

TWO CAPITALS

Being a Short Description of a Recent Visit to
Peiping and Hsinking.

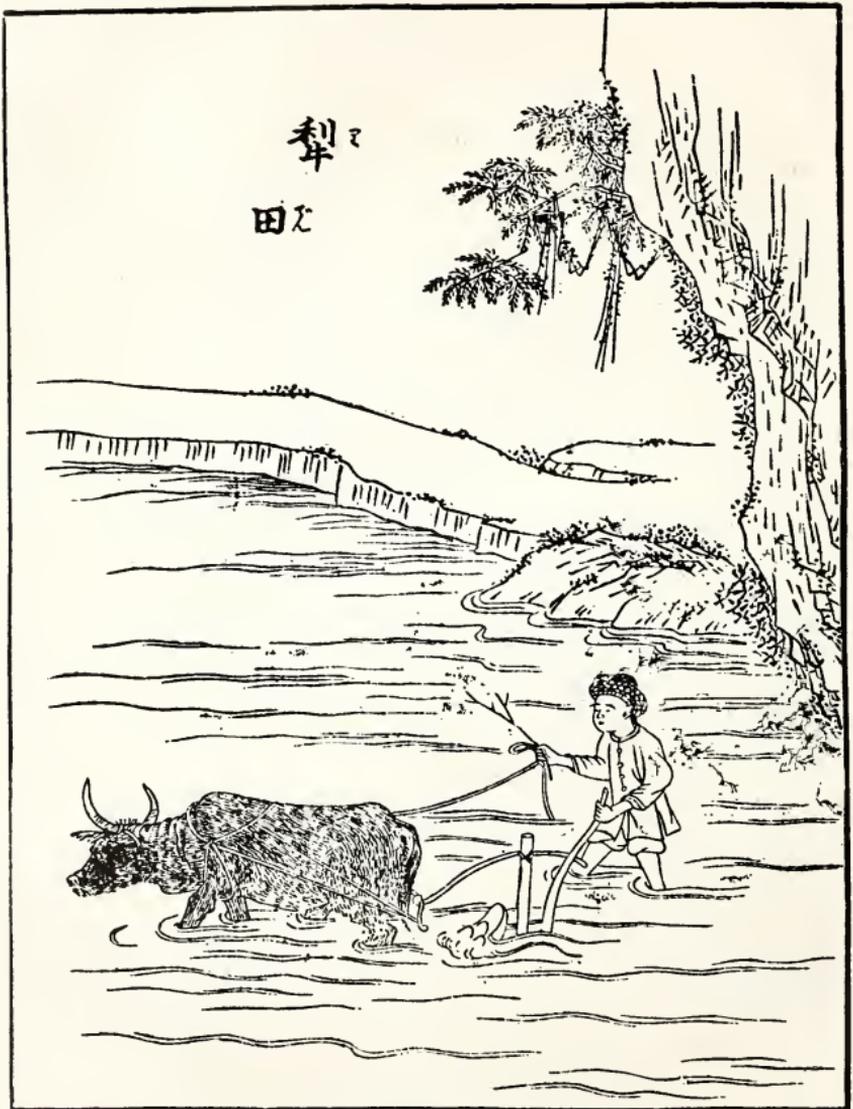
BY RUTH F. EVERETT

AFTER an interval of four years we were revisiting Peiping. With peace prevailing in Central China and railroad communication reestablished we were traveling this time from Shanghai on that romantic sounding Shanghai Express made famous by Marlene Diedrich and the movies. There really is a Shanghai Express, the remnants of the famous "Blue Train" of Wagon-Lits cars which used to run before the revolution of 1925. But the train is scarcely as the picture would have us believe. True, we did start out with a great guard of soldiers at the station. Some minister of state, perhaps the Minister of War, was traveling in the coach ahead as far as the capital, Nanking, which we would reach about midnight. And there were soldier-boys guarding each individual car all the way--young, beardless youths armed to the teeth, but always ready with a smile when a photograph was suggested or cigarettes or cakes. But disillusioning as it may be to believe, it wasn't necessary to send a man ahead to shoo the chickens from the track, nor did we have as traveling companions any glamorous ladies who might be international spies in disguise nor any bandit generals. And as for the dining-car! Well, I would let the others eat first, and if they assured me that the food really tasted better than it looked, then I took heart and ordered something.

