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"Sila Pannato Jayam"

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"Winning Ceylon for Christ"

The old shibboleth of "winning Ceylon for Christ" was resurrected recently, at the 30th annual meeting of the National Missionary Society, by the Rev. R. V. Metzeling. It is strange, but significant, that Christian missionaries seldom talk of the propagation of their religion except in terms of war. "Winning Ceylon (or other non-Christian land) for Christ," "warring against heathendom," "fighting for the Cross"—these are but a few of the sanguinary figures of Christian speech. It is indeed ironical that the cause of the Prince of Peace, as Jesus is often claimed to be, has to be espoused by such militaristic missionaries. Rightly, we think, has the Christian Church been dubbed the Church Militant. Even Christian hymnology has not been proof against the ravages of the bug of militarism, and otherwise sweet-tempered young women and inoffensive old ladies are heard not infrequently bawling out lustily:

"Onward, Christian soldiers,
marching as to war"
and so on and so forth.

Fed as they have been for centuries on the concept of conquest and the vocabulary of violence ("the rank mist they draw"), is it surprising that the Christian races of the world, and the countries which have allowed themselves to be overrun by Christian civilization, are the world's best (that is to say worst) exponents and practitioners of imperialism and militarism? Anent this point, the following extract from an article entitled "The Dynasty of the Shark—

a Personal Reminiscence of Robert Louis Stevenson, by Francis Leonard Harden, M. D., in "The Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated" of September 10, 1944, needs no comment: "There was no missionary on Apennama. The American Board had endeavoured to land a Hawaiian "sky pilot," but old Tem Binoka would have none of him. The threat of an American war vessel did not dismay the lion-hearted islander. "I have 3,000 spears and 50 rifles," he said, "Taroa is mine, also Kori, and their men. I will have no praying man to make a road for the white man to run on with his gin and firearms." The American Board of Foreign Missions wisely exercised discretion and did not attempt to coerce the King's conscience with American guns." Earlier in the same article Dr. Harden writes how "Stevenson had completely won the regard and esteem of the old King and his people. The simple islanders recognized in him a being vastly different from those whites with whom they had come in contact. The missionary, upheld by the armed authority of passing war vessels; the drunken trader, whose coarse, gin-soaked personality exemplified to the islanders 'commerce and civilisation'; the well-armed, well-trained cut-throats, whose vessels sailed from Colonial ports to kidnap and enslave their people under the legal guise of a 'labour cruise'—these were mainly the only foreigners they had encountered."

On the front page of the same issue of *The Times of Ceylon Sunday*

Illustrated is a news item from which we quote the opening paragraph:

"London, Saturday. "General Lemay, when he assembled his airmen for the raid on Manchuria, told them the Command intended to scratch Anshan off the list of targets.

"Then Father Adler, the Command Chaplain, spoke to them and the youngsters, who well knew the Japanese threat to American fliers, followed him in the Lord's Prayer." If this is Christianity, Christianity stands 'more in need of salvation from error than all heathendom put together.

No amount of humanitarian work such as "the self-sacrificing humanitarian work performed by Christian missionaries of all creeds and races during the past few years and especially the past six months in Hunan Province" (referred to in an article on page 3 of the same issue of *The Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated*) can efface the infamy of Christianity's unholy alliance with imperialism and militarism, with big business and the big battalions. It is probably of this brand of Anglo-Saxon Christian culture that Edward James Irvine was thinking when he wrote about Uncle Sam's happy Virgin Island subjects as follows:—

Serenaded by St. Thomasans

Gentle Virgin Islanders
Playing tunes on cullenders,
Pots and pans and glistening glass,
Few orchestras could surpass.

Various Anglo-Saxon saps,
When they are not shooting craps,
Shoot such kindly folk as you,
For the old Red, White, and Blue.

The non-Christian communities of this little Island, the Buddhists, the Hindus and the Moslems, have always been forbearing and for giving towards misguided Christian missionaries who make mischievous un-Christlike utterances. But unfortunately this forbearance and forgiveness, though the outcome of the inherent tolerance of most non-Christian religions, is liable to be mistaken by the undiscerning for pusillanimity. Presuming on the long-suffering nature of non-Christians, Christian missionaries not infrequently indulge in publicly insulting other religions. It was quite recently, for instance, that so eminent a man as the Very Rev. Father M. J. Le Goc, Rector Emeritus of St Joseph's College, Colombo, in a textbook of Church History made disparaging and undignified references to the Prophet Mohamed, whose memory is held in veneration by millions of our Islamic friends in all parts of the world. It was only two or three years ago that a party of senior students of one of the best known Christian schools in Ceylon, while on a historical excursion to the Buried Cities of Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa, had the impertinence not only to perch on a sacred statue of the Buddha, but even to have themselves photographed in that vulgar action. The reverend gentleman who accompanied them as guide and director of the excursion saw nothing objectionable in their act of desecration of an object of worship. It is not so very long ago that the Rev. A. A. Sneath of the Wesleyan Mission spoke sneeringly about "the dead hand of Buddhism." To us heathens who in our blindness worship stocks and stones, it is inconceivable what ineffable spiritual happiness it gives Christian missionaries to decry non-Christian religions. One is sometimes tempted to wonder whether Christian missionaries who resort to this device are not an apt illustration of the

lawyer with the weak case abusing his opponent.

