THE JEWEL IN THE LOTUS

"The Temptation of the Buddha"- Detail of stone carving from the exterior of the Yellow Temple, Peiping.

The Jewel in the Lotus

AN OUTLINE OF
PRESENT DAY BUDDHISM IN CHINA

by

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Dedicated to

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

with respect

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PREFACE

THERE IS probably no Englishman living with greater knowledge of Chinese Buddhism to-day than John Blofeld. He spent most of the war under the ægis of the British Embassy at Chungking, and with his intimate knowledge of all things Chinese was able to render great service to the people of China. He is now working to restore the Chinese universities in the cities from which the Japanese invasion drove them westward to the hills, and in the course of his travels and numerous contacts with the leaders of Buddhist thought be acquired unique knowledge of the religions and philosophic trends in China to-day. In the course of my own recent visit to China I made independent enquiries about Chinese Buddhism, and all that I learned corroborated the conclusions reached by the far more profound enquiry of Mr. Blofeld.

There is, to my knowledge, no work in print which covers the present ground. R. F. Johnston's *Buddhist China* is now unobtainable, and most of the modern books written by visiting journalists are solely concerned with Chinese politics and economics. The time is therefore ripe for a new work on Chinese Buddhism, well-informed, realist in outlook, and frank in expression, and *The Jewel in the Lotus* seems to blend all these requirements into a book which should in time become a classic of its period.

The original manuscript included as an Appendix a translation of a treatise of the Ch'an (Japanese, Zen) School by the monk Hui Hai of the T'ang Dynasty. The inclusion of this one scripture, however, in a general work on Chinese Buddhism seemed to unbalance the book as

a whole, and it has therefore been published separately by the same publishers under the title of *The Path to Sudden Attainment*.

CHRISTMAS HUMPHREYS,
President of The Buddhist Society, London.

London,
May, 1947.

INTRODUCTION

THERE IS a general tendency in the world to-day for the people of one country to wish for a closer understanding of the life and thought of the peoples of other countries. Indeed, there is a growing realisation that world peace itself is largely dependent on such mutual understanding, but whereas the study of a civilisation having a common origin with our own in Greece and Rome is comparatively easy, it is much harder to understand those civilisations which, until recently, have progressed on quite independent lines. The highly developed cultures which exist in the world at the present time may be broadly divided into those which owe their inspiration to Western, Chinese, Hindu and Moslem origins. Of these, owing to the progress of modern science, the first has become by far the most influential, but there are still many countries which owe much to China for their cultural development. These include Japan, Korea, Annam and, to a lesser extent, Mongolia, Thibet, and some of the countries of South-east Asia.

Chinese civilisation, as it was before the recent far-reaching changes resulting from the impact of the West, was a harmonious whole, consisting of a number of closely interwoven strands, not the least of which was Buddhism. Though the number of Chinese who are professing Buddhists is much smaller than is generally supposed in the West, Buddhism has undoubtedly had a profound influence on the development of Chinese civilisation for more than a thousand years, and its imprint can be clearly seen on the literature, art and philosophy of the country. Much of the subject-matter of Chinese painting and

poetry is directly attributable to its influence, while Chinese sculpture is almost entirely a product of Buddhist imaginativeness. In the realm of philosophy and metaphysics Buddhism has permeated the minds of Chinese thinkers to such an extent that even the arguments of those who sought to combat its growth in China are based upon a system of logic largely acquired from the study of translations of Buddhist works. Moreover, the Chinese have a great capacity for absorbing ideas and institutions from foreign countries, and so moulding them that they begin to take on specifically Chinese characteristics. This was particularly so with Chinese Buddhism, which as early as the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907) already appeared in a distinctly native garb and could no longer be looked upon as a purely foreign importation. An analogy may be found in the development of the Catholic Church, which, though owing its inspiration to Hebrew sources, has incorporated many ideas which had their origin in Roman culture.

To-day, Buddhism can hardly be considered a great religious force in China, but its influence continues to be by no means negligible and is manifested in the actions and thoughts of millions of people who would hesitate to describe themselves as Buddhists. Just as modern European civilisation would be largely incomprehensible to one who, even though he knew something of its Greek and Roman origin, was entirely unacquainted with the influence which Hebrew thought has exercised upon it through Christianity, so the understanding and appreciation of Chinese civilisation demand some knowledge of Buddhism, as well as of the native genius exemplified in the works of the Confucian and Taoïst philosophers.

A considerable volume of literature on the subject of Buddhism exists in several Western languages, but it

deals for the most part with that branch of the religion known as the Theravāda or Hīnayāna School, which is prevalent in South-east Asia. The work which has been done on Mahāyāna Buddhism, prevalent in China, Japan, Thibet, Mongolia, Korea and Annam, is far from adequate, though in recent years increasing attention has been paid to it, especially to the Buddhism of Japan and Thibet. Books on Chinese Buddhism are remarkably few in number and, for the most part, somewhat out of date. The purpose of the present volume is to give an outline of Buddhism as practised in China to-day, though it has been impossible to avoid devoting a considerable proportion of the whole to the historical aspects of the religion, in order that it may be seen in its true perspective and in relationship to the original teaching of Gautama Buddha.

The division of the book into two parts has been made with a view to separating the more general matter from the technical. It is hoped that readers who find the latter somewhat arid may, nevertheless, derive pleasure from Part I and, possibly, from Chapters XV and XVI as well. I have placed the chapter on Mahāyāna Buddhism in Part I, despite its technical nature, because it follows on directly from Chapter II and includes a brief account of the introduction of Buddhism into China.

If the eye of any distinguished orientalist should happen to light upon these pages, he will no doubt find that they leave much to be desired, but if they succeed in interesting some readers to the extent of making them wish to pursue the subject further, or if they are deemed to throw some light on one important aspect of Chinese civilisation, their object will have been achieved.

I should like to record my gratitude to the Teacher of Law, Wei Huan (also known as the Bhikṣu Āsaji), and to Professor Fang Chung of the National Wuhan University,

for their help in clarifying certain difficult passages in the original Chinese works that I have consulted during the preparation of this book.

JOHN BLOFELD.

Peiping, 1947.

PART ONE

CHAPTER I

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

THE CHINESE as a whole are a moral but not religiously minded people. Not only does religion, in the strict sense of the word, not play a major part in their lives, as it does with Mongols and Indians, for example, but they do not show even that passive respect for religious institutions which is so common in the West, where many people who take little active part in religious matters still retain the respect for Christianity that was instilled into them as children. A tendency towards mysticism exhibited in Chinese art and poetry often misleads people into thinking that the Chinese are more interested in religion than is actually the case; but there have, of course, always been devout persons among them, and Chinese literature contains a high proportion of ethical and metaphysical works.

Up to the fall of the Ch'ing (Manchu) Dynasty in 1911, the official religion of China was Confucianism, in as far as it can be considered a religion rather than an ethical system blended with ancestor worship. Educated Confucianists might at the same time be Buddhists or Taoists, or both. Some paid equal honour to the deities and main principles of all three religions, while many were inclined to a form of agnosticism which, however, permitted them to remain good Confucianists in the sense that they adopted the Confucian ethical code. They could quote the classics by heart, paid due respect to their ancestors, and performed the various public ceremonies

required of them as officials and literati. Whether they believed in the spiritual valu of these ceremonials or not, they considered their performance, together with the study of the classics, constituted the bonds which held the Empire together. As regards the supernatural, they were less concerned with the existence or nature of God than with the spitits of their ancestors and that harmony between Heaven and Earth which was symbolised or even, as they supposed, brought about by the annual sacrifices of the Emperor, Son of Heaven and Supreme Lord of All Below. If they had been asked to define "Heaven," their answers would probably have been vague. Moreover, there was no Confucian priesthood, though the Emperor and officials may be said to have served upon ceremonial occasions as high priest and priests respectively.

The common people paid homage to the sages and deities of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, as well as to a host of deities of less august antecedents, but seldom with the religious fervour of the Hindu, Moslem or devout Christian. If they were sick or if their relations died, they called in the priests of one or more religions; they worshipped the local earth gods to obtain good harvests and burnt incense in their homes to the various spirits of Heaven and Earth, but seldom taking them very seriously. The spirits of their ancestors were the only spiritual beings who laid serious claims on their devotion. Islam and Christianity also had their adherents, both among the scholars and the common people, but these were of little importance to the nation as a whole, except in those border regions where Islam was strong among the non-Chinese population.

To-day, the position is much the same among the common people. The percentage of Christians is somewhat higher, and the younger people who have spent a year or so in a state primary school have, in many cases,

abandoned any form of religion, but the average farmer maintains the same jumble of religious half-beliefs.

Among the educated classes much more remarkable changes have taken place. The Republic has swept away the whole of the formal fabric of Confucianism, discontinued the state ceremonies and vastly curtailed the importance of the Confucian classics in the curricula of the schools, while still maintaining that Confucius was the greatest sage of all time. Christianity has made some headway among people who have received a modern education, but it is usually of a luke-warm non-doctrinaire variety. Politics, humanism and the Three People's Principles of Dr. Sun Yat Sen command far more attention than any form of religion, and the attitude of many modern Chinese may be summed up in the injunction: "Honour Confucius, practice the teachings of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, and apply yourself to the study of engineering or political science, in order that you may become a useful citizen." It cannot be too strongly emphasised that religion, in the sense generally understood in the West, has played and does play much less part in China than in almost any other country. The following illustration will serve to show how little importance is attached to it.

Towards the end of 1943 a Chinese Goodwill Mission composed of five members and a secretary was sent to England. Upon entering each of the countries they passed *en route*, they had, like all war-time travellers, to fill up forms giving brief particulars about themselves. At first all except the one Christian member of the party left blanks in the spaces provided for religion, but later they became a little self-conscious about this and thought that something more was expected of such eminent representatives of their country, so they began writing "Confucian."

But if religion as such has played less part in China than elsewhere, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism have, nevertheless, been important influences in the development of the Chinese character and attitude to life. The first is better described as a system of ethics and political philosophy than as a religion, though the importance attached by it to sacrificing to the spirits of departed ancestors and the imperial sacrifices to Heaven on behalf of the whole empire are often held to justify the application of the word "religion" to it. It is mainly concerned, however, with the proper regulation of the relationships between rulers and ruled, parents and children, husbands and wives, seniors and juniors, friend and friend. By the exercise of certain virtues, such as loving-kindness, righteousness, sincerity, loyalty, propriety, etc., it was believed that human beings could be brought to live in perfect harmony with their fellows, and to maintain this harmony by a proper observation of their duties towards superiors, equals and inferiors, whether in age or position.

Taoism, like Confucianism, is entirely an indigenous Chinese product. This religion takes its name from the untranslatable word *Tao*, which figures largely in the works of the philosophers Lao-tzû and Chuang-tzû. Various attempts at translation include "The Way," "Heaven," "The Logos," "The Eternal Principle," "Nature," and so on, but in the words of Lao-tzû, "The Tao which can be defined is not the eternal Tao." It is the principle which underlies all forms and appearances and activates them. According to the teaching of the Taoist sages, one should live in conformity with the workings of the Tao and thus achieve a sense of perfect tranquility and harmony with one's surroundings. Everything artificial is directly contrary to the Tao, and most human misfortunes can be traced to a refusal to live in

accordance with our inmost nature, in which the Tao manifests itself. During the two thousand five hundred years which have elapsed since the days of Lao-tzû, however, this school of mysticism has suffered many changes for the worse and become degraded to a system of superstitious practices and magic. Nevertheless, its contributions to Chinese culture have been considerable and it served, in some respects, to prepare the minds of the Chinese for the advent of Buddhism.

Buddhism, though originally a foreign religion which found its way into China round about the first century A.D., later became an integral part of Chinese civilisation and exchanged many of its foreign characteristics for native ones. The particular form of Buddhism adopted by the Chinese was that of the Mahāyāna School, which developed in Northern India and which is based on Sanskrit texts. The other great branch, Hīnayāna, based on Pali texts, which has exerted so much influence on the countries of South-eastern Asia, never obtained a real foothold in China.

It is very difficult, indeed impossible to estimate how many Buddhists there are in China at the present time. The *China Year Book* for 1944 gives the following figures, without explaining how they were arrived at: Monks and nuns, 738,000; laymen, 3,690,000; temples, 267,000; but it is often difficult to decide whether a man should be classified as a Buddhist or not. The average educated man, unless he happens to be a Christian or a Moslem, is, as we have seen, hard put to it to say to which religion he belongs, though he is often reluctant to admit to atheism or agnosticism. He may say vaguely that he is a Confucian or a Buddhist, while his less educated countrymen usually call themselves Buddhists (if they think about it at all) without having the remotest

conception of what Buddhism is, apart from the ceremonies performed in times of illness and death.

There are, however, two groups of people who can properly be called Buddhists—the monks and nuns who leave their homes to follow the religious life and the *chü-shih*, or laymen, who study and practice Buddhism as far as the cares and ties of family life permit.

Once Buddhism was firmly established in China, it both influenced and was influenced by Confucianism and Taoism, especially the latter, and took on an increasingly Chinese complexion. Just as in the past the Chinese have invariably moulded their conquerors to their own pattern and ultimately absorbed them, so they have moulded and absorbed such foreign ideas as have continued to affect them over long periods. It is probable that Christianity would have undergone similar changes had it not maintained strong connections with the outside world. Indeed, the Christianity of the T'aip'ing rebels in the middle of the last century, whose leader gave out that he was the brother of Christ, had already taken on a distinctly Chinese garb. The New Life Movement, product of Methodism and Confucianism, is a more recent example.

Though Buddhism as a religion is finding increasingly less followers among the Chinese, it has had a profound influence on Chinese art and thought as a whole, an influence which will remain even if the religion perishes. No visitor to China can fail to be impressed by the lovely Buddhist sculptures of the Wei (A.D. 386-550) and succeeding dynasties, by the gentle contemplative expressions on the faces of the principal statues in the Buddhist temples, and, above all, by the sweet compassion depicted on the face of Kuan Yin P'u-sa (Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva), known to foreigners as the Goddess of Mercy, whose statue stands in so many shrines, clad in flowing

Hindu draperies and carrying a flask of sweet dew (*kan lu*) or a child in her hands. Chinese poetry and painting show endless examples of Buddhist influence, with its spirit of sweet resignation, its feeling of the impermanence of worldly form and its insistence on the oneness of life, the identity of the mountain and the grain of sand, the human being and the grasshopper. Even the philosophers of the Sung Dynasty (A.D. 960-1280), who opposed Buddhism so firmly, unconsciously used Buddhist logic to support their arguments. Moreover, the Chinese, who usually appears so materialist and practical in his dealings with others, sometimes exhibits a strange, unexpected side to his character which makes his actions seem mutually contradictory. He may disagree with you if you tell him that this is due to Buddhist influence, but he has his moments of resignation when he feels the overwhelming power of fate (*karma*). He often laughs at his failures and misfortunes because, deep down within him, he realises the futility of individual ambitions and the transitoriness of human pleasures and of life itself. The Heart Sūtra (Smaller Prajñā-pāramitā Hridaya Sūtra) says: "Form is not different from void, nor void from form." A strong though often unexpressed belief in this doctrine may be responsible for many actions and words which seem out of keeping with his usual character. The smiles with which he greets news of sorrow or disaster are not due to lack of feeling, but to his unconscious realisation of the futility of individuals pitting themselves against the great cosmic laws. He smiles as a man would smile at the idea of an individual trying to overthrow a mountain with his bare hands. This realisation is the heritage of centuries of Buddhist influence.

The Buddhist doctrine of transmigration, which is of Hindu origin, has also had a profound effect in China and sunk so deeply into the minds of the people as to become

one of the pillars of the main structure of Chinese morality. The majority of Chinese, apart from some of those who have received a modern education along Western lines, still subscribe to this doctrine and believe that their future state will be conditioned by their thoughts, words and actions in this life.

The Republic of China guarantees freedom of religion to all its subjects, and, indeed, they are never directly persecuted on religious grounds by the State. The Chinese have always been a tolerant people, as exemplified by the extraordinary capacity of the individual to subscribe to more than one religion at the same time. Religious persecutions have been much rarer in China than in other countries, though they have taken place from time to time for political reasons. Many Chinese families whose members profess different religions live together in easy tolerance. A common example is that of a family with a vaguely Confucian and semi-agnostic father, a devout Buddhist mother (Buddhism has more followers among Chinese women than men), two or three children who have never given a thought to religion, and, perhaps, one son or daughter who was brought up in a mission school, baptised, and who is a Christian by practice and belief. Such families get on extremely well together and religious quarrels seldom arise. The father's attitude would probably be that his wife was superstitious as most women are, that his Christian child had been influenced by foreigners at an early age and would soon grow out of his beliefs, and that the present generation as a whole were being educated in a new-fangled way and could not be expected to appreciate the wisdom of the Master or devote much time to the study of the classics. To stand out against inevitable change would be troublesome and undignified. The mother would think it a pity that her men-folk failed to share her faith, but obviously

in this incarnation they had not been endowed with Buddha-root and it would be of no use to argue with them, especially as their education was superior to her own. The agnostic children would think their parents old-fashioned and the Christian child would consider it bad taste to argue with his elders. Hence harmony would be maintained and, if anyone wanted to pray for the others, he would be welcome to do so in private. From time to time one member of the family might make an attempt to convert the others, but never in a way which would lead to unpleasantness.

In spite of this spirit of general tolerance, however, Buddhism has received some serious setbacks in recent years. During the period of warlordism, which intervened between the establishment of the Republic in 1911 and the triumph of the Kuomintang* in 1927, and during the divisions which continued even after this date, the Christian General, Fêng Yü Hsiang, in the North, and the Moslem General, Pai Chung Hsi, in the South, burnt down a number of Buddhist temples, melted images, destroyed holy books and drove out the monks from the monasteries. The mere fact that they were Christian and Moslem respectively made them less tolerant than most of their fellow-countrymen brought up in the orthodox Chinese tradition. It is interesting to note, however, that General Fêng recently employed a Buddhist monk to teach him English, and that both he and General Pai are patrons of an association formed in Chungking to promote the growth and spread of all religions. Such an association is less surprising in China than elsewhere. General Wu Pei Fu, sometimes called the only honest warlord, helped to establish a cult in Peiping which conducted the worship of Confucius, Gautama Buddha, Lao-tzû, Jesus and Mohammed at the same altar.

*Nationalist Party.

The present Head of the Chinese State, President Chiang Kai Shek, is a Christian. Other highly placed persons include Christians, Buddhists, Moslems, Confucian-agnostics and plain agnostics among their number, but the tendency in the State schools is to ridicule all forms of religion. In the case of Buddhism, the text-books explain that Gautama Buddha (Shihchia-moni Fu) was a great Indian sage, but that the Buddhist religion has become a hotch-potch of ignorant superstition. Though this is true of Buddhism as practised by the uneducated masses, it seems a pity that mention is seldom made in popular text-books of Buddhist ethics and metaphysics, and that this great philosophical system is judged by its crudest and most degraded forms. The result of this type of education is to increase the natural tendency of the Chinese towards agnosticism, but whereas Confucian-agnosticism went hand in hand with a high code of ethics and personal morals, modern agnosticism has no guide to offer as to individual conduct. Political theories now excite more interest than religion, as is only natural in the modern world, but while emphasis is given to the duty of the citizen to the State, no guidance is provided for individual conduct in daily life. This is contrary to the Confucian theory that the rectification of the State depends on that of the family and that of the family upon the individual.

In recent years this failing has been recognised and the New Life Movement formed to take the place of the old Confucian morality. It has a faint Confucian tinge and a strong Methodist-cum-Y.M.C.A. spirit, but there is little doubt that it is a failure. The Chinese are, in general, an abstemious race, but they attach great value to individuality and to personal freedom of a kind which leaves them free to indulge themselves if they wish. The New Life Movement's insistence on certain high-sounding

virtues is not unattractive to them, but its preachings against smoking, drinking, dancing, the use of rouge, permanent waves, etc., make it obnoxious even to those people who do not normally care for such things, because they feel that these are matters best left to the discretion of the individual.

Another factor which has contributed to the decline of Buddhism in recent years is an economic one. In countries such as Ceylon, Burma, Siam, etc., where Buddhism is the religion of the majority the monks, or *bhikkhus*, are supported by voluntary contributions from the laity, but in China they are forced to depend largely on other means of support. Most of the monasteries are, or were, considerable land-owners, and the monks add to their income by taking money for ceremonies performed for the sick or the spirits of the departed. The number of such ceremonies is decreasing in proportion to the decrease in the number of pious Buddhist laymen, and the lands are being gradually confiscated by the provincial governments. Even the buildings are taken over as schools, hospitals or government offices, and the monks are often driven out to shift for themselves as best they can. So far, devout Buddhists have been unable to prevail much against this form of indirect government persecution, though efforts have been made with some measure of success. Some monasteries, for example, appoint abbots from among those who are on good terms with the local officials rather than from among those who are distinguished for their piety and learning. I remember asking the Reverend Receiver of Guests in a monastery built at the peak of a holy mountain in Central China whether I might pay my respects to the abbot and discuss some aspects of Buddhist philosophy with him. His reverence laughed and said: "It's not worth while. The abbot knows little about philosophy. He was

recently ordained and appointed abbot because of his connection with the local officials.'' The abbot of the chief temple on an even more famous mountain in Western China is reputed to be an opium smoker and to have several concubines, but though he is not respected by pious Buddhists, he serves a useful purpose on account of his friendship with several powerful persons, whose help he has enlisted in preventing any encroachments by the provincial government or military authorities on the temple property.

The Venerable T'ai Hsü is, perhaps, the best-known monk in China to-day.* He has done more than anyone to defend the cause of Buddhism in his country, and for this reason is sometimes described as a ''political monk.'' When the authorities began to confiscate the temples and monasteries on the grounds that they served no useful purpose and that the buildings were needed for schools, he countered by opening several Buddhist schools in the monasteries himself, thus securing them from confiscation. Some of his disciples are highly educated in the modern as well as the Buddhistic sense, and speak one or more foreign languages. One of them has even learnt to be a pilot. Of course, T'ai Hsü has been criticised by some of the more orthodox Chinese Buddhists, but he has understood the necessity of moving with the times. It remains to be seen whether he and his followers can do this without departing from the fundamentals of the religion. T'ai Hsü is also well-known for his scholarship and for his comparative study of the origin and teachings of the various Buddhist sects. Another greatly respected monk is the Venerable Hsü Yün, who lives normally in the Nan Hua Monastery in the north of Kuangtung, where the body of the Sixth Patriarch of the Ch'an (Dhyāna) Sect has been preserved for well over a thousand years. His disciples can be found in all parts of the

*He has died since this was written.

country and his advice is sought by the highest in the land, including the Christian head of the State.

The most potent cause of the decay of Buddhism in China is the decline in the morals and learning of the monks. There was a time when no one could "leave home," *i.e.*, become a monk, without the Emperor's permission, accorded on the advice of high officials who interviewed all applicants for the monastic life. To-day anyone can become a monk. The Order includes all sorts of people, many of them uneducated, such as those who prefer the security of monastic life to the effort of earning a living for themselves, peasants who come to the temple as children in search of a livelihood, deserters from the army, runaway criminals, and only comparatively few who wish to renounce the world on moral or religious grounds.

The decline in the intellectual standard of the monks and nuns may also be attributed to the powerful influence of the Ch'an (Dhyāna) Sect, which postulates that all knowledge gained from external sources is harmful in that it does not leave the mind free to grasp the "intuitive knowledge" which can only be obtained through the practice of meditation. This teaching, wrongly applied or wrongly understood, naturally produces undesirable results so far as the education of young novices is concerned.

Whatever the causes, it is a fact that the standard of learning in the temples is now so low that the majority of the monks repeat the sūtras* without understanding anything of their meaning. There are, of course, many exceptions, but the general ignorance and, in some cases, moral depravity of the monks have caused the whole order to fall into disrepute.

*Buddhists use the word *sūtra* to mean books containing the recorded teaching of Gautama Buddha.

However, during the last thirty years, efforts have been made to inject new life into Buddhism by encouraging a more scientific study of its doctrines, especially by T'ai Hsü and his followers. The main centres of this movement up to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese hostilities in 1937 were:

1. The Chinese Buddhist Society, at Nanking, established by T'ai Hsü.
2. The Chinese Buddhist College at Nanking, established by Mr. Ouyang Chin-wu.
3. The Sanshih Buddhist Association, established at Peiping by Mr. Han Tê-tsing.
4. The Wuchang Buddhist Institute at Wuchang, established by T'ai Hsü.
5. The Minnan Buddhist Institute at Amoy, established by T'ai Hsü.
6. The Sino-Thibetan Buddhist College near Chungking, established by T'ai Hsü.

After the outbreak of war the Chinese Buddhist Institute moved to Chungking and the Buddhist College to Chiangchin, near Chungking, while the Sanshih Association and the Wuchang and Minnan Institutes closed down. T'ai Hsü then made his headquarters at the Sino-Thibetan College. It is expected that all these institutions will move back to their original homes or reopen before long, but that the Venerable T'ai Hsü will centre his activities on Sian.

CHAPTER II

A SUMMARY OF THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE BUDDHIST RELIGION

As THIS book deals with Chinese Buddhism, particularly as it is at the present day, it is not proposed to make a detailed study of the history of Buddhism prior to its entry into China, but the recapitulation of some of the salient facts of the life of Gautama Buddha, its founder, and the early development of the religion in India, will serve as a brief introduction to the discussion of the doctrines of the Mahāyāna School which follows.

The exact years during which Gautama Buddha lived are the subject of a certain amount of controversy, but it is safe to say that he was born about the middle of the sixth century B.C., and that he died (or entered Nirvāṇa) within fifteen or twenty years after the turn of the century, this being, according to orthodox Buddhists, the last of some five hundred reincarnations in all of which he was proceeding nearer and nearer to the goal of Enlightenment. His father, King Śuddhodana, was the ruler of the small state of Kapilavastu in Northern India, and his mother, Queen Māyā, according to tradition, bore him painlessly from her right side, ten months from the time at which he entered her womb, after descending from the Tuṣita Heaven riding on a white elephant. Needless to say, this picturesque tradition is not taken very seriously by the Buddhist scholars who ponder on the meaning of the voidness of phenomena and the subtleties of that ultimate reality which can neither be described as existing nor not existing.

Gautama Buddha is referred to by many names. It appears that Gautama was the name of his clan, of which the Śākyas were a branch. He is therefore often called Śākyamuni, the Sage of the Śākyas. The Chinese usually prefer to use this name, which has become modified by certain linguistic changes to Shihchiamoni. Siddhārtha was his personal name and Buddha (called Fu in Chinese) his title, meaning the Enlightened One. In speaking of himself he often used the word Tathāgata (Chinese Julai), meaning "He-Who-Has-Come." At the age of sixteen he was married to the lady Yaśodharā, who bore him a son known as Rāhula (The Fetter). For some years he lived with them in a palace specially constructed by his father and, as far as possible, cut off from a knowledge of the world outside. Suddenly, however, he renounced this pleasant life and escaped to the forest to become a hermit, leaving his wife and child behind. The young man gazing sorrowfully at the features of his sleeping wife and child, when on the point of leaving, has formed the theme of many pictures by Buddhist artists, and is taken to symbolise the renunciation of earthly ties.

The reason for his renunciation was that the prince, from whom all knowledge of the sufferings of humanity had been carefully hidden, at last became aware that all beings are subject to disease, decay and death, and that life is bound up with suffering. This knowledge impelled him to go forth seeking for a way to overcome suffering, but, according to tradition, seven years passed before, at the age of thirty-five, he came to the full realisation of the nature of existence and the means whereby ultimate peace can be obtained. Upon leaving home, he first attached himself to some Hindu ascetics, and later, finding that their teaching did not give him what he desired to find, went off alone and practised an extreme form of asceticism, which almost cost him his life but failed to lead him any

nearer his goal. At last, after seven years of wandering and fruitless effort, he fell into deep meditation under a tree, during the course of which he became fully Enlightened and thus became known to his contemporaries and to posterity as a Buddha or Enlightened One.

The nature of his Enlightenment was a mystical one and has been variously described, though it is recognised by Buddhists that words are inadequate to convey its full meaning. It is taken to mean complete understanding of the nature of phenomena and of the reality underlying them. This formed the basis of his teaching, which, according to the Mahāyāna interpretation, was in essence as follows.

All phenomena are transient and lacking in objective reality. They are the result of a process of cause and effect which leads to an endless succession of births and deaths for all those who continue to be deluded by desire, aversion and ignorance. Only by cultivating complete detachment from all the objects of the six senses (including that of cognition) can the chain of life and death be broken and Nirvāṇa, the state wherein there is no birth, decay, death, sorrow or impurity, attained. This Nirvāṇa is synonymous with the reality which underlies all the appearances of form. In this connection, Gautama Buddha pronounced the Four Noble Truths of suffering, the origin of suffering, its cessation and the Noble Eightfold Path leading to its cessation. Accepting the prevalent Hindu doctrine of rebirth and transmigration, he taught that beings pass away and are reborn according to the nature of their thoughts, words and actions. Only by complete detachment can these thoughts, words and actions be deprived of their power to bind a man to the wheel of life and death. The whole universe, therefore, is but a process of becoming followed by destruction and destruction followed by becoming, regulated by the

laws of cause and effect which only cease to function when no attachment or aversion to phenomena arise. All phenomena are thus interdependent, the results of many causes and themselves the causes of future results. If all sentient beings were to achieve perfect detachment, the processes of becoming and destruction would cease and, since all phenomena are but expressions of these processes, they also would disappear. Later Buddhists have often used the phrase "nothing exists," but in the sense that nothing has any independent existence of its own, everything in the universe being mutually interdependent.

After attaining Enlightenment, Gautama Buddha spent seven weeks in the neighbourhood of the tree under the shade of which he had reached it. During this time, he is said to have been tempted by Craving, Hatred and Lust, the three daughters of the Demon King Māra appearing before him in the most seducive forms, and to have been threatened by hosts of terrible demons, but to have remained impervious to seduction or intimidation. After some deliberation and, according to tradition, the intercession of Brahmā at the head of a train of gods, he decided to devote the rest of his life to teaching others that they too might become Enlightened and transmit the doctrine in their turn. To this end he founded the Order of Monks, or *Saṅgha*, for those who were prepared to devote their whole energies to the quest for Enlightenment and the instruction of their fellow-men.

In time, Buddha (The Enlightened One), Dharma (The Doctrine) and Saṅgha (The Order) became known as the Three Jewels. This trinity is daily invoked in all Buddhist countries, the Chinese form of the invocation running thus:

I pay homage to the Buddhas.
May all living beings,
Comprehending the great Truth,
Attain to supreme perfection.

I pay homage to the Dharma.
May all living beings,
Going deep into the scriptures,
Attain wisdom as vast as the sea.

I pay homage to the Saṅgha.
May all living beings,
Obeying the Order,
Proceed without hindrance
To the respectful service of the sacred community.

After the death of its founder, Buddhism continued to develop until it spread throughout the length and breadth of India, this expansion being greatly helped by the Order, which soon became a powerful organisation and which has now been in existence for almost twenty-five hundred years.

During the first few hundred years it appears that several Councils of Elders were held in order to arrive at agreement concerning the principal points of the doctrine and the discipline. Most accounts agree in stating that the first of these was held soon after the death of Gautama Buddha at a place called Rājagriha. It would seem that a second Council was held a hundred years later, during which sharp divergences of opinion between the monks were discussed, but the various accounts differ as to the nature of these divergences. The Emperor Aśoka, who began his reign in 274 B.C. and who became one of the most powerful patrons of Buddhism, is credited by some accounts with having summoned a third Council, but the evidence for this is very conflicting. The Council of Kaniṣka in the first century A.D. may, therefore, have been either the third or the fourth. Though the knowledge which we possess with regard to the matters transacted by these councils is very slender and even the approximate times at which they were held is doubtful, there is no doubt that some such councils were held and

that the necessity for them was due to the fact that, even within the first three hundred years divergences of opinion had become so marked that a number of separate sects had already begun to appear.

By the time that Hinduism, which had continued to exist side by side with Buddhism in India, began to oust the latter from the country of its origin, several other Asiatic countries had already entered the Buddhist fold, many of which have preserved the doctrine to this day.

CHAPTER III

MAHĀYĀNA BUDDHISM

BUDDHISM, LIKE most other religions, is split up into a number of sects. All of these can be grouped under one or other of the two great schools, Mahāyāna (The Greater Vehicle) and Hīnayāna (The Lesser Vehicle). There was formerly another group known as the Middle Vehicle, but this no longer survives. Adherents of the Hīnayāna School prefer to call it Theravāda (The Way of the Elders) because they do not acknowledge the inferiority of their doctrine implied in the Sanskrit word *hīna* (lesser).

The distribution of the two schools to-day is as follows:

Mahāyāna.	China.	Annam.
	Japan.	Several small states lying between India and Thibet.
	Thibet.	Parts of Central Asia.
	Mongolia.	Parts of Siberia.
Hīnayāna.	Ceylon.	Siam.
	Burma.	Cambodia.
	Small communities in Assam, Bengal and Bihar, where there are also scattered communities of Mahāyāna adherents.	

The most westerly Buddhists, with the exception of a very few converts in Europe and America, are the Kalmuk tribes of southern Russia, which migrated from Mongolia, bringing with them something of the Mahāyāna doctrine.

Though Chinese scholars do not altogether neglect the study of Hīnayāna Buddhism, there are scarcely any Chinese who can be described as adherents of that school. A discussion of Chinese Buddhism, therefore, means a

discussion of Mahāyāna Buddhism. It is by no means certain when these two schools began to diverge, but there is evidence that the divergence was apparent by the time of the Council of Kaniṣka in the latter part of the first century A.D. Indeed, it is traditionally claimed by the adherents of Mahāyāna that this Council recognised their doctrines as authentic.

The teachings of the two schools are based on Sanskrit texts in the case of Mahāyāna and Pali in the case of Hīnayāna. Adherents of the latter refuse to recognise the claims of their rival to have preserved the true spirit of the original Buddhist teaching. They adduce considerable evidence, mostly of a historical nature, to prove that this is not so, and until quite recently Western scholars have strongly supported their claims, but this support is no longer as universal as it was a few years ago. There is no doubt that the Pali works are of earlier date than the Sanskrit, and it is probable that all the Pali sūtras (purporting to be recorded discourses of Gautama Buddha) are genuine in the sense that they record what were devoutly believed to be the closest possible approximations to the words which he spoke, but as several generations had already elapsed between the death of Gautama Buddha and the compilation of the Pali canon, there was plenty of room for error. There is no doubt, on the other hand, that many of the Sanskrit texts were original works compiled in imitation of the style of the discourses of the founder of the religion, but purporting to contain the spirit of his teaching. Modern research has not yet fully succeeded in adjudicating the matter, but there is now a body of opinion in favour of the Mahāyāna claim to represent more of the spirit of the original teaching than Hīnayāna.

The traditional view of the Mahāyāna School is that, though the Hīnayāna sūtras may be accepted as genuine,

Gautama Buddha reserved his highest teachings for certain chosen disciples who were capable of appreciating them, and that these teachings were not made public until some five hundred years later, a time which corresponds approximately with that of the Council of Kaniṣka.

The canons of both schools are known as the Tripiṭaka (Three Baskets) and divided into three sections thus:

Chinese	*Sanskrit*	*English*
Ching Tsang	Sūtra Piṭaka	Basket of Discourses
Lü Tsang	Vinaya Piṭaka	Basket of Regulations
Lun Tsang	Abhidharma Piṭaka	Basket of Treatises and Commentaries

Whatever the validity of the rival claims may have been, the Mahāyāna teachings soon prevailed to such an extent that Hīnayāna became largely eclipsed, except in the countries of South Asia, where it continues to this day.

There is some evidence to show that Buddhism was introduced into West China by land and onto the coast of Shantung by sea before the traditional date of its introduction during the reign of Min T'i of the Later Han Dynasty. According to this tradition, however, in A.D. 61, this Emperor dreamt that a golden image appeared in the West, and sent messengers in search of it. They returned, seven years later, with Kāśyapmātaṅga and other Indian missionaries, who were entertained by the Emperor at the White Horse Monastery near Loyang, the first Buddhist temple to be erected in China. The first Buddhist books to be translated into Chinese were some of the Hīnayāna scriptures. This work was begun in the Wei Dynasty (third century A.D.), during the period of Chinese history known as the Three Kingdoms, and continued up to the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907), but the translations were not widely diffused. To-day, some scholars continue to study these and other Hīnayāna texts, particularly those of the Ch'êng Shih (Śūnyatā) and

Chu Shê (Abhidharmakośa) Schools, but there is still no exclusively Hīnayāna sect in China.

Up to the time of the Indian scholar Kuṃārajiva* (Chiumoloshih), who came to China in A.D. 386, very few Mahāyāna texts had been translated into Chinese, but he made translations of many of the texts of both schools, after which Mahāyāna became more and more popular and spread rapidly. Since being translated into Chinese, most of the original Sanskrit texts have been lost or destroyed, probably owing to Hindu and Moslem persecutions in India and to political upheavals in China, during which many monasteries and libraries were burnt. In many cases, the only way to reconstruct these Sanskrit texts is to retranslate from the Chinese, a method which cannot be recommended for accuracy, though it may enable Indian scholars to gain a better understanding of the spirit of the teachings which have done so much to mould the civilisation of the Far East. Professor T'an Yün Shan, of the Chinese College (China Bhāvana) at Santiniketan in Bengal, hopes to engage the interest of a number of Chinese and Indian scholars in this work.

