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THIS PEARL

During recent months the public of Ceylon has been regaled with the spectacle of the Minister for Education going about the country singing vociferous praises of his newly-adopted Education Bill, calling it an "inestimable pearl of great price" and of leading spokesmen, chiefly of various Christian denominations, shouting with even greater vehemence, that the whole thing is a fraud, that the Minister is at least an emissary of the Devil if not actually Satan himself and that, therefore, his schemes should be opposed totally and completely with sweat and tears and, if need be, with blood—metaphorically speaking, of course. As usually happens, the real issues have been obfuscated by the dust and din of conflict. The Minister has obviously but few friends; his outspokenness has made him numerous enemies. He had a very hard fight in getting his proposals through because there was opposition from every conceivable quarter. But he won in the end and he may be forgiven if he indulges in a little boasting about his victory. It would have been more satisfactory and more seemly if the praise—which is certainly his due—came from others. But, then, the vocal sections in the country, especially the capitalist-owned newspapers, had banded themselves against him and, in the absence of others equally competent to do the publicity, he himself was compelled to advertise the goods which he had undertaken to deliver. That he obviously enjoyed the process is a small measure of comfort which no one need grudge him.

Whatever the facts or fictions urged about the oyster himself, it has to be admitted by those that have vision and are aware of conditions actually prevalent that the pearl he has produced is one of remarkable possibilities. It has introduced into our society a new concept; it means the beginning of a new era of equal opportunity in place of special privilege to the few. Like adult franchise, free education is a principle whose implications are immense when they

are unfolded. No miracles will happen but planning, courage, foresight and wisdom can produce from it happiness and contentment, peace and prosperity for all of us, not merely to a limited class. Some of the effects of the new measure will be almost immediate, but the more lasting ones will necessarily take time to develop. Before its full purpose can be achieved, or even become apparent, much has to be done. Up till now at least fifty per cent of our children have been illiterate; to provide schools for them will mean heavy building programmes and vast expansions in the training of teachers. Makeshift arrangements are possible but, from a long-range view, undesirable. We need not just so many more schools but a whole and full range of educational services requiring, among other things, sufficient economic resources to provide them.

There will have to be many priorities; central schools have already been regarded as one such priority. As at present constituted they contain the possibility of either being outstanding successes or complete failures. Let us hope—and there is some reason for optimism—that they will succeed. A satisfactory scheme of salaries for teachers is also a matter of major importance. Any law is but a piece of machinery depending for its working on the personnel that handle it and on teachers, more than on any other body of people, lies the success or otherwise of any educational scheme. The equality of opportunity that free education seeks to provide must be so not merely in name but also in actual fact, almost wholly independent of accident, of birth or economic circumstance. It is no good deluding ourselves that there will be immediate sensational results in this direction or that equality of opportunity will solve problems arising out of varying grades of intelligence or social status. It must be remembered that education cannot by itself create the social structure of a country though it can and must profoundly influence it. It has been suggested that almost immediately university education should be free.

Ours is yet but a fledgling institution lacking many features of university life, chiefly the residential life. Even so, if free university education is to be fruitful, the abolition of fees will not be enough. Students should be freed completely from economic concern so that they may be able, with disinterestedness, to develop fully not merely their academic abilities but also those attributes of character and personality which will be their most valuable contribution to public life.

There is grave danger of any new educational administrative structure becoming too self-opinionated, with disaster to its becoming an effective instrument for progress. A national policy of education can breed the evils of uniformity and the possibility of administrative control becoming an end in itself. We need both to raise the status of education and also to broaden the basis of its conception. We need not merely education but also a good education. The first step to a good education is a clear view of what human beings should be; we can then work out the things needed to produce the type. We have been far too inclined to busy ourselves with educational machinery rather than with education itself. Plato said that the noblest of all studies is the study of what man should be and how he should live. It is not enough to impart knowledge; men must be made to think. Mere increase in knowledge without a due appreciation of the higher values of life will lead, as we have seen in the present generation, to nothing but elaborate and, perhaps, refined barbarism. There is a dualism in human existence, of spiritual and material elements, both of which demand satisfaction. Education has both a personal and a social purpose and the two purposes are equally vital. Education is not just for the sake of life, but for the sake of the good life. In fact, we need a comprehensive, fundamental philosophy of education. There must be a clear purpose to our actions; it is not purely a matter of sincerity or zeal. We can only be content with

a total educational advance not a haphazard, piecemeal progress. We need a strong, healthy, well-informed public opinion, aware of the questions involved, capable of distinguishing the wood from the trees in the case of every issue raised.

When we speak of equality of opportunity, for instance, we must also ask: opportunity for what? Our children must profit from their past heritage; they must be equipped to play their part in the present, but their eyes must also be directed towards the future. Without vision, life loses direction and purpose and character becomes a mere habit whose roots are dead. The educational policy of a country is not the concern of any clique or denomina-

tion; it involves far more than the prestige of individuals or the protection of interests. The new education proposals are a challenge to all of us to do our best for the welfare of the country as a whole. They demand the co-operation of every person and every agency seeking the good of the people and their future welfare. The chief feature of the new order is the desire for a national scheme of education, controlled by the State, in place of a scheme mainly organised by private or secular bodies. As far as the Government is concerned, therefore, the only policy of wisdom, if it is to secure the confidence of the people without whose active and willing co-operation no such scheme can succeed, is to show them that public

provision not only comprehends all that private provision had been able to offer in the past, but that it will give in addition other advantages quite beyond the scope or ability of private organisation. Those responsible for the inauguration and the implementation of such a policy need the possession of many qualities not the least of which are goodwill, humour and also humility. Those whom the policy is most likely to effect adversely must be prepared to put first things first and forget their self interest. The free education proposals are but part of a social revolution which is slowly but steadily gathering pace; it were folly, to say the least, to attempt to check its advance.

POWER BEHIND LIFE'S MANIFESTATIONS

By Bhikku Piyadassi

According to the analytical teaching of the Buddha everything in the world is dependent on conditions. These conditions are really the basis for the growth of things or for their development.

When the conditions fail, fall and dissolve, the processes dependent on them too fade and vanish like an oil lamp. With the drying up of the oil, the flame goes out. The disappearance of the nutritive oil finishes the flame. And life too is like that, and all life's good and bad.

Hence for an understanding of life one has to understand the power behind life's manifestations. One has to get down to the depths which nourish it.

The Buddha has taught us the way to know life as it is and has furnished us with the directions for such a research by each one individually. The responsibility therefore lies with us to find out for ourselves the truth about life and to make the best of it. We cannot say justifiably that we do not know how to proceed. All the necessary indications are clear as clear can be. The only thing necessary on our part for the realisation of the TRUTH is endeavour, energy, firm determination and effort to study and apply the teaching.

Life, according to the right understanding of a Buddha, is suffering and that suffering is based on **Ignorance**.¹ It is to make known two things that the Buddhas appear in the world. What two things? Suffering and Deliverance from suffering (**Dukkhamce'va Pannapemi dukkhassa ca Nirodham**).

According to the Suttanta method of analysis the non-knowledge of the Four Noble Truths (**cattari ariya saccani**) is ignorance. According to the Abhidhamma it is the non-knowing of the Four Truths together with the non-knowing of the past, future, both past and future and dependent origination (**Paticca Samuppada**) which teaches, "**This being that becomes**".

