group of rhymes as *ya* and *hua* is *sha* (沙), the sixth word in the fourth line. Apparently the idea of the poet-monk was not to write a conventional "seven words" verse, but just to express himself in the manner that best suited his purpose. So he made *sha* (沙) rhyme with *ya* (牙) and *hua* (華) irregularly in the body of the line, making "Tien mu" perform a double function, first to complete the sense of the line, and secondly as denoting his own residence. S.

Of our new contributors, the Right Reverend Kwōyen Otani is the Lord Abbot of the Eastern Hongwanji Branch of the Shin Sect, and the Right Reverend Son-yu Otani is the Acting Lord Abbot of the Western Hongwanji Branch of the same sect, which is the most popular and influential Buddhist sect in Japan. Visitors to Kyoto all know what those huge temple-buildings near the Station are. We are fortunate to be able to publish those articles on the problem of disarmament by the two powerful Buddhist representatives in Japan. The third contributor on the same subject, the Reverend Shinko Mochidzuki, is President of the Jōdo University, Tokyo. His is the most active sect in social and educational work, and he heads the latter. He himself is a great scholar of Buddhism and an authority on

the history of Buddhist dogmatics in China. It was he who contended the authorship of Aśvaghosha as the writer of *The Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna*. He thinks the book must have been written by a Chinese scholar, Tuan Tsun (曇遵) in the sixth century and advances weighty proofs to support his view.

The present issue of *The Eastern Buddhist* is somewhat a departure from our regular programme; but seeing how important it was to treat those international questions which so concern the welfare of various nations from the Buddhist point of view, and also seeing that the Buddhists, at least some of them, have been too transcendental to get mixed in the practical affairs of the world, we deemed it quite proper to express ourselves in this magazine in relation to current topics of the day. Buddhism, especially in Japan under the feudal government, was a most pliable instrument in the hands of the statesmen in power at the time, and kept itself away from political and social questions as not directly concerning its interests. Hereafter this transcendentalism is to be abandoned.