

snakes and dragons. Kinnara is the musicians of kuvera with men's bodies and horses' heads; they are described as men yet not men, and mythical beings. Mahoraga is described as large bellied; a class of demons shaped like the boa. The Gandharva and Kinnara are born by transformation and the Garuda and Mahoraga are born by eggs.

佛 教 新 聞

Buddhist News in Free China

Translated by Mr. H. Y. Li

Upasaka Tang Acted as Free Medical Doctor

Taipei—Upasaka Tang, one of our writers, opened his medical service free of charge. He knew both the art of curing mental disease and physical disease. He was a graduate of Chinese Medical Academy.

Ven. Wenchu Came with the Union College. Mr. and Mrs. Chu Met her at the Wharf.

Keelung—Ven. Wenchu, a Bhikshuni writer learning in the Honkong Union College, came to Taiwan with the tourist party of the college. Mr. and Mrs. F. Chu met her at keelung wharf. The Venerable is a Cantonese began her homeless life at the age of sixteen. She graduated from the Chenghsin Buddhist College of Hongkong and now is a student of philosophy of the Hongkong Union College. She is now on her age of twenty-seven and was a productive Buddhist writer.

Taichung Buddhist Labrary Changed its Name into Chihkuang

Taichung—The Taichung Buddhist Labrary, established by Mr. P. N. Li, got the permission from the government and changed its name into Chih-kuang Labrary. There are six sets of the Tripitaka (the Buddhist canon) and several thousands of Buddhist books. They welcome any gift of Buddhist books. The address is No. 15 Lihsing North Road, Central District, Taichung, Taiwan, Free China.

Pumen Chapter Explained at the Lotus Club of Taichung

Taichung—There are Dharma speeches on every Saturday at the Lotus Club of Taichung given by the students of Mr. P. N. Li. Now Miss C. L. Lu is explaining the Pumen chapter in local dialect and is interpreted into national language by Miss S. C. Wei.

The "Taday Buddhism Pictorial" Publishers Preaching Dharma Around the Island

Fengshan—The "Today Buddhism Pictorial" Publishers organized a preaching party and set out around the island. The members are Ven. Chuyuen, Mr. K. Chang, Miss Saphia S. Yang and Miss C. Y. Yang.

Announcement

The Bodhedrum want to chaim that their financial condition is not good now. To compensatę the foreign postage please begin your subscription. The subscription fee for one year is U. S. \$ 2.00 or Hong kong \$ 12.00. Please send to Mr. F. Chu by registered letter or cash inside mail.

佛 學 論 文

TOPICS ON BUDDHISM THE "OTHER POWER" BUDDHISM

By Venerable Sumangalo

It has been said that words were invented to conceal thoughts. Often it seems that words are incapable of pevealing the nature of thoughts on the higher levels. Many a heated word-battle has taken place over points which ultimately reveal themselves as being terminological in nature rather than conceptual. Then too, mankind has always shown a most remarkable readiness to swallow camels without so much as a slight gagging, but gnat-swallowing almost invariably entails much straining and is often declared to be a manifest impossibility. Between the Eastern and Western Churches of Christianity

there seems to be an insurmountable wall and, to the objective outside observer, this wall seems to be built of the bricks and stones of terminology—a wall of words. On one side of the wall it is declared that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son; on the other side it is firmly stated that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father through the Son. In this contest of gagging at words, Buddhism is not at all behindhand. Others engage in splitting the hair; Buddhists quadrisection it.

The doctrines of the Sukhavati (Happy Land, Pure Land, Western Paradise) school of Mahayana seemingly took their rise in India shortly before the beginning of the Christian era. These teachings appear to be the natural consequences of the generally-accepted idea that merit can be shared. But the framers of the tenets of the Sukhavati school apparently selected the "wrong" terminology in stating the case for their "new" sect. Ever since then the battle of words has continued without abatement. Antagonists of the Sukhavati school flatly declare it to be "heretical." Many declare it to be a contradiction of all that the Buddha taught. "Work out your own deliverance with diligence"—the words uttered by the Buddha just prior to his passing into Parinirvana, are declared to be everlastingly incompatible with the Sukhavati school's admonition to rely on "salvation by the Other Power"! At times it appears both sides to the argument are in danger of falling into a teaching closely akin to "Salvation by the power of 'right' terminology."

The wearisome, almost endless, repetitiousness of the Theravadin scriptures is more than matched in quite another way in the Mahayana sutras. As a rule, the scriptures of the Northern school abound in allegory, fanciful imagery and symbolism, and this practice is carried to such a point that the more clear-thinking of the faithful are repelled. Many are repelled to the point of accepting the Ch'an views on the uselessness of depending on scriptures for deliverance from ignorance and evil.

