

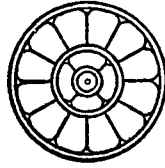
MOTHER INDIA

JUNE 1966

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Mother India: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2



Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute.

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

Vol. XVIII

No. 5

"Great is Truth and it shall prevail"

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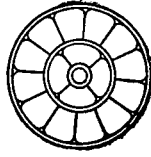
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WORDS OF THE MOTHER

*Faith and Sincerity
are the twin agents of success*

Blessings

SRI AUROBINDO ON HIMSELF

ANSWERS TO SOME PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Q: It is a bit of a surprise to me that Virgil's

*Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt*¹
is considered by you "an almost direct descent from the Overmind consciousness".² I was under the impression that, like that other line of Virgil's—

*O passi graviora! dabit deus his quoque finem*³—
it was a perfect mixture of the Higher Mind with the Psychic; and the impression was based on something you had yourself written to me in the past. Similarly I remember you definitely declaring Wordsworth's

The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep
to be lacking precisely in the Overmind note and having only the note of Intuition proper in an intense form.⁴ What you write now means a big change of opinion in both the instances—but how and why the change?

A: Yes, certainly, my ideas and reactions to some of the lines and passages about which you had asked me long ago have developed and changed and could not but change. For at that time I was new to the overhead regions or at least to the highest of them—for the higher thought and the illumination were already old friends—and could not be sure or complete in my perception of many things concerning them. I hesitated therefore to assign anything like overmind touch or inspiration to passages in English or other poetry and did not presume to claim any of my own writing as belonging to this order. Besides, the intellect took still too large a part in my reactions to poetry; for instance, I judged Virgil's line too much from what seemed to be its surface intellectual import and too little from its deeper meaning and vision and its reverberations of the Overhead. So also with Wordsworth's line about the 'fields of sleep': I have since then moved in those fields of sleep and felt the breath which is carried from them by the winds that came to the poet, so I can better appreciate

¹ The central sense of this line is caught by Sri Aurobindo in an expression in Book VI, Canto I, of *Savitri*:

And feel the touch of tears in mortal things.

C. Day Lewis, in his translation of the *Aeneid*, has written:

Tears in the nature of things, hearts touched by human transience.

A somewhat free rendering is:

Haunted by tears is the world and our hearts by the touch of things mortal. (K.D.S.)

² See *Letters of Sri Aurobindo* (Third Series), p. 110.

³ Sri Aurobindo has translated:

Fiercer griefs you have suffered; to these too God will give ending.

⁴ See *Letters of Sri Aurobindo* (Third Series), pp. 96-99.

the depth of vision in Wordsworth's line. I could also see more clearly the impact of the Overhead on the work of poets who wrote usually from a mental, a psychic, an emotional or other vital inspiration, even when it gave only a tinge.

20-11-1946

Q : I should like to ask a personal question which I have wanted to put ever since, referring to queries by me long ago about the planes from which this or that line came, you wrote : "At that time I was new to the overhead regions or at least to the highest of them." Well, I was under the impression that you had got stationed in the Supermind and the sole thing left was to bring it down. Doesn't your sentence mean that though you were stationed fundamentally in the Supermind the instrumental consciousness of you was still not beyond nodding acquaintance with the Overmind and therefore could not give out ideas and reactions except according to that acquaintance ? At the present moment, how do you stand ? Would it be correct to say that you are functioning from the sheer top of the Overmind ? Can we say even that you have now supramentalised ideas and reactions ? But is it not possible to act directly from your Supermind level above ?

If I had been standing on the Supermind level and acting on the world by the instrumentation of Supermind, the world would have changed or would be changing much more rapidly and in a different fashion from what is happening now. My present effort is not to stand up on a high and distant Supermind level and change the world from there, but to bring something of it down here and to stand on that and act by that, but at the present stage the progressive supramentalisation of the Overmind is the first immediate preoccupation and a second is the lightening of the heavy resistance of the Inconscient and the support it gives to human ignorance which is always the main obstacle in any attempt to change the world or even to change oneself. I have always said that the spiritual force I have been putting on human affairs such as the War is not the supramental but the Overmind force, and that when it acts in the material world is so inextricably mixed up in the tangle of the lower forces that its results, however strong or however adequate to the immediate object, must necessarily be partial. That is why I am getting a birthday present of a free India on August 15, but complicated by its being presented in two packets as two free Indias : this is a generosity I could have done without, one free India would have been enough for me if offered as an unbroken whole.

7-7-1947

EDITOR'S NOTE

THESE two letters constitute a valuable piece of spiritual autobiography, but some parts of them are liable to be misunderstood. Sri Aurobindo's statement that, when first (in the early 1930's) asked about the lines from Virgil and Wordsworth, he was new to the Overmind does not mean that he had not ascended to and realised the

Overmind and even the Supermind : it only means that the Overmind had not settled in all its detailed completeness in the body—beginning with the brain-mind—although its general descent had taken place on November 24, 1926, which is called the Day of *Siddhi* or Victory Day. Whenever in the years after the publication of the *Arya* Sri Aurobindo writes of his not having attained the Supermind and its powers, or of the Supermind glimmering down upon his consciousness, he is writing of the Supermind not having descended and got established in the physical being—initially in the brain-mind, in the normal consciousness which looks out upon the world and acts from the world-level and not from above. Without a clarification of this point, people may be led to think on quite wrong lines of what Sri Aurobindo had realised and what had remained to be manifested.

The Mother's words in 1951 apropos of "The Mind of Light" may be quoted to complete the clarification :

"As soon as Sri Aurobindo withdrew from his body, what he has called the Mind of Light got realised here.

"The Supermind had descended long ago—very long ago—into the mind and even into the vital : it was working in the physical also but indirectly through those intermediaries. The question now was about the direct action of the Supermind in the physical. Sri Aurobindo said it could be possible only if the physical mind received the supramental light : the physical mind was the instrument for direct action upon the most material. This physical mind receiving the supramental light Sri Aurobindo called the Mind of Light."

Finally, we may remember another statement of the Mother's, made in 1953 :

"Even in 1938 I used to see the Supermind descending into Sri Aurobindo. What he could not do at that time was to fix it here."

As we may divine from the Mother's words of 1951, the passing of Sri Aurobindo on December 5, 1950, was a supreme strategic sacrifice connected with the solution of this problem. The solution brought about the realisation of the Mind of Light in the Mother.

THE FORCE OF DESTRUCTION

TWO LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO

THERE are three powers of the cosmos to which all things are subject—creation, preservation and destruction; whatever is created lasts for a time, then begins to crumble down. The taking away of the Force of destruction implies a creation that will not be destroyed but last and develop always. In the Ignorance destruction is necessary for progress—in the Knowledge, the Truth-creation, the law is that of a constant unfolding without any Pralaya.

On Yoga, Tome One, p. 35

Destruction in itself is neither good nor evil. It is a fact of Nature, a necessity in the play of forces, as things are in this world. The Light destroys the Darkness and the Powers of Darkness, and that is not a movement of Ignorance !

It all depends on the character of destruction and the forces that enter into it. All dread of fire or other violent forces should be overcome. For dread shows a weakness—the free spirit can stand fearless before even the biggest forces of Nature.

On Yoga, Tome Two, pp. 862-63

TALKS WITH SRI AUROBINDO

(These talks are from the Note-books of Dr. Nirodbaran who used to record most of the conversations which Sri Aurobindo had with his attendants and a few others, after the accident to his right leg in November 1938. Besides the recorder, the attendants were: Dr. Manilal, Dr. Becherlal, Purani, Champaklal, Dr. Satyendra and Mulshanker. As the notes were not seen by Sri Aurobindo himself, the responsibility for the Master's words rests entirely with Nirodbaran. He does not vouch for absolute accuracy, but he has tried his best to reproduce them faithfully. He has made the same attempt for the speeches of the others.)

FEBRUARY 3, 1940

P : Many people are coming from Bengal this time and many Zamindars too.

N : Zamindars ? Only in name, perhaps.

SRI AUROBINDO : Kiran S. Roy is coming. Suren Ghose seems to be arranging for seven persons to accompany him. I don't know how many will actually come.

N : I am glad that Bengal is turning now to Sri Aurobindo.

P : How do you mean ? You can say the "non-public" are coming now.

N : Charupada and Sotuda will be very glad.

SRI AUROBINDO : Why ?

N : Because they were worrying about what would happen to Bengal after this Muslim Raj.

SRI AUROBINDO : It depends on Charupada and Sotuda what will happen to Bengal.

N : Anyhow, it is the effect of the Muslim Raj.

P : It seems Huq is trying to come to an agreement with Bengal Hindu leaders.

SRI AUROBINDO : He is not out for Muslim Raj ?

P : He may have realised that it wouldn't do. It seems among the Muslims there is a Socialist party which says that the problem is not at all religious but economic.

SRI AUROBINDO : One can make out any question as one likes. (*Laughter*)

P : Professor Kabir and others are for an agreement with the Hindus. The Viceroy is seeing Jinnah on the 6th. It is not known whether the Viceroy has called him or Jinnah himself has asked.

SRI AUROBINDO : The Viceroy must have called him.

P : It would be better if Sikandar Hyat Khan were to be with him.

SRI AUROBINDO : The Viceroy has already seen him. The Viceroy has some plan perhaps. He may be coming to a compromise with Gandhi and wanting to warn Jinnah or tell him to square up.

S : It is strange Jinnah has never said what he wants.

SRI AUROBINDO : Perhaps he doesn't know it himself—unless he wants to be a Minister.

N : And that he can't say publicly.

SRI AUROBINDO : But it is clear what he wants. He wants either a Muslim half of India over which he can rule or some arrangement by which he can rule at Delhi. In that way Sikandar is clever. His scheme looks democratic and at the same time will satisfy what he wants.

P : Sir Raja Ali is angry with Gandhi because Gandhi says most of the Muslims were originally Hindus. Raja Ali says it is insulting.

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : But it is true. Most of the Muslims were Hindus.

P : Raja Ali says the Muslims are democratic.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is a different story. It does not exclude the fact that they were Hindus.

P : No. From Shah Jehan downwards a new connection began between Muslims and Hindus.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. Dara, Shah Jehan's son, was almost a Hindu.

P : One Dr. Kantilal has asked what one should do, and how to become fit, in order to come here.

SRI AUROBINDO : He can do anything that would make him fit. (*Laughter*)

P : No, he wants some guidance or direction.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is another matter. He wanted to 'become' something. If he wants guidance, then consecration and quietude of mind.

P : I shall write that to him.

S : I know him intimately. He came here once. He wanted to know from me and, as I kept silent, he wrote to P. He has been in contact with many yogis but remains unsatisfied. He has read the *Arya* too.

C : Pujalal was saying that Parvati, by worshipping the sun, by gazing at it, obtained Shiva. By gazing at the sun, how is it she didn't get blind ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Why should she get blind ?

C : We have a saying that by gazing at the sun one gets blind.

P : Because of its strong rays, especially at midday.

SRI AUROBINDO : If you start by gazing at midday you will get blind.

C : Is that a symbolic sun at which one has to gaze ?

SRI AUROBINDO : No; one can gaze at the physical sun by practising slowly and little by little. I asked R to practise. He said, "Oh, I will get blind !". I didn't get blind.

C : You also practised it ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes. Of course everyone can't do it.

P : One has to start with the morning sun. I could gaze for about three hours.

EVENING

C : Pujalal was asking if the light of the sun can help one spiritually.

SRI AUROBINDO : Spiritually ? It can help indirectly.

C : He was also asking what effect the practice of eating leaves, fasting, etc., can have.

SRI AUROBINDO : They help one to get mastery over the body and will.

C : And does the light of the sun also help physically ?

SRI AUROBINDO : That is Agarwal's department. (*Laughter*) It is a yogic practice. Of course, it does not give you the knowledge of the Brahman but it helps, as I said, indirectly by preparing for it.

P : An advocate from Calcutta was angry with Nolini because he wasn't given any room to stay in the Ashram.

SRI AUROBINDO : Did he think it was a free hotel ?

P : Afterwards Y met him and explained to him that this Ashram is not like the others. So he had no reason to be angry with Nolini. Y was on the point of being angry with the advocate because he flared up against Nolini.

P read out a fine joke from the *Indian Express* which Sri Aurobindo enjoyed very much.

SRI AUROBINDO (*replying in the same vein*) : You saw about Hitler's secret weapon ? Somebody writes that Hitler will throw gas bombs at England and people will fall asleep for a fortnight. When they wake up they will find themselves already invaded by Germany ! (*Laughter*)

P : And German invaders won't fall asleep by the effect ?

S : The descent of Supermind will be like that. N will fall asleep and waking up will see that it has descended.

N : And that S is supramentalised !

SRI AUROBINDO : Or it may be like the case of Harnath.

S : That was really remarkable. The colour of Harnath's skin changed during a serious illness when he was lying unconscious and his companions thought he was dead and were arranging for his funeral.

FEBRUARY 4, 1940

N : Anilbaran has forwarded a letter of some Rajkumar Bhattacharya of Dacca, who seems to have been a permanent invalid from asthma and bronchitis and has no energy left for sadhana. He has half a dozen children. His wife died last year. He says that strangely enough he didn't cough a single time while writing the letter.

SRI AUROBINDO : Then he can go on writing such letters. But why did he spend all his energy in creating and rearing children, so that none is left for sadhana ?

N : Do you think birth-control would have helped ? People say birth-control

has no religious sanction. Children are supposed to be given by God.

SRI AUROBINDO : So is asthma then. Why take any treatment for it ?

N : Birth-control is an artificial means. Gandhi is against it.

SRI AUROBINDO : I know. But civilisation is also artificial, and even Gandhi's loin-cloth. What do you say ?

N : But the loin-cloth is such a small artificiality. Gandhi says one should practise self-control instead of birth-control. The latter is likely to create more indulgence.

SRI AUROBINDO : Of course, if one can exercise self-control, it is best. But why didn't this man do it instead of producing six children and causing the death of his wife ? Birth-control is not creating more indulgence in Europe. Indulgence in which respect ? Legitimate or illegitimate ?

N : Even in legitimate relationship, it is said that birth-control will remove the restraint imposed on people by fear of having a large family.

SRI AUROBINDO : Does Gandhi say that ?

N : I don't know precisely, but he says that such artificial means causes more harm than good.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is a different matter. But I don't think any fear can stop indulgence. People will indulge all the same in spite of fear of consequences when they have an impulse.

N : Under present economic conditions it is better, I think, to adopt birth-control.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, since most people can't exercise restraint.

N : There is a divergence of medical opinion on the subject. Some say it produces neurasthenia.

SRI AUROBINDO : But plenty of doctors hold the opposite view, and that is now almost accepted.

N : Some doctors say that early marriage is bad, especially for the woman because her body is still immature and undeveloped and the strain of pregnancy will tell on her health, and the children born will also be unhealthy. But in ancient India early marriage was the custom and yet people seem to have lived up to a ripe old age.

SRI AUROBINDO : The long life was due to the early state of mankind.

P : There was no economic struggle then.

SRI AUROBINDO : Apart from that, their habits were vigorous and natural. What, according to medical science, should be the marriage age ?

N : Twenty or after. Of course, there is again another school. One famous authority says that early marriage is good and very healthy. After twenty the bones become fixed and rigid. Flexibility of the organs is lost and this causes a great difficulty during labour.