Ignorance is the experiencing of that which is unworthy of experiencing, namely, evil. Further, it is the non-perception of the conglomerate nature of the aggregates (**khandhanam rasattham**); non-perception of sense-organ and object in their organic and objective nature (**avatananam ayatanaattham**); non-perception of the emptiness or the relativity of the elements (**dhatunam sannattham**);

non-perception of the dominant nature of the sense-controlling faculties (**indriyanam adhipaticattham**); non-perception of the thusness of the Four Truths (**saccanam tathattham**).

And of this ignorance the **Five Hindrances**² are the nutriment. They are called hindrances because they completely close in, cut off and obstruct. They hinder the understanding of the way to release from suffering. There are five such hindrances: sensuality, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and flurry, and scepticism.

And what is the nutriment of these hindrances? **The three evil modes of life**,³ namely bodily, vocal and mental wrongdoing. This threefold nutriment is in turn nourished by **non-restraint of the senses**,⁴ which is explained by the commentator as the admittance of lust and hate into the six sense organs of eye and so forth (**cakkhadinam channam indriyanam ragapatighappavesanam**).

The nutriment of non-restraint (**indriya asamvara**) is shown to be lack of **mindfulness and of complete awareness**⁵ (**asati asamvajjana**).

Mindfulness is that quality by which one remembers or mentally notes an object. Its characteristic is not floating away as, say, of a pumpkin in a stream: it does not let the object slip, but keeps it steady as a rock. In the context of nutriment the floating away of the dhamma object, of the knowledge of the lakkhanas or characteristics of anicca, dukkha and anatta from the mind, the forgetfulness of the true nature of things is the reason for non-restraint.

It is when one does not bear in mind the transiency and so forth of things that one gives oneself all sorts of liberties vocally and physically and gives rein to fully imaginative thought of an unskillful kind. Lack of complete awareness is lack of these four: Complete awareness of purpose (**sattha sampajanna**); of advantage (**sappaya sampajanna**); of resort (**gocara sampajanna**) and of non-delusion (**asammoha sampajanna**). When one does a thing not with a right purpose, a purpose that is according to the norm, that helps growth in the Good Life; when one looks on things or does actions which do not help growth in the Good Life; when one does things not advantageous to becoming better; when one forgets the norm which

is the true resort of the striving one; when one lays hold of things believing them to be pleasant, beautiful, permanent and substantial, deludedly,—when he behaves thus, then too non-restraint is nourished.

And below these two, lack of mindfulness and lack of complete awareness, lies **shallow thinking**⁶ (**ayoniso manasikara**). The books say that shallow thinking or unsystematic attention is wrong-course attention. That is, taking the impermanent as permanent; the painful as pleasure; the soulless as a soul, the bad as good. Rooted in shallow thinking is rolling on (in **samsara**). When shallow thinking increases it fulfils two things: nescience and lust for becoming. Ignorance being present, the origination of the entire mass of ill comes to be. Thus a person who is a shallow thinker, like a ship strayed by the impact of the wind's impetuosity, like a herd of cattle fallen into a river's eddy, like an ox yoked to a wheel-contraption, does turning round and circling in existence.

And it is said that **imperfect confidence**⁷ in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha is the condition which develops shallow thinking, and imperfect confidence is due to **non-hearing of the True Law**.⁸ Finally, one does not hear the True Law through lack of contact with the wise, through **not consorting with the good**.⁹ Thus **war** of **kalyanamittata** appears to be the ground reason for the ills of the world.

And conversely the basis and nutriment of all good is shown to be **kalyanamittata**. That furnishes one with the food of the Good Norm which in turn produces confidence in the Triple Gem. When one has confidence in the Jewels there comes into existence profound or systematic thinking; mindfulness and complete awareness, restraint of the senses, the three good modes of life, the four arousings of mindfulness, the seven factors of enlightenment, and deliverance through wisdom,—one after another in due order.

As Dahlke puts it "if anywhere the all-spiritualizing Buddha-word comes to light there it is in the concept of nutrition. In the Buddhist realisation of actuality all—life together with its sufficient reason, ignorance—is contained in that one concept nutrition" like the elephant's footprint which includes all that is pedal.

BUDDHA GAYA

By J. R. Jayawardene, Advocate, M.S.C. (Kelaniya)

In the Mahaparinibbana Sutta the Buddha says to Ananda, "There are these four places, Ananda, which the believing clansman should visit with feelings of reverence. Which are the four? He then mentions the place where the Tathagatha was born, the place where he attained to Supreme Enlightenment, the place where he first preached the Dhamma, and the place where he finally passed away. The Buddha predicted that bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, followers of the Dhamma and devout men and women would undertake pilgrimages to these places. "And they, Ananda, who shall die while they, with believing heart, are journeying on such pilgrimage, shall be reborn after death, when the body shall dissolve, in happy realms."

At Buddha Gaya, we are at a place where a human being, not a god or deva, or any being with divine attributes or of divine origin, attained the highest that man can attain. Beyond the Buddha's achievement no man can go. Every man can however equal that achievement. We reverence Buddha Gaya as the place where the supreme man was realised; we pay homage to Sarnath as the place where the path to that realisation was first preached to the world of men.

In the sixth year after he left his home, Siddhartha, found himself in the district of Magadha. He had not found satisfaction in the teachings of the various ascetics with whom he had conversed, nor had the severe penance of a forty days' fast brought him closer to his goal, and now, restored to normal health by the care of Sujata, he prepared himself for a new effort. The records say that Siddhartha took the golden bowl offered him by Sujata and went down to the bank of the river and bathed. He then cast the golden vessel into the stream saying, "If I am able to attain Enlightenment today, let this pot go upstream, but if not, may it go downstream." And he threw it into the water. It went swiftly up the river until it reached a whirlpool and there it sank. Pleased with this omen, he decided that this was a suitable place for his final exertion, for in his own words, "here was a lovely spot of ground, a charming fresh grove, a flowing river with pleasant, sandy fords, and hard by was a village where I could beg my food." We now know that the place was Uruvela, the modern Buddha Gaya, and the river was Neranjara the river Lilajan of today.

At the foot of the Bodhi-tree facing East, on the full moon day of Vaisakha, Prince Siddhartha attained to Supreme Enlightenment, Nibbana. For seven days he did not move, but experienced the bliss of emancipation, reflecting on the **Paticca-Samuppada**, the cause of suffering. For seven more days he reflected on the cessation of suffering. For another thirty-five days he lingered around the Bodhi-tree, now at the foot of the Ajapala banyan tree, at another time under the protection of the Naga King Mucalinda, then again conversing with the brahman as to who constitutes a brahman, converting the two merchants Tapassu and Bhalluka, and finally acceding to the request to preach the Dhamma.

Since that day Buddha Gaya has been a sacred spot to millions of human beings. Pilgrims of all races have come here for

25 centuries. Kings and millionaires have bestowed their wealth to beautify the holy spot. Every incident of the Buddha's sojourn here has been commemorated by a monument. The hand of time has now effaced many of these, and a man of a strange faith owns the temple and the surrounding land, yet Buddha Gaya still calls to those of Buddhist faith and there are thousands who daily answer it.

It was as pilgrims that a few of us found ourselves on the road to Buddha Gaya. The most convenient way for pilgrims from Ceylon is by way of Calcutta. The Calcutta-Benares train brings you to Gaya, a railway centre and a fairly important city in the province of Bihar.

