



THE BUDDHIST

THE ORGAN OF THE

Young Men's Buddhist Association

Vol. III. (New Series)

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“Sila Paññānato Jayam”

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Our Religious Examinations An account of the distribution of prizes to successful candidates in the Y. M. B. A. religious examinations together with the report of the Religious Examination Secretary, Mr. A. Kuruppu, is published elsewhere. The report shows an appreciable increase in the number of candidates who stood for the examination this year. The ever growing popularity of this examination leads us only to one conclusion: that there is a real need for systematic religious instruction in our schools. The present system of religious education in the Buddhist schools, we believe, stands in need of immediate re-organization. This can well be materialised if the teachers employed in all the schools managed by Buddhist organizations co-operate with the Y. M. B. A. by preparing their pupils for the Y. M. B. A. examinations. We should also like to invite the attention of the Ministry of Education and the educational societies to the suggestion made by the President that in future appointments of teachers preference should be given to those who have been successful in these examinations. This will undoubtedly increase the number of teachers competent to impart instruction in religious knowledge. But knowledge alone will not do. It is not an end in itself. Knowledge must be coupled with prac-

tice. If the people of this country are to be benefited by the efforts of the Y. M. B. A. in this line, the great ethical principles preached by our Master should always guide the people on the path of progress—progress combined with moral character. We take this opportunity to thank the generous donors of prizes and all those who ably assisted the Y. M. B. A. to conduct the examination.

* * *

A Welcome Gift We are glad to announce that the late Mudaliyar R. F. Gunaratna, one time the Deputy General Manager of Ceylon Government Railways, has very kindly left a legacy of Rs. 500/- to the Y. M. B. A. This is a welcome gift in these days of general depression which is adversely effecting our work. While we express our gratefulness to the memory of the late Mudaliyar Gunaratna, we trust that this noble example will be followed by every well-wisher of the Y. M. B. A.

* * *

Health of the Ven. Dharmapala The venerable Sri Devamitta Dharmapala, in a letter to us, writes:— “I am advised by the doctor not to sit up and write; and yet I do, with the result that immediately pain in the chest follows and then I lie down.” We earnestly hope that the veteran missionary will soon regain his health.

THE SACRED CITY OF BENARES

By Pandit H. Nandasara

It is only those who are familiar with the 'Jataka katha,' the birth stories of Gautama Buddha, that know what a great blessing the Buddha's series of previous births have conferred on this ancient city of Benares. According to the Jataka stories one can say that not only Benares, but also the whole Indian world was five hundred and fifty two times hallowed by the birth of the noblest, purest and the greatest Master to whom more than one third of the whole population of the world, to-day, owe their religious and moral ideas, and about whom it is said "Forest of flowers are daily laid upon his stainless shrines and countless millions of lips daily repeat the formula 'I shall take refuge in Buddha'."

It is universally accepted that Buddha was the teacher of teachers and the saint of saints who vigorously fought against the pernicious caste system and whose Mission strenuously acted for the purpose of broadening the intellectual horizon of the world.

Some eminent scholars, ancient and modern, belonging to other faiths have honestly confessed that the birth of the Buddha was the greatest honour that has ever been brought to Indian soil. As one eminent Hindu says "India produced the great Gautama Buddha who is worshipped all over Japan, China, Java, Sumatra, Ceylon and Burma." But the fact is that the Buddha was worshipped not only by the people of the countries above mentioned not only by the races inhabiting the length and breadth of India, but is even today worshipped by many people of intelligent classes in Europe and America

But to turn to the subject, the city of Benares is regarded as one of the oldest

and most sacred cities of the world. It has been from the remotest past the seat of sages world famed for their meditation. It is supposed to be the fittest place for the Hindus to breathe their last in, for the purpose of obtaining a happy future. It is claimed to be the chief centre of Indian learning. It is here, the world-embracing religion of Buddha based on Universal Love had its origin. Buddha, the compassionate one, more than two thousand five hundred years ago, having attained the supreme Enlightenment under the sacred Bodhi tree at Buddha Gaya, came to Benares to proclaim "Dharma Cakka" the unconquerable Wheel of Law for the happiness of men and deities, to the five ascetics, who lived at Isipatana

As a matter of fact the banks of the Ganges have nowhere else such glorious scenery as in Benares. The city looks charming on account of the Ganges whose Ghats are beautified by thousands of magnificent houses, golden temples and great palaces. There are over two thousand temples including five hundred thousand images—images of Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesh, Parvati, Kali, sacred bulls, sacred monkeys and so on. To a Buddhist who has seen the colossal Stupas and gigantic Buddha images of Ceylon, Burma and Siam and who has read that king Asoka once performed the opening ceremony of 84,000 Buddhist temples on one day it must look pitiable that in Benares the holiest city of India, the birth place of Buddhism, there is not a single temple dedicated to the world-famous Master.

In the days of public *Mela*, the days of religious festival, the Ganges at Benares becomes the scene of activity of many millions of people gathered from all parts

of India. On such days, the streets towards the Ganges are densely crowded. People, men and women, young and old, reciting religious hymns in melodious tunes, go to the Ganges in large procession to wash away their impurities, not only physical, but also mental. Apart from such days, many thousands of believers daily go to take their sacred bath, the bath of purification, in the Ganges where many hundreds of half-burnt human corpses are daily washed away. If a person does not purify himself by virtuous actions, bodily, verbal or mental, the Ganges-bath cannot help him as regards mental purification any more than the water of any well or pond or pool does; and mental purification is the purification that does matter.