SRI AUROBINDO : That is true. No rules can be fixed for these things. Formerly 16-18 was the age for marriage. I know about one of my uncles' family. I mean

Hatkholia Dutt's children. The girl was only 13 when she first delivered. She got a boy. At 13 or 14 I saw this boy. He was very tall, healthy and handsome. The rest of the children, among them 3 girls, were a little shorter but all handsome. The 3 girls were the most beautiful I have ever seen and all of the children were remarkable specimens of humanity. You know the story of Akshay Maitra ?

N : No.

SRI AUROBINDO : He was a great social reformer. Once at a meeting he was holding forth against early marriage. After his speech, his father who was present got up and said : "The lecture was very interesting, but the lecturer is my son and was born out of my early marriage. You see how tall and strong and healthy he is ? Then he has himself been married early and he too has a son who is so strong and rowdy that it is difficult for us to stay at home." (*Laughter*)

N : The old man must have carried the meeting. Another point in favour of early marriage is that the girl being quite young can be moulded and adapted to the family and there is thus more prospect of happiness.

S : That is a point because of the joint family system.

N : No, even otherwise it tends to make the married life of the couple happy. If the girl is already grown up, she has an individuality of her own and is no more plastic.

SRI AUROBINDO : You mean that the girl should always be educated with a view to marriage and she should have no individuality of her own ? Most women, of course, think only of marriage and in India they do not have their own individuality.

N : Another interesting argument against birth-control is advanced by people who ask : "In cases where an illustrious son is born after the 2nd or 3rd issue, what would have happened if birth-control had been practised ?"

SRI AUROBINDO (*laughing*) : What about the majority of people who are not illustrious ? Or the majority of parents who have no illustrious sons ?

S : Huxley says that everything on the human level is evil.

N : But it is the few illustrious people who raise the level of humanity.

SRI AUROBINDO : Some say illustrious people are insane. One valid argument against birth-control is the diminution of population. In France, because of her universal practice of it, the population is very low.

S : Besides, birth-control is only in an experimental stage. It is too early to say what effects it will have.

N : All the same, it is more extensively practised now.

SRI AUROBINDO : Yes, in Europe it is practically universal.

S : There is an increased number of lunatics in the West, probably due to excessive indulgence.

SRI AUROBINDO : I don't think lunacy is due to indulgence. Besides, indulgence is not more now than, say, in the 18th century. That period was remarkable for licentiousness.

S : If we are to believe what is said in the papers, there is much indulgence

today, especially among the aristocrats.

SRI AUROBINDO : Not only among them but among the common people too.

S : When one reads Balzac, one wonders why people in France married at all.

N : As Sri Aurobindo once said, "To love another !"

Sri Aurobindo : Marriage among the French is more for an economic advantage.

S : Chastity doesn't seem to exist in France.

N : That is why modernists say chastity is a superstition.

SRI AUROBINDO : Bertrand Russell ? Chastity is considered a moral need which one outgrows as soon as the need is over.

N : Morality is also regarded as a superstition. But isn't there something good in chastity ?

SRI AUROBINDO : Any restraint gives one power and strength. Half of Hitler's energy comes from his restraint, though his opponents say that he is a sexual pervert and a lunatic.

N : They call his condition of mind schizophrenia—a psychological disease due to sex-repression.

SRI AUROBINDO : I suppose they will call spiritual sex-control mystical schizophrenia.

LEAVES FROM MY ENGLISH DIARY

A PERSONAL RECORD

(Continued from the issue of May, 1966)

LETTERS

27th March 1954

To Mr. S. C. Bach. (Oxford)

I FEEL that I may find friends who will render me assistance in establishing cultural contacts at the highest level—the universities, literary associations, poetical associations, philosophic circles, religious students. I want to present the new approach, the new thought, the new literary contribution, the new solutions which Sri Aurobindo has worked out. I want to present them rationally. The result I expect is awakening of interest in Sri Aurobindo, a kind of cultural fermentation so that his philosophic, literary and poetic contribution to the English language is at last recognised. I want him to be known among the intellectuals of Britain. More than this if I can achieve I shall be thankful to God.

A. B. Purani

10th December 1954

To Mr. S. C. Bach. (Oxford)

Let me tell you frankly that I am not interested in a visit to England for its own sake. Nor is it my purpose to do propaganda. Sri Aurobindo never wanted to start a religion or a sect. His contribution is of the highest cultural value to humanity to-day. It is my intention to evoke interest in the work of one who has contributed so richly to the English language and literature. It is a tragedy that Sri Aurobindo who was brought up in England from his seventh year and had a brilliant academic career at Cambridge should have remained practically unknown to the public and even to the intellectuals in England. His poetical and philosophical contributions alone are of such a value that they should be brought to the notice of the intellectuals.

A. B. PURANI

14-9-1955

FROM THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY.
The Master's Lodge, Magdalene College,
Cambridge (Tel. 58058)

Dr. A. B. Purani,
31 Queens Gate Terrace, London, S.W.7.

Dear Dr. Purani,

Thank you for your exceedingly kind letter. I am so glad that you had a satisfactory talk with Mr. Saltmarsh.

I so much enjoyed our talk and was delighted that you met my grandchildren.

I am writing today to Prof. Basil Willey, our professor of English literature, telling him of our talk, your contact with Mrs. Van Lohuizen, and of your hopes.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Henry Willink

I have had a ring from the Secretary of the High Master of St. Paul's School. I am told that they have been searching through their records and can find no trace of attendance of Sri Aurobindo at the School, and wondered whether it might be that there is some confusion as to the school which he did in fact attend during the years 1884-1890. In view of this the High Master wondered whether you would still be interested in going to see him at 2-30 p.m. on the afternoon of Monday 26th September.

MARGARET HERBERTSON,
British Council.

I feel that your mission in this country was of inestimable value to the people of this land and may God grant you many more years in his "Vineyard".

H. Bagnall Goodwin.
c/o British College of Naturopathy,
London N.W.3.

46, Great Russell St. W.C.I.

7.10.1955

It is indeed unfortunate that our stocks of Sri Aurobindo's works are almost depleted. This is no doubt due to the result of your lectures in this country.

H. Raymond Luzac & Co.

25.10.1955

It has given me great pleasure to read 'Sri Aurobindo's Message to Philosophy' and to have heard your address, the other evening, at the Indian Institute of Culture.
Pauline Quigly.

Your expression : "Here is an alchemist who has brought for mankind the 'Divine Elixir of Life' " especially interested me : not before have I seen it used.
Pauline Quigly.

The University,
Leeds, 2.
9th November 1955

Dear Mr. Purani,

I have placed in our Brotherhood library your generous gift of the works of Sri Aurobindo and your own valuable interpretative studies. Members of the University will be glad to find so rich a representation of the wisdom and spiritual experience of this great man, who combined with the traditional philosophy of the Upanishads something of the personal and social dynamism of European thought; who was a poet and creative writer in the English language and at the same time a liberator of the Indian people, who believed like Plato that education should lead to a direct vision of the Truth and that vision is necessary for salvation in private and public affairs.

We in the universities of this country will watch with the greatest interest the work of the University Centre in Pondicherry, which aims at realising for the benefit of students from all countries the educational aims of Sri Aurobindo, and your gift will often send us to the source of inspiration.

Yours sincerely,
Charles R. Morris.

A.B. Purani, Esq.
The Aurobindo International University Centre.
The Ashram,
Pondicherry,
India.

144 Grangewood St. East Ham.,
London, E.6.

14.11.1955

After I left you, I walked for a little while in Kensington Gardens and the green spaces there and the trees appeared like the top of a mountain !—This morning the few leaves left on the trees shone like jewels and the very gulls over the lake were winged messengers.

Clare Cameron.

30 Kimberly Road, Cambridge.

28.11.1955

It was an exceeding joy and help to all of us gathered at the meeting to hear your very impressive, profound and inspiring address. All present thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated it.

Pt. Rishi Ram.

(Concluded)

A. B. PURANI

LONELY TREE

MUTE stands it under the azure sky,
An ancient symbol of magnificent Art,
Filling my hushed limbs with felicity
Gripping with instancy my deep lured heart.

In storm and calm, in rain and sun
I see it dancing in a beauty nude,
Sweet madness of some divine dominion,
Lost in eternal happy solitude.

SRIJIT

IN THE LAND OF VEDIC STUDIES

(We are glad to publish this paper of Dr. Lokesh Chandra, M.A., D. Litt., son of Prof. Raghu Vira and Director, International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi-16. It was written on November 5, 1964.)

AN invitation of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany took me to this land of Vedic Studies (Dr. Wilfried Nölle has actually written a book entitled *Germany : The Second Home of the Vedas*). The first few days were spent at Bonn, the German Varanasi on the Rhine. The economic miracle is visible everywhere and every German takes it for granted. Whilst he floats in a sea of milk and honey, it is the cultural life to which he assigns a place of pride in his achievemental pattern. You will be told of the magnificent operas, rich museums of antiquities and modern arts, museums of science portraying the pace of its rapid development and presenting the 'epic of ideas' which creates the great and grand of our century. Science need not create cultural barbarians, but can be a close companion and concomitant of belles lettres and beaux arts.

One of the first facts that strikes an Indian is that in German life English has no place at all. If you apprise a German of this fact he is astounded at the observation, he is unable to grasp it, he is lost. It is in India alone that we can conceive of a foreign language dominating the national life and the national language having no place in the country. In Germany no man on the street can speak English. You may visit bookshops and it is impossible to find an English book. German bookshops store and display only German books and that is but natural. The Indian anglocracy is loud in its protestations of the universality of the English language, which is far from the truth. Television is Fernsehen in German, ambulance is Krankenwagen, savings bank is Sparkasse, railway train is Zug, platform is Bahnsteig, and so on. Astonishingly, the daily *Dusseldorfer Stadtpost* of 27 August 1964 carried an advertisement in which 'neu' was written in Devanagari (Hindi) as नौ, which dominated the page of the newspaper by its extraordinary size of two and a half inches.

No visitor to Germany can afford to miss Berlin and its wall, which is an aberrant phenomenon in human history—the inhabitants of a single city divided and presenting a striking contrast in their development. The famed Berlin chair of Sanskrit studies is in East Berlin, but the West Berliners have recently created a professorship at the Free University which is now trying to build up anew. I also had the pleasure of knowing the work of the institute for comparative music where for the first time they are studying the transhimalayan lamaist music of the Tibetans. The Tibetan histories of music ascribe its origin to India. In 1957 I had the unique opportunity of listening to lamaist music in a temple of far-off Mongolia, in its very surroundings of a snowing sky, a pensive calm all around punctuated by the tinkling of tiny bells under the cei-

ling—creating as it were an image of a disembodied omnipresence. The deity being evoked was Mahakala—in the sonorous voice of the hefty Mongols where we could recognise a Sanskrit word here and there. The boundaries of the templum seemed to fade into a deification and the entire atmosphere led to a state of ecstasy where we saw the images of the gods with the eyes of the spirit, not with those of the flesh. The cosmic consciousness seemed to pervade those moments of worship. Such is the divinity of the Tantric music that was carried by our Acharyas to Tibet and the Northern Lands of the various Mongol tribes. It is the infinity of the spiritual condition translated into sound, that is being preserved at the Berlin institute.

Another is the State Museum of Berlin which houses the art of India that crossed over to the Central Asian oases through the ancient Gandharodyana region. The great German archaeological explorers have gathered here wall paintings of exquisite chiaroscuro. Some of them aim at illusive effects so that the composition harmonises with the movements of the faithful during the rite of pradakshina. These paintings are true to the traditions of our shilpashastras. The figure of the worshipper from the Cave of the Coffered Ceiling at Qyzyl corresponds closely to the technique of foreshortening laid down in the shilpashastras under the designation *kṣaya-vṛddhi*: the face of the figure is turned to the left, the receding parts of the face are contracted, the more visible parts enlarged, the former obeying the law of *kṣaya*, the latter of *vṛddhi*. A mural illustrating a gopala has a vigorous quality and seems to mirror the early stage of a Vaishnava subject. The Staatliche Museum, presents a brilliant record of Indian art, integrated with the Central Asian genius. This art gives a material embodiment to the eternal values of our spiritual cosmos which we have shared with other Asian lands.

The famed Berlin chair of Sanskrit is in East Berlin. We crossed over at the famous 'Checkpoint'. The face of the controlling officer lit up with a friendly smile on seeing my Indian passport. After elaborate passport controls, an official arrived to check the car: he had the back opened and carefully inspected it. The seats were taken off and examined. When a thorough inspection was over we were permitted to move into the Eastern parts of the city. Old Berlin architecture is intact and old buildings bear bullet marks of the Second World War. In a few minutes we stood in front of the solid buildings of the Humboldt University of Berlin, where great professors of Sanskrit had truly and solidly laid the foundations of Indological learning. Now under changed political circumstances the emphasis is on modern Indian languages. In Berlin is also situated the museum where are housed the epoch-making discoveries of Professor Hugo Winckler from Boghaz-köi in Turkey. These collections of Cuneiform tablets contain treaties between the Mitanni and Hittite Kings in c. 1400 B.C. The deities witnessing the treaties are Mitra-Varuna, Indra and Nasatya. These gods are from the Rigveda and it is the earliest extra-Indian reference to the Vedic pantheon. These ancient lithic relics had been sanctified by the chanting of Vedic hymns. The Turkish site Boghaz-köi has also yielded an ancient manual of chariot-racing in the Hittite language by the Mitanni author named Kikkuli whose technical terms are

derived from Sanskrit.

In the company of my brother-in-law, Shri Rakesh Lohia, and my sister Dr. Sushama Lohia I visited the ancient Benedictine monastery situated on the picturesque lake of Maria Laach. Here resides an old Polish Count by the name of Dr. P. Cyrill von Korvin-Krasinski who has taken up the monastic robe. He has specialised in Tibetan and Mongolian Ayurveda and is trying to experiment on its *materia medica*. His colleague met us at the gates of the monastery and led us to the waiting room whose austerity was a sharp contrast to the splendour of the homes of the laity. Dr. Krasinski entered the room and greeted us with a smile that seemed to encompass the fulfilment of the eagerness of a long-desired meeting. He opened his portfolio, took out a letter and handed it over to me. It was an invitation from father (Prof. Raghu Vira) to him for a visit to India. The monk Dr. Krasinski was moved and so were we, and in an emotion-choked voice he asked for a fresh invitation to come to India, the home of the medical system of Tibet and Mongolia. I agreed to give it and the conversation drifted to the Mongolian literature on Ayurveda. We covered not only texts but also the botanical identification of the herbs mentioned in them. Father Korvin-Krasinski related how he had had the privilege of having W. Badmajew as his guru in Mongolian Ayurveda in Warsaw. He was the son of the famous Siberian Doctor, N. M. Badmaev, who was well known in Leningrad for his Ayurvedic practice and his great success in this therapy. His patients included prominent Communist leaders like Bukharin, Rykov, the author Alexei Tolstoy and on several occasions he was even summoned to visit Stalin. The People's Commissar of Health Kaminsky had such a high opinion of him that a special department was established under Dr. Feodorov at Leningrad. Even Prof. Ilin of the Military Medical Academy was in this department. During the great Communist purge the department was abolished and the persons liquidated. The son of Badmaev fled to Poland where Father Krasinski met him. Father Krasinski related that Badmaev Jr. had given him a number of Siberian medical preparations. I promptly requested him to show me some. He hesitated. They were upstairs in his room and ladies were not permitted to enter any except the waiting room. My sister was equally keen to see them. Father Krasinski said that he would bring down one. He brought a bottle and spoke about its efficacy and was very sad that now he would not have it again as his Siberian guru Badmaev was no more alive. I requested Father Krasinski to show me a bit of his admirable drug. And lo ! it was the ubiquitous hingvashtaka churna. I reverted to Krasinski : "It is found in every Indian household. You can get it, certainly you can have it again." Now Krasinski was even more insistent on a visit to India to study at the very fountainhead of the medicine of Tibet, Mongolia and Siberia.

