

## Some Indo-Arabic Cultural Contacts.

**A**L-MANSUR (+ 775) the second prince of the Abbasid dynasty (750-1258 A.D.), laid the first brick of his new Capital in 762 A.D. on the west bank of the Tigris—Baghdad which was destined to be the intellectual centre of the East. This scholar—Caliph founded “The Department of Translation” where Arabs and non-Arabs were employed to translate Greek and Sanskrit, including other Oriental languages, into Arabic. This institution became more and more prominent as the number of linguists increased. “The good Harun Alraschid” (786-809 A.D.) who plays an important role in “Thousand and One Nights” was the fifth Caliph of the dynasty, and he brought this to fruition with astonishing rapidity. His son Mamun established “The House of Wisdom,” where he used to hold metaphysical discussion with brilliant scholars of the time, who published their standard works on various subjects.

The keen interest in Indian wisdom shown by the Arabs of the eighth and ninth centuries of the Christian era is a significant feature of the Arabic literature of this period. The fame of the Abbasid Caliph's patronage of letters had spread far and wide which made Baghdad a sort of literary Rendezvous, where just as “to a monarch's hall, as to a market, people bring only what is in demand.”<sup>1</sup> Greeks and “AL-BRAHIMA”—a term then applied to Hindus—Persians and Egyptians met each other. Of all the non-Arabian members of the Academy of Baghdad, the Persian IBNUL-MUQAFFA (+ Circa 760 A.D.) who made several translations from PEHLEVI or Middle-Persian into Arabic deserves our serious attention. The most famous of all his writings which are many is his “Book of Kalila wa Dimna.” This work through a translation in Pehlevi goes back to the Sanskrit “FABLES of BIDDAI”<sup>2</sup> and is undoubtedly one of the oldest Prose works in Arabic, and has always been recognized as a model of literary eloquence.

Al-jahiz (+ 869) a celebrated scholar of Basra, a man of encyclopaedic knowledge, and as described by C. Brockelmann<sup>3</sup> “a genius who stood far above his age,” has paid glowing tributes to Hindu Thinkers.<sup>4</sup> It is a pity that the names of those Indian scholars have become so completely metamorphosed in Semetic script—partly because of Arabs' difficulty to pronounce Sanskrit names and of “the serious defects of Arabic script,”<sup>5</sup> just as many Arabic

1. Tha'alibi (+ 1038 A.D.) *Yatima* (Damascus 1304 A.H.) Vol. I, P. 8.

2. Nicholson : *A Literary history of the Arabs*. (London 1907) P. 346.

3. *S. Geschichte d. Arabischen Literatur*. II.

4. *Al-Bayn I*. 294 (Cairo) 1935.

5. *Al-Beruni—Tahdid Nihayatul Amakin*. S. Islamic Culture Hyderabad. Oct. 1932.

names in European languages have completely undergone phonetic changes.<sup>6</sup> Thus Indian (AL-BRAHIMA) Pundits appear in Arabic pronunciation BAHLA, MANKA, BAZIKAR, FILBARFIL, ŠINDBAD and KANKA. The Hindu sciences which Arabs interpreted to the Eastern Caliphate (as opposed to the Western Caliphate of Spain) are Mathematics, Medicine, Ophidia (Sarpavidyā), Toxicology, Astronomy and Astrology. Al-Beruni<sup>7</sup> (+ 1048 A.D.) informs us that "a Hindu scholar learned in Astronomy and Mathematics came with a deputation from Sind, and brought a Sanskrit Siddhānta to Baghdad during the time of AL-MANSUR. By the Order of the Caliph he translated this work into Arabic with the help of IBRAHIM FAZARI. "This was the first time" says AL-QIFTI<sup>8</sup> in his Dictionary of Philosophers, "that the Arabs recognized the intellectual attainments of India." In Arabic, Mathematical figures were written first in words and later in Alphabets. As a result of Indo-Arab cultural relations, Hindu numerals were cast in the Arabic mould, which were accepted by European students attending the University of Cordova, who called them "Arabic numerals," because they had learnt them from the Arabs, who still call them "Hindu numerals." AL-KHWARIZMI the Court-Mathematician and Astronomer of MAMUN AR-RASHID (+ 833 A.D.)—the son of "Harun Alraschid,"—who researched into Indian Mathematics and published many important treatises, must be regarded as the pioneer in this branch of Indian Science. In Europe names of particular branches of Mathematics such as Logarithms, Alogrithms and Algorism are all corrupted forms of AL-KHWARIZMI.<sup>9</sup> The Arab writers of eighth and ninth centuries used the term "HISABUL-GHUBAR" (Arithmetic of the dust) to indicate the Indian origin of the numerals. The probable reason for this appellation is that these numerals were written with either chalk or lime-water on levelled ground in Indian village patshalas. The Indian origin of the Arabic numerals is best evidenced by the figures which are written from left to right, as in Sanskrit, and not from right to left as in the Arabic script.

