THE IMPACT OF BUDDHISM ON THE WEST[1]

by

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A movement of thought of the extent and magnitude of Buddhism cannot fail to have an influence beyond the area in which its beliefs and practices are prevalent. It thus is almost axiomatic that during the periods of its flowering in the lands of its origin and most widespread adoption, Buddhist ideas, modes of behavior, and cultural objects can be discovered way beyond the periphery of its focal development. In fact, Buddha images have been discovered as far away as Africa and Europe.

Vilhelm Holmqvist of the Swedish Academy of Antiquities recently found an Indian brass Buddha statuette of the sixth century A.D. on the island of Lillion in Lake Mälaren near Stockholm. The discovery of an ivory image of the Buddha at Rome is well-known, and so is the "Memphis Buddha," a Buddha head in terracotta dating back to the fifth century B.C., unearthed by Sir Flinders Petrie in Egypt in the year 1907. A metal statuette of the Buddha dug up by a Frenchman in North Africa was recently placed in the Algiers Museum. Russian archaeologists found large Buddha images dating back to the seventh or eighth century A.D. in the ruins of Akbeshim in the Chu Valley in Krishizia.

India is the cradle of Buddhism. Tradition and some historic or archaeological evidence exist to the effect that Lumbini, now across the border in Nepāl, was the birth place of Prince Siddhārtha (Pāli: Siddhattha);[2] that Bodh Gayā was the place of his Enlightenment (*bodhi*) whereupon he became the "Buddha";

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1. Based on a lecture delivered at the June 13, 1956, meeting of The Siam Society in Bangkok.

2. We shall endeavor in the following to give the Sanskrit first and the Pāli second where the two differ.

that in the Deer Park of Ṛsipatana (Pāli: Isipatana) at Sārnāth, the Enlightened One (Buddha) gave his first sermon; that at Kuśinagara (Kusinārā) on the river Hiraṇyavatī he entered *mahā-parinirvāṇa*, never to be born a mortal again, the 2500th recurrence of which memoral date according to Ceylonese reckonings has been celebrated in most parts of the Buddhist world during 1956 to 1957.

If we encircle the area in which the Buddha is reasonably known to have been active, we find it a small one, comprising some 30,000 square miles at most. Within twelve centuries of his earthly demise the Śākyamuni's doctrine had been carried to all parts of India, to Ceylon, Nepāl, Bhutān, Sikkim, Kashmir, Afghānistan, Iran, Turkestan, Tibet, Burma, China, Indochina, Korea and Japan, an area of roughly 7,500,000 square miles, constituting the greater portion of Asia Major. Within a comparable space of time, Christianity covered only half of this area in Europe and Asia Minor.

The expansive force of Buddhism is, thus, clearly demonstrated. The momentum inherent in it, be it its missionary drive, the power of its ideals, or the appeal of its aesthetic or scientific qualities, cannot but be acknowledged. No other factors, such as the spread by force or military conquest, have come into operation in the case of Buddhism. Hence its appeal is entirely intrinsic or self-based in its ideal content.

One proof of the virility of a doctrine or movement is its adaptability. To be all things to all people and yet maintain its identity spells strength. Buddhism has adjusted itself to the most widely different characters, personalities, cultural configurations and behavior patterns. Let us name but a few of the appeals, mutually exclusive in other contexts, yet supplementary and identifiable as Buddhism: It stimulates art endeavor — it denies beauty and revels in utter simplicity; it is transparently clear and rational— it is mystic; it appeals by virtue of the depth of its philosophy — it shuns all metaphysics; it stimulates man to action—it affords oppor-

tunities for meditation; it is ascetic and pessimistic – it shows man how to live with himself and his neighbor; there is no ritual or ceremony involved – man can worship the Buddha with all pomp and circumstance if he wishes; Buddhism is scientific – it is merely a way of life; it is without belief in god – it is deeply spiritual. More contradictory statements could hardly be made of any movement of thought which at the same time bears one name only. Not even Christianity, in its nearly 300 different denominations, exhibits such a variety of near-mutually exclusive characteristics that have been predicated of it.

With this preamble it is easy to prognosticate the type of influence which Buddhism may have or in fact has exerted and is capable of exerting in a world which reveals to a student of civilization a varicolored picture.

Exchange of goods, barter and commercial transactions are among the earliest activities of mankind. Our globe is reticulated with trade routes to and from places some of which even today are accessible only with difficulty. But man pushed across deserts and oceans and braved weather most foul and humans most base, for the sake of acquiring wealth. However, let us not forget man's insatiable desire to see and to learn. It is due to this drive that the trade routes also became idea-paths along which information and notions passed over thousands of miles.

Of unsung messengers of ideas there must have been an untold number even before much of history was written. To prove their existence we only have to look at ourselves who come from distant lands with intent quite different at times from that of teaching or informing. And yet, teach and inform even the humblest traveler does, because he is the living exponent of a way of life, the ambassador of his civilization with all its idea content. That Buddhism was carried in this way into Asia Minor and farther west at a date unrecorded in history is pure speculation, of course. But must it necessarily be false?

We do possess remarkable instances of ocular demonstration of such an interchange of culture in the motifs of art and the veiled philosophy they contain. The symbol is the earliest visual expression of a significant idea. Our age writes volumes, yet misunderstanding is often vast and deep. The ancients used a symbol and thus addressed themselves, without words, clearly and unmistakably to all generations who were taught the proper interpretation. We have such symbols today, but most of them are ephemeral because they are being invented *ad lib*, and are rarely meant to be carriers of man's insight into the mystery of man and universe.

Even Buddhism was symbolic at first. When the Buddha appeared in art for the first time he was more principle than person, more idea than the familar figure we all know so well. He was the Bodhi-tree, the column, the invisible occupant of a *vajrāsana* or *bodhimaṇḍa* (*bodhimaṇḍala*), that is, a throne, a foot-print, a parasol or a *stūpa*. In how many of these or similar symbolic representations may not the Buddha-idea have travelled throughout the so-called West and the so-called East?

This, too, is speculating about the influence of Buddhism before the Buddha portrait was evolved. But are we necessarily wrong?

