

GODS OF THE HINDOO CREED

Two Women Become Members of the Monkish Order of the Orient.

INITIATION OF A CHICAGO RECRUIT

Face and Sex Lines Eliminated from the Religion—Quaint Oriental Ideas About the Reincarnation of Dudes.

There is no ground too sacred for the American woman to tread, no holy of holies to awe-inspire her to penetrate; as a woman the first of her race, and only the second woman west of the Orient was the other day in Chicago ordained as a Swami, which, according to the tenets of the Hindoo religion, constitutes her a god. Mrs. L. V. Comer, who was the Swami Shradhananda that is, was inducted into this philosophy and initiated into the order by the Swami Abhayananda, the first woman, and indeed the first person of the western world to be thus exalted.



Swami Abhayananda is a keenly intellectual French woman, who had for many years been a student of philosophy, when the famous Vivekananda came to this country to represent the Hindoo faith at the World's congress of religions. She lost no time in placing herself under his tutelage, and later became a priestess of the Oriental cult, which is, by the way, the oldest order of monks in the world, and of Hindoo origin.

In order to become a member of this body one is supposed to have passed through some extraordinary spiritual experiences, and by study and meditation to have arrived at that high state of soul-development, where all desires for wealth, power and fame vanish, and all ideas of separateness or attachment to personalities are merged into the infinite. One then voluntarily relinquishes family and name, and takes upon himself or herself the vows of celibacy, continence, poverty, nonresistance and service to all beings of the universe.

Swami Abhayananda came to America when a young woman—though she still speaks English with an accent—lived for many years in New York, where she was initiated into her mystic faith. This imposing ceremony has, by the way, never been performed in Europe. For some time she taught in New York, but came to Chicago two or three years ago, where she continues to be at the head of the order in this country. She has quite a large following in the western city, and may be found at almost any hour in the rooms of the Adwaita society on Twenty-fourth street.

One cannot look at this nobly proportioned French woman, with her fine, strong, expressive face and distinctive personality, and not be convinced of her power; nor come to comprehend the simplicity of her life and environment without feeling that in espousing poverty and service she has in reality eliminated from life half of its wearisome details.

Her iron gray hair, for instance, framing her face with its full pompadour, need never give her an instant's uneasiness as to how she shall wear it, nor consume any time in its arrangement; while her costume, which is a convenient walking length and quite effective with tan shoes. If buttoned to the right it signifies that one is a Brahman; otherwise, it may indicate some other branch of religion. In this country, of course, one must use such materials as are at hand, and soft cashmeres and crepons seem the most suitable. Hindoo beads, also of ochre, are worn on occasions and add a certain air of mysticism to the costume.

One might conclude that the robe as a whole was intended to stand for comfort, but instead it symbolizes universal love. It is fitted loosely to the figure and is girdled with a silken sash twice around the waist to signify two born. One end of the sash is made into a bag signifying forestry; this was originally for the convenience of the founders of the order who dwelt in forests and used it as the receptacle for their scanty fare. In those days, however, the sash was probably not made of silk, and certainly in these days the monks, male or female, do not take to the woods, but live in comfortable homes and are evidently sufficiently well fed.

My curiosity was piqued as to the ways and means in which one who has taken the vows of poverty, manages that part of the program, since in this practical age, food and shelter are unfortunately not secured without money and without price. I found that the Swami preaches, teaches, holds classes and meditations, etc., and the followers of her cult contribute what they choose to her support.

equal rights came to percolate this ancient order? When were women first admitted to its mystic rites?" "Ah madame!" replied the Swami, "in the world of the spirit there is no sex. Members of our order are neither men nor women, but souls. Sex is but a phenomenon, a mere wave upon the surface, while the soul is the deep, quiet changeless ocean that exists from century to century, now in one form, now in another. You may be a man in one incarnation and a woman in the next, according to the nature of your development. The dukes, for instance, who mark the degeneracy of this generation, will be women in their next incarnation, and women of a low order of intelligence, too; while the strong, stalwart, earnest women of today, like Susan B. Anthony and Julia Ward Howe, will be men and leaders of men in their next stage of development. Women as such have never been recognized by this order; but any human creature who has become dead to the world, and desires to live after the spirit, has been welcome to the brotherhood from its most ancient days. There is no distinction in the costume. We are all monks and wear the ochre robe."

"Have many Indian women joined the order?" "I believe not a large number."

"Does your renunciation bring happiness?" "We at least attain peace and liberation. Attaching ourselves to nothing we are never forced to detach ourselves from anything; and the ordinary cares and struggles of human life do not touch us."

"But one must live," was insisted. "Oh, yes; but our life is so simple that it costs next to nothing. Of course by the spirit of our religion we are vegetarians."

"What is then prohibited?" "We are forbidden nothing. There is not a 'thou shalt not' in our whole code. But we would not eat upon ourselves the vow of service to all living beings, animals included, and then use the latter as food."