Let Christian missionaries realise that even their Christian charity and Christian teaching must begin at home. Let them, instead of trying to win Ceylon for Christ, win back if possible some little part of the extensive ground they have lost at home in Christian Europe and America. What a sorry mess the many centuries of Christian civilisation have made of Europe, every student of European history from the time of Constantine down to this present year 1944 can see for himself. What of the plight of Christianity itself in the lands where the missionaries come from? We wish our local Christian missionaries would study the article "Shall We send our Children to Church?" by M'cready Sykes in *The Atlantic Monthly* of some few years ago. In the course of it, Mr. Sykes writes: "Nevertheless it is undeniably true in the families of intelligent men and women, of those upon whom is thrust the responsibility of doing that part of the world's work that has to be thought out, among our business and professional men, scientists, university professors, and in general the families of recognized intelligence and leadership, that the children are not being sent to church to anything like the extent that children in families of that sort were sent, say a generation ago." And again: "Among intelligent men and women whom one could hardly accuse of failing to lead lives of inspiration and service to their time, there is a growing disinclination to bring up their children in intimate and sympathetic contact with the rites and services of the church." Still again: "But how can we look with hope, or indeed with anything but dread of sorrowful disillusion, to a propaganda whose methods conflict with intellectual integrity and whose most definitely organized and formal arguments and pronouncements are so frequently beneath contempt?"

It is these "arguments and pronouncements" which are "so frequently beneath contempt," "arguments unworthy of a schoolboy," and which are being increasingly repudiated by the intellectual circles in Europe and America, that Christian missionaries seek to foist off on unoffending non-Christian peoples. In the same number of *The Atlantic Monthly* is another article "A Missionary Audit" by Mark M. Jones, which every Christian missionary would do well to read. Here is just one short extract from the article, which is well reinforced with facts and figures: "The decreasing power of expansion and influence in so many local churches in the United States presents what some believe to be the most important problem of the Protestant denominations today, and we cannot ignore its possible effects upon foreign missionary work. The most immediate effect is already apparent, in that it is one of several causes for the decline in amounts available for foreign missionary work, notwithstanding the great efforts of the Society to secure increased support. It is obvious that the church must maintain itself at home as well as in foreign fields. If Protestantism is not holding its ground at home it cannot expect to enlarge programmes in foreign fields, and it should frankly face that fact and alter its policies accordingly."

That is wise counsel indeed. Let the Christian missionaries repair the tottering structure at home, in Europe and the U. S. A., and then it will be time they set about winning Ceylon for Christ and, like Mrs. Partington with the mop, sweeping back the Atlantic of holy heathendom.

(Continued from Page 37)

A deathless face
On the mountains of memory,
by the world's well springs,
In all men's eyes
Where the light of the life of
him is on all past things;
Death only dies."

N. B.—We invite from our readers critical comments on Mr. Guruswamy's article for publication if found suitable.—Editor, *The Buddhist*.

NIRVANA

BY A. P. GURUSWAMY, B. A. (Lond.)

There are two false views in vogue concerning *nirvana*, which shall first be examined. Some think that *nirvana* is a state in which the individual soul is completely absorbed in the universal soul (*paramatman* or *brahman*) in the same way as the Vedanta philosophy of the Brahmins understands it. By others it is regarded as the annihilation of all activities (*chittavrittinirodha*), in which love, life and all become extinct. As regards the first view, I must say that it is radically different from the proper conception of *nirvana*. Buddhism denies a soul (*atman*) as well as an absolute; how can it teach communion with or absorption in such a mysterious being as Brahman? The Blessed One says that those who believe in Brahman and seek a union with Brahman are like a man who makes a staircase where four roads meet to mount up high into a mansion which he can neither see nor know how it is, where it is, what it is built of, nor whether it exists at all. Brahmins base their authority on the Vedas, and the Vedas are based on the authority of the composers of the Mantras, Brahmanas and Upanishads, and these composers rely on the authority of Brahma (*Prajapati*). They are like a string of blind men clinging to one another and leading one another, and their method of salvation is nothing else than adoration, worship and prayer. The Vedantic doctrine is clothed in high-sounding words, but it contains no truth. The follower of the Vedanta is compared by the Blessed One to the monkey at the lake who tries to catch the moon in the water, mistaking the reflection for reality.

