

NOTES

THE LATE PROFESSOR T. W. RHYS DAVIDS

AT the ripe age of seventy-nine Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids passed away at Chipstead, Surrey, on December 27th, 1922. The last few years of his life had been greatly hampered by physical pain so that death came as a relief from suffering. Personally I received the news of his passing over with great grief, for I lose in him one of my best friends, a man for whom I had the highest admiration and respect; a man whose prominent trait of character was kindness, gentleness, and sympathy, who in a supreme extent was possessed of the *Mettā*, the Great Love towards all beings, which he was so fond of quoting as one of his chief ideals and standard of life with the well known passage from the *Itivuttaka*, which in his own translation runs: "Just as at the dawn of day, when the night is passing, the Morning Star shines out in radiance and glory,—just so all the means that can be used as helps toward doing Right avail not the sixteenth part of the Emancipation of the heart through Love".

So I remember him, although weak in body of late, yet strong in mind, great in thought, enthusiastic in his work, when we conversed in the cosy study at Chipstead, from which a wide view of the rustic country of Surrey could be obtained, and where one felt the presence and reality of the ideals of mankind so well, when we talked about the history of these ideals, the great philosophers who had preached these ideals (with whom one could not help associating him as well), and above all the one great Gotama, to the description of whose life and teaching he had devoted his own life and teaching. Surely the effect of such a man and friend cannot

pass away with his bodily frame, the touch of his soul will be felt not only in myself, but in countless others as well. Now he has found Nibbāna, may be, of which he was such an eloquent interpreter and which he has described so well in his versatile language, and to the discussion of which as an ideal of ultimate happiness and bliss, as the crown of the highest optimism, he would always revert in his talks with me. So I remember him as my *kalyana-mitta*, and I may say of him what Pingiya said of the Master (*Sutta Nipata*, v. 1142): “Passāmi nam manasā cakkhunā va rattin-divaṃ ; appamatto namassasūno vivasemi rattim, ten’eva maññāmi avipavāsam.”

His career as a scholar is a varied and multifold course of events, beginning after the finishing of his University studies with the Civil Service in India (Ceylon), where he was first led to acquire a first-hand knowledge of Pāli and to make the acquaintance of Buddhist Civilisation. An ardent desire to make the Buddhist Scriptures accessible to European scholars never left him, and after his return to Europe was the direct stimulus to the formation of the Pāli Text Society by him, the President of which he has remained for forty years, and the institution and working of which has been one of the greatest achievements of modern literary undertaking on a private basis, even excelling Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East*. For this alone his name would be immortal, were it not also for many other facts. All his energies, his thoughts, his aspirations, were directed to the upkeep of the Society, the results of which he reaped in later years with deep satisfaction. More than one text he has critically and accurately edited himself among the publications of the Society. Inseparably coupled with his name, not less with reference to the P. T. S. than to all his achievements of later years is that of his distinguished wife, Caroline Augusta Rhys Davids. It is she who now fitly and deservedly takes his place.

The outcome of his studies in Ceylon was, besides smaller publications, the great classic of Numismatics, viz. the *Ancient Coins and Measures of Ceylon*, (1877). The same year saw his first great historical work published, which has since then had over twenty editions: *Buddhism*. Here a successful attempt was made to separate truth and fiction which were so dangerously intimately blended in Spence Hardy's *Buddhism*, up to then the classic on Singhalese Buddhism. His acquaintance with R. C. Childers strengthened his interest in Pāli. In London, while officially active as a barrister he began his real studies of Pāli and historical Buddhism, as he often said to me, with his translation of the Introductory Book of the *Jātaka* tales (*Buddhism Birth Stories*, 1 vol., 1880), which laid the foundation of his exceedingly intimate familiarity with the whole of the *Jātaka* tradition. The congenial field of the Canonic Law of Ancient Buddhism he tilled together with Hermann Oldenberg in the translation of the two first sections (Vaggas) of the Vinaya Pitaka (most of the second section is his translation) in three volumes (1881-1885) under the title of *Vinaya Texts*. The work, owing to the condition of the Pāli Text and the subject matter, is in need of many corrections, still it is full of valuable information and a document of sound textual criticism. Another, more advanced, translation is that of the *Milindapañha*, published in 1890 (in the *Sacred Books of the East*).

His religious-philosophical bent led him from the more intimate study of the Buddhist Scriptures on to a wider range of Comparative Study. Here deserve to be mentioned his *American Lectures on Buddhism* (1896), and many smaller contributions and essays. His appointment to the chair of Comparative Religion at Manchester University (1904, after having been Professor of Pāli at London University since 1882) was a consequence of this side of his activity.