Buddha Gaya is six miles to the south of Gaya. From Gaya we travelled by carriage, along a dusty road, which runs throughout across a vast barren plain, perfectly flat as far as the eye can see. As we approach Buddha Gaya we pass the home of the Mahant, the present owner of the sacred sites, and the few houses which comprise the village. Emerging from the village it was most refreshing to see the green foliage and the shade of the large number of bo-trees which surround the Great Temple. The absence of trees throughout the journey from Gaya, as well as in the village, makes the precincts of the temple all the more attractive to the eye and soothing to the body. The trees attract innumerable birds too, and these factors help to create the impressions that here is a place where the mind feels elevated, where the passions are calmed, by the moral force of the great Enlightenment, though 2,500 years have passed into history since then.

We leave our carriages and descend to the courtyard of the Great Temple. This is the only monument of historic interest which survives in any structural form. The first mention of any building is associated with the name of Asoka, the Buddhist Emperor of India. In the 21st year of his reign, about the year 249 B.C., Asoka, accompanied by the Saint Upagupta visited Buddha Gaya, and donated 10,000 pieces of gold and built a chaitya.

The Chinese traveller Fa-Hian arrived at Buddha Gaya between A.D. 399 and 414. He saw the Buddha's bathing place, the place where milk-rice was presented and the places associated with his 49 days' stay at Buddha Gaya. Three monasteries flourished here, inhabited by monks who adhered strictly to the rules laid down by the Buddha. Fa-Hian further noticed a stone on which the Buddha had sat, under a great tree, and eaten rice presented to him by two maidens. Hsuan Tsang mentions the same stone, as a blue stone with remarkable veins. In 1861, General Cunningham, India's first Director of Archaeology, noticed a stone which answered the description given by the Chinese travellers and concluded it to be the identical stone described by Fa-Hian. This stone has since then disappeared.

Another Chinese, Hsuan Tsang, visited the holy places of Buddhism between the years 629-642 A.D. He was more observant than Fa-Hian. He described minutely all the temples and statues which surrounded the celebrated bo-tree. It is of interest to us to know that he describes a large building, called the Mahabodhi Sangharama, built by the Sovereign of

Lanka, King Meghavarna (350-379 A.D.). This edifice had six halls, corridors and a three-storeyed pavilion and a surrounding wall 34 feet high. It was constructed with admirable art, and decorated with marvellous pictures.

Of the several monuments noticed by Hsuan Tsang there is only one now extant. This is the Great Temple as it is called. Hsuan Tsang described it thus:—"To the east of the Tree of Knowledge there is a vihara from 160 to 170 feet in height. Its base is about 20 paces on each side. It is built of bluish bricks plastered with chunam. It represents niches disposed in tiers, which contain each a statuette of Buddha in gold. The four sides of the walls are covered with admirable sculptures, in some places by chaplets of pearls, and in some places by images of risish. It is surmounted on the top by an amalaka of gilt copper. On the east side was afterwards constructed a pavilion of two storeys, the roofs of which are sloping and ranged in three tiers. The beams and columns, the doors and the windows, are ornamented with carvings in silver and gold, and set with pearls and precious stones. The deep chambers and the mysterious halls communicate with each other and with others by three doors. On the left and right sides of the outer gateway there are two large niches. That on the left contains a statue of Avalokitesvara Bodhisatva, and that on the right that of Maitreya Bodhisatva. These statues are cast in silver, and are nearly 10 feet in height. Hsuan Tsang also mentions a statue of the Buddha, 11 feet 5 inches in height facing east, under the temple. The statue is gone but the pedestal is there.

The first record of a visit to Buddha Gaya in modern times is by Dr. Buchanan Hamilton, who made a survey of the Bihar province in 1811. His description of the ruins of the Great Temple, leaves no doubt that this was the identical building seen by Hsuan Tsang. Since then the Government of India restored the building at State expense, in 1844, and valuable essays have been written on it, by General Cunningham and by Mr. R. Mitra. It is also now universally accepted that the Great Temple must have been constructed between the visits of Fa-Hian in A.D. 399 and Hsuan Tsang in A.D. 629, for Fa-Hian though he mentions other smaller monuments, does not mention this, and Hsuan Tsang says that this was the predominant building among a number of others surrounding the sacred spot. General Cunningham thinks that the present vihara was built by the celebrated Amara Singh, a contemporary of Kalidasa, about A.D. 500, and that a small building erected earlier by the Emperor Asoka must have been covered by the Great Temple. The only other building at Buddha Gaya, which was in situ up to the middle of the nineteenth century, was the Buddhapada. It was an open pavilion formed of four monolithic pillars situated right opposite the Great Temple. The object of the structure was to provide a covering for a block of granite, bearing the carvings of two human feet, said to be impressions of the Buddha's feet.

Of all the architectural remains discovered at Buddha Gaya, this railing is unquestionably the oldest, and was built about the middle of the third cen-

tury before Christ. It is of the same class as the Sanchi and Bharat structures of the kind, and the characters found on them have not been found in any record of a date later than the second century B.C. It would be quite safe to say that the author of these railings was the Emperor Asoka, who lived at Buddha Gaya for five years, and spent much of his wealth in beautifying it. This railing must have formed part of the structure he put up round the bo-tree, after its destruction by his wife.

There are a number of other buildings, but these have no historical significance and are either buildings put up by the Hindu owners of the site, the Mahants, or by Buddhist pilgrims within the last 100 or 150 years.

We pass on then to the Bodhi-tree, the most sacred object of worship at Buddha Gaya. It was under its shade that Prince Siddhartha attained supreme wisdom and as such it is held in the highest veneration. The Hindus believe that Brahma himself planted it and the Buddhists attribute it to one Digdhakamini, a king of Ceylon. The bo-tree we see today to the west of the Great Temple is of recent origin. At the beginning of the 19th century when Buchanan Hamilton saw the tree, he found it in full vigour and he thought it could not have exceeded 100 years in age. In 1861, General Cunningham found the tree alive but very much decayed. In 1876, the tree was dead and knocked down by a storm and its place was filled by a seedling about

three feet high. Photographs taken by Sinhalese Buddhist pilgrims about 1890 show this tree flourishing as a growing and healthy plant. Today it is full grown, and spreads its shade as its ancestors must have done 2,400 years ago. We do not know when the original tree ceased to exist. Fa-Hian and Hsuan Tsang mention the story of the destruction of the original tree by Asoka's queen, and of its restoration. Asoka is supposed to have erected an enclosure round the tree which Hsuan Tsang says he saw. There is also a story of its destruction by King Sasanka about the year 610 A.D.

Though the bo-tree at Buddha Gaya cannot be called the oldest historical tree in the world—a title which the bo-tree at Anuradhapura alone is entitled to—there can be no doubt that throughout the centuries the spot on which the modern tree stands has been worshipped as the most sacred spot in Buddhism and pious Buddhists have replanted a new tree with faithful hands on each occasion a tree was destroyed.

The more recent history of Buddha Gaya is closely connected with Lanka and particularly with a famous son of Lanka, the Ven. Dharmapala Devamitta. The Ven. Dharmapala first visited Buddha Gaya in January, 1891, and stayed there several months worshipping in the temple. When he was in Japan, on his way back from the Chicago Parliament of Religions, in November, 1893, he happened to read that at the time of the Mahomedan invasion of Bihar in 1201

A.D. the Buddhist priests took away the image of the Buddha from Buddha Gaya and hid it in the forests of Rajagaha. He accordingly suggested to the Buddhists of Japan to gift a suitable statue to Buddha Gaya. This they did and on the full moon day of Vaisakha in the year 1894, he again visited Buddha Gaya with the Japanese statue, a beautiful work of art of the 13th century, carved in wood and artistically lacquered in gold. After he and his friends had placed the statue inside the temple, they were disturbed by the servants of the Mahant. The Ven. Dharmapala sued them, but though successful in the lower court, the accused were acquitted by the High Court of Calcutta. The courts held that the Mahant was owner of the land on which the Great Temple and the other monuments stood, and further held that the Buddhists had the right to worship and place images in the temple absolutely free from regulation by the Mahant.

