

# SCRIPTURES OF ASIA

BY NICHOLAS ROERICH

In the torn and yellow manuscripts of Turfan we find hymns to 'The God of Light', 'To the Sun', 'To the Eternal Living Soul'. We find prayers for peace and quiet and ascension, where the word peace is often repeated.

Besides an immense collection of Buddhist texts, discoveries were also made of many Chinese, Manichean, Nestorian, Tibetan, Iranian and other Central Asian manuscripts.

The deserted temples are now in ruins, and the vestiges of towers and ramparts buried beneath the sands, indicate the site of flourishing cities. The frescoes have gone, the libraries have been scattered and all their treasures ransacked. The traveller to-day, who goes by another route no longer sees those brilliant colours, that shining metal ware, but only darkness.

These manuscripts have suffered as much from the hands of vandals as from dampness and decay, and yet their mildewed pages still remind us that these dark and deserted ruins were at one time the abode of clean and luminous thought. The soul of many an ancient scribe is still enshrined in lofty messages.

A recent translation from one of the Turfan hymns reads thus :

"A hymn to the Living Soul . . . all the sins, all the hesitations internal and external, all the thoughts, all that has been thought and said . . . mixture of good and evil thoughts, unconsciousness. 'Know Thyself'; 'the pure word which leads to the soul.' 'Through the soul understand all the wicked words of the Master of Evil, which are likely to lead you toward the eternal Darkness!'

'As a judge weigh every word that is said and manifested. Understand the transmigration of the soul and behold the depths of hell where the souls suffer torments.'

"Preserve the purity of your soul and the treasures of the word" . . . "O devouring fire of Man! and you luminous winged Free Soul."

"Predestination and transmigration defend your heart and thought from all wicked impulses."

'Go to the land of Light by the road of peace.' . . .

'I sing Thee, O God omnipotent, O Living Soul, O gift of the Father.'

'By the saintly path turn to thy home. O Power, so generously dispensing happiness.'

'Wisdom . . . all . . . Herself . . . Trembling . . . hearing . . . peace . . . You the Son of the Almighty.'

'All the persecutions, all the torments and poverty and need which You have assumed, who could endure them? Thou art the Luminous One, the Gracious One, the Blessed One, the Powerful and Noble Master" . . . .

"Proceeding from the Light, from God, I have lost my native land, I have been exiled."

"Be blessed he who will deliver my soul from torments" . . .

"You will receive Eternal Life."

"Purify your luminous soul and she will liberate you."

"Sing that beautiful hymn, the hymn of Good for peace, for confidence."

"Sing beautifully and rejoice in the thought: 'O Luminous Guide of the Soul'."

“With the trumpet declare with joy : ‘Guide our souls in unity towards salvation’.”

“To the call of the trumpet the sons of God will joyfully respond.”

“Say ‘Holy! Holy! Holy!’ Say ‘Amen! Amen!’ ”

“Sing ‘O Luminous Wisdom’ : Repeat the pure saying ‘The Living word of Truth will liberate the prisoners from their chains.’ Glorify the Truth.”

“Sing ‘Be ardent in the fear of God; unite in the commandments . . . Light . . . call . . . the herald . . . the great peace, treasures, which the souls, the eyes, the ears . . . Invite the Son of God to the Divine Banquet, decorate the beloved groves, show the way to the Light’.”

“Group your members in numbers of five, seven, twelve. There they are the seven glittering noble stones on which the world is based. Through their power the words and all beings live.” “It is like a lamp in the house shining in darkness . . .”

“Do not strike him who has struck you.” “Do not be revenged on him who takes revenge.” “Do not seduce those who try to seduce you.” “Receive in a friendly way those who come to you in anger.” “Do not do unto others what you would not have them do to you.” “Suffer offences from those higher than yourself, from your equals and from those inferior.”

“Do not let the elephant be wounded by the flowers that are thrown at him. Let not the stone be dissolved by drops of water. Offences and calumnies will not shake the long suffering ones. The long suffering One will stand like Mount Sumeru.”

“The long suffering will know how to appear at times as a disciple, at times as a master, at others as a slave, or as a lord” . . .