I visited the two-thousand-year old temple of Mithra or God Surya in the very heart of London and saw throughout the European academic circles their rewarding efforts to understand the centuries of our strivings towards the higher and deeper meaning of Man's fulfilment. I shall skip over the numerous experiences of my European visit and pass on to the major mission which took me to Europe. It was to

enlarge father's collection of microfilms of Mongolian texts which were translations of Sanskrit works, most of them lost to us today. These microfilms comprise over three thousand Indian texts ranging from profane literature like grammar and prosody (*chandaḥ-śāstra*) to the knowledge centred in *ādhyātma-vidyā* or the exploration of the Self. One may find here the Kalachakra expressing the inexhaustible wealth of the tantric vision in its last phases in India. Hevajra and Mahamaya, Mahakala, Kali, Maheshvara, Garuda besides a host of others are evoked and worshipped to transcend the samsaric plane, in countless texts. We may read the time-honoured Sanskrit grammars of Chandra, Kalapa and Panini in their Mongolian translations besides special treatises on the Sanskrit prefixes (*upasarga*) and declensions (*vibhakti*). *Amarakoṣa* the Sanskrit lexicon, *Kāvya-darśa* of Dandin on literary art, the *Chandoratnākara* of Ratnakarashanti on metrics in Mongolian translations have influenced the course of Mongolia's scholarly tradition. The Mongolian *Meghadūta* takes our Kalidasa to the snowy North. A number of medical texts, including some on alchemy, are a part of this encyclopaedic Indo-Mongol corpus. This corpus has been acclaimed by the Mongolian people as "the pearl of our literature", and for us forms a golden link in the historic immensity of India's Perennial Spirit as it unfolded in many lands and climes. This vast corpus exists in a single, a unique complete copy of Ulanbator, the capital of the Mongolian People's Republic. My father had eagerly waited for many years to get this gigantic set in a film copy. At long last India was free and father had an opportunity to travel to Mongolia at a time when the temperature froze to minus 60 degrees below zero. In spite of the bone-piercing cold father was happy to be there to accomplish the dream of a life-time. He found a fertile soil. The Mongols had awaited the advent of an Acharya for three centuries. They hailed him as an Acharya of the Twentieth Century. The epithet Acharya has a unique effulgence in the mind of the Mongol. It embraces a magical reverence sanctified by faith and devotion going back to over 300 years when the last of Indian Acharyas trod to the "Northern Land" and took with them the stories of Lord Krishna, King Vikramaditya and King Bhoja which have lived to this day in the remotest yurts, recounted by grandparents and parents to eager children round cosy fires in *ger* (tents of felt) unshaken by sweeping whizzing winds in temperatures threatening to freeze human blood.

Except one or two, the temples are no more. No fragrance rises to the skies from man-high incensoirs. The perpetual flame—the *akhaṇḍa-jyoti*—in huge ancient oil-lamps flickers no more. A generation whose inner being could attune itself to sadhana lives not. The temple gongs no longer summon the faithful. The painter's brush no more delineates the world of gods with the humming of bijas and mantras. Mongol astrologers look no longer into the almanacs or panchangas for finding the *pūrṇimā* (full-moon) to celebrate a holy day or to draw the eyes of a deity on a silken scroll. The voice of dharma is muffled into a void and a silence. Man's ascent to the heights of humanism is replaced by a process of hominisation under a People's Republic. Yet millennia of spiritual realisation cast their aura on the Mongol and in the shaking

of hands and embrace of arms there was inconceivable warmth towards the Awaited One, Acharya Raghu Vira. While the yester-years of the Mongols were enshrined in father's heart, he loved the great Mongolian people in flesh and blood even more. And the Mongolian scholars, people and government did him unique honour—his arms were laden with the precious gifts of their literary achievements. The gifts were microfilms of the complete Mongol literature that was a rendering of Sanskrit. He wrote :

It is the Lord Himself
Who has blessed thee.
Rise and pay thy homage.
Thy ageless waiting has ended.

The end of the ageless waiting was to be followed by the homage, that is, the publication of this grand corpus. The first step was to enlarge the microfilms. It was a problem to do so on photographic paper. The colour tone of this sensitised paper could not pick up the contrast of the letters and the background. The microfilm itself had a weak contrast because of the original whose red lettering merged into the paper turned reddish-yellow by time. For five long years we tried several ways and means, projectors and screens but the most successful was a projection hypostatized on white paper whose brilliance has not been dimmed by a chemical sensitization. To read these microfilms clearly father even went to the length of preparing a special table with superfine optics with the cooperation of a Danish scientist who was a specialist of rocket lenses, but the blueprints and calculations were completed just the day he was in eternal sleep !

Since then I have talked to several scholars and the Germans agreed to experiment for the most favourable enlargements of father's Mongolian collection as a tribute to him. This took me to Germany and we experimented in a number of laboratories. The best results were attained by electro-static enlargement, which to my amazement was on brilliant white paper and that unsensitized ! It confirmed father's surmise as to the means which could lead us to the optimum. The enlargements are in process. They will run into an astounding length of 25 miles ! I do not know how exultant, exuberant, ecstatic and rhapsodised father would have been to see this gigantic procession of 25 miles of his life-long dream !

I dedicate these precious moments to thee,
Who fill it fully and completely.

Now my heart is abrim with tears. My father summons me to the world of Hindi words, to create them for thirty years, to fulfil his pledge for the linguistic rejuvenation of India and thereby redeem my sonhood of him. My destination is fashioned out of adamant.

THE LOCATION OF KAMBOJA

(This article first appeared in the January 1964 issue of "Purāṇa", the six-monthly periodical of Indic studies published from Varanasi. With the kind permission of the editors it is reproduced here because it has created a certain amount of fresh interest among students of ancient Indian geography and suggested some old problems as being ripe for a new look by historians.)

WHEN doctors disagree, the patient often dies. Dr. D.C. Sircar and Dr. V.S. Agrawala are at variance over the location of Kamboja¹ and as a result the historical truth about this ancient Mahajanapada appears to fade out. The irony of the situation is that both the doctors are right—and both are wrong.

Agrawala puts Kamboja in the region of the Pamirs. He has the clear support of Kalidasa (*Raghuvamśa*, IV. 60 ff) as well as of Kalhana (*Rājataranginī*, IV. 165-66). Some passages of the *Mahābhārata*, which we shall specify later, are also on his side. Then there is the fact that, as Jayachandra Vidyālakara showed on the basis of Grierson's Linguistic Survey, the root *śava*, which Yaska long ago noted as used only in the Kamboja dialect among the dialects of the Aryans, is still current in the Ghalcha-speaking parts of the Pamirs. This fact, of course, is not quite determinative of the Kambojas' location, because *śava* with its Iranian affinity is likely to have been used wherever the Iranian influence on a dialect was strong. Its currency today in the Pamirs cannot decide where the Kambojas, as members of a national or racial group which Yaska had in mind, were located in his ancient age. However, the fact creates a fair presumption that the Kamboja country may have once been in the modern Ghalcha-speakers' territory. And what finally clinches Agrawala's point is the testimony of the geographer Ptolemy (c. 140 A.D.), which is completely omitted by both Agrawala and Sircar.

It was Sylvain Lévi² who drew attention to the place which Ptolemy locates to the south of the Oxus under the name of Tambyzoi. Lévi identified it with Kamboja on the ground that Tambyzoi is only a Greek transliteration of the Austro-Asiatic spelling of Kamboja.

Yes, Agrawala is not off the mark at all. But several statements he makes in support of his thesis seem unacceptable. Thus, apropos of Kalidasa, he says that all the area from the Sindhu to the Oxus, including Balkh (Bahlika, Bactria), was under the Guptas. First, even if Kalidasa did imply such sway by the king who was his contemporary, we could not confidently apply it to the Guptas : we are not yet certain that any Gupta was his contemporary. Secondly, the Meherauli Pillar in-

¹ *Purāṇa*, July 1963, pp. 251-57, 355-59.

² *Indian Antiquary*, 1923, p. 54.

scription of King Chandra, who was either Chandragupta I or Chandragupta II Vikramaditya, unmistakably mentions that the Bahlikas were conquered after a crossing of the mouths of the Indus by King Chandra. Agrawala makes no comment on this specific detail, even when he refers to it. As Allan¹ correctly remarked many years back, the inscription cannot mean that "Chandra's arms penetrated to Balkh, the route to which would not be across the mouths of the Indus". Neither can the inscription be looked upon as merely marking by the Indus-delta and the Bahlikas two terms of a conventional fourfold definition of a *chakravartin's* achievement : we cannot ignore the close-knit grammar of the inscription's sentence, by which the conquest directly and intimately depends upon the crossing. Apart from Allan's own suggestion that the term "Bahlika" in the time of King Chandra may have been employed in a general sense to indicate foreigners, the only plausible idea offered so far is Raychaudhuri's,² pointing to a tribe not very distant from the Indus-delta : "The Vahlikas beyond the seven mouths of the Indus are apparently the Bactrioi occupying the country near Arachosia in the time of the geographer Ptolemy."

Another statement of Agrawala's, which is impossible to accept, is that the Yavanas of Asoka's inscriptions, who are mentioned along with the Kambojas, are the Bahlika-Yavanas of the Brahmanda Purana (Uttarabhaga, Upodghata Pada, Ch. 16. 18) and that therefore Asoka's Kambojas can very well be in the Pamir region. It is plain history, as Sircar urges, that Bahlika (Bactria) in Asoka's day was part of the Seleucid empire until c. 250 B.C. (or c. 256 B.C., according to Newell) when its governor Diodotus revolted and made the province independent. It could never have been under Asoka at any time. So the Bahlika-Yavanas could not have had Asoka's Kambojas as their neighbours. What is more, Asoka's Yona-Kamboja, as Sircar reminds us, is closely associated in Rock Edict V with Gandhara, whose two chief cities, Takshasila and Pushkaravati, are about the Indus and not near the Oxus.

Sircar's two points go to prove that there was a Kamboja country in the vicinity of the Indus, most probably somewhere in Afghanistan and perhaps wide enough to take in Rajapura which is mentioned by the *Mahābhārata* (VII. 4, 5) as the scene of Karna's victory over the Kambojas and which Raychaudhuri³ considered, with the help of Hiuen Tsang's Ho-lo-she-pu-lo (Rajapura, modern Rajauri), as the central clue to the location of Kamboja.

Sircar's further argument that the Aramaic version below the Greek in the recently discovered Kandahar edict of Asoka must be for the Kambojas whom Asoka (R.E. XIII) groups with the Yavanas is not at all negligible. But Agrawala is right in observing that we cannot connect Aramaic with the Kambojas exclusively or, merely on the strength of it at Kandahar, locate them in Southern Afghanistan. For, two other Aramaic inscriptions of Asoka exist—at Takshasila and Lampaka (Laghman).

¹ *Catalogue of Coins, the Gupta Dynasty, etc.*, Introduction, p. XXXVI.

² *The Political History of Ancient India* (3rd Ed.), p. 364, fn 1.

³ *Ibid.*, 1938, pp. 125 ff.

Sircar's strong point is Asoka's *yonakambojesu*. If the Greek text was meant for the Yavanas, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Aramaic here was for the Kambojas.

Sircar, however, writes about the latter : "They appear to have lived side by side with the Yavanas." Does this mean that the two peoples formed a single province ? If that is the implication read in Kandahar's bilingual text, it goes against Asoka's other edicts. In those edicts, not only are the Yonas put with the Kambojas but both are put with the Gandharas and once (R.E. XIII) the Yonas are mentioned by themselves. The clear suggestion is that each people formed a province on its own and that the three peoples formed contiguous provinces. Sircar himself at one place speaks of their living in contiguous areas of Uttarapatha in the age of the Mauryas. In view of this, I suppose we should take his "side by side" to mean nothing more than contiguity. In that case the Kandahar epigraph cannot be said to stand in the Yavana country but only at the common boundary between the Yavana and the Kamboja countries. Attending to the Asokan sequence Yona-Kamboja-Gandhara, we should say that Yona stood south of Kandahar and Kamboja north of it, extending right up to the point where Gandhara started and perhaps marching with its borders further north.

Now we may sum up. Sircar is right about his Kamboja on this side of the Hindu Kush. Agrawala is right about his Kamboja on the other side of that mountain. Both are wrong in ruling out each other's Kamboja. The historical truth is that there were two Kambojas. We have explicit evidence of it in the *Mahābhārata*. The epic does not direct us only to a Kamboja in the Rajauri region. It has an earlier reference (II. 27. 23-26) describing not the conquests of Karna but those of Arjuna, and here we have the Paramakambojas as distinguished from the Kambojas. The latter are grouped with the Daradas who are to be put on the right bank of the Upper Indus, whereas the Paramakambojas are said to have allied their forces with the Lohas and "the Rishikas of the north". In fact, it is the Paramakambojas whom Vidyānāṣa identifies with the Ghalcha-speaking peoples while identifying "the Rishikas of the north" with the Yueh-chis (Kushanas). These Paramakambojas are the same as the Kambojas whom Vidyānāṣa finds often associated in the epic with the Vahlikas. But this association, which fully supports Agrawala, must not lead us to overlook the association with the Daradas nor the third associative formula, first emphasised by Raychaudhuri, which the *Mahābhārata* (XII. 207, 43) gives—Yauna-Kamboja-Gandhara—in the closest possible agreement with the one in Asoka's R. E. V, which fully supports Sircar.

There is no need for the two eminent doctors to disagree. B.M. Barua¹—no less a doctor—could have reconciled them with the double diagnosis he made quite a time ago. And a further truth which Barua² brought forward may interest Sircar

¹ *Asoka and His Inscriptions* (Calcutta, 1946), I, pp. 92-96.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 96.

and Agrawala, especially the latter. Just as the *Mahābhārata* speaks of Kamboja and Paramakamboja, the *Mahāmddesa* (pp. 155, 415) speaks of Yona and Paramayona.

Where shall we locate Paramayona ? Only two possibilities present themselves. Bahlika, from where the Bahlika-Yavanas of Agrawala came, may have been known by an alternative name, Yavana. Or Ferghana (Sogdiana) was the place we want. It was named Ta-Yuan by the Chinese and, as René Grousset¹ suggested, the component "Yuan" may be the same as the Iranian "Yauna" and the Indian "Yona" or "Yavana". As both Bahlika and Ferghana can be considered contiguous to the Pamir-region, Agrawala no less than Sircar can legitimately have a Yona-Kamboja, but the heavy odds against its being Asokan must be admitted.

We may add that Kalidasa, on whom Agrawala leans a great deal, does not permit any combination of the Yavanas with the Kambojas. No alternative *yona-kambojesu* to Asoka's can be based on him. For, while his Kambojas are in the Oxus-area, his Yavanas are pretty far from it. The *Raghuvamśa* (IV. 61) clearly suggests that in moving towards Persia from Western India (*Aparānta*, Northern Konkan) Raghu had to cross the land of the Yavanas. Kalidasa's Yavanas are not Bahlika-Yavanas. They are not northern enough to be anywhere near Bahlika, much less near a Pamirian Kamboja.