Since then various attempts have been made both by the Ven. Dharmapala and the organisation he founded, the Maha Bodhi Society, to recover the Great Temple and the sacred site from private hands and use it in a trust composed of Buddhists of all races. The Congress Government in Bihar was anxious to help and was preparing legislation to give effect to this idea when it resigned from office.

This in short is the history of one of the most sacred spots in the world.

WOMEN VERSIFIERS IN SINHALESE

By C. M. Austin de Silva, B.A. (Lond.)

Be it in the harvesting field, in the home, or in the nursery, the muse's torch inflamed the hearts of the daughters of Sri Lanka to lisp in poetic numbers. The very early poems in Sinhalese literature, namely, the Muvadevdavata, and Sasadvata were composed in the reign of Queen Lilavati who ascended the throne about the year 1197 A.D. The Sasadvata, records that the poem was composed at the request of the Queen, who was a patron and lover of learning. The poet Alagiyavanna Mohottala, in the introductory verses to the Kusajataka Kavya, his masterpiece, eulogises the virtues and learning of a noble lady, named Maniksamī, whose invitation inspired Alagiyavanna to compose that famous poem. A Kandyan lady popularly known as "Balavattalā Mahatmayo" is considered to be the author of a poem entitled "Anuragamalaya". Rancagoda Hamine and Disanayaka Lamaetani displayed considerable skill in the art of reciting and composing poetry.

Judging from the several verses written by the queen of King Rajasinha II, we conclude that she was a poetess of no mean order. The queen had secretly fallen in love with a young, handsome, Portuguese general named Gascoine or Dascon, to whom she wrote several verses, expressing her love. When the king became aware of this amorous intimacy, he ordered Dascon to be executed, and the queen is said to have written the following verses to her paramour, at the moment of his death.

තුන්කල තුමුල මනසේ මල් රස නොවී ද
කන්කල ගජන් කොපුලන බිඳු රොනව වැ ද
කන්කල පහර වැනි නිරිඳුව අසුව ඉ ද
පින්කල හිනනුවනි දුන් කැවෙනු කුමට ද

These lines have been rendered into English verse by the late Hon. Mr. James d'Alwis, in his English translation of the Sidatsangarava.

"As the honey-loving bee, heedless thro' the forest flies,
Where the many coloured flowers tempt him with their rich supplies,
And by fragrance strange allured on the tusked head alights,
Victim of the flapping ears all amid the stol'n delights
Thus adored love, art thou captive of thy king and lord,
Yet dash sorrow from thy brow, cease to mourn my dear, adored."

ස ස් ම න් කරන මලුවේද බැඳි හා ද
සිත්සන් නොසින් දුන් මුව මි බි වා ද
ඉ ස් ම න් ගමන් හිමි මිබි අඳගන වා ද
දසකාන් මසෙ කමට පිවිත දෙන වා ද

In the royal promenade we made love, and with joyous heart did suck the nectar in the lips. O my lordly love, art thou going so soon to thy death. Alas! Dascon, for me, dost thou sacrifice thy life.

The sister of King Rajasinha II, sent a warning message to Dascon, advising him to refrain from his mad pursuit.

අ කු රු ක මේ කුමටද නුවණ මද ග රු
හ කු රු කැලේ ද මදද දිගව ගත තු රු
ක පු රු ම ලේ සුවදව මැනසෙහි බිඹ රු
න පු රු ම ලේ දුන දුන නොකරන් විය රු

O thou, wanting in profound wisdom, for what purpose didst thou indulge in the art of learring? Is the sweet jaggers left to melt and waste away? The bees attracted by the rich aroma of the camphor flower, do perish. O! brother knowing that it is harmful, do not persevere in your mad folly.

A village woman seeing a "Gumbiri tree" in full bloom, in a field at Potuveva expressed her admiration. Her verse is remarkable for its euphonic charm and levity.

ඉ ද ද සේම ඇද නැති
 තිඹිරි ගස වෙලේ
 රෙද්ද සේම අතු නැමිලා
 පෙලින් පෙලේ
 එ ද ද මෙහෙම මල් කැඳෝ
 රැලින් රැලේ
 ඇද්ද මෙහෙම තිඹිරක්
 පොතු වැවේ වෙලේ

The "timbiri tree" grows erect in the field, and its branches laden with flowery clusters bend gracefully. It is surprising to behold a "timbiri tree" of this loveliness in the field of Potuveva.

A country dame from Rekogama expressed her skill in the muse's art, in the following lines.

අකෝදතු බලයෙන් බිදින
 කපි ම ගේ
 දෙපෝදට පායන පුත්සදක් වී ගේ
 යකෝ මිහොම නොකරන්
 මෙමට අරද ගේ
 රැකෝගමට අදුරයි සිමි
 නැතුව මගේ

The poetry I compose with the power of my poetic tongue, is as luminous and alluring as the radiant full moon. O devilish fellow, do not come to indulge with me in that amorous sport. Alas! in the absence of my husband, it is all darkness in the village of Rekogama.

In a poetic dialogue betwixt a man and his wife we come across an excellent piece of poetry, remarkable for its mellifluous style and euphonic charm.

යන මේ ගමන් සිදු උනිනන් පරමාද
 එනතුරු අන් දෙසක් නොබලන්
 සිතුව ද
 අලපන පැන් වැකි පිලසින්
 නොව හා ද
 සිහිම ඉදින් ලදේ මා දුන් අවවා ද

O dear, if I tarry long while on this journey, do not gaze on any other, but

remain with mind composed, until my return and like the water drops on the lotus leaf refrain from attachment. O woman be mindful of the advice I have given you.

සිමි යන ගම්වල අගනුන්
 නොව හා ද
 එනු විගසින් එහි නොවෙමින්
 පරමා ද
 සිමියනි දුන් මබ මට දුන් අවවා ද
 මම ඉවසමි මදරද ඉවසුමි දේ ද

My lord, wait not, to make love with the women in the villages through which you journey. Come back quickly, and do not tarry long. O lord, the advice you have given me, I shall bear in mind, but will the god of love allow me to do so?

Gajaman Nona or Dona Isabel Perumal Cornelia, is the premier poetess of Lanka. An admiring critic has eulogised her as "the singing bird of Ruhuna." She has written several fine pieces. It is in her lyric verse that we get the best poetry of Gajaman Nona. Her lyrical poetry is exquisitely rich, graceful and fascinating. Gajaman Nona's well known lyric on the "Nuga tree" at Denapitiya is a brilliant piece.

