



THE BUDDHIST

“Sila Pannanato Jayam”

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THE BIRTH-THROES OF FREE EDUCATION

The Free Education Scheme which was adopted by the State Council is now in operation and is marching steadily onwards. The prophets who declared with tremendous confidence that it would break down at its very inception have been proved false. So have the others who envisaged chaos in our whole educational system as a result, and, perhaps, secretly hoped that such a calamity would happen. Stories of strikes among school-boys and teachers in protest against the Minister's action, which were intended to put terror into the hearts of the authorities and create confusion in the public mind, are no longer given great currency. Even those who breathed fire and called upon the Minister for Education the curse of the Almighty have accepted the position, even though not quite graciously. They still hope, maybe, that something will happen to upset the full implementation of the Minister's plans.

A beginning has been made; that, at any rate, is matter for great satisfaction. The opening of Central Schools in various districts has been hailed with unprecedented enthusiasm by the people who are really concerned. Fee-levying schools which have now come into the scheme and abolished their fees have been thronged with students seeking admission. It was amusing to see the attempts made by some of the more influential newspapers to make out that free schools were not popular with the better type of student and to bolster up their case by giving in big

headlines statistics of one or two large schools which were finding it difficult to cope with the rush to their doors. These same newspapers evidently forgot, or deliberately omitted to mention, some of the more likely reasons for this supposed rush, such as the derequisitioning of their premises, the removal of numerous handicaps to normal life among the people and last, but not least the inadequacy of the admission available at free schools. If the truth were told, it was this last reason that was most operative and not the supposed unpopularity of free schools. From every free school come reports of hundreds of children having to be turned away because of lack of room. Of the popularity of the new measure there is not the slightest doubt.

But there are other problems that need urgent solution. Chief among these is the need of many more teachers. Many hundreds, nay, thousands of teachers will become necessary if the country is to get full benefit from free education. This is a grave problem; but a solution must and can be found. We can learn much that is useful from the Report of the McNair Committee of England which had to deal with a similar situation when the new British educational proposals were put into effect. Schemes must immediately be set up for the emergency training of teachers. Hundreds and thousands of intelligent young men and women are being turned out of war-time jobs in which they had been engaged. Many of them have gained valuable experience in the

handling of emergency situations and proved their capabilities in unmistakable ways. Their talents can and must be utilised to the fullest possible extent. Money should be no concern; revenues are soaring at the moment. A scheme of national development, such as free education undoubtedly is, can justify even the utilisation of loan funds should that too become necessary. The people of the country, for it is they who count in the ultimate resort and not arm-chair critics and bourgeois-minded leaders, will not hesitate to pledge their future luxuries for the promotion of a plan that will be to the lasting benefit of the country. Education, more education, better education, is the sure panacea for our ills. No sacrifice can be too great in such a cause. Pleas have been made on behalf of the big schools that have chosen to stay out of the scheme on various pretexts. They have resources, or should have them if their much-vaunted services have been appreciated, which will prevent their collapse and if the choice is between giving them artificial respiration and the getting on with speed with the free education scheme, there should be no doubt about what the people want. Free education, like adult franchise, which many well-meaning persons once opposed, has come to stay and the sooner we realise this fundamental fact and do all in our power to get the fullest possible benefit out of it, the better it will be for ourselves and for generations yet unborn.

CIRAM JĪVA

In our last issue we were only able to mention as a special "Stop Press" item the very glad news of the Knighthood conferred on our President, Mr. A. E. de Silva. No Imperial honour of recent times has given greater satisfaction to the people of the country at large nor provoked such universal approval. Sir Ernest's many-sided activities have won for him the goodwill of all communities in Ceylon. His work for the public weal has been singularly disinterested; if he has any fault, it

is that of almost complete self-effacement. We do not propose to make a catalogue of his virtues or give detailed references to his numerous benefactions. Nothing would be more distasteful to Sir Ernest himself and we do not want to run the risk of incurring his disapproval. But we should very much like, on behalf of all the members of the Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association and all our readers, to wish Sir Ernest long life and good health so that he may continue his multifarious activities for

the happiness, the welfare and the advancement of his country, his people and his religion. We should be wanting in our duty if we failed to include in our felicitations Lady de Silva, who symbolises in every possible way the ideal Sinhalese Buddhist wife. "Bhāriya ca parama sakha" declared the Buddha in a well-known Sutta, "Greater friend has no man than his wife" and the life of these two, Sir Ernest and Lady de Silva has been an epitome of that noble truth. May they have every happiness.