We are skirting here quite dangerously the interpretation of the Buddha as a myth. Heinrich Kern, the great scholar of Buddhism, maintained[3] that Buddha was the sun, creative, curative like Apollo, and a savior to all mankind. Māra, the evil one, was, according to him, darkness which is defeated by light; Rāhula was the eclipse. The six, the twelve, indeed all numbers significant in the Buddha story, become astronomical figures and references. This would give Buddhism assuredly a universal scope, convert its possible influence on other than the Indian civilization into a restatement of a world-wide nature myth, but scarcely satisfy the human craving for a human or superhuman being who has shown the way out of suffering.

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3 In Geschiedenis van het Buddhisme in Indie.

Let us, then, be done with speculation and call history to our aid.

The Persian invasion of India which penetrated only as far as the Indus and occurred some years before the close of the sixth century before Christ under Darius (522-486 B.C.), did not net any tangible influence of Buddhism on the western world through personal contact with those professing the doctrine of the master. Also the possibility of literary contact should, perhaps, be discounted for that period. The Persians did not move east on the Indian subcontinent as far as the country of the Magadhas, the classic Buddha-land, and Buddhist missionary activity had not yet set in on a large scale.

Nevertheless, according to a later tradition, Zarathustra is supposed to have gone to India[4] and, as Franz Altheim writes,[5] characteristics of the Buddha legend seem to have been transferred to the person of Zarathustra. Gotama, the Buddha's own clan name (*gotra*, Pāli *gotta*), occurs in the sixteenth verse of the Fravardīn Yäsht as Gaotama and he is said to have been vanquished in argument by a stronger opponent in a debate. Whether actually Gautama, the Buddha, is alluded to is not certain. But Altheim makes it probable on the basis of most interesting contextual and chronological reasoning that the two opposing disputants referred to in the verse could very well have been Zarathustra and Buddha. Although their historic meeting must remain highly problematic, there seems to be strong evidence of ideological contact between Zarathustrianism and Buddhism without the latter, however, exerting any now recognizable definite influence.

More concretely, it is not improbable that an exchange of ideas took place in the general area in which Indian merchants and conscripted troups met with Persians. This exchange surely did occur more frankly and easily after Alexander the Great had crossed the Sindhu in the spring of 326 before the Christian era, laying the basis for that intense spiritual intercourse about two centuries later symbolized by the questions of Milinda, the ruler whose Greek name

4 See the references in Franz Altheim, *Weltgeschichte Asiens im griechischen Zeitalter*, vol. 1 (Halle, 1947) P. 98, n. 19.

5 *Ib.*, n. 20.

was Menandros, which he put to the Thera Nāgasena and which are recorded in the *Milindapañha, The Questions of Milinda*, compiled around the beginning of the Christian era.

It was at the time of the Third Buddhist Council (not fully authenticated by scholars) held in 246 B.C. at Pāṭaliputra or Patna during the reign of one of India's greatest kings, Aśoka (about 273-236 B.C.), that Buddhist missonaries were despatched in all directions. We are told that Mahārakṣita went to the Yavana or Greek country in its eastern reaches. Ultimately the gospel of the Buddha reached the shores laved by the eastern Aegean, and may have found its way to Athens, Corinth and Alexandria. Since Buddhist missionaries do not convert, but only expound and expose, we cannot possibly say how Buddhistic the region of the Aegean became, although, undoubtedly, the doctrine of infinite compassion was listened to not without appreciation by many.

There is so much of the hypothetical in all the visits of Indians to the West or the mentions of Buddhism in the works of Greek historians that it will be worth our while to refer to them here. But it is certain that Clement of Alexandria, who lived between 150 and 218 *Anno Domini*, mentioned the Buddha in his *Stromata*, and so did Archelaos of Carrah, and St. Jerome (about 340-420). At any rate, between 200 B.C. and 200 A.D. there was much intercourse between India and the West, chiefly by sea, and the great city of Alexandria eventually became the port of entry into the region controlled by imperial Rome. The Indian ivory statuette which was taken from the ruins of Pompeii, is a symbol, as it were, of intangibles that must have passed between Europe and India in either direction. Speculation again on our part, but this time there is also archaeological and literary evidence, scant though it may be.

Literary evidence is, further, undoubtedly preserved in Stoicism. Though of an indirect nature, concomitant factors in Stoic and Cynic literature and practice convince me that these thinkers were in actual contact with Indian philosophy, and for good reasons I do not wish to exclude the possibility of Buddhist influence.

Many have speculated on the relationship between Buddhism and the outlook and way of life of the Orphics, the Essenes, the Therapeutae, the Gnostics, the Neo-platonists and Neo-pythagoreans. I must confess that there is much that seems indisputable, but for want of some corroborating evidence we could not possibly declare all such influences genuine or proven. The highly probable may be exploited and invested with spurious proof by uncritical thinking which, when mixed with too great enthusiasm and slight philologic knowledge, runs amuck. But of Buddhistic elements in Manichaeism, the religion of the great Mani who met a tragic death, there is no doubt whatever.

We have now come to the threshold of a problem which may prove touchy to many in the West who are not in the mood for scientific objectivity in matters of religion but which cannot be passed by because of its significance. It is the question: Was Christianity influenced by Buddhism? Some say categorically no; others point to a wealth of parallels suggesting strongly physical contact between the two religions and hence actual influence, adaptation and borrowing.

Resemblances between Christianity and Buddhism exist without a doubt in the ascetic tendency particularly of the clerical Orders in celibacy, in monasticism itself for men as well as women, in relic worship, in the use of the rosary, candles, bells, incense, holy water and flowers in the ceremonial, in the extolling of poverty, almsgiving and chastity, in the very division of laity and clergy, the ordination practices, kneeling, mystery-plays, blessing, sprinkling, indeed, even in the interior disposition of architectural elements in the places of worship, church and *caitya* respectively.

However, stiff opposition is encountered when comparisons are made between the Buddhist records of the New Testament relating to the personal history of the founder of Christianity, the stories both canonical and apocryphal, the parables, doctrinal statements, eschatology and prophecy. Here, obviously, the scholar must be given the last word, for often what seems like borrowing may be explained quite otherwise.

