

NOTES

WE have already reported something about the recent Buddhist activities in China, and are now able to print news about them directly coming from one of the active native workers. The correspondence is reproduced below.

“A Buddhist revival is going on all over China at present, but its movements are especially strong in Peking, Kiansu, Cheking, Hupei, and other places. As Peking is the political and literary centre of the country, all classes of educated people are gathered here. Through the efforts of the statesmen interested in Buddhism and working in cooperation with Buddhists themselves, the faith is gaining strength in various fields of life. Among the eminent statesmen who are active workers for Buddhism, we may mention such names as Tuan Chi-sui (段祺瑞), President of the Chinese Republic, Hsiang Hsi-ling (熊希齡), the former Prime Minister, Chang Shao-tseng (張紹曾, who belongs to Zen), Yeh Kung-cho (葉恭綽), Minister of Communications, Wang Chiu-ling (王九齡), Minister of Education, Liang Chi-chao (梁起超), former Minister of Finance and Justice (noted for his scholarship in the history of Chinese Buddhism), and others. They are among the most earnest of the followers of the Buddha and are doing all they can for the study and promotion of Buddhism. Among the government officers and members of Parliament there is also a large number of Buddhists.

“Of scholars, Tsai Yüan-pei (蔡元培), President of the National University of Peking, comes foremost as supporter of Buddhist movements. A special course is devoted to the study of Buddhist philosophy, especially to that of the Yogācāra school. In this school S. Wan Hui (萬慧), a Buddhist monk who studied in India and Ceylon, is noted for his learning. In most of the universities and colleges, whether national or

private, Buddhism is one of the special courses of study.

“Of the many Buddhist organisations we may mention 大學精舍, 佛教講習會 and 北京佛教會, organised by Wang Yü-chi (王與楫), a reputed scholar of Buddhism, 法相研究會 (Society for Studying the Yogācāra philosophy), presided over by Han Te-ching (韓德清), 宏慈學院 under the management of the Kuang-chi monastery (廣濟寺), 佛化青年會 for the students and young men, etc.

“The Buddhist activities in Chiangsu and Chechiang radiate from Shanghai as the centre. This is principally due to the efforts of Wang Yu-chi, who came to Shanghai from Peking in the sixth year of the Republic and organised there an association of Buddhist Laymen known as 上海佛教居士林. Three years ago this organisation came to assume the title of the World's Laymen's Buddhist Association. He is also active in instructing prisoners in the doctrine of the Buddha throughout the country. We have now many Buddhist converts. Mr. Wang regularly tours to Hangchou to give lectures on Buddhism, and for this reason the faith is also rapidly spreading about in this locality. He once delivered a series of lectures on Buddhism at the Normal School of Kiangsu; he is further the originator of a school specially devoted to the study of the Yogācāra philosophy. Dr. Gilbert Reid who is one of the oldest American residents in Hangchou invited Mr. Wang to his International Institute to lecture on the “Truth of Buddhism.” That Buddhism grew to be better known among the foreign residents, there is no doubt, is principally due to these lectures. Mr. Wang is now back in Peking and devoting himself to lecturing in various neighbouring towns such as Chinang, Paoting, Taiyüan, and others. As he also cut an important figure in the Revolution, he has many sympathisers among government officers.

“The Reverend Ti-hsien (諦閑) succeeding in the orthodox line of the T'ientai school of China has his residence in Ningpo and is noted for his learning and piety and has a large

number of admiring followers. He goes around in his lecturing tours principally to such centres of population as Shanghai, Suchou, Shaohsing, Hangchou, etc. The lectures are generally attended by very large audiences. He was once invited to Peking by Yan Shih-kai (袁世凱), the First President of the Chinese Republic, to give expository lectures on a Sutra, and the audience at each lecture counted more than two thousand truth-seeking Buddhists. He has formed a society specially devoted to the study of contemplative Buddhism at the Kuan-sung (觀宗寺) monastery in Ningpo.

“Reverend Yin-kuang (印光), of Puto Shan (普陀山), which is the place in China most sacred to Kwannon, goddess of mercy, belongs to the Pure Land sect and shares with Reverend Ti-hsien the honour of being one of the two greatest Buddhist teachers of China at present.

