

of jewelry on their persons while they have not a cent at liberty for repairs to their houses. The males are intensely fond of bracelets and earrings—the latter being so ponderous that the lobes of the ears are often torn. So innate is this love of finery that even images of gods are represented with huge earrings dependent from monstrously elongated lobes.

With these rules we have touched the center of Buddhism on its practical side, and for this reason a few more remarks must be added. As already shown, no attempt is made to observe even the five obligatory, much less the three voluntary rules. Furthermore, there is not a single layman in Ladak who is able even to enumerate them. The only rule which has in any way entered into the popular consciousness is the command not to kill—the very one which leads to the grossest absurdities. Of this law it can be said that the people know it, but do not observe it. With regard to the rest, especially those treating of moral matters, I affirm that the people have no consciousness that any transgression constitutes sin. Not only is there no word in Tibetan to express “conscience,” but there is no evidence of the existence of such a thing. Moral conceptions and all higher aspirations have ceased to be. The third obligatory rule certainly includes chastity in speech, but the expressions continually on the lips of high and low are so utterly foul that they cannot even be hinted at. The first obligatory rule, which includes kindness to animals, most certainly also includes kindness to human beings. But in Ladak real charity is unknown; so much so that the words “widow” and “orphan” are common words of abuse. Consider what this implies. In Christian countries the very mention of “the fatherless and the widow” calls forth feelings of sympathy and compassion. The words are almost synonyms or “helpless and pitiable.” But nine centuries of Buddhism have produced a different view, and “the religion of love and compassion” has taught the people that orphans and widows are lawful objects of ill-treatment; they are to be spurned as if they were vermin; their very name is an insult.

It is as interesting as it is melancholy to observe how the superficial view of love, compassion, and charity taught by Buddhism has led to the utter subversion of the meaning ordinarily attaching to these expressions. Charity is a means by which both donor and recipient are benefited, the former in a higher degree than the latter. Consequently—and this logical conclusion is actually drawn—the recipient has no cause to be grateful for any gift received; rather, the donor has to be grateful to the recipient for affording him an opportunity to exercise charity. In practical life this leads to an unusual development of the “sturdy beggar” system. One can daily see strong men and women going about from house to house. No pretence is made that they are reduced to beggary by misfortune, and all the arts practised by professional beggars in Europe are unknown. They do not reckon on exciting compassion, a feeling which they well know does not exist. They simply demand, insisting upon alms as their right, all the more as not they, but the givers, are those who have to con-