“There is the path, there is the

mystery, there is the great commandment and the gates of liberation!”

“Let Thy will be done. Let Thy magnificence protect me and let my patience, righteousness and fear of God be increased. Thy voice and my ear. . .

“Happy is he who in your purity and justice, O God, knows the variety, the multiformity, the charitableness, the miracle . . .

“Here is a disciple of righteous heart and one who loves his master. He follows his master, he honours his name and cherishes him . . .

“Receive those brothers who come to you. If they would draw from thy wisdom then teach them as if they were your own children. . .

“I like the Lord who takes off his armour and lays aside his weapons to put on his royal robes. Thus the envoy of light sets aside his militant character and sits in light and in his divine aspect, with a shining crown, with a beautiful crown. And in great joy, the Luminous Ones hurry to him from right and left singing a hymn of joy. They all gather around the divine miracle like flashes of lightning . . .

“The noble Lord has kept his promise. I shall sit on high, at the predestined hour, I shall send you help.”

So say these mouldy manuscripts. In these ‘pehlevi’ and ‘oigur’ scriptures have been kept the voices from distant lands.

In the frescoes the characteristics of various nations combine harmoniously, and both in imagery and technique you will find the outlines of the Chinese, Iranian, and Hindu genius. Luminous great eyed figures surrounded by various symbols send up their prayers for peace.

“And from beyond the Himalayas resound the prayers of the ancient Vedas.”

“Let all the pain of the world bring us peace. Let God be witness to it.”

“Let Peace be one and let it reign everywhere.”

“Let Peace come unto us.”

In the midst of the whirlwinds of the West Dante in his immortal way tells us :

“O Man what tempests must strike thee, what losses thou must suffer, what shipwreck and loss must ensue, while you strive like a many-headed monster towards evil. You are sick in your consciousness, you are sick in sentiment. Insoluble reasoning will not help

your consciousness. The clearest proofs will not convince your low understanding.

“Even sweet and divine clearness does not attract you, though it breathes through the harmonies of the Holy Spirit. Remember, brother, how well and agreeable it is to live in unity.”

Asia prayed for Peace and the great souls of the West called for the same.

In all the prayers which were inscribed to last, there has been a desire for peace, for the peace of the world.

## THE APPARENT AND THE REAL SELF

(From the standpoint of Advaita Vedānta.)

BY DINESH CHANDRA BHATTACHARYA SHASTRI, TARKA-VEDANTA-TIRTHA

[An insight into the working of the human mind and how it can effectively help in the perception of the Reality that transcends it are fully developed in this interesting article.—Ed.].

Undoubtedly mind is capable of connecting and harmonising apparently conflicting elements in our personality. It is mind that connects our spiritual being with the material one, it connects consciousness and matter. It is mind that has brought down transcendence into immanence, infinity into finitude. The Upanishads have spoken of the supreme Self as ‘मनोमय’ owing to the fact of its being perceived in mind and through mind. Sādhana (efforts) and Siddhi (success), freedom and bondage, all these are concerns of the mind, and, as such, mind occupies the most important place in our active personal life. So, it must be of the greatest importance to determine the nature of mind, its features and functions. In all its conscious and subconscious functions, mind retains an egoistic identity which is called ‘Ahamkāra’. It is obvious, according to the Vedantists, that mind is like a plastic substance,

which can undergo any sort of modification and yet retain its identity. Thus, mind is persisting (स्थायी) but modifiable (परिणामी), its modifications being called ‘Vritti’. As it is modifiable it is matter (जड), because consciousness admits of no transformation or modification. Being material, it cannot, by itself, be the knower, the ‘soul’ in us. Who is, then, the knower—the subject in us, this is the problem. The subject—the apparent self, which knows and feels all outside it, acts and re-acts on the external world, is a most important figure in epistemology. To ascertain the nature of the subject (ज्ञाता)—the active knower, the ‘thinking soul’ of Descartes, we have to resort to a deeper analysis of its features and functions. Is it a reality, a constant factor? Or, is it a series of ideas or sensations, as the Yogāchāra-Buddhists and the sensationalists hold? Is it a simple