It is undeniable that parallels do exist and the difference in time—Christianity being much younger than Buddhism—makes a certain dependence of the religion which the West has embraced at least plausible. Cultural values, moreover, do not flower forth in solitude. Let us remember also that Christianity is an eastern religion. Even great Christian theologians like Otto Pfleiderer have admitted the possibility of historical connections when the parallels become too striking and more than one identical element or circumstantial factor is woven into the Buddhistic and Christian stories. The methods of comparative folklore are then applicable. Let me refer in this connection to such scholarly studies as Ernst Windisch, *Buddha's Geburt und die Lehre von der Seelenwanderung* (1909); H. Haas, "*Das Scherflein der Wittwe*" *und seine Entsprechung im Tripitaka* (Leipzig, 1922); and W. Norman Brown, *Walking on the Water* (Chicago, 1928).

Few, of course, have gone so far and, forsaking the critical, scientific attitude, suggested, like Swami Śaṅkarānanda in a book entitled *The Western Buddhism or Christianity*, that, "when put together, the story of Jesus looks to be the shadow of that of the Buddha," and that the synoptic Gospels are an "attempt to reconcile the highest Vedāntic teachings of the Buddha" with Old Testament religion. When the elements are separated, the Swami maintains Christianity is nothing but Western Buddhism. Much is made, for instance, of the identification of Jesus with a similarly sounding Indian name, which unproven and unprovable fact is then used to draw the conclusion that Jesus, during the period of his life unaccounted for in the Gospels, was in India or Kashmir.

After this, the layman surely needs a little guide so as not to fall prey to deductions and conclusions which are totally off base. Nevertheless, all comparers of Christianity and Buddhism are in the company of many a devout Christian beginning with St. Jerome and certainly not ending with the 18th century Augustinian monk Georgius.

It may be well to mention some works which can be studied with profit in this connection, such as Rev. R. Spence Hardy,

Christianity and Buddhism Compared (1874); Rudolph Seydel, *Das Evangelium von Jesu in seinen Verhältnissen zu Buddha* (Leipzig, 1882); also his *Die Buddha-Legende und das Leben Jesu nach den Evangelien, erneute Prüfung ihres gegenseitigen Verhältnisses* (Weimar, 1897); A. Lillie, *The Influence of Buddhism on Primitive Christianity* (London, 1893); Albert J. Edmunds and Masaharu Anesaki, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels, being Gospel Parallels from Pāli Texts* (Philadelphia, 1908-09, and the later edition of 1914); G.A. van den Bergh van Eysinga, *Indische invloeden op oude christelijke verhalen* (Leiden, 1901); G. Faber, *Buddhistische und Neutestamentliche Erzählungen. Das Problem ihrer gegenseitigen Beeinflussung untersucht* (Leipzig, 1913); Georg Grimm, *Buddha und Christus* (Leipzig, 1928); H. W. Schomerus, *Buddha und Christus* (Hall, 1931).

Even the most striking of the parallels which these authors have discussed are discounted by Edward J. Thomas in his *The Life of Buddha as Legend and History* (London, 1952), pp. 237–248, and previously by others, such as M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der Indischen Litteratur*, II (Leipzig. 1920), pp. 278–285, by T.W. Rhys Davids, J. Estlin Carpenter, Louis de La Vallée Poussin, Sylvain Lévi, Richard Garbe and A.B. Keith. However, categorical denial of mutual influence is no better than categorical affirmation. Some scholars of note, such as R. Pischel, Ernst Kuhn, H. Oldenberg, H. Kern, either admit the possibility of an interdependence or have an open mind on the subject. Nevertheless we may just mention some of the striking parallels which Thomas puts into a sort of catalogue.

There is, first of all, the virgin birth of Christ which has been paralleled with the birth of the Buddha. Simeon in the temple (Luke 2:25 ff.) is compared with Asita's visit to Prince Siddhārtha's house, Jesus' visit to the temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:41 ff.) with Siddhārtha's meditating under the rose-apple tree. The submission to custom by being baptized is compared with Buddha's conforming to the customs of the world. Jesus was tempted by the devil, Buddha by Māra. Kisā Gotamī's praise is paralleled with Luke 11:27. The widow's mite, Peter walking

on the water, and the Samaritan woman are stories similarly told in the Buddhist books. Thomas further brings the parallel discussions of the end of the world, the annunciation, choosing the disciples, and the story of Nathanael, showing the difficulty in the comparison if not its impossibility. He then treats the parable of the prodigal son, the story of the man born blind, the transfiguration, and the miracle of the loaves and fishes in the same way and asserts that the number of parallels "seems to decrease" "in proportion to the investigator's direct knowledge of the Buddhist sources."

Be that as it may, I believe that if we are looking for one-to-one correspondences we are bound to be disappointed. We have to amend the Christian texts, speculate on possible common origins in hypothetical earlier versions, or make yet other assumptions which are as easily proven as they are disproven, depending on the conviction of the author and his dominant attitude, apart from his scholarly qualification. I think an alternative method, such as Ananda K. Coomaraswamy has employed, will yield more satisfactory results.

One most interesting influence which Buddhism exerted, not on the Gospels, for it did not make itself felt till the third century of the Christian era, but on Christian thinking, is the legend of Barlaam and Joasaph. This tale was transmitted through a Manichaen recension as well as some other version to the West and translated into Persian, Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin, Egyptian, Ethiopian and practically all medieval European languages and many other oriental ones.

Joasaph is the son of an Indian king who violently persecuted the followers of the Christian church established in India by St. Thomas, the Apostle. The King wanted to protect his son from Christianity. But a hermit, Barlaam, secretly taught Christianity to the prince. Infuriated, the King did all in his power to have his son give up the new faith. But he labored in vain, indeed, he was in the end himself converted. When he died, he left the kingdom to Joasaph, who then renounced the world, searched for

and found Barlaam in the desert, and lived the rest of his days, after his teacher's death, secluded in the desert. Joasaph, or, Jehosaphat, is doubtless Bodhisattva, while Barlaam may have been Bhagavan, that is, the Buddha. The main story was reworked in the Christian sense and a number of Indian fables, parables or "apologues" were added which made it the extremely popular book it was. Eventually, Barlaam and Joasaph were made Christian saints.

