

Question 169. How are the laymen to behave toward the Brotherhood?

Answer. They are to show the members of the order due respect and reverence, and provide for their daily sustenance. By so doing they are gaining merit, and they are promoting their own happiness. And in a note: *Buddhism teaches that it is not the Bhikshu (monk, lama, priest) who should be grateful for gifts received from the Upasaka (devout layman), but the latter to the first, because the recipient affords the donor an opportunity to gain merit by a charitable act.*

Let the reader pause to consider what this means. A class of men intellectually and morally as debased as the surrounding population, possessing no recommendations of any sort, doing no work, and profiting no man, are so far elevated above the rest as to be released from all feelings of gratitude for being well fed, clothed, and supported in their lazzaroni existence. Nay, the very fact of their being lazy and accepting what they should have earned by labor, causes the donor to be placed under an obligation. Such clerical pretensions are absolutely unparalleled in any other religion.

Question 170. Does the order possess any spiritual power over the laity?

Answer. No. . . . But the order repudiates all connection with an Upasaka who has been guilty of some grave moral offense, or who has spoken contemptuously of the Buddha, the doctrine, or the order.

Translated into facts, this means that the lamas hold friendly connection with every man who can pay, whether he be a criminal or not. As soon as a man cannot pay, or refuses to pay, the lamas blast him by their curse. And here lies the real secret of the lama's power. He alone is possessed of the means to ward off the innumerable demons lying in wait for the layman. Should he refuse his assistance or use his power against him, the layman sees himself delivered helpless into the hands of evil powers. His crops will fail; his cattle will die; he himself and his family will be attacked by loathsome diseases. This belief, carefully fostered during generations by the lamas, renders the laity powerless. The lamas are neither loved nor respected; their power is due to fear, and fear alone. As an example of the supernatural influence ascribed to the lamas, it may be mentioned that they are supposed to be able to control the weather, a belief which is firmly held in spite of constantly recurring unseasonable rains and droughts, which the lamas were unable to prevent. A missionary in Kunawar informs me that at the time of the last Sikkim campaign it was currently stated that the English had, by means of the wind, sent a large number of paper soldiers into Tibetan territory. The lamas, however, caused heavy rain to fall, and completely destroyed the paper army. One could hardly credit such childishness, even on the part of followers of the African rain-doctor and medicine-man; but it is true of a country which has for nine centuries been illuminated by the effulgence of the "Light of Asia."

(To be concluded.)