

THE ORDINATION OF A BUDDHIST PRIEST

A Curious Ceremony Which Costs a Large Sum of Money.

A Chinese paper of a recent mail brought a correspondent's full account of the April ordination of Buddhist priests, and curious and interesting reading it forms. Not that Buddhism has not times for the consecration of its ministers, as in the Christian church, though for convenience, or possibly some deeper meaning, the ceremony does usually take place in spring and autumn. No fixed center is arranged either, the ceremony taking place now at one chief temple, now at another, as funds permit. The expenses are enormous, and the number of initiates, 20 or 30 in number, receive hospitality during the whole examination period, which extends over five or six weeks.

The budding priests may be any age, 16 or 17 is not unusual, 14 to 18 ordinary, and 40 not unknown. They receive preliminary teaching in a priests' school, where the instruction given turns largely on subjects concerning the future vocation.

During the weeks which terminate in the ordination ceremony proper, teaching goes on night and day, with but few hours' intermission. In some of the larger temples of India a corridor of the priests' precincts is adorned with pictures vividly portraying the horrors and the torments of hell, and lectures delivered after dark beneath these grim specters, of men of artistic realism, with the uncertain glare of flaming torches for sole illumination, are calculated to make a profound impression on youthful minds. In addition to instruction, properly so called, the candidates are required during these preparatory weeks to perform all the service pertaining to their future office, until they have every detail at their fingers' end and could be trusted to carry through all ritual unerringly in any condition of mind or body.

The final day of real initiation is in China, but not elsewhere—kept secret, the candidates being sometimes left in a room until the very evening, for the service commences at night. The officiating priest, the candidate, and two groups, one of which is occupied during the whole ceremony in intercession for those about to be ordained. The remaining, arranged in a triangle, of which the preacher forms the apex, are seated before the altar, and are called upon to take the vows of celibacy, obedience, and abstention from specified forbidden pleasures. A sort of concluding and final examination in matters of faith, ritual and practice is also observed at the discretion of the conductor. This forms the introduction to the proper and at this point the officiating group, with the preacher, retire to rest, while the candidates either repose in preparation for the fire ordeal before them or pray for strength to endure it bravely.

Three hours or thereabouts—the time fixed is allowed for these purposes—the preacher, robed and crowned, enters in procession; incense is offered, and, having seated himself before the altar, he addresses the young men, giving an ordination charge, in fact, and this closes his share in the proceedings. Immediately the preacher has withdrawn, the candidates having prostrated themselves before Buddha, kneel in their places. The officiating priest then adjusts the scarifiers—charcoal sticks an inch long and cone-shaped. These to the number of twelve are fixed in three rows on the head of the candidate, the head motionless between his hands, when at a given signal each of these sticks is lighted by an assistant. The charcoal quickly burns through to the skin, and in ten or fifteen minutes the candidate is in full glow, after which the priest blows the ashes away, leaving the scalp in a state of completed ordination. It only remains for the newly accepted priest to prostrate himself a second time before Buddha, and he has sealed his dedication.

Occasionally a weakling will faint under the ordeal, or still more rarely shrink from the shaven head, but he is held in the kneeling position by the officiating priest, who, holding the head motionless between his hands, when at a given signal each of these sticks is lighted by an assistant. The charcoal quickly burns through to the skin, and in ten or fifteen minutes the candidate is in full glow, after which the priest blows the ashes away, leaving the scalp in a state of completed ordination. It only remains for the newly accepted priest to prostrate himself a second time before Buddha, and he has sealed his dedication.

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Elders Sons of American Multi-Millionaires Prove That Law of Primogeniture Is Observed in This Country

Multi-Millionaires Who Are Worth Two-Thirds of the Cash in the United States Are Arranging to Keep It All in Family by System of Entail That Is Becoming as Strong as Ancient Law of Hereditary Among Royal Families and Nobility of Europe's Monarchies—Vanderbilts, Rockefellers, Morgans and Many Other Kings of America's Financial World Are Handing Guardianship of Their Enormous Fortunes and Business Methods to Eldest Sons.

New York, Aug. 22.—Americans have been wont to look with scorn on the law of hereditary wealth, the disposition of estates and family wealth among the nobility of European countries.

Let them look at the state of affairs in their own country. Here in the United States, among the rulers of the financial and commercial world, is a growing observation of the law of primogeniture which corresponds almost exactly with that of foreign countries, and which promises to become even more conservative, for the future.

The Vanderbilts were the first to observe this system of entail, and from the old "commodore" to Alfred G. Vanderbilt, the family wealth has passed straight from the head of one generation to that of the next.

Although Alfred is the second son of Cornelius, he has been brought up to take care of the Vanderbilt family, and he is now the head of the family.

The great magnate has rigidly trained his only son and heir for the control of the family fortune, and he is now the head of the family.

It is impossible to give an estimate of the fortune which is being handed down to the next generation, but it is a large one.

Those who know Mr. Gould well believe that he will hand down the fortune to his only son, and he is now the head of the family.

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J. D. Rockefeller, Jun.

Is Following Closely in His Father's Footsteps.

New York Central railroad have been in the care of Cornelius Vanderbilt's second son they have showed a marked choice of his heir. By the time the late Mr. Vanderbilt died, Alfred G. Vanderbilt, Jr., was the head of the family.

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A Remarkable Situation.

There is a story which Sir Edward Malet recalls of a situation hardly even in fiction. A certain cardinal at an evening party, when pressed by an admirer to reveal the secret of his success, replied that the first person who had come to him after he had taken orders should have been a murderer.

The cardinal, "But I see your eminence does not remember me," he said. "You are a murderer, and I am a murderer."

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