IBN ABI USEYBA narrates in his "TARIKH-UL-ATIBBA"<sup>10</sup> (Biographical dictionary of Physicians), how MANKA, the Indian cured a serious disease. He says:—"Once Harun Alrashid fell seriously ill. When the Physicians of Baghdad failed to cure him, somebody suggested the name of MANKA, the Indian Physician. He was invited to Baghdad and special arrangements were made for his long travel. Under his treatment the Caliph

6. cf. Al-Razi, and Ibn Rushd with European Rhazes and Averroes or Ibn Bajja recorded by medieval Romans as Avempace.

7. Kitabul-Hind (London) P. 208.

8. Akhbarul Hukama: P. 177 (Cairo Edition)

9. 5. Encyclopaedia Britannica XIX, 867.

10. II, 33 (Egyptian Edition).

was restored to health. The Caliph rewarded him profusely. He was then commissioned to translate Sanskrit books in the "Translation Department." BAHLA was another Indian Physician who was presented to the Court of Harun. At that time Gabriel BAKHTSHIU, a Greek, was the Court-Physician who failed to cure the Caliph's Cousin of his diseases, and it fell to the lot of BAHLA to treat him in which he completely succeeded.<sup>11</sup>

Another Indian (Al-Brahima) Pundit whose name is recorded by a tenth century<sup>12</sup> scholar as RAI is reputed to be an authority on 'Snake-bite Cure.' His book was translated from Sanskrit into Arabic. Early Arab writers have mentioned casually the contributions made by Hindus to the science of Toxicology. IBN<sup>13</sup> Nadim refers to a Sanskrit work on Poison, which had already been translated into Arabic long before his time. IBN DHAN was a well known figure in Baghdad. In Arabic "IBN" means "Son"—that is son of DHAN. Semites in general and Arabs in particular were always keen to know the name of the Father; hence this additional "IBN." This Physician was held in high esteem, and he was a medical officer of an important Public Hospital of Baghdad. Besides his hospital duties, he was attached to the Translation Department where he translated Sanskrit works into Arabic. The great German Orientalist Prof. E. Sachau<sup>14</sup> thinks that this DHAN might have been 'DHANYA' or 'DHANAN.' This name was probably adopted to resemble the word DHANVANTARI, which is the name of the physician of the gods in MANUSHAstra.