In the fifth Christian century, the story of the young Buddha appeared in the West in the shape of the legend of Saint Alexius. The Nigrodhamiga Jātaka, in which the Buddha appears in the shape of a deer, was quite likely the original of such Christian legends as that of St. Hubertus. The apocryphal Gospels doubtless contain Buddhistic elements. Thus E. Kuhn has shown in his *Gurupūjākaumudī* that the story of the little Bodhisattva at school has found its way into the legends having the little boy Jesus as center. Thus did Buddhism serve Christianity in putting its message across to the story-loving populace. Bhikkhu Silabhadra even offered the suggestion that Dante got some of his ideas for the vivid descriptions of heaven and hell by devious paths from the Jātakas; but this may be idle speculation.

Except for travel accounts in China and other parts of the Orient in which Buddhism was a living religion (though far from being unmixed with other beliefs and philosophies), such as those of Marco Polo, of Christian missionaries, merchants and diplomats to Eastern courts, the West remained without knowledge of the Buddhist East for practically twelve centuries. The Islamic curtain had meantime been lowered on the scene and blocked out all communication between the West and what remained of Buddhism after the Moslem invasion of India. When the scientific study of languages and literature during the Romantic age finally did come to grips with Buddhism, it was Buddhism in the guise of Lamaism that drew the scholars' first attention. The Hungarian Csoma von Körös published a Tibetan grammar in 1834, and five years later there appeared another one by a German named Schmidt.

What gave the study of Buddhism as such renewed impetus was, actually, the work of the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), who in his great work, *The World as Will and Idea*, called attention to Buddhism in most appreciative terms. In his later years he expressed his joy over the fact that when this his main work first appeared in 1818, it was already in agreement with Buddhist doctrine, although he did not have any knowledge of it. Since he was an omnivorous and multilingual reader we can believe him when he related that in those days only very few most imperfect and scanty reports about Buddhism had appeared in print. In fact, the universal genius Wolfgang von Goethe did not know the name of Buddha. So deep was Schopenhauer's veneration of the Buddha that he endeavored for long to have a Buddha image in his home. At last, Privy Counsel Krüger procured one for him from Tibet. It was coated with black lacquer, and Schopenhauer had it gilded. He instructed the guilder to use only pure gold and not be sparing of it.

Schopenhauer contributed immensely both to the esteem and popularization of Buddhism through his published writings, since they have been read very widely beginning about 1850. A great pupil of his who also held Buddhism in high regard was Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906), but his greatest was Richard Wagner (1813-1883), who in 1856 wanted to write an opera, *Der Sieger*, and in 1859 told Mathilde Wesendonk that he had become a Buddhist without knowing it. We should also mention another pupil, Paul Deussen (1845-1919), who had a profound understanding of ancient Indian philosophy.

As the knowledge about Buddhism increased, the elements of kindness, compassion and tolerance in the Buddha's life attracted many litterateurs and gifted European writers who retold the story of the Enlightened One in epic poetry, in drama, and in the novel. Too many of these writers are merely names now, but I will mention, among the Germans, Joseph Viktor Widmann (1842-1911), who wrote an epic poem "Buddha" in twenty cantos in 1869 and another poem, "The Saint and the Animals"; Ferdinand von Hornstein, who

wrote a drama in three acts, "The Buddha," with music by Robert von Hornstein, which was published in München in 1899 and put on the stage the following year; Karl Bleibtreu (1859-1927) who brought out a drama in 1901 entitled "Karma"; Max Albert Schreiber, who published "Kunala" in 1910, dealing with the sad story of Emperor Aśoka's son Kuṇāla or Dharmavivardhana, whose eyes were put out by his stepmother but who bore no ill feeling toward her; Fritz Mauthner (1849-1923), who came out with "The Last Death of the Buddha" in 1912; Stefan Zweig (1881-1942), who produced the novel *The Eyes of the Dead Brother*, and Thomas Mann (1875-1955), who wrote *The Exchanged Heads*, both of which novels had Buddhist overtones; Hermann Hesse (born in 1877), who wrote *Siddharta* and *The Glass-bead Play*; Albrecht Schaefer who wrote *The Jewel of the Lotus* in 1925; Alfons von Czibulka, who published *Death in Front of the Buddha* in 1935; Eduard Griesebach (1845-1906), Schack, Hertwig, and Joseph Winckler who also dealt with Buddhist themes.

Outstanding among Englishmen is, of course, Sir Edwin Arnold (1832-1904), whose *Light of Asia*, published in 1879, still continues to draw many to Buddhism.

We should also mention the Dane, Karl Gjellerup, who wrote *Pilgrim Kamanita* in 1903 and *The Wife of the Perfect One* in 1906. In French literature we meet Angelo de Gubernatis and A. Obolonsky, who produced in 1899 a drama in five acts called *Le Prince Siddhartha*. Jean Lahor, Maurice Magre and others likewise wrote on Buddhist themes.

However, we should not make the mistake of believing that we always get accurate interpretations of Buddhism in these writings. Almost invariably the idea of *nirvāṇa* is misunderstood, the pessimism of Buddhism is stressed, and there are innumerable inaccuracies. The first western works, such as C.F. Köppen's *Die Religion des Buddha* (Berlin, 1857-1859), abound in misconceptions. Western knowledge of Buddhism, in scholarly circles as well as in the popular mind, has actually improved only within the last few decades. Truth and falsehood are mixed in many an exposition. In Nietzsche, for

instance, we get flashes of insight and then again a gross, indeed grotesque, misconception.

If it had not been for the scholars who in painstaking labor translated and edited and interpreted, the West would not have even now a fair understanding of Buddhism. Scholars of all nations are at present contributing to our knowledge of Buddhism, but because there are so many forms of Buddhism, so many documents, so many languages in which they are written, each treating a special problem, it would be an impossible task simply to list the names of the foremost scholars.