“Of the noted Buddhist laymen, mention is to be made of Chiang Wei-chiao (蔣維喬), Director of Education in the province of Kiangsu, and Chiang Mei-ming (江味儂), of Shanghai, both disciples of Ti-hsien, who have written many books on Buddhism. Lu Yung-hsiang (盧永祥), military governor of Kiangsu, is another pupil of Ti-hsien and a most learned follower of Buddhism. In Nanking there is a Buddhist college known as 支那內學院 or “Chinese Academy of Buddhist Learning,” the president of which is Mr. Ou-Yang Ching-wu (歐陽竟無), a great disciple of Yang Jen-shan (楊仁山). To the remarkable personality of the latter is to be chiefly ascribed the revival of Chinese Buddhism, which is now rapidly spreading all over the country. President Ou strives after the resuscitation of the Yogācāra school of Buddhism, and the professors in this institution are all well-known leaders of thought in their respective special fields. The old Buddhist works in Chinese, Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Pali are collated, revised, and put in order generally by these scholars, and the results so far are highly recommendable.

“As to other Buddhist societies and associations there are

several hundreds of them and I have here no space to give any details about them.

"In the province of Hupei, no account of Buddhist activities here would be complete if one did not mention the wonderful achievements of Reverend Tai-hsü (太虛) and Mr. Li Kai-hsien (李開澂), former governor of the Province. The most notable of organisations inaugurated by them are the Buddhist School of Wuchang, Girls' Buddhist School, The Buddhists' Association of Hangchou, etc. Their branch offices are scattered all over the Province. Hsia Yao-nan (蕭耀南), the present Governor General, is also one of the devoted followers of the Buddha. In the Chung-hua University of Wuchang (武昌中華大學), a course on the Yogācāra is open to the students.

"The above are the principal districts where Buddhism at present is in a most flourishing condition; in such Provinces as Szechuan, Hunan, Ankuei, Shansi, Honan, Kuangton, and Fuchien, Buddhism is in the course of gradual awakening.

"The Yogācāra, Dharmakośa, and Hetuvidya are some of the studies most zealously taken up by the Buddhist students here. The T'ientai and the Pure Land sect are moderately interesting them, and the Fa-hsing (法性), comes next; as regards the Ch'an school (Zen Buddhism) the teachers are enjoying a secluded life in the remoter parts of the country, away from the confusions of city life.

"There are about twenty periodical publications devoted to the study and propagation of the Buddhist faith."

We are in receipt of the first volume of a Buddhist annual called 內學 (*nai-hsiao*, "inner learning") which is published by the Chinese Academy of Buddhist Learning (支那內學院), Nanking, China. It was issued in December, 1924, and contains several learned articles and dissertations and discussions by the professors and graduate students of the Academy. Perhaps this portly journal of 300 pages is the first of this

kind of publication in China. Our sincere wish is that it will make a steady growth and prove to be a great benefit to the seekers of the truth of Buddhism. Some of the leading articles are: "Comparative Method in the Study of the Mahayana Sutras," by Lü Ch'eng (呂澂); "Outline of the Prajñā-Pāramitā Sutra," by Ou-yang Ch'en (歐陽漸); "Concerning the History of Zen Buddhism in China," by Mang Wen-t'ung (蒙文通); "On the Structure of the Chinese Samyukta Agama," by Lü Ch'eng; "The Tibetan Version of Vasubandhu's Trimsaka-Karika" by D. C. Liu (劉定權), etc. The Academy as referred to elsewhere was established by Mr. Ou-yang, who is one of the most representative lay-followers of Buddhism in China. It has been in existence a little over two years since it was formally incorporated as an institution according to the regulations of the Department of Education. It does not seem to have many students yet, but the objects the founder and his associates are planning to carry out are varied and far-reaching. The chief object however evidently lies in the mastery of the secrets of the Yogācāra philosophy, while they do not neglect to study such subjects as Indian logic and Tibetan Buddhist texts. They have already published many books on Buddhism, most of which are reprints of the older editions.

The trouble with us human beings is that things we have created survive their creators and oppress them more than necessary, i.e., more than they are warranted to do so. And as we feel entirely incapable of escaping from those human-created oppressors, we are for ever haunted by them, we become, willingly or unwillingly, knowingly or unknowingly, almost their absolute slaves. At present Buddhism in Japan supplies us with a living illustration of this truth.

Institutional Buddhism breathes the spirit of feudalism and is altogether antiquated. We have now nothing to do with it, but we are far from being able to get rid of this

obsolete and yet overpowering spirit. While most vigorously protesting against this state of affairs, we are pitifully groaning under its weight. We are perfectly conscious of the fact, but we are utterly helpless; the shackles are evidently too strong for us. Shall we have to die impotently with all our knowledge and foresight? If it is an irresistible force of nature such as a deluge or an earthquake that threatens us, we may have something to console ourselves; but when it is one of our own creations, when we know that it is our own hands that are digging a grave for us, we feel righteously indignant over the situation. To appease the monster called history or tradition, have we to offer many victims before we can wrestle ourselves away from its power?