But for China it was a luxurious train, and it arrived everywhere almost on time, and we had no complaints to make whatsoever. What matter if the ice-cream freezer and the canned goods and other culinary articles were stacked in various places around the dining-car. Who wants to travel on an air-conditioned, stream-lined, Diesel-engined train anyway? For those who do there is always the United States and the Union Pacific.

Two days and two nights of traveling took us through the lush, green rice-fields of the Yangtze valley, where sleek, brown water-buffalos tended by tiny boys, as in Sung paintings, went patiently plodding round and round drawing water from the wells to flood

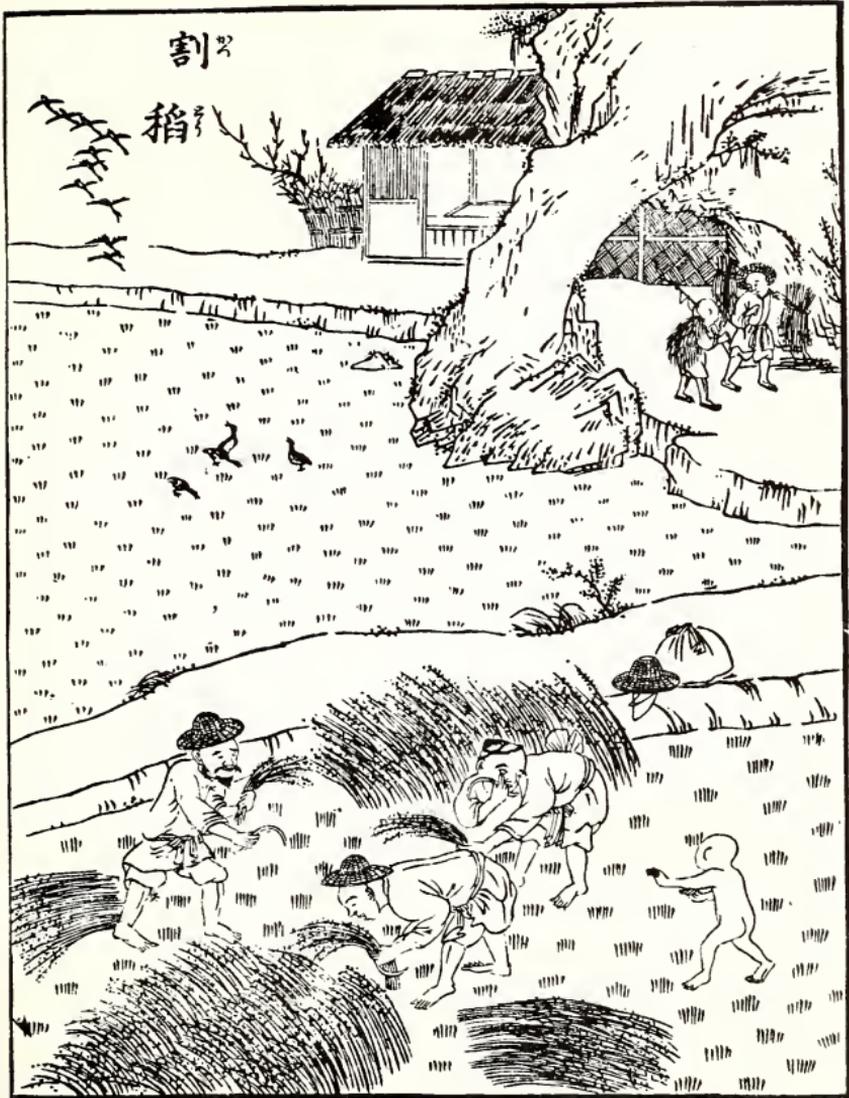
the paddies; and through hundreds of miles of golden earth which was yielding up its golden harvest of wheat under the myriad sickles of blue-garbed folk. To see with what care and with what tireless



PLOWING RICE

expenditure of effort the Chinese peasant, himself and his entire family, cultivates every available bit of this not too responsive land

is to realize as never before what the "Good Earth" really means. It is the source of Life itself. And every inch is tended with a devotion which is at once passionate and patient.



HARVESTING

The high, gray walls of Peiping, or Peking as old friends still prefer to call it, enclose many lovely homes and gardens. But none

is lovelier than the house which we call home there. "The Tranquil Abode of the Peaceful Heart" is its name. An old Manchu palace situated not far from the Forbidden City, it really belongs to friends of ours, a former American Army officer and his wife. When the Colonel retired from active service after many years spent in the Far East, this delightful couple found that their affection for China had developed bonds too strong to be severed forever. Six months of the year now find them enjoying the picturesque and colorful life of Peking city and the wonderful stillness of the almost deserted temple which is theirs in the wild and rather barren Western Hills. During the other six months both their house and their temple are havens to friends like ourselves.