The scholars fall into two groups, those who are interested in the idea-content and the cultural aspects of Buddhism, and those who have philologic and historic knowledge of the subject or certain aspects of it. It must be remembered that the study of Buddhism is just emerging from its infancy. Yet Buddhism is a field vaster in its linguistic and cultural ramifications, than Christianity, having been on the scene for half a millenium longer in countries culturally vastly more differentiated than the countries of Europe in which Christianity was and still is concentrated. There is not and there cannot be a single mind conversant with "Buddhism." There are only specialists who master this or that particular phase. The non-specialist can have only a very general knowledge of the subject of Buddhism.

Let us turn, then, to the group of scholars interested in the ideological and cultural aspects of Buddhism.

We have already mentioned Schopenhauer, who undoubtedly heads this group. His great predecessors, Leibniz (1646-1716) and Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), knew of Buddhism, but their knowledge of it was small and they did not gain so much prestige and influence for Buddhism as did Schopenhauer. The genial Max Müller (1823-1900) could back up his enthusiasm for Buddhism with philologic knowledge. So great was his influence that even now, nearly ninety years after his first great speech on Buddhism, he is cited first in the Orient whenever there is an enquiry concerning Western interest in Buddhism.

What Schopenhauer did for Germany, Paul Carus (1852-1919) did for America. In 1894 he published the Gospel of Buddhism and in many ways popularized the Buddhist doctrine. Other Americans we should mention are James Bissett Pratt, the Williams College Professor of Philosophy, who wrote *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism and a Buddhist Pilgrimage* (New York, 1928); Clarence H. Hamilton, who published a reading guide on Buddhism in 1931 and recently (1952) produced the very readable *Buddhism A Religion of Infinite Compassion*; and E.A. Burtt, a professor of philosophy who compiled in 1955 selections in the paper-bound Mentor Religious Classic entitled *The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha* which is now sold the world over. The *Harvard Oriental Series* published Henry Clark Warren's *Buddhism in Translation* (1896), Eugene Watson Burlingame's *Buddhist Legends* in three volumes (1921), and Lord Chalmers' *Buddha's Teachings* (1932). All three of these works have proved very popular. Franklin Edgerton published a great dictionary and grammar of Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit.

Many thinkers and philosophers have extolled the moral and philosophical teachings of Buddhism. Graf Hermann Keyserling (1880-1946), the famous German author of the *Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen*, characterized Buddhism as the perfect embodiment of spirituality and believed in the saving grace of the Bodhisattva. Other thinkers have not been slow in recognizing the greatness of the ethical views of Buddhism, including Bertrand Russell and George Santayana (1863-1952).

In order to round out to some degree the galaxy of scholars with philologic and historic knowledge who have enriched our understanding of Buddhism in all its phases, even though one who calls himself a Buddhist in the West for sentimental reasons may have never heard of some of them, let us add a few more names to those which have already been given. But it must not be assumed that this list is even remotely complete.

In England the following names stand out: B. Clough, J. Lewis, James Prinsep, L.A. Waddell, Robert Caesar Childers (1838-

1876), H.B. Hogson, S. Beal, T.W. Rhys Davids (1843-1922), Mrs. C.A.F. Rhys Davids (1858-1942), E.M. Hare, R.S. Copleston, Sir Charles Norton Edgcumbe Eliot (1862-1931), W.M. MacGovern, Arthur Berriedale Keith (1879-1944), W.E. Soothill; in France, Eugène Burnouf (1801-1852), J. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, Èdouard Chavannes (1865-1918), Émile Senart, A. Foucher, P. Oltramare, R. Grousset, P. Masson-Oursel, Jean Przyluski, L. Renou, J.Bloch, J. Filliozat; in pre-Soviet Russia, W. Wassiljew, I.P. Minayeff, O. Rosenberg and Th. Stcherbatsky; in Poland, S. Schayer; in Switzerland, C. Regamey; in Italy, A. Ferrari, Giuseppe Tucci, G. Stramigioli and J. Evola; in Scandinavian countries, Vincent Fausböll (who edited the Jātakas), V. Trenckner, J.A. Eklund, S. Konow and P. Tuxen; in the Netherlands, J.H.C. Kern, M.W. de Visser and J. Gonda; in Germany, Hermann Oldenberg (1854-1920), Albert Grünwedel, A.v. Le-Coq, Wilhelm Geiger, H. Jacobi, F. Otto Schröder, Heinrich Lüders, Georg Grimm, A. Hildebrandt, F.M. Müller, K.E. Reichelt, O. Döhring, Heinrich Hackmann, Johannes Nobel, William Stede, Eugen Herrigel, Helmut Hoffmann, Kurt Schmidt, W. Liebenthal, H. Zimmer, Ernst Waldschmidt, Max Walleser, Herbert V. Günther and Helmut von Glasenapp.

Whoever wishes to acquaint himself with what has been written on Buddhism has several bibliographies at his disposal, such as the ones by H.L. Held, A.C. March, and *Bouddhisme: Notes et Bibliographie.* But the greatest is the *Bibliographie Bouddhique,* which is now again published periodically at Paris. By this he may measure the amount of work done by the scholars of the world and by the nature of the treatises judge the impact of Buddhism on the modern world. But he should keep in mind that it is not always the technical study which influences the world in favor of Buddhism but the popular presentation which uncovers psychological, philosophical and generally cultural values in Buddhism.

Depending on whether a man is interested in the rational and ethical aspects of religion, he will study works of and about the Hīnayāna of Theravāda school of Buddhism. If his interest

lies in mystic ritual he will want to read in Tibetan Buddhist literature. If his bent is philosophical, he will search for books on Mahāyāna Buddhism and its many philosophical schools. If the irrational or contemplative expresses his nature, he will study Zen Buddhism, which is becoming extremely popular in the West, elements of Zen having been "discovered" in western literature. Buddhist meditation practices are now gaining favor and replacing the interest in Yoga. All types of Buddhism make their appeal today in popular literature, including the Tāntric form of Buddhism which, however, is usually misunderstood in the meaning of its unusual and perhaps weird ritual.