Here a final question must be posed and answered. Which of the two Kambojas was counted in ancient times as one of the Mahajanapadas of India ? All depends on what limits we assign to Bharatavarsha. Sircar speaks of Kalidasa as describing Raghu's subjugation of "the countries in the northern areas of Bharatavarsha" and as mentioning in this region "the Hunas on the banks of the Vamksu (Oxus), i. e. in the Bahlika country or Bactria", and "the Kambojas" and "the Himalayas". If Bharatavarsha can be thought of in such wide terms, there is no objection to making the Pamirian Kamboja a Mahajanapada of India. But, as none of the old lists of Indian Mahajanapadas includes Bahlika, it may not be proper to go beyond the Kamboja which neighboured Gandhara.

Now we may make a few remarks on certain declarations by both Agrawala and Sircar, which strike us as insufficient. Not in his present article but in his admirable *India as Known to Pāṇini*,² Agrawala repeats what many others have stated before him : "The Kambojas are known as Kambujiya in the Old-Persian inscriptions." May we ask where in these inscriptions Kamboja is mentioned as a tribe or a country ? The term "Kambujiya" occurs only as the name of the Persian king whom the Greeks called Cambyses. And even this term E. Benveniste,³ disagreeing with J. Charpentier, refuses to affine in any way with the Indian designation "Kamboja". Benveniste plainly says : "The name of the Kambojas does not yet appear in any Iranian source."

¹ *L'Empire des Steppes*, p. 75, fn.

² Pp. 48-49

³ *Journal Asiatique*, Vol. CCXLVI, 1, p. 48 with fn.

This fact should make us pause before asserting too categorically that the Kambojas were of Iranian extraction. The root *śava* itself, we may remember, is commented on by Yaska because it occurs in the *Nighaṇṭu* (II. 14) which is a collection of Vedic words. *Śava* must have been part of Vedic usage, even if we have lost the passages where it occurred, and it does not by itself prove Iranian extraction in the speakers. It only proves Iranian influence, either linguistic or racial. As A.D. Pusalker¹ writes : “The earliest mention of Kamboja occurs in the *Varṇśa Brāhmaṇa* of the *Sāmaveda* where a teacher Kamboja Aupamanyava is referred to. The sage Upamanyu mentioned in the *R̥gveda* (I. 102. 9) is in all probability the father of the Kamboja teacher.... The speech of the Kambojas is referred to by Yaska as differing from that of other Aryans and Grierson sees in this reference the Iranian affinities of the Kambojas, but the fact that Kamboja teachers were reputed for their Vedic learning shows them to have been Vedic Aryans, so that Kamboja was an Aryan settlement. Later on Kambojas settled to the north-west of the Indus...”

In regard to their historical status as compared with that of the Yavanas, it is hardly right to say, as Sircar does, that they and not the Yavanas were important in the age of Buddha. No doubt, the *Āṅguttaramkāya* (VII. 5. 3 and 5), which Sircar quotes, enumerates among Mahajanapada Kambojas as well as Gandhara and omits Yavana. But the *Majjhimanikāya* (43.1.3), which too he draws upon and which is as old as the *Āṅguttaramkāya*, makes Buddha himself mention the Yavanas together with the Kambojas in exactly the same form as Asoka : *yonakambojeṣu*. So the Yavanas were as prominent as the Kambojas or the Gandharas in Buddha's age. Besides, as B.C. Law² tells us, the *Chullamuddesa* (which is included in the Buddhist canon and is therefore one of the oldest Pali commentaries) omits Gandhara and mentions Yona no less than Kamboja in its list of the Mahajanapadas which flourished before the time of Buddha. Yona and Kamboja are absolutely on a par in the period of which Sircar speaks.

Here a problem arises. What are we to make of the references to a Yona state having existed in India's north-west in such antiquity ? Must we revive that old favourite of Bhandarkar and Jayaswal—a pre-Alexandrine Greek colony in India ? Or shall we accept the ancient Indian tradition which regards the Yavanas no less than the Kambojas as degraded Kshatriyas ? Then we shall have to say that in ancient India, before the Greeks came to be called Yavanas, there were non-Greek Yavanas—just as in medieval India, though in a different way, the label “Yavana” was not confined to the Greeks. This is a theme well worth discussing at some length, and the more we explore it the more surprises we are likely to encounter, prompting changes in several aspects of ancient Indian history.

One of the surprises Sircar himself has touched on in passing : the Puranic description of both the Yavanas and the Kambojas as having “shaven heads”. And what

¹ *The Vedic Age* (London, 1952), pp 259-260.

² *The Age of Imperial Unity* (Bombay, 1951), p. 1.

renders this description all the more a challenge to the exclusive Greek-Yavana equation is that it merely reiterates what the *Gaṇapātha* on Panini's rule II.1.72 says of these two tribes : *kāmbojamuṇḍaḥ yavanamuṇḍaḥ*. If this is authentic Paninian material, what happens to the usual interpretation of that grammarian's *yavanānī* as an allusion to the Greek script ? Here are deep waters indeed and we cannot launch on them at the moment. It is an enterprise to which we may well invite Sircar and Agrawala—particularly Agrawala who has not mentioned this part of the *Gaṇapātha* in his famous book.

K. D. SETHNA

NIETZSCHE THE POET

Very few students of Nietzsche know that he was not only a poetic philosopher but also a poet in his own right. His output in verse is little but most of it has a lift and a plunge which in a few words sets our imagination on fire and quickens an in-look into things. The following sensitive English translations are by Peter Steiger, a resident of Sri Aurobindo's Ashram, who is at present translating Savitri into German.

TOWARDS NEW SEAS

There will I go, and I trust
Henceforth in my self and my grasp.
Open lies the sea—into the blue
Drives my Genoese ship.

Everything splendours to me new and newer.
Midday is sleeping on Space and Time.
Only Your eye—immense—
Is looking at me, Infinity !

THE SUN SETS

I

Not much longer will you thirst,
Burnt heart !
Promise is in the air,
Out of unknown mouths it's blowing to me—
The great Coolness comes...

My sun stood hot above in the midday :
Salute to you that you come,
You sudden winds,
You cool spirits of the afternoon !
The air is strange and pure.
Squints not with the slanting gaze of the seducer
The night at me ?...
Remain strong, my enduring heart.
Ask not "Why ?"

2

Day of my life !
The sun is setting.

Already the smooth tide
Stands golden.

The rock breathes warm :
Did bliss sleep on him
Its midday sleep ?
In green lights
The brown abysm still plays up bliss.

Day of my life !
Towards eve it's going !
Already glows your eye
Half broken,
Already wells your dew's
Trickling of tears,
Already runs hushed over white seas
Your love's purple,
Your last hesitating delight...

DRUNKEN SONG

O man ! take care.
What speaks the deep midnight ?
"I slept, I slept—
Out of deep dream I awoke !
The world is deep,
And deeper than the day has thought.
Deep is her pain—
Lust even deeper than heart's woe !
Pain says : Vanish !
But all lust wills eternity—
Wills deep, deep eternity !"

YES, I KNOW

Yes, I know from where I come.
Unsatisfied like the flame
I glow and devour myself.
Everything I touch becomes light,
Coal everything I leave :
Flame am I certainly !

THE QUEST

At our request Sri G. Shankara Kurup, the famous poet in Malayalam, has sent us the English translations of some of his poems, and written : "I am looking forward to an occasion to have a 'Darshan' of Sri Aurobindo Ashram." We shall certainly be happy if he comes. Shri Kurup was born on 3rd June 1901. His first poem was printed when he was 17 in the magazine 'Atmaposhini'. He came into special prominence recently by winning the Bharatiya Jnanpith award of one lac of rupees for his book Auttk Kushal (Flute). The translator of the poem given below is V. Sreedhara Menon, himself a poet of quality.

"O, LITTLE breeze,
Whom dost thou seek
Impatient and love-lorn ?"
Asked the poet.

"With no respite,
No other thought
You run wild and crazy,
Day and night.

"The frail flowers of the field
Stand bewildered,
Seeing your mad career.

"Is it your love's name
That you murmur fitfully,
Indistinctly ?
Is it love's intoxicant
That makes you
Unsteady ?

"None other is blessed
With such ecstatic madness;
Truly,
I do envy you.

"Seek, my friend, seek,
Heed not the laughter

Of the bamboo grove,
Hollow and silly."

Fondly caressing me
In faltering tones,
The breeze replied,
Sighing,
"Friend, you have not guessed
Wrongly;
Vainly do I wander
For a glimpse of my beloved.

"It is long since we parted,
But ever-wakeful memory
Goads me on.

"In the primal morn
When I woke,
The earth and the sky
Stood eye to eye
Dumb with grief.

"Alas ! my beloved had flown
From my arms,
Perchance to test
The faith and force
Of my love.

"A starry flower or two
Had fallen from her tresses,
As hurriedly she left.

"The tinkling of her anklets
I heard,
And thought it was the early birds.

"Her crimson footprints
I mistook for the blush of dawn,
The shining ring
That slipped from her hand
I thought was the crescent moon,
Fool that I was.

“Her silken kerchief
She left behind for remembrance;
I did not cherish it,
Thinking it was
A wisp of cloud.

“Nor did I kiss
The hem of her ruffled robe,
Mistaking it for
The ruddy rolling sea.

“From then on
Regardless of me,
I have been wandering
In quest of my soul’s effulgent joy.

“There is none that has seen,
Those that claim they have seen
Have seen not; to see
I myself should strive.

“Some there be
That deny the very existence
Of the fair one whom I seek.
I cannot believe them.

“The fragrance
Of her sweet face
I breathe in the fresh
Jasmine blooms.

“When I put my thirsty lips
To the pool,
I am reminded
Of the cool touch of her cheeks.

“How can the mind be drunk
With remembrance,
If the dear one I seek
Is a lie ?

“Not in the arms of the tender-leaved vines,
Nor on the spotless beds of snow,
Do I find peace.
Sometime I may meet
My darling. Hope sustains.
Weary and faint, at dead of night,
Often do I fall in the solitude of the wild.
Softly my beloved steals
To my side,
Fondles me with balmy hands.
I start in sudden joy,
To weep, to weep alone.

“Rousing the slumbrous sea, I pray,
‘O friend, tell me where my beloved is.’
Grinning with foamy teeth,
He dissolves in laughter,
Taking poor me perhaps for mad.

“How often have I not asked in anguish
The ancient trees !
Shaking their shaggy heads,
Trembling from root to top
They repeat,
‘We’ve not seen, not we.’

“The eternal hills,
Wrapt in meditation,
Pointed at the skies,
While I lay wailing in their laps.
The skies spelt ignorance
By their silence. Is this to be endless,
The torture of my longing ?
I wonder !”

WHOM GOD PROTECTS

THE LIFE-STORY OF A SPIRITUAL ADEPT

(Continued from the issue of May)

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THE ashram of Karali Bhairav was well known in those regions around Kahalgaon. It was situated on the bank of the river, made really beautiful and charming by a profusion of flowers in the garden.

It was just evening when Arka Avadhuta set his foot in the garden. In the hut outside there were a dozen people seated, their faces indicating a feeling of great anxiety for the sick Bhairav. As soon as the Avadhuta appeared, they with a promptness, alert and respectful, led him towards the ashram. The ashram building had a covered verandah running round it, and the whole place was spotlessly clean. In a room there the Bhairav was lying on his bed; in a corner a lamp had been lit.

At the sight of the Avadhuta the Bhairav sat up with a great effort. His was a tall figure, so thin and emaciated that it seemed just a skeleton draped in a skin. He had on the top of his head a load of matted locks tied in a knot. His eyes were large and shining, giving one the impression that his entire life-energy had been concentrated in them. As Arka looked into the eyes of the Bhairav his own right eye throbbed, he felt a strange vibration in his heart; a light of remembrance flashed in his memory, he was sure he had seen that face, those eyes, somewhere before. But he was yet unable to discover where he had seen them. He went deeper and deeper in his memory, suddenly the light of recognition flashed, the hair on his body stood up and his heart throbbed violently. He was more than astonished to see the terrible change the physical body had suffered. With this thought in his mind he advanced towards the Bhairav with a smile, and his eyes shed tears of compassion for the miserable. The Bhairav stared at him with enchanted eyes; his aching heart rejoiced to feel the arrival of happy days, but he could utter no words, forgot even the customary gesture of welcome.

Noticing the expression of the Bhairav, the Avadhuta said in a voice rendered extremely mellow as if he was meeting someone very dear after a long absence, "Aren't you Anadi?" The Bhairav was startled at once and he said "You—me—did you know me before?" Then without waiting for an answer addressed all those who were in the room, "Will you all please leave us alone? I shall call when the need will arise."

When all had left, the Bhairav requested the Avadhuta to sit in a chair that was

beside his bed. Then he asked, "Did you know me before ? Where was it ? I can remember nothing."

The Avadhuta said, "Yes, I met you one night in the ashram of a Kapalik at Bhagalpur on the bank of the Ganges; it is twenty years now."

Stunned, the Bhairav was gaping at him, He said with some agitation, "Are you the boy whom the Kapalik had bought to complete his realisation ?"

"Precisely," said Arka, "the very same."

An expression of great wonder dawned on the Bhairav's face; for a long interval he could not speak. When the expression subsided, he said, "How strange ! Extraordinary are the ways of the World Mother—strange too is the coincidence ! Do you remember all that happened that night ? It is quite twenty years now."

Arka said, "I remember everything clearly, as if it was only last night that it all happened. How could I forget ?"

Bhairav : "Do you remember the huge chest ?"

Arka : "Very well, indeed !"

Bhairav : "The rows of large pitchers full of gold pieces ?"

Arka : "Their mouths were tied with red silken cloth."

Bhairav : "And the little casket of Lakshmi wrapped in silk, that I did not open then ?"

Arka : "I remember that too, its lid was shaped like the spire of a temple."

As soon as he heard this the Bhairav sat erect; then the man who had been bedridden for the last six months and found it painful to sit up, even when helped by someone, stretched out his legs and feet and stood on the floor, as if all his illness had disappeared. Noticing his excited condition and his wavering walk, the Avadhuta caught hold of him gently and with great affection. The Bhairav said, "Oh ! that is nothing," but his legs were still trembling. Then turning towards the lamp he said, "Will you please bring it along ?" The Avadhuta left him and fetched the lamp.

As they crossed over the threshold through the central door into the next room, the large chest loomed into view. It was familiar to Arka.

The Bhairav, approaching nearer, said "Will you please lift up the lamp just as you did on that night ?" The Avadhuta did as he was told. Then the Bhairav, inserting the key, unlocked the chest and with a considerable effort raised the lid.

The same things were arranged as before, in the same order. From a corner he then brought out a bundle; on its being opened the casket of Lakshmi came to light. Handing the casket over to the Avadhuta, the Bhairav himself took the lamp and said, "Now, please open it." The thing that was in it was so strangely beautiful that one could with difficulty shift one's gaze from it. On a hexagonal base of about six inches from point to opposite point was an amazingly beautiful tantrik yantra. There were six equilateral triangles forming another inner hexagon within which was an enormous ruby glinting such a splendid blood-red lustre that one had to see it to believe. In the centre of each triangle was set a smaller ruby. The entire yantra was star-shaped. The peculiarity was that every arm of the triangles that contained the

smaller rubies was studded with small diamonds. The great ruby in the centre, based on a sapphire, was also ringed by small diamonds. The central ruby in size was as big as a florin. The empty spaces in the yantra were inscribed with many letters. Arka could see they were letters from the Tibetan script, they were a few seed-mantras of the most secret tantrik practice, that of Tara.