It is in this holy city of Benares that Buddha found men intelligent enough to understand His Arya Dharma, the Noble Eight-fold Path and the Paticcasamuppada, the Law of Causation, discovered by His own effort. At first, He was, to some extent, disinclined to proclaim His discovery considering the predominating ills of the human world which is full of passion, hatred and ignorance. But later on, perceiving through His divine Eye, He viewed for the first time in Benares, people like Aññakondañña the lotuses of whose minds were awaiting but for the light of the sun of Norm, the Buddha-Dharma. Benares is famous for the people who were born wise, lived wise and died wise. It was well known to be a great centre of learning, of moral and spiritual culture, from time immemorial. Even now it is undoubtedly so. But some Buddhist students coming across such sayings as, "Benares is the chief centre of Indian learning even at the present moment," most probably may come to Benares

with the intention of graduating in Buddhist philosophy and in Pali language in which the Buddha delivered the Three Pitaka Dharma for forty five years. For a Buddhist, Pali language holds the first and foremost place among the ancient Indian languages. But they will ere long be disappointed to find that in Benares no provision has been made to teach Pali language and Buddhist philosophy? Will they not prefer, for that purpose, to go to Japan where they find fifteen Buddhist Universities including over forty thousand Buddhist students who are learning Buddhism? Will they not prefer to go to Siam, Burma and Ceylon where they find many thousands of Pali scholars, to learn Pali?

A thorough knowledge of Pali language is essential to understand the real essence of Buddha's discourses, so that one may know the Master's boundless Universal Love, Compassion, Sympathy, and Equanimity, the profundity of His thoughts and doctrine, the nobility of His ideas, the stainlessness of His moral and spiritual life and the marvellous nature of His wisdom which is beyond the comprehension of uneducated people. From my own experience, in Europe, I dare say that even some honest Christians have begun to see the greatness of Buddhism and admire Buddhist ethics, because Buddhism teaches the absolute Truth which is the ever welcome guest in an honest bosom. The Atheists and those who have given up Christianity are ready to study Buddhism for they are attracted by the rational basis of Buddhism; and those who think that religion is useless, are also ready to take up Buddhism for the sake of its sublime philosophy.

It is a matter of regret that the Buddhist scriptures (some of the best Indian

classics) are not translated into modern Indian languages especially into Hindi, so that the people may know what the Buddha, the ancient Indian sage, has taught to the world; this is strange when we consider that they are translated into many European languages. It is still more regrettable that the learned bodies in India have not yet paid noteworthy attention to the teaching of Pāli or Buddha Dharma. When Buddhism was in vogue in India, the Gupta kings became powerful rulers and attempted to abolish this beautiful religion in every possible way. They did so because they preferred their traditional Brahmanical ideas to the everlasting Truth. They found in Buddhism, teachings such as:—

*Na jacca vasalo hoti, na jacca hoti
Brahmano;
Kammāna vasalo hoti, kammāna
hoti Brahmano*

“By birth no one is a Brahmin or an outcaste; it is by action one becomes Brahmin or an outcaste”—which they did not appreciate. As Buddha's policy was based upon Truth and Compassion, He ever exposed and opposed error for the betterment of humanity in spite of

the petty objections of some unreasonable few. As Gupta kings were orthodox Hindus, Buddhism had to leave its birth-place for foreign lands where it was heartily welcomed. Not only Buddhism, the Triple-gem, but also many other gems and jewels slipped away into foreign lands on account of the ignorance of such biased and unthinking rulers.

It is a healthy sign that some, although a few, in Benares, are taking interest in Buddhism. In the very heart of the city a Buddhist free library was opened two years ago by a Burmese Bhikkhu, Rev. Kusalasaya, with the aid of some Burmese people; and also a Buddhist temple is going to be built there pretty soon. It is the duty of the citizens to encourage, and give every possible help to those foreigners to carry on the noble work for the public weal and the Sasana.

If Buddhism is again to be in modern India the power and the splendour that it was in days gone by, it is of primary importance that Pali should again engage the attention of scholars, and Pali should again occupy a proud place in the educational curricula of Indian Universities.

THE RELIGIOUS INTERCOURSE BETWEEN CEYLON AND SIAM IN THE 13th AND 15th CENTURIES

By S. Paranavitana, Acting Archaeological Commissioner

The most important community of bhikkhus in Ceylon at the present day traces its spiritual descent through the Buddhist Church of Siam. Every student of Ceylon history is familiar with the story of the establishment of the Siamese sect of monks in the reign of Kirti Sri Rajasinha. But it is not well-known that during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries of the present era, the Siamese people modelled their religious institutions on those of

Ceylon and that Sinhalese monks were invited by the Siamese kings to instruct the people of Me-Nam Valley in the teachings of the Buddha. In fact, during these centuries, Ceylon was regarded by the Buddhists of Siam as well as by those of Burma and Cambodia, as the fountain head of the pure Theravada doctrines; and the sanctuaries of that faith in this island were regarded by the people of Indo-China as almost equal in sanctity to the shrines in the Holy Land of Buddhism.

Most of the information about this earlier phase of religious intercourse between the two countries has been made available by French savants whose researches have revealed to us one of the most brilliant chapters of the history of Indian culture.

The first occasion on which the people of Siam came into contact with Ceylon, was in the reign of Rocaraja, one of the earliest of the kings of Sukhodaya. A Buddha image reputed to possess miraculous powers was taken, in this reign, from Ceylon to Siam. The details of this incident are narrated at length in a Pāli work called the "Jinakalamalini," dealing with the history of the Western Laos, written in A. D. 1516 by a monk named Ratana-panna who lived in the Mahabodharama at X'iang Mai, and who belonged to the Sihalasangha, the foundation of which in these lands will be dealt with in the sequel. The story, as is the case with most such stories, is full of the supernatural element; but there is no doubt that it contains a good deal of historical truth. The story as given in the "Jinakalamalini is as follows:—

"Seven hundred years after the decease of the Buddha there were, in the Island of Lanka, twenty theras free from passion. At that time, the Sinhala king, desirous of seeing the form of the Buddha, went to the monastery and questioned the senior thera (in the following manner): 'Our Buddha, when living, came thrice to this island of Lanka; can one who has seen him be yet found? At that instant, through the power of the saints, the king of the nagas came in the form of a young man; and, in order to dispel the doubts of the Sinhala king, created a likeness of the Buddha. The king worshipped that image for seven nights and days and then sending for a

master sculptor caused a waxen Buddha image resembling the one created by the naga king and a mould of the same to be made; and into this mould he poured a molten alloy of lead, gold and silver. After being rubbed and polished the image appeared bright and resplendent like the living Buddha himself. The Sinhala king constantly adored that image in various ways and after him, his sons, grandsons and great-grandsons in succession paid homage to the Sihala image. Thereafter, when eighteen hundred years had elapsed from the passing away of the Buddha, in the year 618 of the Sakaraja era, a certain Rocaraja reigned at Sukhodaya in Syamadesa in the South-eastern part of Jambudipa.