THE DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA

(From the German of Paul Dahlke)

For many of these "noble sons" who went forth from home to homelessness the first meal got on the begging-round could well have been the hardest moment of the ascetic life. It is told by the Buddha himself that on looking into his bowl after his first alms-round he was repelled by what he saw there and could not eat the food. However, through sheer will-power and thought upon the mutation of food taken into the body he overcame this aversion and was able to consume the contents of the bowl to the very last morsel. Incidentally, this reminds us of Francis of Assisi.

Whatever a monk cannot eat himself must either be emptied into a stream or cast on bare ground.

A monk can take only one meal a day and that before noon. Eating after mid-day is inimical to thought and hinders meditation. And to the monks who genuinely strive for salvation, meditation is the most important occupation.

A monk must be a lover of the solitary life of thought and also a lover of the empty grotto if he would follow in his Master's footsteps as "an heir of the Truth and not of material requisites."

"Inviting are the trees; and here are empty caves; practise contemplation; be not remiss, lest ye repent later," that is the command we give you.

"As company is wearying, shun it. Seek, above all, solitude."

"The heart of the perfect monk bends towards solitude, seeks after solitude, sinks into solitude."

"Delightful are the lonely woods where worldlings find no joy. In those woods the passion-free who no longer look for the lustful things find delight."

Thus did the Buddha exhort the monks again and again.

DUTIES OF MONKS

Fa Hien, the Chinese pilgrim, writes that the duty of monks is the doing of

good deeds. But the Sutras admonish the monks to meditate.

At another place in the Scriptures one reads: "Here a monk seeks out a lonely place, a tree-root in the woods, a grotto amongst rocks, a cave in the midst of hills, a graveyard, an open space in the heart of a forest or a straw-bed in the open. When he has returned from his alms-round, he sits cross-legged and with body erect and contemplates: 'Did any thoughts of lust or desire or hate or confusion or anger arise in my mind in the forms that met my eye as I went out for alms into the village or in the place I gathered alms or on my way from the village after gathering alms! And further he investigates as follows: 'Is there yet in me any agitation preventing right and clear vision?' And he recognizes: 'There is no longer in me any agitation that prevents right and clear thinking'."

That is the first knowledge, a knowledge holy, other-worldly, incompatible with ordinary knowledge, that he has won.

As he has comprehended the Truths he contemplates on the emptiness of the body, thinks over the transitoriness of all phenomena. He sees this body as evanescent as a bubble on the water, as illusive as the plantain trunk.

"From head to heel he meditates on this body hemmed in by the skin and filled with manifold impurity. Just as if, o monks, there were a sack with two openings filled with various grains, namely, with paddy, hill-paddy and sesamum, and if a sagacious man were to unbind it and reflect: 'This is paddy, this is hill-paddy, and this is sesamum,' even so, o monks, a monk reflects on his body hemmed by the skin and filled with manifold impurity."

To cleanse the mind of all impure thoughts as with a rough brush is a part of meditation in Buddhism. And when the cleansing of the mind is accomplished one comprehends non-

attachment, so essential for him who tries to understand the highest. Also, the Buddha has recognised talk that is instructive as useful and enjoined it as such on the monks.