Oriental scholars also have contributed to western interest in Buddhism by writing lucidly in the modern languages of Europe or having their works translated. We mention only Bunyio Nanjio, Junjiro Takakasu, Yamakami Sōgen, Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, M. Anesaki, Hajime Nakamura, Sarat Chandra Das, Satis Chandra Vidyabhusan, Dhamananda Kosambi, B.M. Barua, T.R.V. Murti, Nalinaksha Dutt, S. and H. Dutt, B. Bhattacharyya. P.C. Bagchi, S. Mookerjee, B. Ch. Law, G.P. Malalasekera, P. Maung Tin, Sh. Z. Aung and many others.

The long-overdue recognition of philosophical and ethical ideas and values generated in the East is about to be given. The fact that more general recognition is being given now to Oriental philosophies and religions seems to indicate that the western attitude is a function of political events which have given independence and increased stature to the nations of the Orient in which, with the exception of India, Pakistan, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines, Buddhism is a main feature. Since the power of a nation to influence ideologically is directly proportionate to the degree of freedom it enjoys, the West may expect more rather than less of an infiltration of Buddhist ideas. Such ideas are still considered somewhat strange but with the adaptability and liberality which characterizes Eastern thinking, there is reason to believe that the strangeness in the Buddhist doctrines will wear away and a situation on ideological levels will come about which could easily

resemble the state of affairs when legends, tales, fables and *maerchen* (many of them generated within the Buddhist context of the Jātakas) were the common possession of East and West alike.

There is a movement in the West which can be called Neo-Buddhism, led usually by intelligent laymen who may or may not possess a critical knowledge of the texts, but are fired with enthusiasm to have the Buddhist gospel known so that it may contribute to the spiritual and moral life in general. Notable among these persons are Paul Dahlke (1865-1928), a German physician who created in Berlin-Frohnau a Buddhist center, and Christmas Humphrey, who was a Buddhist leader in England. The writings of K.E. Neumann, Karl Seidenstücker, Walter Markgraf, R. Otto Franke, A. Ferdinand Herold, W.Y. Evans-Wentz, Miss I.B. Horner, Edward Conze and a number of others have contributed immeasurably to the popular appeal of Buddhism but on levels which satisfy the intellectual. The societies they and many others have founded or have helped to found in western countries, in Europe, the Americas and Australia, may not have many members, yet their output in pamphlets, reprints, translations and catechisms is vast. These societies owe their existence to an urge on the part of informed lay people to have Buddhism contribute a more rational outlook in religion and build its moral principles into the structure of modern society, perchance to perfect the individual or to bring about social reform. They answer a need which some feel for supplementing or charging the current outlook with the principles inherent in the Dharma (Pāli: *dhamma*). Some individuals in these associations are quite militant, missionary and impatient, often compromising the high aims and the Buddhistic way which they profess. The World Fellowship of Buddhists had its first meeting in 1950.

The Buddhist from the East, of course, may not always find his doctrine presented in its pure state in the West. He must understand that the Western mind has conceived a tremendous respect for the founder of Buddhism and the principles he has laid down in the Noble Path. Whether Theravāda or Mahāyāna, Zen or Tāntric, the Buddhism which is made to carry the message in

this or that Buddhistic group is not so important. What is important is whether much work is being accomplished, and whether sentimentality, superficiality and slovenliness can be prevented from spoiling a good cause. Perhaps the somewhat indiscriminate interest in Buddhism in general, coupled with tremendous and wide-spread admiration of Buddhist art, will ultimately cause a reaction in Buddhist countries of the East, enabling them to forget petty as well as major differences and concentrate on the essentials of the Dharma.

The Western Buddhist is not always a Buddhist in the strictest sense. In fact, he is more often a *friend of Buddhism.* The tendency today in the Western world is to found societies of Friends of Buddhism. Members are thereby spared the embarrassment of severing their affiliations with Christian or other churches. In this, a Buddhist of the East would not find much fault because of the liberality inherent in Buddhism itself. And if we recall that Christianity during the Middle Ages derived as much benefit from the converted or retold Buddhist stories as Buddhism did by having Christianity acknowledge the worth-whileness of its message and its compatibility, at least in part, there is a mutual give-and-take in the making here, that strengthens and enhances both causes.

The yellow robe of Theravāda Buddhism and the brown or blue one of Mahāyānism are to be seen more frequently in the West than ever before. On the continent you might run into the Ven. Dr. W. Rāhula from Ceylon, who is studying on a scholarship offered by the University of Paris, or the Ven. Shin Kelasa of Burma. Refugees from the East with all the regalia of Tibetan priesthood may still be encountered here and there around the world. Some have gone to the United States where at Farmingdale, New Jersey, they have been given land and have established a community with all their customs and rituals intact. Their leader is the Dilowa Hutukhtu, and his followers are the remnants of the Kalmück Mongols who have been deprived of their homeland by communists. They have amongst them Geshe Wangyal, who studied in Tibet. The Hutukhtu himself, who is an incarnation of the Buddha according to the Mahāyāna conception, enjoys taking a bus in the lower part of

Manhattan and riding up Fifth Avenue and Riverside Drive, delighting in New York scenery from the upper deck. Tak-tser Rimpoche, the oldest brother of the Dalai Lama, is also well acquainted with America.

Leader and other grants to travel and study in the United States have been given to Thai Buddhist clergy, such as Phra Paññānanda of Chiengmai, and to Cambodian clergy, such as the Ven. Dhammawara and Huot That Phra Bodhivaṁsa. This year the first Theravāda monk is on a scholarship at St. Johns College, in Maryland, to take a full college course. He is Phra Maha Prasiddh Kittisiddho from Krabi Province, Thailand, who has been the secretary to the Saṅghanāyaka of Thailand. Such visitors or adopted citizens like the Kalmück Mongols, being living exponents of their religion, are doing much to explain Buddhism. Some have taught in American classrooms, and most of them have lectured extensively. All of them have made friends.

The first Buddhist Church was consecrated in the United States in San Francisco in 1905. Now there is a corporation "Buddhist Churches of America." There are about 250,000 Buddhists in America, four fifths of this number being made up of Chinese and Japanese, the rest of intellectuals of various extraction. In Hawaii alone there are some 50,000 Buddhists, and even the staunchly Catholic Philippines have their quota of Buddhists. Modern Germany has given due recognition to Buddhism as one of the *Konfessionen* alongside Protestantism, Catholicism and Judaism.