One day Rocaraja desirous of seeing the great ocean went, accompanied by an innumerable multitude of warriors, down the course of the river Nan and reached the city of Siridhammanagara where King Siridhamma was reigning. Having heard of the arrival of Rocaraja, King Siridhamma came forward to meet him and after treating him with due honour, told Rocaraja of the wonderful account of the Sihala image as he had heard it. Having listened to this account, Rocaraja asked "Will it be possible for us to go there?" Siridhammaraja answered "Not possible, because four powerful divinities, namely Sumanadevaraja, Rama, Lakkhana and Khattagama protect the island of Lanka. Thereafter, the two kings sent a joint envoy (to the Sihala monarch) and Rocaraja returned to the city of Sukhodaya. The royal envoy went to the island of the Sihalas and delivered his message to the Sihala king who gave the image to the messenger after having paid homage to it for seven nights and days.

The royal messenger bringing the Sihala image returned in a ship which, being caught in a storm, struck against a reef and was wrecked. The Sihala image rested on a board which, after three days, arrived at Siridhammanagara, through the power of the naga kings. The king of Siridhamma, having come to know of the arrival of the Sihala image by means of a dream which the devas sent him during the night, despatched boats in various directions. Having boarded a vessel himself, he searched for the Sihala image and by the indication of the king of the devas he came across the plank on which the image rested, brought it (into the city) and paid homage to it. Thereafter, Siridhammaraja sent a message to Rocaraja announcing the arrival of the Sihala image. Having heard it, Rocaraja came to Siridhammanagara and conveyed the image to the city of Sukhodaya where he paid homage to it.

Rocaraja, mentioned in the above extract, is a somewhat vague personage. The monarch who ruled Siridhammanagara at this period, has left a Sanskrit inscription at a place named Jaiya, in which the epithet of Candrabhanu is given him. We know from Ceylon chronicles that, in the reign of Parakramabahu II, of Dambadeniya, a king called Candrabhanu, described as a Javaka, twice invaded this island. In Sinhalese writings, he is also called the king of Tambalinga or Tamalingamu; and in the inscription referred to above, Siri Dharmmaraja is given the epithet of Tambralingesvara. The date given in the epigraph, Kaliyuga 4332 (A. D. 1230) is close to that ascribed, on the one hand, to Rocaraja in the Jinakalamalini, and on the other, according to Ceylonese sources, to the invasions of Chandrabhanu. Therefore, as has already been shown by M.

Coedes, King Siridharmmaraja, the friend of Rocaraja of Siam, was no other than Candrabhanu of the Sinhalese chronicles. M. Coedes is also of opinion that the first expedition of Candrabhanu against Ceylon was undertaken with the purpose of gaining possession of the Sihala image above described and that, foiled in his attempt, he allied himself with Rocaraja and secured the coveted treasure by peaceful means.

Nagara Sri Dharmmaraja or Nakhon Si Thammarat was a great centre of Indian culture from the early centuries of the Christian era; and during the period that we are dealing with, Theravada Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in that country. In the reign of Parakramabahu II, of Dambadeniya, an eminent Buddhist thera named Dhammakitti was invited from this country to Ceylon. King Rama Khamheng of Siam also invited a renowned Buddhist teacher from Si Thammarat to Sukhodaya. In a fragmentary inscription, which was recently discovered on the building popularly called the "Rajamaligava" in Polonnaruva, the opening Pāli verses eulogises a great Sinhalese hierarch, named Ananda, who is called a "banner raised aloft in the land of Lanka," as one who had to do something in connection with the monks of Tambarattha in addition to his labours for the Buddhist Church in the Chola country. This inscription which belongs to the time of Sundaramahadevi, wife of Vikramabahu, has only the first seven lines, forming about one-seventh of the whole, well preserved and, therefore, we are unfortunately not in a position to say with certainty what the great thera Ananda of Ceylon had to do with the Buddhist monks or Tambarattha or Ligor. But it is quite certain that from the twelfth century there was good deal

of intercourse between the Buddhist monks of Tambarattha and their brethren of Ceylon. Tambarattha was in communication with Siam and thus served as an intermediary through which the Siamese had their first relations with this island. The modern Ligor, known in olden days by the names of Sridharmaraja, Nagara Sri Dharmaraja, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Tambarattha and Tambralinga, is included in the territories of His Siamese Majesty; and, therefore, these remarks about the intercourse between that region and Ceylon are not out of place here.

Let us now return to the subsequent career of the image taken from Ceylon to Siam. The "Jinakalamalini" narrates, in detail, how the successors of Rocaraja continued to worship the Sihala image in Sukhodaya till the time of King Lidayya when it was taken to the city of Jayanadapura. When the dynasty of Ayodhya supplanted the Sukhodaya kings, the Sihala image found a resting place at that capital. The "Sihalapatima" was held in such high veneration by the people of Siam and the neighbouring countries that princes went to war with each other to be the possessors of the image and several replicas of it were produced. From Ayodhya, the image was taken to Vajirapakara and also had temporary abodes at Jamrayapura and Pallankadipa till it found its last resting place at Nabhisipura (X'iang Mai) which had supplanted Haripunjaya as the capital of the Yonakaraththa (Western Laos). In the Thai language, this image is called Phra: Sihing and the story of its miraculous origin and its adventures are the theme of a Pāli work. At present there are three statues in Siam which claim to be the Sihalapatima; one in the Bangkok Museum, the second in a temple named

Vat Phra: Sing (Sihalarama) at X'iang Mai and the third at Nakhon Si Thammarat.