The second view may seem to accord with the literal meaning of the word *nirvana*. *Nirvana* is *nir*, separation from, and *va*, wind; the simplest and most natural meaning would seem to be, not "blown out", but "no more waving", as from presence of wind, no more restlessness and change. Whatever may be

the literal meaning of the term, the life of the Blessed One gives the lie direct to the view that *nirvana* is the annihilation of all activities. Sakyasinha attained *bodhi* at the age of thirty-five, and he spent the remaining forty-five years of his life in active preaching and doing good. *Nirvana* cannot therefore mean the annihilation of all activities. On the one hand, it is the annihilation of ignorance, delusion, covetousness, aversion, and all worldly selfish cravings, and on the other hand it is the perfection of all human excellences. If *nirvana* meant the annihilation of all activities like the extinction of a flame, suicide would be the quickest and best means of making an end of suffering and misery. But to one who has grasped the true nature of the *ego* and *karma*, the absurdity of this conclusion is evident. Suicide sets an example which will bear evil fruit in the hearts of others. Being a cause of consternation and unrest it cannot lead to the cessation of suffering. Suicide is the result either of madness or of egotism; it is due to some temporary aberration of the intellect or to a strong desire to protect one's life against certain dangers that threaten it. The suicide throws himself into the arms of death because he fears some impending emotional or physical disturbance. Under no circumstances therefore could suicide conduce to the attainment of *nirvana*.

What then is *nirvana*? *Nirvana* is the cessation of lust, hatred and ignorance. The commentator on the *Jatakas* says: "By what can every heart attain to lasting happiness? And to him whose heart was estranged from sin the answer came: When the fire of lust is gone out, the peace (*nibbata*) is gained; when the fires of hatred and ignorance are gone out, then peace is gained." This represents only the negative side of *nirvana*. Its positive side is described by Asvagosha as follows: "When in this wise the principle and the condition of defilement,

their products, and the mental disturbances are all annihilated it is said that we attain to *nirvana* and that various spontaneous displays of activity are accomplished." When all that is evil is destroyed by the annihilation of the *atman* conception, the moral and intellectual powers attain complete perfection. When all evil inclinations have disappeared, the holy man becomes the perfect embodiment of truth, not so much in respect of the scientific knowledge of the nature of things, but in its realization in a moral and virtuous life. When all thought of self is annihilated, the holy man becomes the very embodiment of the ten supreme virtues (*paramitas*) of generosity (*dana*), kindness (*maithri*), good will (*seela*), renunciation (*nishkama*), wisdom (*pragna*, scientia scientiarum), forbearance (*kshanti*), love of truth (*satya*), energy including courage and self-reliance (*virya*), resolution (*sraddha*), and equanimity (*upeksha*).

Though *nirvana* is the annihilation of all egotism, it does not imply the annihilation of personality. Annihilation of personality can occur in life only with the cessation of all consciousness, as in a faint or in dreamless sleep. It is the Vedanta doctrine that teaches that "at the time of deep sleep the soul becomes one with the highest Brahman" and that "the state of senselessness (in swooning, &c) is a half-union with Brahman." The Dharma on the contrary gives no room for such a view, but distinctly declares such ideas to be mere madness. The holy man who has attained *nirvana* lives and works, not for himself, but for others. Instead of being the absolute non-existence which some people think *nirvana* to be, it is really a life of perpetual fellowship in the pure atmosphere of truth, goodness, freedom and enlightenment. *Nirvana* is at once the annihilation of all thought of self and the complete attainment of perfect love and righteousness. It is in short the realization in the thought and life

of man of those eternal conditions which constitute perfect humanity.

All that man aspires and desires to attain through religion might in its essentials be reduced to three points; peace and tranquillity of mind; fortitude and consolation in adversity; hope in death. In Buddhism all these are attained through *nirvana*. The ordinary man seeks his rest and peace in God. For him all questions find their solution in God. But it is entirely different with the Buddhist. Buddhism denies an *Ishvara*, and the latter cannot therefore be its goal and resting point. The Buddhist's goal is Buddhahood, and the essence of Buddhahood is *Satdharma*, the totality of all those laws which pervade the facts of life and the living recognition of which constitutes enlightenment. *Satdharma* is no pitiable abstraction from experience, like pure being, the Idea, the Absolute, or the Universal. It is that aspect of existence which makes the world intelligible, which shows itself in cause and effect, in the blessedness that comes from righteousness and in the cursedness that follows evil doing. *Satdharma* is that presence which is forming the world in every detail, revealing itself most completely in man's rational will and moral aspirations. Though not an individual person like man, though not a limited being of a particular cast of mind, *Satdharma* is the condition of all personality. Without *Satdharma* there would be nothing that constitutes personality, no reason, no science, no moral aspiration, no ideal, no aim and purpose in man's life. In short, *Satdharma* is what Clifford has described in his essay on Cosmic Emotion as the principle of nature in which "we must recognise the mother of life, and especially of human life; powerful enough to subdue the elements, and yet always working gently against them; bidding her time in the whole expanse of heaven to make the highest cosmos out of inorganic chaos; the actor not of all the actions of living things but only of the good actions."