In the West it is considered part of a liberal education to know about the religions other than Christianity. Hence college and university curricula offer courses in comparative religion and philosophy. There is considerable pressure brought to bear, especially in American institutions, to afford greater opportunities for the study of oriental religions and philosophies in more intense courses. This means, of course, more recognition for and knowledge about Buddhism.

The number of Westerners wearing the plain, yellow robe of Theravāda Buddhism or the ornate one of some Japanese Buddhist sect, is steadily increasing, swelled by Britishers, Americans, Germans, Frenchmen and Italians. Within the Hīnayāna fold we have the well-known names of Bhikkhu Ananda Metteya (Allan Bennett); Bhikkhu Silācāra, a Scotsman; Bhikkhu Kevalānanda; Bhikkhu Sangharakshita, an Englishman who is an editor of *The Maha Bodhi* journal; Bhikkhu Kapilavaḍḍho, another Englishman, and the American Phra Sumangalo (Rev. Robert Stuart Clifton). Some, like Bhikkhu Nyāṇatiloka (Anton Gueth), a German now residing in Ceylon and writing prolifically, have contributed through popular works to the right understanding of Buddhism in the West. One of the Westerners, a German, initiated in the Buddhist-Lamaist tradition is Lama Anagarika Govinda (Anangavajra Kham-sum-Wangchuk).

There is a Western Order of Buddhism with headquarters in Hawaii, and an Arya Maitreya Mandala with headquarters in Germany.

The number of Buddhist journals in the West is amazing. In practically every country, at one time or another, one or more magazines appeared which were published by Buddhist groups. There is one also in Brazil, the *Budista do Brasil*, and smaller countries like Belgium, which published *Le Sentier*, will not be outdone by the larger ones like Germany, England and the United States in being at least represented in the publishing field.

In the nature of the western Buddhist groups, which are loose at best, most of these journals have proven ephemeral. Yet there are some that have maintained themselves and seem well established. We mention only *The Middle Way*, an English quarterly; *La Pensée Bouddhique*, published in France; *Die Einsicht*, a Swiss magazine; *Yāna*, a journal for "primitive" Buddhism (Altbuddhismus) and religious culture with articles also in English translation, published in Germany; and *The Golden Lotus*, still in mimeograph form, appearing in the United States. In the United

States and in Hawaii, by the way, several Buddhist journals are published, but they are in the main organs of Young Buddhist organizations and contain mostly social news, such as *Busshin*, *The Bussei Review*, *The Y.B.A. Times*, and others. *Trī-ratna*, published in Fresno, California, ceased publication like many other magazines in that class. As a curiosity among Buddhist journals of the popular type there should be mentioned *La Budha Lumo*, written in Esperanto. *The Maha Bodhi*, the monthly journal of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, is read widely and has appeared in other vernaculars.

Some of the earlier European Buddhist journals, particularly the German ones like *Der Buddhist*, which was the first European Buddhist review, *Die Buddhistische Welt*, *Die Brockensammlung* (a journal for applied Buddhism), generally appealed to the intellectuals. They either did not offer enough to satisfy scholarly demands or were not general enough for the layman.

A similar situation is met in the case of the societies of which these journals were organs. Buddhist societies and groups are encountered in almost every country. To mention only a few: England has its Buddhist Society and the Buddhist Vihāra Society; France, *Les Amis du Bouddhisme*; Germany, the Deutsche Buddhistische Gesellschaft and the Altbuddhistisches Haus; the Netherlands have their Buddhist Association, and so have Belgium, Finland, Italy, Switzerland, Hungary, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Each temple, like those in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Berkely, Sebastopol, Denver, Chicago, New York and Honolulu has its own organization, mostly social in character, but there are other Buddhist societies in the United States which have no regular meeting place. They hire halls or meet at the residences of members. One such group, the Washington Friends of Buddhism Society, for instance, meets at the embassies of different Buddhistic countries, such as the Royal Thai Embassy and the Embassies of India, Ceylon, Japan and so forth. At Visākha Pūjā, the meetings of this Society are particularly colorful, as

Mahāyāna priests from Tibet, Mongolia and Japan will officiate alongside Hīnayāna representatives and listen to addresses by attachés of various Buddhist countries and their Ambassadors.

The libraries of colleges and universities are usually well-stocked with books on Buddhism and there is hardly a public library in the United States, however small, which might not satisfy the basic requirements of one wishing to acquaint himself with Buddhism. In this respect the libraries in many countries of the East are often sadly deficient even though they may have Buddhism as a living religion.

Whoever in the West (that is, Europe or America) wishes to study Buddhism has excellent opportunities at all metropoleis and university centers. The academic knowledge which he is able to accumulate there would then only need to be supplemented by a visit to the Buddhist countries of the East for background and living contacts with the people.

Since 1882 the Pāli Text Society of London has been active publishing a journal and, since 1883, it has been editing all Canonical Buddhist works and most post-canonical ones in transcribed Pāli and translating a considerable number. Since 1895 the *Sacred Books of the Buddhists* have also been published in England. Beginning in 1901 the *Bibliotheca Buddhica* was published in pre-Soviet Russia, Germany came out with a *Zeitschrift für Buddhismus und Verwandte Gebiete* as well as a series called *Materialien zur Kunde des Buddhismus* which was issued at Heidelberg. At Paris a series was started called *Buddhica*, divided into *Mémoires* and *Documents*. Belgium published *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*. Practically all the other famous series dealing with Orientalia such as the *Sacred Books of the East* and all the journals for the Orientalists like the *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, etc., carry much material that is of Buddhist interest. Great dictionaries, like the now obsolete Childers *Dictionary of the Pāli Language*, or the *Pāli-English Dictionary* of the Pāli Text Society and the *Pāli*

Concordance now being compiled, are most valuable aids to the scholar. A *Buddhist Dictionary* is now in preparation, and scholars from many countries are working on the UNESCO-assisted *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, edited by G.P. Malalasekera and published in Ceylon.