The same courtly old man in his long, gray silk gown and stiff, black satin hat unbolted the great brass-studded, red-painted gates which open onto the narrow, dusty *hutung*. The same red spaniel, David, a little stiffer and a little grayer than four years ago, wagged and barked his welcome. The same great oak tree in the garden, an oak tree well over four hundred years old, is the abode of the same fairy to whom offerings are always made on the night of the full moon. And against the almost unbelievably blue sky of Peking the flocks of pigeons still fly of a morning, leaving behind them wisps and trails of eerie music from their dainty bamboo flutes. There really is no city in the world quite like Peking, with quite its charm, and with quite its thrill.

Dr. Hu Shih came for tea with us the afternoon of our arrival, and a day or two later took us in his car to see the university of which he is Dean of Literature, I believe. Yes, in his car. For the number of cars is increasing even in Peking. The rickshaw is not yet a relic of the past in China as it is in Japan. There are more automobiles and more paved streets than four years ago. In fact Peking seems to be sprucing up a bit, to be becoming a little more tidy and better kept. But under all this appearance of youth and good grooming one is conscious of the sad and depressing sense of watching the gradual dying of a city. The movement of the national capital from Peking to Nanking, while it was, no doubt, a rational act, sounded the death knell of Peking as a vital, living metropolis. True, the foreign legations have not as yet removed to Nanking, but many merchants have, and all the activity and bustle which is the natural accompaniment of a seat of government is ebbing away.

The Forbidden City with its rosy walls and its roofs of gold and and turquoise and sapphire and jade tiles—roofs whose fantastic beauty seems the flowering of imaginations totally incomprehensible to us from the West; with its great courtyards and balustraded terraces of white marble surrounded by pillared halls of lacquer-red, this is still there. But these halls have not only lost their Imperial Master but also most of the treasures which had made of this Imperial dwelling, under Republican government, one of the greatest art museums in the world. Removed to Shanghai from supposed fear of destruction by hostile armies, these treasures have vanished, many of them. Where? A committee is now at work in Shanghai to determine.

The beautiful Altar of Heaven is sprouting grass and weeds between its exquisitely carved stones. The great, iron braziers in which the Son of Heaven was wont to have placed the huge bales of multi-colored silk to be burned in sacrifice to the Sovereign on High, are rusting away. A melancholy charm is beginning to pervade the city. Which makes all the more appropriate the little verse, the poem of some unknown English poet, which Dr. Hu has translated into Chinese and which our absent host has had carved, after the style of Dr. Hu's own calligraphy, on the white marble tablet which surmounts the back of the white marble tortoise near the entrance-gate to the second garden:

Guard each moment preciouslly:

Already more than you realize have passed by.

A look at the extensive building plans for the new university library to be built on the site of the former palace of a Manchu Duke, and a visit to the beautiful, new and most modern Peking City Library built from American Boxer Funds, would seem to belie what I have said. I spent a morning with my friend Dr. Suzuki, the well-known Buddhist scholar of Kyoto, in the basement of this latter library looking at manuscripts taken from the caves of Tun Huang in western China, Chinese translations of Sanskrit Buddhist texts and the writings of ancient Chinese Buddhist scholars. I hesitate to say, for fear that I may exaggerate, but as I remember it the oldest one which I examined was thought to date from about 420 A.D. The ink was still fresh and the writing perfectly legible. Dr. Suzuki, reading another text as easily as if it were in the language of today, translated to our amusement the complainings of the scribe

who had copied this particular sutra, because of his patron's dilatoriness in paying the agreed fee. If the scribe could not get his money at least he could assuage his aggrieved feelings by perpetuating his patron's perfidy.

But the sense of the eventual passing of all that goes to make up the phenomenal world was strong again when, with Dr. Suzuki, I went to visit two Buddhist temples. The blind and aged Abbot of the first, sweet and peaceful and dignified as he was, could have little, or so it seemed to me, to give which would answer the needs of young China. And the dilapidated temple buildings which were his home emphasized only more clearly the lack of real vitality and effectiveness in the younger men surrounding him.