In the time of Kilana, king of Nabhisipura (A. D. 1355-1385) and Dhammaraja of Sukhodaya, a monk named Sumana who had been to Pegu was instrumental in introducing the Sinhalese form of religious discipline among the monks of the Thai countries. The story is thus narrated in the "Jinakalamalini":—"At the time (in the reign of Kilana), a thera named Sumana, a resident of Sukhodaya, went to Ayojjapura and, having learnt the religious doctrines from the teachers (there), returned to Sukhodaya. Then, a great master named Udumbara came to Rammanadesa from Ceylon. Sumana, having heard that, went to Rammanadesa accompanied by a friend, received ordination anew at the hands of Udumbara Mahasami, and learnt the doctrines. Then Dhammaraja, desirous of having a 'bhikkhu' capable of performing all acts of church discipline, sent an envoy to the Mahasami (Udumbara) asking for such a 'bhikkhu.' The Mahasami wishing the prosperity of the religion, deputed Sumanathera to Sukhodaya for performing all kinds of religious exercises. Having taken leave of his master, Sumanathera went with his companion to Sukhodaya. Rejoicing thereat, Dhammaraja prepared the Ambavana monastery, made the thera Sumana reside therein and supplied him with the four requisites."

Sumanathera, the disciple of the Sinhalese Udumbara Mahasami was honoured not only by Dharmmaraja, king of Sukhodaya, but also by his son Lidayya, then Viceroy at Sajjanalaya. Udumbara Mahasami was also instrumental in introducing proper religious discipline among the monks of Nabhisipura, the chief city of the kingdom of Yonarattha.

Says the "Jinakalamalini". "Then, the great King Kilana, desirous of having a bhikkhu able to perform all the 'sanghakammas' in Nabbisipura, sent an envoy to Udumbara Mahasami living in Ramanadesa. The great thera presented his pupil, Ananda thera, to the messenger. Ananda thera, accompanied by the royal messenger, traversed a route of twenty 'yojanas' and arrived in Syamadesa. King Kilana was greatly pleased and supplied him with the four requisites. The thera Ananda, not having received sanction from his master, was not willing to perform the 'sanghakammas' connected with the forest dwelling monks and addressed the monarch, 'O king, a thera named Sumana, sent by our master, is now residing at Sukhodaya; he is proficient in performing all the 'sanghakammas.' Having listened to the thera's speech, the king despatched a messenger saying:— Go thou to Sukhodaya and, making obeisance to Sumanathera on my behalf, invite him here.' He (the messenger), in due course, went to Sukhodaya, and not being able to persuade Sumana to come with him, brought a 'thera' named Saddhatissa. The thera Ananda was not willing to perform 'sanghakammas' with Saddhatissa. The king again sent a messenger with gifts to Dhammaraja asking for the thera Sumana. The envoy went to Sukhodaya and delivered his message to Dhammaraja who, desirous of the welfare of the religion, sent the thera Sumana. The latter, having taken leave of King Dhammaraja came to Nabbisipura accompanied by the royal messenger and also brought with him sacred relics."

As far as I am aware, there is no reference in the writings of Ceylon to Udumbara Mahasami who went from this island to Pegu and whose disciples were invited to the Thai lands to organise

the Buddhist Church. "Udumbara" is evidently not his personal name; possibly, he belonged to the fraternity of forest-dwelling monks whose headquarters were at Udumbara giri (Dimbulagala), and which played an important part in the history of religion in Ceylon during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

We now came to a period of direct religious intercourse between Ceylon and Siam and our principal sources of information were the Siamese epigraphical records. In an inscription now preserved in Bangkok there was a detailed account of how King Lidayya invited a Sangharaja from Ceylon to organise the Buddhist Church in Siam and how the King himself entered the Order. An account of the arrival of the Sangharaja and the great honours with which he was received and the conversion of the King was recorded in that fragmentary inscription.

There was also a statement in Pali verses composed by the Sinhalese Sangharaja and engraved on a stele set up to the South of the Ambavana Monastery giving an account of the King's renunciation. The name of the Sinhalese Sangharaja was not given in the Siamese inscriptions and so far as I know there was no account of those events in the writings of Ceylon. From the Pāli inscription composed by the Sangharaja in praise of Lidayya, which was preserved though in a mutilated condition, we could form an idea of the scholarly attainments of that monarch so honoured by the Siamese King. The style was elegant and was reminiscent of such Pāli works as the "Hatthavanagalla Viharavamsa" etc., which were composed in Ceylon during the 13th and 14th centuries.

A sprout from the sacred Bo-tree at Anuradhapura was taken to Sukhodaya and planted there in the reign of Lidayya in the 14th century and in 1455 a seedling from the same tree was planted in one of the monasteries at Nabbisipura by King Bifakaraja at the request of the members of the Sihalasangha. A relic taken from Ceylon by one of the monks ordained in Ceylon was deposited in 1478 in a shrine called the Rajakuta which was now known as Pra Chedi Luang. A Buddha image named Ratanapatima, which was said to have been originally fashioned by King Milinda according to the advice of Nagasena and which was afterwards brought to Ceylon was also taken from Ceylon to Burma and subse-

quently to Cambodia and Siam. From that period for about 300 years we had no record of religious intercourse between the two countries and when they were resumed again in the reign of King Kirtti Sri conditions had entirely changed. Instead of the Siamese coming to Ceylon to obtain religious teachers, images and relics, the Sinhalese had to despatch an embassy to the King of Siam entreating him to send properly ordained monks to revive the Buddhist Church in Ceylon. The Siamese King of that time and his spiritual advisers in responding to that call of the Sinhalese Buddhists repaid in some measure the debt that their people owed to Lanka in the earlier centuries of their history.—(From an address before the R. A. S., Ceylon.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON MISSIONARY EFFORT

By Professor H. J. Laski

I have been reading recently some attacks on Mr. Ghandi for his supposed hostility to Christian missionary effort in India. I do not know, nor am I profoundly interested in his attitude to the theme. But the line of attack interested me by the simplicity of its assumption that India (or any other country) ought to be grateful for the gifts that missionaries bring. Even the replies were built round the argument that it was proof of Mr. Ghandi's nobility that in fact he was not so hostile. And that led me to reflect upon the temper implied in the zeal with which missionaries inflict their effort upon the non-Christian races of the world.