පිනවන දුටු දන සැම—
 ගහ මුහ පිහිටි කදිම
 තුරු පෙල අවට සැදිම—
 සුත් සෙවනැල්
 ගන මේකුලෙව් දුළුම—
 විහඟුන් මතරැව් දිම
 සුමනින් පත ලෙලිදිම—
 ඇති හැම කල්
 යන එන අය සැපසේම—
 එහි ඉද හිමි සැනසීම
 දස දිග අතු විහිදිම—හිමෙන විසල්
 දෙනපිටියටම ඉතාම—
 වටිනා මහ නුග දු ම
 බල සකි එහි සිත් සේම—නිලඹර දුල්

O friend behold at Denapitiya, the great banyan tree, glorious like the azure sky. It is enchantingly alluring to all beholders. Surrounded by the perennial greenery of other trees, it stands by the river, casting an ample shade. It resembles the dark-blue rain-cloud, wherein the mating birds warble amidst the leaves fluttering in the breeze. Under the shade of its foliage the passers-by rest comfortably and allay the fatigue of their bodies. And the intense heat of the sun is warded off by its branches stretching out in the ten directions.

Rancagoda Hamine hailed from the village of Rancagoda in the Matara district. Although she was not a woman of letters, yet she was inspired to write spontaneous verse, sparkling with wit, and humour.

මෙහෙම ගමේ රංචාගොඩ ඉපදි ලා
 රුහුණු රටට මා දීලා ඉලච්චේ
 දෙමට පොතු කකා කට
 හමයන්නැවේ
 සැම දෙපියනේ මගෙ සිමියා
 රැකෝ රැකෝ

I was born in the village of Rancagoda, and woe is me, for I married a man of the Ruhuna land. My mouth is being peeled by eating "demata potu". May all the gods protect my dear husband.

බොලන් සුසානෝ මම
 කොමුඹ යනකොට
 බල්ලොන් නොකන වැල වරකා
 ගල්කිස්සේ
 කතරගම් ගොසින් මැරුණා
 පිහිය මිට
 මේවා නොදක පත පලයන් පෙරේද

O Susana, while travelling to Colombo, I saw at Galkissa, ripe jak unfit to be eaten by a cur. When I went to Katara-gama, the handle of my knife was damaged. I wish I had died the day before yesterday, rather than meet with such disaster.

HOSTEL LIFE IN THE Y.M.B.A.

By K. C. de Silva, B.A. (Lond.)

The hostel is the Cinderella of the Y.M.B.A. It is, sometimes, the scapegoat on which are heaped all the sins of commission and omission. Sometimes, it is regarded as anathema and bete noire by the powers that be of the association. Till a year or two ago the unseemly wrangle between the hostellers and those in authority at the Y.M.B.A. was a time-honoured tradition. It assumed the proportions of a puny civil war spiced with personal acrimony and political bitterness. Those were the inevitable mountains which spring up from insignificant mole-hills in human relations—a mere storm in a tea cup that has blown over. This did not bespeak anything amiss in the administration or anything perverse in the human material in the hostel. It only emphasised the essentially elemental human aspect of life in the hostel, or for a matter of that, in all human institutions. This weakness was a strength, the symptom of virility of the hostel and the association, bursting with youthful exuberance, bubbling with manly vigour and throbbing with the joie de vivre of life. With such heyday of activity there

is no danger of decay or decadence setting in at the Y.M.B.A. Few realise that the hostel is the hub of the association. It is the core and the heart, the mainspring of its life, without the throbbing of which the association would be starved of its life-blood. Minus the hostel, the association would be as dead as the dodo, its premises as silent as the grave. The hostel is the dynamo that galvanizes the association into activity. Yes, yet the hostel department is the Cinderella of the Y.M.B.A. Ours is a cosmopolitan hostel. It knows no barriers of creed, class or clan. In the hostel there have been and there are men belonging to various religions and races—Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Muslims, Sinhalese and Jaffna Tamils, Europeans and Indians, Moors, Japanese, Chinese and Burmese. They are men drawn from every stratum of society, from all conditions and walks of life. Among them there have been glamorous advocates and affluent staff officers, garrulous graduates and peripatetic pedagogues, humble students, State Councilors in embryo and others in less pretenti-

ous vocations. In this motley concourse there are complex diversities of character and personality. Sometimes a stray rara avis flies in, creates a flutter and flies out as quickly as it came. At another time a "bad hat" from the flotsam and jetsam of life floats into the tranquillity of hostel life and is cast away. The ages of the hostellers vary from about late adolescence and early manhood to late middle age, the majority tending towards the former with a few instances of men in the afternoon of life. The character, disposition, habits and general outlook vary with the difference in age. There is the irresponsible youth of irrespressible exuberance; the boisterous young man blithe and gay in facetious vein, querulous and pugnacious in militant spirits; the natty man-about-town, sartorially meticulous, a gentleman to the finger-tips; the gay bachelor, affable and sociable, with his patronising aloofness and condescending bonhomie; the serious married man, cold and calculating, wise in counsel like Nestor of old and looking askance at the frivolities of ill-mannered youth. In spite of the

protean complexities rooted in the infinite variety of human character in the hostel, the communal and social life is harmonious.

It is true that now and then a discordant note disturbs the harmony of the place; an occasional "tiff" or manifestation of frayed tempers and nerves mar the tranquility of life; cliquism and the old Adam in us make the wheels of life ill-lubricated and put the life of this world in microcosm seriously out of joint, even though temporarily. These frictions and petty bickerings are part and parcel of human existence, found even in the best constituted and most orderly homes.

Still there is a wonderful unity in all matters of importance, a spirit of give and take the ideal of live and let live, and the glowing warmth of camaraderie.

This unity amidst diversity, the harmony among unseemingly irreconcilable ideologies of hostellers of different faiths and the reconciliation of the wilderness of human complexities speak volumes for the infinite tolerance, the universality and the catholicity of outlook of Buddhism.

Those who believe that the hostel is a Buddhist ashram may be disillusioned. The inmates are not angels; most of them are ordinary men engaged in the rough and tumble of a work-a-day life. They have their human foibles and frailties. To insist that every hosteller should lead a strict Buddhist life would be a Utopian ideal. At least most of them conform to the conventional standards of a "good" Buddhist obtaining in the country. I am not sure whether there is any *upasaka* among us, though a few of us are Buddhist idealists who believe with Browning that "It is not what man does that exalts him, but what man would do". It is incumbent on every one of us residing in the hostel to strive after the ideal of being a good Buddhist in the strict sense of the word. The constant endeavour of striving after this ideal, each in his own way, and as far as circumstances and opportunities permit, can lift us up into a higher plane of spiritual and moral excellence. Different people attain different planes of excellence. Be that as it may, let us face realities. The world is a

real place, not an ideal—so is the hostel.

The hostel is a home away from home. Its non-commercial character contributes much to invest it with a homely serenity and informality. The religious activities of the association permeate into the atmosphere of the place and give the spiritual background so characteristic of a good home. The social and sporting activities of the association provide the necessary "pep", charm and liveliness necessary to dispel the leaden gloom that would otherwise envelop the premises. The spacious rooms upstairs, full of light and well-ventilated, are easily the best available among all the hostels in Colombo. The rooms are not at all overcrowded as in other similar hostels and it is to the lasting credit of the association that it refuses to exploit the situation by trying to accommodate more hostellers and derive a bigger income.

Our association is not commercialised. It does not derive a single cent from the catering arrangements for the hostel. The association only gets the room rent. The fees for board are all spent on the hostellers, who manage their catering by means of an elected committee of three, one of whom is in charge of the finances. The catering is, in fact, done as in a "chummy". Each hosteller is his own master. On each rests the responsibility of conducting himself in the best traditions of the place, he being answerable only to the Committee of Management of the association. The hosteller in charge of the finance is *de facto* the direct lineal descendant of the Resident Manager, which post was discontinued some time ago. He is the liaison officer between the hostellers and the Committee of Management of the Y.M.B.A.

