

will be a potent influence in ennobling our social, economic, and political relationships, and above all, will make us approach the problems of God and spirituality from perfectly scientific and philosophical view-points. It will drag us out of the weeds and back-waters of traditionalism into the austere atmos-

phere of critical search, where every individual will be free to make *his own* experiments with Truth, according to his own make-up and his unique "individuality". Religion will not die out as many think, but surely, the old forms are fatally doomed.

HEAVENLY GIFTS

(DIARY LEAVES)

BY PROF. NICHOLAS DE ROERICH

Joyfully we followed all the news and articles dedicated to the glorious celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna's centenary. How wonderful that here on our confused and disturbed earth such unanimous devotional reverence and admiration was possible. And this recognition of the Great Attainment came from various countries, from many entirely different people. All dedications to the Blessed Bhagavân were permeated with a profound love from the heart—it means that the message of the Paramahansa deeply touched the very soul of humanity.

People should rejoice at every such unanimous manifestation, for in it is expressed the striving towards the Good and in this common bliss is already contained a real Heavenly Gift, which mankind should cherish above all ages and nations. And did not the Bhagavân himself, in his goodness, show the example of tolerance and all-containment? If people would only evince more care and reverence for all heavenly sendings, which continuously illumine our dusky earthly life!

Heavenly Gifts in human consciousness are always connected with lightning speed. Everything from the Highest, everything from Above natural-

ly directs human imagination towards light, towards sparkling, towards urgency. And so it is. The greatest realizations can come like lightning, instantaneously. But yet another condition has to be cognized in our earthly understanding. For in these high manifestations was revealed a heavenly language whereas ours is an earthly tongue. Even for the highest conceptions we have but poor clumsy expressions.

If around the concept of Heavenly Gifts we shall gather all our conventional definitions, it will yet be but a weak and limited expression about the Ineffable.

Only the heart will give life to such expressions as solemnity, greatness, ecstasy, tremor, joy. Without a transfiguration through the heart all these best words will remain but dead sounds. Therefore it had been ordained since antiquity that the best gifts should be reverently accepted and dignifiedly introduced into the earthly life.

Love is like lightning, but it must be educated and affirmed in full consciousness, or even this heavenly feeling will be but the tremor of a mirage.

Many epics tell of the sending of Heavenly Gifts into earthly surround-

ings. By such legends the effort was made to warm human light-mindedness and to introduce into the consciousness a worthy understanding.

Heavenly Gifts, if not introduced lovingly and with care into earthly life, will be as torn-off wings, which even despite their magnificent beauty will yet remain cut off. But by the Highest Will wings are given for blissful flights. Without a genuine ardent striving towards spiritual flights man will forget about the wings, which will become dusty amidst the household rubbish. Tiny grey entities will creep out from dark corners to clothe the God-sent magnificence into morbid grey rugs.

Stuffed birds with motionless spread wings always arouse a sad thought that the symbol of movement and highest flights has been nailed down and is thus condemned as a worthless thing in the dust.

The culture of Heavenly Gifts in earthly conditions is a difficult science. Precisely difficult, for this realization is born in labour. And precisely is it a science, because many experiments, many tests had to take place until the Heavenly blossom unfolded itself unharmed in its entire predestined grandeur.

Not only the rare chosen ones are called to care for the blossoming of Heavenly Gifts on earth. In every home there should be a sacred garden, into which the Heavenly Gifts should be brought with the greatest love and surrounded with the best offerings which only the human heart is capable to render.

At times people in despair imagine that Heavenly Gifts have ceased to be poured out. But they do not ponder whether their own eyes are vigilant enough to discern the Invisible Light amidst the glare of the sunshine. Do

not people take refuge from blissful rain under an umbrella? And do not people flee into dungeons from purifying thunder storms and from majestic waves of Light?

Do not people try to make a small thing of the Greatest? And how sad it is when Heavenly Gifts—these generous beautiful treasures are cast to derision or locked up in the safe of a miser!

These deniers will try to invent all imaginable excuses to shift on anyone else their own ignorance and rudeness. Little physical effort is needed to tear off a beautiful flower. And in the same way is very little coarse force required to defile the highest Heavenly Gift. But if anyone will argue that this is already a common place, let us reply with the words of Vivekananda: "If you know what is good, then why don't you follow the ordinances?" In these significant words thunders a direct challenge to all who violate and abuse the Highest. And is this question nowadays not most imperative?

If anyone will tell you that it is unnecessary to repeat, answer him: "If something useful is not applied, one has to re-affirm it!" A discussion whether help should at all be rendered, would be immoral. Everyone will agree that one should always help. This means that if somewhere something most precious is being neglected, then one should endlessly reiterate it as long as one's voice lasts. And if anyone sees that a humanitarian principle is violated by ignorance or malevolence, it is his duty to point this out, if only he himself understands wherein are true values.

Heavenly Gifts are multifarious. Generously and magnificently are these beautiful helpers sent to assist humanity. The shower of Bliss is poured in benevolent generosity but only drops of

this treasure reach. But every thought about Heavenly Gifts already strengthens the heart. Especially now when

human hearts are in such confusion and deep pain, one should strive after the highest panacea—after Heavenly Gifts.

“Thy benevolence fills
My hands. In profusion it is pouring
Through my fingers. I can not
Keep all. I am not able to distinguish
The glowing streams of richness. Thy
Benevolent wave pours through the hands
Upon earth. I do not see who will gather
The precious gems. The tiny sprays
Upon whom will they fall? If only I could
Carry home the Heavenly Gift.”

HINDUISM IN BURMA

BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA

Burma is, both geographically and culturally, a part and parcel, a projection and portion of the Indian continent. This Suvârna-Bhumi, or the land of gold, as tradition calls it, has been professedly Buddhist ever since the introduction of the Faith in her soil in the early centuries of the Christian era. Hinayâna Pali canon or the Southern School of Buddhism is the religion of the people in general. It was also the State religion of Burma till the early eighties of the last century when she lost her independence. This beautiful country owes its religion and philosophy, art and literature, culture and civilization, and in fact everything, to the Blessed One, His Dharma and Samgha.

But as Hinduism prevails in the main land Burma could not escape the influence of the Hindu religion. Burma had in the long past, as in the present, close commercial contact with India. Hindu maritime activities which commenced before the Christian era and which culminated in the establishment

of Hindu colonies in the South-East Asia had their repercussions on the coast of Burma as well. Small trading principalities such as Prome, Rangoon, Pegu and Thaton probably came into existence as a result of the Hindu expansion overseas. Hindu traders who had migrated to Burma brought with their merchandise their deities for worship and installed them in temples. “It is probably their shrines” says Mr. G. E. Harvey, I.C.S. in his *Outline of Burmese History* “that form the original portion of such pagodas as the Shwemawdon at Pegu, the Shwedagon at Rangoon and the Shwezayan at Thaton.” Mr. Niharanjan Roy, in his very interesting work on early Indo-Burmese historical and cultural relations,—which is the first of its kind—rightly remarks that Hindu elements in Burma seem to have made their mark as early as the sixth century A.D. and continued to have its share of influence on the people till the fourteenth. It is to be noted that the Hindu element was mainly confined to the Hindu immi-