Let me say at once that for much missionary work I have both sympathy and admiration. A man like the Reverend George Brown, who lays the foundations of scientific anthropology in Melanesia;

Archdeacon Owen, who has so nobly defended the rights of native tribes in Kenya; Father Damien (if Stevenson's account be accurate), in his work among the lepers of the South Seas: those unnamed hosts of men and women who have given of their best to education and medicine in distant and difficult places—these seem to me types of the human race we can ill afford to spare. Rationalists will yield to none in respect for their labours.

But those labours are one thing, and the assumptions which lie behind them are another. The purpose of the missionary is to save souls for Christ. He comes to bring to men and women a truth upon the acceptance of which, as he insists, their salvation depends. Whatever else he does, whether by way of training or medical relief, is subordinate to that essential effort. He is obeying what he

believes to be a Divine injunction to spread the "word." The gifts with which the "word" is surrounded are at bottom no more than a method of winning the confidence of possible converts. There is nothing in the building of schools or the grant of medical assistance which is inherently a Christian function. Secular governments do both of these things with no desire of religious proselytization behind their effort. If the supporter of the missionary subscribes to his funds on the ground that these things "civilize" the backward races—bring to them the gifts of Western civilization—he is subscribing, no doubt, to noble objects; but he is not subscribing, at least in intention, to the main purpose the missionary societies have in view.

It is with this main purpose that I am here concerned. My anxiety is to understand the grounds which lead the missionary to believe that the acceptance of Christianity, in any sense that has meaning, by the African, the Hindu the Chinaman, the Japanese, will add to the happiness of humanity. The questions I raise here arise out of that anxiety.

1. Is the missionary assumption that conversion implies the acceptance of certain moral truths, which make the non-believer thereby a better man? If the argument for his effort rests upon this general ethical ground, there are, I think, two things to be said: first, that it is doubtful whether there are any general ethical truths which can claim to be specifically Christian; and secondly, that the general experience of Christianity by the Western world does not tend to show that Christianity has had the effect claimed for it

On the first point, I suggest that the history of ethical theory is a final answer to any Christian claim. Its moral ex-

pression is nothing more than the deposit of traditions which Christianity did not originate and has practised no better than other faiths. Stoicism, Confucius, Lao-Tse, Platonism—these at least share with Christianity the right to affirm their possession of moral precepts as fine as any in the record of human thought. Insofar as the missionary claims that in this realm it is Christian doctrine that he is expounding, he is guilty of historical and intellectual error. What he is communicating is common to the thought of mankind without regard to race or creed.

On the second point, an impartial observer may reasonably doubt whether the position of humanity has been improved by the existence of the Christian Churches. Theirs is a terrible record of persecution. They have almost invariably fought on the side of reaction. They have opposed the acceptance of all new truth which seemed to them in conflict with the particular doctrines with whose care they were charged. Once they obtained great possessions, they ceased to be the protectors of the poor and the humble. Most of their great revivals—notably that of Methodism—have been a political tactic which drew attention away from important social problems and persuaded the oppressed to give heed to the issues of the next world in order that the powerful might be relieved from the need to perform their obligations in this one. Anyone who considers the present position of Christian civilization can hardly regard it as an advertisement to the heathen.

2. If the assumption is that by conversion the missionary seals his convert into salvation, the argument seems to me to rest on even weaker foundations. The truth of Christian dogma is a matter of testimony, and it is increasingly unable

to meet the attacks which have been made upon its adequacy. There is not a central principle of Christianity—the Incarnation, the Atonement, the Resurrection—in which the West retains any historical confidence. The progress of research has reduced Christianity to the position of a faith without rational foundations, whose hold depends upon the unwillingness of men to examine the grounds of ancient traditions which have the prestige and magic of antiquity about them. Insofar as the missionary presents his doctrine as a body of simple and unquestionable truth, he is deceiving the people whom he seeks to convert.

If, on the other hand, he believes that his truths are simple and unquestionable, that attitude is the outcome of his own ignorance; and an ignorant man who does not know the problems of his own creed is surely not entitled to insist upon its virtues. We should not agree that a man is entitled to teach physics who was ignorant of its foundations; why should we make any other assumption in the religious realm?

It may be said that there are missionaries—Dr. Albert Schweitzer for example—who are fully aware of the complexities. Where these exist can they hope to make them have meaning for those whom they propose to convert? Does Dr. Schweitzer expound the principles of his *Quest of the Historical Jesus* to the neophytes of the African desert? If he does, can they have any conception of what he is talking about? If he does not, what doctrine precisely it is that the converts are asked to accept?

There is the further problem of the division of missionary effort. The missionaries all speak in the name of Christianity, but each has a slightly different message to bring. Can the Roman Catholic

explain to the Pathan of the North-West Frontier precisely why there is no salvation outside his particular Church? Can Father Elwin, who works so nobly among the Indian outcastes, explain, also precisely, the differences which separate him from Rome? Can the Presbyterians explain, with any hope of conveying insight, the grounds which make them claim validity for their Church as against alternative Churches? If the explanations are made and accepted, are we entitled to believe that peoples so skilled in the appreciation of nice historical argument have need of the ministrations offered? If the explanations are not offered, is the missionary intellectually honourable in accepting the conversion as adequate?