Strictly Cosmopolitan. "Our order does not acknowledge race, sex or creed, or rather, it is the epitome of all races and creeds. You notice there back of our altar pictures of the Christ, saints of both the Episcopal and Catholic church, dark hued prophets of the Orient, Buddha, etc. Here I preach Jesus of Nazareth as he is the manifestation accepted in the western world, and indeed the highest of all manifestations; but among the Mohammedans, I should teach the same spiritual truths with Mahomet as their exponent. Our faith is the synthesis of all religions, moralities and philosophies. 'That which exists in one, men call it variously.'"

"What progress is this most ancient order making in this most modern of American cities?" "The thought is growing rapidly. The women of New York were inclined to take up the study of Buddhist philosophy as a fad; but the women of Chicago have gone into the subject earnestly, and are more ready to accept it as a religion."

The name of the Swamis all terminate in "ananda," which signifies bliss—Abhayananda meaning freedom and bliss; Shradhananda, the name of the ne convert, faith and bliss. Once having taken orders, the previous name and environment of the monk are supposed to have passed into utter oblivion. Like her spiritual mother, the first American recruit will preach and teach. The saving grace of this set of all religions, worthy the name, is that it teaches unselfishness and universal love as the highest law.

Men with Salty Wives. Kisses That Savor Too Much of Chloride of Sodium.

and, by the way, it is very dangerous—doesn't seem to have a scientific name. It leads to sudden death unless taken care of radically." The fat man with the "salty wife" unceremoniously drained his glass of beer nervously and asked the fat man with the cured "salty wife" to tell him about it.

"You see, it is this way," began the one whose wife was safely out of the pickle, "sodium chloride, or common salt, really exists in every animal tissue and fluid, and is present in the blood in tolerably constant proportions. It is introduced with the food as it is maintained in the system through all the channels of elimination in a certain proportion. If the salt supply is cut off from the food, it passes away from the system. The blood holds on to its diminished supply. This shows how necessary salt is to health. Another funny thing, the more you take into you in excess of physical necessity the less you get of it, and the less you take in the more you lose by elimination. Strange, isn't it?"

"Now, this 'salty wife' disease is not common and the doctors don't seem to know much about it, except that it is dangerous. It seems to be a phase of nervous disorder that causes the salt to leave the system without having performed its proper work. When the nervous system is unduly excited—that is to say, when you make your wife hot at you or the gets out of sorts with the children—all the pores of her body discharge salt in volumes. She gets so in time

that you can tell her moods by the difference in the degrees of salty taste you get from her lips."

"What comes of this trouble?" "In time it causes anaemia, general breaking down of the nervous system and death from heart failure."

"Can it be cured?" "Yes, you want to send your wife to a doctor at once. He will have to arrange her diet for her and give her some medicine to loosen up the glands of the system and get her to working. Our physician gave my wife iodine of potassium and mercury, and a couple of days after she started taking it I didn't get any more salt in my kisses, although I touched her up once or twice to see if her temper was also losing its bad taste. It takes several weeks' treatment to complete the cure."

How General Burt Was Tricked. One day when General Andrew S. Burt, lieutenant colonel of the Seventeenth United States Infantry, related the Chicago Journal, Captain Charles A. Booth, then a lieutenant, met him on the rifle range.

Booth was announced, and he "called" each shot as he fired, without waiting for the markers to signal the result. "You're a pretty good guesser," said the colonel. "Why don't you admit you're guessing where those shots land?" "I'll bet you a box of cigars," said the junior officer, "that I can call twenty shots in succession."

"Taken," said the old warrior. Lieutenant Booth fired, and a red flag from the target told that this was correct. Another shot. "Miss," he declared. A third shot. "Miss again," he said. "Fourth shot," announced Booth. Another shot. "Miss," again sang out the lieutenant. "Hold on there," put in Colonel Burt. "What are you trying to do? I thought you were going to fire at the target."

DIVORCE IN MANY LANDS

Various Reasons for Which the Marriage Bond is Severed.

METHODS IN OLDEN TIMES AND NOW

Easy for a Man to Put a Girdle of Grass Widows Around the Earth in a Short Time—Phases of Domestic Life.

The marriage and divorce laws of the various countries, states and tribes, brought together, compound a dish of statistics as analogous to hash as anything on the legal board, says the Green Bag. A year or two ago a London writer humorously suggested that an interesting piece might be prepared for the stage, entitled, "Round the World's Divorce Courts in Sixty Days." He would have the hero, or shall I say the villain, Don Juan, begin his matrimonial adventures in Ireland, take a second wife in Scotland, and a third in England.

The laws covering his case, lacking uniformity between the three countries, would declare the marriages both legal and illegal. Don Juan would next go to America, where, by reason of the varying laws of the different states, he could marry and divorce, remarry and divorce, and commit bigamy, triplicate and quadruple, all his matrimonial adventures in Ireland, take a second wife in Scotland, and a third in England.