Chinese and Indian protagonists of Mahāyāna have written numberless treatises to prove that this school is authentic and represents a higher stage of Buddhism than the Hīnayāna teachings. They point out that, as the words of the Buddha were taken down from verbal reports made long after his time, the two collections of his teach-

*Kumārajīva was the chief translator of the Mādhyamika division of Mahāyāna teaching, which adopts an idealistic interpretation (*fa hsing*) of the universe, while a Chinese monk, Hsüan Chuang (seventh century A.D.), occupies a similar position with regard to the books of the Dharamalkṣaṇa division, which takes a more realistic view (*fa hsiang*) of the universe, and Amogha (Pu K'ung), who came to China in A.D. 719, was one of the leading translators of the remaining division dealing with the esoteric doctrines (*mi chiao*). Of the eight sects which will be described in due course, the Pure Consciousness Sect belongs to the first of these divisions, the Secret Sect to the the third, and all the others to the second.

ings forming the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Tripiṭakas, though they do not include the same series of teachings, have equal claims to authenticity. They do not see anything fundamentally contradictory in the doctrines of the two schools, but claim that the Mahāyāna doctrines are superior for those able to understand them. In support of this latter claim, they adduce various logical arguments, including the famous Ten Points of Maitreya (Milo),* who lived some five hundred years after Gautama Buddha. To the modern mind the arguments upon which these ten points are based are by no means the best which could have been put forward. They include the following:

"Buddha predicted everything that would affect the spread of the doctrine after his entrance into Nirvāṇa, but he did not predict the rise of a great heresy ; hence Mahāyāna is not a heresy.

"The Mahāyāna teaching is very profound and far superior to that found in heretical books purporting to be Buddhist; hence it is not heretical and must be the teaching of Gautama Buddha.

"If there were no Mahāyāna there would have been no Hīnayāna, because Buddha attained Enlightenment through the practice of Mahāyāna, without which he could not have preached Hīnayāna.

"The followers of the Hīnayāna teaching claim that Mahāyāna is a heresy and forms no part of the teaching of Buddha, but they do not appreciate that the inner meaning of the Hīnayāna sūtras is much more profound than their superficial meaning and that, if this inner meaning is properly understood, it will be found to confirm the truth of the Mahāyāna teaching."

It will be readily seen that these arguments are by no means examples of flawless or unanswerable logic, though

*Not to be confused with the Buddha of that name.

the last is interesting and might be used with some advantage to build up a case for Mahāyāna. What is, perhaps, of greater interest than the claims of the two schools to be the authentic teaching of Gautama Buddha, is the difference between them and the obvious superiority of Mahāyāna as a moral and metaphysical system of vast breadth and depth, supplying the ordinary religious needs of mankind to a far greater extent than Hīnayāna. In the view of the adherents of the Mahāyāna School, the superiority of their doctrines is apparent from the following points of difference:

(1) Mahāyāna transcends Hīnayāna in postulating that not only form and sensual phenomena are void,* but that everything is void, not excluding the *Dharma* or Law of Buddha itself.

(2) Mahāyāna transcends Hīnayāna in postulating that Enlightenment can best be obtained through seeking the Enlightenment of all sentient beings instead of concentrating, like the Hīnayāna Arhats, exclusively on one's own. (This has given rise to the practice of taking the Bodhisattva's vow, *i.e.*, the devotee undertakes not to seek to enter the final stage of Buddahood until all sentient beings have reached the point where they are capable of entering too. This entails using the merit acquired by each individual for the benefit of all, and it is common to dedicate the merit which, according to the law of karma (cause and effect), naturally follows from right action, to the welfare of others. Furthermore, Hīnayāna followers are openly accused of selfishness because they concentrate entirely upon the achievement of their own Enlightenment.)

(3) Mahāyāna transcends Hīnayāna in postulating that the seeker after Enlightenment can achieve it not only by

*Void in the sense of having only a relative as opposed to a real or absolute existence.

his own merit, but through the merit accumulated by those who have already reached the stage of Bodhisattva and who are on the brink of becoming Buddhas. This merit of the Bodhisattvas is drawn upon by means of various devotional exercises which will be described in the chapters which follow. (Hence, whereas the figure of Gaùtama Buddha alone is reverenced in Hīnayāna temples, the figures of many Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, some of them unknown to Hīnayāna, are reverenced in Mahāyāna temples.)

(4) Mahāyāna transcends Hīnayāna in postulating that the practices of endurance, alms-giving and meekness should be added to those of strict observation of the regulations (*vinaya*), meditation and the acquirement of wisdom, which are the chief practices of the Hīnayāna School. (Meekness includes the idea of tolerance. For example, a follower of Hīnayāna would certainly regard it as a serious offence to take wine under any circumstances, unless specifically for medical reasons or because the wine had passed his lips before he realised what it was, but a follower of Mahāyāna might be prepared to drink a little if it enabled him to put a guest or fellow traveller more at ease and make him more receptive to his host's description of the way to Enlightenment. It should not be thought that this is a regular practice, as the illustration is merely intended to show what is meant by the word "tolerance" in this connection. Meekness means passive acceptance of unkindness and inconvenience plus active readiness to put oneself to trouble or inconvenience if necessary for the welfare of another being.)

Other peculiarities of Mahāyāna are as follows:

(1) The doctrine that there are many different methods of obtaining Enlightenment, any one of which may be used according to circumstances. These include the practice of good works, meditation, study, mystic rites

and frequent oral repetition of the sūtras (words of Buddha) and mantras or *dhāranīs* (mystic formulas). Study includes the reading of the sūtras and commentaries with intent to understand their inmost meaning, as well as the reading of the *vinaya* (regulations) and *abhidharma* (*śāstras*, or treatises), the history of the religion and the Sanskrit language.

(2) Mahāyāna followers differ among themselves as to the meaning of the voidness of the universe and of Nirvāṇa, the indescribable state which is reached upon attaining full Enlightenment. Many, however, incline towards a distinctly Hindu conception of a universal reality or soul which underlies and permeates the unreal world of form. This conception is not unlike the Christian mystic's conception of the nature of God, and is a form of pantheism. Others state that absolutely nothing exists except consciousness, a teaching contained in the works of the Pure Consciousness Sect (Wei Shih Tsung), while adherents of the Meditation Sect (Ch'an Tsung) take the view that matter and void are identical and that there is nothing which can be described either as existing or as not existing.

(3) Mahāyāna postulates that just as a Buddha has three Bodies (Trikāya), since we are all potential Buddhas and unknowingly possess Buddha natures, we too have three bodies, though in our state of ignorance we are only aware of the third. The Bodies of a Buddha are:

The Law Body (Dharmakāya or Fa Shêng), the supreme body in which a Buddha is one with Nirvāṇa, the formless state.

The Body of Compensation (Sambhogakaya or Pao Shêng), the blissful or heavenly form of a Buddha.

The Body of Transformation (Nirmāṇakaya or Hua Shêng), in which a Buddha manifests himself in the form of a man or any other being.

Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna agree to some extent on many of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism. Impermanence is one of these. According to this doctrine, nothing remains the same even for an instant: everything is in constant flux and is subject to endless transmutations as it goes through the round of birth, growth, decay and death, followed by endless cycles of the same kind. It follows, therefore, that attachment to sense objects (or aversion to them) puts the subject into the false position of desiring (or feeling aversion for) mere forms which have no permanence or objective reality. Such desires (or aversions) result in unhappiness because, no sooner have we attained the objects of our desires, than we find them no longer desirable, and no sooner have we freed ourselves from the objects of our aversion than we find them to be other than we thought. What appeared to be solid reality reveals itself as nothing but a shadow. Thus impermanence leads naturally to the doctrine of the voidness of sensual phenomena. As we have seen, Buddhists differ in their interpretation of the exact implications of this doctrine of void, some maintaining that nothing is real, others that only consciousness is real, others that there is an intangible universal reality underlying the voidness of phenomena, and others that reality cannot be described in terms of void or non-void. The degree to which the thinker himself exists is also bound up with this. No Buddhist doubts that he is part of the endless flux and does not remain the same for two successive points of time. He regards himself as a temporary but continuously changing entity, conditioned by his past and conditioning his future by every thought, word and action. Many Buddhists hold that sentient beings do have individualities of their own in a purely relative sense. They may be regarded as a number of apparently separate processes which, in reality, are part of the universal

process, or apparently separate forms of consciousness together making up the universal consciousness.

This brings us to the law of karma, which is common to all sects of Buddhism and to Hinduism as well. It is the unchangeable law of cause and effect. The endless changes to which everything is subject are conditioned as to the form they take by the nature of the changes which precede them, and themselves condition the changes which follow them. Thus, what in a relative sense may be called an individual is, at any given moment, the result of certain processes which immediately preceded that moment.

The thoughts, words and actions of a man at such a given moment are the result of his previous thoughts, words and actions, and the conditioning agents of his future thoughts, words and actions. This process is believed to be carried on from one life to the next because, just as matter cannot be destroyed but only transmuted, so, according to the Buddhist metaphysicians, no chain of cause and effect can come to an end, but stretches on throughout eternity. (It will be seen, however, that such cycles of change are held finally to reach an end in the formless state known as Nirvāṇa.)

There follows from this the law of transmigration through various states of existence. Popular Buddhism divides these states into six main categories, represented as spirits in hell, hungry ghosts (*pretas*), animals, humans, semi-divine beings (*asuras*), and gods (*devas*), even the gods being subject to birth, decay and death, though the process is much slower for them than for human beings.

Another fundamental teaching of Buddhism is that existence in the world of form or illusion (*māyā*) is by its very nature bound up with suffering, the natural result of desire, aversion and ignorance. There is,

however, a way out of the endless cycle of birth and death with its attendant misfortunes. This is the way of non-attachment. According to this teaching, if non-attachment to sensual phenomena is cultivated, then the stimuli which cause an individual to go on and on weaving his chain of karma cease to have their effect. This can only happen completely when such an individual has reached the stage of full Enlightenment (*i.e.*, become a Buddha) and is able to comprehend everything as it really is, divorced from the empty forms which formerly gave it the appearance of solidity and permanence. When this happens, to use the beautiful phrase of Sir Edwin Arnold, "the dew-drop slips into the shining sea" and the individual, throwing off the illusion of individuality, enters into Nirvāṇa, the formless state.

Buddhists of all schools and sects are taught to practise the utmost compassion to the sentient beings whom they meet on their long journey to the goal of Nirvāṇa, but Mahāyāna followers carry this teaching further. They are expected to take the Bodhisattva's vow at the very moment when they first consciously strive towards the attainment of Nirvāṇa. As we have seen, this vow binds them to abstain from entering Nirvāṇa until every being has been brought to the brink of realising it for themselves. Furthermore, Mahāyāna Buddhists are expected to abstain from meat, especially in the case of monks and nuns, in order to reduce the amount of animal suffering in the world. (Another reason which is sometimes given for this abstention is that a vegetarian diet is more conducive to the attainment of a spiritual state during the practice of meditation.) To the more metaphysically minded Buddhists, there is the added incentive that, since the individual has no real independent existence of his own, subject and object are in fact identical so that, by showing kindness to another, he is

showing kindness to himself, because he is adding to the sum total of happiness in a universe of which he himself is not only a part but an expression of the whole.

The goal of all Buddhism is, therefore, that supreme Enlightenment which will enable an individual to throw off the chains of karma binding him to the world of illusion and to enter into that blissful state where he is no longer subject to rebirth and its attendant sufferings. The special aim of Mahāyāna is to work for the Enlightenment of all sentient beings, and the various methods employed to achieve this object may be broadly divided into three :

(1) Enlightenment through meditation.
(2) Enlightenment through the merit accumulated by the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, which can be drawn upon by special methods.
(3) Enlightenment through the study and practice of the teachings contained in the Tripiṭaka (Buddhist canon).

Another classification corresponding to this is

(1) Enlightenment through intuitive knowledge.
(2) Enlightenment through faith.
(3) Enlightenment through knowledge acquired from external sources and the practices derived from that knowledge.

These three methods are followed separately by some and combined by others, who may, according to the Mahāyāna doctrine, concentrate on or emphasise whichever seems most satisfactory to each individual. In China there are a number of different sects, each laying emphasis on one or more of these methods, which are described briefly in Part II.

It will be seen from the foregoing remarks that the concepts of good and evil must be foreign to Buddhism, though these terms are often used in a relative sense.

What are called good and evil are equally allied to the illusory world of form. In their stead, Buddhists put the concepts of wisdom and ignorance. If a man could foresee the results of his actions to the utmost extent, he would not perform any action which would serve to increase the power of karma over him and prolong his sufferings through countless cycles of birth and death. The nearer a man is to Enlightenment the wiser he becomes, and the less he is tempted to actions and thoughts bringing unfavourable results in their train.

CHAPTER IV

MONKS AND LAYMEN

ONE OF the chief features of the Buddhist religion is the great monastic Order which was founded by Gautama Buddha, and is revered with him and the Law (doctrine) as the Triple Treasure. The ascetic ideal became firmly rooted in China after the introduction of Buddhism, but not without incurring the strongest disapprobation of the Confucians, who considered it a prime duty to ensure the perpetuation of their ancestral lines through their children and grand-children. Though there are many points of difference between the monastic life lived in China to-day and in the Buddhist India of former times, the underlying principle is the same. It is held that a married man, his mind weighed with the responsibilities of family life and his body enmeshed in the snare of sexual gratification, cannot devote his entire energies to the struggle for Enlightenment which, even under the most favourable circumstances, is so difficult to attain.

Buddhist temples and monasteries are to be found in almost every part of China, and are probably most numerous in the Province of Chekiang, the original home of more than one Chinese sect, while many years of persecution directed against monks and nuns by the Moslem general Pai Chung Hsi have resulted in the destruction of almost all those in Kwangsi. Their general form and decoration differ remarkably little from place to place except in those areas where Mongol or Thibetan influence is predominant. Thus Peiping provides some exceptions on account of the large number of buildings

in the Thibetan style, testifying the desire of the former Manchu emperors to win the approbation of the lamas from their Thibetan and Mongolian dependencies. Few travellers can fail to remark on the exquisite taste which led the builders of many of the monasteries to choose sites so pleasant to the eye, where mountains, water, ancient trees and the architecture of the buildings themselves all contribute to the loveliness of the surroundings. Though the life of a Buddhist monk may be devoid of even the most elementary physical comforts, he often lives against a background of such beauty that he might be excused for thinking himself already at the portals of the Western Paradise.

Of the numerous sacred mountains, there are four which the Buddhists maintain to be of peculiar sanctity. They are:

P'ut'o Shan, a sea-girt rock off the coast of Chekiang, sacred to Avalokiteśvara and mystically connected with the element of water.

Wut'ai Shan, a mountain in Shansi with more than three hundred temples and monasteries scattered about its slopes, sacred to Manjuśrī and mystically connected with the element of wind.

Omei Shan, a lofty peak in Szūch'uan within sight of the snow-capped mountains of Thibet, sacred to Samantabhadra and mystically connected with the element of fire.

Chiuhua Shan, in Anhui, sacred to Kṣitigarbha and mystically connected with the element of earth.

The following description is not of any real place, but would almost serve for any of the larger monasteries in any part of the country.

P'ut'i Szū (The Temple of Enlightenment) is situated on the slope of a pleasant hill about five miles from the nearest town, which is the seat of local government for a small district and market centre for the surrounding

villages. The monastery is closely surrounded by a small wood of lofty pines, and beyond these lie the fields which form the greater part of the monastery property. The buildings are quite invisible from the mountain path, whose steepness makes the pilgrim pause for breath every hundred yards or so, but every now and then the curving roofs of a many-storeyed pagoda may be discerned between the trees. At regular intervals the air throbs with the vibrations caused by the single stroke of a wooden clapper on an age-green bronze bell, as yet invisible. Suddenly, on turning a sharp bend, the pilgrim finds himself confronted with a scarlet wall, pierced by a moon-shaped door. Beyond this lies a garden, well kept but suggestive of the wildness of nature, and a two-storeyed pavilion, the upper part of which contains the huge bronze bell whose mournful notes have already reached his ears. The lower portion houses a statue of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva, who periodically descends into hell to succour the sufferers there. The ringing of the bell is intended to bring them a message of comfort and deliverance.

Beyond the pavilion lies a more formal garden containing the pagoda with its thirteen gilded storeys, and, passing through this, the pilgrim approaches the main gate of the monastery itself. This is a large roofed building with a wide door, flanked on the outside by two Vajradevas* and on the inside by the Four Heavenly Kings. The fearful aspect and grim expressions of all these beings is not intended to inspire fear, but rather confidence in their fierce tenacity of purpose and ability to guard the Sacred Law against all the demons of the universe. Facing the open gate is a large and jovial figure with a smile of welcome on his face and a bag of

*For descriptions of the various deities, see Chapter XIV.

rice clasped close to his enormous stomach. This is the august Maitreya Buddha. Immediately behind him (their shrines are back to back) is a splendid warrior with features and armour of shining gold and clasping a great sword. He is Weit'o, Guardian of the Law. Let the evil forces of desire, hatred and ignorance tremble before him ! Weit'o faces a great courtyard, with rooms for the entertainment of guests on the right and for the use of the monks on the left. Immediately in front of him is a stone pond in which goldfish swim lazily in and out among the roots of the lotus and disturb the reflections of the ornamental trees and shrubs. The fourth side of the courtyard is taken up by the main hall, a hugh building with a yellow-tiled roof whose upward-curving eaves are supported on scarlet pillars and decorated with brightly coloured birds and flowers. This is the great hall or *tien*, where the service of the Buddhas and Mahāsattvas is performed morning and evening. Around its inner walls are ranged the figures of the Eighteen Arhats, smiling with self-satisfaction and engaged in childish games with dragons and other monsters.

In the centre of the hall is a carved and lacquered altar covered with flowers and votive lamps, from behind which loom the majestic, golden figures of Śākyamuni, Amita and Bhaiṣajyagura Buddhas, mingling in their expressions calm detachment with infinite compassion. The pilgrim enters and, after reverently placing some lighted incense sticks in the bronze burner in the centre of the altar, bows his head three times to the ground, chanting:

> Homage to Śākyamuni Buddha, The Original Master.
>
> Homage to Amita Buddha, the Compassionate Lord of the Realm of Bliss.
>
> Homage to Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha, Disperser of Calamities and Prolonger of Life.

Rising to his feet, he walks slowly round to the back of the hall and does obeisance at the foot of the statue of Avalokiteśvara, saying:

> Homage to the infinitely compassionate, infinitely merciful Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva Mahāsattva.

The Reverend Receiver of Guests now appears and conducts him to the guest hall for tea and refreshments, after which he continues his tour of the temple.

Beyond the main hall are other courtyards surrounded by buildings containing the library, block printing press, school for novices, meditation hall (where many of the monks sleep), dining-room, store-room and kitchens, the apartments of the abbot and other high dignitaries of the monastery, a room containing a great stone bath, wash-rooms, lavatories, and so on. Returning to the front gate, after having made a complete round of the various courtyards, the pilgrim steps out to examine the pagoda in the outer garden. This highly ornamental building was probably built long ago by a rich layman who hoped to gain merit thereby (this superstitious practice is discouraged by many Buddhist teachers), or it may have been erected to house some precious relics. Not far off is a special building called the Pavilion of the Assembly of Saints, which houses the urns containing the ashes of departed monks, the Buddhists having borrowed the Hindu practice of cremation. (In some monasteries, there is a little garden full of stone towers about six feet high which look like tombs. They are tombs, but contain only the ashes of the dead.)

A formal ceremony is conducted twice a day in most monasteries, usually a little before dawn and late in the afternoon. It is announced by the throbs of a giant drum and the long-drawn-out notes of a huge bronze bell. The monks hastily don their ceremonial robes of black, over which they wind the dark yellow sacred garment of

Indian origin known as the *kaṣăya*, and file into the hall. Here they bow three times to the ground and then stand ranged on either side of the altar like the choir in an English church, but there are no seats either for them or for any laymen who happen to be present, only kneeling cushions.

The ceremony opens with a refrain known as the Incense Chant, after which come various other chants, including professions of faith in the efficacy of the Law (doctrine) to lead the way to Enlightenment, professions of repentance, invocations and words of homage to the Buddhas, but nothing which can be described as prayer. Several of the sūtras and a number of mystic formulas (*dhāraṇī*) in a very debased sort of Sanskrit are also recited. The whole is accompanied by rhythmical strokes made with a knobbed stick on a sonorous piece of hollow wood known as the wooden fish and punctuated by the sound of different kinds of bells. Some use is also made of the movements of the hands, called *mudrās*, which introduce an added Indian note to the proceedings. During the afternoon ceremony, a cup of water is used by the officiating monk as a symbolical offering to the thirsty souls in hell.

Besides these daily ceremonies, there are also special services held to mark the first and fifteenth of every lunar month (new and full moon) and certain days dedicated to particular Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Arrangements can also be made by laymen to have services performed for the benefit of the sick or recently departed.

The life of the monks differs very much from that of Buddhist monks in Ceylon or Burma, who observe the ancient regulations more carefully. This is due to several causes, one of which is the difference in climate, which makes it necessary to compromise on such matters as dress and fasting from noon till dawn. Thus Chinese

monks wear more than the prescribed number of garments and do not observe the fast. The difficulty of obtaining lay support in a country which is not predominantly Buddhist has made it necessary for Chinese monks to keep to their monasteries all the year round, instead of spending one season of every year on the road, and they have had to forego the practice of going out with begging bowls to receive their daily food from the faithful. For the same reason they do not observe the rule against handling money, but depend for their support not only on the laymen who offer money in return for hospitality or to pay for the special services for the sick and departed, but also on the income derived from the temple lands, which the peasants cultivate for the monks just as they would for any other landlords.

There are many Chinese who feel that the monks live unproductive lives and are therefore an economic drag on the community, so little lay opposition has been encountered whenever the Government has confiscated lands or temples with a view to using them for other purposes. To one who is not a Buddhist, this attitude must seem perfectly reasonable, and is common enough among the opponents of religion in all countries. The Buddhist monks' answer to the charge of leading unproductive lives is that, though they do not produce any of the material necessities of life, they have all vowed to work for the Enlightenment not only of themselves but of all sentient beings, and are thus of the greatest value to the community. This is, of course, a typically Mahāyāna outlook, and the argument could not be used by Hīnayāna monks to justify their existence.

When a man wishes to "leave home"—the Chinese expression for becoming a monk—he must first attach himself to an older monk who will instruct him in the general principles of Buddhism and the duties of the

monastic life. After a certain time, he will proceed to one of the largest temples in the neighbourhood and "receive the precepts," the equivalent of ordination, with upwards of a hundred fellow novices from round about. During this ceremony, nine or twelve marks will be lightly burned with incense on his shaven head, providing him with a token of his new state which can never be erased. (In China, unlike the southern Buddhist countries, a monk is expected to remain so for life, though it sometimes happens that he changes his mind and "reverts to the vulgar state.") Once the ceremony of initiation has been performed, the young monk may either return to his former teacher in the small temple where he completed his first studies, or remain in the large one where he was ordained. If he chooses the latter course, he will be given free board and lodging in return for the performance of certain obligations. He may at any time remove to another large temple, but cannot stay permanently in any small temple, other than that of his own teacher, unless he is able to make special arrangements with the monks already living there.

The organisation of the community in a large temple varies, but is generally along the following lines. The most senior member is the abbot (Ta Ho-shang or Fang-chang), though there may be a retired abbot or venerable monk (Lao Ho-shang) resident in the temple. Under the abbot are various senior officials, such as the Controller of Affairs (Tang-chia Shih), Dean of Discipline (Sheng-tzû Shih), Preceptor (Wei-na Shih), Receiver of Guests (Chih-k'o Shih), and so on. Each of them controls a special branch of the temple life. Under them are the monks and novices, who are expected to attend certain services and to undertake one or more of three activities—work, meditation and study. Work may be undertaken in the guest-rooms, store-rooms, kitchens, gardens,

shrines (cleaning the sacred objects and assisting the pilgrims in their rituals), and in other parts of the temple. Monks who are prepared to live in the meditation hall and go through at least three long periods of meditation every day are excused manual work. Study is undertaken individually by senior monks, while classes are held for the younger monks and novices. These classes consist of instruction in reading, writing and the sūtras. Large temples usually have a big library and, sometimes, a printing press in which wooden blocks are used for the reproduction of the sūtras and other forms of Buddhist literature.

The day begins before sunrise with the morning service in the main hall of the temple. This is followed by breakfast, after which the monks settle down to work, meditation or study. The second meal, followed by the same round of duties, is eaten at noon, and the third after the evening service, which is held at about four in the afternoon. The food consists of plain vegetarian fare, varied a little on holy days, such as the first and fifteenth of every lunar month. The prohibition against eating meat is, of course, the result of that against the taking of life, though the monks in the Southern Buddhist countries will eat meat which has been offered to them. Chinese monks are one hundred per cent vegetarian, if we exclude some bad characters who may indulge in meat on the sly. There are also special days when several hours are allotted for the mending and washing of clothes, bathing in the huge stone bath which is specially heated, and similar domestic duties. Clothes and bedding are of coarse grey, blue or black cloth, and beds usually consist of planks supported on wooden trestles.

There is a period in the autumn when the majority of the monks enter the meditation hall for as much as eighteen hours a day for seven days (*ta ch'i*), to be spent

in meditation, sitting in the lotus posture adopted by Gautama Buddha during his meditations and at the time of his Enlightenment.

Occasionally a monk may wish to seclude himself still further from the world and allow himself to be shut up (*pei kuan*) in a room for a period of months or years, during which he receives his food and communicates with others through a small window. The period may be spent in meditation, invoking the Buddhas, or both.

Discipline in the larger temples is usually strict, particularly for the younger monks, but no attempt is made at control of thought, so that a body of monks in the same temple sometimes holds quite divergent views on the interpretation of the Buddhist Law (Dharma). Guests are welcome at any time to stay for a meal, a night, or a year, and are expected to make a gift of money to the temple according to their means, but there are no fixed rates for such hospitality. In practice, rich and distinguished pilgrims receive better treatment than the poor, though the latter often show the greater devotion to the religion and are known as fragrance or incense-bearing guests (*hsiang k'o*). In small temples there are no rigid regulations to follow, so the monks are free to live as they please and according to the dictates of their consciences.

Nunneries are run on the same lines as monasteries, but no nun can receive the title of Teacher of the Dharma (*Fa-shih*), however learned she may be. Other titles reserved for the male sex only are: Teacher of Dhyāna (Ch'an-shih), Teacher of Vinaya (Lü-shih), and Exalted Teacher (Ta-shih).

The more devout Buddhist laymen or householders are known in China as *chü-shih*, a title applicable to both sexes, though more generally used to denote a man. The chü-shih is one who is not prepared to renounce the world altogether by becoming a monk, but who wishes to devote

himself to Buddhism while remaining as a family man and earning his living in the ordinary way. Usually he undertakes to observe the five precepts against killing, stealing, indulging in lust, lying and intoxication. He may or may not be a vegetarian and may continue to have carnal relations with his wife. Usually there is a small shrine in his house where he performs morning and evening worship, in addition to spending some time every day in meditation.

Most of the large cities in China have at least one Chü-shih Lin (Forest of Laymen), the name given to the regular meeting places of the laymen. There may also be a similar association known as the Kung-tê Lin (Forest of Merit).

As the chü-shih are often men of considerable learning as well as faith and piety, they sometimes exhibit a more profound understanding of Buddhist philosophy than many of the monks and nuns. To this learning they add active observance of the teaching that the utmost compassion should be shown to all sentient beings. Some of them go as far as buying live fish and birds in order to liberate them, though this practice sometimes defeats its own ends, as the peasants often take advantage of it by catching fish and birds to be sold specially to these pious laymen.

The chü-shih is usually a cultured person. He prefers to wear the dignified Chinese gown of blue, grey or bronze-coloured silk, and by his habits and gestures, exhibits his fondness for and understanding of the traditional culture of his country. He is often a poet or painter as well as a philosopher and metaphysician, and may be something of a historian or possess a knowledge of Chinese herbal medicine in addition. One can appreciate how essentially Chinese the Indian religion has become when one sees its devotees cling to the Chinese

past more than almost any other group of educated people. To see the chü-shih gathered together at a meeting, the rich colours of their gowns blending together, their fans fluteering in response to a hundred charming gestures, and the quiet benevolence of their facial expressions, creates a picture not easily forgotten. The austerity of the Indian religion has not destroyed their sense of beauty, and they often show themselves to be far above the vulgar superstitions which have done much to lower the tone of the great moral and metaphysical system created by the Indian sage Gautama.

CHAPTER V

THE PEOPLE WHO BELIEVE

DURING MY travels in China I had the good fortune to meet many devout Buddhists, and was greatly interested in their attitude to their religion and to life in general. Some among them were attracted by the great breadth and depth of Mahāyāna philosophy, while others knew little of this philosophy, but had great faith in the power of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to lead them to Enlightenment, either directly or by causing them to be reborn in the Pure Land. The following anecdotes are none of them particularly remarkable, but they may serve to provide a glimpse of some of these people, in all their wisdom and foolishness, profundity and simplicity, just as they appeared to me.

Once, late at night, while staying in the Monastery of the Flowery Pavilion, I was sitting in my room talking to a young monk with whom I was on specially intimate terms, when we were disturbed by a knock on the door. As it was already so late I did not relish the idea of having any more visitors that night and took the precaution of calling out "Who's there?" "It is I," came the reply, to which I rather facetiously responded, "Who is 'I'?" This was succeeded by a dead silence which made me rather curious, so I jumped up and opened the door, but it was quite dark outside and there appeared to be no one there. Not knowing what to make of it, I shut the door again and thought no more about it. Some days later, however, I wandered over to the great bell tower from which the message of Ksitigharba's

compassion is conveyed to sufferers in hell by the tolling of the bell at regular intervals of sixty seconds or so, day in and night out. The monk responsible for this duty was an ex-soldier from the North who was rather more learned than the average run of monks, and I was fond of going to see him and discussing all kinds of interesting matters with him. On this occasion he began by saying that he had called on me a few nights before, but that something I had said had caused him to go away without seeing me. I remembered the incident and asked him to explain. "Well," he replied, "you asked me who 'I' was. Since we do not believe that the ego really exists, I thought the only possible answer was to disappear into the night."

Upon another occasion, while in the same monastery, I went to the bathroom on one of those days on which the huge stone bath, as big as a swimming-bath, had been heated for the whole community. It was usual to wash oneself down thoroughly with soap and water and then to rinse off all the soap and dirt before getting into the hot water to soak. I happened to go into the dressing-room wearing a pair of fine silk pyjamas with a blue dragon embroidered over the breast pocket. This caught the eye of the abbot, who was also preparing for a bath. "You've got a smart pair of pyjamas," he said, smiling. Feeling rather abashed, I answered that I was wearing them because I happened to have them with me, but that in a monastery it would have been more fitting to have dressed plainly or even poorly to demonstrate the unimportance of outward appearances. To this the abbot replied: "Do I dress poorly?" This question was deliberately put to confuse me, and succeeded perfectly in its object. If I had said yes, I should have been guilty of discourtesy, but the opposite would have implied that the abbot paid more attention to his person than he

should. I have forgotten how I tried to avoid the dilemma, but I well remember the lesson it taught me. My opinion on the subject of what was fitting or not fitting had not been asked, and who was I to lecture an abbot in his own monastery on such a matter?

This particular abbot was fond of such jests. Another monk once complained to me of something which had displeased him in the way the temple was administered. I rather sympathised with him on this point, and committed the discourtesy of saying on the spur of the moment, "Yes, the abbot is a bit of a block-head." Someone present must have reported this, for a few days later, during the course of a conversation between the abbot and myself, the former said: "I suppose you think I'm an awful wooden-head? "Again I did not know what to reply, since I must appear guilty either of discourtesy or deception.

Though the Chinese as a rule are not particularly religious, it is surprising how many of them have a kind of half-belief in spirits. Quite recently, when I was recovering from an illness in the Adornments of Buddha Monastery, near Chungking, I received a visit from a Chinese lady who was concerned about my welfare. "I can't think how you can bear to live here," she said. I looked round the small but clean room that had been allotted to me, gazed at the beautiful expanse of yellow-tiled roof and scarlet eaves on to which my window looked, and thought of the warm hospitality which I had received from the monks. "Why should I not be happy here?" I asked. She replied that she thought the many dark passages must be very frightening at night, and that it was more than possible that the place was haunted. I happened to know that this lady considered belief in the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to be pure superstition, so I naturally enquired why she thought it superstitious

to believe in benevolent spiritual powers, while herself believing in the more malevolent type. She laughed a little, but could give no logical reply. "I just feel that way," she said.

It was in this monastery that I met a monk who had only recently entered the Order. He had been an officer, and relished a gay life to such an extent that he still put on military uniform from time to time and went out in search of pleasure. It was well known that he indulged himself in meat and wine, possibly in still more dubious pleasures. Though the officials of the monastery complained about him, nobody thought of turning him out altogether. "Poor fellow. Where would he go?" they said. This seems to me an example of Buddhist tolerance of which it would be hard to find the equal among the adherents of other religions.

A pious Buddhist whom I knew very well in Hongkong had a photograph of himself, pulling a hideous grimace, hung up in the place where he carried on his profession. One of his friends, shocked by such levity, pointed out that it might cause his clients to think him a very odd sort of person and even frighten some of them away. My friend replied that most human beings have something of the devil in their make-up, and that it was just as well to acknowledge the fact. If his clients put their faith in him merely on account of his usually benevolent expression, they deceived themselves as to the value of appearances and were welcome to go elsewhere. Another day I chided him for dressing in expensive silks and paying great attention to his personal appearance while professing himself a devout believer in the unreality of form and the danger of being attached to it. "Do you really think that I care about such things?" he said. "Come out into the street." I followed him out and saw this highly respectable professional gentleman do a

most extraordinary thing. On the very doorstep of his own office, immediately under the great gilded board inscribed with his name and the nature of his profession, he lifted up his long robe and exposed his belly, naked above the trouser-line, to the astonished passers-by. "That's what I think of appearances," he smiled. The only one to blush was myself.

Some years ago, I made the long journey to the sacred mountain of Wu T'ai* in Shansi, the earthly habitation of Manjuśrī Bodhisattva Mahāsattva, and lodged in one of the great temples with several Chinese friends from Tientsin who happened to have gone there on a pilgrimage. One day we decided to hire some mules and make a round of the five peaks, taking two or three days in all, and examining the temples and other objects of interest *en route*. My friends proposed to stop at each temple, however small, and perform a short ceremony of adoration, but it happened that the first temple we came to was dedicated to the Dragon (Nāga) King who is responsible for controlling the rain. "The Dragon King is not a strictly Buddhist deity," said one of the party. "I don't believe in such superstitions. Let us give this temple a miss." The others all agreed, and no one dismounted. The next day, as we were about halfway up one of the peaks, it began to rain so heavily that we had to take refuge in a temple and abandon all hope of proceeding for the time being. The gentleman who had so recently spoken in derogatory terms of the Dragon King began to look very worried. He considered that the whole party was being held up on account of his lack of respect to this watery deity. Finally, he decided to go out in the pelting rain and make the ascent on foot and alone. We tried to dissuade him, but he replied that he hoped to be able to make the Dragon King take pity on him and relent.

*See Chapter VII.

No doubt he was drenched to the skin within a few minutes of leaving the temple, but he went on his way undaunted. Apparently the Dragon King was really touched, for the weather cleared in a little while and the whole party was able to proceed in comfort.

A certain lady in Hongkong was specially devoted to Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Mahāsattva, and spent some time engaged on the translation into English of the book containing his Ten Vows. The symbol (*mudrā*) appropriate to this Bodhisattva is made by placing the palms and fingers of the hands face to face, the fingers as close to each other as possible and the thumbs outstretched. While the work of translation was still proceeding, this lady went to the market to buy lotus flowers to decorate the shrine in her house. To her amazement, she came upon a most peculiar bud. As it was not yet open, the petals resembled the fingers and palms of two hands pressed close together. This was quite normal, but, oddly enough, the flower was malformed and had a projection consisting of several petals growing away from the main bud and corresponding to the extended thumbs of the mudrā. This so delighted her that she took it as a sign that Samantabhadra Bodhisattva was watching over her and approved of the translation she was making.

A gentleman in Canton devoted himself to the mysteries of the Eastern Esoteric Sect, recently reintroduced into China from Japan. In time he became so proficient in the rites that he was able to set up as an exorcist. On one occasion somebody came to him and asked for his help in casting out a devil which had taken possession of one of his relatives. The exorcist agreed, and hastened to the house of his client. Rushing into the room where the possessed person lay writhing on the floor, he formed with his hands the mystic symbol of a sword and proceeded to attack the devil with fearful spells and incantations.

CHAPTER VI

THE STORY OF FA PAO

THE OBJECT of including this story in the present work is to give some indication of the way in which the Buddhist doctrine appeals particularly to those who have suffered unduly, and of the inducements which it sometimes offers to educated Chinese to abandon their usual agnostic attitude towards religion.

