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## EDITORIAL

WHEN the lamp of universal truth is lit in the mind of man, he cannot help but bear witness to it as best his circumstances permit. Day by day, bit by bit, he takes account of the very spirit that moves him. He may, for his own edification and clarification, strive to set this basic experience down in writing. Yet somehow he does not stop at this point. He longs to reach out and seek the company of like-minded fellow beings.

It would seem in just such a manner the original issues of *The Eastern Buddhist* were delivered to the world exactly fifty years ago. Its founder-editor was Daisetz T. Suzuki, later celebrated for his role in introducing Zen Buddhism to the West, and it was co-edited by his American wife Beatrice Lane Suzuki, a Buddhist scholar in her own right.

To some, much of the first twenty years of *The Eastern Buddhist* may read like the personal history of a single person and his devoted helpmate. But in retrospect we know these are the records of those whose very lives and thoughts, openly and directly transcribed, are the living links of the Mahayana transmission.

By 1921, the first year of *The Eastern Buddhist* publication, Japan had made astonishing headway in the world politically and militarily. In the 52 years since having officially broken away from the feudalism and isolationism practiced for some 300 years under Tokugawa rule, she had worked her way into the family of modern nations, participating both in war and in peace.

The restored Emperor Meiji in 1868 set the tone for this new era by proclaiming that "Knowledge shall be sought for throughout the world." The doors of the confined island nation were now flung fully open and the whole country took to the task of learning with unprecedented enthusiasm and energy. The impact of this is being felt to this day. Exposure to alien thoughts and cultures was to direct her simultaneously to critically reflect upon and re-examine her own traditional values. There was a lot of catching up to be

done and little time to do it in. The enlightened men of Meiji thus looked in two directions—outward and inward. Unlike generations that were to follow, the Meiji-born was in most cases firmly rooted in his own cultural and religious heritage. He was not likely to be overcome by the shock of cultural disparity however sharp.

According to one representative of this era:

“... One of the chief reasons why so readily the Japanese could assimilate the highest flights of Western intellect was no doubt due to the Buddhist training through which the Japanese have gone for many long centuries.”<sup>1</sup>

Not only was he able to “assimilate” things foreign, but his own clear identity and awareness as an Easterner often saved him from biting off more than he could chew.

In the field of Buddhism, among names known to the West, two stand out: Shaku Sōyen (1859–1919), the first Zen master to travel to the West, and Kiyozawa Manshi (1863–1903), a leading reformist in the Jōdo Shin Sect of Buddhism. In 1893, the two men took part in the World’s Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Shaku Sōyen attended and read a paper, while Kiyozawa Manshi submitted an essay entitled “The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion,”<sup>2</sup> the first such outline written by a Japanese.

The breadth and depth of vision encompassed by these men may be measured in part by the effects they produced upon their successors and contemporaries. From Shaku Sōyen came Daisetz T. Suzuki, Shaku Sōkatsu, Senzaki Nyogen, and others known for their roles in disseminating Zen Buddhism overseas. Kiyozawa Manshi, on the other hand, chose to turn his attention homeward, towards the problem of a diseased priesthood. He saw that massive surgery was necessary, and instigated uprisings designed to shake the outdated structure and the complacency of the Jōdo Shin priesthood. But the roots were too deeply imbedded in Tokugawa feudalism. Kiyozawa Manshi was promptly branded a heretic. He went to Tokyo and formed a group of independent young Shin intellectuals, and in 1901 laid the foundation for a college of religious