Arka was struck with amazement to see the wonderful yantra.

The Bhairav said, "I know nothing about this thing nor do I understand anything, although I have guarded it as my own for the last eighteen years. What do you make of it ? Is it an ornament or something quite different ?"

Arka said, "It is a yantra for tantrik sadhana, meant for a worshipper of Tara, for his spiritual realisation. He, who gave it to you, must have been a Tara-worshipper. It must have come from Tibet, as such things are not found in this country. The letters in the spaces are all seed-mantras of Tara inscribed in the Tibetan language."

The Bhairav said, "I have never shown it to anyone before for fear that the very sight of it might engender a greed to possess it and consequently endanger my life. The Kapalik received it exactly eight days before his death. Since his demise it has been with me—now it is yours. Not only that ; all that is in the chest is yours now, as my work is over; I have been just its guard and never claimed ownership. I shall not live much longer."

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The Avadhuta when he heard the offer said, "I am a beggar, the road is my home, all this is not for me. But this yantra should not remain with you any longer as that may be harmful. I shall keep it with me for the present." The Bhairav felt greatly relieved.

"In this chest there are some scrolls and twelve jars of gold pieces, each one contains two thousand five hundred pieces, some old gold Mohurs of Akbar's time each valued at about forty-five rupees;—I am relieved to offer all to you," said the Bhairav and replacing everything in their respective places closed the lid and locked the chest. Then both returned to the other room.

After resuming his seat the Bhairav said, "I could feel your greatness as soon as you stepped into the room ; at that very instant all my misfortunes melted away. I have been bedridden for the last six months and all this time I was looking for you; I sought you as the Guru of Mother Parvati, but never knew that you were the child destined to be sacrificed, who came to liberate me from my slavery to the satanic Kapalik. You remember, don't you, the strange happening of that night ? Even before I knew that Arka Avadhuta was the same child, I had offered all to you, as I lay on my sick-bed, at the command of Mahamaya, the Divine Power; now I feel relieved to hand over to you all. I have not spent anything from this hoard, as I was never in need of anything from it. The only thing I have done is to weigh them and assess

their value. Since my arrival here at Kahalgaon much wealth came to me, in my own right, in the shape of gifts and respectful offerings from the local people. I am not poor nor am I in want of anything. At the beginning the greed of enjoyment came upon me with this immense wealth at my disposal, but I did not understand then that this wealth did not belong to me. Later, as I understood, I did not even have to touch it. I see clearly now that I have guarded it all this so long, only to hand it over to you. Deeply have I understood how and in what amazing way the World-Mother acts. I allowed none to enter that room."

The Avadhuta from his very infancy had seen many instances of the World-Mother's mysterious ways and considered himself fortunate to be able to discern Her rules and directions. Still, this unthought-of affair now astonished him a great deal. Many were the schemes rising in his heart. Strange it was, that so much wealth had come to a tyagi, a world-renouncer. Innumerable works, big and small, are daily done in the world by Her power flowing in the shape of money. To accomplish her design the hard-earned wealth of one came to be possessed by someone else. Tangled are the ways of the power of money. The Goddess of wealth is, in this way, ever acting unhindered in the world as one of the principal powers and that is why no one is able to hold this ever restless Divinity all the time.

What is the purpose behind this great wealth of jars of gold pieces, each one of them surcharged with who knows how much desire of how many prepossessors? What is the intention of the Supreme Ordainer to bring so much wealth under his control? The Avadhuta thought, and was endeavouring to discover within him how to utilise it in the most beneficial manner. This money can help to build up Loknath's organisation. Much more can be achieved—large numbers of destitutes can be fed and clothed, given the means to do useful work; it can bind together in many ways the disrupted lives of a small community and various other benefits can come if this wealth be properly handled. He thought, therefore, that the ever restless Goddess was bent on initiating a fresh current of action in the world, a creation of the Great Mother.

The Bhairav, however, felt a good deal uneasy to remark Arka's thoughtful countenance. He said in a plaintive voice, "Master, pray do not disappoint me. On the threshold of death I have met you and I feel my life fulfilled; I am waiting to breathe a sigh of relief; with great anxiety I am expecting you to accept."

Arka, remarking his anxiety, took one of his hands in his own with deep compassion. Even though he did not speak, his touch instantly calmed the Bhairav so much so that his eyes were filled with tears of gratitude which fell in big drops—an act that he had not known for many years. The Avadhuta slowly stroked his hand without a word, but with a face soft and loving.

Gradually the Bhairav regained his speech and with a voice vibrant with emotion said, "That dreadful night, the day of siddhi (realisation) of the Kapalika, when I saw your calm and pure face, I was sure that the child before me was not an ordinary one—as if Narayan himself were before me in a child's garb. But deluded was my

mind by the lust for gold, deluded with the idea of how to utilise it for my lustful enjoyments, wild were my thoughts for enjoyment. What mattered this unknown child, who would bother about him ? Who could have told me then that twenty years later I would have to hand over to that very child all this wealth that I had so long guarded as a genie, secretly impelled by the Will of the World-Mother, and thus receive the satisfaction that was my share though quite unknown to me till now." As he finished, he burst into tears. Even now the Avadhuta did not utter a word. He was happy to see the great change in the Bhairav, who for years as a Guru had banished all the soft and delicate emotions of mercy and love from his heart. Now all the barriers, erected by his egoistic Guruhood, were swept away.

(To be continued)

PROMODE KUMAR CHATTERJEE

(Translated by Kalyan K. Chaudhuri from the Bengali)

TWO POEMS

1.5.66

Mango branches
By a grey wall
Bent beseechingly
Yet the tempest was seeking
A white petal.

Are you ?

ONE NIGHT

I dreamed by the sea
And the sun returned
To dream with me...

Of whom did I dream ?

ANURAKTA

WOMAN IN SRI AUROBINDO'S POETRY*

THERE is a hierarchy in the concept of the perfect woman in Sri Aurobindo's poetry. Each type in this hierarchical order is inevitable and perfect in her own sphere. Each reveals something essential, elemental and true in her character, her nature, in her acts and moods and emotions. But it is not possible to deal with all of Sri Aurobindo's female creations in this short survey. Therefore we shall select only the most representative ones for our analysis.

The woman who typifies the eternal feminine principle is Ahana who is close to earth and is a link between the two poles of being—God and man. She is the representation of perfect beauty, of supreme felicity and is the soul of spiritual knowledge and love. She is the dawn of the soul, the revealer of the secrets of the spirit. She is the first principle of manifestation. She tops the hierarchy. She is divine in nature, immortal in her existence.

Next, we discover Urvasie and Helen. They are typical higher vital principles of love, beauty and passion. Urvasie is rich with mystery and light. She too is immortal—not in the spiritual domain, but in the kingdom of higher life where all is a wonder, a discovery, a rapture and a seizing. She is not a goddess like Ahana, but a nymph, a heavenly woman who has entered the heart of beauty, and her body is a revel of ethereal enchantment. She was

...a face
Of dawn, a body fresh from mystery,
Enveloped with a prophecy of light
More rich than perfect splendours.¹

And her body was

A warm rich splendour exquisitely outlined
Against the dazzling whiteness, and her face
Was as a fallen moon among the snows.²

Here we find a note of grace, a subtle beauty which is not outwardly vivid. This mystic note is typically Aurobindonian. Sri Aurobindo is never loud, harsh, gaudy with external colour; rather he is soft and mystic with unseizable suggestiveness. He gives Urvasie a heart of love which is almost human in its intensity. But he gives her a faith-

★ A speech delivered at the Second Annual Conference of the New Age Association on 9th September 1965.

¹ Sri Aurobindo, *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. I, p. 40.

² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

fulness which is rare amongst supernatural beings. In short, he gives her a double character, that of a heavenly nymph and that of the eternal lover. This concept prevails everywhere in his poetry. His woman is a link between earth and heaven. We note in passing that Kalidasa's Urvasie is almost a woman of earth full of passion, jealousy, possessiveness and the home-making instinct. The Urvasie of Tagore is ravishing, swift, elemental, impetuous, a cosmic entity of life's power of beauty. But the Urvasie of Sri Aurobindo is heavenly in her temperament, divine in her nature, but earthly in her capacity for love, without the degrading influence of human weakness.

Next in the hierarchy is Helen. Again Sri Aurobindo gives this Homeric character, who caused great disaster to two nations, a special characteristic. She too is half-divine in her beauty; her self of physical perfection is the manifestation of Divine Beauty in a human frame. Sri Aurobindo pictures Paris seeing her :

Calmly he looked on the face of which Greece was enamoured, the body
For whose desire great Troy was a sacrifice, tranquil regarded
Lovely and dire on the lips he loved that smile of a goddess,
Saw the daughter of Zeus in the woman.....¹

This beauty is not subtle like Urvasie's or tempestuous like Penthesilea's, but it has a vividness, an ensnaring brilliance which, though physical in its manifestation, is superhuman in its character. We can almost see her, a typical Greek beauty, by the few but poignant lines of Sri Aurobindo. She is great due to her love, her sacrifice and her unsophisticated nature. Beauty did not make her proud or self-conscious or arrogant; she was almost a superhuman being, because such rare beauty could not manifest in a common mortal.

Priyumvada is the natural woman; her beauty was like the dawn. It was

An empire for the glory of a God.²

We find

Wonderful melancholy in her eyes
Grown liquid and with wayward sorrow large.³

In her we find a deep love for earth; her nature answers the elemental beauty of life most spontaneously and intensely. Therefore she cries before her death :

I have not numbered half the brilliant birds
In one green forest, nor am familiar grown

¹ *Ikon*, Book IV, p. 60.

² *Collected Poems and Plays*, Vol. I, p. 86.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 87

With sunrise and the progress of the eves,
Nor have with plaintive cries of birds made friends.¹

She is the girl when earth herself was young and love was unstained. She shares this primal purity; she is one with physical nature and its lyrical beauty; with her we enter a new hierarchy. So far we have mentioned only superhuman women, but now we shall consider the human types. Here too we find Sri Aurobindo revealing his genius in his concept of the perfect woman. The perfect woman is not necessarily the ideal woman; she is perfect in her own domain, inevitable in her own sphere of existence.

Vasavadutta is the typical heroine of romance, and she discloses in her love the heart of the eternal woman, in spite of her sophisticated bearing. She is great in her own surroundings and here Sri Aurobindo has explored to the full the possibilities of romantic love. She has all the fire and grace of the common heroine with a difference—a difference caused by the Aurobindonian touch. He avoids vulgarity and commonness and he endows the Sanskrit tradition with a fineness of approach and presentation. Here is a typical example; Vasavadutta speaks of Vutsa Udayana :

I have heard
Only a far-flung name. What is the man ?
A flame ? A flower ? High like Gopalaca
Or else some golden fair and soft-eyed youth ?²

Although love is the bedrock of a woman's character, we see in Sri Aurobindo this love revealed in many ways, conditions, intensities and heights. The love of Urvasie differs entirely from that of Vasavadutta or Pryumvada; each of these shows one aspect of love in her character, in the trend of her personality, manifest in the given circumstance. The character of Andromeda is a rich contrast to all heroines we have examined so far. She is sweet, but her nature has the gift of compassion which we miss in Vasavadutta. Though sprung from a royal lineage, Andromeda is not sophisticated; she appears to be untouched by the surrounding royal pomp and she, by her own will, builds her fate and becomes instrumental to her own union with Perseus. But with Vasavadutta, environment plays a decisive role in building her character and her outer mask of royal indifference. Vutsa comes to her and by his presence dissolves the mask. But Andromeda goes to Perseus as a result of her own act of compassion.

Andromeda is the instrument of a greater power : Athene. She has a higher calling; she has a larger nature, already half-divine in its capacity for self-sacrifice. She says :

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.

² *Vasavadutta*, p. 62.

If there is any god in the deaf skies -
 That pities men or helps them, O protect me !
 But if you are inexorably unmoved
 And punish pity, I, Andromeda
 Who am a woman on this earth, will help
 My brothers.¹

By this trend of nature, she grows greater than those around her and becomes worthy of Perseus, himself half-divine.

But we have another ideal in Penthesilea in *Iliad*. Not tenderness, but courage, force, chivalry and all such elements of martial nature are in her. She glories in battle, in the conflict of men, in the spilling of blood, in the victory that comes after long struggle. Penthesilea is not like other heroines, meek and gentle. Here Sri Aurobindo has given us another portrait of the ideal woman. And, without her, much of the vividness of feminine nature would have been lost. She equals the greatest of the Trojan heroes and by her dauntless prowess becomes equal to Achilles himself not only in spirit but in physical skill as well. She is a menace to the Greeks. She is armed with a puissance, which is hard to encounter; she truly is the Vibhuti of the great world-mother Mahakali, as Andromeda is the instrument of Pallas Athene. The divine afflatus gives Penthesilea all her glory, her passion, her fierce love. Listen :

But in her speed like the sea or the storm-wind Penthesilea
 Drove towards the ranks of the foe and her spear-shafts hastened before her,
 Messengers whistling shrilly to death; she came like a wolf-hound
 Called by his master's voice and silently fell on the quarry.²

Her great march, her titan strides we hear in these magnificent hexametrical lines; we feel the inexorableness of her untamed nature and revel in the glory of her vibrant womanhood.

In Savitri we reach the peak of womanhood. She has all the qualities we have traced so far, and many more. She is the integral, the complete woman, as far as her basic foundation is concerned. We see in her all opposite trends harmonised and blended; we see in her the will, the courage, the love, the compassion, the passion and the divine anger all manifest as the many aspects of her divine humanity. She is apparently human in overt presentation; but she is the immanent divine Shakti, who has taken on herself the task of uplifting humanity and to greaten the stride of cosmic evolution. Her sweetness is intense, her love is boundless, but she also possesses limitless knowledge and unimaginable freedom. It is difficult to class her as one type of woman, for we find in her a will and courage far greater than Penthesilea's or Andromeda's; we see in her a love which no Priyuvada, Urvashi or Helen could match;

¹ "Perseus the Deliverer," *Collected Poems and Plays*, p. 218.

² *Iliad*, Book Nine, p. 129.

we see in her a sacrifice which we can never find except in fairy tales. But as presented by Sri Aurobindo she or her life is not a fairy tale but a cruel and heart-rending struggle which brings home to us the full import of her character. We find in her a greatness which no woman could reach. All is in her—not as something extraordinary, but as something natural. She, it appears to us, is oblivious of her greatness, her superhuman stature; so much is she merged with the earthly substance and so intense is her love for the world. Especially we are struck by the opposites shown us in Books Ten and Eleven and in the Epilogue. In the first two we discover her great personality, her will, her amazing perseverance against colossal odds. She reveals herself as the World-Mother who annihilates death and obtains from the Supreme the consent of Satyavan's revival. In the epilogue we find her human again with almost no overtrace of the former divinity. Her advent was to earth a revelation :

A new epiphany appeared in her.¹

And superhuman were the elements of her base :

A mind of light, a life of rhythmic force,
A body instinct with hidden divinity
Prepared an image of the coming god.²

In her daily life :

Her hours were ritual in a timeless fane;
Her acts became gestures of sacrifice.³

All these examples disclose her supernal origin. But she never loses her link with earth; she is the wonderful bridge between the unseen and this world. Sri Aurobindo describes her thus :

A deathless meaning filled her mortal limbs;
As in a golden vase's poignant line
They seemed to carry the rhythmic sob of bliss
Of earth's mute adoration towards heaven
Released in beauty's cry of living form
Towards the perfection of eternal things.⁴

Savitri implies the heightening of human qualities into something essentially divine, not by some explicit revelation but by some subtle, hidden suggestion, some trace, some outline that shows the all-beautiful by a sign. But this is one aspect of her nature. She also defies fate thus :

¹ & ² *Savitri* (University Edition), Bk. IV, Canto 2, p. 406.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 409.