One summer evening, during a visit to a small temple which lay on a hill overlooking a city in Northern China, I was sitting under the lengthening shadow of a huge pine-tree just outside the temple gate. Below me was a great plain stretching out in every direction, yellow where the naked soil showed between the patches of green marking the areas under cultivation, and blue in the far distance where it merged with the cloudless sky. While I was enjoying the last rays of sunshine and contemplating the ordered beauty of the scene, I gradually became conscious that I was not alone. A glance over my shoulder disclosed a black-gowned figure standing under the upturned eaves of the gateway, who seemed to be looking at me rather shyly, as though wondering whether to break in on my meditations or not. I recognised the thin, intellectual face as that of one of the younger monks, the quiet happiness of whose expression had several times attracted my attention, and welcomed this opportunity of having a chat with him. At a little distance from where I was sitting there was a stone bench engraved with curious figures of mythical monsters and of beings, half human, half animal. I jumped up and

pointed to it, calling to the young monk to join me. An exchange of courtesies followed, each of us being determined that the other should be the first to be seated, until, as though by mutual consent, we sat down simultaneously. For some time we talked about nothing in particular, until I gradually brought the conversation round to the point where I could ask him what had induced him to forsake the world and enter the Order. From what he said then, and from several subsequent conversations, I pieced together the following story.

His name, given to him at the time when he "received the precepts" and entered the Order, was Fa Pao, Jewel of the Law. He came from a prosperous family, who had, for many generations, been gold and silver merchants in the city of Tsinan, and was now about thirty years old, having spent the last seven years partly in the temple where I met him and partly in one of the big monasteries in Peking. Unlike many present-day monks, he had received a good education, and after passing through junior and senior middle school, had spent one year at the National University of Peking studying chemistry. At the age of twenty-one he had been betrothed to the daughter of the magistrate of a neighbouring city, a girl whom he knew but slightly and for whom he entertained no special regard. This betrothal was the beginning of his misfortunes. Even now he could not speak of it without some emotion.

"I went home as soon as I received the letter announcing my father's decision," he said. "And I spent several days arguing with him. At first he was very angry, but I believe he gradually came to appreciate my point of view. I explained that the Westernised education I had received made it impossible for me to regard myself merely as a unit of the family, and that I could not subordinate my whole personality and

happiness to the decrees of the family elders. I remember clearly the harassed look in his eyes when he realized how extremely unhappy he had made me. Finally he allowed himself to make an admission of his own helplessness. 'Your grandmother has made up her mind about this. I have tried to reason with her, but without success. I can do nothing.'

"My grandmother was a great power in our family, and I felt a tremor of fear as I realised that my father, out of his love for me, had braved her displeasure and probably received a severe scolding both from her and from his elder brothers. I knew that to argue with her would be like 'lifting up the T'ai Mountain and leaping across the North Sea,' so I just bowed my head to indicate to my father that his wishes would be respected."

What he had not told his father, however, was that he was already deeply in love with a young girl, a ward of his uncle's who lived in the same house and who occupied a position midway between that of a poor relation and a servant. Immediately after agreeing to accept his father's decision, he arranged through one of the men servants, on whose discretion he could rely, to meet this girl soon after dark in a summer-house at the end of the garden.

"I remember," he said, "sitting in the little pavilion waiting for her to come. I had drunk several cups of rice-wine at dinner, yet my eyes were moist with tears and the wine had failed completely to raise my spirits. All of a sudden, I heard a little noise, as if the bamboos were whispering together, and there she was before me in the pale starlight. I held out my arms to her, but she remained standing a few paces in front of me with her head bowed. Then, in a voice like the tinkling of jade ornaments, she said, 'So you have agreed to the betrothal, Young Master.'

"I didn't like the 'Young Master.' She had long been in the habit of calling me by name when we were alone. 'It was the Great Lady's will,' I replied. Suddenly she spat out a scornful sound, 'P'ei'—and started to berate me in a voice full of fire and contempt. 'Why can't you run away, you big baby? Surely you know enough to be able to earn a living for both of us. You are like a paper tiger that collapses with a single prick. Why should you care about the family elders? My family cared so much for me that they sold me to your uncle, who now wants me for his concubine—as if he didn't have enough already! Now your family want to sell you to the city magistrate. With your money and his influence, there is no telling to what heights you may all aspire.' She went on scolding me for a long time while I stood there with the tears running down my cheeks. At last she succeeded in taunting me out of my submission to the family will, and I agreed to run away with her within the course of the next few days. But the family somehow learnt of this (I still don't know whether our conversation in the garden was overheard by one of the servants), and within three days she was sent off to some destination the whereabouts of which I could not discover. We never saw each other again."

A week or so after the girl's disappearance, Fa Pao (as he came to be called latter) borrowed some money from a sympathetic cousin and set off to look for her. For six months he searched the neighbouring towns and the houses of his distant relatives, but never once succeeded in obtaining any news of her. He did not, however, give up all hope until his resources were exhausted. All this took place a year or two before the second revolution of 1926, which gave a great measure of unity to China under the government of the Kuomintang. At the time of which Fa Pao was telling me, the whole

country was in the grip of rival warlords, and it was to one of these that he turned when he found himself far from home and on the point of destitution. On account of his education, his new patron offered him a captaincy in his private army and set him to work combatting the increasingly successful Kuomintang propaganda among the northern troops. In the following year, however, the combined armies of the remaining warlords were defeated by the Nationalist Army under General Chiang Kai Shek, and Fa Pao found himself at once a beggar and a fugitive, well-known to the conquering army on account of the political work in which he had been engaged. In desperation, he adopted the course of several of his fellow-officers in a like position and entered a monastery in Peiping, though he had but the remotest conception of the Buddhist doctrine and regarded the monastic life merely as a means of ensuring safety from his pursuers and of obtaining the bare necessities of life.

Such an introduction to Buddhism, though quite common at that time, was not a happy one. Fa Pao found himself a member of a community of some seventy monks, of whom only three or four had received more than a rudimentary education and many of whom were boorish and ignorant in the extreme. His personal teacher was an old man of some piety but little learning, who set him to work memorising seemingly meaningless formulas, transliterated from the Sanskrit, a language with which he was entirely unacquainted and in which there was no one to instruct him. When, at last, he had mastered the performance of various ceremonies and could repeat many Sanskrit formulas and Chinese translations of the sūtras by heart, he was sent off to the chief temple in the neighbourhood and underwent the ceremony of ordination, during which nine marks were burnt onto his newly shaven head with sticks of lighted incense.

During this normally painful process he was enjoined to repeat, in unison with all the others, "I offer homage to the Original Teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha," and to concentrate his whole mind on the sound and meaning of these words. To his amazement he achieved a degree of concentration which rendered the ceremony almost painless, and discovered later that this was the common experience of most of his fellow-initiates. He realised that the words had no mystical power in themselves, and learnt his first lesson in the art of withdrawing the mind from its surroundings.

After this, he was sent to the temple where I met him some years later, and settled down to what proved to be the most miserable period of his life. The daily round of boiled rice and tasteless vegetables made him think longingly and often of the specially fattened ducks and stuffed chickens which no doubt continued to grace the family table at home, so that the hours of drudgery in the kitchen and store-house of the temple, interspersed with dreary, half-understood ceremonies in the shrine-room, failed to give an edge to his appetite or to keep his mind away from continual thoughts of what his life might have been if he had not been forcibly separated from the girl he loved. Her image, instead of fading with the passage of time, had taken on a dream-like quality which gave it a beauty probably far more entrancing than the reality.

It is not surprising that, in less than a year, Fa Pao became dangerously ill. He seems to have suffered from a complete nervous breakdown and to have been equally sick in mind and body. A doctor, summoned from the city by the abbot, prescribed draughts of bitter herbs infused in boiling water, but without achieving any appreciable effect. Finally, the monks despaired of his life and performed the ceremonies proper to cases of

serious illness without, it seems, any real expectation that he would recover. Fortunately, it happened that a well-educated layman who was staying in the temple at the time happened to enquire why daily services were being held for the sick. Learning in this way of Fa Pao's illness, he insisted on having him moved to hospital at his own expense and on obtaining for him the best medical attention which the neighbouring city could provide. Thanks to this treatment, Fa Pao recovered a measure of bodily health, which resulted in a slight improvement in his mental condition. As soon as his mind became less clouded and he was able to talk coherently, he received several visits from his benefactor, who proved to be the head of a prosperous firm dealing principally in foreign-style patent medicines. This gentleman, whose name was T'ang Chin Nung, was also the head of the local Buddhist Laymen's Association and a keen student of the Buddhist sūtras. When he realised that Fa Pao was a man of some education and yet almost quite ignorant of the faith which he professed, he pressed him to come and stay in his house as soon as his condition should make it possible for him to leave the hospital. Some three weeks later, Fa Pao was carried in a sedan chair to a large house standing in a walled enclosure just inside the north gate of the city. Mr. T'ang was now fully aware of the circumstances which had led up to his guest's illness, and set to work to ease his mind by interesting him in the great system of philosophy which lay behind the mechanical forms, which were all that he had learnt in the temple.

One of the best rooms in the T'ang mansion was devoted to T'ang Chin Nung's private collection of religious and philosophical works. It was a pleasant room, giving onto a small walled-in courtyard, entirely cut off from the rest of the house and containing several

flowering shrubs planted in huge porcelain bowls. The rose-wood furniture was simple but exquisite, consisting only of such articles as were absolutely necessary to form part of the equipment of a scholar's study. In one corner was a special stand for the Sung-dynasty seven-stringed lute which Mr. T'ang regarded as his most prized possession. Fa Pao was surprised to discover such evidence of good taste in the house of a merchant, but he soon learnt that his host took no active part in the business he had inherited, and that he spent almost all his time reading or playing age-old tunes on the silken strings of his lute.

On the day after his arrival, Fa Pao was taken into this room and told that all the books and manuscripts it contained were entirely at his disposal, but he replied that he would be quite lost if left to himself to select suitable material for his studies. Accordingly, Mr. T'ang agreed to assist him in his choice. To begin with, he was given one or two volumes dealing with the early history of Buddhism and the development of the Mahāyāna School. Later he passed on to the study of those branches of Buddhist philosophy which emphasise the importance of self-development and the seeking within one's own mind for the truths leading to Enlightenment. He also had long conversations with his host, who asked him for information on certain points where it appeared that modern science might serve to corroborate the teaching of the Indian and Chinese sages. Mr. T'ang had a vast knowledge of the various schools of Chinese philosophy, as well as a close acquaintance with those works on Vedic and European philosophy which had been translated into Chinese; but he was most completely at home when discussing the teachings of Bodhidharma and the Patriarchs of the Ch'an Sect. As Fa Pao was a man of more than average intelligence and very willing to learn,

he proved a good pupil and often made T'ang smile with pleasure by showing a quick grasp of some particularly subtle point or other.

Some three months passed quickly by, during which Fa Pao made several attempts to return to the temple, being unwilling to outstay his welcome, but T'ang wouldn't hear of his going until he felt sure that the young monk had sufficiently mastered the principles of Buddhist self-development. One day they were sitting together in the study with their feet on a small charcoal brazier, drinking tea and discussing the important research work which had been done in recent years by Japanese scholars in the field of Chinese Buddhism. The conversation had languished somewhat and for a few moments they had sat in silence. Fa Pao noticed that the other was looking at him gravely, as if weighing him up in his mind. Suddenly T'ang leant forward and said:

"You are really very fortunate to have 'left the world' so young and to be without the ties of a family to hamper you in your search for the Truth. As the head of a large family I have too many responsibilities to be able to follow your example. That is why I have done my poor best to set your feet firmly on the path, so that you will soon be able to advance far beyond the utmost point which I can hope to reach in this incarnation. I feel that you have already attained a mastery of the theoretical side of the Dharma and that the time has come when you must go forward alone. I would beg you, however, to stay with me a little longer and to practise the art of meditation because, now that you have mastered the principles, further reading will not produce very rapid progress. That can only come from within yourself."

Fa Pao readily agreed to this, and starting the next day, embarked upon a serious course of meditation. He would sit for an hour or so in the lotus posture, five times

a day—one immediately upon rising, once after each of the three meals which he shared daily with his host, and once before going to bed. In the daytime he would take up his position cross-legged on a special cushioned stool which he carried out into the little courtyard; but as the evenings were chilly, he would perform his evening meditation either in the study or sitting on the great carved and gilded bed in the guest-room which had been allotted to him. To begin with, he experienced many of the same difficulties which had occurred to him while carrying out this practice as part of the daily routine in the temple. His thoughts would wander, and he would find himself admiring the flowering shrubs or the beautiful designs on the glazed porcelain bowls in which they were planted. Sometimes he did manage to achieve a certain tranquility amounting to almost complete absence of thought for a few seconds, but this was always marred by the sudden realisation that he had achieved such tranquility, because that realisation was in itself a thought and immediately destructive of the state of thoughtlessness.

Constant failure to obtain that complete control of the processes of thinking which was essential to any further progress sometimes discouraged him and caused him to relax his efforts so that his mind wandered aimlessly into the realms of fact and fancy. At such times he usually fell into a day-dream woven around the seductive figure that he had loved so well. Whenever this occurred, the old sorrow welled anew in his heart, yet never quite with its former intensity. He would recall himself with a start and remember that the Buddhist doctrine was founded on the recognition of the fact that existence is bound up with suffering, so that there is no single living being who does not experience it to a greater or lesser degree. He once reminded himself of a woman whose

child had died from the effects of snake-bite. She had taken its body in her arms and sought out the Buddha when he sat discoursing with his disciples, hoping that he would be able to restore it to life. The Buddha had told her to beg a little mustard-seed from the house of a neighbour, but to take care that the house was one in which no one had died. She went the round of the whole village, enquiring whether anyone had ever died in each of the houses she entered. The answer was always the same, and she gradually came to perceive in her simple way that all beings are subject to decay and death, that death is a natural process which cannot be reversed, and that her sorrow was one which all her neighbours had experienced at one time or another. Fa Pao would ponder on this truth and repeat to himself again and again: "Desire is the root of sorrow. Only by eliminating desire can sorrow be banished from the heart of a living being." Sometimes he would be comforted by this and spurred on to renewed efforts to control his thoughts and desires. At other times, he failed utterly to withdraw his mind from the visions of the past which it had conjured up, and, relinquishing his efforts with a sigh, he would get up and return to the more solid comfort of reading. Fortunately, he found that the pleasure he derived from books was usually sufficient to distract his thoughts from his own troubles.

When T'ang Chin Nung heard about Fa Pao's difficulties, he could offer but little advice. He looked worried and muttered: "Nu li, nu li"—"Try your utmost, try your utmost," adding that no help could be expected from without, and that freedom from sorrow and desire, the ultimate understanding of the real nature of existence and the final goal of deliverance from rebirth, were all to be sought within the heart.

Towards the end of autumn, Fa Pao returned to his

temple, still a prey to frequent fits of depression, but prepared to approach the monastic life from a point of view entirely different from his former one. Before, he would have welcomed any opportunity of returning to the life of a layman which did not involve the necessity of going back to his family in disgrace and begging the forgiveness of the Elders. Now, he would have rejected any such opportunity. He had acquired a taste for quiet study, and did not believe it utterly impossible that he would be able to develop that inner power by which he could transcend the world of sorrow and desire. For two years he studied diligently, being well supplied with books from T'ang's library and receiving frequent visits from him. He continued to spend some three periods a day in the practice of meditation and felt himself to be making slow but definite progress. Sometimes he would vary this exercise by sitting in a spot from which he could command a good view of the green and yellow plain which lay around the temple, dotted with walled villages, clusters of grave mounds and occasional stone monuments. He would watch the progress of clumsy Peking carts and heavily-laden coolies on their way to and from the city behind the hill. Seeing all these things from far off, he felt like a god who held the lives of all these insect-like humans in his hand.

"That little dot moving in the distance," he would say to himself, "is a man. Probably he has recently lost a close relative or been separated from his girl—yet what are his sorrows to me sitting up here? So must my sorrows seem infinitesimal to that great sea of humanity which laps around this hill. Probably that old farmer who seems intent on his patch of vegetables is thinking to himself: 'Those monks in that temple up there have an easy life of it. They don't have to work all the year round to keep off starvation. How happy they must be,

passing their days in glorious idleness!' What does that old man know or care about my sorrows? What, indeed, do I know about the inner feelings of the abbot or my fellow monks? The abbot suffers from pains in his leg and likes to have it rubbed for hours on end. He is also fond of mushrooms cooked in sesame oil, but there must be greater sorrows and joys in his heart than these.''

Gradually Fa Pao succeeded in convincing himself that his past sufferings were of little account, and that dwelling on them was like staying in a burning house even though it was only necessary to step through the open door to escape. This resulted in his achieving an almost continuous state of pleasant calm, but he did not mistake it for a greater degree of progress than it actually represented.

The third summer after his illness, Fa Pao received some news which affected him greatly. A nephew of T'ang Chin Nung appeared one morning at the temple and informed the abbot that his uncle had been killed in a motor accident in Peiping. He added that the body had been brought home in a temporary coffin to await burial in the family grave-yard whenever the astrologers should deem the time auspicious. Meanwhile the T'ang clan were in deep mourning and desired that a group of monks be sent down into the city to perform the ceremony for departed spirits. The abbot immediately called upon Fa Pao to lead the group, on account of his friendship with the deceased, and informed him that the ceremony was to be performed in the T'ang mansion for seven nights in succession.

Candles spluttered day in and day out before an altar on which was displayed a photograph of the dead man, decorated with the funeral colours of blue and white. The air was fragrant with costly Thibetan incense and vibrated with the sounds of the gongs and drums with

which the monks accompanied their chanting. Beside the altar was spread a large mat on which T'ang's wives and sons sat, dressed in roughly stitched robes of coarse, unbleached hemp, and wailing at intervals, partly from sorrow and partly because it was the custom. Every few minutes a newly-arrived kinsman or friend of the family would come in and prostrate himself before the photograph on the altar, upon which the mourners would kneel upon their mat and bow their faces to the ground to return this courtesy.

The special ceremony for comforting the spirit of the departed man was performed every evening after supper, and occupied a space of two hours or more. A long table was placed with its head towards the altar and the other end towards the open doors of the Hall of Ceremony. This was for the convenience of the monks, who sat in two rows facing each other across it and who used it as a rest for their religious books and some of the smaller percussion instruments used during the performance of the rites. Fa Pao, dressed in a sacred garment of scarlet and gold and crowned with the figured cap which was the visible symbol of his mystic connection with the Bodhisattva Ti Tsang Wang, Saviour of Lost Souls, sat cross-legged on a raised seat at the head of the table with his back to the altar. From here he led the chanting, while the fingers of his hands twirled around each other forming the mystic symbols by which the power of the Bodhisattva was enlisted on behalf of the deceased.

The carrying out of this duty was a great trial to the young monk, not only because he was experiencing a feeling of sorrow akin to that of a son mourning his father's death, but also because he realised that his friend had achieved such a deep understanding of the Buddhist Law that a ceremony of this kind would have seemed to him like a devilish mockery of sublime truth. Yet

custom decreed that it should be performed and Fa Pao was glad that he, rather than a stranger, had been called upon to officiate.

The last part of this story can best be told in Fa Pao's own words:

"During the seven nights of 'feeding the hungry spirit' I found it difficult to concentrate on the rites I was performing, because the bitterness of parting was almost too great for me to bear. Then, on the last night, when they were over and the room was all in darkness except for the candles spluttering on the altar, I went in to take final leave of my friend. I bowed three times to the ground before his portrait and waited kneeling in the semi-darkness, trying to project my mind out beyond the Yellow Springs to the place where his spirit sat in loneliness. My eyes were moist and, when I called upon his name, a strange croacking noise welled up from my throat, so I fell to whispering. What I said at that time I do not remember, but it was like standing by the bed of a sick friend and whispering comforting words into his ear. All at once I began to experience a strange feeling of comfort and relief, as though the sick friend had opened his eyes and smiled at me. I do not believe that I actually saw anything unusual or heard the sound of words being spoken, yet in some mysterious manner I received a clear message of comfort and advice from my friend. He seemed compassionate on account of my grief for him and yet amused by it.

"I think I must have spent more than an hour communing with the departed spirit. No one disturbed me, except one of the family who came in silently to renew the candles and incense on the altar and slipped out again without a word. I don't think I can explain this strange communion in words that anyone would understand, but it was as if T'ang Chin Nung had taken my hand in his

and said to me: 'Why should you grieve on my account? Do you not understand anything of what I taught you? Do you not see that excessive grief is as dangerous to your progress along the Path as excessive joy or foolishness? True happiness lies in perfect stillness. Let your mind remain unmoved by joy or sorrow as the mountain remains unmoved by the winds which howl among its peaks. Birth and death are as inevitable as the awaking which takes place after sleep and the sleep which follows wakefulness. Where is there cause for grief in this? Since nothing exists except mind, and as the individuality of each human being is but a delusion which hides his oneness with the Universal Mind, the living man at your elbow is no nearer and no further from you than the being who lives at a distance of eighty-four thousand universes from you. I have not gone from you, because "I" was never there. The underlying reality which animated the appearance of my living body has not moved or diminished. On that ultimate plane I am one with you and with all living beings. Thus there is no coming or going, being born or dying, loving or being loved. All these are but empty forms. Why allow yourself to be moved by them? In the silence and the stillness you will find peace and the end of sorrow.'

"I think," continued Fa Pao, "that a lot more entered my mind as I knelt before the portrait of my friend, but all of it can be summed up in the words, 'in the silence and the stillness . . .'" That night I returned home feeling much lighter of heart than ever before, and from then onwards I have found myself making good progress in the practice of meditation. That, again, is something which I cannot describe; I can only say that my life is full of peace and of that true happiness which is to be distinguished from the empty pleasure of desire fulfilled. In the silence and stillness of my own mind I find the

answers to all the riddles of life. I can perceive the latent beauty behind all that is ugly and the ugliness which lies behind the beautiful. Winter and summer, youth and old age, sickness and health, activity and passivity—all these are but the names we give to aspects of the one, eternal Truth. All the sounds in the Universe add up to silence and all movements have their beginning and end in stillness. This was the message of my friend, T'ang Chin Nung. This is the sum of my own experience and this is the Law expounded for the guidance of posterity by our Original Teacher, Sākyamuni Buddha.''

CHAPTER VII

A SACRED MOUNTAIN

THERE ARE a number of sacred mountains in almost every province of China, but only nine of them are sufficiently important to be known throughout the whole country, four dedicated to Buddhist Bodhisattvas and five to Taoist deities. The following account of a journey to Wu T'ai Shan serves to illustrate an important aspect of Chinese Buddhism, namely, the yearly pilgrimages undertaken by Buddhists from all over the country to the four sacred mountains and other centres of the religion. Owing to the huge distances between these places, there are very few people who have paid a visit to more than one or two, though occasionally a pious man may decide to spend a year or so going the round of all of them.

Wu T'ai Shan is situated in Shansi Province, which lies to the west of Peiping, but is near enough to the Inner Mongolian border to attract many pilgrims from outside the Great Wall. It is sacred to Wenshu P'usa (Manjuśri Bodhisattva), the patron of wisdom and learning, who is usually depicted riding on a tiger and holding a sword. Unquestionably this mountain is the greatest Buddhist centre in North China, there being over three hundred monasteries and temples scattered about its slopes and in the great plateau lying between the five peaks (*wu t'ai*), from which it derives its name. Temporal authority over its inhabitants is exercised by a *hsienchang*, or district magistrate, appointed by the Provincial Government, but spiritual authority is invested in a High Lama

appointed from Thibet, on account of the fact that the mountain is a stronghold of the Western Esoteric Sect, which has its headquarters in Lhasa. In addition, there is a Mongolian Living Buddha in residence, but he does not seem greatly interested in religious matters and has not done much to justify the decision of the lamas, who shortly after his birth declared him to be the reincarnation of another Living Buddha recently "borne on high."

Some years ago a young Pekingese Buddhist named Li Meng Jên, a devotee of the Esoteric Sect, fell ill. His family called in a number of specialists in both Chinese and Western medicine, none of whom seemed very sanguine about the young man's prospects of recovery. Realising that his position was desperate and that it required a more drastic remedy that medical science could provide, he vowed to Wenshu P'usa that, if he were permitted to recover, he would unfailingly perform a pilgrimage to Wu T'ai Shan to tender his thanks. Needless to say, it was not very long before he regained his normal health, whereupon he set out to accomplish the fulfilment of his vow, laying aside his silk garments and donning a simple robe of blue cotton to indicate proper humility.

The first stage of his journey was by railway from Peiping to Tat'ung, a route which took him through a gap in the Great Wall at Nank'ou only to return him once more to its protection by way of another gap at the Mongolian border town of Kalgan. He reached Tat'ung towards evening, and made his way to a small inn consisting of several rooms arranged round a court-yard, all of them entirely unfurnished, except for a huge *k'ang*, or brick platform, which could be heated in winter and on which the guests could spread out their bedding. During supper, which was laid out on a six-inch high table and placed before him as he sat cross-legged on the

k'ang, he asked the inn-keeper to arrange for the hire of a *chiaotzû* to take him to Wu T'ai Shan, some seven days march to the south-east. In most parts of China, the word *chiaotzû* signifies a sedan chair carried on the shoulders of two men, but in Shansi it refers to a large, covered palanquin with shafts at each end which are fitted to the harness of two mules, one before and one behind. The advantage of this mode of conveyance over the local horse-cart is that it glides smoothly over the roughest roads (the legs of the mules acting as springs) and that it is capable of carrying a heavy man up almost perpendicular mountain sides.

Shortly after dawn the following morning, the *chiaotzû* appeared, accompanied by a young countryman dressed in trousers and jacket of faded blue cloth, who announced that he was the *lo-fu*, or muleteer, who would guide Mr. Li to his destination. The inn-keeper bustled out with his suitcases and deposited them on the netting which formed the floor of the *chiaotzû*. Over these were spread a couple of padded quilts belonging to the *lo-fu* and the similar, but more elegant, bedding of the passenger. They started almost immediately, Mr. Li reclining at his ease and the *lo-fu* plodding at the side, and hurried to join up with a small party proceeding in the same direction. This party consisted of two other Chinese pilgrims in *chiaotzûs*, a Mongolian lama on a spirited horse, two *lo-fus*, and some six or seven Mongolian pilgrims proceeding on foot.

For some days they travelled through rather arid country, spending the nights sometimes in ancient walled cities and sometimes in farmhouses, where the peasants were so poor that they could not afford to eat the eggs laid by their own chickens, reserving them all for the market or for the pilgrims who passed that way and who were prepared to spend twenty or thirty cents each on a

night's board and lodging. Once they came to a river in full spate. There was a ford, but the water was rushing so fast that the *lo-fu* were afraid to take their animals through it. Mr. Li climbed out of his *chiaotzû* and surveyed the scene. Inwardly, his pious thoughts gave way to oaths because it looked as if he might have to spend several days in the desolate village which straggled along the road leading to the ford. All of a sudden, however, a venerable Mongol pilgrim, who must have been at least seventy years old, flung off his trousers and, tying the skirts of his long robe round his middle, grasped the bridle of the first mule and leapt into the torrent. With some difficulty he dragged the unwilling animal to the other side of the ford and returned for the next. Meanwhile he taunted the *lo-fu*, calling them the misbegotten sons of turtles, and drawing attention to their youth and his own advanced years. Stung into action by these words, the younger men flung off their trousers too, and catching hold of the remaining animals, raced each other across the ford. A few minutes later they returned for the baggage which had been emptied out of the *chiaotzûs* and for the Chinese pilgrims, including Mr. Li, whom they carried across on their shoulders. The Mongols preferred to walk, with the exception of the lama, who spurred his horse through the torrent, soaking the skirts of his beautiful purple robe. That evening, Mr. Li learnt that the old Mongol who had shamed the *lo-fu* into action had walked all the way from Northern Manchuria, spending over two years on the road.

"Why did you not come by railway?" he asked.

"I wanted to make this a real pilgrimage," was the answer.

During the next few days the ground began to rise until, eight days after leaving Tat'ung, they reached

the bottom of a gigantic slope which proved to be the northern face of Wu T'ai Shan. Just about this time, the leading mule of the two harnessed to Mr. Li's *chiaotzû* became sick and took to rolling over on the ground. This occasioned several falls, though neither the *chiaotzû* nor its occupant came to much harm, as the second mule resolutely stood its ground. The *lo-fu* produced a long needle and professed to be able to cure the sick animal by stabbing it in a certain part of its head. Mr. Li was inclined to regard this cruel remedy as an example of ignorance and turned away each time it was administered, but somehow the mule seemed to recover and did not fall or roll over again. However, Mr. Li decided that he would climb the face of the mountain on foot, thus combining a little additional piety with a natural concern for his own safety.

Towards noon the whole party reached the top of the slope and climbed through a narrow gap into the great plateau which lies between the five peaks. The scene which met their eyes was one to which they were soon to become accustomed, yet it was so entrancing that during the whole three months of his stay Li never failed to be moved by it. Here, indeed, was a fit dwelling place for a Bodhisattva! It was now the height of summer and a profusion of wild flowers covered the whole ground as far as the eye could reach, reminding Li of a multi-coloured Peiping carpet with a green background, as heavily ornamented as the official robes of the mandarins of former days. The brightness of the colours was enhanced by the mountain atmosphere, so clear that not so much as a silken whisp of mist or cloud obscured even the furthest peaks. Complementing the work of nature, some thirty or forty of Wu T'ai's three hundred temples could be seen nestling against the slopes surrounding the plateau or strewn across it like jewels carelessly

thrown on the lovely carpet. Their coloured walls and eaves vied with the flowers in gorgeousness, while, far away on the right, a huge dagoba of glistening white provided a sharp and lovely contrast to the rest.

As the little procession filed along the path leading to this tower, it began to dwindle as its members dropped out and made their way to the temples which caught their fancy or which they recognised as the ones in which they had been recommended to stay. The Chinese pilgrims were the first to say good-bye to the others, as they were bound for Kwang-chi-mon-p'ang, a large monastery near the pass and one of the few inhabited by Chinese monks. Most of the others were in charge of Mongol lamas with a sprinkling of Thibetans and other natives of Central Asia. Li himself decided to make for P'usa-ting, the greatest monastery of all and residence of the High Lama, who had been sent from Thibet to exercise spiritual authority over the thousands of lamas in the neighbourhood.

P'usa-ting stood on the southern slope of a small hill above the village of Wu T'ai and looked down on the great, white dagoba which rose up from the courtyard of a temple at the foot of the village. Over to the right was a smaller temple with walls of yellow ochre, which proved to be the property of the Dalai Lama himself; but, for the moment, Li was only interested in the monastery in which he himself was going to stay. It consisted of a number of large and highly ornamented buildings, surrounding a series of courtyards and looking extremely like a section of the palace in Peiping which had formerly housed the Manchu emperors. This likeness was heightened by the dress of the lamas who thronged its courts, in dragon-embroidered robes of crimson and blue, picked out with silver and gold, which gave them the

appearance of mandarins in the days when the Son of Heaven still occupied the Dragon Throne.

Li was ushered in by a side door giving direct access to the apartments reserved for well-to-do guests. Dismounting from his *chiaotzû*, to show proper respect, he bowed to two gorgeously dressed officials who proved to have been entrusted with the welfare of the guests who lived in this part of the monastery. He soon discovered that, though lamas, both these gentlemen were Chinese by race and that their education left something to be desired, so that their mandarin robes appeared more conspicuous than their mental adornments. Nevertheless, both Wang Lama and Ma Lama proved truly hospitable, and Li soon grew to overlook their shortcomings. They led him to a splendid room, big enough to house six or eight persons, one half of which was taken up by the largest *k'ang* Li had ever seen, covered with rich carpets from Central Asia, and bounded on three sides by walls frescoed to represent scenes from heaven and hell as envisaged by a Thibetan artist. The rest of the room was furnished with chairs and tables of coppery-red lacquer which were hardly ever used, as the *k'ang* afforded ample space for several people, either sitting or lying, and Li's meals were served on a tiny table as he sat cross-legged on his own quilts. Ma Lama explained that this room often served to accommodate a party of three or four guests, but that he was to have it to himself as long as he cared to stay. He did not feel unduly flattered by this attention, as he guessed that Wang and Ma had correctly estimated him to be a man of more substance than his simple dress proclaimed—not that they would make any charge for board and lodging; they would merely expect his "gift" to be a somewhat generous one.

He spent the first afternoon wandering round the

monastery and the neighbouring village, for he intended that his long stay on the mountain should serve three purposes—the fulfilment of his vow, the improvement of his health, and the means of passing an enjoyable and instructive holiday. His first act after lunch, however, was to go to the main pavilion of the temple and prostrate himself to the ground three times before a huge image of Wenshu P'usa, in order to announce his arrival and inform the Bodhisattva that he had not failed to fulfil his vow. The great pavilion was an impressive place, the high, painted ceiling being supported on huge scarlet pillars wrapped around with specially-made carpets, more lovely than any he had seen in Peiping. The lacquered altar immediately in front of the Bodhisattva bore more than a hundred votive lamps, each containing a spluttering wick floating in melted butter. In addition, there was a porcelain incense burner and three large plates heaped with precious and semi-precious stones presented by pious pilgrims. Great banners, inscribed in Chinese, Thibetan and Sanskrit, hung from the ceiling or floated on silken cords between the pillars supporting the roof. The general colour scheme within followed that of the crimson walls and yellow-tiled roof which formed the outside of the pavilion. Li, who had often visited the temples and palaces of Peiping, was nevertheless impressed by the splendour of this and the other principal buildings of the monastery.

After paying his respects to the Bodhisattva, he wandered down to the village, for the most part a single street of shops supplying the needs of the pilgrims, such as religious paintings and carvings, incense burners, prayer-wheels, receptacles for holy water, cunningly wrought metal lamps and silver reliquaries, beautiful silks and satins figured with dragons and flowers worthy to be used as presents to the highest lamas, food and

sweets of all kinds, snuff for the Mongols and tobacco for the Chinese. Considering the smallness of the village, it was amazing to see such a variety of goods, many of them extremely valuable. Li decided that he would make some purchases here before he returned to Peiping, but he was in no hurry to do this, as he preferred to get an accurate idea of local prices and to spend days or weeks, if need be, in arriving at satisfactory bargains. Moreover, there appeared to be a number of craftsmen who would be prepared to execute work in silver or bronze to suit the fancy of the customer.

Strolling down to the end of the village he came to a rather dilapidated crimson wall surrounding some irregularly spaced buildings, which had all the appearance of extreme age and from among which the great white dagoba reared its head to the sky. A number of people, both lamas and laymen, could be seen walking leisurely in and out of the temple gates, giving the impression that it was a much frequented place, an impression which was confirmed as soon as Li had penetrated to the court-yard surrounding the base of the dagoba. This great bottle-like structure was completely ringed round by a gallery, the inner wall of which consisted largely of a row of Thibetan prayer-wheels, some four feet high, fitted into a groove running all round the tower. These wheels were kept continuously revolving by a succession of Mongol pilgrims, who walked round and round at a steady pace, fingering their rosaries with their left hands and patting the wheels with their right. Li learnt from a Chinese onlooker that it was the ambition of these pilgrims to make ten thousand eight hundred complete circles of the dagoba, this number corresponding exactly to one hundred times the number of beads on a Buddhist rosary. By this devout practice, they hoped to receive the especial blessing and protection of Wenshu P'usa. Most Chinese

Buddhists, however, regarded this purely mechanical practice as one not likely to be very efficacious in leading to Enlightenment, a point of view shared by Li. Another novelty which aroused his interest was the presence of several Mongols scattered about the courtyard who stood facing the tower from all sides and who threw themselves flat on their faces before it time and time again. They too were striving to make the number of their prostrations mount up to the giant figure of ten thousand eight hundred. Naturally they had to come back day after day to achieve this purpose; moreover, they were each assisted by an ingenious device. This consisted of a flat board, some seven feet by two, raised slightly at the end pointing towards the dagoba, and flanked by two soft pads which could be made to run up and down its entire length. The devotee could stand facing the tower with his feet just behind the outer end of the board, which touched the ground at this point. Placing the fingers and palms of his hands together he would raise them above his head and bring them downwards, pausing when they were on a level with his mouth and again when they reached his chest, and chanting at the same time: "Homage to the Buddha, homage to the Dharma, homage to the Saṅgha." Then he would stoop down and seize the two sliding pads on either side of the board. Pressing hard against the ground with his feet, he would let his hands, protected against splinters by the pads, shoot forward until he was lying face downwards and at full length along the board. Finally, he would relinquish his hold of the pads and press his palms and fingers together above his head. This completed one whole movement, after which he would hurry gracefully to his feet and repeat the whole process again. Li considered that this practice, in addition to its devotional value, was an excellent way of exercising the body, and

that it had probably been invented centuries ago by some Hindu or Thibetan asetic for the purpose of counteracting the effects of prolonged sitting in one position during meditation.