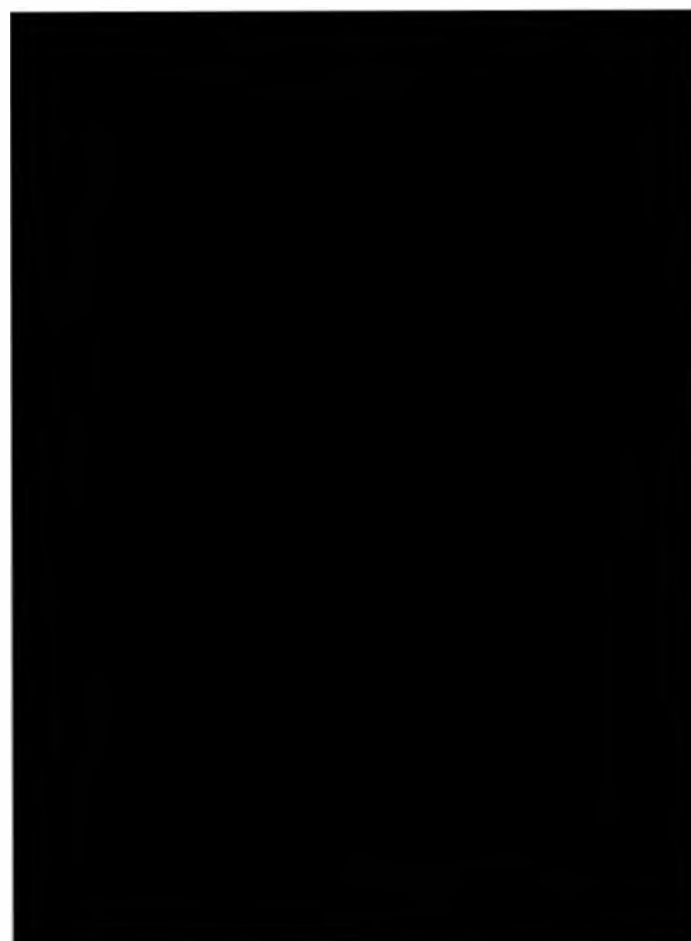
<sup>1</sup> From the Editorial, *The Eastern Buddhist*, I, no. 1 (May 1921), p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> Written under his former name, Tokunaga Manshi.

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instruction called Shinshū Daigaku, the predecessor of today's Otani University. In spite of his premature death two years later at the age of 40, he had a firmly established following: Akegarasu Haya, Chikazumi Jōkan, Ikeyama Eikichi, Tada Kanae, Sasaki Gesshō, Soga Ryōjin, Kaneko Daiei, and others.

By 1909, Dr. Suzuki had completed a stay of twelve years in the United States and Europe and had returned to his native Japan equipped with the knowledge and training he had acquired on the editorial staff of the Open Court Publishing Company in LaSalle, Illinois. He found that his boyhood friend, the philosopher Nishida Kitarō (1870–1945)—who, in addition to formulating his unique system of Oriental thought, was greatly responsible for introducing Western philosophy to the Japanese—had close contacts with some members of the Kiyozawa group in Tokyo. Among them was the impressive figure of Sasaki Gesshō (1875–1926) whose depth of character and open-minded views were deeply respected by Suzuki and Nishida. The following year Dr. Suzuki and Prof. Sasaki collaborated on an English translation of *The Life of Shōnin Shinran* and other Pure Land (Jōdo Shin) writings. That they could see beyond sectarian differences and appreciate the essentials in the Mahayana teaching is refreshingly evident in all their undertakings. *A Study of Shin Buddhism*, authored by Prof. Sasaki and translated into English by Dr. Suzuki in 1925, was another of their joint works.