This is indeed a strange position created for us, but it is history that makes us, nourishes us, saves us, and finally ruins us. As long as we cannot rise above it, it is the master most arbitrary and its former creators are now its most object slaves chained and muzzled. And it is indeed due to a few individuals who are spiritual enough that the force or spell of history and tradition is broken and a new life and meaning is given to the "old bottles." In no other times in the history of Buddhism we have felt so strongly the need for such free and independent spirits as would overrule the tyranny of institutionalism.

In the latter part of the Tokugawa régime, there was a Buddhist monk in Kyushu, who had some trouble with the feudal lord of the district. The lord threatened to withdraw all the material protection given to the monastery if he did not acquiesce in his request. This naturally meant the gradual ruination of the fine architecture and the disappearance of the flourishing condition then enjoyed by the time-honoured institution; but the monk was a truly religious spirit and had no longing for material welfare. He at once severed the historical relationships with the lord. He said, "We are not necessarily dependent upon the support of a powerful political

agency. We will go out among the people themselves, and if they refuse to help us, this monastery must be regarded as having already served its purpose, showing that my spiritual discipline has not yet reached the stage to maintain this material symbol of Buddhist faith in this place. It is then time for me to retire and put myself to the work of further perfecting my spiritual merits." The said monastery is still standing in the city of Hakata in its former magnificence, justifying the attitude of the monk whose spirit was strong enough to transcend the material and historical connections.

There was another monk in Kyushu almost contemporaneously I think (as I have no time now to verify the dates, which are not after all very essential in this connection). He used to live in a fine monastery until he was forty-nine years old. One day after giving a fine sermon to his disciples he disappeared. Nobody could find him anywhere. It was after some years that he was discovered in Kyoto among a company of beggars, all in rags and carrying a broken bowl. When one of his former disciples came up to him and asked him earnestly to return to his temple again, he said :

"Even with a Buddhist monk there still lingers in his heart a desire for fame and things material, and because of this craving he becomes a slave to the outside world. When I was living in a great monastery, I had to go out of my own way to please the patrons. This was more or less necessary for physical shelter. But I am now free. If I have something to eat in my broken bowl, I eat; if there is nothing, I do not. How do you expect me to go back once more to a life of dependence after enjoying this? Besides, these unfortunate brethren of ours are entirely neglected, while those who have money or social rank are well taken care of. I am quite content with my lot here."

These are some of the examples given us in the feudal days by those spirits that tried to break through the material fetters always ready to bind up our hands and feet. These

days are however gone now for ever I think, and another form of revolutionary movement must come into being in order to make spirit assert its dignity above matter.

Epochs in Buddhist History by Professor Kenneth J. Saunders is another welcome addition to Buddhist literature contributed by Christian writers. It is remarkable that the Christian attitude generally towards Buddhism is changing or has already changed when compared with that of a few decades ago. When Beal, Edkins, Monier-Williams, Spence Hardy, and others published the results of their respective studies of Buddhism in the countries in which they happened to find themselves, they treated the subject with a sort of condescension, and it may be suspected that their principal object of writing books on it was to show the incomparable superiority of their revealed religion. The way the author of *Epochs in Buddhist History* assumes towards his subject is fair and sympathetic and at the same time scientific, showing how well he understands not only Buddhism but his own religion. Buddhism is notorious for its being tolerant towards other religions and we should not at all be surprised if a Buddhist scholar wrote such a book as we have before us on *Epochs in the History of Christianity*. It is refreshing and fills us with hopes to see a Christian writer lecturing on Buddhism in the spirit as is manifested in this book. He is also free from the prejudices usually observable in students of Pali Buddhism, who forget the fact that a faith at all living grows by assimilating different elements as well as by unfolding possibilities ingrained in it. The author tries to describe this process of assimilation and development in Buddhism, though inevitably in bare outlines, as it overran the Indian borders northward and eastward. It is really wonderful to notice how the so-called primitive Buddhism, not necessarily meaning Buddhism in Pali, could develop for instance into the Zen school in China and the Shin in Japan. How could indeed the Buddha himself dream

of his Dharma coming to be the doctrine of absolute identity or of universal salvation by faith? But this actually took place, and we have the Mahayana schools of Buddhism. Could we not then picture to ourselves something like an amalgamation of a divinely revealed religion and a humanly created one—and this not in an incalculably remote future? Some of the ideas that have been formed in Professor Saunders' mind during twelve years' study of Buddhism are set down as follows :