Satdharma is the norm of all existence, the standard of truth, the measure of righteousness, the good law. Owing to the limitations of our knowledge and the imperfection of our goodness we may not yet know all about *Satdharma*. But we know enough about it to make it our guide in life. Like a cloud shedding its waters without distinction, *Satdharma* encompasses all with the light of comprehension. Though the great cloud full of rain comes up in this wide world covering all lands and seas, and pours down its rain everywhere, over all grasses, shrubs, herbs, trees of various species, families of plants of different names growing on the earth, on the hills, on the mountains, or in the valleys, yet the grasses, shrubs, herbs, and wild trees, though sucking the same water, all of one essence, poured down abundantly by the same great cloud, grow according to their *karma* and acquire a proportionate development and bigness, shooting up and producing blossoms and fruits in their season. Similarly though *Satdharma* is the same for all, different creatures appropriate in different ways the norms of truth and follow differently the light of *Satdharma*. Each creature has originated from unconscious potentialities through its own blind impulses; each one, in its own field of experience, has learned the lesson of life in its own way. Each one is responsible to itself, and no one can blame another for what he is and has become.

Satdharma is not a God who asserts himself and calls sin what is contrary to his will. *Satdharma* does not say to man: "I am the almighty ruler of the universe; you are my special favourite. I have given you the highest place of all in the universe, and you can get still further privileges if you obey my commands and pay me tithes." *Satdharma* neither loves to be addressed in prayer nor delights in listening to the praises of worshippers. *Satdharma* is not a self-conscious individual whose creatures we are. We are largely creatures of our

own making. Pondering on the problems of life and death, the Blessed One has recognised that life starts in unknown non-conscious potentialities with blind impulses, and that life's start is its own doing. It is this unconscious potency from which life starts, not knowing its whither, that is at the bottom of all evil. The Blessed One has expounded in a succinct way the various links (*nidanās*) in the chain of causation (*adhyātmiḥ prāptiḥ samutpāda*) that leads to the full development of life as manifested in human beings. In the beginning there is unconscious potentiality (*avidyā*); and in this nebulous ocean of undefined life the formative and organising propensities (*samskāras*) shape crude formless aggregates. From the materials thus produced originate organisms possessing awareness, sensibility and irritability (*vijñāna*).

From these develops self-consciousness, the unity which differentiates self from not-self, and makes organisms live as individual beings (*nāma rūpa*). With self-consciousness begins the exploration of the six fields of experience (*ṣaḍāyatana*) belonging to the five senses and the mind. The exploration of the six fields brings about the contact (*sparsa*) with the external world. The perception of the external world and the exercise of the senses and the mind thereon leads to the experience of different kinds of pleasure and pain (*vedanā*). The experience of pleasure and pain generates in the individualised being, through not knowing its own nature, a grasping desire (*trishṇā*) for its own individual satisfaction. The thirst for obtaining egoistic satisfaction induces a cleaving (*upādāna*) to worldly pleasures. The indulgence in worldly pleasures produces the growth and continuation of selfhood (*bhava*). Self-assertion manifests itself in incessant changes of births (*jāti*), and these incessant changes looked at selfishly become the sources of sorrow connected with sickness, old age, and death (*jarā*

marana). These give birth to lamentation, anxiety and despair.

Thus the cause of all sorrow lies at the very source; it lies in the unconscious blind impulses with which life starts. When these blind impulses are checked and controlled, the wrong appurtenances born of them will no longer have sway; with the removal of these wrong appurtenances the wrong perception begotten by them will be wiped out. When the wrong understanding of the world is wiped out, the egoistic errors peculiar to individualization will cease, and with the cessation of these the illusions of the six fields will disappear. If the illusions of the six fields disappear, sense experience will no longer produce misconception. When no misconception arises in the mind, all grasping desires will cease, and with the disappearance of these will arise freedom from morbid cleaving and indulgence. When morbid cleaving and indulgence do not exist, the selfishness of selfhood will disappear. When this selfishness is annihilated, there will be complete escape from all sorrow arising from birth, disease, old age and death.