The historian once more showed himself to advantage in

his *Buddhist India* (1903). In graphic and vivid strokes he here gives us a picture of India under the influence of Buddhist culture. The language of the book is clear and to the point; the material is sifted and sounded historically. Another little book which must be mentioned as founded on historical studies of his later and more mature years, and which he himself considered the best that he had ever written on the subject is his *Early Buddhism* (1914).

In 1912 he retired from public duties and soon after the outbreak of war moved to Chipstead (Surrey), where he lived a secluded, one might almost say, arahantic life. Here in Chipstead he brought to perfection (besides seeing the whole of the Canonical texts published in Pāli Text Society editions) especially two plans and ambitions of his life. The first one was the printing of the translation of the Dīgha Nikāya, or long collection, under the title of *Dialogues of the Buddha*. This was begun in 1899, and the third and last volume was published in 1921. Here too his faithful and intelligent wife has been a great help to him. We do not hesitate to say that the *Dialogues* are the most important product of his Genius and are especially valuable for the critical introductions to each section. Here the historian, the poet, and the philosopher were most happily combined.—As the years passed by, he grew more and more anxious about the other one of his life-plans, the publication of the Pāli Dictionary for which he himself had collected such an abundant mass of material during his long life and his extensive reading. The need of such a Dictionary, which should be based on the P. T. S. editions of the Sacred Texts and their commentaries, was most urgent and all Pāli scholars were since 1908 agreed on the realisation of such a plan. It is not the place here to enter into the history of the scheme; all former plans were frustrated by the War. In 1916 we discussed the scheme anew and decided that I should undertake the work with his

help and under his guidance. I owe him a great deal of instruction and advice and regret that during later years he could not give me as much of his help as I should have liked, his failing health more and more hindered him, just when the work was in its most important stage. He revised my work up to the article "Desana". It was a great pity that he was called off even before seeing half the work published. Still, with all that, the foundation and inspiring genius of the work are his own and I am grateful to him as his pupil as well as his colleague.

In his method of work he always emphasised the importance of facts in the interpretation of historical documents and their expression in language. The Dictionary should primarily be a statement of facts in historical order; the words were to be given in their history within the field of Pāli. The disadvantage of this scheme is often evident, as with this the independence of Pāli is unduly put forward and the sphere of meaning too restricted. Yet it is a sound principle and to be welcomed as checking the other extreme of abstraction and suffusion of meaning. Sound was also his opinion as to the close affinity between Vedic and Pāli and the high age of some Pāli idioms. True that he often placed too much credit on facts of narration which are indeed often purely allegorical representations of half-truths, as seen with the untrained eyes and minds of faithful believers of old, among whom we have to include even the enlightened commentators of the holy texts. Thus it came that Rhys Davids placed a certain discredit on etymologies, which he used to call fanciful play. But on the other hand, he was a scientifically trained mind, who always warned not to put Abhidhamma ideas and constructions into the simple word and teaching of the Suttantapitaka. Fact and history were always his coins and measures.

His life was favoured by ease and opportunity, by travels and all other helps of self-education; yet it was full of strug-

gle and it had its share of sorrow and illness. His genial nature, however, would never let the latter gain the upper hand and spoil his character; and so it came that he was contented and serene up to the last days of his age and passed away peacefully:

“All resolute, and with unshaken mind,
He calmly triumphed o'er the pain of death.
E'en as a bright flame dies away, so was
The last emancipation of his heart.”

(*Dialogues*, II. 176)

Dr W. Stede, Bremen

THE SHINRAN CELEBRATION

During April, a great celebration lasting a week took place at the Higashi Hongwanji Temple in Kyoto. It celebrated the seven hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *Doctrine, Practice, Faith, and Attainment* (教行信證), which is the most important text-book of the Shin Sect of the Pure Land written by its founder, Shinran Shōnin. There were elaborate ceremonies, processions, lectures, and other observances. During the week huge crowds visited the temple. It is said that 550,000 persons attended the celebration and that 1,437 priests took part in the impressive ceremonies.