In the domain of Astronomy and Astrology the Arabs drank deep from the "Fountain" of India, particularly, in Astrology which was entirely a new subject to them. In Astronomy, however, they may have acquired considerable knowledge through the observations of the ancient Semites known in history as Chaelidians, who inhabited the region lying between north Arabia and modern Mesopotamia. In this sphere of knowledge the ground was already prepared to grasp Indian calculations. The celebrated Al-Beruni writing in the early eleventh century A.D. while commenting upon the meteorological studies of famous ABU Mashar of Balkh—whose works have been studied by Nallino and Caetani—observes: "This is the testimony of ABU Mashar, showing that through this (Indian) method you obtain correct results. If, (besides,) you take to (help) the Mansions (the places of the Lunar Stations) of the Hindus and their single parts, you are pretty sure in your calculation to come near the truth."<sup>15</sup>

11. Ibid. II, 34. (Egyptian Edition).

12. Ibn Nadim P. 303.

13. I, 317.

14. Al-Beruni's Kitabul-Hind—English Translation. See Introduction P. 33.

15. Al-Beruni's "Chronology of Ancient Nations" English translation by E. Sachau P. 342. (London 1879).

Historian Masudi (+ 947 A.D.)<sup>16</sup> informs us that a voluminous medical book was written for RAJA KURASH (?), wherein the causes and treatment of diseases are discussed, and drugs and herbs illustrated, and "Female Diseases"—written originally in Sanskrit by a Hindu woman named "RAOOSA"<sup>17</sup>—are described.

To this list of Brahamin scholars another may be added. I have discovered recently an Arabic MS. in Colombo, which is dated 641 A.H. (circa 1221 A.D.) and copied as the scribe of the MS. says from a still older manuscript at Ghaza near Damascus.

The author of this manuscript is one "BAYYUN" stated in the manuscript as "Al-Brahamin." It deals with the effect of minerals and jewels on the human system. This appears to be a unique manuscript as I have so far not succeeded in tracing any reference to this manuscript in the published printed catalogues of European or Asiatic libraries.

In consequence of the Indo-arabic cultural contacts many scientific Sanskrit words crept into Arabic but they have been Arabicised to such an extent that not all of them can be easily identified.<sup>18</sup> The question is where are these Arabic translations today? The answer to such a question is that probably all of them were destroyed by the order of Halaku Khan, the Mongol, who sacked Baghdad in 1258. According to the historians of the age the libraries of Baghdad were burnt to ashes while the Mongols took delight in this 'bonfire.' The treasured manuscripts which had been guarded jealously from century to century were completely destroyed. The same tragedy befell the Alhambra library which was triumphantly burnt to ashes by the Crusaders. Then followed a period of civil wars, in which there was little or no real cultural activity. Ceylon too has had in my opinion cultural contacts with Arabia. Al Beruni in his 'India,' incidentally mentions a certain SANHAL HINDI, who wrote a book entitled "Great Book of Births." In Arabic unvocalized script the author's name is recorded as SNHL. Can we not take this for Sinhal or Sinhalese?

S. A. IMAM

16. P. Muruj. Ed. by Barbier de Meynard with French translation I, 162 (Paris).

17. Ibn Nadim. P, 303.

18. S. Islamic Culture. Hyderabad. Oct. 1932. Moulana Sulaiman.

## Reviews,

*Poems from India by Members of the Forces.*—Chosen by R. N. CURREY and R. P. GIBSON.—O.U.P. Rs. 3/-.

The editors of this selection of poems written by members of the forces in India are to be congratulated on the production of a highly interesting and illuminating little volume. Although the quality of the writing is, as natural in the circumstances, uneven, the general level would justify attention on its own account, apart from the valuable light thrown on the mood and temper of a generation of Britishers who lived and fought in India during the second world war.

Technically very few of the writers here have developed an utterance of their own, even the terse directness of colloquial speech which one might have expected in *vers libre*, the most popular form represented, seems to be wanting. There is something in the editors' remark that "original epigrammatic wit seems hard to come by." Might it not be that one meets here not with a deficiency of language but a kind of inarticulateness which is a deficiency of attitude. The weakness seemed to lie there, in the indefiniteness of attitude to what was seen and experienced. Or the moulds into which experiences flowed were old, banal ones—not those of Anglo-India mercifully—as the following might suggest :

### Epitaph of a Sweeper

Monotonous, yes. Degrading, perhaps. But still  
He has, for what it's worth, a cast iron defence,  
Who passed his whole God-given existence,  
Emptying the faeces of sahibs, until  
Death eventually rewarded his diligence.