The other temple, just outside the South wall of the city, was interesting from the standpoint of the antiquarian. The fine old buildings had been kept in excellent repair. The courtyards were filled with pots of flowering plants and trees. Every corner was an exquisite composition of curved roof-line, lacquered pillar, gnarled pine branch and quiet gray-robed monk. The meditation-hall which interested me especially, was indeed from times medieval—a glimpse back into ages otherwise difficult for us to envisage. And as we drove away in our somewhat precarious vehicle through the deep dust and the heavy ruts of a Chinese country road, the sharp, harsh tones of the bell which had announced our coming, now softened by increasing distance, floated after us mingled with chanting voices and the throb of the sutra drum.

Yes, dusk is descending upon Peking. But elsewhere in China there are signs of a coming dawn. Let us hope that from the old China will arise a new China which, while adopting for itself all that is best and most modern in present-day science and culture, will not forget its obligations to its own past. Let us hope that above the clangor of machines and the hum of factories and the clatter of the cities will be raised again the voices of the Sages of old, who together with the true leaders of the present day will bring about for their people a new era of prosperity and peace, even as did Yao and Shun.

The wharf at Dairen, the gate-city of Manchuria, is all bustle and hustle in the early morning. It is a great dock of the most modern type, with a long concrete and stone pier, double-decked, with berths for steamers of all sizes and kinds, and the latest ma-

chinery and equipment. The streets of Dairen are broad and clean. The hotel is large and comfortable and up-to-date. Red brick houses of a type which we are wont to associate with a small German or Dutch city, are surrounded by gardens and trees. There are good shops, department stores, apartment buildings, hospitals, and moving-picture houses, lots of them.

In a fine, shiny Packard one is motored over splendid roads through what is known as the Kwantung Peninsula. The field-stone houses of the peasants look substantial and even affluent. The window-frames are brightly painted. The court-yards are large and the barns and auxiliary buildings numerous. One is taken to the various hilltops which were the scene of stern fighting in the Russo-Japanese war. A neat, white building on the top of one houses the museum of relics of this conflict. On the top of another the underground fortifications of a former Russian stronghold of steel and concrete, now broken and torn and twisted, are open for inspection. And from still another hilltop one may have a view to the west and to the north which seems to stretch out into the farthest reaches of Asia—of a great plain, treeless except where man has carefully cared for and nurtured a single one or two, gray and yellow except where man again has planted and husbanded a tiny plot: of rocky, weatherbeaten earth, extending to the distant, distant hills which seem themselves to extend still farther and farther to invisible mountains beyond. Nature is not soft in Asia, not in Central Asia at least. She is great and vast and bold and cataclysmic. The rivers are stony basins or raging floods; and the mountains are bleak and bare and forbidding. Nature does not woo man here. Man is but an infinitesimal speck on the surface of her bosom. This great plain stretching out before one might have been the stark, crude womb from which primeval man was born.

Hsinking is the new name for the new capital of what the newspapers call "the Japanese controlled state of Manchoukuo." Until recently only a provincial capital, a Chinese type of city with high walls of gray brick, narrow, unpaved streets, axle deep in mud in the rainy season, axle deep in dust in the dry season, hot in summer and cold in winter with those extremes of temperature which only a city situated on a wind-swept plain can know, it is now in the process of being made into a great modern city.

A fine train of Pullman cars made in the shops at Pullman, Il-

linois, a train composed of a diner, sleepers, compartment and observation cars, pulled by a great Baldwin locomotive, brings one into the fine, new station on time to the minute. A great crowd of Japanese and Manchoukuoan army officers, spurred and wearing swords, of business men with their brief-cases, and of officials with their wives and children descend from the train. Neat, red-capped porters take their luggage and promptly and efficiently deposit it at the carriage entrance. Here, however, the scene changes. The most swanking army officers do drive off in automobiles in some style to be sure. But the minor officials, the business men, the international drummers, and the less important army men satisfy themselves with a dilapidated droshky pulled by a dilapidated beast, or else, having scanned an unpromising horizon, pick up their luggage and trudge off across the broad and dusty plaza which lies between the station and the city itself.

The hotel is old and rambling, but a new wing with the last word in luxuries has been put up, hastily to be sure, but it looks well; and one has a rose-shaded electric lamp on the table between the twin beds, a thermos bottle of ice-water, and the latest type of desk telephone. The lobby and the bar and the dining-room are crowded. There is no other place to eat foreign-style food in Hsinking or to get good foreign drinks.