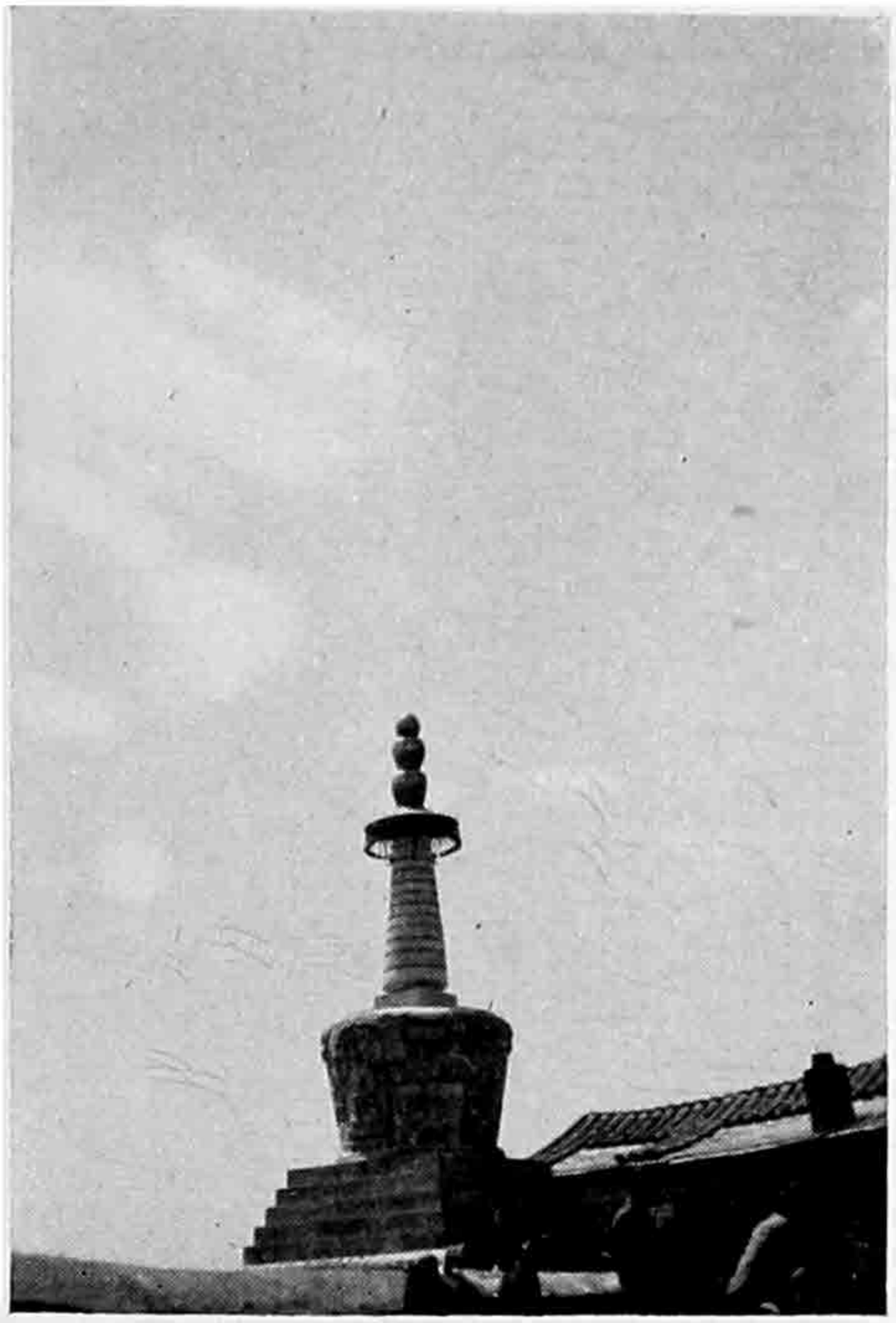
He returned to P'usa-ting in time for the afternoon service, and stood quietly in an attitude of devotion while the great Thibetan horns blared and some forty or fifty lamas chanted in deep bass voices very different from the nasal tenor employed by most Chinese monks. The sonorous Thibeto-Sanskrit phrases echoed throughout the courtyard in front of the great pavilion, reminding him of thunder rumbling among the mountains, an effect which was heightened by the braying of the long bass horns and the beating of two drums, each of them as great in circumference as the boiler of a railway engine. The crimson robes of ceremony worn by the officiating lamas added to the sombre magnificence of the scene and Li, affected by the combination of solemn sounds and rich colours, felt that he was indeed in the presence of the great Bodhisattva whose golden statue loomed above the altar, his body resplendant in the light of the flickering votive lamps and his head almost lost in the gloom which hung about the mighty ceiling. A feeling of deep reverence welled up in his heart and he prostrated himself again and again before the open doors of the pavilion. For the first time since his arrival on the mountain, he sensed something of the spirit which for nearly two thousand years has drawn men to it from every province of China and from all the countries of Central and Eastern Asia.

"Homage to the Buddha," he whispered. "Homage to the Dharma, homage to the Saṅgha, homage to Manjuśrī Bodhisattva Mahāsattva, Lord of Wisdom."

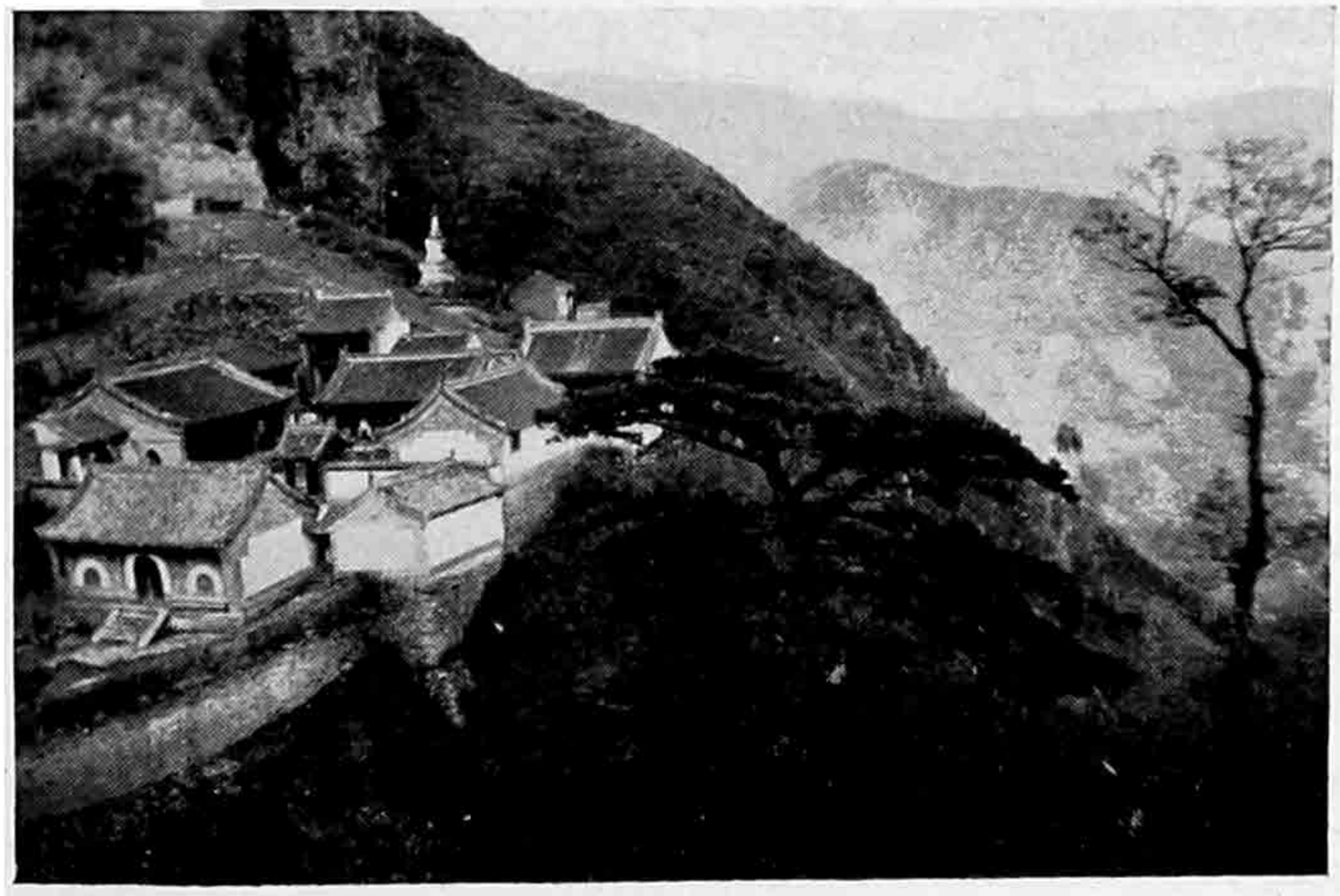
When the service was over he returned to his room and took out some of the devotional books he had brought

with him, intending to pass the evening in study; but this serious mood was rudely dispelled by the arrival of a servant with his supper, and he spent the next few hours in conversation with Ma Lama, who never ceased telling his beads, even when his tongue was busy with all the scandal of the neighbourhood. At nine o'clock, the old man took his leave and Li set about spreading his silken quilts on a corner of the *k'ang*. Although it was still the height of summer, the mountain air grew cold after sunset and the soft comfort of his bedding proved very welcome.

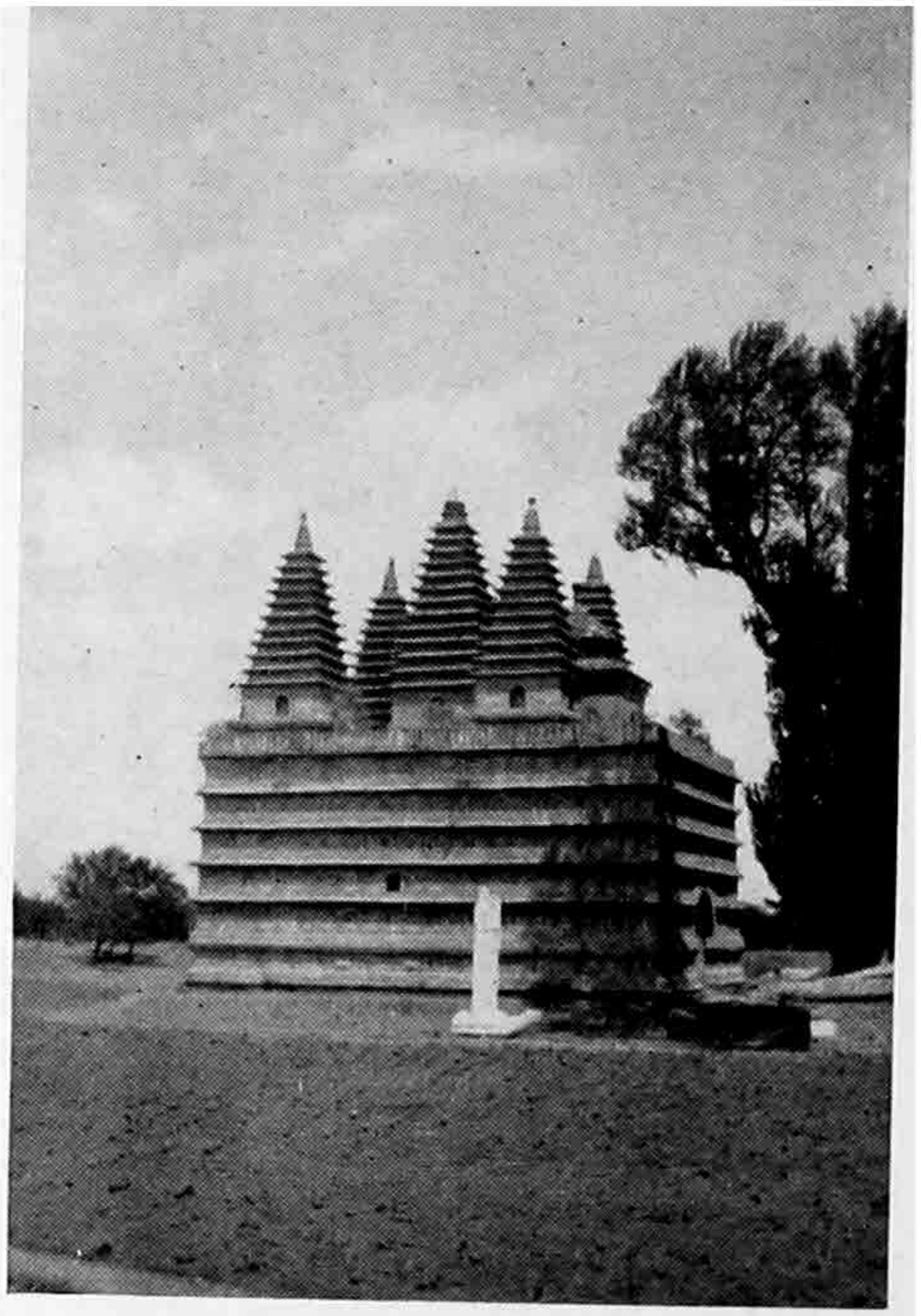
The next few days were passed very much like the first. Li had intended to set out as soon as possible on a round of the five peaks, a journey which, in fine weather, takes from two to three days, but Wang Lama advised him to wait until after the great summer festival which was almost due to begin. So he contented himself with spending two or three hours a day in study under the supervision of a lama who had undertaken to teach him the rudiments of Thibeto-Sanskrit, and by passing the rest of the time in visits to some of the nearer temples and monasteries. In one of these, called Mani Bhadra, he came across the old Mongol who had taken the lead in dragging the mules across the river. He gave Li a warm welcome and offered him a cup of tea flavoured with salt and a small lump of rancid butter. Etiquette obliged him to accept the cup as gracefully as possible and to drink the contents with apparent enjoyment, but he had the greatest difficulty in preventing himself from vomitting up the revolting liquid. When they had chatted for some time, the old fellow led Li to a small cave at the back of the temple which contained a natural rock basin fed by a spring. The water was reputed to have magic properties and to be a sure remedy for every type of illness, so Li was pressed to accept a little in a



Thibetan-style tower, Miao Feng Shan,
Peiping.



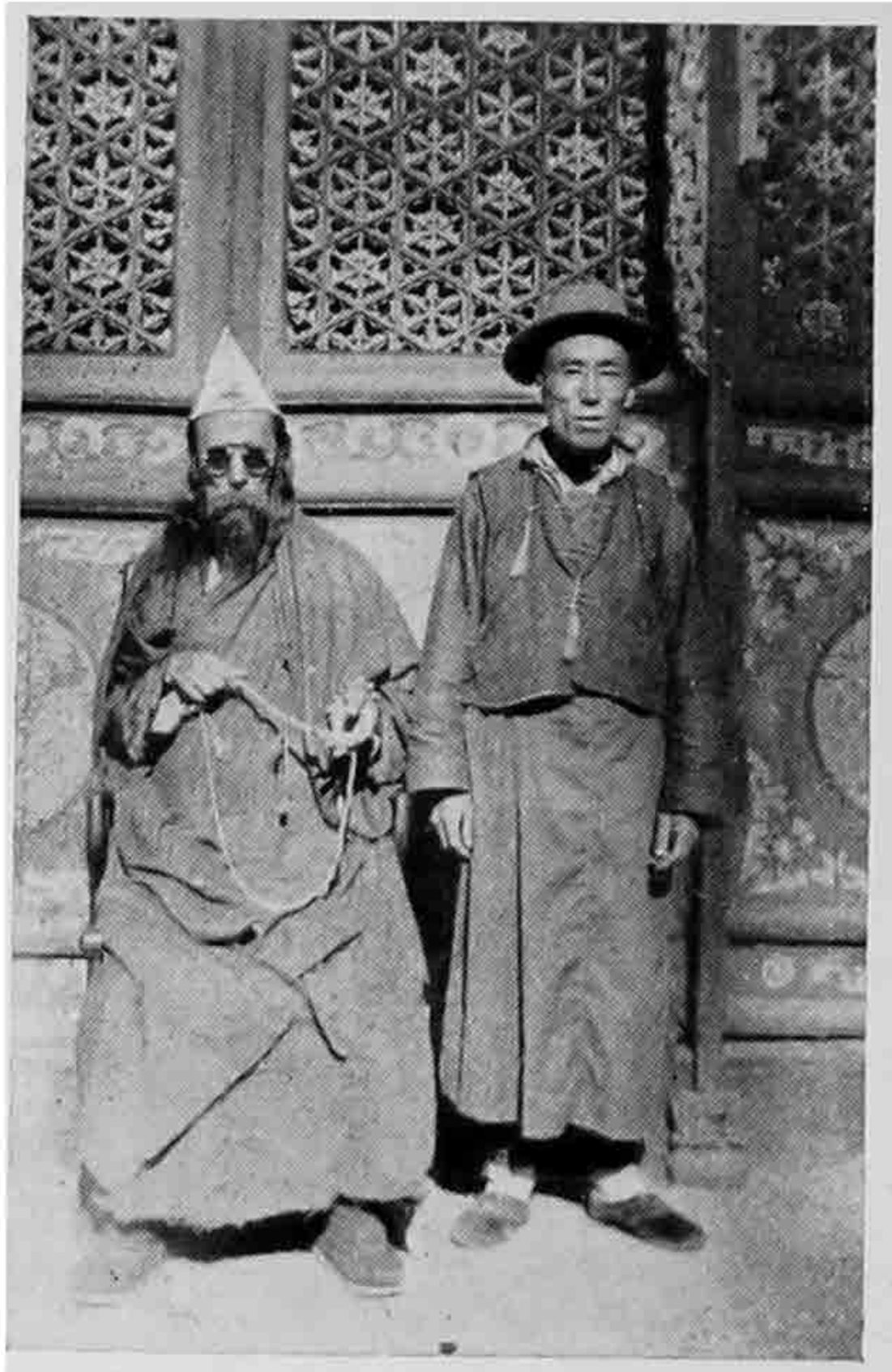
One of the hundreds of temples on Wu T'ai Shan, Shansi.



The Five Tower Temple, Peiping.
Note the strong Indian influence on the architecture.

Wayside Temple, Kuangtung.

The Yellow Temple, Peiping, showing Thibetan influence.

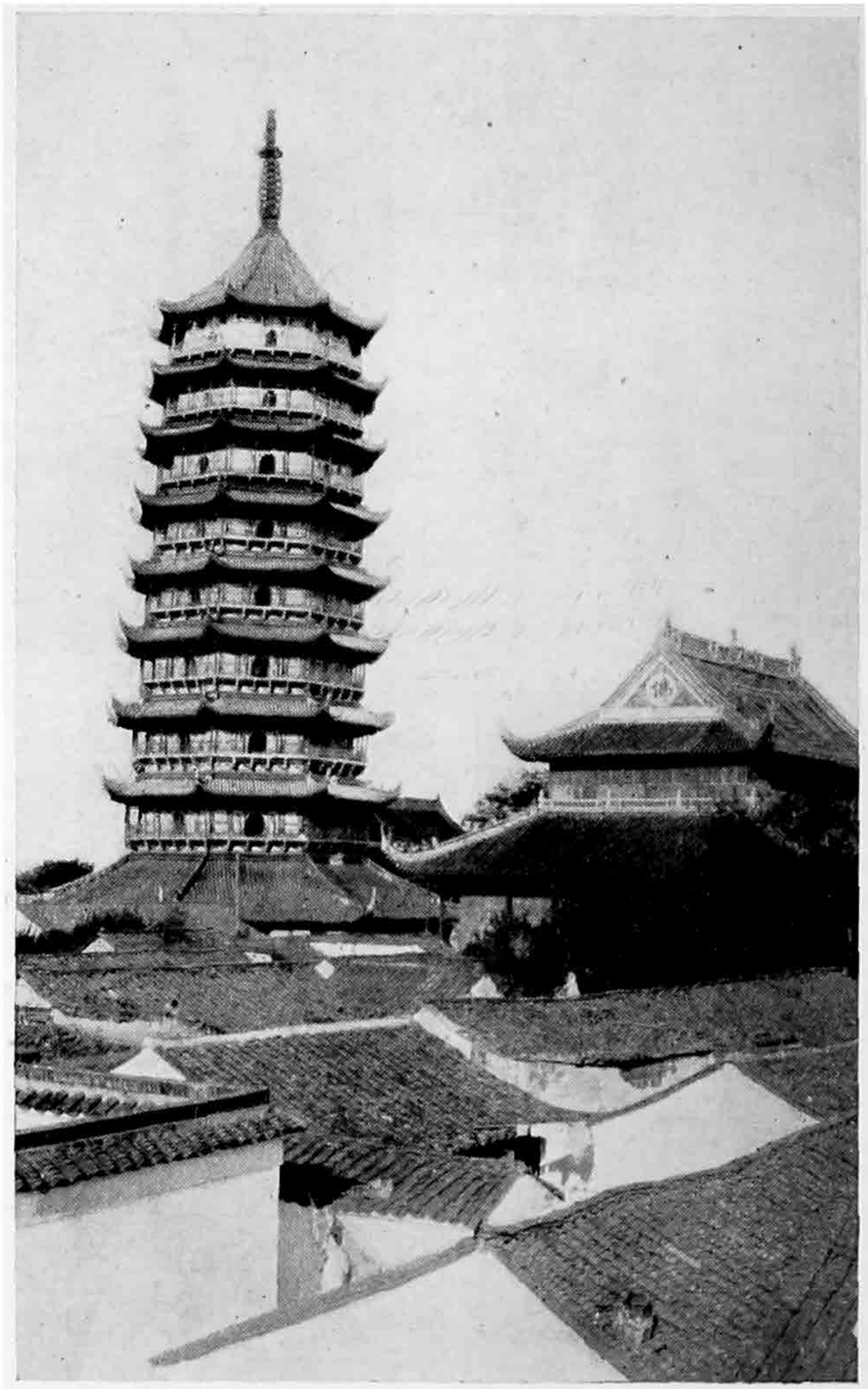


Mongolian Lamas

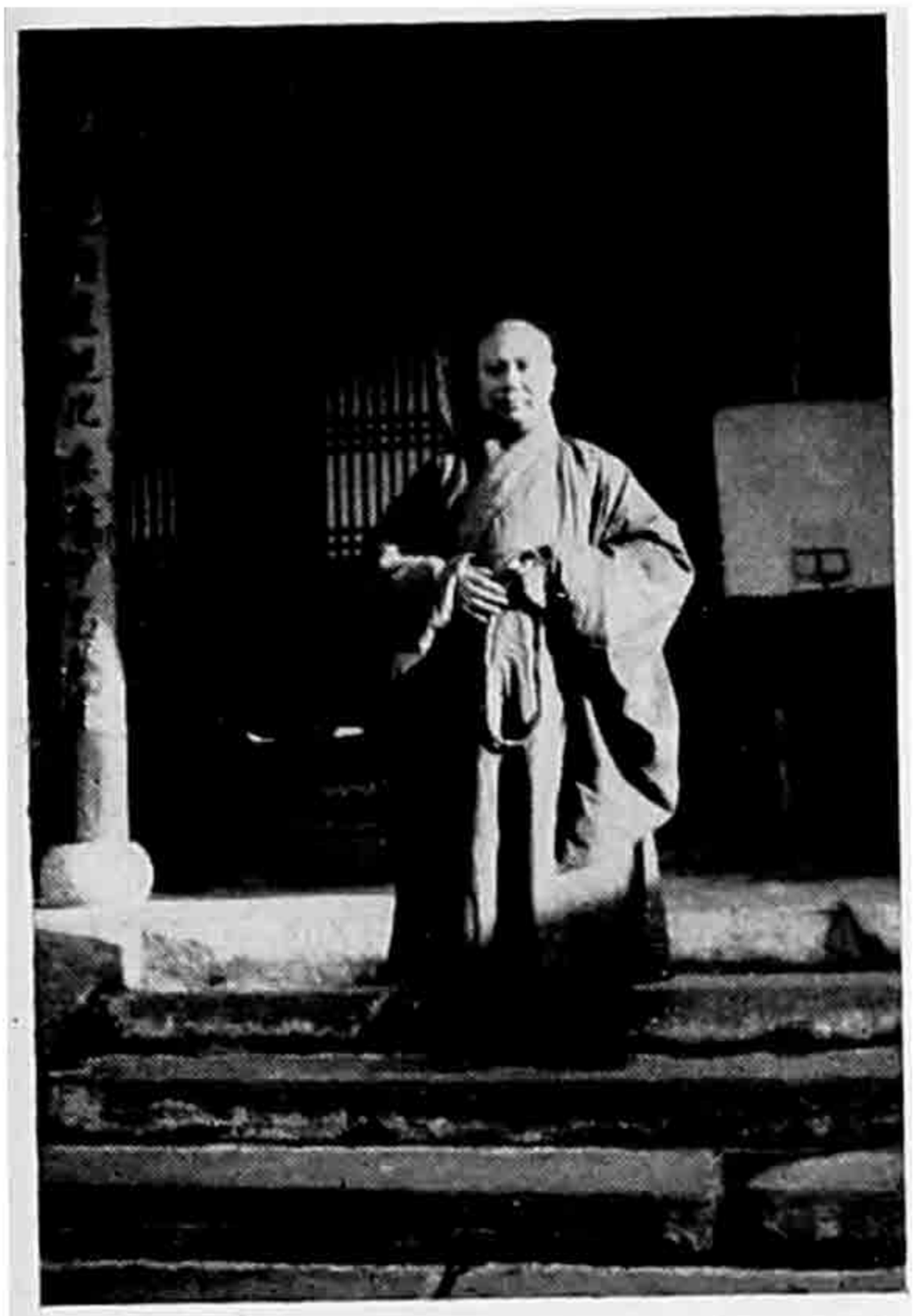
A senior Lama with the title of Khambo or Doctor.

Lama in ceremonial dress similar to that of officials in the Manchu Dynasty.

Turning a prayer wheel, Wu T'ai Shan, Shansi.



Pagoda in the City of Soochow.

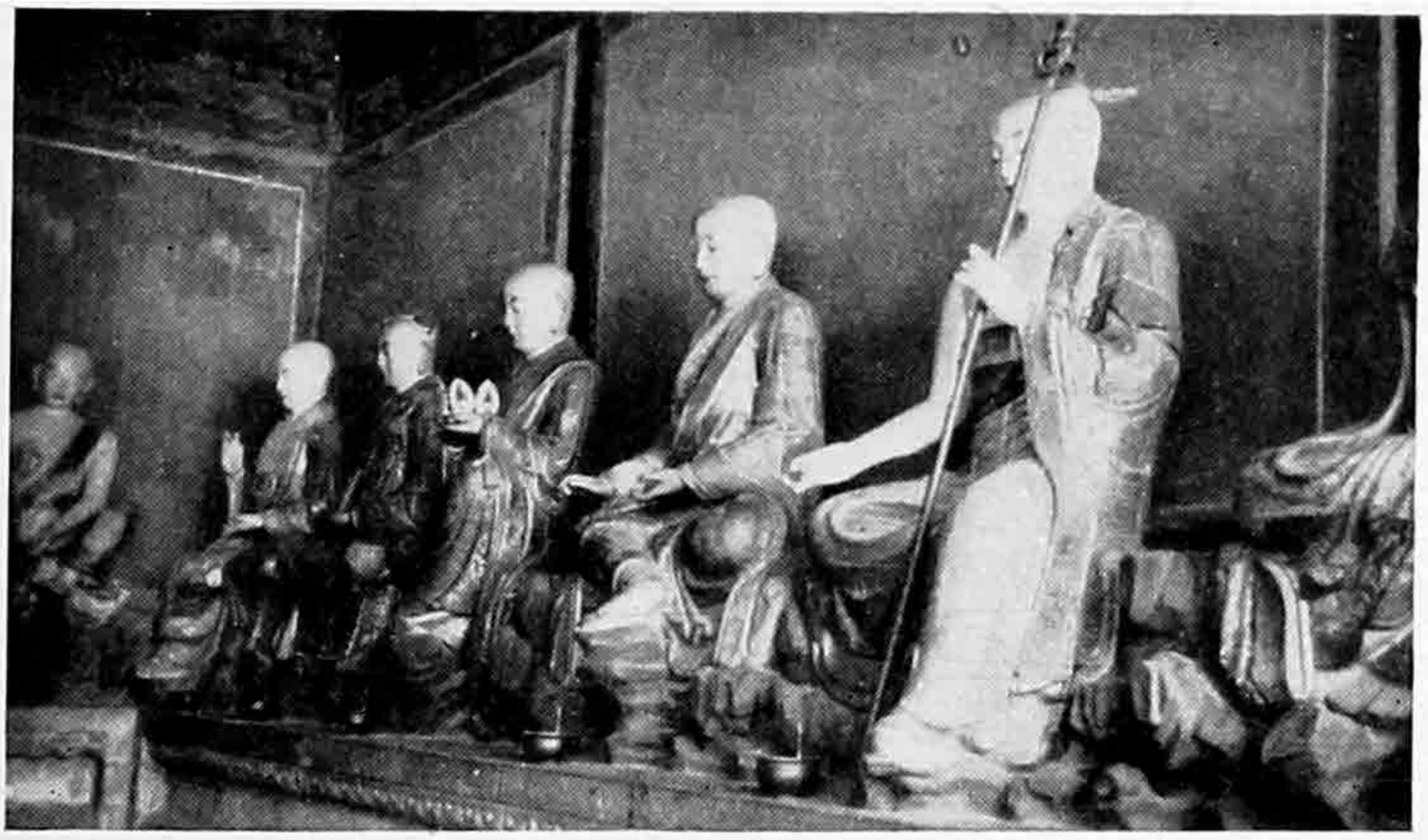


"The Reverent Receiver of Guests."

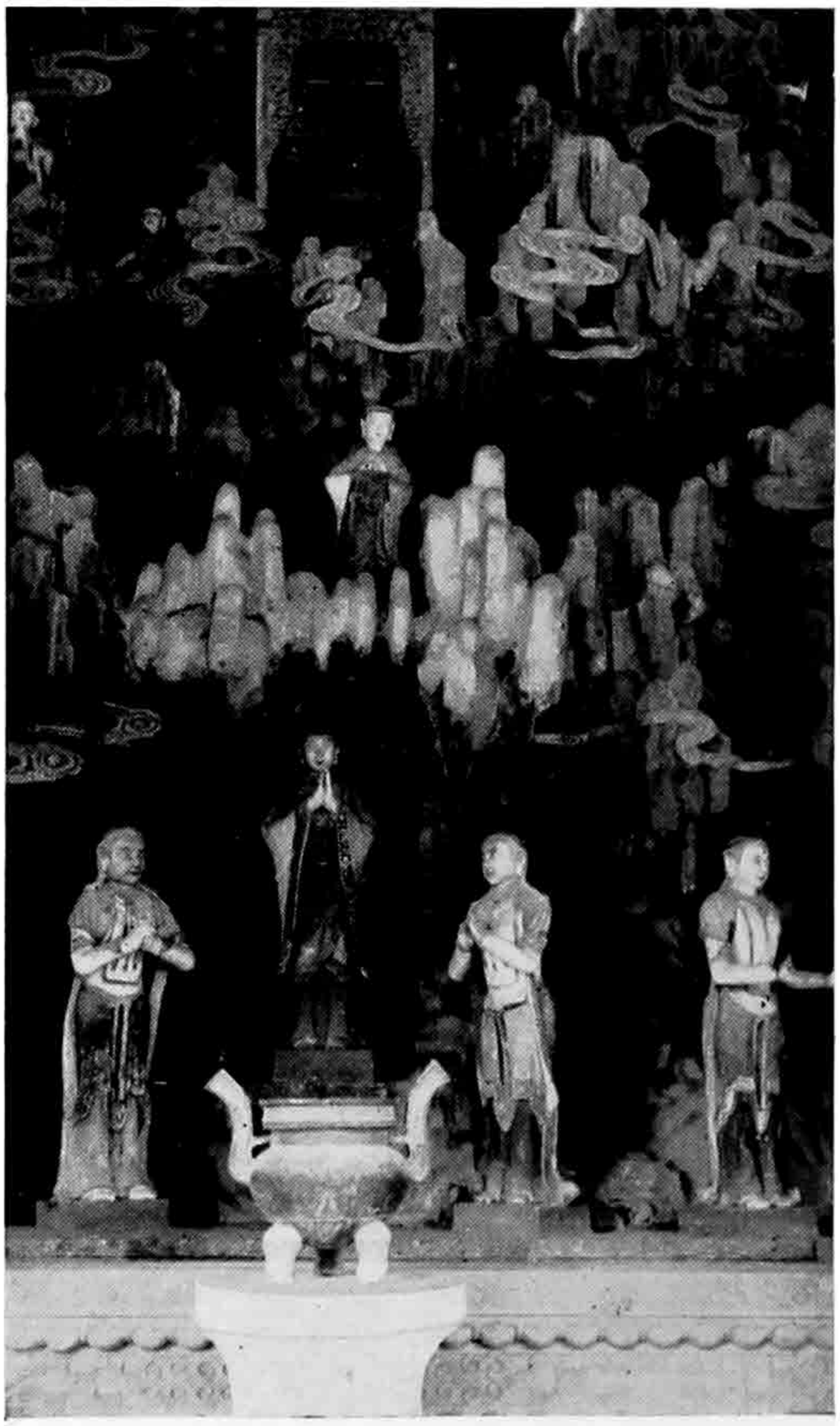
Young monk in the private courtyard of the Abbot, Kunming, Yunnan.

"P'u Hsien P'u-sa." The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. From the exterior of the Yellow Temple, Peiping.

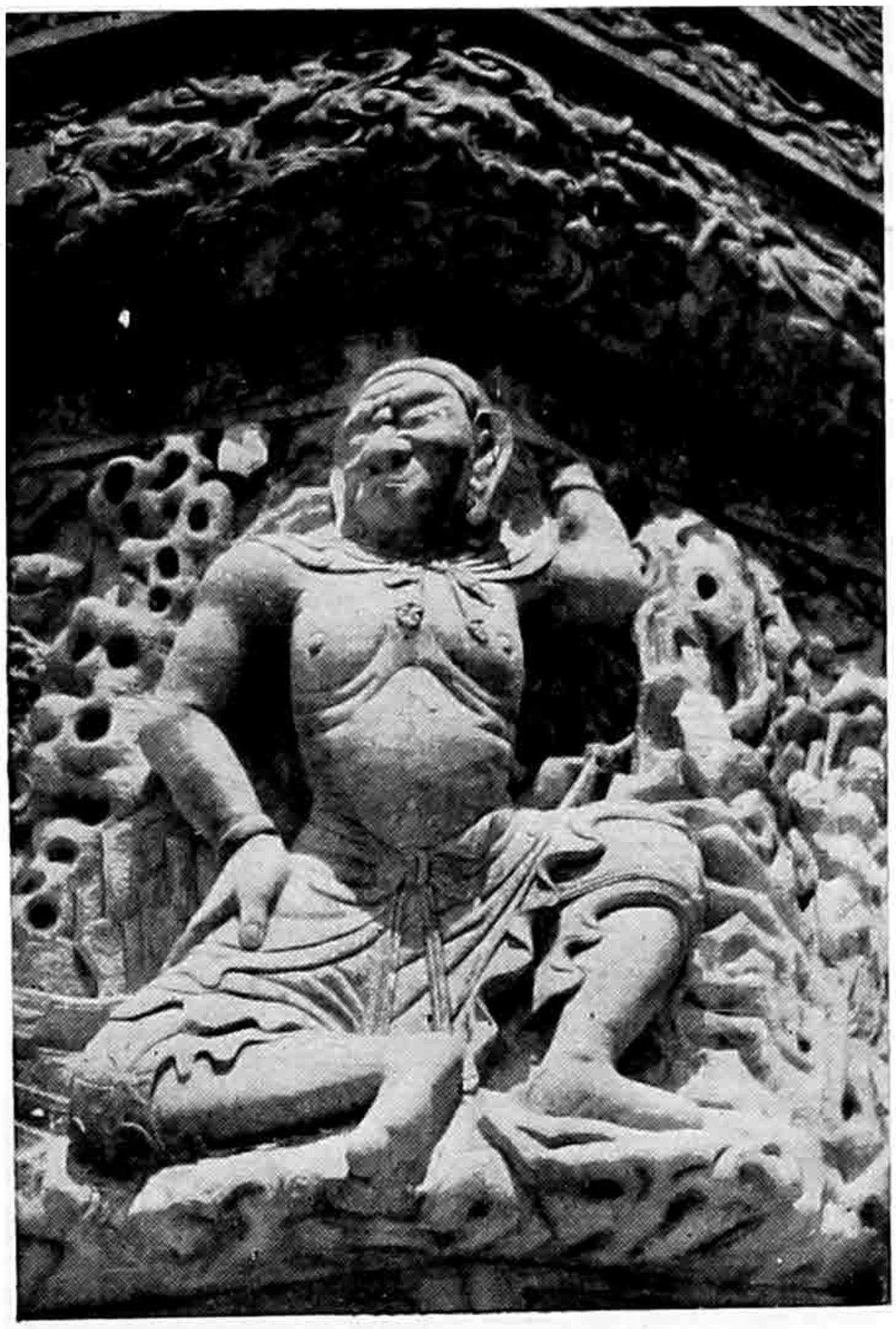
"Kuan Yin Pu-sa." The Bodhisattva Avolokitesvara. From a temple in Peiping.



Some of the Five Hundred Lo-han or Arahan, Temple of the Sleeping Buddha, Peiping.