At present there are 19 hostellers, some of them holding high posts in government service, and among the younger lot are a good number of professional students and a few who have just entered their professions. For professional and university students no better place can be imagined for their studies. Perfect silence reigns over the place the whole day, except between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. and on days when the hall downstairs is let out for weddings, concerts or meetings. The hostel provides the sporting amenities and

the cultural and social contacts that are so essential a part of education. It may have modest pretensions—as all good public hostels have—to be called a small University of Life.

The excellence of the hostel has its own inherent dangers. Some have called the hostel, with a certain amount of justification, the Bachelors' Paradise. The hostel is an attractive but bloodless substitute for a home. Life in a hostel is glamorously artificial, divorced from the stark realities of home life. It is a false hot-house existence with an irresponsible outlook on life. We are apt to live in a little cloud-land without any stable foundation for the simple economic and domestic virtues of life. A hostel should not provide an escape and a haven of refuge from the burdens and social responsibilities of building up of a home. An irresponsible and diffident bachelor may be induced by such artificial surroundings to lead a life of single blessedness. The hostel should primarily be for young men on the threshold of life, and specially for professional and university students who really need good surroundings and a wholesome atmosphere with a fair amount of discipline at this dangerous period of their life when they are apt to go astray being thrown into the whirligig of Colombo life immediately after their school career of repression and restraint.

The hostel, in my view, should be restricted to those below a certain income, if they are employed, and to all students above a certain age irrespective of their income. Of course, a leaven of maturity is essential in a hostel as a beneficent steadying influence. A certain proportion between the students and those employed might be maintained; at the same time the tone of the place should not be sacrificed for the sake of charity and fairness. Standards and rules laid down for admission should be rigorously enforced. Not for a moment do I suggest that our hostel and institution should be *bourgeois*. On the other hand it should be run in the true humble spirit of Buddhist fraternity. If another hostel could be started by the Association on the same lines as a separate unit, much good would be done, as extensions to the present hostel would make the place too unwieldy.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

New Members: 3.7.45:—Lieut. N. de S. Gunaratne, Headquarters, C.A.S.C., No. 9, A.B.P.O.

Mr. T. P. Gunasekara, Colombo Commercial Co., Ltd., P.O. Box 33, Colombo; Mr. K. R. Perera, Mills Superintendent, Colombo Commercial Co. Ltd., Colombo; Mr. H. Wilfred Peiris, Treasurer's Dept., Town Hall, Colombo; Mr. K. A. F. Perera, 188, Mahgakande, Maradana; Mr. D. B. S. de Silva, "Siri Wimana", Magalle, Galle.

10.7.45:—Mr. Eddison Fernando, 433, 2nd Division, Maradana; Mr. C. M. Austin de Silva, Asst. Master, St. Joseph's College, Borella; Mr. S. Sittampalam, Assessor, Income Tax Department, Colombo.

17.7.45:—Mr. G. Walter de Silva, Inspector, Municipality, Colombo.

23.7.45:—Mr. G. R. Amhalawanan, Municipality, Colombo; Mr. D. G. Albert Silva, South Ceylon Distributors, 11, Sea Street, Galle.

31.7.45:—Mr. C. M. Walter Wijesinghe, Rakwana; and Mr. M. B. de Silva, Land Registry, Rajagiriya.

Personal:—The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake, was entertained to a complimentary lunch at Claridge's, London, by His Majesty's Government.

Dr. M. W. M. de Silva, M.O.H., Panadura, has been transferred to the head office of the Medical Department.

Dr. A. M. Samarasinghe, Medical Officer of Health, Moratuwa, is leaving on promotion as Divisional Medical Officer of Health, Kurunegala.

Dr. D. F. de S. Gunawardene and Dr. P. D. S. Wijesekera have been selected by the Medical Department for study leave in England.

Mr. D. R. Wijegunawardene left for England last month.

Weddings:—We offer our congratulations to—

Mr. R. Wilson Hegoda and Miss Nanda Rubasinghe, Jayawardeneam.org

Mr. M. D. W. R. Saparamadu and Miss Linda Peiris.

Mr. C. J. Ranatunga, Advocate, and Miss Ruby Samarakoon.

Film Show:—A record house greeted Mr. Annesley Krasse when he conducted a film show at the association hall on July 20. It was an unprecedented success. Several reels, in black and white and in technicolour, were put on the screen with a background of appropriate music. The films depicting the Esala Perahara, Kandyan dancing, Peradeniya Botanical Gardens and Sri Pada in technicolour which were presented with a selection of oriental music recorded by well known artistes were greatly admired. "Silk Culture in Japan", an educational film of great beauty, "Diving Aces", "Scenes from Baroda" (last two kindly lent by Mr. E. P. A. Fernando) and a colourful cartoon, "Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp", completed the programme.

"Our grateful thanks are due to Mr. Krasse for the excellent entertainment he gave us," writes the Secretary of the Social Activities Branch, Mr. V. S. Nanayakkara, whose unbounded enthusiasm, and never-failing energy have been responsible for much of the new life in the Y.M.B.A.

Oriental Orchestra:—The Oriental Orchestra, which was formed in March, under the direction of Mr. Lionel Edirisinghe, Sangit Visharad, is carrying on its practices weekly at the Association premises. It is conducted on lines similar to the great orchestras in India. More players are needed, particularly flute and veena, in order to improve the orchestra.

Will those who desire to join kindly send in their applications early. The fee has been reduced to Rs. 5/- per month.

It is hoped that more members will avail themselves of this opportunity of learning to play rare compositions for a nominal fee.

Arrangements are being made to give a public performance in September.

Wrestling and Judo:—The Wrestling and Judo section of the Physical Culture Department made considerable progress during July. There were 9 new recruits for wrestling and 4 for Judo. Many more have expressed their desire to come in from August. A new feature is the free admittance of school boys and there are already 8 of them.

Four members took part in the Intermediate Wrestling Meet conducted by the Ceylon Amateur Wrestling Association and, though beaten, won the appreciation of the spectators for their plucky fights.

Messrs. H. P. Jayawardene, W. R. K. Fernando, W. F. Fernando and S. K. Silva form the Wrestling and Judo Committee.

Light of Asia Elocution Contest:—The semi-finals of the annual Light of Asia Elocution Contest conducted by the Colombo Y.M.B.A. were held on Saturday, July 14, 1945, at the Association headquarters. 77 boys and girls from several schools competed. The competition, as usual, was conducted in four sections, boys and girls being divided into juniors and seniors separately.

The following candidates entered for the Contest:—

Junior Girls:—Hemawathie S. Amarasakera, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Colombo. Dulcie Bastiansz, "Sarnath", 177A, Rupesinghe Avenue, Dehiwala, Rencira Campbell, 50, Mt. Mary, Baseline Road, Maradana. Swarna de Mel, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa. Therese Don, St. Thomas' College, Kotte. Kulina Fernando, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa. Irangan Heendeniya, "Nandana", Mirihana, Nugegoda. Mangala Heendeniya, "Nandana", Mirihana, Nugegoda. Padma Kumari Hettiaratchi, Beach Road, Mt. Lavinia. Mallika Jayanayake, Visakha Vidyalaya, Bambalapitiya. L. Jayaratne, 145/1, Ketawalamulla Lane, Maradana. Esme Jayasinghe, 19, Kandewatta Road, Nugegoda. Indranie Jayasinghe, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. Sujata Jayasinghe, Visakha Vidyalaya, Bambalapitiya. Padmawathie Kulasekera, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. Doreen Sriyathala Liyanage, c/o Miss Perera, "The Walawwa", Nawala Road, Nugegoda. Harriet Sunethra Liyanage, c/o Miss Perera, "The Walawwa", Nawala Road, Nugegoda. Manel Mary Mutuwady, "Erica Cottage", Melder Place, Nugegoda. Mavis Nelson, St. Thomas' College, Kotte.