The broad street to the right will some day be a great boulevard after the style of the Champs Élysées. It stretches out through the rambling environs of the city for two miles or more to a great, circular hub on the plain from which will radiate other similar broad boulevards. Already buildings of all kinds are being put up on either side. High, handsome, iron gates on the right lead to a fine city park. And a little further on a huge, white structure, crowned with a tower after the style of a Japanese castle will house the offices of the Kwantung Government, the Headquarters of the Commander of the Kwantung Army and the residence of the Japanese Ambassador to Manchoukuo.

Arrived at the great circle, we are taken through the Foreign Office, the first of the new government buildings to be completed. It, too, was put up in a bit of hurry as is already evident. The green enamel roof-tiles which really are only a sort of plaster-paris are already beginning to disintegrate, and the yellow stucco walls to crack and chip. But from the roof we have a panorama of the great

plain on which Hsinking is situated; and at our feet we see the recently completed Department of Education Building, the rapidly rising Bureau of Communications, and various other large structures for which foundations are already being dug or for which concrete uprights have already been poured. The whole scene is one of animation and activity.

"Over in that direction will go up the residences for various officials. And over here where you see that clump of trees will be the palace of the Emperor Kang Te," we are told. "That temple which you see over there stood just in the center of the projected boulevard. Before we could begin any building operations at all, the government had to move it and rebuild it."

When I visited the temple the next day, I found it new indeed, and extremely clean and shiny. My host, the Abbot, was a young man of thirty-eight, but three years come from Peking, at once learned and wise, simple and energetic, a true Buddhist monk of the finest type.

Dinner at the present Embassy—a fine Georgian residence, within a large compound well guarded at the gate, later to become the home of the Japanese Consul General at Hsinking—was a very formal affair: full *décolleté* for the ladies, white vests and tails for the men. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres in the most approved style preceded a long, course dinner which included in its menu delicious lobster and all the correct wines not excepting champagne. The dinner was served by the hotel. No private cook in Hsinking was capable of its like. The butlers wore white coats on the sleeves of which were pinned with safety pins the numbers which on less auspicious occasions they wore as ordinary waiters in the hotel dining-room. But the gentlemen remained behind for liqueurs and stories and the ladies adjourned to the small drawing-room for *crème de menthe* and coffee and gossip.

"It is said that Her Majesty, the Empress, insisted upon getting up, though she has been in bed for weeks, to attend the dinner given for his Imperial Highness, Prince Chichibu."

"The Prince is so very handsome, you know."

And later, when the gentlemen had joined us, we were shown the exquisite Japanese garden which had been finished just the week before for the visit of his Imperial Highness and we strolled up and down the terrace in the air of the summer evening, smoking and

talking of friends we had known here and there, and of previous meetings in Tokyo and New York and all the other things which cultured people talk about wherever they may be.

The Prime Minister of Manchoukuo, Premier Chêng, received us in the large sitting-room of his official residence, a gray brick, foreign-style building in the old city. This man of seventy, a Chinese, a great poet and a great calligrapher, considered by many the greatest living today, has devoted his entire life to the service of his Imperial Master. The wiles of Republican politicians, their offers of high rank and great wealth, never swerved him in his undying purpose, that of returning his Emperor to the throne of his ancestors. It was he who accompanied the former Son of Heaven in his flight from the house of the former Imperial Father, Prince Ch'un, to the Japanese Legation. It was his carriage which drove them both through the streets of Peking, hidden from the curious eyes of the people by one of those terrific dust storms which sometimes sweep down from the Mongolian desert. When he accompanied his Imperial Master on still another journey, this time to the land of his forefathers, his dream was nearer to realization. And when, on that cold and blustery March morning, on the hastily constructed Altar of Heaven, he saw the last of the Imperial House of the Manchus make the sacrifices to Heaven, he realized its final accomplishment. Simple, sincere, calm, direct, representing all that is finest in the Chinese classical ideal of the true statesman, he stands out a shining figure among his busy, efficient, uniformed associates.

The Emperor, too, would grant us an audience. At eleven one morning the limousine of the Imperial Household drew up before the hotel entrance. Our interpreter, a young Chinese from Peking whom we shall call Mr. Li, was in cutaway and winged collar, gray gloves and patent-leather shoes. So was my husband. And I! Well, it doesn't matter what I wore. In the car Mr. Li suggested that we tell him the questions which we intended to ask the Emperor. Not that he wished to be inquisitive, but it did make it easier for him if he knew beforehand what the subjects of conversation were to be. He wouldn't have to strain quite so much. Since his clothing was quite a strain and his shoes quite a strain and since he was already mopping his brow from the warmth of the day, we would have liked to help him out; but the best we could do was to assure him that we wouldn't ask any embarrassing questions.