⁴ *Savitri*, Book IV, Canto 3, p. 423.

My will is part of the eternal will,
 My fate is what my spirit's strength can make,
 My fate is what my spirit's strength can bear,
 My strength is not the titan's, it is God's.¹

Mark the strength, the inborn will, the challenging vehemence that comes from the soul and not from the ego. Here is a naked self-knowledge; here is what constitutes a divine being. We cannot but acknowledge and bow to her greatness. Penthesilea's strength amazes us, but Savitri's overwhelms and captivates us with its magnitude, its calmness, its unchanging quality. But we have yet a greater revelation when Savitri overcomes Death by her transcendent power. She casts her light on Death thus :

Light like a burning tongue licked up his thoughts,
 Light was a luminous torture in his heart,
 Light coursed, a splendid agony, through his nerves;
 His darkness muttered perishing in her blaze.²

Here is Savitri as the World-Mother herself, there is no veil; she stands before us august and inviolable. We can only feel her grandeur in the annihilation of Death as a wide cosmic gesture from her supreme summits. A little later the voice of the Eternal comes down to us thus :

O beautiful body of the incarnate Word,
 Thy thoughts are mine, I have spoken with thy voice.
 My will is thine, what thou hast chosen I choose.
 All thou hast asked I give to earth and men.³

Such in her variety is Woman in the concept of Sri Aurobindo. She has her depths, her mysteries, her heights, her inscrutable charm. She has unforeseen powers, uncharted seas of passion. We cannot estimate her in her totality, so great is her many-sided magnificence.

She is goddess in one aspect and intensely human in the other. Her nature is the meeting-ground of these two. She lays bare the power of love, not as an ineffective romantic element, but as a great creative intensity, capable of changing even the direst opposition, capable of rising to heights no other power can attain.

Savitri is the summing-up *par excellence* of these qualities. She is the Divine Shakti in a human form; she is also the princess of love, she is again the yogi and yet again the fighter against Death. Her power of love does not annihilate but saves, her love awakes the deepest soul, her love achieves what no power on earth can achieve—the certitude of earth-transformation.

Romen

¹ *Savitri*, Book VI, Canto 1, p. 493.

² *Savitri*, Book X, Canto 4, p. 748.

³ *Savitri*, Book XI, Canto 1, p. 783.

THE DESTINY OF THE BODY

THE SEER-VISION OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER

(Continued from the issue of May)

PART THREE : THE CONQUEST OF FOOD-NEED

VII. WHY MATERIAL ALIMENTATION ?

We do, however unconsciously, draw constantly upon the universal energy, the force in Matter to replenish our material existence and the mental, vital and other potencies in the body : we do it directly in the invisible processes of interchange constantly kept up by Nature and by special means devised by her; breathing is one of these, sleep also and repose. But as her basic means for maintaining and renewing the gross physical body and its workings and inner potencies Nature has selected the taking in of outside matter in the shape of food, its digestion, assimilation of what is assimilable and elimination of what cannot or ought not to be assimilated.

(Sri Aurobindo, *The Supramental Manifestation upon Earth*, pp. 52-53)

Life is the same in insect, ape and man.

(Sri Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Book Two, Canto 5, p. 185)

All that is Breath has its life in food.

(*Aitareya Upanishad*, 1-3.10)

To all outward appearances a normal adult body seems to retain its form and figure, its weight and structure, unchanged over a long stretch of time. If that be so, is this not rather strange that the body should still be under the obligation of regularly gathering material aliments from outside ? What is the rationale of this ineluctable necessity ?

To understand it fully we must first know what characterises a living body, what keeps it a viable concern and in default of what the organism dies. Incidentally this study will offer us some significant clues as regards the conditions that have to be satisfied in the purely physical plane before a successful resolution of the problem of material food-intake can be at all feasible.

Contrary to all deceptive appearances, a living body is not at all a static or finished product; it is rather in a state of dynamic flux, undergoing continual interchange of material with its environment. For some reason or other, whenever this ex-

change process is rudely disturbed and finally ceases, the organism is said to have succumbed to death.

Even inside the body itself, there is no sign of any static fulfilment; there is instead a fantastic play of biochemical activities building up a structure of dynamic equilibrium. Modern physiological analysis has revealed the "picture of bewildering complexity in which an immense number of chemical and physical processes go on simultaneously, crossing, recrossing and modifying each other within the limits of each cell."¹ For the viability of the living organism, chemical compounds of extraordinary diversity are being built up and disrupted all the time at an unbelievable speed so much so that at any given instant, apart from the few relatively stable chemical bodies, the living tissues contain myriads of smaller chemical "intermediates, the partly completed structures which will eventually enter into the larger aggregates, or the messengers which go to and fro, carrying energy or otherwise facilitating the working of the machinery of the cells."²

In spite of this state of dynamic superactivity a living organism manages to maintain the continuity of its individuality and this capacity of continuing in spite of change or rather through change, through *Stoffwechsel* or 'change of stuff,' as they would say in German, is so fundamental to all embodied life that the symbol of organism is sometimes taken to be the 'burning bush all afire but never consumed,' *nec tamen consumebatur*.

Now the living body maintains its uninterrupted continuity through an elaborate network of extremely complex biochemical processes simultaneously going on inside it. Some of these reactions have for their function the building up of complex substances of the body tissues out of relatively simpler components, while some others are engaged in the reverse operation, the degradation and breaking-down of more complex substances into simpler ones. The constructive and synthetic processes are grouped together under the term '*anabolism*', while '*catabolism*' is used to categorise the disruptive, analytic and running-down processes; *metabolism* is the generic term for both the sets of processes.³

The metabolic machinery by which all these vital chemical changes are brought about in the living body essentially consists of biocatalysts otherwise called *enzymes*. These ubiquitous enzymes found in their thousands in every part of every kind of living organism from the single-celled amoeba to the giant-like elephant, are composed largely or exclusively of protein, produced by the cells, and are astonishingly specific so that each particular enzyme controls and mediates one single distinct chemical process.

These enzymes catalyzing a wide variety of chemical reactions in the body such as synthetic, degradative, hydrolytic, oxidative or condensation reactions or those

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1956), Vol. 3, p. 605.

² J. A. V. Butler, *Inside the Living Cell* (1962), p. 287.

³ From Gk. *anabolē*, ascent; *catabolē*, descent; *metabolē*, change.

involved in the transfer of groups such as amino, methyl, phosphate, etc., do not form just a small portion of living matter. Recent investigations have shown that "the functional proteins of living matter are for the most part enzymes; living matter in its most fundamental aspect is a highly organized system of enzymes dispersed in an aqueous solution."¹ These enzymes, so essential for the maintenance of bodily life because of their responsibility for virtually all metabolic processes in the body, have been appropriately termed by Prof. Arthur W. Galston the direct superintendents of the cell's chemical machinery. "All cells are what they are by virtue of their chemistry; their chemistry is determined by their enzymes."²

And man's body forms no exception to this general rule. What is all the more striking is the unexpected fact that Nature has provided all organisms with almost similar sets of enzymes. Thus, even the simplest forms of life which have survived to this day have practically all the types of enzymes that we encounter in the bodies of higher animals that are relatively recent products of organic evolution. In the words of Prof. J.A.V. Butler, "if life has evolved from simple unicellular organisms to complex ones, there does not seem to have been any great improvement in the enzymes. There has merely been an increase in specialization and in the possibilities of cooperation and of division of labour between cells."³

Now, many of these vital enzymes owe their effectivity to the presence of smaller molecules (called *coenzymes*) attached to the mainly protein part (termed *apoenzyme*). In such instances, neither the apoenzymes nor the coenzymes can separately manifest their catalytic capability; only their integration in combined wholes can restore their all-important mediatory role. Among the kinds of molecules that function as coenzymes are those that contain such metals as iron, manganese, copper, zinc, molybdenum, and magnesium, and such vitamins as thiamine, riboflavin, nicotinic acid and pyridoxine.⁴

These enzymes and coenzymes, as everything else in a living body, are not immune from the 'dynamic status' already referred to. And this fact makes us perceive the first reason why an organism should seek to get from outside a continual supply of proteins and of vital minerals. Let us investigate for other factors necessitating the intake of material aliments.

At the outset, let us bear in mind a few salient points :

(1) Energy is neither created out of nothing nor destroyed out of all existence : it only undergoes transformation from one form to another. This is the great Law of Conservation of Energy.

(2) A chemical change within a living organism and the same reaction outside of it in the inanimate *milieu* are basically the same and governed by identical laws of change.

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1956), Vol. 3, p. 607.

² Arthur W. Galston, *The Life of the Green Plant* (1963), p. 14.

³ J. A. V. Butler, *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁴ Arthur W. Galston, *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

(3) All chemical reactions involve transfers of energy. Some of them are *exergonic*, that is to say, they are accompanied by the release of energy; while some others are *endergonic*, necessitating an induction of energy from outside.

(4) A living body behaves exactly like all other chemical or mechanical systems in so far as energy transformations are concerned. It is *not a creator of energy but just its transferer* from forms to other forms. Very careful measurements have shown that the total energy produced in and by the body is exactly equal to the amount supplied.

(5) The structure of living matter, as we have noted before, is all the time undergoing a process of continual formation and degradation. The chemical reactions involved in these metabolic processes must thus demand a transfer and transformation of energy. Now, the synthesizing reactions of the anabolic or constructive processes that are solely responsible for the maintenance of body tissues by replacement of the continual loss incurred as a result of ineluctable wear and tear in course of living, are altogether endergonic in character. Far from releasing any energy, they themselves require a certain amount of energy, the so-called energy of activation. Where is then the source of supply for this additional energy so vitally needed by the body to drive the biochemical reactions that synthesize the various structures of the organism ?

But, as we shall presently see, energy is needed for other purposes too.

(6) Energy manifestation in living bodies assumes different forms depending on the species concerned. Apart from the production of heat and the execution of a certain amount of work—common attributes of all life—certain organisms, both vegetal and animal, act as spontaneous sources of light, while some others like the numb-fish (also called Electric Ray or Torpedo) produce electricity of considerable strength. Now, heat, light, mechanical work and electricity are nothing but particular modalities of energy, and hence the respective organisms require a source of supply for the necessary energy transformations.

(7) In the case of an adult homothermic organism like man, in the state of 'weight equilibrium', the energy expenditure is principally made up of two elements : work due to muscular movements voluntary or involuntary and production of heat to maintain the body at a constant temperature in spite of all fluctuations in the environment.

As a matter of fact, in every movement of the body, walking or running, rising from a seat or sitting up on the bed, climbing a staircase or executing a sustained piece of work, there is invariably an expenditure of energy due to muscular contraction. So a provision of energy must be made if the bodily life has at all to be dynamic.

Also, the ability to maintain a constant body temperature through a complex physiological process of thermoregulation gives to man and other homothermic organisms an independence of activity and a relative mastery over their surroundings. But the animal body is always losing heat in the form of radiation, conduction and evaporation on the lungs-surface and on the exertior surface of the skin. So here too

there must be a continual supply of energy for the body to function effectively.

But even when all voluntary muscular activity and other energy-consuming functions are totally suspended, the body requires still a certain amount of energy for the sheer maintenance of its *status quo* and of the vegetative life-processes. Let us see what this irreducible minimum of energy-need is due to.

Basal metabolism : Even when the subject is lying comfortably at rest, many physiological processes continue in the body requiring an inescapable expenditure of energy. Thus some organs like the cardiac and respiratory muscles are continuously at work; even the so-called resting organs—the resting muscles, for example—continue to have a certain tonus, thus necessitating the absorption of nutrients and oxygen; the glandular secretion continues unabated and it is the same with the central nervous activity at least in so far as it is concerned with the regulation of different vegetative functions. Above all, the different cells constituting the tissue are themselves living bodies and hence continually expend energy, and if this cellular metabolism is stopped, death ensues in no time.

Thus energy must be provided to the body to sustain respiration, heart action, circulation, muscle tonus, gastro-intestinal activity, glandular secretions and such other functions absolutely essential to the maintenance of life.

Energy-need : The foregoing analysis reveals that the different forms of activity displayed by living organisms are in the last analysis a transformation of energy. But the body itself is no creator of energy; so, in order to replace the energy utilized, a regular provision of *new external sources of energy* must be provided to the living body. If these sources are cut off, the 'vital' machinery grinds to a halt and an irreversible process of death intervenes.

Now two sources of energy are *theoretically* available to any organism : ¹

(i) the chemical energy potentially stored in organic compounds present in the environment; and

(ii) the energy of radiation impinging upon the surface of the organism.

Most plants use the energy of sunlight but, due to some fortuitous circumstances which we shall presently investigate, *all* animals except for a few micro-organisms have totally lost the capacity of tapping *directly* the energy of radiation. They have to obtain their required energy *solely from the oxidation of organic compounds* by molecular oxygen. Energy in the form of various foodstuffs must thus be supplied to the animal body, and embodied life without material aliments becomes an altogether impossible proposition.

Material need : Apart from fulfilling the energy-need of the body, various foodstuffs have to play another essential role, the *role plastique* as it is termed in French : it is to supply the building materials for tissue repair and the construction of new tissues and their constituents.

As a matter of fact, because of the process of constant synthesis and breakdown

¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1956), Vol. 3, p. 608.

of body substances, an adult human body for example loses ineluctably a certain quantity of vital matter every day. It has been estimated that, on the average, we lose daily from our bodies 2500 grams of water, 20 grams of mineral salts, 280 grams of carbon in the form of exhaled carbon dioxide and 16 grams of nitrogen in the form of urea and uric acid.

Also, experiments conducted with radioactive isotopes by R. Schoenheimer and D. Rittenberg have demonstrated that most of our body constituents such as proteins and fats that were previously considered to be stable in the sense that they were thought to have been incorporated in the body substance to remain there undisturbed for an indefinite length of time, are in reality in a state of flux and in dynamic equilibrium between ingested substances gathered from outside as food elements and identical ones already incorporated in the body.¹

In order to allow for this dynamic state of body constituents, also for the replacement of body matter that flows out daily through the kidneys, the lungs and the skin surfaces, a living body must be provided with a continual supply of necessary matter in the shape of material aliments.

These then are *the two fundamental factors, the energy need of the living body and its necessity for building materials*, that have made life absolutely dependent upon food from outside. But a question may be raised whether any and every available material may satisfy this double criterion and thus be utilised as food by the organism. The answer is no; let us see why.

(To be continued)

JUGAL KISHORE MUKHERJI

THE PROBLEM OF A COMMON LANGUAGE

X

WOOD'S DESPATCH OF 1854

THE next great landmark in the history of Indian education, after the Minutes of Macaulay and Lord Auckland to which we referred in the last issue, is the famous Wood's Despatch of 1854 from the Company's Court of Directors in London, after the name of the President of the Board of Control, Sir Charles Wood (later, Lord Halifax). The policies outlined in this document continued to guide the Indian government for nearly half a century, until Lord Curzon introduced his own ideas and schemes.