I do not think it is unfair to argue that missionary literature in general makes no serious attempt to answer these questions. It dwells enormously upon incidental issues. It gives impressive accounts of its educational and medical successes. It tells of the mitigation of barbarous practices. It records the growth of habits of industry among its devotees. Few people can read unmoved of the ardours and endurances of missionaries who grapple with flood-relief in China or with cholera in India. But it is not specifically Christian to do any of these things. All religion apart, it would still remain a human obligation to perform them; and all of them are performed, and have been since the dawn of human history, without the acceptance of Christian dogma being their impelling foundation.

The Rationalist, I suggest, is entitled to know the content of the Christianity accepted by the peoples to whom it is brought. That it is good to be kind rather than cruel, generous rather than mean, civilized rather than barbarous, industrious rather than warlike—all these

things I understand. But all these things the whole world understood long before Christianity was dreamed of, and the world will continue to believe them long after Christianity has passed away. Insofar as the missionary preaches merely this, what title has he, as I have already argued, to urge it as specifically Christian? Insofar as he goes beyond it, what proof can he offer either that the surplus is understood, or that its substance is intelligible to peoples who inherit a wholly different tradition?

I forget, it may be argued, the social effects of missionary effort. Whatever its historic adequacy, it has brought hope not otherwise attainable to backward and repressed peoples. In India, for example, the spread of Christianity among the outcastes has been a main weapon in elevating them to a sense of indignation at Brahmin superiority. Here, as elsewhere, it has created that sense of equality which is the birthright of the human being. There is, I think, some substance in this view, though its measurement is a question in proportion upon which the evidence is both dubious and scanty. And even here certain things must be remembered. The appeal of the missionary to the outcaste, like the appeal of all religions to the disinherited, came from its reponse to their sense of right denied. It succeeded, not as a proof of Christian truth, but as a denial of Brahmin injustice. And the reality of the Christian faith in equality is less satisfactory when weighed by alternatvns scales. We have yet to hear of a revolt of the Christian Churches in America against injustice towards the Negro; nor do we hear that Roman Catholic missionaries in the Congo are fighting tooth and nail for the equality of those natives whom, only the other day, M. Vandervelde declared, in the

Belgian Parliament, to be living in conditions of abject slavery. Here, as elsewhere, the Churches have no difficulty in adjusting themselves to the conditions of profit-making enterprise.

I am not, be it observed, making any case against the missionary on the ground that he is usually the inevitable precursor of shameless commercialism. I do not use the plea, which has strong anthropological weight behind it, that his work so prejudices tribal custom as to deprive the latter of its sanctions for good behaviour and happiness without the provision of an effective substitute. I do not inquire, as it would be legitimate to inquire, whether Christians who have not adequately convinced their own civilization are entitled to extend the area of their efforts until they have completed their domestic task. I do not even ask whether Western civilization, the Churches included, would allow, say, the ancient East to proselytize for their own special faiths, and extend to it the amplitude of protection which missionaries receive as a matter of course from their respective States. These are interesting and important questions, the answers to which would not, I submit, be wholly favourable to the missionaries' case. For it would reveal the fact that the continuance of their effort is based not on the zeal of the individual, but on the power of secular technique to vindicate, by the use of force, his claim to be zealous. The warship and the machine-gun are the unseen accompaniments of the Bible and the hymn-book.

My argument is the different one, that the enthusiasts for missionary enterprise make no critical inquiry into the intellectual premisses of their work. They take for granted things which no rational observer has ground for doing. The case for their own creed is not less dubious

than the case for the creeds they seek to displace. The belief they engender is not, by the very nature of the society in which it has to operate, the belief they are seeking to engender. Their own religious differences are not susceptible of rational explanation to their converts. The social good they do can be done without the use of the vast doctrinal apparatus they bring into play. If they teach their converts to be other-worldly, they are endangering that attention to material well-being which is the greatest need of the backward races. If they devote themselves to the extension of material well-being, their religious effort is a mere by-product unrelated to their central achievement.

Missionary work, in a word, I can understand as an effort on the part of those who undertake it to satisfy some ardent impulse within themselves. If someone has a gospel which he must preach or perish, no doubt he will go forth to preach; but if he assumes thereby that he is enlarging the boundaries of the kingdom of Christ in any sense which has real meaning, I take leave to doubt his intellectual *bona fides*, even while I accept his emotional good faith. And on the side of material accomplishment his effort seems to me to drug the conscience of the State into leaving unperformed those tasks which are an inherent part of its obligation to its citizens.

This is, I think, a more important matter than is generally realized. One of the gravest difficulties in all Colonial administrations is the impact upon governmental habits of the settler's tendency to think that the second-best is good enough for the subject-peoples concerned. When missionaries provide the services which ought to be the first

concern of the State, the latter is tempted to withhold the initiative it should be prompt to exercise. Taxation can then be kept low; and, as we have seen only too clearly in places like Kenya, when it is imposed it is so deeply resented that officials become timid where they should be determined, hesitant where they should be decisive. The quality of State-effort is seriously hampered by associating efforts with missionary enterprise which are only later and too partially understood to be a matter of State-concern.

We in England know only too well the tragic consequences to education of assuming that it was the proper object of Church-control. Not even the struggle of fifty years has released the schools from the noxious hand of ecclesiastical control. It is a serious matter that the same mistake should have occurred in the territories for which we are responsible. The missionary can never adequately replace the scientific anthropologist as the source of counsel upon culture-contacts. By allowing him to usurp that position we have created problems for the future which it will be no easy matter to solve—
(*The Rationalist Annual*)

OUR NEXT NUMBER

Will Include:—

An interesting letter from an
HUNGARIAN BUDDHIST

Origin and Development of
KATIKAVATA

By Mr. JULIUS DE LANEROLLE
Synopsis of
CULLASETTHI JATAKA

Y. M. B. A. RELIGIOUS EXAMINATION AWARD OF PRIZES AND CERTIFICATES

For the eleventh year in succession, the annual distribution of prizes on the results of the Religious Examination conducted by the Young Men's Buddhist Association, Colombo, took place on Saturday the 19th November.