Praising, he agreed when two monks said to him: "Every fifth day, O Lord, we sit together the whole night in discussion on the teaching." Here too we meet with a deviation from Indian custom. The Indian recluse was a "silent one"—*muni*—but of what could he speak? He saw nothing; he felt nothing; and he thought on nothing except his God. Of this God of the Upanishads, this highest Brahman, one can say nothing but: Not this! Not this!.....

WAY TO GOAL

Said Vashkali: "Sir, proclaim thou to me the Brahman." Then Bahva was quite silent. For the second and the third time Vashkali said: "Sir, proclaim thou to me the Brahman." Then Bahva answered: "I make known to thee the Brahman; only thou understandest not that this highest self is quite silent." The Brahman cannot be proved.

Upon the very structure of the Buddhist system and the constitution of its highest goal rests the fact that the emphasis in Buddhism is not on the highest goal of it but on the way leading to that goal.

But this way can be and must be taught. Of Nirvana also nothing can be said but this: It is not this, it is not this. In spite of that, it glows not in that supernatural dazzling fire which blinds for all others the spiritual eye of the Muni.

The Buddhist sees clearly the way but not the goal; the Muni sees the goal as a beacon in the distance, but not the way that leads to it.

Thus instructive talk is set down as an important factor in Buddhism and we understand from the reproach made by the Brahmins: "The Sakyans are great gossips." Impressively the Buddha

says to his monks: "Choose ye, my monks, between these two: Instructive talk or solemn silence."

This indeed is an instructive talk that a person who himself wanting little should speak of wanting little with his monks; that himself contented should speak of contentment with his monks; that himself secluded should speak of seclusion with his monks; that himself persevering should speak of perseverance with his monks; that himself strictly virtuous should speak of strict virtue with his monks; that himself wise should speak of happiness of wisdom with his monks; that himself delivered

should speak of the happiness of deliverance with his monks; that himself knowing deliverance clearly should speak of the clear knowledge of deliverance with his monks."

The life of a monk may be compared to "a mixture of milk and water." "Can you bear everything," asks the Buddha of some monks, "without a quarrel and look on with gentle eyes?" Elsewhere too we hear much of the conduct of the monk to his neighbours; what is adduced here is sufficient to give a picture of the work in regard to the Self by him who treads the holy eightfold path. What we see

here is no sudden illumination, no ecstasy, but a peaceful serene, almost a mechanical action towards freedom. Well, none of the Buddha's disciples trod the road to Damascus. Something solid, prosaic, runs through the whole of this teaching. Patience and strong tenacity are here the wings that bear us upwards.

"Meditation and mindfulness," that is the refrain. And "step by step he progresses further, on the watch for the smallest fault."

(Translated for "The Buddhist" by
Ananda Vajra)

BUDDHISM DOES NOT RECOGNISE MIRACLES

But There are the Four Incomprehensibles

(By Ananda Pereira, Advocate)

A miracle, according to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, is "a marvellous event due to some supernatural agency; a remarkable occurrence; a remarkable specimen (of ingenuity, impudence, etc.)."

It need hardly be said that Buddhism does not recognize any miracles in the first sense. The Buddha's teaching countenances no extranatural agencies, either supernatural or subnatural, and all phenomena, however marvellous, must necessarily be due to the operation of the forces of nature. Even the attainment of Nibbana, which may perhaps be called a passing from the natural to the supernatural, from *Lokiya* to *Lokuttara*, is not due to the working of a "supernatural agency." The individual achieves this supreme end by his own exertions, understanding the forces within himself which bind him to the "Wheel of Rebirth," understanding the Laws, or *Dhamma*, according to which they operate, and finally accomplishing the dissolution of these forces by the method taught by the Buddha.