It is therefore clear that the fate of each one of us rests in his own hands. If life is associated with suffering, no being has a right to blame another, much less *Satdharma*. It is not *Satdharma* that permits beings to suffer innocently for conditions which they did not create themselves. Life's suffering is life's own doing. He who knows the nature of life must not be afraid of suffering; he must bear its ills nobly. If he avails himself of the light of *Satdharma*, the essence of Buddha-hood, and follows the noble eight-fold path, he can escape the suffering that is associated with life, and arrive at the blissful heaven (*sic*) of *nirvana*.

"That realm on earth where one may stand and be free from an evil deed absolved." (Dhammapada)

He who has attained *nirvana* can no longer live a life of self-hood, confined to the attainment of individual satisfaction. "*Bodhichittam*

samutpadaaya sarva satva sukhecchaya. It is with the desire to make all beings happy that one desires to attain *bodhi*." He identifies himself with all that is good and noble. He extends his kindness to all beings, and his sympathies are universal. His charity is so far-reaching and unbounded that it refuses none, not even those who hate and despise him. As a mother, at the risk of her own life, protects her only son, so he who has attained *bodhi* cultivates good-will beyond measure towards the whole world, unstinted and unmixed with any feeling of making distinctions or showing preferences. He is always in

That state of peace wherein the roots
Of ever fresh rebirth are all
destroyed, and greed
And hatred and delusion
all have ceased;
That state from lust for future
life set free
That changeth not, can ne'er
be led to change.

When the holy man who has attained *nirvana* dies, the *skandhas* which constitute his individual existence are dissolved, but he still lives. The *nirvana* in life is not free from *upadhis*, the ills naturally concomitant to a bodily life. But *parinirvana*, the *nirvana* in death, is free from *upadhis*, and is therefore regarded as a higher state, "a state which is unborn, unoriginated, uncreated and unformed; a state where there is neither earth nor water, nor heat nor air, neither infinity of space nor infinity of consciousness, nor nothingness nor perception, nor non-perception, neither this world nor that world." The man who has attained *parinirvana* lives in the eternal verities which he realised in practical life and with which he identified himself while alive. *Le Bouddha "vide de natur proper" est eternite, amour et misericorde*. It may be impossible to point out that after his death the holy man, the Buddha, lives here or there in a definite individual. He who looks for the *Tathagatha* through any material form, or seeks him through any audible sound, that man has entered

on an erroneous course, and shall never behold the *Tathagatha*. The Blessed One said: "When I have passed away and am no longer with you, do not think that the Buddha has left you and is not still in your midst. You have my words, my explanation of the deep things of truth, the laws which I have laid down for the society; let them be your guide; the Buddha has not left you." So even after the dissolution of his body, the Buddha lives in the *Dharmakaya*, the universal spirit of humanity which carries mankind in its onward and upward march to a higher life. He who has attained *nirvana* lives for ever in the ideal of truth and moral aspiration. Thus the Blessed One, though dead more than two thousand years ago, still lives in the perennial truths he has revealed to mankind, in the *Dharma* he has taught. Whosoever comprehends the truth of the *Dharma*, even he is always in the divine presence of the Blessed One. And whosoever realises the *Dharma* in his practical life, even he is a *Tathagatha*, a personal manifestation of eternal truth; nay more, he is *Devatideva*, for what is God but the most perfect reflection of the highest humanity.

"For unto each man his handiwork,
unto each man a crown,
The just fate gives;
Whoso takes upon him the world's
life, and his own lays down,
He, dying so, lives.
Whoso bears the whole heaviness
of the wronged world's weight
And puts it by,
It is well with him suffering
though he face man's fate,
How should he die?
Seeing death hath no part in him
any more, no power
Upon his head
He hath bought his eternity
with a little hour,
And is not dead.
For an hour if you look for him,
he is no more found,
For one hour's space;
Then you lift up your eyes to him,
and behold him crowned
(Continued on Page 34)

The Buddha's Way

A Poem by James Arther

BOOK III: YOUTH. CANTO 7: THE ROYAL PLOUGHING

(Contd. from Page 27)

Fired by compassion, by experience taught,
the prince resolves (in this birth his first trial
of purpose set, while still of tender years,
though by karmic resultants predisposed,
brought over from efforts made in countless births,
the Buddha-nature to perfectionate)
that gloomy cloud of fear and pain to pierce,
that over all life a sable shadow throws.

In meditating posture he sits down
as since of old sages are wont to adopt,
taught by experience, the longer limbs
drawn in against and under the main trunk,
the tortoise imitating who for fear
of outer hurtful contacts in her shell
protective refuge seeks; then undisturbed
the vital currents through the body flow
in closed circuit—thus sits the prince, cross-legged,
and in his lap the hands with palms upturned
laid in each other, uppermost the right,
the fingers close together, back and neck
with head held straight upright, the eyes near-closed,
their light and sight veiled by the heavy lids,
all senses from the outer world withdrawn,
the breathing in and out regularized
and by control slowed down, the vital airs
thereby to calm subdued, from all desire
abstaining, on reflection bent, detached,
in rapture sunk and bliss—thus reaches he
of meditation's stages the first grade,
pondering on pain and fear's ubiquity.