Sasaki Gesshō

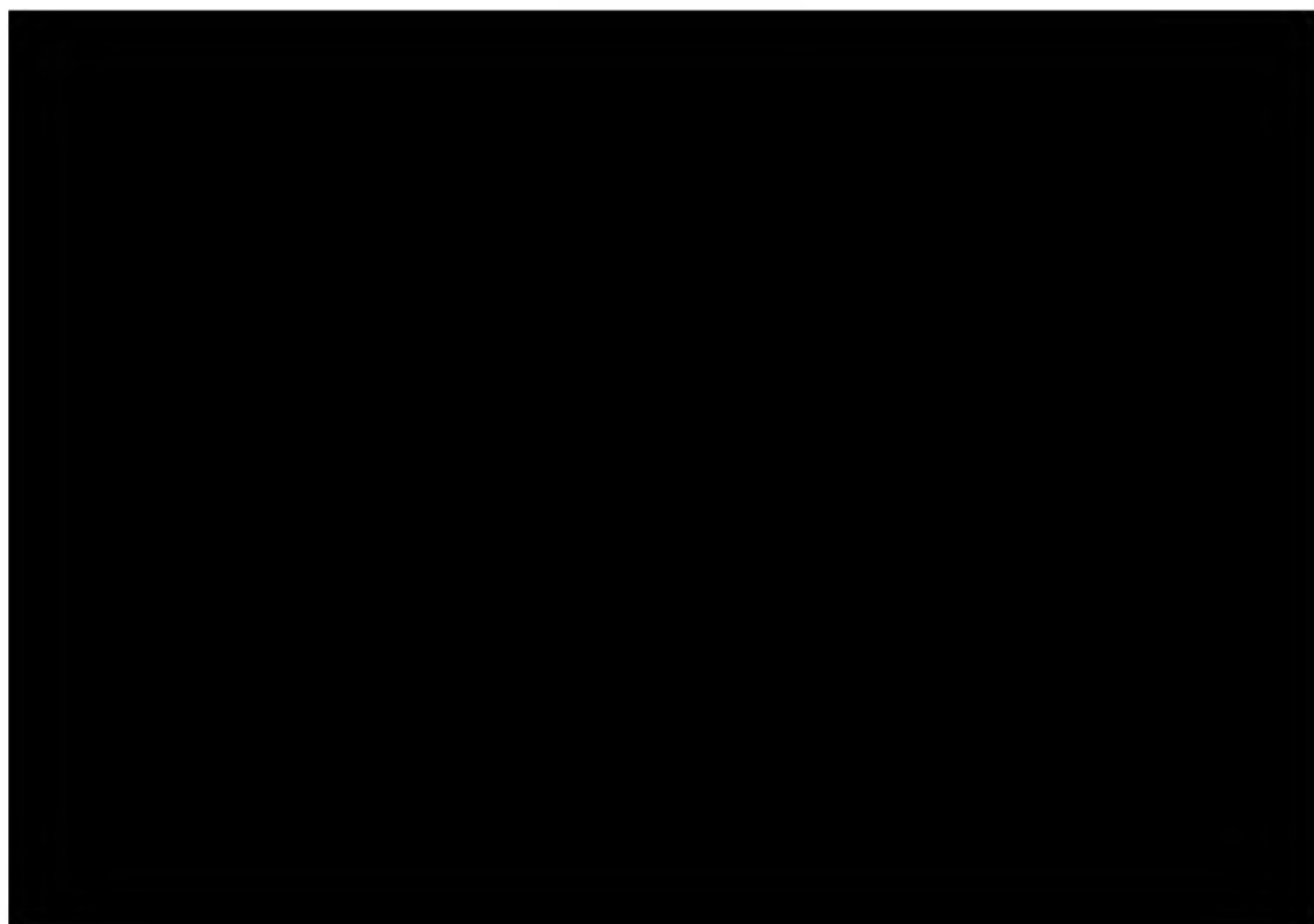
In 1910 Prof. Nishida left Tokyo to join the teaching staff of Kyoto Imperial University, while Prof. Sasaki took the Chair in Buddhist Studies at Otani University which in 1911 had been transferred to Kyoto. Dr. Suzuki taught at the Peers' School (Gakushū-in) in Tokyo until 1920 when for various reasons he resigned. He had become increasingly annoyed with the military influence in the school, and, with the sudden demise about this time of his teacher and mentor, Shaku Sōyen, there was now nothing left to keep him from leaving

Tokyo. It was through the direct influence of his two friends in Kyoto that Dr. and Mrs. Suzuki found themselves at Otani University, he as professor of Buddhist Philosophy and she as professor of English.

The Eastern Buddhist Society was organized the following year, 1921, actively promoted by Prof. Sasaki, and with financial encouragement from the Eastern Branch of the Jōdo Shin Sect. Akanuma Chizen, Yamabe Shūgaku were also among the early supporters.

The object of the Society was threefold: "(1) Translation into Japanese of the original texts of Buddhism; (2) Translation into European languages of the Buddhist texts now existing only in Eastern languages other than Sanskrit and Pali; publication of studies in the Buddhist doctrines in Japanese or in any one of the European languages; (3) Publication of a magazine in English aiming at the propagation of Buddhism and also giving information as regards the literary activities of Buddhist scholars in Japan."

The third item, the magazine *The Eastern Buddhist*, was to be but a partial fulfillment of their program. Yet, it was to prove the most difficult side of their undertaking. First, very few Japanese Buddhists scholars were capable of writing in English. The burden of translating—in many cases, of rewriting—articles were placed totally on the shoulders of the editors. The job of printing had to be done in Tokyo, as in Kyoto there was no suitable printer in English. Although when the need arose Dr. Suzuki set out on a train journey to Tokyo,



Otani University, 1937. *Front row, left to right*: Sugihira Shizutoshi, unidentified, Dr. Suzuki, Mrs. Suzuki, Yokogawa Kenshō.

a distance of roughly 500 kilometers, communication was mainly by mail and telegram.