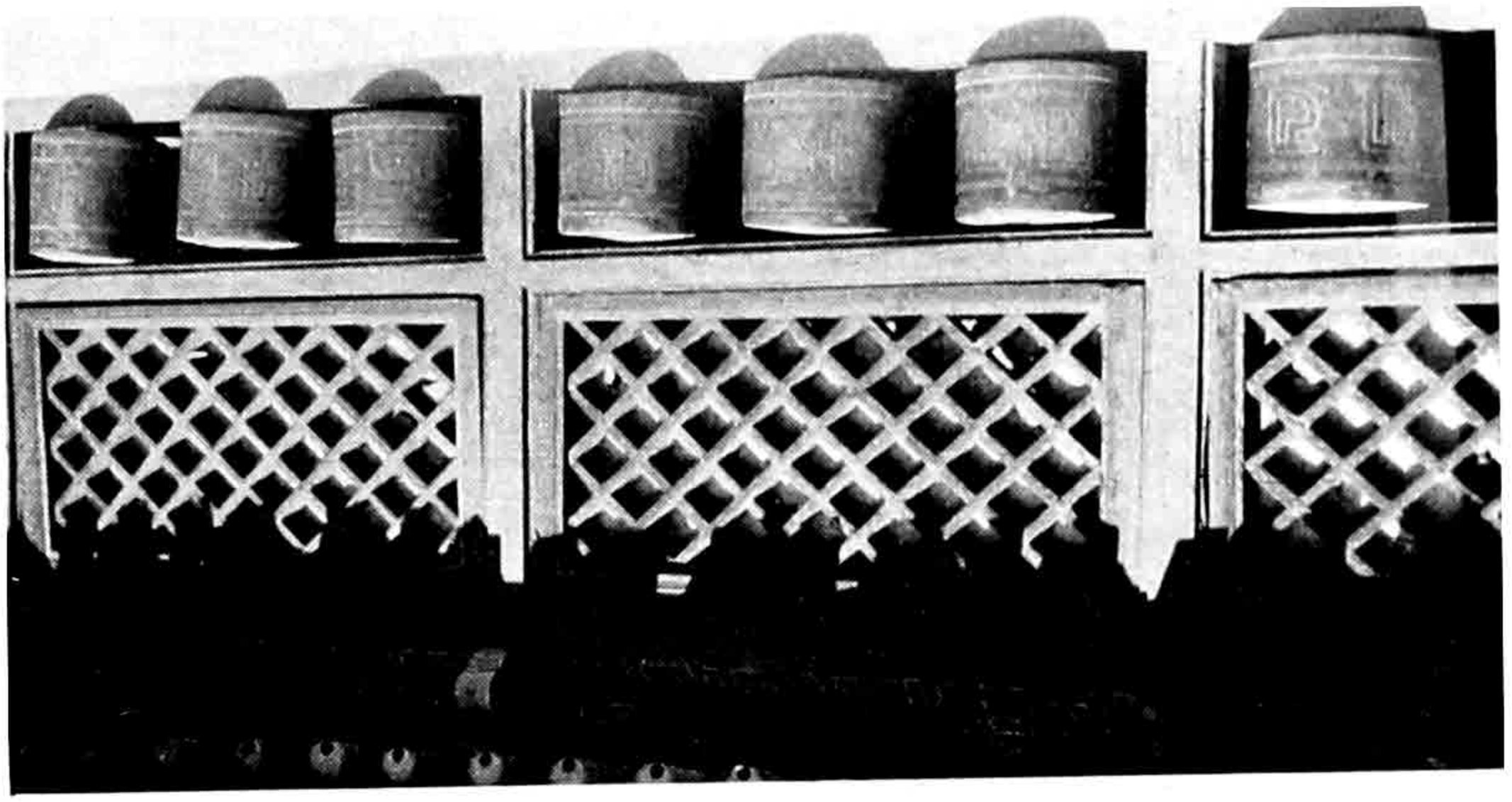
Grotto in the Temple of Paradise, Winter Palace, Peiping.



Strange and melancholy figure from the exterior of a temple in Peiping.

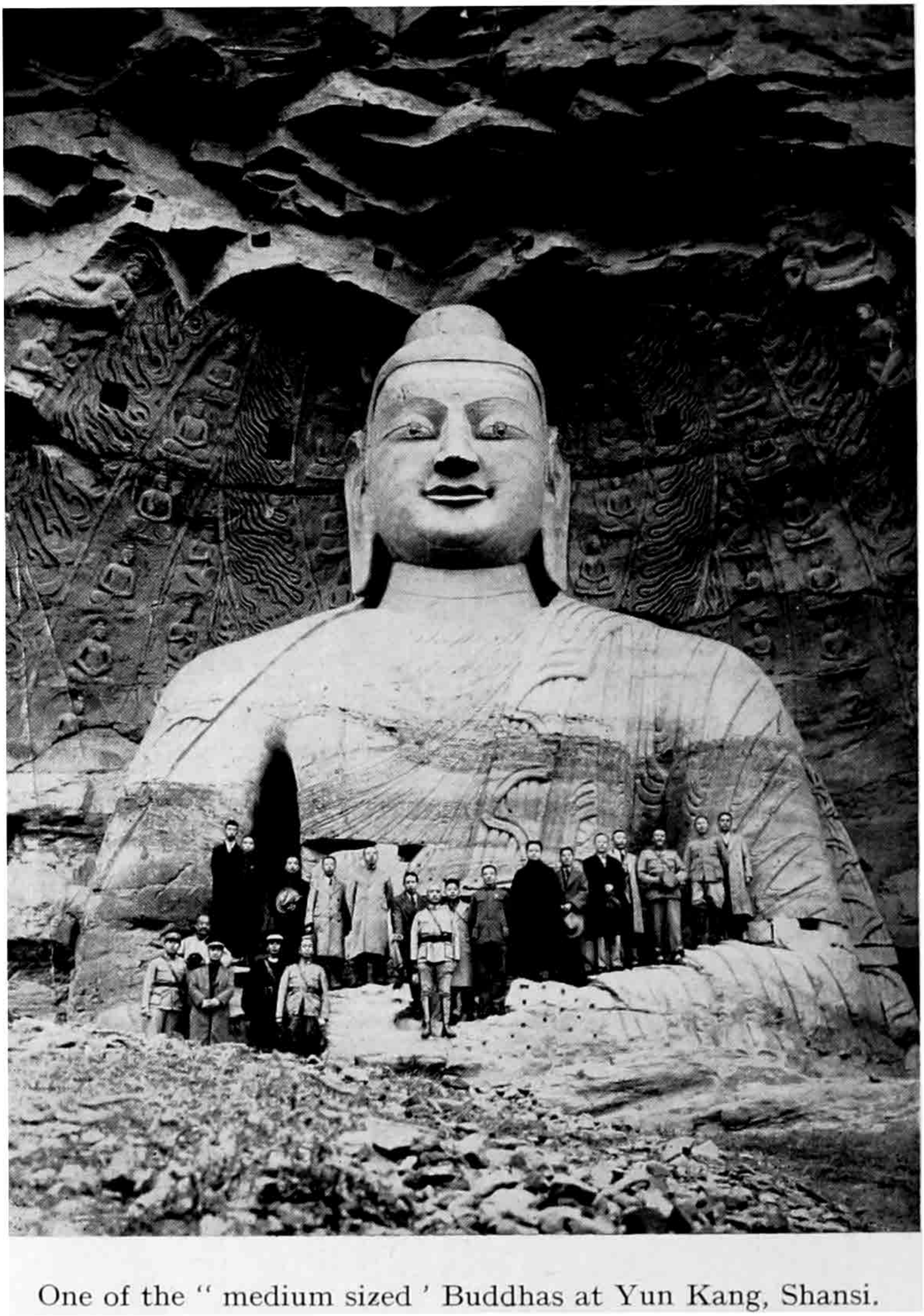
The inner courtyard of a temple in Yunnan.

The Gateway of a temple in Yunnan. Note the two Chin Kang or Diamond Beings who the Doorway guard.

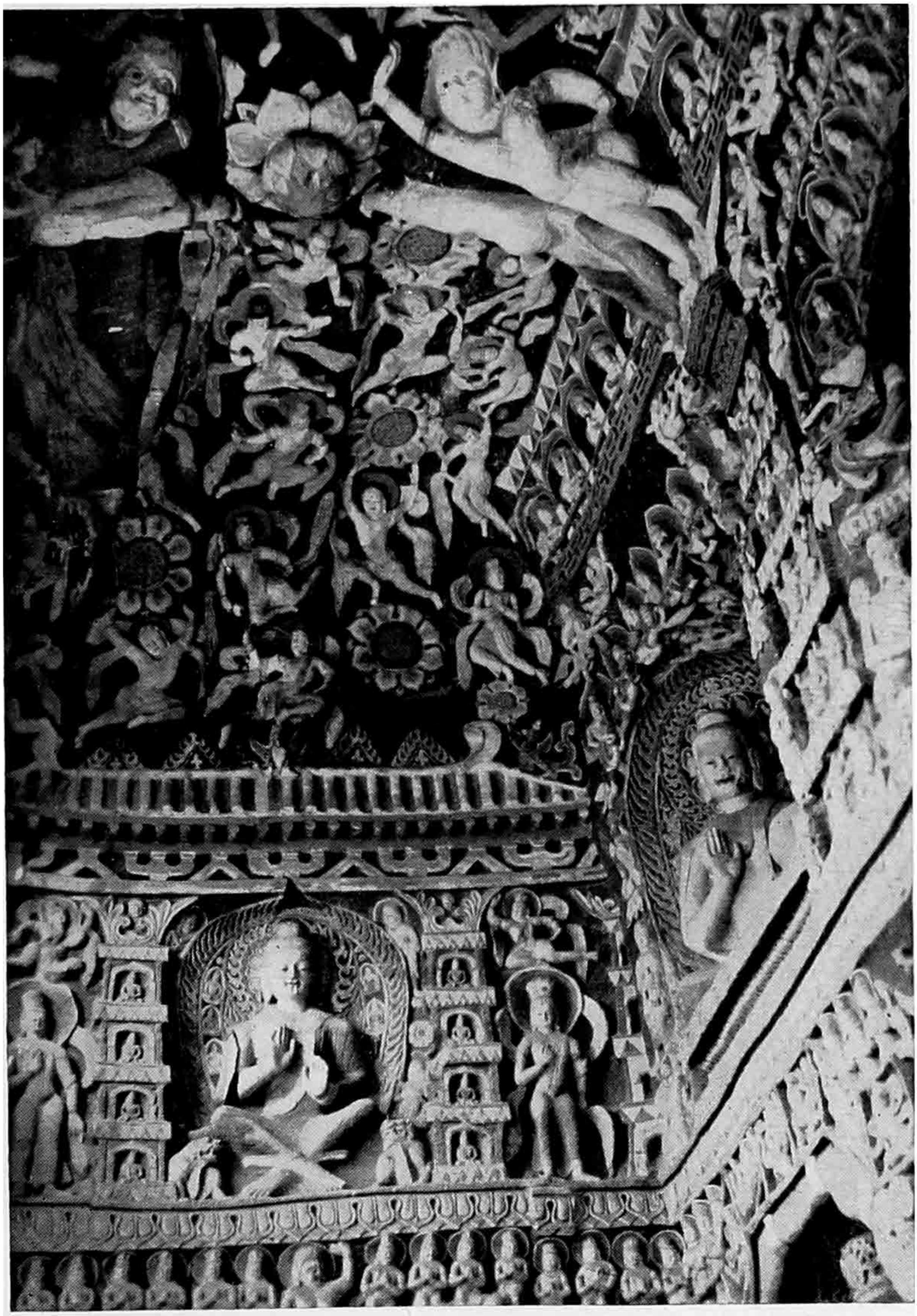


Prayer Wheels, Wu T'ai Shan, Shansi.

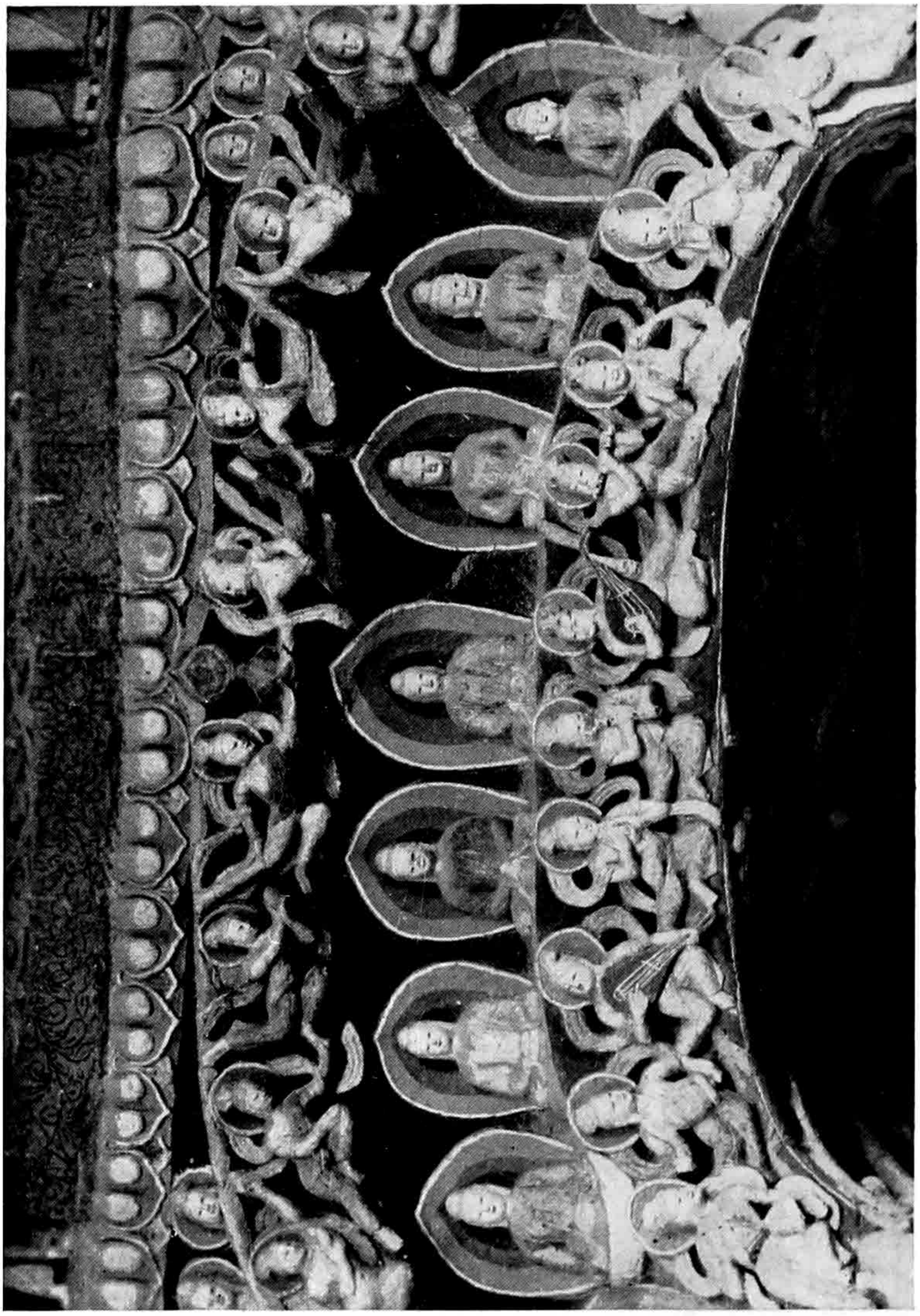
Monk's graveyard, Ling Yun Temple, Shantung.



One of the " medium sized ' Buddhas at Yun Kang, Shansi.



Rock carvings from the Cave Temples at Yun Kang near Ta Tung in Shansi, Wei Dynasty (A.D. 386-556)



Rock carvings from the Cave Temples at Yun Kang near Ta T'ung in Shansi, Wei Dynasty (A.D. 386-556)

small earthen bottle, to take back to Peiping for use when necessity should arise. Naturally, he did not refuse the gift, but he had little faith in its miraculous powers.

Upon another occasion he visited Kuang-chi-mon-p'ang, where the Chinese pilgrims who had accompanied him on the journey were staying. This proved to be a large monastery, inhabited by several hundred monks, in charge of a Szechu'anese abbot, the Teacher of the Law, Nêng Hai, who had spent several years in Thibet and who combined certain Lamaistic practices with those common to Chinese monks. Thus the main pavilion of the monastery was arranged in the Chinese way, but many services were held in a smaller building during which purely Thibetan rites were performed. Nêng Hai was well known throughout the Chinese Buddhist world for his learning, and several prominent men were included among his lay-disciples. Li asked to be allowed to pay his respects. He prostrated himself three times before the abbot, who was sitting cross-legged on his bed, and received from him a small mud plaque embossed with an image of Wenshu P'usa and a piece of blue ribbon to wear round his neck, but the great man seemed tired and disinclined to talk much, so Li withdrew as soon as possible and paid a visit to his Chinese friends. They were housed in a room greatly inferior to the one which he occupied at P'usa-ting and, in conformity with the practice in all Chinese temples, were expected to live entirely on vegetarian food unaccompanied by wine. In P'usa-ting, on the other hand, meat was served with every meal and the Lamas Wang and Ma both had a taste for strong spirits, distilled from grain, which they often shared with Li, who, as a member of the Esoteric Sect, was not expected to abstain from such things.

A few days after Li's arrival at Wu T'ai Shan the great summer festival commenced. Thousands of

Mongols and a fair number of Chinese had by now arrived to witness it and were distributed among the various temples in the neighbourhood of P'usa-ting; which, as the residence of the High Lama, was the traditional centre for the festivities. On the first day, the Mongol pilgrims and many of the lamas attended a debate in one of the great courtyards. Everyone was wearing a crimson "toga" over his best robe when he took his place in the assembly. They sat in seried rows cross-legged on the ground and facing towards a vacant space, about six feet across, which ran from one side of the courtyard to the other. At one end of this was a great throne on which the High Lama presently took his seat, robed from head to foot in cloth of gold and accompanied by high dignitaries in gorgeous robes and pagoda-like hats of gilded lacquer. The proceedings began with the intoning of several chants of invocation by the whole company, while horns blared, drums throbbed and bells jangled. It appeared that even the meanest pilgrim knew all these chants by heart. Then, as a deep silence descended on the throng, an elderly man of unassuming appearance took his place at the far end of the aisle which had been left open between the crimson-clad throngs and sat facing the throne of the High Lama from the opposite end of the courtyard. Li learnt that this old man was highly skilled in religious debate and that he was prepared to take on anyone who cared to present himself for a verbal contest. One after another, people leapt up from the ground and stood in front of his impassive figure, swaying their bodies with ritualistic movements and shouting the questions and answers at the top of their voices. Unfortunately, the whole debate was conducted in the Mongolian language, and it was impossible for Li to discover whether any of the participants succeeded in worsting the old man. Several hours

passed before the last contestant, a small boy with a lovely smile, resumed his seat. The ceremony then concluded with more music and chanting, after which the High Lama and his attendant notabilities stalked away, leaving the crowd to its own devices.

The two or three days which followed were spent in much the same way, though debating was not always the central attraction. On one occasion three Chinese, discreetly dressed in dark blue robes surmounted by black satin waistcoats, stood among the gaily coloured throng which surrounded the High Lama. They proved to be well-to-do laymen who desired to gain merit by offering alms to the entire company. The High Lama introduced them with a few words, after which they bowed to the assembly and spoke in their turn. Lama officials then came forward and received great bags of money from them, which they proceeded to distribute, picking their way carefully between the rows of silent pilgrims who sat with their hands cupped above their crossed legs to receive the gifts. Later, other lamas went the round with silver beakers decked with peacock feathers, from which they allowed a trickle of holy water to escape into the cupped hands of each individual, who immediately sipped a little and laved his forehead with what remained. Li found all this extremely colourful and interesting, but it was the last two days of the festival which afforded him the greatest pleasure.

On the last day but one, the great courtyard was given over to "devil dancing." The crowds of pilgrims were denser than ever and included a far higher proportion of Chinese than before, as well as hundreds of extravagantly dressed Mongol women, who appeared for the first time. In order to leave enough space in the middle of the court, instead of sitting down they formed a tightly-packed mass on all sides, craning over each other's heads to see

the dancing. This consisted of a number of portrayals of religious stories by dancers who represented two classes of spiritual beings—good and evil. All were fantastically dressed, the former with a touch of barbaric beauty and the latter to represent all kinds of strange goblins and animal-headed monsters. The whole audience went tense with excitement as the dancers whirled around, leapt into the air, attacked each other with sham ferocity, and worked themselves up to a pitch where they must almost have believed in their own identity with spirits and goblins. Now a horse-faced being would leap into the centre gyrating on his own axis; now a devil would appear, grinning from ear to ear as he lapped up human blood from an inverted skull. Obscene creatures with grossly enlarged sexual organs (which, fortunately, were more symbolic than realistic) would join the evil throng, twisting and twirling to the mad beat of the drums. Suddenly the music would take a different turn and the likeness of a great Bodhisattva with a lotus crown and benign expression would appear and attack the hosts of demons with sword or whip. Invariably the forces of light overcame those of darkness, and each dance would finish up with a few graceful movements signifying the triumph of the victors. The excitement among the crowds was intense. To the Chinese minority it was merely a thrilling spectacle, but the Mongols seemed to live every moment of the drama, which they alone could understand.

Li noticed that among the throng was a solitary figure in white clothes of European cut who looked on superciliously while alternately picking and sucking his teeth. One of the bystanders informed him that this was the Living Buddha, who lived in a temple at some distance from P'usa-ting. His appearance was so ordinary and, indeed, unattractive that Li decided he

would forgo the pleasure of paying him a formal visit, which would have entailed kneeling before him and offering him a present of money together with a *kanda*, a ceremonial scarf of blue silk. As he had already bought the scarf, he made up his mind to visit the High Lama instead.

The climax of the whole festival was a procession which started from P'usa-ting the next morning and wound its way along a path leading to another monastery to which the High Lama paid a yearly visit of state. It was headed by several lamas on white horses, with silver bridles and finely woven saddle carpets. They were followed by musicians, including the little boys who held up the ends of the long Thibetan horns. Then came a gaily lacquered palanquin containing an image of Wenshu P'usa and followed by a huge concourse of lamas in robes recalling the days of the proud Manchu Empire. Last of all came the High Lama himself, riding a powerful horse and dressed in cloth of gold, with a fringe of gold-thread falling from his peaked hat so that his face was completely hidden. The whole route was lined at intervals with altars surrounded by dignitaries from other monasteries, who bowed to the ground at the approach of the High Lama and burnt incense in his honour.

As the gay procession passed down the hill from P'usa-ting, weaving its way in and out among the flower-covered slopes, the older Chinese present recalled the imperial processions of former days, not with any nostalgia for the former regime, which had been so harmful to the interests of the country, but with regret for the colour and pageantry that had passed away for ever. To-day such things could be seen only in the mountain fastnesses of Thibet, the desert cities of Mongolia and here, once a year, on Wu T'ai Shan.

Li went to pay his respects to the High Lama the same afternoon. Like his visit to the abbot of the Chinese temple, this occasion resolved itself into a mere formality. Li prostrated himself, presented the blue silk scarf with upraised hands and received a yellow one in exchange, together with a few words of encouragement and a blessing; after which he bowed his way out of the room. He realised by now that, if he wished to receive lengthy religious instruction, he must approach some learned lama or monk who was not constantly busy with administrative duties. Upon enquiry, he learnt that there was a Chinese-speaking Mongol living near the white dagoba who had a reputation for wisdom and piety. Accordingly, he paid him a visit, treating him with the same ceremony that had marked his visits to the High Lama and the Chinese abbot, and received a promise that, after he had made a pilgrimage to the five peaks, he would be accepted as a pupil for the duration of his stay on the mountain. This lama informed him that his home was in Japanese-occupied Manchuria, and that some enterprising Japanese who wished to study under him had threatened to imprison his brother if he did not return soon. He was quite undecided as to what to do, as he did not care to undertake the instruction of persons whose actions were at such variance with the Buddhist ideal.

Some days later, Li set out on mule-back with his Chinese friends from Kuang-chi-mon-p'ang on a tour of the five peaks, taking with him a yellow banner on which he intended to have stamped the vermilion seals of each of the temples which crowned the five highest points of the mountain. The first night he passed at the apex of the north peak, in a small temple remarkable for its icy coldness and for the vast number of rats that lived in the kitchen. The other peaks were similar, in that they provided him with the warm feeling of a religious

duty well performed at the cost of cold discomfort, a discomfort greatly increased by the hardness of his wooden saddle and the difficulty he experienced in preventing himself from sliding over the head of his mule whenever they descended a particularly steep slope. He had one experience, however, which more than compensated for these hardships.

He had gone to bed early on the second night of the journey, sleeping side by side with his companions on a *k'ang* in a small temple near the top of the southern peak. About midnight, somebody ran in and woke them, calling that the "Wenshu lights" could now be seen. Despite the intense cold, they hurriedly put on their clothes and made their way through the darkness to a tower which crowned the summit a hundred feet or so above the temple. From this point they gazed into the night sky, and were rewarded by the sight of numerous flickering lights that appeared to be on a level with their eyes. This strange phenomenon was one of the great attractions of the Wu T'ai mountain. Li had often heard of it before, but had not expected to be lucky enough to see it for himself. Though a sincere Buddhist, he was not sufficiently credulous to accept every superstition which had been incorporated into the religion, and he found himself trying to account for the lights in a natural way. They were obviously not fixed in any one spot, because he could see them moving at about the rate of a swimming fish, nor were they being carried along some ridge on a level with themselves, for they were standing at the top of a sharp precipice and there was nothing on a level with it as far as the eye could reach in broad daylight. (He only gathered this at the time from a remark made by one of the party, but on the following morning he ascertained it to be correct.) The possibility of the phenomenon being due to some kind of marsh gas could

not be excluded, yet it was hard to accept this explanation in view of the fact that the lights were at least fifty yards away from the peak in a vertical direction and over a thousand feet from the ground below. Even at a distance of fifty yards they appeared to be the size of hens' eggs, which more or less disposed of the remaining possibility that they were produced by insects of the fire-fly variety. Though he was not convinced that the lights were of supernatural origin, Li had to admit that he was unable to find an alternative explanation.

By noon the following day, they had completed the tour of all five peaks and returned to their respective monasteries on the plateau, each one carrying a yellow banner duly stamped with five red seals, which was to be the visible sign that he had performed the whole of the pilgrimage. Li still had two months or so to spend at P'usa-ting, and passed most of his time studying under one or two lamas with whom he had made some contact previously. The pleasant life of the monastery, affording as it did ample leisure to study and rest, appealed to him so much that he began to view the prospect of going home with some disfavour, but towards the end of his stay he sometimes caught himself thinking wistfully of the pleasures of city life, so it was with mixed feelings that he ate his last breakfast with Wang Lama and Ma Lama. Before leaving, he presented a generous donation to the funds of the monastery and accepted from his hosts numerous souvenirs of his visit. At the last moment, when all was prepared for his departure and the mules were already harnessed in the shafts of the *chiaotzî*, he remembered to go to the great pavilion to take leave of the Bodhisattva. Once more he saw the votive lamps flickering on the altar and smelt the sweet Thibetan incense which swirled upwards before the golden statue. Standing in the sombre gloom, he gazed at

the dimly-seen face, with its expression of utter calm and detachment, before prostrating himself nine times and muttering the age-old formula:

"Homage to Manjuśrī Bodhisattva Mahāsattva, Lord of Wisdom."

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE AFTER DEATH

THE TRADITIONAL attitude of the average educated Chinese to the question of whether there is life after death and, if so, the nature of that life, is a peculiar one. Inclined to be agnostic, he nevertheless generally admits that there is some sort of ruling power in the universe, which he refers to by the rather vague name of Heaven (*T'ien*), and that the individual is probably perpetuated in some way or other. But, like Confucius, he does not believe in speculating much about the things which lie outside the scope of this present life, and accordingly gives very little thought to the matter. The position is further complicated by the fact that various ancient books give widely different interpretations both of the nature of the ruling power and of the kind of immortality which can be expected after death, while the grafting of Buddhist theories on to the original Chinese Confucian and Taoist philosophies has, of course, added to the confusion.

One of the earliest Chinese conceptions of a spiritual existence, which has been perpetuated and added to by the Confucians, was closely connected with ancestor worship. It appears that, in remote times, Heaven was regarded as a congregation of the spirits of the departed, ruled over by the supreme ancestor (Shang Ti), a term later used by Christians and others to denote God. The practice of offering sacrifices to ancestors is a very ancient one and received the strongest support from the Confucian

School, which in all other respects preferred to have as little to do with the supernatural as possible.

The relationship held to exist between the departed ancestors and their living descendants was a peculiar one. In time it developed into something like a system of mutual aid. On the one hand, the comfort of the ancestors in Heaven was dependent on the sacrifices being properly performed by their descendants, and on the other, the latter could receive material help from their ancestors provided that they were kept well disposed. Moreover, the honours attained by the living could be shared by the dead. Thus the Emperor might confer a title of nobility on some well-deserving person and decree that similar titles be granted posthumously to so many generations of his ancestors. In this connection arose various theories as to the nature of the soul, a popular one being that a man in fact possessed several souls, one of which was destined to dwell in Heaven, while another hovered round the tomb and a third inhabited the ancestral tablet, which was kept either in a place of honour in the house or in a specially constructed building not unlike a temple.

Originally Taoism, which held that all phenomena are pervaded by a universal one-ness (T'ao), was not much concerned with such trivial matters as the survival of the individual soul. Such a soul could not be anything but a manifestation of the all-embracing T'ao, which was the only thing of lasting importance, but as time went on and Taoist philosophy became more and more involved in magic, two new theories of immortality arose. One of these concerned a physical immortality which could be attained with the aid of a certain drug and gave rise to the practice of alchemy, some people devoting their whole lives to experiments which they hoped would lead to its discovery. The other theory arose from the later

Taoist belief in a number of extremely material heavens and hells, where the good were rewarded and the wicked punished.

When Buddhist theories began to attract the attention of Chinese thinkers and to be grafted on to the beliefs of the people as a whole, they made confusion worse confounded. To begin with, there was the Indian theory of reincarnation, according to which the thoughts, words and actions of an individual in this life determined the nature of his next rebirth, which would be followed by a succession of further rebirths until such a time as all desire should be extinguished and Nirvāṇa attained. The various classes of rebirth included the human and animal states as well as rebirth in heaven or hell or as spiritual beings of various grades. All such states were, however, to be regarded as temporary and Nirvāṇa as the only permanent reality. Then arose the belief in the Pure Land according to which, by faith in Amita Buddha, it was possible to be reborn in the Western Paradise, there to await the moment when Nirvāṇa could be attained. Lastly came the exponents of the doctrines of the Meditation Sect, according to which Nirvāṇa could be reached in this life!

The three religions of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism interacted upon each other to a considerable extent, and while persons devoted entirely to one or other of these religions continued to flourish, the Chinese people as a whole accepted all of them without bothering to enquire too closely into their obvious contradictions. Thus it has come about that a Chinese, when he troubles to consider the after-life at all, has a great variety of interesting possibilities from which to choose, and it is all the more remarkable that he seems scarcely aware of this, unconsciously selecting something from each of them and treating the whole with the greatest vagueness. The

only exceptions seem to be individuals who definitely disbelieve in an after-life and others who cling to one particular religion, rather as people do in the West, but these are a comparatively small minority, if we exclude Christians and Moslems, who have to some extent severed their connection with the traditional thought of their country.

Chinese funerals often take place in conjunction with the rituals properly belonging to each of the three chief religions of the country. Thus, both Buddhist monks and Taoist priests may be called in to perform various ceremonies, while great quantities of paper, in the form of houses, servants, money, furniture, and even aeroplanes or motor cars, recall the spirit of the ancient sacrifices approved by the Confucian school, even if the form has undergone great changes.

In connection with the subject of death and the after-life, there are many stories current concerning supernatural events. Although most of them can hardly be considered as consonant with strict Buddhist teaching, a picture of popular Buddhism as it is to-day is not complete without them, owing to the extreme confusion between the various religions. I have selected some of these at random to illustrate my point.

The first story concerns a very great friend of mine, who was an ardent Buddhist and who devoted the latter part of his life almost entirely to the study and performance of the tenets of the Eastern Esoteric Sect. The circumstances are peculiar, to say the least, but I can personally vouch for that part of them which is concerned with the number five.

Some years ago this friend, who had already retired from his profession, was contemplating going to live in seclusion on one of the minor sacred mountains in the province of Kuangtung. During the last conversation

I had with him, he mentioned that he would welcome death whenever it came, as he had complete confidence that his pious practices would ensure that in his next rebirth he would be able to continue his quest for Nirvāṇa under better conditions than those of his present life. A few days later his nephew came to inform me that "Fifth Uncle" had passed away at five o'clock that morning, which happened to be that of the fifth day of the fifth moon of the Chinese calendar. As the death occurred in Hongkong, where there are certain regulations concerning the quick disposal of dead bodies in the hot weather, the funeral was arranged for the same afternoon. During his lifetime my friend, who was the fifth son of his father, was known as "Fifth Uncle" not only to his nephews but to many of his younger acquaintances. Moreover, at the time of his death he was fifty-five years old by Chinese count. Thus, we already have an unusual combination of fives: the fifth son of his father, he died at the age of fifty-five on the fifth day of the fifth moon at five o'clock in the morning. During the course of the day, a great number of friends and relatives went to his house to pay their last respects to his encoffined body. I was among the first to arrive, and was present when it was decided that all of us should follow the coffin on foot for the first part of the journey to the cemetery, but that only a few of his immediate relatives should go the whole way. For their benefit, someone was detailed to telephone for a taxi, as the distance was too great to walk. Curiously enough, when the taxi arrived it was observed to bear a number-plate inscribed with the figures 555!

The remaining circumstance surrounding the death of "Fifth Uncle" is even more peculiar. I am unable to vouch personally for the following episode, but heard it described by his sister, who was the only person with

him at the time. "Fifth Uncle" had gone to bed the previous night in the room next to hers. At a few minutes before five in the morning she heard him call out in a loud voice and ran in to see what was the matter. She found him lying on his back, apparently in his death agony. Suddenly a small film of white smoke issued from his lips, and at that moment he passed away. Later, a Buddhist monk was consulted as to the meaning of this portent, and after making careful enquiries about the manner of "Fifth Uncle's" life, made the following pronouncement:

"There are three methods of cultivating the Buddha-root within us, corresponding approximately to the actions of the mind, the mouth and the body. Advanced or highly intellectual persons have little need of sūtras or ceremonies, as they are able to perceive the pure essence which underlies all the changing forms produced by the human mind. By the practice of meditation and careful mind-control, they are able to eliminate desire and so achieve Nirvāṇa either in this life or during a not too distant future life. Others, less gifted, have to depend much on the power of the Bodhisattvas to aid them in their quest. They should spend their time reciting the sūtras and calling upon the name of the particular Bodhisattva whose help they require, as well as in reciting the special invocations appropriate to that Bodhisattva. There is a third class of persons who, although incapable of the more intellectual approach and ignorant of the sūtras, invocations, etc., by the purity of their daily lives and the benevolence extended by them to their fellow-men and, indeed, all sentient beings, can advance several stages along the Path and ensure a favourable quality of rebirth. Better than any of these three classes of devout persons, are those who harmoniously combine all three methods.

"In the case of the deceased it appears that, prior to his conversion to Buddhism, he had indulged in wordly pleasures to an extent which made it difficult for him to regain absolute purity of body, even when he had renounced all such pleasures; for the laws of cause and effect cannot be set aside. Moreover, though a kind-hearted, benevolent and extremely pious man, he did not succeed in reaching that high state where nothing is required except that which comes from within one's own mind. On the other hand, he had spent several years practising the Eastern Esoteric rituals, and his mouth, constantly engaged in the repetition of sūtras and invocations, became the organ of his purification and the means by which the compassionate Bodhisattvas were influenced on his behalf. Thus, at the moment of death, something took place which shows that, despite whatever shortcomings he had, his devotion to the teaching of the sect to which he belonged and his constant practice of its rituals have been sufficient to ensure that he will obtain rebirth in some pure state from which it will be no great distance to Nirvāṇa."

The next story also concerns a friend of mine, and has been included to illustrate the way in which the Buddhist doctrine of transmigration is popularly interpreted. This gentleman, whom we will call Mr. Chên, has a curious brown mark on his hand, the origin of which he explains in the following way. A few years before his birth in Canton, a son was born to a family living at no great distance from his own parents. For some reason the mother took an intense dislike to her baby and treated it with the greatest cruelty. This went on for four or five years until, one day, she crowned a series of petty cruelties by burning his hand with some metal object. The effect of this burn was to throw the child into a high fever from which it never recovered, and it soon became obvious

that the little boy was rapidly sinking. Shortly before the end, he reproached his mother for all her unkindness, phrasing his sentences in a way quite remarkable for one so young, and adding that he had reached the utmost limit of endurance so that the prospect of living with her any longer had become abhorrent to him. "Thus," he said, "I have to depart this life, before my natural span of years is fulfilled. My rebirth will be almost immediate, therefore, and will take place at such and such a time in such and such a street of this city." Approximately nine months after his death Mr. Chên was born in the street indicated by the child's last words to his mother, and bore on his hand a brown birth-mark in a place corresponding to the mark of the burn which was the immediate cause of the little boy's death.