Manel Nanayakkara, 11, Campbell Terrace, Maradana. Astrid Perera, "The Walawwa", Nawala Road, Nugegoda. Primrose Rupasinghe, St. Thomas' College, Kotte. Yasoma Rupasinghe, Visakha Vidyalaya, Bambalapitiya. Chitra Samarasinghe, Sreedhara Walawwa, Borella. Indranee Samarasinghe, Sreedhara Walawwa, Borella. Irene Samarasinghe, Sreedhara Walawwa, Borella. Joyce Sandrasegaram, St. Thomas' College, Kotte. Kshama Weerakoon, Visakha Vidyalaya, Bambalapitiya. Sylvia Weerasinghe, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Maradana. N. S. P. Wijesinghe, "Nimal", Nawala Road, Rajagiriya. Vagdevi Welivittigoda, "Nulands", Nawala Road, Nugegoda. Iranganie de Silva, "Sevana", Nugegoda. Seelawathie Rajakaruna, Anula Vidyalaya, Nugegoda. Sita Goonetilleke, Anula Vidyalaya, Nugegoda. Kusumalatha Wijeratna, Anula Vidyalaya, Nugegoda. E. R. Lettitia Jayasundera, Anula Vidyalaya, Nugegoda. Iranganie Perera, Anula Vidyalaya, Nugegoda.

Sanatorium,
Kandana, 23.3.45.

The Hon. Treasurer, Y.M.B.A.,
Colombo.

Dear Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of the magazines with thanks.

May I add that, this contribution from the Y.M.B.A. is very greatly appreciated. Most of the patients are Buddhists. Any pamphlets and books on Buddhism either in English or Sinhalese will be of great value.

Thanking you and your Association.

I am, Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.)

Hon. Secretary, Kandana Sanatorium Patients' Association.

Note by the Gen. Secy., Y.M.B.A.:—

This letter speaks for itself. Will members who can spare books on Buddhism in Sinhalese or English and magazines please forward them to the office to be distributed to the patients' associations in different parts of the island?

Magazines from the Association's Reading Room are sent regularly to hospitals.

Junior Boys:—Ian Louis Campbell, 50, Mt. Mary, Baseline Road, Colombo. Lal de Alwis, Shalimar, Ratmalana, Mt. Lavinia. W. Susantha de Alwis, 10, 13th Lane, Bambalapitiya. Bernard de Cruse, St. Thomas' College, Kotte. Lakshman de Mel, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa. G. L. Wijeratne de Silva, St. Thomas' College, Kotte. Primus Tilakaratne de Silva, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. Upali de Silva, St. Thomas' College, Kotte. H. Dharmasiri, Mahiyadewa College, Kurunegala. G. Thompson Fernando, "Kallis Cottage", 216, Wasala Road, Kotahena. M. Dayaratne Hewage, 105, Stanley Place, Maradana. M. Prematilaka Hewage, 105, Stanley Place, Maradana. E. R. Jansz, 39, Initium Road, Dehiwala. D. J. Jayakody, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. S. A. Jayaratne, 145/1, Ketawalamulla Lane, Maradana. B. T. S. Karunaratne, c/o S. D. Karunaratne, Dandagamwa. Haig Ranjit Karunaratne, c/o S. D. Karunaratne, Dandagamwa. N. J. Mendis, Ananda College, Colombo. H. S. Nalaka, 350, Dematagoda Road, Maradana.

M. A. Perera, Mahiyadewa College, Kurunegala. A. D. Piyasena, Ananda College, Colombo. S. Samarasinghe, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. A. A. Sathar, 30, Gonawela Road, Matale. K. M. Senarathne, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. R. P. Somatilaka, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. W. R. Tillekeratne, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. Harischandra Welivittigoda, "Nulands", Nawala Road, Nugegoda. Mahasen Welivittigoda, "Nulands", Nawala Road, Nugegoda. Upali Wijewickrama, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. Tilak N. Ratnakara, "Downham", No. 232, Moratuwa. Vajira Fernando, 55, Turret Road, Colpetty.

Senior Girls:—Dhananjani Perera, Visakha Vidyalaya, Bambalapitiya. Mallika Undugodage, Visakha Vidyalaya, Bambalapitiya. Thalini Fernando, "Siri Wimana", 45/1, Braybrooke St., Slave Island. Hemalatha Jayasundara, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. Winifred Payoc, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. Kamala Jayaweera, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa. Daya de Mel, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa. Kusuma Fernando, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa. Rane Heendeniya, Nandana, Mirihana, Nugegoda. Jassima Pietersz, St. Thomas' College, Kotte. Phyllis de Cruse, St. Thomas' College, Kotte. D. G. Keritivyagala, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Maradana. H. Trixy Bastiansz, "Sarnath", 177A, Rupesinghe Avenue, Dehiwala. S. Hettiarachchi Menike, Beach Road, Mt. Lavinia. Mallika-devi Hettiarachchi, Beach Road, Mt. Lavinia. Carmen Goonatilleke, "Accacia Villa", Lauries Road, Bambalapitiya. Kusuma Rajapakse, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Maradana. Mahanel Welivittigoda, Women's College of Higher Education, Colombo. Malini Kulatunga, Anula Vidyalaya, Nugegoda.

Senior Boys:—D. R. P. Abeyawardena, Ananda College, Colombo. S. Adihetti, Mahiyadewa College, Kurunegala. Chandrananda Aponso, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa. Austin Dharmathilake Balasuriva, c/o B. A. Perera, Mahawila, Alubomulla. Neville Daniel, Carey College, Colombo. Gerald G. de C. Dassanaike, Ananda College, Colombo. R. M. A. Dassanayake, Mahiyadewa College, Kurunegala. W. Dunstan de Alwis, 19, 13th Lane, Bambalapitiya. L. Gregory Fernando, 427, Church Road, Jaela. I. A. Gurusinha, "Somi-medura", Kumbalwella, Galle. A. C. S. Hameed, Vijaya College, Matale. S. V. Ingersol, Carey College, Colombo. I. B. Javathirathne, Ananda College, Colombo. M. P. P. Jayatilleke, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Maradana. A. St. V. Jayawardena, Palugamwa Estate, Kattimahana. N.W.P. T. C. Z. Jayman, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Minuwangoda. T. B. Meewadana, Mahiyadewa College, Kurunegala. Boniface Regis Payoc, Nalanda Vidyalaya, Colombo. Arunugam Perampadan, Motor Transport Office, Colombo. M. Dayaratna Perera, Ananda College, Colombo. Warnasena Rasapitira, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa. S. A. D. K. Waidyaratna, Wackwella Road, Kumbalwella, Galle. S. P. Withanapathirana, Mahiyadewa College, Kurunegala. D. Wijepala Demuniwasa, Godagedera, Balapitiya. Sampat Sri Nandalochana, Fellowsleigh, 10th Lane, Bambalapitiya.