Seven times on September 1, 1923, catastrophic earthquakes struck Tokyo, Yokohama, Kamakura and surrounding areas. Their printing house Sanshusha, which was located in the Kanda area of Tokyo, was completely destroyed by fire. A look at the relatively thin volume issued that year gives graphic proof of the effect of the calamity on *The Eastern Buddhist*.

There were other, less traumatic, challenges to be met with—the kind that came with just plain living. Mrs. Suzuki was deeply concerned about the protection of animals from human cruelty. She later founded an animal shelter in Kamakura, one of the first such places in Japan. Whenever she encountered a stray dog or cat on any of her outings she was in the habit of bringing it back home with a tender, loving heart. Her husband appreciated her actions, though with some stoic endurance, until one day he found himself having to work

within a household full of friendly fleas. There had to be a solution. Whenever the menagerie grew unmanageably large, its members were safely packed in containers and delivered by rail to far-off Kamakura where they were subsequently picked up by the devoted housekeeper, Okono san. Part of Dr. Suzuki's hard-earned royalties was consigned to the upkeep of these poor fellow creatures.

In March of 1926, they suffered another major blow in the death of Prof. Sasaki. *The Eastern Buddhist* had lost a deep and abiding friend and a true supporter.<sup>3</sup> About this time we begin to see the gradual inclusion of new members: Yokogawa Kenshō, Idzumi Hōkei, Sugihira Shizutoshi, Fujioka Ryōjun, Abe Genryō.

In the years that ensued until the death of Mrs. Suzuki in 1939, which was a primary reason for the temporary closing of the Society, the Suzukis played host to streams of foreign visitors, both eminent and not so eminent, who came in search of Buddhism and Japanese culture. Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Charles Eliot, James Bissett Pratt, L. Adams Beck, Paul Demiéville, Karl Ludwig Reichelt, Dwight Goddard, Bruno Petzold, Kenneth Saunders, J.W.T. Mason, Otto Fischer, Robert C. Armstrong, Ruth Everett (Sasaki), Gregg M. Sinclair, Sylvan Lévi, A. L. Sadler, Dryden Phelps are but a small number of names found recorded around this time.

The magazine reached many shores and influenced not a few creative minds. It was clearly a labor of love of two remarkably unaffected, free-minded people. There was no pretentiousness, nor special desire to be accepted in the rarefied company of academicians. Theirs was a happy marriage that spanned two hemispheres. But more than that, through their mutual work they lived in time and beyond time.

The pressures of the impending World War were already being felt around 1939. The rationing of paper, censorship, and suspicion in general of all things foreign were on the increase. Although the Society was to dissolve officially in 1942, its activity had virtually ceased with the passing of Mrs. Suzuki in July, 1939.

In 1949, Dr. Suzuki and his former pupil Sugihira Shizutoshi sought to

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<sup>3</sup> See Memorial Number for Professor Gesshō Sasaki, *EB* IV, no.1 (Jul.-Aug.-Sep., 1926).

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restart the publication. However, in June of that year, Dr. Suzuki left Japan to lecture in the United States, a visit that lasted some nine years. Prof. Sugihira took full charge during this phase and published the four numbers that compose Volume eight.

In 1962, once more with Dr. Suzuki, now age 92, at its center discussions began for the New Series. Even after forty years Dr. Suzuki could see that the hard task of producing a good Buddhist periodical in English in Japan had become no easier. Yet the need was certainly there. Three years later the first number of the New Series saw the light. His only comment upon setting his eyes on it was, "Yes, it looks respectable enough. . . ." He then fell into a thunderous silence.

It was a special privilege of the present writer to hear one day these intimate words of reminiscence from the lips of our founding father, then in his early nineties: "You see, who would have ever thought that I would live to be so old? When I was a boy, Mother used to tell me I was so frail at birth she could comfortably hold me in the palm of one hand. Strange, is it not, that I should be here like this, and so many of my good and stronger friends gone?" He turned towards a small photograph of Mrs. Suzuki on top of a chest of drawers, "Poor dear Beatrice. Oh yes, we worked hard. Writing, yes, writing—that's what we did and had to do. She helped me very much. She was so willing. We promised each other that whatever we wrote together would be our child. *The Eastern Buddhist* was one such child. . . ."