At least he can claim in Nirvana without pretence  
That his life was dedicated to the Fundamental.

That leaves on me the impression of slackness, of the want of something which technique alone would not have imparted. The pun which ought to have given strength and firmness to the whole, is abortive, and it hovers perilously near the tasteless banality. Besides it is a trifle too long, technique might have saved it here.

The best things in the selection are in the first part entitled Indian Scene, and here the outstanding contribution is Alun Lewis's. The editors rightly comment on "the intensity of intuition" with which his work speaks for the wartime soldier. He expresses himself without any constraint and with a fine sensitiveness which gives his work individuality. What seems to me the most notable quality of his poetry is its complete expression of the type of mind portrayed—small in range, but deriving surety from the very limitation of range, sincere, clear, yet appalled at the incoherencies of his world. It does not seem correct to say that Alun Lewis had anything valid to say about India; wherever he would have been, in the world in which he grew up, he would have communicated the same integrity of a mind curiously defeated by the world of experience. India provided a focus which Sicily or the steppes or the Pacific might have given. In his last poem the impression is left of the unremitting exactitude with which the blankness of the time is portrayed. If a poem is judged by the success of its communication then this poem would rank very high. It is difficult to resist quotation :

Grey monkeys gibber, ignorant and wise.  
We are the ghosts, and they the denizens;  
We are like them anonymous, unknown,

Avoiding what is human, near,  
 Skirting the villages, the paddy fields  
 Where boys sit timelessly to scare the crows  
 On bamboo platforms raised above their lives.  
 A trackless wilderness divides  
 Joy from its cause, the motive from the act ;  
 The killing arm uncurls, strokes the soft moss ;  
 The distant world is an obituary,  
 We do not hear the tappings of its dread.  
 The act sustains ; there is no consequence.  
 Only aloneness, swinging slowly  
 Down the cold orbit of an older world  
 Than any they predicted in the schools,  
 Stirs the cold forest with a starry wind,  
 And sudden as the flashing of a sword  
 The dream exalts the bowed and golden head  
 And time is swept with a great turbulence,  
 The old temptation to remould the world.

Phrasally, rhythmically, and in its whole effect the communication is strong and severe. Lewis undoubtedly possessed the least of the poet's gifts—the memorable phrase. Every one of his contributions is marked by it, this from *The Journey* :

There was also the memory of Death  
 And the recurrent irritation of ourselves.

or this from *The Mahratta Ghats* :

Dark peasants drag the sun upon their backs.

What is distinctive in Alun Lewis's poems provides the best of the other work in *Poems from India* with its hallmark, the impression of a group of men not apathetic nor over self-conscious, but aware of a general catastrophe not specially India's or their own, but the evil of a world. If the volume, as its editors hope, does something to help understanding between British and Indian, it must be this feeling of a common greyness, which will strike sensitive Englishmen and English educated Indians as incidental to their world. In more than one poem, notably by Stuart Piggott in *Bohemond's Tomb*, by R. N. Currey in *Burial Flags, Sind*, and by George Taylor in *Bengal : After a Storm*, that mood is communicated. The last is in its own way a minor success :

Bengal : *After a Storm*

Sweetly the sky apologizes for  
 The epileptic interlude, the gibbering rain :  
 Water in pools shines out like compliments  
 The reconciling gestures are quite plain  
 Cool benediction of the moon  
 Healing touch of the night air  
 Cancel our exile and declare  
 Moment and place are both a boon.  
 The temporary truce must not deceive ;  
 Already the sneering bull-frog in the slime  
 And the appalling chorus of jackals  
 Betray the real intentions of the time.

All that remains to be said is that the book, illustrated by line drawings by Sapper Blackburn, is attractively got up.