HUMAN ENDEAVOUR

But, although Buddhism does not admit of the supernatural, it does recognize the supernormal. Certain phenomena, such as *Iddhi* (the manifestation of supernormal powers by a highly developed individual) are recognized as being *Acinteyya*, beyond the comprehension of the ordinary intelligence. And thus, if a "miracle" be taken in the second sense, as a "remarkable occurrence," there are miracles in Buddhist literature not one or two isolated instances, but scores of them. So well recognized are they that the *Vinaya* lays down specific rules regulating the employment of these powers by *Bhikkhus*, and prohibiting certain forms of *Iddhi* altogether, such as *Vikubbana Iddhi*, the assumption of non-human bodily form. But it is clearly understood that Buddhism does not ascribe these phenomena to the operation of any supernatural agency. They are the fruit of human endeavour,

the result of natural ability and tireless perseverance along well-recognized paths of mental culture. And what is more, they are not even the hall-mark of Sainthood. A being can possess *Iddhi* powers without being even a *Sovan* (the lowest grade of Buddhist Saint), and there were *Arahants* (individuals who had attained the highest degree of sanctity) who did not possess *Iddhi* powers.

Iddhi powers are evidence of a highly-trained mind, but in order to attain *Nibbana* the individual must use his mind to understand the true nature of existence, to grasp the eternal truths of Impermanence, Suffering and Non-soul. By giving rise to selfish conceit, the possession of *Iddhi* powers may even become an obstacle to the attainment of *Nibbana*, just as the possession of exceptional vitality and physical strength can make it difficult for their possessor to understand the truths of sickness, old-age and death.

Buddhism recognizes four "Incomprehensibles"—*Acinteyyas*. They are *Buddha*, *Loka*, *Kamma* and *Iddhi*. In connection with any of these four phenomena may occur which baffle the ordinary mind. But it is necessary to remember always that however incomprehensible such phenomena may be, they are not supernatural. There are natural laws which govern them, and our own ignorance of these laws does not make them supernatural, any more than a savage's ignorance of the causes of lightning would make lightning supernatural. We would indeed be thinking like savages were we to jump to such hasty conclusions.

On the other hand, the attitude of the hard-headed materialist, who flatly denies the very possibility of such phenomena, is equally naive and uncouth. There are many things which we do not understand. But they do exist, and a refusal to admit their existence is evidence of a childish mentality. Avidualism is a pseudo-scientific and self-styled "rationalist" literature are

the most obstinate users of such mental blinkers. Thus, even with the mass of evidence carefully collated by the Psychical Research Society to prove beyond all doubt the survival of human personality after death, and the existence of sentient and even highly intelligent beings who do not belong to the animal kingdom, there are yet numbers of people who "refuse to believe in ghosts." This attitude, unscientific and illogical, is usually maintained with a laugh that rings as hollow as the head from which it comes. The true scientist finds no reason for humour in things he does not understand.

NOT SO ABSURD

Not quite so absurd, but also undesirable, is the inclination to explain away the inexplicable by the use of ready-made words. Scientific theories such as "telepathy," "auto-hypnosis" and the "sub-conscious mind," have all been used in this way. Nobody knows how telepathy operates, but there are many people who blithely mouth the word and imagine that they have laid bare the mechanism of thought transference. A true inquirer into "miraculous" phenomena has to hack his way through a jungle of such easy catchwords before he can touch the reality which lies behind them, as "natural" as the Earth we tread on, as tantalizing as a half-remembered dream. If we do not understand the "miraculous" and lack the time or the means to investigate it, let us be frankly agnostic. To deny it is foolish, to call it supernatural is irrational, to offer facile explanations is meaningless.

Regarding miracles as remarkable occurrences, a further point arises and may be dealt with briefly. The capacity for wonder being subjective, there is no limit to the number of external phenomena which any particular individual might find wonderful and hence call "miraculous." The delicate hues of dawn-light on a misty morning, the aimless loveliness of an unfolding bud,

the star-spangled sky on a clear night—all these and many more purely natural phenomena have been called miraculous by people whose senses are alive to the beauties of nature, especially if they happen to be in love. Each breath of wind seems to bear a whispered message to them, from the loved one, or from the Great Heart of Nature—never from the cattle-shed or the manure-dump at the bottom of the garden. And if the sensitive and sentimental observer of such phenomena also happens to be a believer in a theistic faith, the Divine runs a grave risk of being forcibly conscripted and used to explain, and add flavour to the purely natural and biological. This may be good poetry, but it is muddled reasoning. The capacity for childlike wonder is a valuable quality, as beautiful as it is rare, but it is an undependable guide to the understanding of phenomena and their causes.