The following selection of excerpts are taken at random from the Editorial and Notes sections of the early issues of *The Eastern Buddhist*.

. . . One may say, "East is East and West is West"; but when we know that this antithesis comes more or less from the difference for one's emotional reaction to environment and further that this emotional reaction is largely modifiable through an intellectual sympathy and mutual understanding, we must not stop short at merely stating disagreements; but let us endeavor to clear up all the obstacles lying between the East and the West so that each may profit by the other, for our views are generally the half-views of half-men. And there is no doubt that Buddhism forms one of the key-notes that have struck deep into the heart of the Eastern peoples. Indeed, without some knowledge of Buddhism



the East may remain forever an enigma to the West. . . . I, no. 1, (May 1921), pp. 83-4.

. . . Our standpoint is that Mahayana ought to be considered one whole, indivisible thing and no sects, especially no sectarian prejudices, to be recognised in it, except as so many phases or aspects of one fundamental truth. In this respect Buddhism and Christianity and all other religious beliefs are not more than variations of one single original Faith, deeply imbedded in the human soul. Why then should we confine ourselves into a narrow channel and survey the world from there? . . . I, no. 2, (July, 1921), p. 156.

. . . One thing we wish to emphasise . . . is that the present magazine stands for absolute unsectarianism. There are many sects of Buddhism in Japan and in the other parts of the East, but our position is to be quite impartial to all these. And then as Buddhists we are not opposed to any other religious systems of the world. . . . When they [Mahayanists] go out and preach their doctrines, they just wish to be understood, and they know that the Mahayana doctrine appeals to some minds more strongly than to others. It is always best to have various views of life fairly and judiciously presented to the public, for the ultimate truth will shine out of the mutual rubbing and striving of all the claimants of truth. . . . I, no. 5 & 6, (Jan.-Feb. 1922), p. 388.

. . . Religion has been constantly losing its spiritual hold on us, being too busy in repairing and maintaining the old weather-beaten structure known as Buddhism or Christianity or something else. Outwardly, they retain what they have so far gained, but morally and inwardly neither of them, Buddhism or Christianity, is what each once was. They have been too ready slaves to secular power, they have supported those that were wielding the most power at the time, they have given themselves up sometimes to the despotism of autocracy, or to that of aristocracy or plutocracy; they have sometimes been a "lantern-bearer" to state absolutism and militarism. It is high time now for all religions to free themselves from all ties and to carry forward boldly the standard of love and light, disregarding all worldly conditions and facing whatever consequences their unflinching attitude may bring upon them. Let each religion be first itself with all its individual marks and then get united with others

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in the proclamation of the Truth which is one and eternal. . . . I, no. 4 (Nov.-Dec., 1921), pp. 293-4.

. . . all kinds of teachers and propagators and representatives of religion are in some cases the worst victims of narrow-mindedness. They think they are the only keeper of the key to Heaven, and how tenaciously they fight for what they regard as their monopoly! Religious leaders often betray the meanest side of human nature. Let the worldly potentates fight, try to oust one another if they are ever so ignorant, and get the best for themselves out of the scramble. But shall we who claim to be followers of the Buddha or Christ imitate our worldly brethren and fight among ourselves?

The world is large enough and there are so many people of so many minds: if religions differ, may not the difference be left to different minds, different characters, or different temperaments? Ought we to consider a religion an indivisible whole and to take all of it if the parts are at all taken? Are we really so perfect as to have crystallised all that is perfect in a nutshell or in a pill? When we swallow this particular pill, all ill that we have been subjected to is cured straightway, and there remains nothing in other religions which we may occasionally like to taste? Religion is not a food nor a medicine, but even when all the essential elements of nourishment are in good proper proportion concocted into one palatable dish, are we sure we do not get tired of it? Are we not tempted to taste something not quite so digestive and nourishing? Of course, I do not mean that there ought to be something in religion not quite healthy and not quite so inducive to one's spiritual welfare. But the very fact that there are more than one religion and that they are all doing well among their own circles appeals to our imagination and makes the world move more smoothly than not.

But the thing is not to emphasise the difference but the agreement; . . . The difference is individual while the agreement is superindividual. . . . I, no. 4, (Nov.-Dec. 1921), pp. 291-92.