The medals, prizes and certificates were given away by Mrs. D. P. Wijewardene, Lama Etani, of "Sedawatte Walauwa."

The Ven. P. Vajiranana, Nayaka Thera, presided and there was a large gathering present.

Proceedings began with the recital of Pansil after which the Chairman addressed the gathering.

He dwelt on the inestimable benefits derived by teaching Buddhist children the principles of their faith during the impressionable period of their lives. The good work done by the Y. M. B. A. "in order to meet a special need, long and generally felt, for some effective means of systematising religious education and training of Buddhist children in the way they should go" was most meritorious. Among the activities of the Association this was the most important in spite of the fact that it was carried on unostentatiously. It was gratifying to learn that no less than 10,000 children had sat for the examination held in various parts of the country.

It was far more meritorious to build the character of one individual than to build a thousand viharas,

for the possession of a knowledge of religion (and a love of and reverence for their faith) in children was reflected later in their lives as good, intelligent and useful citizens. A life which began with maitriya and ended with pragna was the summum bonum of a Buddhist. He wished the promoters of the movement all success.

Mr. Julius de Lanerolle read the report of Mr. A. Kuruppu, Hony. Secretary, and the distribution of awards then followed.

Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara, Minister of Education, in the course of his remarks, paid a tribute to the voluntary service so enthusiastically rendered by the members of the

Y. M. B. A. At a time when teachers were worried about remuneration for their services it was refreshing, he said, to find no such disturbing element facing the Sunday School teachers. In all movements of that nature the chief obstacle was finance, but the Buddhist religious examinations were free from that bogey—thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Wijewardene Lama Etani, who had taken upon herself the task of defraying all expenses. It was his fervent prayer and hope that she would continue her generosity.

One thing that struck him was the absence of students from English schools among the prize winners. Could it be that the examination was confined to vernacular schools only? Another feature was the preponderance of girls among the prize winners. Where were the boys? There were Buddhist boys in the public schools of Colombo—both Government institutions and missionary schools, and he would earnestly ask the members of the Y. M. B. A. to get into touch with teachers in English schools and induce them to present Buddhist students to take up the Religious Examination. Whatever school they might attend during the week they ought to regularly attend a Sunday School and receive instructions in their faith. The number of candidates appeared to increase yearly. He hoped that the increase would be maintained and that in the coming years every Buddhist child would be instructed in the faith and once more Lanka would be re-named Dharmadwipa as it was known in ancient days.

Mr. W. A. de Silva, speaking next, said that the absence of students from English schools was probably due to the system of education imparted in the schools, which did not provide for religious education. But he hoped that with the present Minister of Education at the head of affairs, the desired object might be achieved and that provision would be made to cater to the religious requirements of students in the same measure as was made for secular subjects.

A curious phenomenon they had discovered recently was that parents who at one time

clamoured for the inclusion of the vernaculars in the high schools and colleges, now complained of the handicap to the study of English if the vernaculars were taught. There was no prohibition by Government against religious instruction in schools but the fault was in the preparation of the curriculum which appeared to ignore the subject of religion. While they had time to spare to teach boxing and marksmanship, it would, he thought, be more useful if religious instruction could be found a place in the curriculum. He hoped to see a new orientation in education during the regime of the present Minister of Education.

Sir D. B. Jayatilaka thanked the large gathering present and said that it was a great encouragement to the members of the Y. M. B. A., who carried on their voluntary work for the benefit of the rising generation of Ceylon. The future of their country was in the hands of the youth of the country and it was their bounden duty that they should be brought up on a sure foundation of religion. He thanked the donors of prizes and those associated in the movement. He hoped that the example set by the Colombo Y. M. B. A. would be followed by others in various parts of the Island. It began in 1920 with about 300 pupils taking up the examination and the number had grown to 9,000, without any special effort, which showed its natural growth and expansion.

They held examinations at 149 centres and the expenses did not exceed Rs. 149. He would commend the example to the Minister of Education and ask him to consider what the expenditure would be to examine 9,000 candidates at 149 centres, if his department undertook the task.

Those engaged in the work were voluntary workers. Bhikkhus and laymen joined in the enterprise and did the work as a labour of love. Except for essential clerical assistance and the like the expenditure was small. A great step and an important one was the establishment of teachers' examinations for which Mrs. Wijewardene Lama Etani, was responsible and bore the expenses therefor. She realised the importance of training teachers and qualifying them to train the children under their care, as the sure means of achie-

ving the object in view. The absence of students from English schools among the prize winners did not mean that there were no candidates. He understood that students from Nalanda, Ananda and Vaisaka Vidyalaya had taken up the examination. He hoped a larger number would present themselves in successive years.

It was proposed to have a Sunday School in Colombo at the Y. M. B. A. for Buddhist students of the various Colombo schools and he hoped that there would be a ready response. He wished publicly to thank Mr. Kuruppu, the Hon. Secretary, for his services. He wished to mention that a beautiful painting of the Buddha had been presented to the Y. M. B. A. by Mr. Sri Nissanka and Mr. John of Messrs John & Co., and he offered his thanks to the donors on behalf of the Y. M. B. A.

Refreshments were served before the gathering dispersed.

REPORT ON RELIGIOUS EXAMINATION, 1932

The Religious Examinations instituted by the Young Men's Buddhist Association, Colombo, have been carried on annually since 1920 and the recipients of the Medals, Prizes and Certificates today are candidates—students and teachers, who distinguished themselves in the Examinations held in March and July this year.

The Young Men's Buddhist Association considered it necessary to hold these Examinations in Religious Knowledge regularly every year, in order to meet a special need, long and generally felt, for some effective means of systematising religious education and training up Buddhist children in the way they should go.