Over in Japan he could legally shake off a wife who talked too much; in China one who was ill-tempered; in Australia one who implied that he was a convict, and in America one who was too extravagant; and so he could travel merrily on, until he had actually girdled the earth with divorces and grass widows.

Divorce was known in Rome as far back as the time of the decemvirs. The historian Dionysius says that the first divorce was in Virginia, in which she mentions that her son, Coriolanus, before he left Rome, told his wife, Volturna, that he was no longer to be her husband, and wished her better luck in marrying another more fortunate than himself. This was in the fifth century before Christ.

In ancient Athens the law allowed divorce upon very trifling grounds. In Crete any man might dismiss his wife who promised to hamper him with a too numerous progeny. The Greek wife, however, was not allowed to remain a wife, must conduct herself with the greatest propriety. The husband may obtain a divorce from her if, against his wish, she should stay a night in another house; if, without his consent, she should go to the theater or the races; or, if, against his desire, she attends a dinner or goes in bathing with men.

Looking Backward. The divorce procedure of the ancient Hebrews, judging from the case of Abraham and his wife Hagar, was a very simple matter indeed. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and took bread and a bottle of water and gave it to Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away."

In early Russian times divorce was brought about in this way. The couple who wished to be separated simply proceeded to a public square, and, each taking hold of one of the ends of a strip of brittle muslin, they pulled it apart in the presence of the townspeople, by this act signifying a mutual desire to part company.

It is not only in Japan that a husband may divorce his wife if she should be too talkative. The Chinese courts allow divorce for loquacity, inattention to her parents-in-law, thievishness, ill temper, lasciviousness and harshness. The most common ground for divorce in the Orient is that the wife has been guilty for any other cause is to be punished with eighty blows.

The ancient Chinese were much more liberal in their divorce laws. It was recorded in one of their old books that "a man was turned away if he allowed the house to be full of smoke, or if she frightened the dog with her disagreeable noise," by which it would appear that those old rat eaters thought more of their dogs than they did of their wives. Prebably the dogs secured for them their favorite rodentian fare.

man's inconsistency set forth her plaint in a petition for divorce in this style: "Dark clouds of discord began to lower over the sky of wedded felicity, and the miraculous lightning of disunion began to dart its lurid flames across the gloomy clouds of matrimonial blackness, obscuring every star of hope and happiness whose resplendent glory illuminated the dawn of the first few brief years of her wedded life, when she gave her hand and an undivided heart to the defendant, who in the sultry month of July, 1878, after having been warmly and snugly watered within the fond embraces of her loving arms and closely nestled to a heart that beat alone for the defendant, showed his base black ingratitude by abandoning her without cause whatever, except the insatiable thirst for novelty, which is the predominant character of the defendant's nature."

If the deserted one was in the habit of holding out in this style the wonder is that the union lasted as long as it did. But complaints of cruel and inhuman treatment are not the exclusive privilege of the weaker sex. Husbands have made their share of them. One man claimed a divorce on the ground that his wife was in the habit of coming to his house and threatening to thrash him, and make him do everything she wanted him to do.

It is only a few months ago that William Schneeknebel of Chicago applied to the courts for freedom from a wife who had set up for his observance these new commandments: These are the new commandments of ten, which wives now make to married men: 1—Remember that I am thy wife. That thou must cherish all thy life. 2—Thou shalt not stay out late at night when lodges, friends or clubs invite. 3—Thou shalt not smoke indoors or out. Nor chew tobacco "round about."

4—Thou shalt with praise receive my plea, Nor pastry made by me despise. 5—My mother thou shalt strive to please, And let her live with us in ease. 6—Remember, 'tis thy duty clear To dress me white throughout the year. 7—Thou shalt in manner mild and meek Give me thy waxes every week. 8—Thou shalt not be a drinking man, But live on prohibition plain. 9—Thou shalt not flirt, but must allow Thy wife such freedom, anyhow. 10—Thou shalt get up when baby cries, And try the child to tranquilize. These, my commandments, from day to day, Implicitly thou shalt obey. The plaintiff obtained his divorce, but it is

only fair to Chicago to say that it was granted on some more reasonable ground.

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The Alexander Statue. On August 1 the great statue of the Czar Alexander II, which has for many years past been in course of erection within the walls of the Kremlin, was unveiled. It was designed by Jankovsky, an able Russian painter, and is some sixteen feet in height. More interesting perhaps than the statue itself is the huge dome-shaped building in which it is placed. This rises to an elevation of over 100 feet from a sort of bastion that stands at the same height above the river. The material used is red Finland granite, the roof being of gilt bronze with alternate plates of black enamel, while the columns are richly decorated with gilt and oxidized metalwork. Inside the structure is lined with Venetian mosaics, and around the courtyard from which it rises run arched colonnades, the walls and roof of which are adorned with mosaic portraits of all the sovereigns from St. Vladimir to Nicholas I. Altogether, says report, very gorgeous and very Russian.

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