Fleets time; the height of his ambition reached,
slow climbs the sun his downward way, and long
and longer grow the shadows of the trees,
while at the same time veering to the east.
The attendants then returning find the prince,
a half-smile beatific lying round
the corners soft of his sensitive mouth,
oblivious of their presence as all else,
lost to all sense of time, as time were not,
and with amaze mingled with awe they see
that the rose-apple tree, as in the like
absorption held through sympathy with him

who in its shade there meditating sits,
has not its shadow cool removed from where
it covers the still figure at its feet,
but as at noon immoveable stands.
Rouse him they dare not, hardly speak or breathe,
in whispers consultation seek, at last
the king, still at his ploughing, to inform
decide, and to his wisdom leave the import
rightly to read of this prodigious sign,
who hearing it his plough and oxen tired
places in the good care of menial aids,
and with long strides to the rose-apple tree
steps out. In silence he the marvel views
and the young prince, sorrowed at what his eyes
to him reveal, reminded of the Seer
and the young Sage, that would arrive a day
when he would lose his son, his throne its heir,
his race their king, the world a ruler just,
for sake of greater good to human kind
than in the world may ever be found of man.
The sign of the immoveable shade
of the rose-apple tree alike is read
by the wise king in its true sense—the heart
of hearts of things in meditation touched
by the young prince, where ceases time and change,
nor shadow is of turning from the mean,
the central equatorial of calm and peace.
Beyond himself uplifted by his thought,
by a sublimer power than his own mind
inspired, the king as once before kneels down
at his son's feet, and worships him;
his words: "My son, this is the second time
that for thy greatness me my will and pride
forsake, and I thee humble homage pay."

The prince awakes from his abstraction deep,
and when the father lifts his head, and eye
meets eye, a smile of filial love breaks forth,
bright as the dawn, gladdening the parent's heart.
Then looking round, the shadows of the trees
to normal, with all else, he finds restored,
while in their hearts the music of the stars
and spheres their heavenly harmonies resound.

The Buddhist Conception of the Properties of Matter

BY BHIKKHU PIYADASSI

The Buddha was a *Vibhajja vādin*—an analyst in the strictest sense of the term. As a skilful anatomist resolves a limb into tissues, and tissues into cells, so did the *Tathāgata*—the Peerless Scientist and the Greatest Discoverer—analyse both mind and matter and reduce them into their fundamental units.

According to His philosophy there are four *Paramatthas* (ultimate things), namely—*Citta* (Consciousness), *Cetasika* (Mental Concomitants), *Rūpa* (Matter) and *Nibbāna* (the Supreme Bliss).

Nibbāna, the *summum bonum* of the Buddhists, is *Nicca*, *Sukha*, and *Anatta*—Permanent, Blissful, and Void of an ego-entity.

Why is *Nibbāna* Permanent, Blissful, and Void of an ego-entity? Because it is unoriginated, uncreated and absolute. This is the reason, this is the cause why *Nibbāna* is exempted from the eternal law of *Anicca*.

"*Nibbāna* is the only thing which does not spring as the effect of a cause and which as cause again does not give rise to any effect."

The whole cosmos is constantly changing. All constituent things pass through inconceivably rapid movements of *Uppāda*, *Thiti*, and *Bhāṅga*, or of arising, reaching a peak and ceasing. Thus we understand that all mundane things are in a state of constant flux, and, therefore, subject to the law of cause and effect.

Man is nothing but an ever-changing interrelated mind and body flux (*Nāma-Rūpa Santati*) which when separated from each other lose something of their potency and cannot function indefinitely.

Nāma or mind is nothing but a complex-compound of fleeting mental states. It is dynamic and not static. *Rūpa* or matter is merely a manifestation of forces and qualities or in other words a constant vibration of elements.

Before the advent of the Buddha, almost all the great teachers divided the whole cosmos into five elements or Primal Matters, to wit: Solidity, Liquidity, Heat, Gas and Space. However, the *Tathāgata*, the Greatest Discoverer, Who saw the fallacy of their teaching, accepted the older terminology but explained it in a quite different manner. He first of all rejected the space element, for space is nothing, or rather it is empty expanse. So we get only four elements.

The so-called Indian sages who searched after the essentials of matter finally concluded that the element '*paramānu*' was indivisible.