The three main Sutras of the Sukhavati (Ching T'u Tsung) school of Mahayana are definitely in the forefront of that

group of Sutras abounding in allegory and appeals to man's five senses. Apologists for these three scriptures claim that the sensual appeal is but an Upaya (device) for gaining attention from those ensnared by the world of the senses. Once the attention is gained and credence in the Sukhavati teaching is well-established, then it is claimed by this school that progress in higher spiritual perception comes naturally as a result of belief and practice. Faith and credulity are not to be mistaken for synonyms, the scholars of this sect tell us. Faith is a higher awareness, a sense of mystical union with Amita. The three scriptures are crutches for the mere believers; for those who have progressed from believing to faith, the three scriptures have a vastly different meaning. It is often claimed that all holy writings are at once exoteric and esoteric, depending on the reader's stage of spiritual advancement, his ability to get beyond the clutch of words and of the senses.

The Sukhavati scriptures are an excellent case in point as regards this matter of combining the exoteric and esoteric in a joint presentation. To those who seek intellectual satisfactions, the extravagant word-pictures of these sutras offer nothing at all. Taken at their face value, they seem to warrant the claim made by many that are flatly at variance with the generally accepted concept of deliverance by self-effort. Many critics of "Pure Land" (or "Happy Land") Buddhism claim it is not Buddhism at all and its avowed foes either disdainfully dismiss it from all consideration or else hurl harsh epithets at it. Among those who conceive of the Buddha-dharma as an intellectual system, the derisive laugh is their only notice of Sukhavatism.

Among other reasons for the success of the Sukhavati teachings in China is the fact that their scriptures purport to give a "history" of the aeons-long effort of the Bodhisattva who became Amitabha (Omito Fu). The story of the vows made millions of years ago, their accomplishment and the resultant store of merit in quantity sufficient to ensure the release from lower rebirth for all who accept the releasing power embodied in the Holy Name! Namo Omito Fu, is one well-

calculated to appeal to minds not given to analytical thinking and consideration of abstractions. The Sukhavati school utters the unutterable, describes the indescribable, writes down that which is unwriteable, defines the indefinable and, thus, leads on those whose attainments are not of a nature to enable them to grasp Truth through the medium of any other device (Upaya).

One of the most frequently heard criticisms of Sukhavatism is that the florid materialism of Amitabha's Western Paradise renders it incapable of ever attracting those who have risen above sensuality. To this accusation the Sukhavatists reply: "Through the senses is deliverance from the senses to be found." When only the arguments of Sukhavatism's opponents is heard, they make out what seems to be an unassailably logical case against the entire scheme of salvation by faith. But, it often happens that a quite logically thought-out theory collides head-on with an unbudgeable fact, reminding us of the question we have all heard propounded at one time or another: "What happens when an irresistible force collides with an immovable object? Let us see.

Only a few years ago the newspapers of the world were filled with the story of the collapse of one of the world's largest bridges, spanning a broad river and making possible the linkage of large portions of two great nations by a modern system of highways. From the moment the bridge collapsed, the network of fine roads no longer had any international significance; what had been a vast unified system became no more than a chain with the middle link broken. It was true that the undamaged portions of the chain were still good, but without the central link, the original intent and meaning of the system were lost.

Let us not surmise that this mammoth yet gracefully beautiful bridge was the result of careless planning or faulty materials or careless workmanship. Great engineers had labored over drawing boards and calculations for years, had carefully checked and re-checked all their estimates as to the stresses and strains to which this great structure

would be put. Every imaginable eventuality had been considered and dealt with. When the final plans and specifications were drawn and accepted, they were based on perfection of theory. That this magnificent bridge, when completed, overfall was too laughable an idea to bear consideration. It simply *couldn't* fall. But it did!

Antagonists of the Sukhavati Buddhism are often prone to say that the tenets of this sect are unsound, unworkable, illogical and un-Buddhistic and, being un-Buddhistic are therefore incapable of bringing forth the fruits of the Buddhist life." The evidence from scripture, logic, history and "sound common-sense" is adduced to show conclusively that Sukhavatism can not possibly produce Buddhist results. It is said: "it simply can't work." But it *does* produce Buddhist results and it *does* work. In fact, it is altogether likely that Sukhavatism of the present day (as well as in other days) has produced more Buddhist saints in this very life than all the other schools of Buddhism put together, with the possible exception of the Ch'an school. In my more than forty years of meeting Buddhists of all nations in all parts of the world, I usually find that those who have found Heaven here and now are either Sukhavatists or followers of the meditative school. These good folk have made real in their own lives what others have achieved, if at all, only as intellectual conviction. Those who have realized truth in their own lives have serenity—a serenity against which all Hell cannot prevail, whereas those who have intellectual convictions must content themselves with the satisfactions of having "right theory." The Sukhavatist might well ask: "which is better for a hungry man a cookery book or food?"

(To be continued)

Cease from evil.

Do good deeds.

Purify the heart;

This is Buddhism indeed