Stories of this kind are extremely common in China and India, inspired by the general belief in reincarnation. Sometimes it is claimed that the person concerned can give the most intimate details of his previous life and describe people and places seen in that life with the greatest accuracy, though he has had no opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with them. It is hard to give much credit to such stories, and the more advanced Buddhist would probably say that they were of no importance, even if true, but there is no doubt that such mysteries and marvels appeal to the popular taste, which finds the atmosphere of true Buddhism a little too rarified.

One of the stories of the after-life which I like best was told by a Malayan-born Chinese who was up at Cambridge with me. I think he was quite serious, and in any case it is a delightful illustration of the way in which the Chinese, instead of arguing about the merits of this or that religion, cheerfully embrace all religions within the bounds of their somewhat half-hearted belief. When my friend was still a very small boy, his

grandfather died. The family was a well-to-do one, and consequently the funeral ceremonies were conducted with a great deal of pomp and splendour, resembling in almost every detail the ceremonies which would have been performed had the old gentleman died in his own country instead of in Malaya. There was, however, one important exception. When a death occurs in a middle-class family in China, if the deceased is a man of advanced years the body is carefully dressed in beautiful silken robes, complete with "mandarin boots" and an official hat, as though for an audience with the Emperor or a high official. Since the establishment of the republic, little change has taken place in this respect except that the corpse is sometimes dressed in the long blue silk robe and short black over-jacket, which comprise the ceremonial costume of a republican official. But the majority of male Chinese in Malaya normally dress in European tropical costume, and so it often happens that a family does not possess any Chinese robes; so it has become a common practice there to dress the corpse of a deceased parent in a white suit, complete with collar and tie. This is exactly what took place in the case of my friend's grandfather.

Two or three days after the funeral, the little boy was startled by the appearance of his grandfather's ghost, or at least by a dream so vivid that he fully believed that an apparition had actually appeared by his bedside. In the morning, he ran into his father's bedroom in great trepidation and told him what had occurred.

"If, indeed, it was the ghost of your grandfather," he was told, "you should not have been afraid. You know that grandpa loved you very much and was always giving you sweets and presents of money. Probably you offended him greatly by exhibiting signs of terror when he approached you last night and he may not trouble to

come again. But if he does, you must make him a respectful bow and ask if there is anything we can do to add to his comfort in the other world.''

Sure enough, the following night the same apparition appeared. On this occasion the boy, remembering his father's instructions and mastering his fear by the knowledge that his grandfather had been extremely attached to him when alive, got out of bed and performed the kowtow or three-fold obeisance.

''Grandfather,'' he said in a trembling voice, ''I await your instructions.''

''My dear boy,'' replied the ghost, ''a most unfortunate mistake has been made and it is most necessary that it should be rectified without delay. During the funeral ceremonies my soul, released from its bodily prison, soared up until it reached the portals of Heaven. Here I was met by a richly attired gate-keeper, who looked at me with a degree of contempt to which I was never accustomed during my life. Deciding to pay no attention to want of courtesy on the part of such a junior official, I asked politely to be allowed to enter and pay my respects to his superiors. To my great surprise, he slammed the door in my face and continued the conversation through a little peep-hole. 'Mortal,' he said, 'how dare you present yourself before the court of Heaven in such barbarous attire. It would appear that you lack even the most elementary knowledge of the Rites. Under no circumstances can I allow you to enter. However, as I am a kind-hearted person, I will give you a little hint. The neighbouring heaven, a rather untidy place in charge of the god Ye-su (Jesus), seems to admit all sorts of people, even foreign barbarians. You had better try there.'

''Accordingly,'' continued the ghost, ''I made my way hopefully to the Christian heaven, but again I was refused

admission. 'You have not been baptised,' said the gate-keeper, a man dressed in outlandish fashion with an ill-kempt beard. 'You had better go away quickly before the angels on guard see you.' Finally, I bethought myself of the Buddhist heaven. The Buddhists are compassionate people and will refuse admission to no one, I thought. But, alas, I could not even gain entrance to the Western Paradise. The gate-keeper there was extremely polite and sympathetic, but he pointed out that I should have to be reborn a great many times before I could reach a stage of advancement sufficiently high for me to be able to benefit from the teachings concerning Nirvāṇa which are constantly being given to the inmates of the Western Paradise. Hence, he regretted that his instructions made it impossible for him to allow me admission.

"Thus it is," concluded the apparition, "that I wander about in the middle-air, hungry and tired, with no one to care for me and quite out of reach of the sacrificial offerings prepared by your father and uncles."

The following morning the little boy reported the gist of his grandfather's story to his parents, who immediately called a family council. It was decided that the coffin should be opened without delay and a set of the finest silk robes substituted for the dress in which the corpse had been laid to rest. It appears that this remedy was entirely successful, for the ghost never came back to trouble any members of the family again.

This story is interesting, not only because it illustrates the all-embracing attitude of the average Chinese towards all kinds of religions, but also as an illustration of the extremely materialistic conception of the way in which the after-world is governed by a hierarchy exactly similar to the ancient Chinese official hierarchy, even down to the humble gate-keepers. There is another story which

illustrates this point even more forcibly, though it must be admitted that it has little to do with Buddhism, being more consonant with popular Taoism.

Some hundreds of years ago a man returned from a visit to some friends or relatives with a couple of unusually fine water-melons, which he intended to share with his family on the following day. During the night, however, a messenger from hell appeared to inform him that his life was now over and that he must hasten at once to the judgment seat of Yen-lo, the Lord of the Nether Regions. The unfortunate man had no choice in the matter, and accordingly his soul immediately left his body and followed the messenger along the path to hell. On the way, he asked rather anxiously about the character of the judge, and was informed that he was a being of inflexible morality who judged every case in the most impartial manner. If a soul had more sins than virtues to his credit, there was no possibility of escaping the refined tortures which would, in the course of millions of years, purge him of their taint. The variety was quite amazing, and included burnings, twistings, pluckings, starvation, thirst, cold, being cut to pieces, torn in bits, sawn in half, and so on. When the poor man heard this, he became extremely worried.

"Is there no way," he enquired, "in which I can influence the judge to regard my case in a favourable light?"

"Well," replied the messenger, "I doubt it, but there is just a faint chance. You see, he is very fond of melons, and it is possible that he might be gratified by the gift of those particularly luscious melons which I noticed in your room. If you will agree to make over to me half of all the paper money which will be burnt at your funeral, I will take you back to pick up the melons."

The poor man, or rather his ghost, agreed readily to this suggestion, which was carried out accordingly. As

soon as he stepped into the awful presence of Yen-lo, he bowed to the ground and begged His Majesty to be gracious enough to accept his humble present.

"I am fully aware," replied Yen-lo, motioning one of his attendants to remove the melons to an inner room, "that you hope by this present to deflect the course of justice. Such a hope is, of course, futile and unworthy of you. I should really regard it as an insult to myself. However, I can see that you are not altogether without merit, and I should be sorry to sentence you to the punishments you deserve. I cannot possibly undertake to let you off, but there may be one way out. According to this book, you were due to die about two hours ago and, as you no doubt realise, are already dead. We greatly pride ourselves on our punctuality in these matters. I am not in the least moved by your present of melons, but because I feel there may be some good in you, I propose to advance the date of your death by exactly three years. You may now return to your body, and if in the three years which remain to you, you can so order your life that your merits outweigh all your past and future sins, you will avoid the consequences of the latter."

The next morning the erstwhile ghost awoke and found himself re-embodied and as full of life and vigour as ever. His first thought was that he had over-eaten at the farewell party given by his friends the day before, and suffered from an unusually virulent form of nightmare in consequence, but a swift look round the room disclosed the surprising fact that the melons were no longer there. As no one in the house admitted to having removed them, he decided to be on the safe side and devote the next three years to pious practices and to liberal endowments to charity.

The funeral ceremonies performed for the late mother

of one of my friends in Kuangtung provided another example of Chinese materialistic conceptions of the after-life. An altar was set up in the main room of the house, furnished with food, drink, flowers, incense, and even the water-pipe to which the old lady had been addicted during her life—all these for the comfort of her soul. At the end of the first day of the ceremonies, the family retired as usual, after renewing the candles and incense which were burning before the portrait of the deceased. When they descended to breakfast the following morning, they discovered that the water-pipe showed signs of having been smoked during the night—infallible proof that the spirit of the old lady had felt a craving for tobacco which had survived the separation of body from soul!

A story which carries such materialistic conceptions even beyond the normal bounds of Chinese thought, and which thus forms a fitting conclusion to the subject, concerns a certain gentleman in Northern China during the earlier stages of Sino-Japanese hostilities, round about 1938. This gentleman claimed that, by means of occult practices, he had enticed the souls of several living Japanese generals into some glass bottles in his laboratory. He further claimed that they would shortly meet violent deaths and that, as he had taken the precaution of corking and sealing the bottles, there was no possibility of any of them reaching heaven or savouring the wine and food which would be offered up from time to time by their descendants. Unfortunately I heard this story at second or third hand and was unable to ascertain the names of the generals concerned—otherwise it would be interesting to discover if all of them met the violent ends predicted for them!

There are many Chinese who would treat the majority of these stories with derision and others who would be

prepared to offer logical or "scientific" explanations for some of them, refusing to accept any supernatural interpretations. It must be conceded, moreover, that serious Buddhists would regard all except the first with almost equal scepticism. It may, therefore, be contended that there should be no place for them in a serious work on Chinese Buddhism. However, a comprehensive survey of Buddhism in China to-day must take into account not only the practices and beliefs of those who accept Buddhist to the exclusion of all other religious doctrines, but also those of the great mass of Chinese people with whom Buddhism is inseparably entangled with religious ideas springing from alien sources. The strictly Buddhist approach to the problem of the after-life will be fully dealt with in the chapters devoted to the teachings of the various sects.

PART TWO

CHAPTER IX

CLASSIFICATION OF THE SECTS

LONG BEFORE Buddhism reached China a number of different sects had arisen within both the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Schools. Several of these were later transplanted to that country, where they underwent various elaborations and modifications. In addition, certain sects of largely Chinese origin grew up, though their adherents usually claim traditional links with India.

T'ai Hsü and other Chinese scholars, for the purposes of research, classify the sects which are or have been of some importance in China under eight, eleven or thirteen heads. Not all of them survive to-day, but their differences serve as convenient divisions for the study of the Mahāyāna doctrine. Numbers 12 and 13 on the following list are Hīnayāna in essence, but their doctrines have been studied in China with some care, which is the reason for including them. Numbers 9, 10 and 11 can all be considered as sub-divisions of other sects, leaving eight in all, if we exclude the two Hīnayāna sects according to the general Chinese practice. (Note: Number 12 has been incorporated into number 8.)

1. Ch'an Tsung	Dhyāna or Meditation Sect.
2. Ching T'u Tsung	Amitābha, Sukhāvatī or Pure Land Sect.
3. Mi Tsung or Chên Yen Tsung	Mantrayāna, Tantrayāna, Esoteric or Word of Truth Sect.
4. Hua Yen Tsung	Avataṁsa or Hua Yen Sect.
5. Wei Shih Tsung or Fa Hsiang Tsung	Dharmalakṣaṇa or Pure Consciousness Sect.

6.	T'ien T'ai Tsung or Fa Hua Tsung	Śaddharmapuṇḍarika or Lotus Sect.
7.	Nan Shan Tsung or Lü Tsung	Vinaya or Law Sect.
8.	San Lun Tsung or Fa Hsing Tsung	Mādhyamika, Dharmatā or Three Śāstras Sect.
9.	Ni P'an Tsung	Nirvāṇa Sect.
10.	Ti Lun Tsung	Daśabhūmi Sect.
11.	Shê Lun Tsung	Mahāyāna Sāstras Sect.

9 may be considered a sub-division of 6

10 ,, ,, ,, 4

11 ,, ,, ,, 5

12.	Chêng Shih Tsung	Sūnyatā or Satyasiddhi Sect.
13.	Chu Shê Tsung	Abhidharma Sect.

T'ai Hsü has classified the eight main sects in another way intended to show how each of them emphasises a particular aspect of the Mahāyāna doctrine and how they are interrelated. This classification loses in the translation, because some of the original Chinese terms have a wide sense which cannot be accurately translated. It is shown in the diagram at the end of the chapter.

A former and much wider classification consisted merely of three heads, thus:

Ch'an	Dhyāna	Meditation
Chiao	Dharma	Doctrine
Lü	Vinaya	Discipline

To these the Pure Land and Esoteric Doctrines were sometimes added as two separate categories.

A brief study of the peculiarities of each sect may give the impression that their teachings are mutually contradictory, as indeed they are from a purely scholastic point of view, but the wide tolerance of Mahāyāna makes

room for all of them, and they are regarded by the Chinese as being different roads to the same goal of Enlightenment. In the words of T'ai Hsü, "they are like eight jewels united in a single ornament." Further consideration will show that there is some justification for this assertion. Mahāyāna Buddhism in general aims to demonstrate the voidness or purely relative existence of the world of phenomena, and to teach the methods by which it is possible to arrive at that perfect comprehension of the ultimate reality underlying all phenomena that is called Enlightenment; also that every being is possessed of the latent possibility of attaining to that state. The doctrines of the eight sects will be seen to be in general agreement on these points, though their interpretation may differ. Such differences as exist between them are recognised, but it is held that they are due to the necessity of adapting the doctrine to the understanding of people at different intellectual levels. The following brief comparison is intended to show the general unity of the eight sects, though it may be argued that the matter has been over-simplified. However, the following chapters deal more fully with the peculiarities of each sect.

The Meditation Sect teaches that Enlightenment may be attained in this life by a sudden comprehension of our true natures, which are identical with the ultimate universal reality.

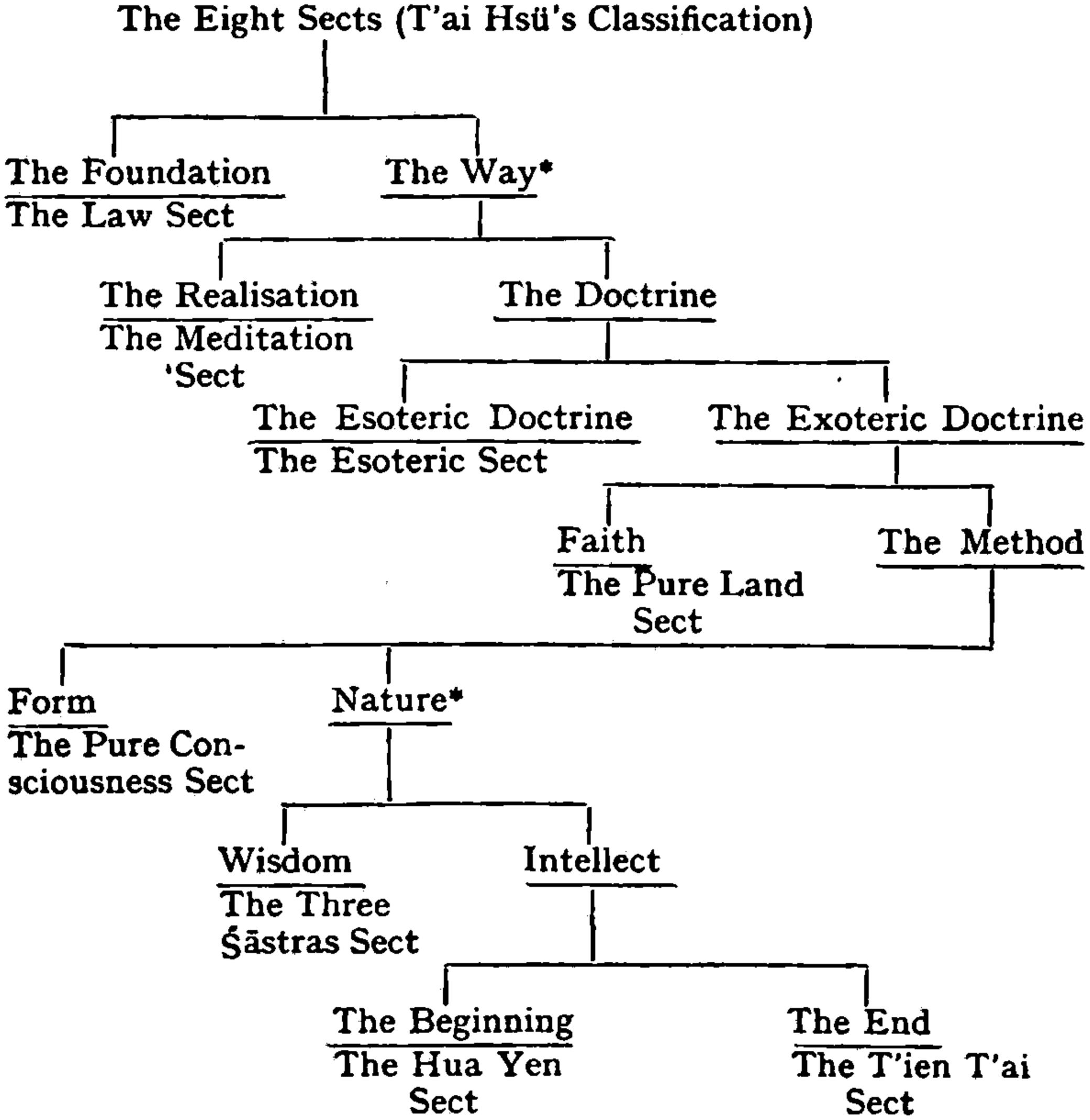
The Pure Land Sect, which seems at first sight most out of keeping with the others, does not deny the voidness of phenomena, but emphasises the difficulty of reaching Enlightenment in this life and postulates that, by faith in Amita Buddha, we may attain rebirth in a better world (also formless in reality) in which there will be ideal opportunities for grasping the truth.

The Esoteric Sect accepts the fundamental Mahāyāna doctrines, but propounds the theory that the assistance

of the Bodhisattvas can be enlisted, by means of appropriate rituals, in the struggle for Enlightenment.

The Hua Yen Sect classifies the Mahāyāna doctrines and analyses the nature of existence in conformity with the basic conception of voidness.

The Pure Consciousness Sect seeks to prove that only



*"Way" is a translation of the word *Tao* and is used in the widest possible sense, not in the sense of "Method," which has been used for the Chinese word *Fa*.

*"Nature" (*Hsing*) should be understood in the sense of "nature of the universe," not in the sense of "Mother Nature."

consciousness exists and that this is synonymous with universal reality.

The T'ien T'ai Sect classifies the Mahāyāna doctrines and postulates that there is no fundamental antagonism between the different sects or even between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna.

The Law Sect lays emphasis on the mental attitude of human beings, provides regulations for the discipline of the monastic Order, and accepts the doctrine of voidness.

The Three Śāstras Sect attempts to demonstrate the correctness of the Mahāyāna doctrines as a whole and the impossibility of using words to describe the true nature of reality, which is formless and therefore beyond power of description.

CHAPTER X

THE MEDITATION SECT

THIS SECT, more generally known in Europe by its Japanese name of Zen, is called Ch'an Tsung in Chinese, *Ch'an* being the equivalent of the Sanskrit word *dhyāna* (meditation) and *tsung* meaning a sect. It has for over a thousand years been one of the most influential sects in the country and has played a great part in the development of Chinese philosophy and art, as well as making a peculiar impression of the psychology of the Chinese people. The interest which its doctrines have aroused in certain circles in the West is partly due to the labours of Dr. D. T. Susuki, but mainly to the extreme freshness of its doctrines and the attitude to life of its adherents, which is in such sharp contrast to that of other religious groups.

The principal doctrine of the sect is that Nirvāṇa can be attained in this life as the result of an experience known as sudden Enlightenment, which connotes sudden apprehension of our real nature and of the fact that this nature is identical with that of the ultimate reality underlying the appearances of all phenomena. Study, even of the Mahāyāna sūtras, is thought likely to impede progress, by filling the mind with acquired knowledge and thus preventing the inflow of intuitive knowledge, which can only result from the practice of concentration and meditation.

The Chinese claim that the sect originated in the following way, though the story is not recorded in any known Pali or Sanskrit text. This, however, is in keeping

with the claim that Ch'an teachings were handed down orally or by silent understanding between teacher and pupil and not committed to writing.

Śākyâmuni Buddha during a discourse to his disciples picked a flower and held it up for their inspection. Nobody present understood his meaning except Mahākāśyapa, who indicated his understanding with a smile. The Buddha then called him aside and said: "I have here a True Law, a wonderful way leading to Nirvāṇa. This is the reality which is not seen and a very subtle form of the Dharma. I now give it into your keeping. Guard it well." From Mahākāśyapa, this knowledge was handed to Ānanda (reputed to have been the favourite and most learned disciple of the Buddha), and from him to a succession of twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, the last of whom was Bodhidharma (P'ut'itamo), who also became the first patriarch of the sect in China. Among these, the most famous were Aśvagoṣa (Ma Ming) of the fourth century B.C., Nāgārjuna (Lung Shu) of the third century B.C., and Vasubandhu (Shih Ch'in) of the fifth century A.D., the twelfth, fourteenth and twenty-first patriarchs, respectively. Because this knowledge was intuitive and dependent not on scriptures but on an awakening of the mind, the method of transmission was that of silent understanding between one patriarch and the next. It is said that these Indian patriarchs kept the matter secret and continued to conform outwardly to the ordinary Buddhist traditions, until the time of Bodhidharma, who brought the teaching to China and openly taught what he called "the method of realising one's inner nature," though the patriarchate continued to be transmitted by silent understanding. After this, the tradition became discontinued in the country of its origin, where no sect was ever formed to preserve it. The absence of any evidence of the existence of such a sect in India has led

some to conclude that the story of Śākyamuni Buddha and the flower was an invention of Bodhidharma and that the Ch'an doctrine originated with him.

Even the existence of Bodhidharma himself has been disputed, and whether or not doubts on this point are justified, it is probable that the details of his life which we have from Chinese sources are largely fictitious. According to one account he was a Persian prince; but he is generally thought to have been a native of Conjeevaram in southern India, which was, in fact, ruled by a dynasty of Persian origin at that time. He is said to have reached Canton by sea in A.D. 527 and travelled overland to Nanking to have audience with the Emperor Ta T'ung of the Liang Dynasty, then in the first year of his reign, a pious monarch with many religious works to his credit and the patron of various translators of the Mahāyāna canon. Bodhidharma shocked him by declaring that the study of the sūtras and the building of monasteries were of no importance whatever, nothing being of any value except the attempt to comprehend our real nature. The interview was, therefore, not a successful one, and Bodhidharma thereupon retired to the Shao Lin Monastery in Honan and spent several years in meditation facing a blank wall. (This Monastery of The Little Forest has since been famous for boxing, as the Chinese art of self-defence is sometimes called. It more closely resembles wrestling and was the forerunner of the Japanese *judo* (or jujitsu), which is based on the same principle of utilising the strength of one's opponent to defeat him. The former developed from the exercises performed by the monks in between the long periods of meditation. during which they had to sit motionless in one position.) In time, the Emperor Hsiao Ming (A.D. 516-525) of the Wei Dynasty heard about Bodhidharma, and requested him to pay a visit to the palace on three different

occasions, but the monk, disgusted by his former treatment at royal hands, refused to go to see him. After spending nine years in the monastery, he handed on the silent 'teaching to a Chinese monk, Hui K'o, and died in the first year of the Emperor Ta T'ung of Wei (A.D. 535).*

Hui K'o, who had originally been a Taoist, became the second patriarch of the sect in China, and was followed by four other Chinese patriarchs. Though they taught numerous disciples, they were very strict about handing down the doctrine, and chose their successors with the greatest care.

The last but one of the five Chinese patriarchs, Szû Jên, lived in Huang Mei Hsien in Hupei. During his time a Cantonese wood-cutter once happened to hear someone reciting the Diamond Sūtra (Vajracchedikā Sūtra) while he was selling firewood in the market. He was deeply impressed by the words: "Thought should spring from a state of non-attachment," and asked from where such teaching could be obtained. Upon hearing of Szû Jên, he immediately hastened to enrol himself among his disciples, but found himself greatly despised by his fellow monks on account of his illiteracy and the fact that he came from Kuangtung, which was then considered a barbarous place. For many years he was employed at the lowest menial tasks, until, in due course, the time came for the fifth patriarch to choose his successor. In order to make sure of choosing wisely, Szû Jên asked his disciples to submit poems to him for his consideration. One of them, Shên Hsiu, wrote the following, which was greatly admired by the others.

*The second Chinese character of this emperor's name is different from that of the Emperor Ta T'ung of Liang mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph. The Liang and Wei Dynasties were contemporary, the one in the South and the other in the North.

"The body is a Bodhi Tree,* the heart like the stand of a bright mirror.

"We should frequently wipe it to prevent dust collecting upon it."

When the Cantonese novice, who had been given the religious name of Hui Nêng (often romanised as Wei Lang), heard of this poem, he asked someone to read it to him, whereupon he replied with another which showed that his understanding of the Dhyāna doctrine was much superior to that of Shên Hsiu. It ran:

"Bodhi (enlightenment) is not a tree, the mirror has no stand.

"From the beginning nothing has existed. Whereon can dust collect?"

The fifth patriarch was so pleased with this reply, which indicated such a profound understanding of the doctrine, that he handed him his bowl and robe, the signs of the patriarchate; but this was done secretly because he realised that the other monks would be jealous of the honour which had been done to the illiterate Cantonese serving monk. Hui Nêng then fled to the South, where he established his school of Dhyāna. Meanwhile, Shên Hsiu, who had written the first poem, founded a rival school in the North, but in spite of royal patronage it soon became extinct, while Hui Nêng's school spread as far as Japan and Korea. He soon became recognised as the legal sixth patriarch, but no patriarchs were elected after him and various splits occurred within the body of the sect. He died in the Southern Flowery Monastery (Nan Hua Szû) in northern Kuangtung, where his body is preserved to this day in the posture of meditation, together with those of two of his descendants in the spiritual line. This temple is at present occupied by

*Tree of Enlightenment.

the Venerable Hsü Yün, acknowledged as the greatest Chinese teacher of Dhyāna now living.

Since the T'ang Dynasty (A.D. 618-907), the Meditation Sect, particularly the branch known as Lin-chi (Looking onto the Ford), has been extremely popular and influential. During the persecutions of Buddhists which occurred for political reasons in that dynasty and the condition of lawlessness prevailing in the period of the Five Dynasties (A.D. 907-960) which followed, all Buddhist sects declined rapidly with the exception of the Meditation Sect. The reason for its preservation was that its members required no temples, statues or books and so could easily continue their practices in secret. They lived together in groups, farming the land and preaching in places where they believed themselves safe. At the beginning of the Sung Dynasty (A.D. 960-1280), peace was restored and the emperors of China once more treated the monks with respect, with the result that they came out of hiding and started work on reviving the Buddhist religion as one of the great life-forces of the nation. Naturally, most of the surviving Buddhists at this time were the adherents of the Meditation Sect, and this soon became so popular that even Confucianism and Taoism came under its influence and underwent several changes in character as a result. Additional reasons for the popularity of the sect were that its teachings were conveyed to the people in simple, everyday language, and that little importance was attached to the translations from the Sanskrit which were so difficult to understand and which played so much part in the teachings and practices of the other sects. (The difficulties inherent in the study of the Chinese translations of the sūtras are threefold, in spite of the excellence of the renderings, which leaves little room for improvement. The first is that the characters employed to convey abstract ideas are so

pregnant with meaning that it is not easy to use them with the precision of an alphabetical language, so that a number of such abstract terms taken together is often capable of several widely different interpretations. The second difficulty arises from the impossibility of finding Chinese terms for some of the Sanskrit words, which were therefore left untranslated and rendered phonetically, being incomprehensible to those untrained in the use of the special Buddhist terminology. Finally, many of the treatises or śāstras were aimed at particular Indian heresies about which the Chinese knew and cared very little.)

The word *ch'an* (*dhyāna*) can be rendered into English as "meditation" or "pure thought." Adherents of the Meditation Sect emphasise the importance of attaining Enlightenment through carefully directed concentration of mind and certain mental exercises, holding that the study of the scriptures is a much more uncertain road to that goal. Having little belief in the efficacy of words and acquired knowledge, they call their doctrine "a teaching beyond teaching." Their method is to practise the eradication of wayward thoughts by concentration and to open their minds to that intuitive knowledge which, they believe, will come to them as the result of prolonged mental efforts to obtain it. They hope to be able to recognise and understand the "intrinsically pure essence of mind" which is the common possession of all, though few are aware of it. This "essence of mind" is said to be our Buddha-nature, our true nature, obscured by the darkness of desire, aversion and ignorance, but of unchanging and unchangeable purity in itself. By intuitive wisdom, the fruit of rightly performed meditation, we can grasp this nature and realise that the individual is in reality a Buddha or, looked at from a wider point of view, "one with Buddha" and, indeed,

the whole Universe. This method is still practised to-day by millions of people throughout the Far East, but often accompanied by the methods for obtaining Enlightenment advocated by other Buddhist sects. Moreover, though Ch'an is called a wordless teaching, several books are now popular with the adherents of the Meditation Sect, especially the Diamond Sūtra (Vajracchedikā Sūtra), the Heart Sūtra (Smaller Prajñā Paramitā Hṛidaya Sūtra), and the Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch, the Exalted Teacher and Treasure of the Law. (Previous to the time of Hui Nêng, the word *sūtra* was used for the teachings said to have been given orally by Gautama Buddha himself, though some of the Mahāyāna sūtras are supposed to have been delivered to audiences of spiritual beings, no humans being present. However, the recorded teachings of Hui Nêng were also dignified by this name, or rather its Chinese equivalent, *ching*.)

The Heart Sūtra contains the essence of the teachings of the Meditation Sect in a very few words, and is given here in full as an example of Ch'an philosophy. It runs as follows:

"When Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva was practising the profound *prajñā pāramitā* (arriving at the further shore by means of wisdom), he perceived that the five congregates (*skandha*) were all void; and by so perceiving liberated himself from all sorrows." (The five congregates are matter, sensation or the effect on the senses of matter or phenomena, perception or the mental awareness of having received these impressions, discrimination or the mental acts of liking or disliking the objects of these impressions, and consciousness.)

"Śāriputra (he said), matter differs not from void, nor void from matter. Indeed, matter is void and void is matter. And such also is the case with sensation,

perception, discrimination and consciousness.'' (Śāriputra was the disciple to whom Gautama Buddha is said to have delivered this lecture.)

''Śāriputra, all these are of the nature of void. They are neither existing nor non-existing; not impure nor pure; neither growing nor decaying. Therefore in the void there is no matter, neither is there sensation or perception, discrimination or consciousness. And in it there are no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body or mind. There is no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch and no knowledge. There is no that which is seen by the eye, heard by the ear, etc., up to no that which is conceived by the mind; no ignorance nor ignorance exterminated; no decay and no death, nor are they extirpated; no sorrow nor cause of sorrow, no extinction of sorrow nor way to its extinction. There is no wisdom, nor anything to be gained by it. Because nothing is gained, so one is a Bodhisattva. Because of the *prajñā pāramitā*, the mind is liberated. Because the mind is liberated, so one is free from worry and ignorant thoughts and can attain to the supreme Nirvāṇa.'' (''That which is seen by the eye'' means that which results from the contact of the eye and the object which it perceives. So, also, with the other sense organs and the objects which they apprehend.)

''All the Buddhas of the three periods attained supreme Buddahood by way of *prajñā pāramitā*. Therefore it is known that *prajñā pāramitā* is the most divine mantra, the unsurpassed mantra, the peerless mantra. It can assuage all sufferings and is the Truth. Therefore, I teach you the mantra of the *prajñā pāramitā*, thus: 'Gati gati paragati parasamgati bodhi svāhā'.''

This translation is based on one made by the Teacher of the Dharma, Wei Huan, a disciple of the Venerable T'ai Hsü. The meaning of the Sanskrit words of the mantra at the end is: ''O wisdom, gone, gone to the other

shore, arrived at the other shore, svāhā,'' but mantras are not supposed to be thought of in relation to the exact meaning of the words of which they are composed, some of them having no apparent meaning at all; they are valued and used for the sake of their esoteric meaning and particular sound, which, it is said, help to establish contact between human beings and the spiritual being to which the mantra employed is specially appropriate.

The Heart Sūtra carries to extreme length the doctrine that not only form but the Dharma itself is void. Even the Four Noble Truths of suffering, the cause of suffering, the existence of a way to end suffering and the Noble Eightfold Path, which are often considered the keystones of Buddhism, are denied, though they are, of course, considered to hold true in the relative sense that anything exists at all. Thus it will be seen how the Meditation Sect emphasises the fundamental voidness of everything, including the Buddhist teaching itself, and even postulates that the consciousness of the thinker himself is void. The Buddha is represented in this sūtra as having pondered over the existence of sorrow, sickness, decay and death, prescribed an antidote in the Four Noble Truths and then, speaking as from a higher plane, to have stated emphatically that sorrow, death and the Four Noble Truths do not exist, in order to emphasise that absolutely nothing exists except in a relative sense.

The method of meditation employed by this ''wordless sect'' is not easy to describe. The devotee takes up his position with his legs crossed and the soles of his feet uppermost (the lotus posture). His back is held straight, but not rigidly, the palm of his right hand facing upwards and its back contained in the palm of the left hand which rests, knuckles downwards, on his lap. His eyes are kept half-closed, his mouth slightly open and the tip of his tongue resting lightly at the base of his upper

teeth. This position can be maintained for hours by those who have had sufficient experience, and there are some even who can maintain it for days. The Venerable Hsü Yün is said to be able to remain in it for as much as eight days.

After taking up this posture, the seeker after Enlightenment allows a few moments for his thoughts to become calm, and then strives to put his mind into a condition to receive the intuitive knowledge which, it is believed, only enters when the mind is perfectly still and devoid of thoughts arising from the perception of external phenomena, or from the knowledge acquired from previous perceptions which has been stored up in the memory. People are said to differ greatly as to the amount of practise they require to perform this practice successfully, and the degrees of success range from the ability to keep the mind tranquil for a few moments to ecstatic contemplation lasting over a long period and leading to supreme Enlightenment. The intuitive knowledge which is the object of this practice consists of a complete realisation of the individual's true nature or, as it is called, "essence of mind."

It sometimes happens that a novice is unable to concentrate long in the lotus posture, which can prove uncomfortable and difficult to maintain for those who have not practised it over a long period. In this case he may, after a certain interval of time, relax and take a walk or drink a few cups of tea to stimulate him to further effort. When a number of young monks are practising meditation together, they usually sit for as long as it takes for one incense stick to burn from end to end and then get up and walk round and round the room, their steps gradually getting faster and faster until they are almost running. Suddenly the "wooden fish" is given a sharp tap and everyone resumes his seat, after which

tea is served and drunk in silence. A further period of meditation then follows. It is said that tea-drinking, now a universal habit in China and Japan (where Ch'an, or Zen, has been so influential), was popularised in this way. According to an amusing legend, Bodhidharma once fell asleep in the course of his meditations. This upset him so much that he cut off his eyelids to prevent a recurrence of such a lapse. The lids were carelessly thrown on the ground, and in due course produced a plant with leaves shaped like themselves, an infusion of which had the property of warding off sleep. This liquid became known as *ch'a*, the Fukienese pronunciation of which is *tei*, from which the English word *tea* is derived.

Another aid to concentration is the *hua-t'ou* (known in Japanese as the *koan*). This is a form of problem for meditation to which there is no logical answer. It is intended to induce the disciple to abandon logic and to take a leap from normal thinking to intuitive knowledge. In Japan teachers are fond of making up such questions on the spur of the moment, but in China the same ones are used over and over again. A common one is: "What was my original nature before my father and mother gave birth to me?" Another is: "Who is it that worships Buddha?" (*i.e.*, "Who am I?") It is believed that by these and other methods, sudden Enlightenment may be obtained, but only if the usual processes of logical thought are discarded.

The effect of Ch'an teaching on the community as a whole has been far-reaching. Chinese painting abounds in Ch'an subjects, such as Bodhidharma meditating or a group of monks drinking tea from small handleless cups. The style of painting, as well as its content, shows the influence of Ch'an philosophy. In the West, nature is frequently used as a mere background for man, but in China human figures are often added to a painting to

emphasise some quality of nature. Chinese philosophers and thinkers have borrowed from Ch'an to such an extent that the Chinese national character itself has been considerably influenced by it. One of the less desirable results of the Ch'an philosophy is seen in the monasteries, where the education of young novices is often neglected in accordance with its special wordless tradition, with the result that many of the monks have singularly little "acquired knowledge" and, in many cases, show no sign of having obtained any "intuitive knowledge" in its place.

It has sometimes been said that the doctrine of the Meditation Sect shows traces of having been influenced both by the philosophy of the Hindu Vedanta and by that of the Taoists. The Ch'an doctrine of a universal reality with which our true nature is considered to be identical is compared to the Hindu conception of the *ātman*, or universal soul, and it is thought possible that Bodhidharma, or whoever was the real founder of the sect, belonged to some school which combined certain of the Mahāyāna conceptions with those of the Vedanta. A careful study of the translation of a typical Ch'an treatise, such as *The Path of Sudden Attainment** will, however, show that the comparison with the *ātman* cannot be carried too far. Certain similarities between the teaching of the Taoist sages and Ch'an are more remarkable, but it does not necessarily follow that the one is to some extent the outcome of the other. Western scholars sometimes err in trying to establish historical connections between things which have certain features in common, but which may owe their similarity to the natural tendency of human beings in different parts of the world to develop along lines not altogether dis-

*Originally prepared as an appendix to this book, but now published separately bv the Buddhist Society, London.

similar. Thus, certain similarities of an entirely superficial nature have led more than one European to trace an historical connection between Buddhist and Christian ceremonial. In any event, the language of the Taoist sage, Laotzû, is too vague to point with any certainty to his having influenced the development of Ch'an philosophy. What is more certain is that the similarities between Taoism and Ch'an resulted in the latter being accorded a more ready welcome by Chinese scholars (such as Hui K'o the successor of Bodhidharma), who had Taoist leanings at the time of their conversion to Buddhism.