Four from each section were selected to present themselves at the finals on August 2, at 6 p.m. at the Association headquarters. They were:—

Senior Boys:—M. P. P. Jayatillake, Nalanda Vidyalyaya, Colombo; I. B. Jayathiratne, Ananda College, Colombo; Sampat Sri Nandalochana (Private); and Warnasena Rasaputra, Moratu Vidyalyaya.

Senior Girls:—Mallika-devi Hettiarachchi (Private); S. Hettiarachchi Meniké (Private); Kusuma Rajapakse, Nalanda Vidyalyaya, Colombo; and Mahanel Weliwitigoda, Women's College of Higher Education, Colombo.

Junior Boys:—Ian Louis Campbell (Private); Bernard de Cruse, St. Thomas' College, Kotte; Haig Ranjit Karunaratne (Private); and H. S. Nalaka (Private).

Junior Girls:—Dulcie Bastiansz (Private); Padma Kumari Hettiarachchi (Private); Manel Nanayakkara (Private); and Mavis Nelson, St. Thomas' College, Kotte.

The judges at the semi-finals were, Mr. H. W. Jayawardene, Mr. G. T. Samarawickrama, Mr. T. B. Dissanayake, Mr. J. G. T. Weeraratne, Mr. Mahasen Rutnam, Mr. Cecil M. W. de S. Wijeratne, Mr. E. P. Wijetunga and Mr. Ranjit Hewagama.

Buddhist Congress:—The annual sessions of the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress will be held on August 25 and 26, at the Kegalu Vidyalyaya, Kegalle. The Kegalle Y.M.B.A. will be the hosts.

Letters to the Editor

CAN A BUDDHIST USE HIS OWN JUDGMENT?

Sir,

I am obliged to P. D. R. for his letter of May 6, and hasten to acknowledge my mistake. When I wrote the sentence in question I had in mind the words of the Buddha in the *Maha Parinibbana Sutta*, not so much the *Apadesas* as the *Padesas* (permission) and particularly the *Attanomatī* (one's own judgment). It is clear that even *Attanomatī* must agree with the texts and commentaries. But if P. D. R. holds that the *Mahapadesas* were intended for the use of the *Sangha* alone then the correct view is that no layman has a right to think for himself.

Yet the layman who considers the spirit of the *Dhamma* as a whole cannot help feeling that the Buddha encouraged individual thinking for the simple reason that his religion had everything to gain and nothing to fear from the thoughtful man. The Buddhist method is essentially one which is aimed at helping every man to realise certain truths for himself. Buddhism is unique in that it gives its adherents complete freedom of thought. Permission to use one's own judgment is implied in the very spirit of the *Dhamma* even if it has not been expressed in so many words. P. D. R. and your readers should therefore kindly consider the following points.

1. If the *Mahapadesas* were intended for the use of the *Sangha* alone then the *Sangha* has been very slow in taking advantage of it. During the early history of our religion many attempts were made to introduce fresh matter into it. If on

those occasions the *Sangha* as a body followed the procedure laid down in the *Maha Parinibbana* the *Dhamma* today should be a model of consistency. Instead the *Sangha* divided on every issue, thus giving rise to numerous sects many of whom invented whole *sutras*. There were schisms even among the *Theravadins* not only in India but also in Ceylon. Our scriptures therefore are not as pure as we would like them to be. The obvious remedy is for the *Sangha* to hold a council with a view to restoring its purity. But it is doubtful if the *Sangha* of today can ever be got together to work harmoniously for a common purpose. And the commentators disagree among themselves. In the circumstances can we help using our judgment?

2. I used to think that Buddhist publications so often give prominence to the *Kalama Sutta* because of the open mind which the Buddha advocated therein. With all due respect to the *Dhammadharas* mentioned by P. D. R. I shall have to struggle hard to believe that in that *sutta* the Buddha has set up a criterion by which he was not willing that his own religion should be judged. The trouble is that the *Kalama* is seldom if ever quoted in full. It is true that the *sutta* starts with a reference to the religions of other teachers. But the Buddha goes on to give a short exposition of the salient points of his own religion (the three *Kusala*- and *Akusala*-mulas, the four *Brahmaviharanas* etc.) and by means of repeated questions compels the *Kalamas* to admit that his religion comes up to the standards which he had just set up. It would be interesting therefore to know on what grounds the *Dhammadharas* base their view. Even the *Manorathapurani* fails to advance such a view. It is interesting to note in this connection that Mr. Woodward uses for his translation of the *Kalama* the title "Use your own judgment." Vide "Some Sayings of the Buddha" p. 281.

3. If the words to *Baddiya* also do not refer to Buddhism then there is a similar passage in *Vinaya* ii 10 which does. *Maha Prajapati* the Gotami asks the Buddha "for a teaching hearing which she may dwell alone, zealous, ardent and resolved." The Buddha then says "of whatsoever teachings thou canst assure thyself these doctrines conduce to dispassion of such teachings thou mayest with certainty affirm. This is the norm. This is the discipline. This is the Master's message." The Buddha was obviously giving in this passage the guiding principle underlying his religion.

4. It was only the Buddha who could have asked a desirable convert like Upali to reconsider his decision to embrace Buddhism and to "make a thorough investigation". Only such a religion will appeal to the wise man.

5. The Buddha discouraged spoon-feeding in religious matters. In reproaching Aritha the Vulture-Tamer He refer-

red to "certain misguided ones who learn the scriptures by heart without investigating their meaning or taking any interest therein."

6. The Buddha never burked discussion; he invited questions. In the *Vimamsaka Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikaya*) the Buddha says "You should question me again and again before you accept my omniscience as a fact." If the Buddha openly encouraged his disciples to doubt his omniscience what is wrong in doubting the genuineness of the scriptures. It is by doubting several explanations that we finally come upon one which admits of no doubt.

7. Buddhism does not call for blind belief. On another occasion at Jetavana the Buddha made certain from the *Bhikkhus* that his religion was being preached as a matter of personal conviction rather than as a revelation from him, and added "The intelligent man who wishes to understand this teaching should first ponder over it in his own mind."

8. Narada Thera in his "Buddhism in a Nutshell" p. 12 says "Buddhism is saturated with the spirit of free inquiry."

9. Sir Radhakrishnan in his *Ratnayake* Trust lecture p. 2 says in reference to Buddhism "it has a singular attraction for free and inquiring minds and is very much in agreement with the boldest speculations of modern thought." On p. 3 "the faith which also makes a strong appeal to the intellectuals of our age."

10. It is seldom that a writer on Buddhism fails to refer to its catholicity. In the very issue in which P. D. R.'s letter appeared I noticed with interest the following passages from the learned contributors of the *Buddhist*:—

(a) On p. 95 *Bhikkhu Soma* says "In this sense the Buddha *Dhamma* is the one and only teaching of perfect freedom and independence for the individual."

(b) On p. 100 U. *Dhammajoti* says that the Buddha said "What I am no more my teachings and your reason will serve you as a guide." This is an interesting quotation but I have been unable to place it. Will someone help?

(c) On p. 100 *Zen* says "The Buddha was evidently not interested in starting an orthodoxy."

11. The glory of Buddhism lies in the fact that the Buddha is the one great teacher who has allowed his followers to think for themselves. He has shown us how we may rise to the highest pinnacles of thought if we learn to depend on ourselves and train our minds accordingly. For the greatest things in life come to those who depend on themselves—like lamps unto themselves, seeking no other light.

Yours etc.,

D. B. Jayasinghe.