In a certain sense everything that happens is wonderful, because the chances against its happening are so vast. Step out into a shower of rain and feel the rain-drops falling on your head, and reflect for a moment on the chances against those particular drops falling on your head and nowhere else. They stagger the imagination. And yet people carry umbrellas. The matted

strands of cause and effect which produce all phenomena stretch back into the infinite past, and yet we take it all for granted, because there is nothing supernatural in this tangle.

In its last sense, of a "remarkable specimen of ingenuity, impudence, etc." the miracle is fast becoming a commonplace in the realms of scientific invention and power-politics. The atomic bomb can scarcely be cited as an instance of Divine intervention by even the most ardent theist, however awe-inspiringly beautiful it might appear from a safe distance, however satisfactory its results might be from the point of view of the user. Equally ingenious, as cynically impudent, are the recent happenings in the Not-so-far East.

And yet, there was once an Atlantic Charter, and a time when subject peoples dared hope that "freedom" had at last come to mean something more than an empty word in a glib tongue. Some of them even presumed so far as to live heroically and die prematurely in this ingenuous belief. Of such as these a poet has written—

"They say
Whether our lives and our deaths
were for peace and a new hope
Or for nothing
We cannot say.
It is you who must say this."

Easy would it be for us who live to say, with some bitterness, that they believed in and died for a miracle, and that there is no such thing. But such bitterness leads nowhere and is unworthy of a proud people, the inheritors of a noble and courageous faith.

IT IS REALISTIC

The Buddha's teaching is realistic: As you sow, you reap. If the people of Lanka are today subject to a foreign rule it is because yesterday and for many yesterdays their own actions have fitted them for such subjection. It is not for us to whine, and to beg for such scraps of autonomy as may be tossed to us as bones are tossed to dogs. If in our daily lives we sow the seeds of freedom, self-respect and self-reliance, national independence will grow from them in obedience to the eternal and inevitable law of causation. The basic code for such a mode of life is to be found in the Buddha's teaching—in the Five Precepts and in the repeated stress He laid on the virtues of intelligence, confidence and courageous energy (*panna*, *saddha* and *viriya*). There is no limit to what these potent qualities can achieve, no need to crave the miraculous intervention of a supernatural agency.

SELF-SACRIFICING WORK OF TALAWE'S "SUDU AMMA"

Exemplary Social Service: "Incidental" Conversion of Buddhist Children

The 1945 report of the House of Joy, Talawa Mission, N.C.P., states: Miss Karney is still at China Bay with the service men and women, but we are all looking forward to the time when "Upe Amma" can return to this province. When Miss Karney wrote the last report in August, 1944, Miss Ekanayake was working here enthusiastically. She continued till June. The old N.M.S. school was rebuilt, ready for a weaving centre, for which the Department of Commerce and Industries supplied the equipment, and a teacher was at hand in the village; the electric light plant and water pipes were put in order; regular Bible classes were held, resulting in the conversion of two older girls, who along with three infants received Baptism in February. Miss Ekanayake did a great deal of hard work of which we reap the benefit.

Miss Rowe arrived in December, 1944, and I came here in April, after an attack of malaria which might have closed the door to my coming had it not been for Doctor and Mrs. Theobald's loving care and faith. The Hospital took on a new lease of life with Miss Rowe's coming, and this is her report:—

"It was with a heart full of gratitude to God that I arrived back in Ceylon in December last, and it was a great joy to take up the medical work. Patients now come again from all the surround-

ing villages and work is steadily on the increase. There are a few young girls to help, all of whom except Aubrey, I am, by God's race, training myself.

