

## EDITORIAL

Recently, it was said by a friend abroad that he had heard that a revival of Buddhism in China was more likely than a revival in Japan. To us here in Japan this seems very strange, for we feel that the revival in Buddhism in Japan has already come and has been with us for some time. Persons who say this are not well informed. Buddhism has revived in Japan and is growing more and more flourishing.

I also read in a European journal that a certain Japanese priest in Berlin had said that he was obliged to go to Germany in order to learn pure Buddhism as Buddhism was degenerated in Japan. I cannot understand what he could have been doing or where he could have been staying in Japan, to have made such a statement unless he was referring to strict Hinayana Buddhism.

Buddhism is not deteriorated in Japan. It is a living vital force, and, after its partial eclipse at the time of the Meiji restoration, has revived and become a vehicle of peace and power to thousands of its followers.

Let us consider some of the Buddhist activities in Japan.

First of all the temples. They have many activities perhaps one of the chief of which is consolation at the time of death. They conduct services for the dead and console the living. This, as with Christian denominations, is an important part of a priest's duties. There are the celebrations—the death days of famous priests and patriarchs of the sect and anniversaries of various kinds also make occasions for celebration. For example, as only one out of many, this year the 1100th anniversary of the death of Kōbō Daishi and the completion of the new Hall and Pagoda was celebrated at Koyasan from April 2 to May 21. Thousands of people attended the services at this celebration.

There are many Buddhist societies for Buddhist propagation and dissemination. There are women's associations, also the Y. M. B. A. and Y. W. B. A., Sunday Schools and philanthropic societies devoted to active charitable work. There are study classes and many lectures are given by eminent speakers. Preaching Halls are established. Summer schools are held and there are group meditation periods held for laymen. Pilgrimages to sacred places are frequent.

As for books and magazines they are issued in great quantities. There are a number of Buddhist colleges, and schools where young people receive Buddhist instruction. Does all this imply deterioration? Buddhism, as Prof. J. B. Pratt states, is "emphatically the religion of Japan." He also says, "Whatever may come about in the next fifty years, certain it is today Buddhism has a large, and, in some of the sects, an enthusiastic and devoted following."

Prof. Pratt also remarks that "the last fifteen years have been marked by a notable advance. In education, propaganda, worship, and service it has taken great strides and we are witnessing today only the first fruits of its new sowings." He further states that in his opinion the Buddhism of Japan is "a religion of great present strength and pretty fair promise."

Prof. Addison of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, has a number of interesting things to say about what he calls the *Revival* of Japanese Buddhism. He states that behind the activity of Buddhist education and publication lies a genuine intellectual revival. Buddhist leaders with a modern mental equipment are re-thinking and re-stating the doctrines of their religion. He also remarks "that partly as a result, partly as a cause of the Buddhist revival, there is widely observed, especially in the younger generation, an awakened idealism and a growing interest in religion. Far less enthusiasm is now manifested for the older type of materialism and scepticism represented by Herbert Spencer; far more general is the response to the stimulus of idealism in many forms—whether of the latest German philosophy, or of Christianity, or of the new Buddhism. Developing rapidly in such an atmosphere, the Buddhist revival, already accelerated, is likely to continue until far more radical changes have taken place than those we have here described."

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. But those who do investigate know that the Japanese revival has already taken place, that Japan can give the follower the best Mahayana Buddhist teaching and initiate him into Buddhist activities of which he can only dream in other countries. Come to Japan. Buddhist aspirants, and witness for yourselves the Buddhist revival here. Study it in its various ramifications and activities and then you can truly assert that in Japan, Buddhism exists, has revived from a temporary dull period and is now pushing on to a new and deep spirituality.

---

### NOTES

The Association for the Study of Religion in Japan had its third annual meeting on the 5th and 6th of May at the Rissho Buddhist College of Tokyo. Many lectures on religion including Buddhism were given by eminent scholars.

As this is the two thousand and five hundredth anniversary of Buddha Śākyamuni's birth, (though the opinions of scholars differ on this point), various commemoration works are going on. The Japan Young Men's Buddhist Association is translating the Buddhist Bible edited by Rev. Muan Kizu into English. The Second Pan-Pacific Young Men's Buddhist Meeting will be held in July. Buddhists from various parts are expected to attend, including Reverend Tai-hsu and many other Chinese noted Buddhists.

Kōbō Daishi's one thousand and one hundredth anniversary is celebrated this year. In the Shingon Sect of which Kōbō Daishi is the founder, a fifty days' service was held from April 2 at Kōyasan which thousands of Shingon devotees attended.

Of recent important publications on Buddhism outstanding ones are Dr. H. Ui's *History of Indian Philosophy*; Dr. E. Kanakura's *Studies in the Vedānta Philosophy*; Dr. B. Shiio's *Introduction to the Buddhist Scriptures*, the late T. Hashikawa's *History of Japanese Buddhism*; Mr. E. Tomomatsu's *Outlines of Buddhism for Modern People*.

---