skin or complexion, white or dark? Is his skin supple in texture or otherwise? Is he a Kshatriya, a Vaisya or a Budra by birth? No hurry to pull out the arrow. Let's make a careful study of the bow; is it made of mulberry or thorny-mulberry, the wood of elaeocarpus, Japonics or horn. Is the bow string made of silk thread, cow tendon or deer tendon? No hurry to pull out the arrow. First of all, I must make sure what fowl feather is the arrow adorned with and what metal is the arrow tipped with. No hurry to pull out the arrow. I wish to know the first and last names of the arrow maker and where the arrow came from.' So the story goes. It is beyong doubt that the man will die of the fatal wound long before the doctor complete the above probes." This parable is a master piece by itself. From this it follows that Sakyamuni, the Buddha, did not discourse on "the absolute void" and "the phenomenal and noumenal" just for a joke. He is a devoted clinical physician who prescribes the right medicine for the right ailment at the right time. In his lectures, he never touches upon such abstruse philosophies which have nothing to do with "the Uncreate", the" Wisdom of Prajna", "Enlightenment" and "Nirvana". In this respect, Sakyamuni, the Buddha, has much in common with Confucius who once said; "How can you serve the dead (the spirit) since you have not served the living (the man) . How can you know anything about death since you know nothing about life?"

THE TRANSMISSION GATHAS

Contiuned

Charles Luk

Gatha chanted by Mahakasapa when transmitting the Dharma to the Second Patriarch Ananda:

that in the face of heated controversies among different schools of philosophy and religions, Sakyamuni, the Buddha, always steered a middle course in the same way as Confucius did at his time when hundreds of schools contended and hundreds of species of flowers burst into blossom. This is the reason why Buddhism is known as the religion or philosophy of Majinhao or the Middle Way. The same is true of Confucianism which places special stress on the principle "To teach the people how to follow the middle course between the two extreme ends of a track."

Buddhism in the opinion of many people, is only concerned with abstruse speculation and idle talk. This is true in the case of Buddhism in its later development. It is not the case with Buddhism in its formative stage. Sakyamuni, the Buddha, time and again emphasized the importance of coupling meditation with practice. When such questions put to him by many of his contemporary thinkers as "Is the world limitless in time and space?" and "Is the body one with life or otherwise?" He only answered in non-committal terms. (Non-committal is a technical term in Buddhism, meaning neutrality or indeterminate). Why non-committal? The reason for this lies in the fact that the above questions, in the opinion of Sakyamuni, are not worth studying and probing. It is time consuming and labor lost to delve into them and nothing good can be derived therefrom. To illustrate this point, we had better cite the parable of arrow from Volume 60, Madhyamagama, reading:

"In answer to the question put to him by a lad, Sakyamuni, the Buddha, said 'Badly hit by a poisonous arrow, a man is on the verge of death. It is a matter of a few minutes that he will breathe his last. To save his life, a doctor should first of all pull out the arrow and then apply medicine to the wound without the least delay. If the doctor says 'No hurry to pull out the arrow.' Let's first establish the identity of the patient. Who he is? Whether he is short or high in stature? What is the color of his

THE CHARACTERISTICS AND MERITS OF BUDDHISM

A Lecture by Late Liang Chi-chao

Trans. by Elaine Chow

A comparison between the various schools of herectics of India in opposition to Buddhism and the Pre-Chin (Before 221 B. C.) philosophies and religions vis-a-vis Confucianism leads to the conclusion that Sakyamuni, the Buddha, holds the same place in the cultural developments of India as Confucius did in China. Out of the fibre of controversial doctrines and religions of India, Sakyamuni, the Buddha, spinned the yarns of "golden mean" which serves as a guiding principle for the practice and teaching of Buddhism. So far as spiritual cultivation is concerned, He discarded the extreme materialism of the Lokaytikas and the extreme asceticism of the Jaine, and thus followed the middle course of "no suffering and no happiness."

On the question of soul, he had no preference either for the externalists or for the nihilists, two doctrines as wide apart as pole asunder, and, instead, he set forth his causally conditioned fluxional view of life "Yin Yuan Ho Ho". So far as the law of causality is concerned, there was the doctrine of extreme fatalism as opposed to the school of Non-causalism. To refute the two, He developed the theory of automatic karmaic retribution to illustrate the moral responsibility of all sentient beings under the universe. The above facts point to the conclusion