"The labour room is light and airy and a ceiling has made the work more satisfactory. The rest of the Hospital and Dispensary looks clean and bright with white-washed walls and wood work in pillar-box red. We have twenty-three maternity beds and can accommodate over twenty fever cases. Attendance at the Dispensary averages ninety on four mornings a week.

"Every Saturday Mr. Pereira or Mr. Gabriel, the schoolmaster, gives an interesting Gospel Lantern Lecture and twice a week Margaret and I have an hour's Gospel talk with the patients and the 'Dawn' children sing 'Kavies.' There are of course many opportunities for quiet talks and prayer with one and another, especially in the days before baby comes.

"GOSPEL SAVED HER"

"One afternoon in January Mr. Pereira and I cycled fourteen miles along elephant jungle roads to an urgent maternity case. The patient was in such a bad state that the relatives had given up hope and were just considering carrying out the last Buddhist rites. The villagers had gathered, and Mr. Pereira wonderfully held their attention with the Gospel mes-

sage, while God helped me to save the lives of both mother and baby. We rode back late at night with a great joy in our hearts. Later the mother with her husband and mother, full of loving appreciation, came to show us the baby, now a bonny laughing boy.

"Then there are the accidents—the woman gored by a bull, the old man beaten and dragged along the road by robbers, the boy tossed and torn by a buffalo, the youth who teased a monkey, the little lad who fell from a wood-apple tree, the dear little boy who had two deep gashes in his head—they said that a brother had let two knives fall from a tree under which the little fellow was standing—and another little boy who scalded his tummy and asked to be taken to the 'Sudu Amma' to be made better.

"We feel God's presence with us, and praise Him who 'in His Mercy heals them all'."

In September, the return of the thirteen Dawn children to Nungi Gedera brought new life to the compound. Miss Karney, with her great-nephew and another R.A.F. friend, brought this large family back from Matale by bus, singing all the way. They sing anything from "Punchi Rala" to "Wide, wide as the ocean, is my Saviour's Love." Mrs. De Lanerolle, their former matron, found herself back in Talawa just at the right time to make

ready for their return. In this, as in so many ways, we realise that the battle is not our's but God's. The children now number over twenty, and are a real joy and a great help to the life of the compound. We owe a very sincere debt of gratitude to the Baptist friends at Matale who have looked after them so well during the war years and given them such excellent training in every way.

The Church meetings are well attended; besides the children there are about fifteen who attend prayers at 6.30 a.m. and 6 p.m. and still more who come for the two Sunday services. The Rev. V. W. Vidyasagara has come once a month from Anuradhapura and now that he is transferred we shall miss his enthusiasm for personal and evangelistic work.

There is a great need for Bible study and believing prayer among us as a Church; to help to meet this need, the visiting of nearby villages, which has been done regularly for thirty years, has given place to our own study and prayer. The older girls have Bible study every evening with Margaret, who also conducts the Sunday school;

we are glad that God sent her to us, for to her, "to live is Christ." Phil. 1.21.

"HEATHENS" KEPT AT BAY

In some interior villages there are scattered Christians and we have visited each district twice. We were called to the funeral of the head of one of these Christian families and went in a hiring car taking brightly coloured flowers. The widow was bravely keeping relations and friends from performing heathen rites and she was so thankful when we arrived. The man had dreamt three days before his death, that a car full of flowers came to take him away and, asked if he was ready, he had replied, "No, not yet." How wonderfully God had prepared him!

Contacts have been made with some who had not heard before and we wish we could be out oftener to teach them. As we walk twelve hot miles between two midnight train journeys but refreshed by Christian hospitality and the joy of service, or jog along in a cart for three days, or push a broken cycle, we wonder which is the best mode of transport, considering jungle

roads and streams, advantages of slow or quick travel, night accommodation and other abstract but important factors. We have not been able to undertake any long tours into new districts and we cannot do so now until the dry weather.