We arrived at the palace. Not the great edifice to be "built in the grove of trees yonder," but at the gates of the gray brick Salt Gabell, or former administrative offices of the Salt Tax Board. Past single lines of soldiers at attention we walked, down a short avenue to the inner gate, through a modest courtyard, and into the large drawing-room of a gaunt, spare building. Almost as soon as tea had been served us by an attendant we were told that the Emperor was waiting to receive us. We crossed the courtyard again and entered another, smaller building. A very short hall brought us to a door which opened even before we reached it. Into a good-sized, foreign-style room, furnished as you might expect to find any nice hotel sitting-room furnished, we entered.

From the couch opposite the door where he had been sitting, there rose a young man of perhaps thirty, dressed in a simple, khaki-colored uniform and wearing a single decoration on his breast. A slender young man, fairly tall, with sensitive hands and with the eager expression on his sensitive face somewhat sobered by the large, pale blue glasses which shaded his dark eyes. He greeted us in English and motioned us to seats on either side. Mr. Li, more warm and strained than ever under increasingly onerous duties, excused himself for having to address himself solely to His Majesty in order to thoroughly acquaint him with who my husband might be and with the fact that I was, well, simply I. That accomplished, the Emperor turned to my husband and through Mr. Li thanked him for his understanding viewpoint on various political matters.

Then turning to me he said quite simply and naturally, always through Mr. Li, of course, but indicating in various ways that he understood much of the English in which my part of the conversation was carried on:

"And so you are a Buddhist?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"And you have studied Zen in Japan?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"And you have practised meditation in the Meditation Hall of a Zen monastery?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"I also do meditation every day. Will you tell me. . . ." And there followed a short conversation, more or less technical, concerning the practice of meditation.

A secretary entered and laid several cards on the table before the Emperor. But still he continued:

"Do you know our Chinese Sages?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Do you think that they still have something living and worthwhile to offer to our people today? Or do you think that only your own western philosophers have a vital message for these times?"

I expressed to him my deep and sincere admiration for Confucius and begged that in the new State of Manchoukuo the school-children from their earliest years might be taught that most important of all the great Sage's teachings: that the welfare of the State depends upon the rectification of the heart of the individual man.

"Then you understand what is meant by 'Wang Tao'?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

And lest you, perhaps, do not know the "Kingly Way" of the Confucian Teachings, I shall quote it here, this "Kingly Way," which the Emperor Kang Te has proclaimed as the basic political doctrine of the State of Manchoukuo.

WANG TAO

Yen Yuan asked about perfect virtue. The Master (Confucius) said, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him."

Tsze-lu asked what constituted the superior man. The Master said, "The cultivation of himself in reverential carefulness."

"And is that all?" said Tsze-lu.

"He cultivates himself so as to give peace to others." was the reply.

"And is that all?" asked Tsze-lu again.

The Master said, "He cultivates himself so as to give peace to all people, even as Yao and Shun were solicitous about this."

From the Son of Heaven down to the masses of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything besides.

When the great doctrine prevails all under the heaven will work for the common good. The virtuous will be elected to office and the able will be given responsibility. Faithfulness will be in constant

practice and harmony will rule. Consequently mankind will not only love their own parents and give care to their own children; all the aged will be provided for, and all the young employed in work. Infants will be fathered; widows and widowers, the fatherless and the unmarried, the disabled and the sick, will all be cared for. The men will have their rights and the women their home. No goods will go to waste, nor need they be stored for private possession. No energy should be used for personal gain. Self-interest ceases, and theft and disorder are unknown. Therefore, the gates of the houses are never closed.

Our audience had lengthened far beyond the time allotted to it. We rose to go. His Majesty rose also and stopped us for a moment.

"Our teaching is the rectification of the individual that the State may be rectified. Your teachings are in essence the same, are they not? Our people wish for peace. And your people have the same desire, do they not? I practise Taoist meditation and you practise Buddhist meditation. And yet we realize the same Reality, do we not?"

And then very simply and in English His Majesty said, raising up the forefinger of his right hand.

"All is One, is it not?"

"Yes, Your Majesty."

And we bowed our way from the room.