To judge by the published writings of those who are leaders in Neo-Buddhism, I should say first of all that it is the personality, the figure of the Buddha himself who exerts a tremendous fascination upon the educated, liberal Westerner. The story of his life is full of compassion for suffering mankind when, as a *rāja* or king, he could have enjoyed life in his palace, where, if moved at all by the beggar, the diseased and the aged without the gate he needed only to send his exchequer and his physician to relieve the immediate suffering by alms and medical treatment. He put searching for the remedy that would benefit all suffering humanity above all else. Every move of his, his leaving home, the backward glance at his loving wife, the child he doted on, his horse Kaṇṭhaka dying of grief, sending his servant back home with his royal robes—all this is very human. The search for deliverance is so true to life, the solution so grand, yet simple, that a child may understand it. But what moves the Western heart most, and what should inspire all teachers small and great, is that having reached salvation, the very end of the journey for which, according to the legends, he had prepared himself in numerous incarnations, he remembered that he had undergone the search not for himself, but for mankind. He relinquished *nirvāṇa* to preach his insight so all men might benefit thereby. Buddhists rightly celebrate his *mahāparinirvāṇa* at the end of his earthly journey as the greatest event in tribute to a perfect person. It is thus the power of his personality that most greatly attracts the Westerner.

Next comes, and Hermann Beckh made this observation well, the aesthetic element in Buddhism. The immense stimulus to art which Buddhism has given throughout the Orient is a source of inspiration to the connoisseur as much as to the educated layman who is deeply touched by the aesthetic values so profusely created, in the midst of which stands the Buddha again with his ethereal smile.

We have purposely not spoken of the influence which Buddhist art has had on the western world because that is a large chapter in itself. Buddhist art is by no means confined to the representations of the Buddha, his activities, his previous lives in the Jātakas or yet other scenes that are Buddha-centric. Holding to such a view would be extremely superficial. Buddhist art, rather, is all that which has been permeated by the spirit of Buddhism, by its symbology, by its outlook upon life and all its forms, by its philosophy. All Chinese and Japanese art, for instance, which has the element of *dhyāna*, *ch'an*, or *zen*, that is, meditation in it is intrinsically related to Buddhism. And if such products have had an influence on western art—and they have had it—we can speak of an influence of Buddhism on the West with even greater *tiefen psychologischer* force than if it were a mere matter of copying this or that form or imitating a certain motif. Because in such a case the very essence and spirit has passed from East to West. A mere descriptive and comparative treatment of the theme without philosophical and metaphysical insight would result in little that is useful for a deeper understanding of how values are passed on between cultures.

But chief among the factors that have allowed Buddhism to gain the deepest respect in the West is the Eightfold Noble Path itself, which teaches liberation as a breaking of chains each one of us has forged, for which we need not make others responsible. Living a perfect life of moral endeavor, pursuing right livelihood and objectives, not harming others in deed or word, and practicing meditation is a good way of life. There is a kind of quiet strength in this appeal to the individual man who can bring about his own salvation. Well has it been called the Noble Path.

In this scientific age, the approach the Buddha used is particularly appreciated. Let each test the verity of the statements by his own experience, making use of logic and natural laws. The ethics of Buddhism are not authoritarian, they are based on self-knowledge and self-operative causality against which no man will act wisely.

Above all, what Westerners feel attracted to is akin to the doctrine of love they know so well from Christianity, but which takes the form of infinite compassion in Buddhism, from which feeling no man or animal is excluded. The historic records of Buddhism on this which are being studied more and more, help to earn for it even greater respect in the West.

And, finally, there is the tolerance which Buddhists profess and practice and which to many, along with other virtues already mentioned, seems particularly applicable in a world where the lack of it has led and is threatening to lead to conflict and misery.

It has often been said that the work of the scholar is apart from the stream of life, that he views his field objectively, unemotionally. This certainly needs qualification. We have treated the scholar of Buddhism in this brief survey together with his products in texts, translations, expositions and interpretations, as integrated in the general picture of "Buddhism in the West," or the "Buddhist impact on the West," because it is he and his work which make articulate the whole endeavor and interest of the West in Buddhism. Almost timidly the scholar avoids being drawn into societies and activities which are controlled largely by sentiment and which openly profess their preferences, leanings, debts. But in the privacy of his study he displays as much, if not more, feeling and appreciation of his subject matter which urges him on to burn the midnight oil and in labor produce or reproduce the truth, which is his avowed design. His devotion to his cause really knows no bounds. In fact he is possessed of his subject—"influenced," if you like—even more than many another layman.

The impact of Buddhism on the West has been only briefly characterized here. In reviewing the points made it will appear that the West has been selective in what it took and is willing to take from Buddhism. Not all the Buddhist doctrines and practices will ever be embraced, that much is certain. But retroactively, Buddhism as it is now practiced with great variations in different countries of the East may learn from its missionary endeavor

which it is unfolding once again, inspired by the portents of the year 2500 of the Buddhist Era, that the West has values also and in the pooling of the resources of each may lie salvation for us all.

Perhaps, the fact that the West is taking such a deep interest yet is not weighed down by traditions making for factions, schisms, sects and differences which have devided Buddhism into Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna and other *yānas*, is doing something for Buddhism itself by helping the East which is beginning to see the life-sapping, useless emphasis on doctrinal differences, to a more synthetic rather than an analytical view of Buddhism.

As to the fear expressed by some that Buddhism threatens other established religions and convictions, it must be said that fear exhibits an internal weakness. Whatever is established in truth may be assailed yet never be vanquished. To assail and to conquer, however, is not in the vocabulary of Buddhism rightly understood. Its central concepts are derived from $\sqrt{budh}$, to wake, awake, understand, such as Buddha ("The Enlightened One"), *bodhi* ("enlightenment"), *buddhi* ("reason," "intellect"), Bodhisattva ("one perfect in wisdom"). Buddhism's only admonition is that which Buddha gave to his disciples when he passed away: "Search diligently for yourselves." And if that search should guide a man away from what the answers of traditional Buddhism are, the Buddhist is silent, has no defence, is in no mood to recover "lost souls," but merely expounds anew the words of the compassionate Buddha in the hope that the individual and, through him, society may realize wherein the remedy for all suffering lies, and rests his case.