The occasion for this Despatch was the revision of the Company's Charter in 1853. It had been customary since 1773, when under the Regulating Act of 1772 the East India Company's affairs became the object of Parliamentary interest, to review the situation in India every twenty years before granting the Company an extension of its privileges by a renewal of its Charter. On every such occasion a Select Committee of Parliament would go into the details of administration, criticise and suggest modifications, and generally lay down the broad lines of policy that must be observed by the Company in regard to its Indian possessions. 1853, incidentally, happened to be the last occasion for a detailed review, for the possessions of the Company passed into the hands of the Crown after the Mutiny of 1857, and Indian affairs ceased in consequence to attract any particular notice in London, until the coming of Swadeshi in the first decade of this century.

The controversies between the Anglicists and the Orientalists during the three preceding decades had raised a lot of dust and clouded some of the main issues of educational policy in India. They had also left an amount of rancour among the supporters of the orientalist viewpoint. Macaulay left India late in the thirties and Lord Auckland did something to assuage feelings by allowing the expenditure of certain sums on the Oriental institutions. But a clear pronouncement on future policy was imperative if there was to be any assured continuity in the measures adopted by Government. This the Despatch ensured, first, by a statement of aims and objectives, next, by deciding on the medium of instruction and, finally, by its directives on organisation. We should refer briefly to each of these matters.

In its summary of the aims to be kept in view by the Government of India, the Despatch upholds the opinions expressed earlier by several spokesmen. First, there was the question of "duty" towards India. "It is one of our most sacred duties, to be the means, as far as in us lies, of conferring upon the natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of useful know-

ledge, and which India may, under Providence, derive from her connection with England....” There was also the question of securing suitable government servants in the future. This was to be a vital consideration, for there was already a provision made in the Charter Act of 1833 for the employment of Indians in positions of trust : “that no native of the said territories...shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment under the said Compny.” It was no doubt understood that England would not rush headlong into Indianising the services at the first opportunity. Macaulay in his speech in Parliament in connection with this particular provision had made the point fairly clear : “I am far, very far from wishing to proceed hastily in this delicate matter. I feel that, for the good of India itself, the admission of Natives to high offices must be effected by slow degrees...” The Despatch of 1854 does not commit itself in any way on the broader issue and merely records that “we have always looked upon the encouragement of education as peculiarly important, because calculated not only to produce a higher degree of intellectual fitness, but to raise the moral character of those who partake of its advantages, and so to supply you with servants to whose probity you may with increased confidence commit offices of trust”.

Important as these considerations were, there was a deeper motive behind England's interest in Indian education. This the Despatch does not try to hide; indeed it is for the first time that an official statement of such high authority makes clear the true role of India in the Indo-British partnership. India was to be made to realise the might of England's industrial potential and she should modestly accept her position as the supplier of the raw materials that England needed for running its machinery; this was sufficient ground for the introduction of western knowledge into India. “This knowledge,” says the Despatch, “will teach the natives of India the marvellous results of the employment of labour and capital...and at the same time secure to us a large and more certain supply of many articles necessary for our manufactures and extensively consumed by all classes of our population...”

Given these premises, it was natural to conclude that “the education which we desire to see extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe, in short of European knowledge.” The view of Macaulay on the worth of oriental learning found adequate support in the Despatch. “The system of science and philosophy which forms the learning of the East abounds with grave errors, and Eastern literature is at best very deficient as regards all modern discovery and improvement.” At the same time the orientalist were sought to be pacified by the declaration that “an acquaintance with the works contained in them [that is, the classical literatures of India and the East] is valuable for historical and antiquarian purposes, and a knowledge of the languages themselves is required in the study of Hindoo and Mahomedan law, and is also of great importance for the critical cultivation and improvement of the vernacular languages of India”.

It is here, in this solicitude expressed in the Despatch for the future of the Indian vernaculars, that it strikes a distinctive note. "We have always been most sensible of the importance of the use of the languages which alone are understood by the great mass of the population. These languages and not English have been put by us in the place of Persian in the administration of justice and in the intercourse between the officers of Government and the people. It is indispensable therefore that in any general system of education, the study of them should be assiduously attended to, and any acquaintance with improved European knowledge which is to be communicated to the great mass of people—whose circumstances prevent them from acquiring a high order of education, and who cannot be expected to overcome the difficulties of a foreign language—can only be conveyed to them through one or other of these vernacular languages."

The problem then was : how to reconcile the use of the vernacular medium with the idea of diffusing European knowledge ? Translations on a wide scale at government expense being out of the question, "this can only be done effectually through the instrumentality of masters and professors, who may by themselves, knowing English and thus having full access to the latest improvements in knowledge of every kind, impart to their countrymen, through the medium of their mother-tongue, the information which they have thus obtained." But the possibility of translations of European works need not be ruled out altogether. "At the same time as the importance of the vernacular languages becomes more appreciated, the vernacular literatures of India will be gradually enriched by translations of European books or by the original compositions of men whose minds have been imbued with the spirit of European advancement, so that European knowledge may gradually be placed in this manner within the reach of all classes of the people." The conclusion was : "We look therefore to the English language and to the vernacular languages of India together as the media for the diffusion of European knowledge, and it is our desire to see them cultivated together in all schools in India of a sufficiently high class to maintain a schoolmaster possessing the requisite qualifications."

To achieve this purpose the Despatch envisaged a large number of High Schools where the medium of instruction would be the local vernacular; these schools would exist side by side with those where the medium was English. "We include these Anglo-vernacular and vernacular schools in the same class, because we are unwilling to maintain the broad line of separation which at present exists between schools in which the media for imparting instruction differ. The knowledge conveyed is no doubt, at the present time, much higher in the Anglo-vernacular than in the vernacular schools; but the difference will become less marked, and the latter more efficient as the gradual enrichment of the vernacular languages in works of education allows their schemes of study to be enlarged, and as a more numerous class of schoolmasters is raised up, able to impart a superior education."

As a help to raising up a "more numerous class of school masters", and no doubt also in order to ensure a steady supply of competent servants of Government, the

Despatch proposed the setting up of universities in India, on the model of the London university which was then only an examining body. At the same time, a Department of Public Instruction was to be formed in every Province, with a Director in charge; he was to be assisted by a staff of Inspectors who would look into the working of the schools at all levels. The universities too would be controlled directly by the Government who would nominate all the officials in charge.

(To be continued)

SANAT K. BANERJI

LISTENING FOR THE SILENCE

TIME was when we could sit there undisturbed,
 And no one would come near us...
 Nor would they say a word.
 Now, if we sit awhile to think
 Or meditate, on things that matter,
 All around us is natter, natter, natter.

Perhaps I shall be told that the True Silence,
 Should be deep down inside,
 And cannot be disturbed by noise or violence.
 This of course is so and is an aim.
 But what alarms me is, that Space and Matter
 Seem swamped—With idle chatter, chatter, chatter.

LEENA

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Gems from Sri Aurobindo, Second Series. Compiled by *M. P. Pundit*, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 2, pp. 391, Price : Rs. 10.00 or Sh. 15/-

The readers are familiar with *Gems from Sri Aurobindo*, First Series. In that book were collected the quintessential distillations from the prose works of Sri Aurobindo. The book received warm greetings from all quarters and now we are regaled with the Second Series. Here are gems picked from Sri Aurobindo's poetical works and arranged as usual in the alphabetical order under appropriate headings such as Action, Adoration, Advent of Truth, Adventure etc,

This most beautifully got-up book, easily pocketable and portable, of quotations is both a casket of jewels and a bouquet of flowers. As they body forth deep truths of life and spirit sharpened and chiselled so that their light can penetrate into the depths of our souls and dispel the darkness of ignorance, they are bright jewels. Rhythmically fashioned as they are, their hard core of lustrous substance will continue to illumine our path for all time. But in their delicacy, rich colouring and haunting suggestiveness they are flowers whose fragrance can always waft us from the stench and mire of ordinary life into

Still regions of imperishable Light
All-seeing eagle-peaks of silent Power
And moon-flame oceans of swift fathomless Bliss
And calm immensities of spirit Space.

Poetry gives us truths but with a magic of transforming power. For instance, we are all under sentence of death, and perhaps the angel of Death is God's most terrifying courier whose approach makes us shudder even when in the grip of a violent pain and yet how does Sri Aurobindo view it ?

young portress bright
Who opens to our souls the worlds of light. (P. 54)

Death is but changing of our robes to wait
In wedding garments at the Eternal's gate. (P. 52)

But, no, this is perhaps too mellifluous to conjure away the bitter reality of Death. We want some deeper insight into its meaning. Well, then, here you are :

Death is a stair, a door, a stumbling stride
The soul must take to cross from birth to birth,

A grey defeat pregnant with victory,
A whip to lash us towards our deathless state. (P. 53)

No, we do not want to be lashed by it but to defy it and conquer it. Here is the challenge of Savitri spurning this monster :

I bow not to thee, O huge mask of Death,
Black lie of night to the cowed soul of man,
Unreal, inescapable end of things,
Thou grim jest played with the immortal spirit. (P. 55)

And this is the vision of the future held up before us :

Even there shall come as a high crown of all
The end of Death, the death of Ignorance.

Thus there are thirty-eight entries under this head alone and the reader can choose whatever suits his mood or temperament.

There is no end to the variety of themes with which this book is packed and at the end of this long journey we meet the word "zigzag" and are relieved to find :

Always ascends the zigzag of the gods
And upward points the spirit's climbing Fire. (P. 391)

I will end this brief review with two quotations on Bliss :

A hidden bliss is at the root of things :
A mute Delight regards Time's countless works :
To house God's joy in things Space gave wide room,
To house God's joy in self our souls were born. (P. 18)

And to reveal this hidden Bliss is the aim of all Art and Sri Aurobindo's poetry does it most wonderfully :

This universe an old enchantment guards;
Its objects are carved cups of world-Delight
Whose cherished wine is some deep soul's rapture-drink.

RAVINDRA KHANNA

Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo and the New Age by *Kishor Gandhi*, published by Sri Aurobindo Society, Pondicherry, India. Price Rs. 6.00

Though academic terms like "Social Philosophy" and "Social Science" have come into wide currency, and the term "Sociology" come into existence only since a little more than a century ago with August Comte (1798-1857), the spheres they cover were trod by thinkers of as early civilisations as those of India, Egypt, Babylonia and China. However, it can be confidently said that conscious efforts to give system and shape to man's relationship to his society are almost as old as society itself. But it is something more than the effort to formulate system and shape that makes a Social Philosophy—it is the touch of an ideal which justifies any system and shape. Aristotle, generally the very first name in a roll call of Social Philosophers which can include Plato and Confucius, begins his *Nicomachean Ethics* thus : "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim."

Social Philosophers took into account the experiences of history and human psychology, but got their inspiration from what they believed to be an ideal state of things. No doubt, they have greatly inspired the conduct of man and the motives of revolutions and the formation of social institutions. But though based upon realistic considerations, their ideals have been moral and intellectual and often not without touches of utopia. Developments of recent times—World Wars, an all-pervading sense of futility, rapid withering away of old values—perhaps threaten the sanctity of many a theory of Social Philosophy today.

Against this background, the study of the aspect of Social Philosophy in the writings of Sri Aurobindo is of super-eminent importance. A difference of cardinal significance, a qualitative difference, of the Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo from those of all others lies in the fact that Sri Aurobindo's inspiration rested in his sure vision of the future, not in any ideal imagination, moral or intellectual. It is only his divine humility, which instead of rendering his words abruptly prophetic, makes a patient, even academically most brilliant analysis of the growth and the purpose of society and social institutions. But, to stress again, it is the certainty of the future of man, the Knowledge which alone can justify, particularly in the present-day-context, all the manifold struggle of man for existence and progress, which is the elixir of all that constitute Social Philosophy in the writings of Sri Aurobindo.

The awareness of this difference, naturally, makes the book under review a study in Social Philosophy with a difference. The excellent effort of the author to bring together and stress the significance of a hundred gems of a certain glow strewn across the Master's abounding realm of riches, and discuss them under such heads as (In Part One: Social Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo) "The Nature of Society", "The Individual and the Society", "Social Development", Social Evolution and Social Progress", "Stages of Social Evolution" and (In Part Two : Sri Aurobindo and the

Future Evolution of Humanity) "The World-Action of Sri Aurobindo", "Sri Aurobindo and the World Crisis", "The New Humanity" and (In Part Three : The New Age) "Religion in the New Age", "The Future of the Family", "The Hour of God", "The Crucial Choice", go to bring an elevation in the very theme of Social Philosophy. One of the articles, "The World-Action of Sri Aurobindo", published in booklet form in 1946, accomplished the mission of an angel-messenger from the Divine domain in Pondicherry. Two of the articles in the book were read and approved by Sri Aurobindo and four more have been read and approved by The Mother. This leaves little for a reviewer to discuss the authenticity of the author's interpretations, and his style is bold and prolific enough to match the depth of his convictions.

Topics like "The Hour of God", "The New Humanity", "The Crucial Choice" are revealing—and a topic like "The Future of the Family", speaking frankly, may be shocking to many, but would certainly be convincing to all that the shock is that of Truth, which is paving the passage for the New Age.

The twin purpose of the book is categorically stressed in the concluding sentence of the preface : "The book is brought out with the hope that it may help the intelligent reader to clearly grasp the essentials of Sri Aurobindo's spiritual-philosophical vision of the future evolution of humanity and awaken him to the present urgent need of answering the call of The Mother in this Hour of God."

And with this book is inaugurated a new series of studies in Social Philosophy, in response to the beckonings from the new horizons unveiled by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother.

MANOJ DAS

Students' Section

THE NEW AGE ASSOCIATION

SEVENTH SEMINAR

20 FEBRUARY 1966

THE seventh quarterly Seminar of the New Age Association was held on the 20th February 1966. The following subject was approved by the Mother for this Seminar:

How to serve the Truth ?

The six members who participated as speaker were :

Brajkishore, Prithwindra, Romen, Rose, Srijit and Tarun.

The Seminar was held in the New Hall of the Centre of Education from 8.30 to 10 a.m.

A short piece of the Mother's recorded music was played at the commencement. After that Kishor Gandhi, the Chairman of the Seminar, made the following introductory speech :

Friends,

The subject of this Seminar—*How to serve the Truth ?*—is directly related to the Mother's New Year Message this time : *Let us serve the Truth*. It has been specially selected for this occasion in order to focus our attention on its significance and to grasp its full implications.