The Buddha, not being satisfied with this conclusion, employed His keen analytical knowledge and discovered that the so-called *paramānu* was nothing but a mere manifestation of forces and qualities and therefore reducible. The forces and qualities which in His language are '*Paramatthas*' (*Rūpa Dhātu*) or irreducible ultimates were termed *Paṭhavi*, *Apo*, *Tejo* and *Vāyo*.

These four elements or *Dhātus* that carry their own characteristic marks, are ever interrelated and never exist by themselves.

According to the Buddha Law *PAṬHAVI* is the element of expansion (*Vitthāra Dhamma*). It is due to this element of extension that objects occupy space. When we perceive a thing we see something expanded in space and we give a name to it.

In this connection we must understand that *Paṭhavi* is not solidity. What we call 'hardness' and 'softness' are nothing but a particular state of *Paṭhavi*.

This element of expansion is present in water also, for when we see the sea stretched before us even then we see *Paṭhavi*.

ĀPO is the element of cohesion (*Bandhana Lakkhana*). It is *Āpo* that heaps particles of matter together and holds them together

without allowing them to scatter about. *Āpo* cannot be felt by the sense of touch. As a matter of fact, of all the four essentials this is the one that is intangible; the remaining three are tangible. The softness of water felt is *Paṭhavi*. The cold or heat felt is *Tejo* and the pressure felt is *Vāyo*.

The cohesive force in liquids is very strong, for unlike solids it coalesces even after its separation. However, in the case of solids it is not so. Once a solid is broken or separated, the particles do not re-coalesce.

When we see a thing we see shape or rather we see an expansion with limits; this shape is possible because of *Āpo* or cohesive force. We must also bear in mind that *Āpo* is not liquidity. It is nothing but a cohesive force.

TEJO is the element of heat (*Tapa Dhamma*). According to the commentators 'it is the element which matures, sharpens, intensifies or imparts heat to the other three essentials'. The vitality of all beings and plants is preserved by *Tejo*.

From every expansion and shape we get a sensation of heat. This is relative; when we say a thing is cold we only mean that the heat of that particular thing is less than our body-heat, in other words that the temperature of the object is lower than the temperature of our body. So it is clear that the so-called 'coldness', too, is *Tejo dhātu*, of course in a lower degree.

During summer a person in Colombo may say the climate is very warm. The same person on arriving at Nuwara Eliya may possibly say the climate is very cold. The same person may, after climbing the summit of Pidurutalagala, say that the spot is colder than any other place in Lanka. Therefore, it only means a rise and fall of heat and nothing else. Hence, 'coldness', too, is *Tejo Dhātu*.

And there cannot be any expansion in absolute coldness.

Vāyo Dhātu is the element of motion. It is displacement (*Calana Lakkhana*). This, too, is relative. To know whether a thing is moving or not we need a fixed point, and to know the stability we need a moving body. So the so-called stability, too, is Vāyo Dhātu. Vāyo depends on Tejo. In the complete absence of Tejo the vibrations of atoms ceases. Complete absence of Tejo is of course theoretical. We cannot get it because we should not exist then as we, too, are made of atoms.

Everything on earth is a composition of the four elements. Nevertheless, they seem to preponderate. For instance, Pāvani preponderates on earth, Āpo in water, Tejo in fire, and Vāyo in air.

Now we come to the conclusion that according to the Buddha-Law, these four irreducible elements collectively aid the existence of all things animate or inanimate.

Even the most infinitesimal particle of matter is a composition of the four elements. These four elements according to Buddhism are inseparably combined with colour (*vanna*), odour (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*) and nutritive essence (*ojā*).

Even the irreducible essentials are in a state of constant flux which goes on incessantly like the waves of a sea, never remaining the same for two consecutive moments.

So the whole world becomes a mass of sensations only. According to the Buddha-law, there are no seers, or hearers, and so forth.

When sensations arise we call them seeing, hearing, *et cetera*. When we see colour patches, expansion and shape, we make them an entity by our collective mentation, but in reality it is not so. The world consists only of some sensations in reality and beyond that nothing exists because 'there they do not find any footing'.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

Special General Meeting

A special general meeting of the Association was held on Friday July 21 at 6 p. m. at the Association headquarters, Borella.

Mr. R. L. Pereira, one of the Vice-Presidents, was in the chair and proceedings began with votes of condolence being passed on the deaths of Sir Baron Jayatilaka and Messrs. H. L. de S. Kulatilake and D. N. Hapugalle.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya, a Vice-President, moved a resolution directing the Committee of Management to take immediately all such steps as are necessary to collect funds for the proposed Association building in the Fort in which one of the halls and the library will be named after Sir Baron.