E. F. C. L.

*Robert Bridges*.—By EDWARD THOMPSON. O.U.P. 8/6.

The author of this memoir explains that Robert Bridges wished no biography of himself to be written ; the memoir has to be looked upon as a graceful circumvention of that wish. It is in no sense biographical, it gives the reader a picture of Bridges' personality and, within its slender compass of one hundred and twenty five pages, makes some comment on his poetry and criticism. Regarded as a friend's tribute Thompson's memoir would certainly please those who knew Bridges, and those who knew of him in Oxford. It is a pity its small scope offered an artist of Thompson's calibre little opportunity to make the portrait lively or even plausible. Too much seems to be taken for granted ; while there is no doubt that those who knew Bridges would be delighted, one wonders whether it will interest the majority who did not know him and did not care very much for his work.

Two things stand out for special mention, Thompson himself notes them, and to outweigh them points to qualities in the work which to him were undoubtedly excellent and are more than compensation. Both are such obvious criticism that it seems scarcely profitable to mention them here. Yet it is difficult to write anything about Bridges without referring to them. He himself was almost completely cut off from the life of his times, although he was no don, he was more donnish than most dons ; secondly, his interests in poetry were technical in a sense which made of technique an end in itself. Both these things had an inhibiting effect on the poetry, so that in the end little is left of value, when prosodic experiments and still lifes—"flower pieces" Thompson calls them—are put away.

The accident of birth gave Bridges the kind of life which "as he acknowledged repeatedly, was fortunate," not only his youth but the better part of his life was spent in days which were surely fortunate for the class to which he belonged. Thompson notes that this good fortune had its disadvantages.—"if Bridges had possessed more intellectual curiosity and had acknowledged a wider range of ideas, even heretical and subversive ideas, as being at least of interest, he would have been a still greater poet." Apart from the damaging innocence of that remark, the isolation of Bridges from the life of his time would surely have prevented him from being very much of a poet. On that score it is difficult to credit Thompson when he claims that Bridges' good fortune enabled him to devote all his time to being a poet.

Nor is it to be supposed that a man so "fortunate," even if he did possess a good ear and a feeling for racy and homely turns of speech, could bring anything to the technique of writing poetry but adroitness. For what could a manner of saying a thing do, if there was nothing to be said after all ? Thompson incidentally prefers to echo what Symons and Brett Young said of Bridges' early work, depending on Elton for opinions on *The Testament of Beauty* but what is culled is scarcely criticism at all. Thompson's own preferences are for the inept placing—of *The Growth of Love* for instance he writes "It ranks, of course, lower than Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, and in sincerity and passion is far inferior to the *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. How do remarks like this help to show that *The Testament of Beauty* for instance, offers any new insights or convinces of the reality of the writer's insights. Technique, prosody, in the way in which Bridges was interested in it was an arid study, it had more to do with languages very different in character from the English. Nothing that Thompson says of *Noel* does convince that it is "as astonishingly fresh and lovely poem, the first entirely successful unrhymed lyric in English or, if Collin's *Ode to Evening* is that, then the second ; it contains two rhymes only." Perhaps it would be better to say that the first part of the claim has not been maintained.

There is much to interest the critic of poetry in this memoir, even though the results may not support an argument with which its author would agree. To judge it from these points of view would be unfair, the book was intended as a labour of love, both the labour and the love are plentifully evident everywhere.

E. F. C. L.

*The Legend of the Topes (Thūpavaṃsa).*—Bibliotheca Indica: No. 268—  
By BIMALA CHURN LAW; pp. i-x + 101—Published by the Royal Asiatic  
Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1945.