I would repeat here the following words in the annual report read last year when Lady Thomson was pleased to distribute the Prizes:—

“The doctrines of Buddhism cover a very wide and extensive ground; and in their study and practice, guidance and direction are necessary so that the essentials of religion may not be forgotten and one phase of it emphasised to the neglect of another. To be a good Buddhist one must observe in correct perspective both the Ethical precepts and their philosophical bases. It is not merely enough that one should learn and practise to do good and avoid evil, but he should know why certain things are good and others bad, - the reason for the rule of daily life. With this end in view, a carefully graduated course of studies was drawn up and the Buddhist Schools in the Island were invited to adopt it. The object of this course of instruction is not to turn out Buddhist Scholars as Pandits but to make our school boys and girls good and intelligent Buddhist men and women and useful citizens of the country.”

The syllabuses for the Examinations have the approval of learned members of the Sangha who have also kindly compiled text books, editing, translating, and annotating portions of the Tripitakas suited to the requirements of students.

The publication of these useful books has been undertaken by the Association, and as many as thirteen of them have already been printed and published.

The question papers are set every year by a Board consisting of eighteen eminent and erudite Bhikkhus who duly award marks after scrutinising the yearly increasing number of answer papers—by no means a light task though performed gratuitously.

The Association with the willing help and co-operation of its members and friends at out-stations conducted the Examination which is held simultaneously at centres in different parts of the Island. The number of candidates examined at the various centres in the first year. 1920 was about 300. Of the 9358 applicants this year (as against 776 last year) who were registered, 7355 (as against 5330 last year) appeared at the examination. Of these, 3391 passed.

The Examination was held at 149 centres as against 109 in 1931, and 175 schools of the 240 registered, (as compared with 130 and 188, respectively, of last year,) took part in it. The number of schools registered up to date is 275.

It is encouraging to note that the number of schools applying for registration, as well as the number of students presented by them for the Examination and the percentage of passes obtained, is increasing every year.

The Association has good reason, therefore, to be satisfied with what it has achieved in the past and to hope for greater advancement in the future.

The Gold Medal awarded by the Association,—besides the book prizes—is a valuable gift as a student must score more marks than 75% to secure it. The winner of it this year is Miss N. Sandaseeli of Sri Sugata Samayodaya Buddhist Sunday School, Kolonnawa. The Silver Medals are awarded to competitors who should also obtain a similar percentage of marks.

In order to arouse greater enthusiasm and to secure greater efficiency on the part of those engaged in imparting religious instructions to students, an Examination is also held annually of teachers themselves, on the result of which cash Prizes of the value of Rs. 175/- are awarded.

The Association is deeply indebted to Mrs D. P. Wijewardena of "Sri Ramya" Kollupitiya, for offering these prizes for the last several years, besides defraying all the expenses in connection with this Examination. There were nineteen applicants for admission to this Examination of whom sixteen sat for it, eleven passing in the first, and two in the second division.

Two competitors for the second prize obtained equal marks, and each of them was awarded a prize of Rs. 50/-. Of two other candidates who competed for the third prize, and obtained equal marks, one only was awarded a prize as the other had received a similar prize in the previous year,

It is a matter of regret that this year too the number of entrants for the Examination has not come up to expectations although the purpose intended to be secured by it is one of great importance.

The Association desires to take this opportunity to express its gratitude to all those who have helped it in various ways, especially the Nayaka and Maha Nayaka Theras as authors and editors of text books, and others who acted as supervisors at the various centres, and last, but not least, the very generous donors of Prizes.

The Committee begs to thank Mrs. D. P. Wijewardena most sincerely and heartily for gracing this occasion with her presence and for so kindly consenting to distribute the Prizes, and Sir D. B. Jayatilaka our President for his unfailing guidance and valuable advice in all matters.

A Kuruppu.

Colombo,
19th November, 1932.

REVIEWS

"GEOGRAPHY OF EARLY BUDDHISM"
BY DR. BIMALA CHURN LAW, M.A., B.L.S.,
PH.D., PP. XXI & 88 PUBLISHED BY KEGAN
PAUL, TRENCH, TRUBNER, & CO.

The above is the title of the latest work of Dr. B. C. Law, the famous research scholar who has contributed not less than twenty valuable volumes to Buddhist literature. It is preceded by a foreword from the able pen of Dr. F. W. Thomas.

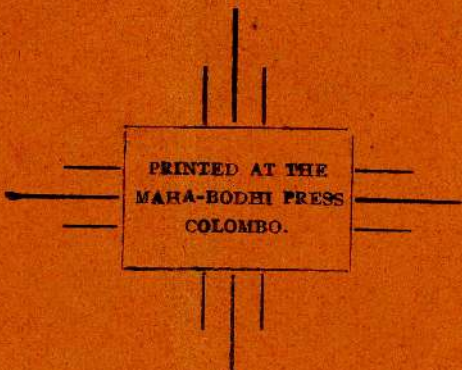
The present work deals entirely with the ancient countries, cities, rivers, mountains etc which existed in India and to which references are found in Pali literature. The learned writer has very laboriously collected all the necessary details from both Pali and Sanscrit works. Wherever possible the author has attempted to identify the ancient places and give the modern names.

The book consists of six chapters. The first five chapters deal with the Majjhimadesa or the Middle country, Uttarapatha or the Northern India, Aparantaka or the Western India, Dakkhinapatha or the Deccan and the Far South, and Pracya or the Eastern country. The last chapter is devoted to Ceylon, Burma and other Foreign Countries. Most of the important places of historical interest in Ceylon as mentioned in the Mahavansa and Dipavansa are found in this chapter.

In an appendix the writer speaks of the significance of the term Cetiya. Writing on the Kanthaka Cetiya and Maha Cetiya the author says:—"The Kanthaka Cetiya was visited and circumambulated by Asoka before entering the city or Anuradhapura." "The Mahacetiya was visited by Asoka where he saw a thera worshipping"

Both these quotations are cited from the Samantapasadika. Evidently the author is referring to King Devanampiyatissa in this connection. The mistake should be corrected. The map annexed to the book is extremely helpful. We recommend this useful work to every student interested in the geography of early Buddhism.

NARADA



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