We know that, in God's work in this district, we are but partners with so many who have their share in the work in so many different ways: technical advice from friends in the province, daily intercession by those far and near, gifts of stores and clothes, evangelistic labours of visiting Christians, sewing and other work by the Friends of the House of Joy and the Anuradhapura Ladies' Guild, and the sympathetic interest of many, and it is a joy to have the Management Committee at the back of all our work.—E. M. Gregson, Missionary-in-Charge.

[We commend to our readers a careful perusal of this Report and would particularly ask them to read it in conjunction with the Editorial "Buddhists and Social Service" in our issue of January, 1946.—Editor, "The Buddhistist."]

THE BUDDHA ON LUCK AND ILL-LUCK

By John M. Seneviratna

On the question of Luck and Ill-Luck the Buddha's teaching, by precept and example, was always direct, simple, and uncompromising.

In the *Culla-Kalinga Jataka* (No. 301), the Kings of Kalinga and Asoka are at war with each other. The Bodhisatta, who in this birth is an ascetic living in a hermitage on a spot lying between the two kingdoms, is asked which of the two would be victorious.

The hermit refers the question to Sakka, King of Heaven, who replies:

"Reverend Sir, Kalinga will conquer. Assaka will be defeated, and such and such omens will be seen beforehand."

Though the omens portend victory for Kalinga, the other, undaunted, fights valiantly and eventually gains the victory.

In his flight Kalinga reviles the ascetic:

"Kalingas bold shall victory claim,
Defeat crown Assakas with shame.
Thus did your Reverence prophesy,
And honest folk should never lie."

The hermit afterwards meets Sakka and thus upbraids him:

"The gods from lying words are free,
Truth should their chiefest treasure be,

In this, great Sakka, thou didst lie;
Tell me, I pray, the reason why."

Sakka's answer is expressive of the Buddha's teaching on this question of Luck and Ill-Luck:

Hast thou, O Brahmin, ne'er been told

Gods envy not the hero bold?
The fixed resolve that may not yield,

Intrepid prowess in the field,
High courage and adventurous might

For Assaka have won the fight.

Similarly, in the *Sarabhangā Jataka* (No. 522) the following four questions are propounded to the Buddha:

Whom does the world as "moral" name?

And whom does it as "wise" proclaim?

Whom does the world for "pious" take?

And whom does Fortune ne'er forsake?

And the Buddha's answer is illuminating:

Whoso in act and word shows self-restraint,

And e'en in thought is free from sinful taint.

Nor lies to serve his own base ends—the same

All men as "moral" evermore proclaim.

He who revolves deep questions in his mind,

Yet does not utter aught true, or unkind

Prompt with good word in season to advise,

That man by all is rightly counted "wise."

Who grateful is for kindness once received,

And sorrow's need has carefully relieved,

Has proved himself a good and steadfast friend—

Him all men as a "pious" soul commend.

The man with every gift at his command,

True, tender, free and bountiful of hand,

Heart-winning, gracious, smooth of tongue withal—

Fortune from such an one will never fall.

"Fortune" in the above question as well as answer is another word for "Good Luck."

Of similar import, in the *Vessantara Jataka* (No. 521), is Vessantara's advice to the King of Kasi as to what a King's duties are:

Even more precise and clear, however, was the Buddha's teaching on this point on another occasion. After narrating the *Siri Jataka*, he declares:

"Whatever riches they who strive amain

Without the aid of Luck can ever gain,

All that, by favour of the goddess Luck,

Both skilled and unskilled equally obtain.

All the world over many meet our sight,

Not only good, but creatures different quite,

Whose lot it is fruition to possess
Of wealth in store which is not
their's by right."

And, going on to explain that "man has no other resource but merit won in previous births, enabling him to obtain treasures in places where there is no mine," the Buddha recites the following scripture:—

"There is a Treasury of all good things

Which both to gods and men their wishes brings.

Fine looks, voice, figure, form,
and sovranly

With all its pomp, lies in that Treasury.