This is the first attempt made to translate the mediaeval Pali Chronicle *Thūpavaṃsa*, the original of which was edited for the Pali Text Society by the same writer in 1935. The title chosen for the translation is rather misleading and, as will be seen below, is obviously the result of misunderstanding the Pali term. It is claimed that this translation will "help the reader to understand and appreciate a Pali traditional work of the late mediaeval period, to crack the hard nut of the stereotyped and highly conventionalized prose of scholastic writings" (p. vi). But, one regrets to say so, the translation is marred by so many inaccuracies on every page that the reader entertains a persistent doubt as to how this attempt will fulfil the intended purpose. It is, in fact, disturbing to anticipate its use even by students of the history of Buddhist art and institutions, not to speak of the effect on students of the Pali language for whom it is primarily intended.

A glance at the very first page of this translation will no doubt help to corroborate the above remarks. In the first verse itself, "For the welfare of the world I create an image of the Conqueror and bow down paying homage to that most wonderful tope wherein lay, on all sides, the Conqueror's noble relics . . ." seems a puerile attempt to render the simple Pali of the original :

*Yasmim sayimsu jina-dhātvarā samantā,  
chabbanṇa-vaṃsi visarohi samujjalantā :  
nimmāya loka-hita-hetu jinassa rūpam,  
tam thūpamabbhutatamam sirasā namitvā.*

The reader can easily see for himself the trouble the two simple, though irregularly used, words 'nimmāya' and 'samantā' have given the translator, from the italicized phrases in the citation. In spite of the clear singular 'thūpam' in this verse (cp. *thūpassa*, in verses 2 and 6; tattha *thūpassa* vaṃsam vakkhāmi, §1) it is impossible to understand why the author who uses the singular in the first verse has developed a prejudice for the plural sense ever afterwards and translated in every succeeding verse the word by "Topes"! In the fifth verse, "Legend of the Teacher's Topes" is simply inexcusable for "vaṃsam *thūpassa* satthuno." In accordance with this prejudice the translator has throughout stuck to his "Legend of the Topes" as title, and this in spite of the palpable evidence of the original itself: "Idha pana kañcana mālikamahāthūpo ti adhippeto" (p. 1, last sentence). Moreover, this last sentence which clearly means "Here, of course, the great Suvannamālī Thūpa is intended," for every student of Pali knows the interchangeability of the two synonyms 'kañcana' and 'suvanna,' has only deceived the translator into a glaring *faux pas*: "Here, however, a great tope having golden garlands is intended" (p. 2). As for the translator's powers of English expression, the following specimen from the first page itself is characteristic: "Herein the expression 'I shall relate the Legend of the Topes,' a shrine which is built and erected after depositing the relics of the Buddha and the rest who are worthy of *Thūpas*, as follows from the dictum—a Tathāgata . . . is worthy of a Thūpa; . . . a sovereign king is worthy of a Thūpa, that on which a shrine has been built and erected, is called a Thūpa." One searches in vain for the predicate of the subject "the expression" in view of the sheer impossibility of such a thing as "the expression . . . is called a Thūpa"! It is difficult even to suspect a printer's error in this case, for this first page should have stared in the face of any proof-reader! In the second verse "I shall relate the Legend of the Topes which brings welfare to the whole world, is a cause of joy to all beings, is always adored by the best of the gods, demons and lords of men and is a shining heap of jewels," the singular verb 'brings' would, of course, refer, in English syntax, to the 'Legend,' but then "is always adored . . . etc." and "is a shining heap of jewels"

would be sheer nonsense, as even the translator could have seen. Thus we are left with the English ". . . the Topes which brings . . . and is a shining heap of jewels." It is, however, unfair by the author of the original to create an unwarranted metaphor out of his straight forward phrase "ratanajalathūpikassa" which just connotes "having a spire shining with gems."