CHAPTER XI

THE PURE LAND SECT

IT WILL have been noticed that one of the principal differences between the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Schools is that the former asserts that those too weak to achieve Enlightenment by their own efforts can still attain it through the accumulated merit of the Bodhisattvas. The principal sect devoted to this teaching is the Ching T'u Tsung or Pure Land Sect. Its Sanskrit name is the Sukhāvatī (Happy Land) Sect.

Nāgārjuna is traditionally regarded as the first patriarch, and Vasubandhu, who compiled the Sukhāvatīvyūha, an important canonical work of the sect, the second. The first Chinese patriarch was Hui Yuan. (A.D. 333-418). It would appear that the doctrines of this sect were current in India by the beginning of the Christian era, and it is held by some that they are of Iranian or even Christian origin, though the books which propound them have all the marks of being purely Indian works. The central idea of the saving grace of Amita Buddha is very much similar to those contained in the Bhagavad Gita (composed shortly before the Christian era) concerning Krishna and the saving power of *bhakti* (devotion or loving kindness), and historical connections between the two are often inferred. Adherents of the Pure Land Sect, however, regard the doctrine as having been preached by Śākyamuni Buddha and are not willing to admit the possibility of its being of later origin. Chinese tradition has it that this doctrine was known in China as early as the second century A.D., but that it

was not until the fourth century that a special sect was formed by Hui Yuan. Whatever the origin of the Pure Land teachings may have been, there is no doubt that their influence has been enormous throughout the whole of the Far East, especially in China and Japan, where millions subscribe to them. At first sight they may seem less interesting than those of the Hīnayāna School and devoid of the sublime metaphysics of the Mahāyāna, but they are by no means despised by the adherents of other Mahāyāna sects, who assert that the Buddha had to preach the way of Enlightenment to all kinds of people and that this method is specially adapted to the intelligence of those who are unable to understand the greater subtleties of the others. For this reason and because Amita Buddha is mentioned in a number of the sūtras specially revered by the other sects, the adherents of the latter frequently combine the religious practices of the Pure Land Sect with their own.

The books upon which the teachings of the Pure Land Sect are based are the Sūtra of Immeasurable Longevity (Buddhabhaṣitamitāyurbuddha Sūtra), containing a description of the Pure Land; the Sūtra of Contemplating the Buddha of Immeasurable Longevity (Buddhabhāṣita-mitāyurbuddhayāna Sūtra), which propounds a method of obtaining rebirth in the Pure Land by a series of visualisations; and the Sūtra of Amita Buddha, which also dilates on the infinite compassion of Amita, the beauties of the Pure Land and the methods of obtaining rebirth there. The Teacher of the Law, Yin Kuang, who died a few years ago, did much to revive the popularity of the Pure Land doctrines in China. He can be regarded as one of the important figures of the present century in the Chinese Buddhist world, though he has not aroused as much interest among foreigners as T'ai Hsü, probably because the Pure Land Sect is not con-

sidered to merit as much attention as some of the others.

In spite of offering little of interest to the European metaphysician or philosopher, the Pure Land Sect deserves rather full treatment because of its great importance in China and the Far East. Stated simply, its main teaching is on the following lines:

Amitābha (Lord of Boundless Light), also known as Amitāyus (Lord of Immeasurable Longevity), having achieved the state of Buddahood after countless lives devoted to its attainment, declined to enter Nirvāṇa and leave millions of sentient beings to struggle in the darkness without hope of Enlightenment for countless æons. Out of his infinite compassion and by the power of his accumulated merit, he created a paradise in the West where beings who are too much ensnared by desire, hatred and ignorance to achieve Enlightenment by their own efforts, can be reborn and have a unique opportunity to hear the Law preached among surroundings perfectly conducive to spiritual progress. (This doctrine involves a particular application of the law of Karma, or cause and effect. An Enlightened One is able by his stock of merit, accumulated in the course of æons of lives devoted to the search for perfection, to produce a desired effect. Thus Amita Buddha was able to create such a world by the force of his own mind and to transfer the results of his excellent Karma to whomsoever should be reborn there.) In the Pure Land dwells this Buddha together with the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, the former personifying compassion and the latter wisdom and power.

This land is described as having "columns made of gold inlaid with seven jewels. . . . Each column has eight facets and each facet contains one hundred diamonds. Each diamond emits a thousand beams of light, each of eighty-four thousand colours. . . . On that terrace there

are hundreds and thousands of storeyed pavilions composed of a hundred kinds of jewels. To each side of the terrace there are hundreds and thousands of embroidered tapestries and musical instruments as decorations. There are eight kinds of mild breeze wafted from the brightness which play upon the instruments and produce the sound of the Law of Sorrow, Transitoriness and Void. . . . Every flower and every leaf on the trees is of brilliant hue. A golden ray is emitted from those of agate colour, a crimson from those of crystal, beryl from lapis-lazuli, pearl-green from beryl. There are rays of coral and amber shining beautifully and nets made of strings of pearls covering the trees. . . . The babbling sound of the water is wonderful. It preaches the Law of Sorrow, Transitoriness and Void; it also praises the virtue of the Buddhas. The *muni*-gem emits a golden ray which transforms itself into many birds of a hundred colours, chattering delicately and praising the Buddha, the Law and the Order.''*

Amita is described as having a body ''as bright as hundreds of golden rays from the Yemo Heaven. He is sixty million *yojanas* tall. With eyebrows twining up to the height of five Mount Sumurus, his eyes are as brilliant as the waters of the four seas, the pupils and whites being distinguishable. There are rays coming out from the pores of his body and his halo is as large as millions of universes. In that halo are hundreds of thousands of the Bodies of Transformation of the Buddha, and each of these has countless Bodhisattvas in attendance.''

Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva is represented as being ''crowned with a corona of *bhilange-muni* gems on which

*This and all but one of the quotations in this chapter are taken from a translation of the Sūtra of Visualising the Buddha of Immeasurable Longevity made by the Teacher of the Law, Wei Huan.

stands a Body of Transformation twenty-five *yojanas* high.'' Her face ''is of yellowish gold, her eyebrows the colour of the seven jewels and emitting eighty-four thousand rays of different colours. . . . Her arms are the colour of a red lotus and ornamented with eight million refulgent rays in which all kinds of magnificent things appear. Her palms are the colour of variegated lotus flowers. She has ten slender fingers, at the top of each of which there are eighty-four thousand pictures. . . . It is with these hands that the Bodhisattva receives all beings. When she lifts one of her feet, one sees the Figure of One Thousand Wheels on the sole . . . ''

Mahāsthāmaprāpta is described in somewhat similar terms, the description ending with the words: ''He shines with the Light of Wisdom upon all, enabling them to abandon the three evil ways and attain the supreme power of Enlightenment. Therefore he is called the Powerful One.''

The object of obtaining rebirth in the Pure Land is to be sure of obtaining Enlightenment as a result of hearing the Law preached over a long period in a place devoid of the distractions of suffering and desire. There are said to be nine classes of rebirth. The first is reserved for those who have ''the mind of sincerity, the mind of faith and the mind of vows'' and who, ''having compassionate minds, do not kill living beings and observe the precepts or who read and study the Mahāyāna sūtras or who practice the six kinds of right thought.'' Such people will immediately be reborn into the presence of Amita and the two Bodhisattvas, being, moreover, assured of becoming Buddhas within a short space of time. The lowest form of rebirth is for people who, having committed the five enormities, the ten evil deeds and all kinds of wickedness, at the moment of death repeat with sincere hearts the words ''Namo Amita Buddha'' without

interlude for ten seconds. Such an evil-doer will be reborn in the Pure Land, but will remain shut up inside a lotus for twelve major æons (*kalpas*), after which the lotus will open and he will hear the Law preached by the Buddha and two Bodhisattvas.

It will be seen, therefore, that rebirth can be obtained simply by repeating the name of Amita with faith in one's heart at the moment of death. It is stated thus in the Sukhāvatīvyūha: "Not merely on account of possessing the root of goodness can beings be reborn in the country of Amita Buddha. If a son or daughter of good family shall hear the name of Amitāyus and, after hearing it, shall ponder on it and reflect upon it for one, two, three, four, five, six or seven nights with concentration, when he comes to die, Amita Buddha will stand before him attended by many followers and Bodhisattvas and he will die with his mind at rest." This doctrine amounts almost to that of "salvation by faith alone," but it is expressly pointed out that this does not imply that one may pursue evil ways, secure in the thought that the evil consequences will be removed through the compassion of Amitā. Though this may seem a logical deduction, adherents of the sect are nevertheless exhorted to lead pure lives.

As there is a danger that the moment of death may have such terrors that the dying man may neglect to repeat the holy name, members of the sect practice repeating it as often as possible, usually several thousand times in succession, and are exhorted to continue the practice mentally even when engaged in attending to the daily routine of their lives. They do this until it becomes such an ingrained habit that, even while they are eating or sleeping, the repetition goes on in their minds without conscious effort. Thus they trust that the habit will not fail them at the time of approaching death and that they

will be thus assured of reaching the Pure Land. Many of them carry a rosary and allow one of its one hundred and eight beads to slip through their fingers with each repetition of the holy name. In South China these rosaries are often made of the seeds of the *bodhi* tree, taken from off-shoots of the one under which Gautama Buddha attained Enlightenment (or at least from trees of the same genus). The number of beads on each rosary seems to point to its being of Hindu origin.

In addition to reciting the name of this Buddha, members of the sect also recite its special sūtras rapidly and rhythmically, beating out the rhythm on the hollow instrument known as the wooden fish. They firmly believe that these practices will ensure their rebirth in the Pure Land, but realise that people at different stages of development cannot all hope to attain the highest form of rebirth in that land; hence the teaching about the nine grades. There is also said to be a City of Doubt in the Pure Land where those whose faith is weak are forced to undergo a period of further study of the Buddhist Law before coming face to face with Amita Buddha.

It will be seen that the Pure Land corresponds in some ways to the Christian idea of Paradise, in that it is a place where great happiness may be enjoyed, though not the highest state of all, but the Buddhist looks for the highest state in Nirvāṇa, involving the dissolution of those elements which give him the illusory conception of individual existence, while the Christian looks forward to preserving his individual entity for all eternity. Rebirth from the lotus can also be interpreted symbolically (as, indeed, the whole doctrine of the Pure Land), for the lotus signifies purity on account of its spotless petals which remain undefiled by the mire in which it is embedded.

In connection with the Pure Land Sect, something

more must be said about Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (Kuanshihyin P'usa or Kuanyin). The Chinese name means the Bodhisattva-who-pays-regard-to-the-cries-of-the-world. Westerners usually refer to her as the Goddess of Mercy, but a Bodhisattva, one who is working for the Enlightenment of all sentient beings, cannot rightly be called a goddess. Buddhists who believe in gods (*devas*) and goddesses (*devis*) consider that these beings may have all sorts of supernatural powers and live for stupendously long periods by human reckoning, but that, far from being Buddhas, they are subject to decay, death, and rebirth. In fact, it is better to be a man than a god, for Enlightenment can only be attained from the human (male) state. A Bodhisattva is already beyond differences of sex and Avalakiteśvara is portrayed sometimes as a male, but more often (especially in the Far East) as a female, though it seems that the latter has never been the case in India or Thibet. In female guise she is popularly regarded as the proper "deity" to be approached by childless wives who desire to give birth to children and so, in this popular sense, it seems that she is really given the attributes of a goddess, but this is a departure from the strictly Buddhist point of view. She is credited with inexhaustible pity, but is not connected with love in the worldly sense, there being nothing erotic in the ideas associated with her. It is said that the executioner's sword, the power of the tempest, the evils of desire, hatred and ignorance are equally impotent to prevail against the power of her name, if it is uttered with complete faith in its efficacy. She is also credited with being able to manifest herself in any of thirty-two different forms in order to bring comfort to the suffering and helpless. Many people repeat her name as well as or instead of that of Amita Buddha. Everywhere throughout China and Japan she is beloved by millions

of people who are quite unable to comprehend the more subtle sides of Buddhism. The merit of the Pure Land Teachings as a whole is that they bring a message of comfort to those incapable of scaling the snowy heights of Buddhist mysticism.

CHAPTER XII

THE ESOTERIC SECT

THIS SECT is one of the two around which the recent Buddhist Revival is centred, and demands some attention both on that account and because its doctrines are, in many respects, sufficiently different from those of Mahāyāna as a whole to warrant the word "school" rather than sect being applied to it. At the present time it has two main branches in China—the Eastern Branch (Tung Mi), recently reintroduced from Japan, and the more important Thibetan Branch (Tsang Mi), which has for its adherents almost the whole population of Thibet and Mongolia, as well as a limited number of people of Chinese race.

The names of the sect are various. In Chinese it is called Mi Tsung (Esoteric Sect), Mi Chiao (Esoteric Doctrine) or Chên Yen Tsung (Word of Truth Sect), while the Sanskrit names generally given to it are Mantrayāna and Tantrayāna.

The traditional history of the sect begins right away with something requiring a highly mystical interpretation. It is stated that "In the temple of the heart, Vairocana Buddha revealed the secret of reason." This secret was mystically transmitted to Vajrasattva (Chinkang Sato), who remained locked up with it in an iron tower for seven hundred years. The tower was opened by Nāgārjuna (Lung Shu—second century A.D.) who transmitted the doctrine to Nāgārbodhi (Lung Chih). The latter lived for several hundred years before handing it on to Śubhakara (Shan Wu Wei), who paid a brief visit to

China. From him it was transmitted to Vajramati (Chinkang Chih) and Vajradhātu (Chinkang Chieh), both of whom arrived in China in the seventh century A.D. or at the beginning of the eighth. These last, together with Amoghavajra (Pu K'ung), who reached China in A.D. 719, are known as the Three Great Teachers.

This history has been reconstructed somewhat differently in recent years by historians and philosophers. According to them, the doctrine of the sect is a product of the Tantric School, concerned with highly complicated mystical practices which flourished in Bengal during the eighth century A.D. and of which earlier traces exist in India. These practices and the esoteric doctrine on which they were based were introduced into China by Vajrabodhi (Chinkang Chih) and Amogha (Pu K'ung), who reached China together in A.D. 719. The Vajrabodhi of this account and the Vajramati of tradition are sometimes thought to have been the same person.

At first the sect, which was founded in China in A.D. 720, flourished and enjoyed a period of court patronage, but later it declined and disappeared altogether, though it was taken up by the Japanese and has continued to prosper in Japan ever since. During the last few decades it has been reintroduced into China as the Eastern Esoteric Sect and has a small following, especially in Kuangtung. The Hongkong Buddhist Laymen's Association (Chü Shih Lin) is specially devoted to its teaching. The real impetus to the study of the Esoteric Doctrine in modern times, however, has come from Thibet. The Western Branch of the sect is commonly known in China as the Thibetan Esoteric Sect (Tsang Mi Tsung), but is sometimes called the Lotus Division (Lien Hua Pu), the latter name having special reference to Padmasambhava, the Lotus-born Teacher, of whom more will be said. It may also refer to Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, who is

greatly venerated by this sect and whose chief symbol is the lotus.

The history of this Western Branch diverges after the departure of Vajramati and Vajradhātu for China. In A.D. 747, Padmasaṁbhava, a fellow student of Amoghavajra and Vajrabodhi in Bengal, but a native of the region between Afghanistan and Swat, was invited to Thibet, which was at that time being converted to Buddhism through the influence of the Chinese and Nepalese wives of King Thi Sron Detsan, both of whom were devout Buddhists. Previously, five Indian monks had already done some preaching in that country, but Padmasaṁbhava brought with him the Esoteric Doctrine, which was peculiarly suited to Thibet as it included a knowledge of magical practices for controlling natural phenomena, thus exhibiting considerable similarity to the Bon Religion which had preceded Buddhism and obtained great popularity among the Thibetans. Indeed, the invitation from the King of Thibet to Padmasaṁbhava is said to have originated in the desire of the former to bring an end by mysterious means to a number of snow-storms which had been causing great havoc in the country. The Esoteric Doctrine flourished in Thibet to such an extent that it has now become the national religion, both there and in Mongolia. In the West it is often known as Lamaism and its monks called lamas, though "lama" is, properly speaking, a title reserved only for monks of high standing.

By the time the Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty (A.D. 1280-1368) had established its control over China, the Esoteric Sect had spread all over Thibet, Mongolia and neighbouring areas, extending even as far as Siberia and the sea-coast of China, but the area was so huge and the followers of the sect so mixed that it declined in learning and morality about the same time as the decline of the

dynasty. Tsoṅ Khapa, a monk born in the Chinese province of Kansu in A.D. 1417, but living in Thibet, was so shocked by this decline that he began to work on a number of reforms, laying special emphasis on morality and the performance of meritorious actions, though he made no changes in the interpretation of the doctrine. In time his followers became so numerous that they exceeded the number of those who continued to follow the old ways. In order to distinguish them, Tsoṅ Khapa ordered them to wear yellow hats, in consequence of which the adherents of the two main divisions of the Western Esoteric Sect are called the Red Hats and the Yellow Hats to this day. During the last five hundred years the Yellow Hats have held the chief spiritual and temporal authority in Thibet and the greatest measure of spiritual authority in Mongolia.

The Manchu Court at Peking (now known as Peiping) cultivated "lamaism" for political reasons right up to the establishment of the Republic, and the city still possesses many temples and pagodas the architecture of which clearly owes its inspiration to Thibet. Though the majority of the adherents of the Esoteric Sect in China are persons of Mongol or Thibetan origin, periodical visits to the great cities of China by "Living Buddhas" and high lamas have been instrumental in awakening the interest of the Chinese Buddhist intellectuals, some of whom have established centres for the study of the Esoteric Doctrine in Peiping, Tientsin, Nanking and Shanghai, etc. Moreover, there are a number of Chinese adherents to be found in all the border areas adjacent to places inhabited by Mongols and Thibetans. The present Chinese Government, mindful, like its predecessors, of the importance of religion among the non-Chinese races of Mongolia, Thibet, and other dependencies or border regions, takes care to entertain important ecclesiastical

dignitaries from those areas with considerable lavishness and protestations of respect for their spiritual calling.

The chief sūtras upon which the Esoteric Doctrine is based are the Vairocana Sūtra (Piluchêna Ch'eng Fu Ching) and the Diamond Apex Sūtra (Chingkang Ting Ching). Though much of this doctrine is still handed down orally and in secret, it is possible to give a general outline of its main tenets, but there are some points which require further elucidation than that given below if the whole theory of the nature of existence is to be clearly comprehended. Unfortunately there does not seem to be general agreement about the interpretation of these points, and there are many things which are withheld from the uninitiated. The writer in his search for knowledge has undergone some of the preliminary initiations, but the instruction received was not sufficient to enable him to comprehend the whole theory.

As stated in the chapter on Mahāyāna, the Body of a Buddha is capable of a mystical division into three. The highest of these, or Law Body, is synonymous with the ultimate reality underlying all phenomena. This Body is also represented separately in the person of Vairocana Buddha, who is the central figure in the mysteries of the Esoteric Sect. Locana Buddha represents the ultimate reality in conjunction with the transitory phenomenal Universe, and Śākyamuni (Gautama) Buddha is regarded as the personification of the essence of reality.

Vairocana Buddha, then, is the original, self-existent essence in which all things take their form and have their being. This essence is represented as having two aspects—*vajradhātu*, or intellection, which rises from *garbhadhātu*, the matrix or mystical substance underlying it. It is from intellection that all things are born. In the realm of relative existence which results from it, there are six elements—earth, water, fire, air, space and

consciousness, which are the basis of all such existence. Existence is taken here to mean every aspect of form and consciousness and is visualised as four perfect circles (*maṇḍalas*)—the Great Maṇḍala or general basis, the Law (Dharma) Maṇḍala or ideas and terms, the Teacher Maṇḍala or function, and the Concentration (Samaya) Mandala or form.

Intimately connected with the function of existence are the Three Secrets upon which the practices of the Esoteric Sect are largely based. I must confess that I do not perfectly understand the meaning of the word "function" (*yung*) used in this connection, but consider it probable that it is intended to connote that animating force which, proceeding from the essence of reality, relates it to phenomena (though it must at the same time be understood that reality and phenomena are essentially the same thing).

The Three Secrets together connote a method of establishing a special connection between an individual and a particular Bodhisattva which will result in temporarily identifying the one with the other. In this way the devotee may take to himself the store of merit accumulated by that Bodhisattva, in the course of millions of lives, for the purpose of securing his own Enlightenment. These Three Secrets differ in their application according to which Bodhisattva or Buddha is to be sought through their mystical power. They comprise *mudrās*, or symbols, made by placing the hands and fingers in certain positions; *dhāraṇīs*, or secret formulas, to be repeated in a special tone of voice; and the visualisation of the form of one or more of the Bodhisattvas.

Devotees are expected to go through a period of preliminary training before any of the higher secrets are revealed to them. This consists of tens of thousands of

full-length prostrations, the repetition according to certain rules of the commoner dhāraṇīs and the preparation of symbolical offerings. In some cases a teacher may be prepared to allow his disciple to omit some of these preliminaries if he considers that the latter's development is already of a high order. When the time is ripe, he will begin to impart further knowledge in a series of carefully graduated stages, on the strict understanding that the essential details will never be divulged to anyone but the disciples which the pupil will himself instruct in due course. Thus many of these details have never been committed to writing, much less to print. In recent times, however, the Thibetan mystics have been faced with the problem of giving adequate instruction to Chinese disciples with whom they may be able to have only brief contact during their periodical visits to China. For this reason, some books have been privately published in Chinese revealing a certain number of the secrets connected with the lower stages of the path. The lamas are not much concerned about these books falling into the wrong hands, because they feel that unbelievers will never take the trouble to practice the highly complicated rituals, some of which take hours to perform, while believers will not dare to practice any rite without due preparation and the permission of their teachers.

Each Bodhisattva has certain mudrās and dhāraṇīs peculiar to himself. By forming these mudrās and reciting the dhāraṇīs in the proper tone of voice and, at the same time, visualising the form of the Bodhisattva as being of a certain size, colour, appearance, etc., and having certain characteristics and particular ornaments and dress, the devotee is expected gradually to be able to identify himself with the Bodhisattva and so become one with him. Fiery letters and refulgent rays of various kinds also play an important part in these visualisations.

The secret knowledge imparted to the disciples by their teachers consists of a knowledge of these mudrās, dhāraṇīs, visualisations, the ceremonies that are appropriate to their use and, more rarely, of the metaphysical theories underlying this complicated ritual. There is hardly a single detail in the whole ceremonial which is not symbolical of something infinitely more profound than appears on the surface, though it may be doubted if all the instructors are aware of the true significance of what they teach.

Before anyone is permitted to perform the rituals appropriate to a particular Bodhisattva, he must first be the recipient of a sort of baptismal ceremony known as *kuan ting*. His teacher will perform an elaborate ritual, invoking the Bodhisattva whose presence is desired, and sprinkle the disciple with holy water, besides touching the crown of his head in order to transmit to him mystical power. A separate *kuan ting* is necessary for the invocation of each Bodhisattva.

The adherents of this sect believe that, in addition to Enlightenment, all kinds of magical or supernatural powers can be obtained in this way, but the pupil is warned to regard these powers as mere by-products of his mental activity and not as an end in themselves. Those who practice the rites simply in order to obtain supernatural powers are considered heretics, though that does not deter some people from making their acquisition the main goal. The powers are intended to be used to aid the seeker in his search for Enlightenment or to help others, but not for selfish ends. For example, it is believed possible to acquire the power of covering long distances at a tremendous pace. The value of this power is that it enables the wielder to devote less time to moving from place to place in the exercise of his religious duties and to come quickly to the aid of others whenever necessary.

Breathing exercises, similar to or even identical with those of the Hindus, and the practice of meditation are also taught by this sect. Its use of Sanskrit mantras or dhāraṇīs as well as of mudrās, together with many other similarities to the Tantric Yogācaryā School of Hinduism, have caused the doctrine and practice of the Esoteric Sect to be known in the West and in India as Tantric Buddhism. Its closeness to the Hindu Tantric Sect can be seen from many still more remarkable points of similarity between them, including the worship of the Goddess Tārā in her twenty-one different forms and even of the Goddess Durgā—a purely Hindu deity.

To those who believe that the search for Enlightenment cannot be brought to a successful conclusion through ritualistic practices this sect must seem very far from the sublimity of Gautama Buddha's teaching, but before condemning it as mere superstition, the theory behind it should be taken into account as well as the kind of people who form the greater part of its adherents. To begin with the latter, it should be remembered that the Thibetans were long accustomed by their old Bon religion to magical practices of all kinds, and that the intellectual development of the majority was (and is) not sufficient for them to grapple with the metaphysical subtleties of Mahāyāna Buddhism as a whole. The theory which lies behind these practices is not so far from the norm of Mahāyāna Buddhism as would appear at first sight. For example, it is common to place before a sacred image eight small cups, each containing a different kind of offering. In front of these are placed eight other cups containing the same eight kinds of offerings in the reverse order. The object of this is to remind the worshipper that the Buddha or Bodhisattva represented by the statue is also to be found in his own heart. Moreover, it sometimes happens that a devotee practises

the visualisation of the form of a particular Bodhisattva so frequently and with such concentration that the Bodhisattva actually appears to stand before him. Elated with his success, he rushes to tell his teacher that such and such a Bodhisattva has actually appeared to him, whereupon the latter scolds him and tells him to go back and continue the practice until he realises that the Bodhisattva has no existence outside his own mind.

Needless to say, the practice of this Esoteric Doctrine is open to many abuses. The common people can easily be intimidated into believing that a lama has magical powers which will be used against them unless they satisfy his greed, and it is very easy for the ceremonies to degenerate into the most material form of idol worship by those not properly instructed into their true significance.

CHAPTER XIII

THE REMAINING SECTS

The Hua Yen Sect

THERE IS no satisfactory English term which can be used to translate the name of this sect. It is taken from the title of the Buddhavataṁsaka Mahāvaipulya Sūtra (Hua Yen Ching), meaning "The Expanded Sūtra of the Adornments of Buddha." This sūtra is said to have been preached two weeks after the Buddha attained Enlightenment and to have been his first discourse. The audience is believed to have been composed of Bodhisattvas, Mahāsattvas, etc., no human beings being present. Realising that the doctrine contained in it was much beyond the comprehension of his human disciples, the Buddha followed up this discourse by others better adapted to their understanding, which, according to the adherents of Mahāyāna, formed the basis of the Hīnayāna School.

Modern scholars are inclined to regard the sūtra as a later Mahāyāna work based on the metaphysics of the Indian Yogācārya School, which is concerned with the relativity of all phenomena and the nature of the ultimate reality underlying them. The idea that it was not preached to a human audience is believed to have been inspired by the story that the Buddha, immediately after his Enlightenment, was reluctant to preach, because he was not convinced of the wisdom of doing so and because of the difficulty of making the sublime truth which he had discovered comprehensible to the unenlightened. His refusal, later on, to discuss certain metaphysical problems

is also given as a reason for the belief that this sūtra represents a higher form of teaching which was withheld from his disciples.

Nāgārjuna (Lung Shu) is traditionally regarded as the first patriarch of the sect, though Tu Shun (died A.D. 640), the first Chinese patriarch, may be considered its founder. The story goes that the sūtra was recorded and hidden in an iron tower (like the sūtras of the Esoteric Sect), and that this tower was opened by Nāgārjuna with the help of seven grains of mustard seed. Inside he found three manuscripts of the sūtra, the longest composed of countless stanzas, a medium one, and a third composed of only one hundred thousand stanzas; but as the first two were found to be beyond the power of the human intellect to grasp, only the shortest was used.

Three Chinese translations of the sūtra exist. It centres round the figure of Locana Buddha (identified with the Body of Compensation of the Triple Body) and contains a highly complicated metaphysical exposition.

The Hua Yen Sect divides the discourses of Sákyamuni Buddha into three separate periods and according to five main doctrines. They are:

The first period when the Hua Yen doctrine was preached.
The second period during which the Hīnayāna doctrines were preached.
The third period during which the Mahāyāna doctrines were preached.
The doctrine of Hīnayāna.
The doctrine of Mahāyāna (idealistic).
The doctrine of Mahāyāna (realistic).
The doctrine of Sudden Enlightenment (Dhyāna).
The doctrine of Hua Yen (Avataṁsa).

According to the last, there are four ascending realms of understanding:

1. Phenomena or form, appearance, sensation, matter, mind, etc.

2. The true nature of phenomena which is transitory and void.

3. The realisation that the appearance and the reality are not contradictory.

4. The realisation that there are no real distinctions between phenomena.

A man in the first realm of consciousness will believe in the objective existence of mind, matter, etc. In the second, he will understand that these are transitory and have no actual existence. In the third, he will be able to reconcile the concept of absolute existence with that of relative existence. Upon entering the fourth, he will attain to an understanding on the essential unity of phenomena which seem to be differentiated from each other.

The Pure Consciousness Sect

This sect is known by a variety of names, of which the commonest are:

Wei Shih Tsung—*wei shih* meaning pure consciousness in the sense of "only consciousness" or "nothing but consciousness."

Fa Hsiang Tsung—*fa hsiang* (*dharmalakṣaṇa*), being the term applied to a system of philosophy somewhat more realist than the purely idealistic *fa hsing* (*mādhyamika*).

According to tradition, the sect originated and was developed in India by Maitreya (Mi Lo), Jina (Ch'en-Na), Assaṇga (Wu Tso), Vasubandhu (Shih Ch'in) and Dharmapara (Hu Fa), all of whom, with the exception of Maitreya (not to be confused with the Buddha of that name), lived round about the fourth century A.D. Maitreya seems to have lived in the first century A.D. Hsüan Tsang, the great Chinese pilgrim and translator, who spent fifteen years in India between A.D. 629 and 645, introduced its teachings into China and took a great part in the translation or compilation of the "Treatise on Achieving Pure Consciousness" (Ch'eng Wei Shih Lun),

upon which the doctrine of the Chinese sect is based. He is regarded as the first patriarch of the sect in China.

The doctrine expounded by this treatiṡe poṣsesses much in common with the Trimsika or Thirty Stanzas compiled by Vasubandhu which were based on the Lankavatāra Sūtra. It would appear that the doctrine originated much before the time of Vasubandhu, but that he and Asaṅga provided systematic arrangement and explanations. Śīlabhadra (Kai Hsien), the teacher of Hsüan Tsang at the great Buddhist University of Nālandā, near the modern Patna, is the reputed author of the text, but T'ai Hsü is of the opinion that it was produced by the combined efforts of several people, and there are some who attribute much of the authorship to Hsüan Tsang himself.

In this treatise all things are explained as being mind or consciousness, which, when stripped of the transient appearances of phenomena, represents true reality. An attempt is made to prove this by a careful investigation of the specific characteristics of phenomena. No difference between the universal and the individual is admitted, they being considered essentially identical. The nature of consciousness is analysed and divided into eight categories, the first six of which are consciousness dependent on sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and thought. The seventh is explained as a link between these six and the eighth, while this last is described as a field in which are planted the "seeds" of the other consciousnesses. These "seeds" determine the various transmigrations through which all individuals must pass. By taking care that only the right "seeds" are planted (which requires constant control over the reactions to impressions received through the senses), Enlightenment and Nirvāṅa can ultimately be obtained. It should be kept in mind that the individual has no objective existence

of his own, but a fundamental unity with the universal consciousness. He and his transmigrations are, in the last analysis, without absolute existence.

The term realism (*fa hsiang* or *dharmalakṣaṇa*) applied to this system is somewhat misleading, unless understood in the sense of something which is a less pure form of idealism than that propounded by the Hua Yen, T'ien T'ai and Esoteric Sects; because, in fact, all the Mahāyāna doctrines are idealistic to a greater or lesser degree.

The T'ien T'ai Sect

The name of this sect is taken from that of a mountain (The Terrace of Heaven) in the province of Chekiang, where the monk Chih K'ai lived for some time during the sixth century A.D. It is also known as the Lotus of the True Law Sect (Fa Hua Tsung) from the name of the sūtra to which it attaches the most importance.

The sect is traditionally said to have been founded by Hui Wen (*circa* A.D. 550), or some say by Nāgārjuna (second century A.D.). Taking the former as the first patriarch, Hui Ssû was the second and his pupil, Chih K'ai or Chih I (A.D. 528-597), the third. Chih K'ai is, however, generally regarded as the real founder of the sect.

Influenced by the teaching of the Lotus of the Good Law Sūtra, he wished to show that there is no fundamental antagonism between the various Mahāyāna sects or between Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, but rather that there is a place for all of them. He therefore asserted that none of the Buddhist doctrines should be considered erroneous (though he opposed the teaching of the Meditation Sect that study is superfluous), and taught that they range from those intended to appeal to simple hearers up to the nearest possible approximation to truth,

absolute truth being beyond the power of comprehension before Enlightenment is attained.

To this end the Mahāyāna teachings are divided into four categories—the swift, gradual, esoteric and variable methods of attaining Enlightenment. They are also said to have been delivered over five different periods, thus:

1. The first three weeks after Enlightenment, during which the Buddha expounded the complete truth as contained in the Hua Yen Sūtra to audiences of Enlightened beings already beyond human state.

2. The twelve years devoted to the preaching of the Hīnayāna doctrines for the benefit of those who could not understand the higher teachings.

3. The eight years devoted to the preaching of the Mahāyāna doctrines.

4. The twenty-two years devoted to the teaching of the Mahayana doctrines centring around that of transcendental wisdom (*prajñā*) and to the reconciliation of the Mahāyāna and Hinayāna doctrines.

5. The last years devoted to the doctrine that all beings may attain Nirvāṇa, during which the substance of the Lotus of the True Law Sūtra was proclaimed.

The Lotus of the True Law Sūtra (Fa Hua Ching) is known in Sanskrit as the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra. Taken with its supplement, the Śāstra of Great Wisdom (Ta Chih Tu Lun) or Mahāprajnāpāramitā Śastra, it forms the chief work on which the sect bases its teachings. Its doctrine is that of the identity of the absolute and the phenomenal, the eternity of the Buddha (here used as synonymous with supreme reality), the existence of an infinite number of Bodhisattva saviours and the latent power of every being to become a Buddha.

The sect is one of the most important in China and originated in an attempt to reconcile whatever appears conflicting in the various sūtras.

The Law Sect

This sect takes its name (Lü Tsung) from the Chinese word *lü*, which is used as the equivalent of the Sanskrit *vinaya* (laws, discipline, regulations, etc.). Another name for it is the Nan Ṣhan (Southern Mountain) Tsung, taken from that of a mountain in Chekiang. The founder was Tao Hsüan (died A.D. 667), who laid little stress on doctrine but considered strict discipline essential to religious life. Though no longer of great importance as a sect, it has contributed greatly to the practice of Buddhism in China as a whole, all the other sects, with the single exception of the Esoteric Sect, having borrowed their regulations from it.

Great attention is paid by the adherents of this sect to the analysis of consciousness, which they divide into four components. They also stress motive rather than action, though this aspect of their teaching seems a little out of keeping with the importance given to the proper observance of a great number of detailed regulations, drawn from both Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna sources, but mostly from the latter. In spite of this, the character of monastic life in China has diverged considerably from that of Buddhist India, a process greatly accelerated by the difference of surroundings and conditions. Some of these differences have been touched upon in the chapter on Monks and Laymen. Generally speaking, however, the majority of monks and nuns in well-run monasteries lead severely simple lives, and discipline for the younger members of the community is strict, while considerable

latitude is permitted to those monks who show themselves to be responsible persons and who do not wish their privately undertaken studies and meditations to be too much disturbed by the daily routine of the monastery.

The Three Śāstras Sect

This sect takes its name (San Lun Tsung) from the fact that it is based on three śāstras or treatises. It is also called the Mādhyamaka (Fa Hsing) or Idealistic School, but this name is often used more widely to include the Hua Yen, T'ien T'ai and Esoteric Sects.

Traditionally the founder of the sect was the Bodhisattva Manjuśrī, but Nāgārjuna is usually accepted as the real founder. Kumārajīva (Chiumoloshih), who translated the three śāstras at the end of the fourth century A.D., is known as the first patriarch of the Chinese branch of the sect, though Chia Hsiang, who lived at the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth centuries A.D., is also sometimes given that title. The sect no longer exists, but its doctrines are still studied with interest. The names of the three śāstras on which it is based are as follows: Prāṇyamūlaśāstraṭīkā (Chung Kuaṅ Lun), Dvādaśanikāya (Shih Êrh Mên Lun), both by Nāgārjuna, and Śata Śāstra (Pai Lun) by Āryadeva (T'i P'o) and Vasubandhu (Shih Ch'in). These treatises are considered to be masterpieces of logic and give detailed explanations of Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna doctrines. The first was written to prove the inferiority of Hīnayāna, and, incidentally, to refute heresy with the object of manifesting the greatness of Mahāyāna and proving it to be the real teaching of Buddha. The second is specially directed against heresy but aimed at Hīnayāna as well; while the third is equally directed against both.