“(1) The great keynotes of our modern scientific thinking, causality and the unity of the universe, even if Gautama did not first formulate them, were popularised by him; and that this is one of the most remarkable achievements in the history of human thought; (2) the conviction which rings through his words of a moral purpose governing the universe, of the sure reward of good and evil, is even more sublime; (3) that his anticipation of modern psychological theories deserves close and respectful study; (4) that his “religion,” the influence of his words and deeds, is still very much alive, and still supplies a felt want in Asia; (5) that with all its accretions and corruptions it still has much to teach the Western world; (6) and that what men have made of it is eloquent of what they are made of: for its rationalism has needed to be reinforced by mysticism; its moral code has been driven to seek other sanctions than the enlightened common sense he appealed to; and the devotion he strove to disentangle from his own person has clung tenaciously to it.”

There is no doubt that the book is a good concise introduction to the mastery of such a complicated system of teaching as Buddhism—sometimes indeed hopelessly in confusion. The book treats of the subject as it first sprang in Rajagriha, its development in Gandhara and Purushapura, the rise of Mahayana Buddhism, missionary activities in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, and then the unfoldment of various doctrines in China and Japan, in Nepal and Tibet. It has useful appendices

among which are charts showing the different sects in India, China, and Japan. One thing we like to remark about the charts is that Kegon is classed as provisionary Mahayana. This will not be approved of not only by the Kegon students but by other schools of Buddhism; in fact it was Kegon itself that started this kind of gradation or classification among the various sects of Buddhism in order to distinguish itself as the first and last teaching of the Buddha. Let us conclude this note by saying that the East and the West have a great deal to learn from and of each other in morals, religion, culture, and spiritual discipline.

We wish to acknowledge the receipt of the following books and magazines: *Kant und das Ding an sich*, by Erich Adickes. Published by Pan Verlag Rolf Heise, Berlin.—*La Mistica del Buddismo*, by Bernardo Jasink. Published by Fratelli Bocca, Torino.—*Storia della Filosofia Chinese Antica*, by Giuseppe Tucci. Publisher, Nicola Zanichelli, Bologna.—*Saturin le Saturnien*, Roman du Dr. Lucien-Graux. Les Editions G. Crès et Cie. Paris.—*The Origin of Christianity*, by Swami Satyananda. Published by L. Chakraberty, Calcutta.—*Revolt in Religion*, by K. P. Raman, Mysore.

La Revue Spirite. Paris.—*Rays from the Rose Cross*, The Rosicrucian Fellowship, Ocean-side, California, U.S.A.—*The Mahabodhi and United Buddhist World*, Calcutta, India.—*Prabuddha Bharata* or Awakened India, Mayavati, Almora District (Himalayas) India.—*Journal of Religion*, University of Religion University of Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.—*Occult Review*, London.—*The Quest*, London, England.—*The Rally*, London, England.—*Shrine of Wisdom*, London.—*Re-incarnation*, Chicago, U.S.A.—*The Epoch and the Life of Reason*, Ilfracombe, England.—*Annals of the Bhandarkar Institute*, Poona City, India.—*Vedanta Kesari*, Madras, India.—*The Vedic Magazine*, Lahore, India.—*Kalpaka*, Tinnivelly, India.—*Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore City, India.—*Self-Culture*, Tinnivelly.

India.—*Theosophy in Australia*, Sydney, Australia.—*The Theosophical Review*, London, England.—*Revista Teosofica*, Habana, Cuba.—*O Theosophista*, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.—*Papyrus*, Cairo, Egypt.—*Revue Theosophique Francaise*, Le Lotus Bleu, Paris.—*The Messenger*, Chicago, U.S.A.—*The Message of the East*, Vedanta Society, Boston, U.S.A.—*Sanskrita Bharati*, Buidan, Bengal, India.—*Logos*, Tubingen, Germany.—*The Herald of the Star*, London.—*The Theosophical Path*, Point Loma, Cal., U.S. A.—*Bulletin of School of Oriental Studies*, London.—*Divine Life*, Chicago, U.S.A.—*The Liberal Catholic*, Sydney, Australia.—*Die Christliche Welt*, Gotha, Germany.—*Journal Asiatique*, Paris.—