The task of the reviewer of this kind of work is indeed a difficult one; even the minimum number of remarks on *prima facie* inaccuracies is bound to exceed the space available. It will suffice to add that a cursory glance at the *hundred* odd pages of this translation shows at least as many errors of omission and commission, a few of which are given below:

"a week" (p. 3) for "sattasattahā"; "boundless and suitable to the occasion" (p. 5) for "aparimita-samaya-samucitāya"; "But there is nothing to be done for the attainment of Nirvāṇa if I, in disguise, destroy my sins" (p. 5) for "Aññātakavesena pana me kilēse jhāpetva nibbānappattiyā kiccaṃ natthi"; "folly" (p. 8) for "okāra"; "they did not scatter" (p. 9) for "were not scattered"; "taking advantage of the birth of an Enlightened One in their midst" (p. 13) for "raṭṭhupādam gahetvā," *i.e.*, having collected the revenue of the country; a bad omission in para 23, p. 15; "golden bowls" (p. 16) for "suvanna-paṭṭakam"; "Enlightened One" (p. 19) for "buddho jano" meaning "a wise person"; "he reached the state of living at ease" (p. 20) for "appossukatam āpajjamāno" which means "becoming reluctant"; "jewels" (p. 24, para 8) for "ratana" which here implies "cubits"; "sprouted" (p. 25) for "mugga," *i.e.* "green pea"; "But great privileges arose afterwards like these chieftains making an attack" (p. 28) for "mahāparihārā pa'ete rājāno, parihāraṃ karontā va pacchato jātā" which means "these chieftains have indeed made great preparations, (owing to their) making preparations they arrived there last." The para beginning with the words "he came there . . . etc." (p. 33-34) is totally a mistranslation; "my father, a great Elder" (p. 38) for "pitamahatthero" shows how unacquainted the translator is with Pali idiom, for the meaning of the compound "the Elder, my teacher's teacher" seems to be unknown to him.

O. H. de A. W.

*Nava Maga.*—(A Sinhalese Literary Quarterly). PERAMUNA PRESS, Colombo.  
Rs. 1/25.

Amongst a vast crop of post-war Sinhalese Journals the *Nava Maga* distinguishes itself in two ways: it sets out with the purpose of raising the standard of literary taste and evaluation among the Sinhalese reading public by providing them with material of a definitely higher quality, and it aims at giving the new generation of writers who are seeking to express themselves through new concepts and new forms an opportunity of placing their work before the public.

Experimentation with new forms has been evidence in the past, of stagnation. The prose writers after the Saddharmāṅkārāya tried out new styles of writing for lack of anything new to say. Today's experimentation is rather the result of too many influences and too many new techniques as yet unincorporated into the tradition of the country. In order that new writers may discover what the genuine old tradition is, and in what way the new forms may be fused with it so that we find a path best suited to the expression of our national genius, it is necessary that there should be a rallying point. This is the unique service that this journal will be able to perform for the new literature that is attempting to express itself in the spirit of the new age.

There is a section devoted to critical articles on aspects of Sinhalese literature and culture, and a section in which special articles are contributed, of an informative nature, on modern subjects like psychology and sociology, which are still a closed book to the Sinhalese reader.

E. R. de S.

*Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists.*—Translated by E. M. HARE, OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS (Printed in Ceylon), 1944.

This translation of the Sutta Nipāta has appeared as the XVth. Volume of the Sacred Books of the Buddhists Series, and is, in fact, the third translation so far made of this most important Pali text. The earlier translations are those of Fausböll in the Sacred Books of the East Series and of Chalmers in the Harvard Oriental Series.

It is by no means an exaggeration to say that an understanding of early Buddhism is hardly possible without a correct interpretation of the Sutta Nipāta which is the one single collection of verses that belong to the period of the first foundations of Buddhism. Apart from its linguistic importance, therefore, the point of view put forward in it ought to be of the greatest interest to those who wish to know with what set of ideas originated this great movement in Indian thought, which in its final developments included the most extreme forms of idealism and realism, the most devout forms of theism as well as the coldest forms of atheism, the subtlest kinds of logic as well as the most devastating systems of nihilism.