Mr. N. J. V. Cooray seconded the resolution; carried.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya, on behalf of the Committee of Management, placed before the meeting its unanimous decision upon a resolution introduced by Mr. D. S. Senanayake, a vice-President, to elect Mr. A. E. de Silva, the senior vice-President, as President of the Association. In moving Mr. de Silva's election, Mr. Amarasuriya referred to the many generous gifts of Mr. de Silva to the Association.

Dr. E. A. Blok, a vice-President, seconded the resolution which was unanimously passed.

Mr. de Silva, who occupied the chair thereafter, moved, as recommended by the Committee of Management, the election of Mudaliyar Thomas Rodrigo, one of the two surviving Founder Members, as a Vice-President. Mr. M. H. Jayatilaka seconded; carried.

Mr. de Silva, thanking the members for electing him President, paid a tribute to the work of the late Sir Baron. It was a pity, he said, that Sir Baron had ever taken to politics, for otherwise he might have made a contribution to world culture. Sir Baron had been a man of the people and there had been nothing of the snob in him, a result of his deep learning. He hoped that a proportion of the young men who passed out of the University of Ceylon would eschew politics and direct their minds towards research work with a view to enriching the culture of the world.

Lectures

Bhikkhu Dhammapala delivered a lecture on "Social Service" on Friday, July 28 at 6 p. m.

Committee of Management

Messrs. Rajah Hewavitarna and W. Richard de Silva have been elected to fill the vacancies in the Committee of Management.

PERSONAL.

Mr. U. B. Wanninayake, M. S. C. Puttalam, married Miss Chandra Abeyratne.

Mr. W. A. B. Soysa, Mayor, Kandy, has been elected to the Nuwara Eliya seat in the State Council.

Obituary.

We record with the deepest sorrow the deaths of Messrs. H. L. de S. Kulatilake, D. N. Hapugalle and Charles Dias. Mr. Kulatilake and Mr. Hapugalle had served in the Committee

of Management for several years and Mr. Dias, though not a member at the of his death had rendered much valuable service in his day, more especially in regard to the Rel. Examination, with the inauguration of which he was closely connected.

TOURNAMENT

Tournaments of the following games

to be held soon.

Billiards

Handicap Tournament for the A. E. de Silva Trophy.

Entrance fee Rs. 3/- Entries close on October 25.

Badminton Events

(a) Men's Doubles (b) Men's Singles
(c) Mixed Doubles (d) Women's Doubles
Entrance fee.-Men-Re. 1/-per event or Rs 2/50 for all 3 events.
Women Re. 1/-per event or Rs. 1/50 for both events.

Tenniquoits Events:-

(a) Men's Singles (b) Men's Doubles
(c) Women's Doubles (d) Mixed Doubles
Entrance fee:-/25 cts. per event

Ping-Pong Events:

(a) Men's Singles (b) Men's Doubles
(c) Juvenile section if occasion arises.
Entrance fee: Re. 1/- per event.

Appeal

The Dramatic Union of the Mantivu Lepor Asylum has made an appeal to the Association for musical instruments. Will those members who could spare any musical instruments please send them to the Association to be sent for the use of theseun fortunate patients? Even old instruments are welcome.

NEW MEMBERS

3. 7. 44: Messrs. T. A. Karunaratne, Inspector of Works, 22, 43rd Lane, Wellawatte. W. Dharmawardene, Asst. Factory Engineer, Govt. Factory, Kolonnawa. D. N. Samarawickrama, P. O. Box 507, Colombo. D. de S. Gajaweera, Ceylon Cold Stores Ltd., Slave Island. N. V. Subramaniam, General Manager, Swadeshi Industrial Works Ltd. P. O. Box 21, Colombo.

10. 7. 44: Messrs. Edmund Gunaratne, Interpreter Mudaliyar, Supreme Court, Colombo. P. H. J. Wijesekera, Bogala Graphite Ltd., 63, Narahenpita. W. Samuel Dep, Artist, 11, Rodney Street, Cotta Road, Borella. S. W. Perera, Proctor & Notary 232, Dam Street, Colombo. S. S. Kaluhindiwela, 105, Stanley Place, Maradana.

17. 7. 44: Messrs. Sudharman Perera, "Sirisovana" Mirihana, Kotte. Henry Wellitigoda, Proctor & Notary, 233, Hulstsdorp, Colombo.

24. 7. 44: Mr. Nelson Senanayake, 39, Chatham Street, White House Buildings, Colombo.

31. 7. 44: Messrs. D. T. de S. Gunawardene, Rubber Control Dept., Colombo. D. S. Weerasuriya, B. Sc., 57, School Lane, Kollupitiya. (Total Membership 932)

Life Member

Mr. A. B. Gomes was elected a Life Member of the Association under Rule (3) e.

Resignations

Messrs. H. K. Nelson and N. D. Wijesekera have resigned from membership of the Association.