This New Year Message is a distinct pointer to the most important and urgent need of the present hour. The Truth to which the Mother refers is the supramental Truth which manifested in 1956 in the inner atmosphere of the earth, from where it is now insistently pressing to emerge in the external life of the world. At this moment the most important and imminent need is to make ourselves ready to receive and express that Truth in our life and actions—that is, to *serve* that Truth sincerely and whole-heartedly. To do this rightly it is very necessary to guard against our common human tendency to seize upon that Truth for utilising it for the satisfaction of our egoistic desires and interests. This is a gross error which can only tend to deflect the Truth from its right course and lead to false or deformed consequences. This the supramental Truth will never permit. Let us recall Sri Aurobindo's warning :

“Avoid the imagination that the supramental life will be only a heightened satisfaction of the desires of the vital and the body; nothing can be a greater obstacle to the Truth in its descent than this hope of glorification of the animal in the human nature. Mind wants the supramental state to be a confirmation of its own cherished ideas and preconceptions; the vital wants it to be a glorification of its own desires; the physical wants it to be a rich prolongation of its own comforts and pleasures and habits. If it were to be that, it would be only an exaggerated and highly magnified consummation of the animal and the human nature, not a transition from the human into the Divine.”¹

It is in order to guard against this error that we are asked to change our normal ego-centric attitude into the God-centric. This ego-centric attitude is so deeply ingrained in the human nature that even in sadhana it persists obstinately for a very long time and is the cause of most of the dangers and deviations. As Sri Aurobindo points out : “Even in their sadhana the I is always there,—*my* sadhana, *my* progress, *my* everything. The remedy is to think constantly of the Divine, not of oneself, to work, to act, to do sadhana for the Divine; not to consider how this or that affects *me* personally, not to claim anything, but to refer all to the Divine.”²

If this is not done, the result will be that when the spiritual and supramental experiences come, the small human ego will seize hold of them and swell itself into a magnified ego, which is one of the greatest perils on the spiritual path. What the magnified ego means has been very vividly described by Sri Aurobindo : “...when the limits of the ordinary mind and vital are broken, one feels a far vaster and more powerful consciousness and unlimited possibilities, but if one ties all that to the tail of one’s ego, then one becomes a thousand times more egoistic than the ordinary man. The greatness of the Divine becomes an excuse and a support for one’s own greatness and the big I swells itself to fill not only the earth but the heavens. That magnification of the ego is a thing to be guarded against with a watchful care.”³

The complete rejection of the ego is thus the indispensable necessity of receiving the supramental Truth and undergoing the supramental change. That is why Sri Aurobindo insists that “the first condition of the supramental change is to get rid of ego.”⁴ It is only when this is done that one can serve the Truth without any distortion or error.

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It is relatively easy to recognise the impulses of our physical and vital nature as ego-centric, but in our higher mental nature there are tendencies which, from the point of view of human development, appear to us so impersonal, exalted and noble that we

¹ *On Yoga II*, Tome Two, p. 602.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 467-68.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 476.

⁴ *On Yoga I, The Synthesis of Yoga*, pp. 320.

do not consider them ego-centric and therefore instead of rejecting them we expect that the advent of the supramental Truth will bring to us their highest fulfilment. This especially applies to our mental ideals, moral principles, religious beliefs and humanitarian aims. We have a deep conviction that the pursuit of these high aims and aspirations liberates us from the narrow bounds of the ego and opens us to a larger and greater impersonal truth. So we hope that in the divine life created by the supramental Truth in the world these aims and aspirations will find their perfect consummation.

But this is an error and unless we overcome it entirely we will not be able to serve the Truth in its purity and fullness. The supramental Truth is too vast and free to be confined within the narrow and rigid limits of our mental, moral and religious ideals. So long as we remain attached to them, the vast and limitless Truth of the Supermind, one in essence yet infinitely various in manifestation, cannot be received by us in our consciousness or expressed in our life and actions. Attachment to these limiting ideals can be as great or even a greater obstacle to the free action of Truth in us as the hindrance created by vital ego and desire and physical obscurity and inertia. If we aspire to serve the Truth in its wholeness and purity it is imperatively necessary that we must liberate ourselves from these narrow encumbrances and open ourselves entirely and exclusively to the illimitable vastness of the supramental Truth for its free and perfect action in and through us. In Sri Aurobindo's words : "If we are to be free in the Spirit, if we are to be subject only to the supreme Truth, we must discard the idea that our mental or moral laws are binding on the Infinite or that there can be anything sacrosanct, absolute or eternal even in the highest of our existing standards of conduct. To form higher and higher temporary standards as long as they are needed is to serve the Divine in this world march; to erect rigidly an absolute standard is to attempt the erection of a barrier against the eternal waters in their outflow."¹

It is for this reason that Sri Aurobindo insists : "The perfect supramental action will not follow any single principle or limited rule. It is not likely to satisfy the standard either of the individual egoist or any organised group-mind. It will conform to the demand neither of the positive practical man of the world nor of the formal moralist nor of the patriot nor of the sentimental philanthropist nor of the idealising philosopher. It will proceed by a spontaneous outflowing from the summits in the totality of an illumined and uplifted being, will and knowledge and not by the selected calculated and standardised action which is all that the intellectual reason or ethical will can achieve. Its sole aim will be the expression of the divine in us and the keeping together of the world and its progress towards the Manifestation that is to be. This even will not be so much an aim and purpose as a spontaneous law of the being and an intuitive determination of the action by the Light of the divine Truth and its automatic influence."²

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 217.

² *Ibid.*, p. 235.

This then is the answer to the question we have for this Seminar. The only way to serve the Truth is to be free of all our human standards and principles and to submit totally and exclusively to the Will of the Truth alone and let it act freely and spontaneously in and through us. We have to be free not only of the blinding compulsions of our lower nature but also of all the mental, moral and religious ideals of our higher nature to which we attach so great a value and even consider as sacred and inviolable. We have to break all these bonds if we are to be the perfect servants of Truth. If we do not do so then instead of ourselves serving the Truth we shall only try to make the Truth our servant. But the supramental Truth will not allow itself to be deviated in this manner because it is uncompromising in its insistence on serving the Divine Will only and no other.

We may therefore say that to serve the Truth we must obey unconditionally the one Divine Will alone in all our being and life. That can only be done by a total self-surrender to the Supreme Lord who is the Master of Truth and of all our being and life. Love is the key to perfect surrender. Therefore, to love the Lord and obey His Will in all sincerity is the most perfect way to serve the Truth.

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I have only touched upon the central point of the subject of this Seminar. The other six speakers who will follow me will explain in more detail its many-sided implications.

After they have finished I shall read out to you an extract from Sri Aurobindo's writing which gives an explanation of the subject of this Seminar as well as of the Mother's New Year Message. The Mother has found this explanation to be so perfect that She has published it along with the New Year Message in the *Bulletin* which will be out tomorrow—21st February 1966. She has however permitted me to read it to you in advance at this Seminar. I shall read it at the end.

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After this speech the six speakers were called to deliver their speeches. These speeches are reproduced below.

HOW TO SERVE THE TRUTH ?

I

When we set before us this question, reason most naturally asks what this Truth is that we are to serve. And in the whole realm of thought perhaps there is no more abstract notion than the notion of Truth. Yet we cannot afford to fall off to rest because of this difficulty; for as the Mother says, "In the world, as it actually is, the goal

of life is not to secure personal happiness, but to awaken the individual progressively towards the truth-consciousness.”¹ It is not so much for its own sake that we want to know what Truth is, but for the sake of living it out. In fact, there is no such thing as knowing the Truth, as far as we are concerned. For, “It is only, when you are no longer human, that you *know*.”² Knowledge is only a secondary aspect of life, being is first. In Sri Aurobindo’s words : “To be or become something, to bring something into being is the whole labour of the force of Nature, to know, feel, do are subordinate energies that have a value because they help the being in its partial self-realisation to express what it is and help it too on its urge to express the still more not yet realised that it has to be.”³

“There is a state, a state essentially pragmatic, spiritually pragmatic where of all human futilities, the most futile is metaphysics.”⁴

Hence the truth we are seeking after is the truth of being, the dynamic truth, the dynamic Will of the Divine, in the universe and in the individual. But how are we to know what the Divine wants of us ? It is possible to know this Will only if we have built an inner relation with the Divine. But even before this relation is established, when at every moment we can perceive the guiding finger, we are never left out in a total darkness. The knowledge for the right action is always given. In fact when we fail to serve the truth, it is rarely for the lack of knowledge. It is most often a failure of the will that is not strong enough to brush aside inferior wills or personal satisfactions that infiltrate. And when infiltrating desires cloud the mind, we fail to hear even the most convincing known Voice, or to see the written word.

What is required is total surrender to the Highest and obedience to the Command. While we desire to reign in knowledge, Truth seeking to materialise begs hopelessly for serving hands.

We are all assigned a frame of work which offers ample opportunity to serve the Will. But our work is only a frame, a symbol. Our wider work is the whole of life, with all our thought and feeling. And we are to grow gradually into harmony with the Will in life itself. That is our true status. And service in that status can bring no fatigue. Fatigue belongs to the effort of climbing back to it, or, even more often perhaps, to the ego struggling to come out of it...

BRAJKISHORE

(To be continued)

Compiled by KISHOR GANDHI

¹ *On Education* (1952), p. 28.

² *The Mother, Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, Aug. 1965, p. 53.

³ *The Life Divine* (American Edition), pp. 906-907.

⁴ *Bulletin*, Aug. 1965, p. 54.

**SRI AUROBINDO INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND RESEARCH**

NEWSLETTER

No. 6.

June 1966

1. *The Evidence of Poetry*

During a discussion on comparative values the other day a student asked if the words of the poets held any real value for modern life and learning. The answer might well rest in the lap of another question : What is the value of modern scholarship ? The subject of course is much too vast to comment on at any length in this Newsletter but perhaps we can exemplify an answer by confining it to one aspect of poetry. Often when historians encounter a *lacuna* in their thesis they have recourse to the writings of the poets to inform them of the sentiments of the people and their attitude to certain aspects of the society of the time. For example we know only too well in India that today a woman can stand on equal terms with a man—a thing impossible only a short time ago. But how far back do we have to go to find the roots of the social norm whereby all women were dependent on men ? Let the poets answer these questions. A remark of one of the characters in Menander runs : “a woman is necessarily an evil, and he is a lucky man who catches her in the mildest form.” But the general Greek view of the dependence of women on man is well expressed in the words of Aethra in *The Suppliants* of Euripides. “It is proper for women who are wise to let men act for them in everything.”

One Greek writer discriminates as follows the function of the sexes : “War, politics, and public speaking are the sphere of man; that of woman is to keep house, to stay at home and to receive and attend her husband.”

We are not then surprised to find that it is in a burlesque passage from Aristophanes that we recognize, in spite of a touch of caricature, the genuine features of the Greek wife. Praxagora is recounting the merits and services of women :

“They dip their wool in hot water according to the ancient plan, all of them without exception, and never make the slightest innovation. They sit and cook, as of old. They carry upon their heads, as of old. They conduct the Thesmophoriae, as of old. They wear out their husbands, as of old. They buy sweets, as of old.”

The same poet, however, makes Lysistrata explain the growing indignation of the women at the bad conduct of affairs by the men. We may quote a beautiful translation by B. B. Rogers. The comments of the “magistrate” typify of course the man’s point of view.

Think of our old moderation and gentleness, think how we bore with your pranks, and were still.

All through the days of your former prognacity, all through the war that is over and spent :

Not that (be sure) we approved of your policy; never our griefs you allowed us to vent.

Well we perceived your mistakes and mismanagement. Often at home on our housekeeping cares,

Often we heard of some foolish proposal you made for conducting the public affairs.

Then would we question you mildly and pleasantly, inwardly grieving, but outwardly gay;

“Husband, how goes it abroad ?” we would ask him; “what have ye done in Assembly today ?”

“What would ye write on the side of the Treaty-stone ?” Husband says angrily, “What’s that to you ?

You hold your tongue !” And I held it accordingly.

STRATYLLIS

That is a thing which I never would do !

MAGISTRATE

Ma’am, if you hadn’t you’d soon have repented it.

LYSISTRATA

Therefore I held it, and spake not a word.

Soon of another tremendous absurdity, wilder and worse than the former we heard.

“Husband,” I say, with a tender solicitude, “why have you passed such a foolish decree ?”

Viciously, moodily, glaring askance at me, “Stick to your spinning, my mistress,” says he,

“Else you will speedily find it the worse for you ! war is the care and the business of men !”

MAGISTRATE

Zeus ! ’twas a worthy reply, and an excellent !

LYSISTRATA

What ! you unfortunate, shall we not then,

Then, when we see you perplexed and incompetent, shall we not tender advice to the state?¹

The final interrogation might easily have been uttered by a modern daughter of India.

2. *Essay writing versus Creative writing*

Most of the textbooks on essay writing, the good ones, are of fifty or a hundred years ago. Much of their advice is still good but does not, however, measure up to the requirements of modern creative writing. Often the teacher has to accept a good concept along with archaic words or expressions. Jonathan Swift's observation comes to mind :

When a man's thoughts are clear, the properest words will generally offer themselves first, and his own judgement will direct him in what order to place them, so that they may be best understood.

The word 'essay' as a noun, in its commonest sense of a kind of literary piece, has the accent on the first syllable. But in the wider and less usual sense of *an attempt* the old accent, says M.E.U., on the last is still often heard; that it was formerly so accented is evident from lines like

Whose first essay was in a tyrant's praise...
This is th' essay of my unpractis'd pen...
And calls his finish'd poem an Essay...

An essay in the wider and less usual sense of an attempt is seldom creative; in the commonest sense of a kind of literary piece it is perhaps even less often creative. Writing is never a mechanical process governed by a set of grammatical rules, it is a complex process of inspiration, imagination and thought in which the chief element is, if the inspiration and the imagination are to be properly communicated, the clearness of one's thought.

If, then, teachers stress the point that the writer's object is to *express his thought through the pattern which is most appropriate and so the writer needs the process by which material takes on form under the influence of clear thinking*, this would be one of the most direct and useful means to good essay writing in the modern sense, and exercises to this end most apposite to creative writing.

3. *INDIA—Educational Statistics*

In 1959, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote as his message of good wishes for the Tenth National Seminar of Indian Adult Education Association :

The more one thinks of the many and varied problems of India the conclusion is forced upon one that the basic approach has to be through education.

¹ Aristoph. *Lysistrata*. 507. Trans. B. B. Rogers.

The results, in statistics, are as follows : From the 12% literacy of 1941 we progressed to 17% in 1951 and 24 % in 1961. An optimistic estimate states that we may reach 45% by 1975.

The Census of India, Paper No. 1, reveals that the literacy rate has increased 0.8% per year in the general population, 1.0% for males and 0.5% for females.

4. U.S.A.—*The Role of the University*

President Johnson, in dedicating the new Woodrow Wilson Hall at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princetown University, last month, said :

...learning must erect no barriers of class or creed. The university is to nourish an elite to which all can aspire. Its mission will be to search for truth and to serve mankind. As Woodrow Wilson said : 'It is the object of learning not only to satisfy the curiosity and perfect the spirits of individual men, but also to advance civilisation.'

It will be remembered that President Wilson's daughter, Margaret, was a disciple of Sri Aurobindo and The Mother before she died at the Ashram in 1945. Her Ashram name was "Nishta".

5. U.S.S.R.—*Tagore's Works*

The last volume of the twelve volume edition of Rabindranath Tagore's collected works in Russian has just appeared, on the eve of his birth anniversary this year, says the Soviet Consulate-General in Calcutta. The volume includes *My Reminiscences*, *Letters from Russia*, *Glimpses of Bengal*, poems from *Gitanjali*. It has been published in 92,500 copies.

6. *Thought of the Month*

In her book *Tales of All Time*, in the chapter on Patience and Perseverance, The Mother quotes four lines from an old Panjabi song, which translates something like this :

The Bulbul does not sing in the garden forever,
And the garden is not always in bloom ;
A king's reign is not all a round of feasting,
And friends are not always together.

The Mother ends this little piece with the observation :

Perseverance is patience that is up and about and does not just sit quiet.

NORMAN C. DOWSETT