A comparison of the verses of the Sutta Nipāta with the gāthā portions of the Nikāyas would seem to point to the conclusion that what is instinctively sought after as being 'early Buddhism' is, for one thing, much earlier than it is often thought to be, and is, as a matter of fact, quite different from both what has been so far regarded as early Buddhism, as well as the Buddhism that goes as orthodox Theravāda. In fact, the entire ideological basis of the Sutta Nipāta, with its repeated emphasis on the evils of sense-perception, seems to be the first formulation in India of philosophy which takes for its major premise the relative unreality of the external world, and aims at the goal of individual happiness by the attainment of inward peace (ajjhattasanti) through Yogic contemplation. The difference between this philosophy and that of the Upanishads seems to lie mainly on the fact that early Buddhism does not define ultimate reality even in negative terms, or hold it out explicitly as the goal of salvation. It refers, however, to ultimate reality as being beyond the sphere of intellectual grasp as it is beyond the contradiction of opposites, beyond the sphere of relativity.

There seem to be certain key words in the Sutta Nipāta, therefore, on the interpretation of which will depend our entire understanding of its ideology. Such words are the oft-recurring *diṭṭha-sutamuta*, *phassa*, *saññā*, as well as the less frequent *papañca* and *nāma-rūpa*. Mr. Hare, unfortunately, does not give us, in his translation, any re-interpretation of these words. He translates the all-important word *phassa* in its literal meaning as 'touch', in the manner in which it has been translated by Fausböll (Chalmers uses the equally inadequate word 'Contact'). *Nāma-rūpa* is translated as 'name-and-form', which, though literal, does not in any way bring out the specific sense in which this pre-Buddhistic term is used in the Sutta Nipāta. Chalmers happily renders this expression as Mind and Matter, which could have been regarded as an attempt on his part to bring out the import of this stanza (872) had he not used the word 'Contact' in the same sentence.

Another Pali word which the reader anxious to understand the philosophy underlying the obscure verses of the Sutta Nipāta would wish to know the real meaning of is *ñāṇa*. Particularly in the Māgandiya Sutta the Buddha is represented as rejecting *ñāṇa* as a means of attaining purity (suddhi). Mr. Hare renders the word by 'knowledge' following Fausböll, while Chalmers uses 'lore', leaving the reader of today as confused about the meaning of the stanza as Māgandiya himself (*maññāma'ahaṃ momuham eva dhammaṃ*).

Nor do the translations of other important words, with the exception of a few, throw any fresh light on the difficult portions of the Sutta Nipāta. *Saññā* is translated as

'surmise', which is obviously incorrect. *Saññā* seems to be consistently employed in the Sutta Nipāta to mean 'sense perception'. Fausböll himself has stumbled over this word, as he translates it by 'marks'. Chalmers gets nearer what appears to be the correct meaning of this word when he renders it as 'sense-impressions' which, however, is closer to the meaning of *phassa* than of *saññā*. The very difficult word *sankhāra* is translated as 'moulders' (incognotum per incognotus), but the rendering of *viññāna* as 'mind-at-work' is a happy flash, for it is certainly an improvement upon Chalmers' 'Consciousness'. Fausböll, by the way, leaves the word untranslated (where angels fear to tread.).

The fundamental defect in all previous translations, therefore, that they do not aim at any interpretation of the Sutta Nipāta, and that they do not reveal any consistent attitude on the part of their translators regarding the philosophical basis of this book, is shared by the translation of Mr. E. M. Hare as well. Apart from the difficulties of interpretation of the text, the translator is further limited by the demands of metre and poetic diction. Mr. Hare, however, overcomes this difficulty well, and it must be admitted that the translation reads smoothly as English unrhymed verse, in spite of the occasional use of such jargon as 'cankers' (compare 'the cankerless, ill-quit' for *anāsavo sabbadukkhappahīno*), 'ease' and 'ill' for *sukha* and *dukkha*, and a few such stock expressions which mean nothing to the reader who is unacquainted with Pali.

E. R. de S. S.