. . . In the first place, Buddhism, especially Mahayana, is very much misunderstood in the West. It is forgotten that Buddhism is a living force still actively at work in moulding the destiny of the East. It may be found clustered with many superstitions or antiquated beliefs, but this is also the case with other

living religions. As long as everything living has its historical background, it is inevitable that it harbors something of anachronism in it. The thing however is to dig into the essence of the matter, and this is what is undertaken by the present magazine. . . . I, no. 1, (May 1921), p. 83.

. . . The one thing however we are not quite satisfied with in the old-school Buddhism is that its advocates are too busy to commemorate the past instead of planning for the future. If Buddhism is a dead thing, this may do very well. But we find it hard to reconcile ourselves with this conservative idea, we want to drive the Wheel of the Law forward, we want to proclaim the truths of Buddhism to the world at large. The world is on the other hand growing smaller every day owing to the various inventions which will annihilate the notion of distance in a very material way. These advantages ought not to be made use of by industrial and commercial people only, we must appreciate their significance. . . . II, no. 6, (Mar.-Apr. 1923), pp. 375-6.

. . . Mahayana Buddhism is, when it is historically considered, a great monument of the human soul. Its struggles, its yearnings, and its triumphant and joyful cries are all recorded in it. The Mahayana, therefore, is not the sole heritage of the East, and must be made accessible to the West. . . . I, no. 1 (May 1921), p. 85.

. . . There is no other place in the world where Buddhism can be, in its Mahayana form, so well studied in its theory or in its practice as in Japan. Indeed, I may go so far as to say that without a visit to Japan a certain spiritual grasp of Buddhism cannot be attained. But there are some who come and "seeing they see not" and do not understand. Generally these are persons who see but superficially, do not thoroughly investigate and study and come in contact with different classes of Buddhists. . . . VI, no. 3, (July 1934), p. 318-19.

. . . There is, besides, something infinitely grand and all-embracing in the ideas of Mahayana Buddhism, which compel those who study it to admit that they are truly such.

For instance, consider the idea of the Bodhisattva's postponing the attainment of enlightenment. He does this for the sake of his fellow-creatures, which

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include not only human beings but all living beings, sentient and non-sentient. Every possible means (*upaya*) is utilised for the purpose. He incarnates himself in every possible form and condition, and stands to his fellow-beings in every possible relationship. He goes to hell as readily as to heaven. Even when he acts as an enemy, he is using the opportunity for the latter's conversion and final salvation. As long as there remains one single soul to be saved, he will keep up his activity. If he thinks it best to save a man as Christian, he will not have him to be a Buddhist. The means of salvation is not limited; as his resources are inexhaustible, he always knows what to do. He is not prejudiced, nor is he one-sided. If he cannot accomplish his objects in one life, he will be reborn as many times as necessary. And when everything is accomplished, he will quietly enter into his own Nirvana as if he achieved nothing, though no human intelligence can tell when such time will ever come on earth. And, last of all, the most wonderful thing is that this Bodhisattva is no other being than ourselves only if we know it.

In Christianity, each single individual stands to his creator as an independent solitary soul; but in Buddhism each soul is not only related as such to the highest reality but to one another in the most perfect network of infinite mutual relationship. The doctrine of anatta (non-ego), therefore, in Mahayana Buddhism grows to be quite a positive concept full of implications which have not been imagined in the teaching of the Hinayana. The doctrine of mutual interpenetration taught by Mahayanists goes beyond the limits of history, and does not countenance the idea that all the truth and power working for universal salvation centers in one single historical personage. As a Zen master claims, the Mahayanist turns a blade of grass into a golden body sixteen feet high (meaning the Buddha) and makes it function as such; not only that, he knows also how to turn the Buddha into a blade of grass and make it function as such. . . . IV, no. 1 (Jul-Aug.-Sep. 1926), p. 76.

. . . The political and economic questions which are disturbing the whole world at present, cannot be successfully solved so long as religions are separated from one another just because one teaches Christ and another the Buddha. We must get into the basic ideas of each religious system which, as we comprehend them, do not differ so radically as to exclude their mutual understanding and kindly cooperation. Whatever misunderstandings we have between various

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religious teachings are due to not knowing one another well enough. We as Buddhists will do our part in making known to the world what we consider the essentials of its teaching, historically and philosophically. Hence the publication of *The Eastern Buddhist* as a partial fulfilment of our programme. . . . II, no. 6, (Mar.-Apr. 1923), p. 376.