The teachings of this sect on the nature of reality are summarised as follows:

1.	There is existence	The common explanation
	There is void	The right explanation
2.	Void exists	The common explanation
	There is neither void nor existence	The right explanation
3.	Non-void and non-existence exist in void	The common explanation
	There are no such things as non-void and non-existence	The right explanation
4.	The second of each of the above propositions is correct	The common explanation
	There is nothing which can be described as not being non-void and not being non-existence	The right explanation

If we compare the four propositions which are described as right, we shall see that they are mutually contradictory, unless we regard each as being relatively true in comparison with the first proposition of the same group and each as being an advance on the second proposition in the preceding group. Then the argument runs as follows: (1) It is better to describe the world as void than to say it exists, but (2) there is no void and no existence, yet (3) there is nothing which can be described as non-void or non-existence. However, (4) there is also nothing which can be described as not being non-void or not being non-existence. The object of this argument is identical with that once employed by the Buddha to show that the nature of Nirvāṇa is something which cannot be described. As with Nirvāṇa, so with all forms of existence. Whatever is said about them is only relative and therefore does not express the whole truth. If we say that a thing is infinite, we immediately limit it by our definition, because we imply that it is something and not something else. This is exactly what this form of argument seeks to avoid.

Another doctrine of the Three Śāstras Sect which implies the same thing is expressed thus:

(1) Birth and destruction.

(2) Nothing is born and nothing destroyed.

(3) There is nothing which can be described as not being born or not being destroyed.

(4) There is nothing which can be described as not being not born or not being not destroyed.

The Nirvaṇa Sect

This sect was based on the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, which was proclaimed by the late Mr. Ouyang Chinwu, one of the greatest of modern Buddhist scholars, to be the most important of all the sūtras. Said to have been preached by the Buddha at the time of his approaching entry into Nirvāṇa, it should not be confused with the sūtra which, according to Hīnayāna tradition, was preached at that time. The origin of the sect in India is no longer known, so the translator of the Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra, Dharmarakṣa (T'an Wu Ch'an), an Indian monk, is regarded as the first patriarch. The translation was made in A.D. 414 (or 423) during the reign of the Emperor Kao Tsu of the Pei Liang Dynasty. In the sixth century the sect merged with the T'ien T'ai Sect and now has no independent adherents of its own.

The original teachings of the sect have been lost. It is only known that they were based on the doctrine that Buddha's nature is eternal; that all sentient beings possess this nature and that it is identical with Nirvaṇa, which has no beginning, no end, is eternal and unchanging. This, in effect, means that there is no such thing as attaining Nirvana because nothing exists outside Nirvāṇa

(all else being mere illusion). Hence our efforts should be concentrated on banishing illusion and attaining to the realisation of what we and all sentient beings really are.

The Ti Lun Sect

This sect, like the last, no longer exists at the present day. It derived its name from the Shih Ti Lun, the śāstra or treatise upon which its teachings were based, written in explanation of the sixth chapter of the Hua Yen Ching, entitled Shih Ti P'in (Daśabhūmi Chapter) or Ten Stages to Buddahood. Altogether three explanatory treatises on this chapter were written by Indian scholars, but only this one, the work of Vasubandhu, was brought to China. It was translated in the sixth century A.D. by an Indian called Bodhiruki, who became the first patriarch in China. The sect later became absorbed into the Hua Yen Sect.

The Mahayana Śāstras Sect

This sect is based on some of the śāstras of the Pure Consciousness Sect and does not require separate description. It is, however, still classified separately for scholastic purposes.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PANTHEON

THE MAHĀYĀNA Buddhists anticipated the findings of modern science by conceiving the world in which we live to be a very insignificant part of a universe infinite in space and time and containing more worlds than there are grains of sand in the Ganges. It is not surprising, therefore, that they conceived of a vast profusion of Buddhas (Enlightened Ones), Bodhisattvas (those seeking the Enlightenment of all sentient beings as well as their own), Mahāsattvas (Bodhisattvas who have reached a stage very near to that of Buddhas), and hosts of other beings. Among these, there are some who are held to have a special interest in the advancement towards enlightenment of sentient beings in this world, and it is they who form the figures of the Chinese Buddhist pantheon. Those whose images are most commonly seen in the temples and monasteries are as follows:

Chinese	*Sanskrit*	*Description*
Shihchiamoni Fu	Śākyamuni Buddha	The founder of the Buddhist Religion in the present age. Also known as Gautama. See Chapter II.
Omit'o Fu	Amita Buddha	The Lord of the Western Paradise. See Chapter XI.
Yaoshih Fu	Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha	The Healer. He is represented as warding off sickness and bestowing long life.

The images of these three, in the form of massive gold figures seated on lotus thrones, often occupy the chief

place of honour in the temples. Only the first is a historical figure in the human sense of the word.

P'iluchêna Fu (Tajih Julai)	Vairocana Buddha (The Great Sun Tathagata)	Synonymous with the Law Body or First of the Three Bodies of Buddha. In this sense, the term Buddha implies the universal reality underlying phenomena. See Chapter XII.
Lushêna Fu	Locana Buddha	The second of the Three Bodies of Buddha or Body of Compensation.

The third of this trinity, the Body of Transformation, is Śākyamuni (Gautama) Buddha. Neither of the first two seem to be historical personages. While representing the Three Bodies of Buddha, they also exist independently as separate entities. The whole conception is highly mystical and closely connected with the doctrines of the Esoteric Sect. Some Orientalists are of the opinion that Vairocana is of Nestorian or Iranian origin and somehow became incorporated into the Buddhist pantheon.

Milo Fu	Maitreya Buddha	The Buddha who is to be the next to appear in the world. He usually faces out of the main gate of the temple and also has a place in the dining hall. Commonly known in the West as the Laughing Buddha.
Kuanshihyin P'usa Mohosa	Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva Mahāsattva	The personification of love and compassion. See Chapter XI.
Tashihtzû P'usa Mohosa	Maāhsthāma-prāpta Bodhisattva Mahāsattva	The personification of power and wisdom.

These two are usually grouped with Amita Buddha, who occupies the centre position. They are the three Lords of the Western Paradise (though Kuanshihyin is generally portrayed as a female) and are the chief objects of veneration by the Pure Land Sect.

Wenshu P'usa Mohosa	Manjuśrī Bodhisattva Mahāsattva	Personification of intellect and learning. Usually represented riding on a lion.
P'uhsien P'usa Mohosa	Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Mahāsattva	Revered for ten vows which he made. Usually represented riding on an elephant.

These two are usually grouped with Śākyamuni (Gautama) Buddha in the centre.

Titsang Wang P'usa Mohosa	Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahāsattva	He is said to have vowed to deliver all beings from hell (one of the six states of transmigration).
Weit'o P'usa		Guardian of the Law. He usually stands, sword in hand, with his back to the main door of the temple.

There is no evidence that any of these Bodhisattvas were historical personages, though there are many legends concerning their activities in this world which may not be altogether without foundation. Mahāyāna Buddhist intellectuals are inclined to accept their existence as mystical forces, but do not take them too literally.

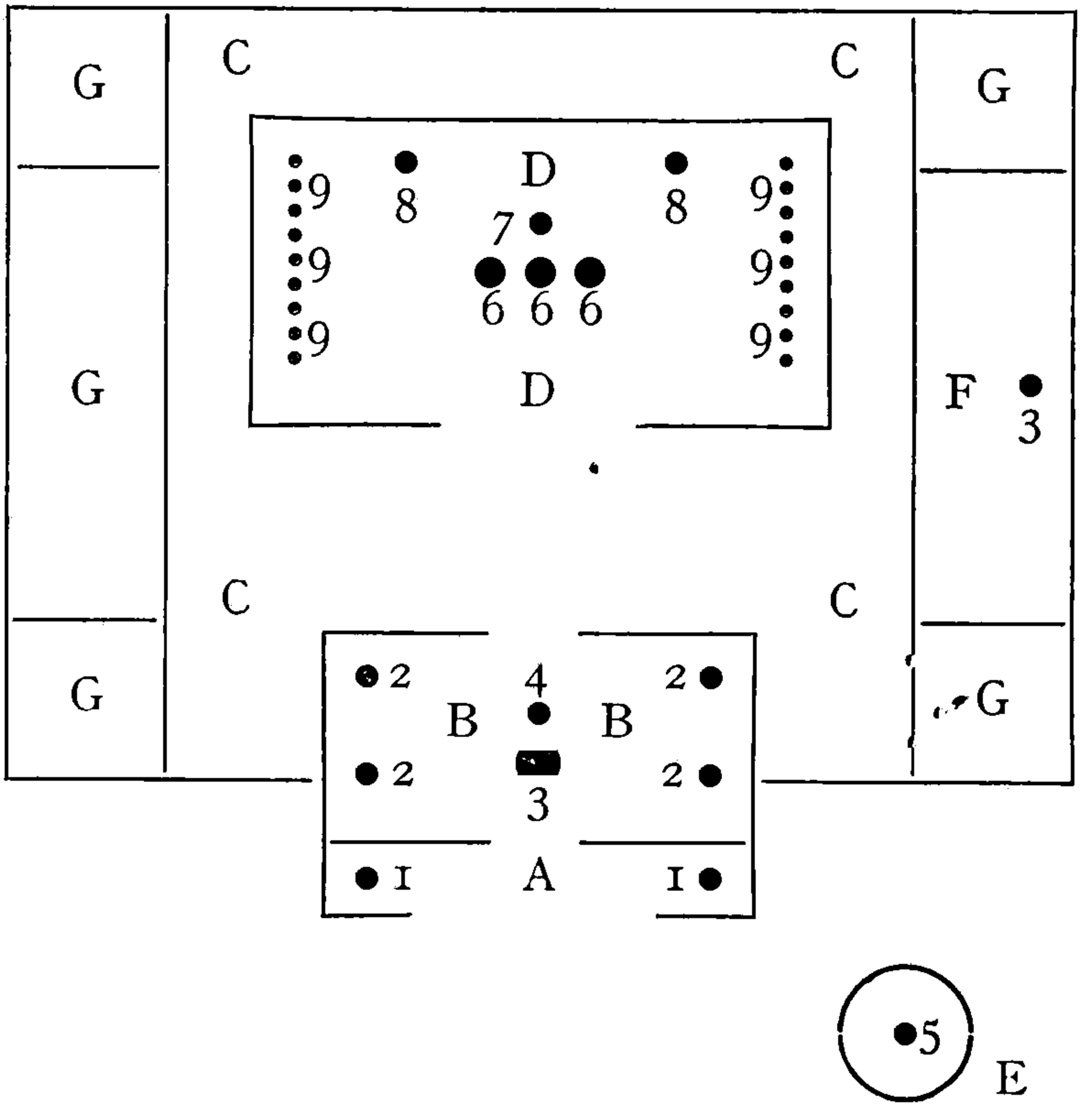
Chiayehp'o	Mahakāśyapa	A disciple of Śākyamuni Buddha, who became the chief of the Order after his death.
Anant'o	Ānanda	The most learned of all the disciples. Traditionally known as the compiler of the sūtras.

These two disciples are usually grouped with Śākyamuni Buddha and stand one on either side of his throne.

The Sixteen, Eighteen or Five Hundred Lohan	Arhat	The famous disciples appointed to witness the Buddha Truth. Their numbers vary as indicated. Usually they are to be found ranged round the walls of one of the temple halls. Their smug expressions indicate the general Mahāyāna contempt for Arhats who concentrate only on attaining Enlightenment for themselves in the Hīnayāna tradition.
The Four Tat'ien Wang	Mahārāja	The Four Heavenly Kings who rule over the four continents to the east, south, west and north of Mount Sumeru, the centre of the earth. They usually sit two on either side of the entrance hall of the temple.
Chinkang Shên	Vajradeva	A guardian spirit of the Buddhist Order. One of them is usually found on either side of the porch of the temple.
Yenlo Wang	Yama	King of the Demons or King of Hell.
Tamo	Bodhidharma	Reputed founder of the Meditation Sect.
Kuan Kung of Kuan Ti	—	A Chinese general promoted, after his death, to be a guardian of the Order.

Diagram of a small temple with only one Hall of Worship, showing the general arrangement of the images. This arrangement would not be very different in the case of a larger temple, but there would be other halls containing additional images.

A. Porch.
B. Entrance Hall.
C. Courtyard.
D. Main Hall.
E. Bell Tower.
F. Dining Hall.
G. Living and Store-rooms.



1. Two Vajradeva.
2. Four Heavenly Kings.
3. Maitreya Buddha.
4. Weit'o Bodhisattva.
5. Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva.
6. A group of three Buddhas.
7. Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva.
8. Unimportant figures of local significance.
9. Eighteen Arhat.

A recitation repeated or sung by the monks before taking their food mentions the special attributes of most of the principal Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It runs thus:

I make oblations to the Pure Body of the Law, Vairocana Buddha;

To the Body of Complete and Perfect Compensation, Locana Buddha;

To the Body of a Myriad Transformations, Sākyamuni Buddha;

To the Lord of the Realm of Bliss, Amita Buddha;

To Him that is Yet to be Born, the august Maitreya Buddha;

To all the Buddhas of the Ten Quarters of the Triple World;

To the infinitely wise Manjuśrī Bodhisattva;

To the infinitely accomplished Samantabhadra Bodhisattva;

To the infinitely compassionate Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva;

To all the august Bodhisattvas and Mahāsattvas;

To the supreme wisdom leading to Enlightenment.

In contemplating these various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas it must be remembered that, according to the Mahāyāna way of thinking, there is one reality underlying the manifold forms of the Universe, so that the myriad Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, together with all things visible and invisible, are but manifestations of this one.

CHAPTER XV

A FEW REMARKS ON CHINESE BUDDHISM AND SCIENCE

THE DISCOVERIES of modern science have done much to shatter man's belief in the explanations of the universe offered by the various religions of the world. The religions of the West—Christianity, Judaism and Islam—have suffered particularly heavily from the effects of these discoveries, because they threw doubt on the veracity of the traditional explanation of such matters as the Creation, the existence of a personal God, the efficacy of prayer in obtaining the intervention of God in the natural order of things, miracles such as the Virgin Birth, and so on. It is true that popular Buddhism also admits the possibility of direct intervention by spiritual beings in response to prayer, and subscribes to beliefs quite as strange as the Virgin Birth, but these have never been admitted by those who may claim to have a real understanding of the Buddhist teaching. With Christianity it is different. The Catholic Church does not admit any doubt to be cast upon the fact of the Virgin Birth, even by those members of the Church who have reached a high intellectual level, while many Protestant sects still cling to the literal interpretation of the story of the Creation given in the *Book of Genesis*. Naturally, there are many Christians who do not take either of these too literally, but those who do cannot all be numbered among the great masses of people whose belief in such things can be accounted for by their lack of education and critical powers.

From the earliest times, Buddhism, despite the wealth of legend which soon became interwoven with the original teaching of Gautama Buddha, adopted a much more scientific attitude towards the problems of cosmology and metaphysics than that of most other ancient religions. Gautama Buddha appears to have wished his disciples to investigate the correctness of his teachings for themselves before subscribing to them. He said nothing comparable to the words "He that believeth in Me shall have eternal life," though the teaching of the Pure Land School, which grew up later, has provided a close parallel. In this respect, however, the Pure Land School is unique among the Schools of Buddhism which flourish in China.

The attitude taken by educated Buddhists to science is that, far from contradicting, it only serves to corroborate Buddhist doctrine, though it is claimed that it cannot lead the thinker more than part of the way to the point which can be reached by the study and practice of the latter. T'ai Hsü says in this connection:*

"Buddhism . . . holds that science does not go far enough into the mysteries of nature and that, if it were to go further, the correctness of the Buddhist doctrine would be even more evident. The truths contained in the Buddhist doctrine concerning the real nature of the universe could make a real contribution to science and tend to bring about a union between it and Buddhism."

Buddhism does not find itself in any real conflict with science upon such matters as the nature and existence of God or the creation and age of the universe; the Buddhist doctrine on these points comprising one set of conclusions which can be drawn from the scientific data

*T'ai Hsu, *Lectures in Buddhism*, Paris, 1928. Much of the material used in this chapter has been taken from the same book.

at our disposal, though this data is not yet sufficient to make only one set of conclusions possible.

The scientific theory of the conservation of energy is one which is very close to the Buddhist "law of no becoming and no destruction." According to both, there is nothing which can be created or destroyed, the appearance of birth or destruction resulting merely from changes of form. Thus a piece of coal may be reduced to smoke and ashes, but though they be dissipated to the four corners of the universe, nothing has actually ceased to exist. Similarly, a new-born child draws the material of which its body is composed first from its mother and then from the food which it eats, without any addition being made to the sum total of matter in the universe. The Buddhists infer from this that there was no such thing as the Creation and that all phenomena are produced by an endless succession of changes, subject to the universal law of cause and effect. Moreover, Buddhism further agrees with science in postulating that these changes are taking place continuously and that nothing remains the same even for a single moment, though the process of transformation may be so slow as not to be apparent to the observer.

The Buddhist insistence on the inflexibility of the law of cause and effect is also in accord with modern scientific theory. Both agree that nothing can exist or take place of itself, but only in relation to a variety of causes, some of which precede it and some of which are co-existent with it.

Buddhism is often considered to be a form of idealism, because it denies the existence of matter except in a purely relative sense, and for this reason is sometimes regarded as conflicting with the findings of modern science. Even on this point, however, it is not at all certain that any real conflict exists. Scientists of the

materialist school no doubt regard matter as a substance which has actual existence as opposed to relative existence. They reduce everything to a combination of atoms which can be further reduced to protons and electrons. The materialist conception, however, is now being challenged by the dynamic conception, in which everything is reduced to energy or movement. This requires a complete change in our previous conception of the nature of matter and brings us close to the Buddhist doctrine that form (or matter) is merely the visible evidence of a series of processes and cannot exist independently of them. The time has not yet come for scientists to agree among themselves as to the precise nature of matter, but the fact that some of them are inclined to the view that it can be reduced to energy, thus ceasing to be matter in the ordinary sense of the word, shows that the old Buddhist philosophers based their system on a theory which may yet prove to be more correct than that of the scientists of a generation ago.

One of the greatest changes wrought by modern science has taken place in our ideas with regard to the relative size of things. On the one hand we are shown that the earth is not the centre of the universe, as our ancestors prior to Copernicus believed, but that it is an insignificant planet among an infinite number of heavenly bodies balancing and counter-balancing each other in space without any master control. This confirms the Buddhist saying that "Space is endless and the number of worlds infinite, for all are in mutual counterpoise like a network of innumerable beads." On the other hand, the microscope has shown us that a single drop of water may contain countless numbers of living organisms, which brings to mind a passage from one of the sūtras which states that: "In a single drop of water the Buddha can behold eighty-four thousand sentient beings."

Perhaps the greatest discrepancy between Buddhism and Christianity is that the former does not hold with the existence either of God or of the individual soul. Science, which is still in a stage of rapid development productive of sharp contradictions between the theories of one generation of scientists and the next, has not yet reached the point where it can prove or disprove the existence of God. Nevertheless, scientists are becoming less and less inclined to believe in a God who is the creator of the universe and exists independently of it. Though they are still puzzled as to the origin of life and frequently prepared to admit that there are certain matters which cannot yet be adequately explained in a scientific way, most of them would find it hard to accept the existence of a personal deity who is cognisant of the thoughts and actions of every individual and who may be moved by prayer to intervene in the natural sequence of events, thus setting aside the law of causality. The Buddhist theory of the true nature of reality is, as has already been stated, that matter is no more than the visible and transient appearances produced by a number of interrelated processes which are constantly in motion. These processes are said to be perpetuated by desire, aversion and ignorance—desire for or aversion to the illusory forms which they produce and ignorance of their illusory and transient nature. A vicious circle is thus established. Desire, aversion and ignorance perpetuate certain processes which produce the illusion of form; form in its turn giving rise to desire, aversion and ignorance. If all forms were clearly understood to be transient illusions and if all desire for and aversion to them were to cease, then the processes which produce them would be cut off and even the appearance of form would cease. This would result not in complete annihilation but in a universal state of utter calm in

which there would be neither becoming and destruction nor the appearance of things becoming or being destroyed. This perfect calm is called Nirvāṇa and is held by Buddhists to be the only true reality. There have been certain mystics in the West who have held a somewhat similar view of the nature of reality and who have applied to it the term "God," but this term is misleading because it carries with it when used in this connection an entirely different connotation from that ordinarily intended. Nevertheless, scientists who refuse to believe in a personal God and are yet not willing to describe themselves as atheists, must surely have a similar conception of God, and regard him merely as the source or sum total of the forces in the universe. The Buddhists prefer to avoid the use of the word "God" altogether, but the words used to denote certain concepts are of little importance compared with the concepts themselves, and as often as not tend to confuse the issue and represent differences of outlook when in fact no such differences exist. Just because of the inadequacy of words, it is extremely difficult to know just exactly what belief or disbelief in the existence of God means to different individuals, but it would appear that the conception of the real nature of the universe held by many scientists, whether they employ the word "God" or not, does not differ radically from the Buddhist conception.

A more vexed question is that of the existence or non-existence of an entity which can be termed the "self" or the "ego." According to Buddhist doctrine, the self does not exist except in a purely relative sense. This problem is, perhaps, not strictly within the province of science, and it is therefore more difficult to point to any similarity of view between scientists and Buddhists in this connection. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw a scientific parallel to the Buddhist theory of the

non-existence of the self. A chair and a book are two objects each possessing certain characteristics and certain functions of their own. Both of them, however, can be reduced to a congregation of atoms constituted of protons and electrons. Though the composition of these atoms may differ, the differences between the real nature of the two objects will now be seen to be much smaller than appeared at first. If it is further allowed that matter can be reduced to energy, perhaps even these differences will be seen to disappear. The case of two individuals differing from each other in mental characteristics and appearance is somewhat similar. To the Buddhist, their external differences are of small importance, because form is not considered to have any real existence of its own. There remain, however, the mental characteristics peculiar to each of the two individuals which differentiate them sharply from each other, until it can be shown that these characteristics are themselves dependent upon the illusory nature of form. The personality of an individual is based upon his reactions to impressions received through the senses and conditioned by his mental powers. All the material with which his mind deals in the process of thinking is acquired originally through the organs of the senses. The way in which he reacts to the phenomena apprehended through these senses and the feelings of pleasure, pain, desire, aversion or indifference which they inspire will differ in certain respects from the feelings inspired by the same phenomena in other individuals, because the sum total of the phenomena with which he comes in contact will not be identical with that experienced by any other individual. Thus he will form a personality peculiar to himself and therefore unique. His responses to the apprehensions received through the senses will be further modified by the state of his mental apparatus. If, however, matter is held to have only a

relative existence, then the objects of perception and the sense-organs themselves also exist in a purely relative sense, so that the impressions gathered from them and the unique personality which is built up on the basis of these perceptions cannot exist except in that sense. Moreover, the mental powers of an individual are conditioned by such material factors as the size and quality of his brain, the state of his liver and of his health generally. If these material factors are held to have no real existence, then the differences between the mental powers of two individuals are themselves relative. The Buddhists believe that when a man attains to a full understanding of the nature of reality, his attitude to all sensual phenomena will be one of complete non-attachment. As soon as this attitude is adopted, the very roots of his individuality are destroyed and there remains nothing to distinguish him from any other individual in a like case. Personality is therefore shown to be dependent on experience gained from external phenomena. Since these phenomena do exist in a relative sense, the self also exists in that sense, but since they have no real existence in the last analysis, so also the self has no real existence.

Leaving aside the superstitions of popular Buddhism, there still remain certain important aspects of the Buddhist doctrine which are extremely difficult to reconcile either with the doctrine as a whole or with the findings of modern science. Though not so fundamental as the question of the existence or non-existence of God, they still present a problem. This difficulty is explained by T'ai Hsü somewhat on the following lines. Gautama Buddha, having attained supreme and universal perception, was able to comprehend many matters which remained utterly beyond the comprehension of those who had not reached this degree of Enlightenment. In

consequence, he was forced to limit his exposition of the truth in such a way that it could be understood by his followers, all of whom dwelt to a greater or lesser extent in the world of illusion. It was thus impossible to present the doctrine in all its perfection, and arguments had perforce to be employed which were related in some way to the ideas prevalent at the time at which he lived. Had he not made certain compromises of this nature, his teaching would have been utterly incomprehensible and so lost to those for whose benefit it was given. A teacher of geometry who subscribed to Einstein's theory of relativity would not hesitate to teach a class of small boys that parallel lines never meet, though privately he would know that this was not the case. A further limitation with which Gautama Buddha was faced was the familiar one of the inadequacy of language to give expression to those truths which were altogether outside the range of normal human experience. For these reasons he resorted to the expedient of using illustrations which could be readily understood and which, though they led the recipients of his teaching nearer to the comprehension of the true nature of reality, nevertheless failed to express it completely. This method is similar to that of teachers who employ comparison to establish certain truths which can be directly deduced from it, provided the comparison is a valid one. The Mahāyāna School of Buddhism accounts for all the discrepancies which exist in the Buddhist canon by the fact that the Buddha is believed to have employed different levels of teaching to suit the understanding of different persons. All these teachings are claimed to be true within a certain relative framework of comparison, beyond which they are no longer entirely valid. The highest truth of all is believed to be beyond description.

While many Buddhists welcome the advancement of

science in the firm belief that it will tend more and more to corroborate the correctness of the Buddhist doctrine, they hold the opinion that science can never advance beyond the point of logical deduction and that this point is still far off from the comprehension of the ultimate reality. In the words of T'ai Hsü, "By the use of such scientific methods, the Buddhist scholar is aided in his investigations. When we go beyond these methods, we find that science is unable to grasp the truth of the Buddhist doctrine. The reality of the Buddhist doctrine is only to be grasped by those who have attained to supreme and universal perception in which they can behold the true nature of the universe, but this implies attainment of the wisdom of the Buddha himself, and it is not by the methods of science and logic that we can expect to acquire such wisdom. Science, therefore, is only a stepping-stone to the knowledge of such matters. The scientist claims that scientific knowledge expresses the whole truth and stops there. In this he resembles the blind man who, after examining the body of an elephant, declared the ear to be a fan and the tail a broom. If we compare the elephant and all the organs of its body to the universe, then the blind man may be compared to the scientist who has never attained an absolute, universal perception of the nature of the universe." It is quite clear from this that T'ai Hsü does not intend to disparage science, but merely to point out that an examination of each of the parts is not sufficient for a real comprehension of the whole.

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

It will be seen from the foregoing that in studying Chinese Buddhism we are concerned almost entirely with the Mahāyāna School, and that the Hīnayāna doctrines have made very little impression in China. Though the researches undertaken by both Western and Eastern scholars have made it abundantly clear that the greater part of the Mahāyāna sūtras were composed in India at various times subsequent to the death of Gautama Buddha, it is less clear as to what extent they represent the actual substance of his teaching. Until recently Western scholars were decidedly of the opinion that the Hīnayāna School has much greater claim to represent authentic Buddhist teaching, but researches conducted on that hypothesis have not proved as satisfactory as was expected, and there is a growing body of opinion among Orientalists that the key to the understanding of even the earliest Buddhism is to be found in the study of the growth and content of Mahāyāna.*

If the Mahāyāna sūtras were to be accepted in their present form as the actual words of Gautama Buddha, it would be necessary to subscribe to the belief that many of them contain matter which was first delivered to audiences of spiritual beings, such as Bodhisattvas, Mahāsattvas and so on, who later transmitted them to their human disciples. Such a belief is still held by many Buddhists and is comparable to the Christian belief in the sacred inspiration of the Bible or the Moslem

*This view has always been held by Russian orientalists.

account of the way in which the substance of the Koran was received by the Prophet. Every religion presents certain features which are open to doubt in the light of modern knowledge, but though one may find it hard to believe in the existence of spiritual beings or, at least, in their power to transmit sacred messages to mortals, this does not necessarily preclude one from accepting the substance of teachings claimed to have been delivered in this way as correct. The further study of Mahāyāna Buddhism by competent scholars may well prove that the arid teaching of the Hīnayāna School is a departure from the spirit of the teaching of Gautama Buddha, and that the claims of Mahāyāna to represent the most subtle and valuable part of that teaching are not altogether without justification. What is even now apparent is that the Mahāyāna doctrines are both broad and lofty, giving more scope to the individual to use his own faculties of reason and intelligence than is the case with most religions. In Mahāyāna there is little of the rigidity which is to be found in the Christianity, Judaism and Islam of the West or the Hīnayāna and Confucian Faiths of the East. Even the earlier and purer form of Taoism knows more limitations than Mahāyāna, which shares with certain schools of Hinduism the pride of place among the religions of the world in this respect. Rigidity would be quite incompatible with the Mahāyāna doctrine of the voidness or relativity not only of the material world but of the Dharma or religion itself. The most fundamental teachings of Mahāyāna are accepted as being only relative expressions of truth even by the firmest adherents of that school. A fuller study of the doctrines of the Meditation, Pure Consciousness and T'ien T'ai will reveal a realm of metaphysical speculation which, regardless of the correctness of the conclusions reached, can only be described as awe-inspiring and

sublime. The wanderer on those snowy heights cannot fail to be struck by their beauty, whether they represent for him the ultimate truth or whether he regards them as a lovely vision which once took shape in the minds of Indian and Chinese scholars long since departed from this life.

There are signs that organised religion all over the world may soon be relegated to the past, together with monarchies, feudalism and other relics of former ages. When this time comes, stories of gods and prophets, accounts of supernatural happenings, the hope of heaven and the fear of hell will no longer exercise any influence over the minds of men, but two things will remain—speculation as to the origin and nature of existence and a growing consciousness of the brotherhood of man. Mahāyāna Buddhism provides some lofty theories of the former, while Buddhism as a whole has never failed to emphasise the latter, even extending the concept to include the kinship of all sentient beings.

What has China, a country which prior to the introduction of Buddhism underwent a singularly self-contained cultural development, gained from the deep impression received from that religion, and what part will Buddhism continue to play in the development of Chinese culture?

The first question offers less difficulty than the second. The native Chinese culture put perhaps too much emphasis on a materialistic conception of life. Confucianism, as we have seen, was principally concerned with a harmonious relationship between rulers and ruled and between individuals standing in different relationships to each other. This, though excellent in itself, was not sufficient to satisfy the longing of man for something which could raise him above the narrow limits of his material existence and, at the same time, soothe and comfort him in times

of trouble. Taoism, which began on a very exalted, idealistic plane, failed to maintain its position as the counterpart to Confucian materialism, and later came to embrace a whole pantheon of gods who not only dressed and behaved very much like Chinese government officials of the period, but who showed the same tendency to favour those individuals who offered them bribes, whether in this life or the next. The celestial hierarchy was also closely modelled on the Chinese official hierarchy, and the junior gods had to devise ways and means of avoiding the wrath of their superiors. It seems that the Chinese, materialists by nature, required some stimulus from the outside to enable them to give free rein to their desire for something in the nature of spiritual experience and metaphysical speculation. This stimulus came from India and added something to Chinese culture which made it a more balanced and harmonious whole. It is a pity that India gained little in return from China. A blending of Chinese matter-of-factness with her own spiritual values might have had excellent and far-reaching effects for that country, but though many Indian scholars came to China to preach Buddhism, it appears that none of them cared to return to their own people taking with them the peculiar advantages of Chinese culture.

Once Buddhism became accepted as an integral part of Chinese civilisation, it wrought many changes in the country of its adoption. The Chinese began to find a new interest in metaphysical speculation and to regard the ups and downs of human life with more detachment than hitherto. By the study of the Buddhist scriptures they also developed a system of logic superior to any they had had before. Buddhist ideas and modes of expression became so bound up with the indigenous culture that many scholars, while continuing to regard themselves as orthodox Confucians, were influenced by them. This

was particularly true of the neo-Confucianists of the Sung Dynasty. Moreover, just as the philosophy and logic of Buddhism influenced the Confucians, so did the more popular, ceremonial side of the religion affect Taoism, while Chinese Buddhism was in its turn affected by both Confucianism and Taoism. Thus there grew up the San Chiao (Three Teachings) which combined to form what can loosely be described as the national religion of China. Individual Chinese continue to emphasise one or other of these Three Teachings to suit their own tastes, and there are many who reject all of them, yet it would be difficult to find a Chinese who does not owe something of his mentality and attitude to life to all three.

The stress placed by Buddhists on compassion and the desirability of seeking the Enlightenment of all sentient beings in addition to one's own has also influenced many Chinese to adopt a kinder and more considerate attitude towards animals than is required by non-Buddhist standards, though this is by no means universally to be observed among the people as a whole. One of the results of this has been the practice of abstaining from meat-eating, in some cases over a prolonged period and in others on certain days of the month. This has given rise to an interesting example of the way in which Buddhist teachings have sometimes been moulded to fit an entirely different conception of life. Until recently it was the practice in China for the local officials to give orders to the people in their charge to abstain from the slaughter of animals and consumption of meat whenever a severe drought threatened a particular district, in the hope that Heaven would be gratified by such an exhibition of compassion and send down rain as a reward. In country districts this practice is still continued, though I have heard it said that the officials who give the orders to abstain from slaughter are guided by their desire to

relieve the superstitious fears of the farmers rather than by any belief in the efficacy of this action in producing rain.

The part played by Buddhism in the development of Chinese art is in itself of sufficient importance to form the subject of a book. Buddhist influences in this direction can be classified as primary and incidental. An example of primary influence can be found in poetry, which owes nothing of its form to Buddhism but much of its content, being often coloured by the detached attitude towards the material world which is so characteristic of Buddhist thought. The same is true of painting, the technique of which has not been greatly influenced except in cases where Buddhist figures form the subject of the picture, but which often expresses Buddhist feeling in more subtle ways. What I have called incidental influence can be seen in Chinese sculpture and in the architecture of certain buildings that have a religious significance. These owe much to the types of sculpture and architecture prevalent in India at the period when Buddhism first began to exert a powerful influence in China. The word "incidental" is used in the sense that, had Buddhism been developed in Europe instead of India, Gothic and Byzantine influences might have found their way to China. The study of this subject is rather complicated by the fact that there are characteristics in Chinese art which may equally have been derived from Buddhism or from Taoism in its purer form, there being a great resemblance between the philosophy of the earlier Taoist philosophers and the adherents of the Meditation Sect of Buddhism.

The extent to which Buddhism will continue to play a part in the development of Chinese culture is something which we can only conjecture. There are many signs that as an organised religion it is dying out in China.

The number of professing Buddhist laymen is becoming increasingly smaller and has reached a lower level than at any time since the middle of the T'ang Dynasty (except during short periods when the adherents of the "foreign" religion were persecuted for political reasons). Educated monks who make a real study of the Buddhist doctrine and try to apply it to their lives are not especially common, in spite of the influence wielded by T'ai Hsü, Hsü Yün and other outstanding leaders. Yet it is also possible to speak of a Buddhist Revival as having taken place in recent years. The laymen's associations in several of the larger cities have been extremely active, and the same applies to the academies and schools established by T'ai Hsü. The prevailing tendency is towards the scholarly Pure Consciousness Sect on the one hand and the Esoteric Sect on the other. The latter has been stimulated from time to time by the visits of important lamas from Thibet, and the highly ritualistic practices of the sect have made a special appeal to people who are beginning to find modern life rather dull and prosaic. The ceremonial connected with the court of the Emperor and the Mandarinate has gone never to return; the peacock plumes and embroidered silks and satins of those days have given place to a more practical but drabber style of dress, while the graceful salutations with which the mandarins used to greet each other are equally things of the past. No longer does the Son of Heaven ascend the snow-white terrace to perform the yearly sacrifice. It is not surprising that the passing of these things should leave a gap even in the minds of those who know them only by hearsay or from seeing them represented on the stage. The ritual of the Esoteric Sect provides spectacles almost as generous as those of Imperial days and offers an escape from the greyness of modern life.

There are few signs, however, of the Buddhist revival having much appreciable effect on the Chinese people as a whole, the general tendency throughout the country being away from any form of religion. The revival is, therefore, one of quality rather than quantity, and unless its protagonists make greater progress than seems altogether likely, it is probable that Buddhism as an intellectual force will perish with the present generation, leaving the doctrine to survive in its popular form as a component part of the mixture of superstitions to which the peasants rather half-heartedly subscribe. The metaphysics and philosophy of Buddhism may, however, be preserved by attracting the attention of individual scholars with a taste for such things, some of whom may continue to become professing Buddhists while others adopt a purely academic standpoint, like that of the professors of philosophy who offer courses on Buddhism in the universities. All of these are pure surmises based on insufficient data, and should not be regarded otherwise. The one thing which is certain is that Buddhism has so affected the character of the Chinese as a whole that it will continue to bear fruit even if the tree from which it grows is no longer clearly identified. There is also the possibility that the Chinese, like the people of any other nation, may grow weary of the materialism of the present day and turn again to Buddhism for relief. If they do so, they will bring with them the scientific spirit and highly developed critical faculty of the modern age, the application of which to the traditional form of Buddhism may result in the sweeping away of the mass of superstitions and ignorance which have for so long obscured its true meaning and in the restoration of its original brilliance.

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