

Equally insightful are the other essays which illustrate author's versatility as a scholar and his wide range of intellectual interests. The brief essay by Mart Läänemets (pp 194-197) on Linnart Mäll's contribution to Oriental and Buddhist Studies in Estonia is a fitting tribute of a student to his mentor, who had made many sacrifices in life on account of his devotion to Buddhist Studies but has now emerged as a champion of Estonian freedom in the political scene. This is not a book to be read casually but one to be read with intense attention. This statement refers primarily to the first hundred pages which are a book by itself on Prajñāpāramitā.

– Ananda W.P. Guruge

One Day one Thought: 365 Gems of Buddhist Wisdom

By Kodo Matsunami
Buddhist Searchlight Center, Tokyo,
Japan, 2005, 382 pp.

The current world is advancing rapidly with tremendous changes. On the one hand, science and technology has brought immense benefits to human beings. Globalization has become an irresistible trend, a trend in which even the leaders of states are stunned by the rapid progress. On the other hand, wars, diseases, man-made and natural disasters are devouring lives every day. Human beings are in a paradoxical situation – they find themselves helpless in dealing with all these problems, especially the new types of diseases, such as AIDS, SARS and BSE.

It is with deep concern that Professor Kodo Matsunami writes this book *365 Gems of Buddhist Wisdom: One Day one Thought*. He points out that unfortunately there seems to be not a

single politician, thinker or religious leader who, against the background of the currents of today's globalization, is capable of looking into the future and offering us a road map. Today's society, full of competition, lapses into the law of the survival of the fittest and the law of the jungle. This social-Darwinian theory has led competition astray because people become ruthless in the alienated struggle for life.

Seeing the fact that the powerful politicians are incompetent to combat the side-effects of globalization, Professor Kodo Matsunami feels it his responsibility to introduce his road map, based on his understanding of the teachings of the Buddha. He writes this book with a view to awaken the minds of people in our era by introducing a Buddhist way of life as a moral approach to everyday living.

365 Gems of Buddhist Wisdom: One Day one Thought is divided into twelve chapters as twelve months and each chapter is subdivided into either thirty or thirty-one parts. In fact, each page is a sub-chapter. In other words, if the readers read one sub-chapter each day, they can finish the whole book in exactly one year. They gain an understanding of Buddha's teachings gradually in 365 days. The book is arranged in a flexible way that the reader may open the book and start from any point.

Each subchapter begins with the passage from Buddhist scriptures, or words spoken by famous monks. Then Professor Kodo Matsunami further explains the passage he quotes in the first paragraph and in the next two or more paragraphs illustrates his points and advises the readers, urging them to be good men by following Buddha's teachings. The author does not talk of abstruse doctrines of Buddhism, but by using simple words to describe what is happening in daily life, he discusses the need of the Buddhist way of life, which, as he believes, may help modern people

to do away with the harmful effects in the world in which people seek an ever-more convenient and comfortable way of life. Lamenting at the constant conflicts in the Middle-East, he does not think it optimistic even when some temporary compromise is reached. The monotheistic ideologies seem incapable of leading us to peaceful coexistence and co-prosperity in this world, he holds.

In a subchapter entitled "Money is only a Means," Professor Matsunami points out that money is necessary as a means of living, but not in itself an end. He illustrates this point by quoting Johann Wolfgang von Goeth, "If one looks at the world with a practical eye, there is not a thing of value." He just combines the value of both East and West by saying that what we must remember is to not be at money's beck and call.

The whole book is full of easy-to-understand moral teachings of Buddhist way of life. It is full of wisdom of oriental culture as well as wise sayings of Western philosophers and poets. At this point, Professor Matsunami makes efforts to blend both cultures so that the wisdom of East and West can capture the minds. Those who are disillusioned by the reality may find it particularly useful for their further understanding of the true meaning of life.

Professor Kodo Matsunami believes that the teachings of the Buddha belong to all human beings. In this age of advanced science and technology, the teachings may illuminate the way of all human beings. Coincidentally, seventy years ago, Chinese Buddhist leader Taixu spoke of same the need of Buddhism in the West. In 1930s Taixu pointed out correctly that if the unrest in the West stops, the unrest in the whole world ceases. Similarly, Taixu also wanted to introduce the Buddhist wisdom to Westerners so that they would overcome their arrogance and taste for fighting. Ever-lasting world peace can become a reality if everyone practices benevolence towards all

according to the teaching of the Buddha, the state of anatman. Therefore, it is important to introduce the oriental medicine of compassion, forbearance, benevolence and righteousness to all.

– By Darui Long

Beautiful Living: Buddha's Way to Prosperity, Wisdom and Inner Peace

By Bhikku Basnagoda Rahula
Vimamsa Publishers, Houston, Texas,
USA, 2006, xv+252 pp.
ISBN: 0977234304

Sir Arthur C. Clarke, the celebrated visionary and master of science fiction, who admits being "a life-long secularist," says in the Foreword to this book: "My views on religion have been widely publicized, and I believe all religions are a form of mind virus that affects otherwise healthy – and often educated – human beings." Then he proceeds to say, "Buddhism stands apart in being tolerant, accommodating, and pragmatic. Having lived half a century in Sri Lanka, I have seen how Buddha's teachings are applied by various groups in many different ways. Strange as it might seem, perfectly rational people and rabid fundamentalists both claim to derive their beliefs and attitudes from the same source. Clearly, many liberties are being taken with the original teachings. That is why I welcome the publication of this book by Dr. Bhikkhu Basnagoda Rahula which aims to rediscover the principles and values of Buddhism that have been obscured by centuries of culture and history."

Inspired by Sir Arthur's comment, I read Venerable Dr. Basnagoda Rahula Thera's innovative presentation of the Buddha's teachings to see how far he succeeds in demonstrating that Buddhism is a way to prosperity,