On the days on which the great ceremonies took place, there was a procession of priests and laymen of temple rank into the great room where the ceremony took place. This procession was most interesting. First came the laymen with temple rank, 1,523 of them. These laymen are divided into different groups according to their ranks. The lowest group in rank, the *shōryōin skaku* (商量員格), walked first, followed by the *jun-shōryōin* (准商量員), then the *shōryōin* (商量員), then the *junkōto* (准講頭), then the *kōto* (講頭), and last of all and highest in rank, the *sō-kōto* (總講頭). These men wore a peculiar costume—the dress called *suho* (素袍) was of

a thin silk of light green or light blue, made in a way to stand stiffly out from the body, and on their heads they wore odd little stiff black hats of ancient style called *ebōshi*. They carried short wrist rosaries. They marched in, not two by two but one by one, and it seemed as if their number was endless. For the most part, these lowest Buddhist devotees were elderly men, but occasionally a younger man was seen among them. After the passing of the laymen came the priests. These also marched and were clad according to their ranks. Over broad trousers, somewhat in the Turkish style, called *sashimuki* (差貫) and adorned or not adorned with crests according to the rank of the wearer, they wore their robes, and over the robes the *kesa*, (*kāshāya* in Sanskrit), that Buddhist garment which is supposed to resemble the robe worn by the Buddha Shakyamuni. The robes varied in colour and were sometimes very brilliant, green, orange, white. There are thirteen degrees among these priests, and their robes varied as their ranks, the highest being a brownish orange and next a brilliant orange. Over the robes the brilliant *kesas* hung with a curtain-like effect in the front and back held by a sash over the left shoulder. These priests carried ceremonial fans and long rosaries with tassels; these rosaries were sometimes very beautiful, made of crystal, amber, coral or carved wood. After the long procession of priests had passed came a number of little boys attired like girls. These were the *chigo* (稚兒), the celestial children or angels, who were later to dance in praise of the Buddha. Some of them were dressed as butterflies and others as flowers, peonies, wistaria, and lotus. After they had passed came the Ōtani family, first the brothers of the Abbot called the *Renshi* (連枝), next walked the Abbot's son called *Shinmonzeki* (新門跡), and last of all the Abbot himself, the *Tōmonzeki* (當門跡). This closed the stately procession.

The scene of the ceremony was the great hall of the

temple. It was filled to overflowing with devoted adherents.

The altar was very beautiful. It was in the form of a golden shrine, which contains an image of Shinran Shōnin. On each side of the altar were enormous and gorgeously arranged bouquets of flowers, and also hanging lamps richly ornamented. Into the inner shrine came in solemn order certain high priests, followed by the Renshi in black and red robes, the Shinmonzeki in white, and the Tō-monzeki in red and white. All entered with slow and stately steps to the accompaniment of music played upon ancient instruments, in classic style. The Tō-monzeki seated himself upon the *daijō* or great seat, on one side of the altar, and the Shin-monzeki upon the other. The ceremony began by the singing or chanting by the priests of the *ka-da* (伽陀), a song in praise of Amida. At this ceremony as conducted on two days, the Abbot himself officiated, but on the middle day the Abbot's son, the Shin-monzeki, officiated and offered the incense and read the *Life of Shinran* before the shrine. Young, graceful, dignified, he moved through the solemn ceremony, looking like some young prince of a former era.

There was more chanting by the priests, the Amida Sutra without music, and then those at the altar, the Abbot, his son and brothers and the high priests took part in the *gyōdō* (行導) or "walking around the shrine" ceremony. All the participants held in their hands plates on which were many paper lotus leaves representing heavenly flowers, and at certain times during their procession around the shrine they tossed out the leaves before the altar. Then they returned to their places, the Abbot to his dais on the right and the Shin-monzeki on the left; the music began again, and the priests chanted the *Shōshinge* (正信偈), a hymn of praise to Amida and the Shin patriarchs, composed by Shinran Shōnin and greatly revered by every Shinshūist.

During the chanting, I gazed upward at the decorations

of angels on the panels above the altar and at the tablet written by the Emperor Meiji in honour of Shinran. The word is "Kenshin" (見眞), "To See the Truth," meaning Shinran, Kenshin Daishi being the posthumous title given to Shinran Shōnin by the Meiji Emperor. To the devoted Shinshū adherent, Shinran did indeed see the Truth and this truth is summed up in the Nembutsu—*Namu Amida Butsu!* Glory and praise be to the Buddha Amida!

Out in the temple courtyard the butterfly children were dancing on a specially prepared stage an ancient dance in praise of the Buddha. I leaned over the balustrade watching their graceful posturings and gazing upon the throngs of people below—rich and poor, old and young, educated and ignorant, devotees of the Buddha. Yet sometimes in the West, they say that Buddhism is dying in Japan. I wish that those who say it might visit Hongwanji on a day like this. Would they repeat it, I wonder!

It was a wonderful week at the Higashi (Eastern) Hongwanji, repeated the following week on an equally grand and similar scale at the Nishi Hongwanji, and attended by enormous crowds, followers of the Western Branch of the Hongwanji Shinshū.

B. L. S.

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