Lordship and government, imperial bliss,

The crown of heaven, within that Treasury is.

All human happiness, the joys of heaven,

Nirvana's self, from out that Store is given.

True ties of friendship, wisdom's liberty,

Firm self-control, lies in that Treasury.

Salvation, understanding, training fit

To make Pacceka Buddhas come from it.

Thus hath this merit a virtue magical;

The wise and steadfast praise it one and all."

THE HINDUISED BUDDHA

(By P. S. Laksminarasu, B.A., B.L.)

Avataravada is the belief peculiar to the Hindus that Vishnu now and then incarnates himself (descends to the earth) in order, as stated in the Bhagavad Gita, to protect and preserve the virtuous and to destroy the wicked.

The Vedic literature, the Mahabharata, and the Jayakhya and the Ahirbudhaya Samhitas do not mention the Buddha at all as Vishnu's avatar. In the Rig Veda as well as the Satapatha, the Aitereya and the Taittereya Brahmanas Vamana, the dwarf, who took the three strides to Bali's utter ruin is claimed as Vishnu's avatar. Between Varaha, the boar, that raised the earth from the water, or Matsya, the fish, that saved Manu from the great deluge, or Nrsimha, the man lion, that came out of a wooden post to prove God's omnipresence and omnipotence, or Kurma, the tortoise exalted as Prajapati—between these and Vishnu, there is, however, no direct connection in the stories about them developed in the Rig and the Atharva Vedas, the Satapatha and the Taittereya Brahmanas, and the Taittereya Aranyaka. From the three lists of avatars drawn up in the Narayaniya section of the Mahabharata it is seen that Vasudeva, Rama-Dasaratha, Hamsa, Bhaghava, Rama Krishna and Kalki are the seven names added to the Vedic figures with the exception of Kurma, to swell the number to eleven.

From the fifth century A.D. onwards the first four-named avatars in the Mahabharata had, as it were, a shaky recognition. For Harivamsa replaced Bharghava by the Buddha and the Matsya Purana further substituted Dattatreya, Mandhatri, Parasurama and Veda-Vyasa for the remaining three names. The Kurma Purana assigned by R. C. Hazra to 550 A.D. in his "Puranic Records of Rites and Customs" introduced Kurma into the scheme of avatars. Later the ten popular ones were settled in the Varaha and the Agni Puranas of the 7th-8th centuries and the Buddha included therein was, however, confused with the nude Jina, or given, as in the Bharhat Samhita, the Jaina mark of sriavatsa. This trend is followed in a 7th century Palava inscription, the 7th-8th century Visnupura records, a hymn of Satagopa alias Nammalwar in the 9th century Ksemendra's Dasavatara-carita of the 11th century and Jayadeva's Gita Govinda composed in the 12th century.

The avataravadins maintain the inevitability of evil and oblige Vishnu to prune evil in excess of good. Though weaponless, the Hinduised Buddha is shown as having successfully marched gods' enemies to destruction through deceit and the wrong teaching of cowardice. Modern Hinduism values his help as a sweeper of the Vedic cobwebs but is sorry that he lacks Sankara's head.

No Buddhist of either Hinayana or Mahayana school can be heard to own the Hindu Buddha as his Buddha. For his Master teachers, "Suffering is preventible, curable" and his lament is that man uses the sword to set in order houses other than his own. He has always concerned himself with the art of freezing all the man's prized possessions holding them to be evil, changing, and without a core. Though the Matsya Purana grouping of Krishna by himself, the Vedic and the human avatars is possibly modelled after the three sets of Adi Buddha's emanations, yet the Hindu savants overlook the function Buddhism assigns to a manasi (human) Buddha. For Vairocana, though without a sword, is the sword itself and the other two emanations, Manjusri and Acala (or Fudo Myo-o), carry each a sword. With it the former kills greed, anger, and folly arising from the instinct of self-preservation. The latter furiously rounds up to the last camp all the enemies staying in himself and opposed to the prevalence of the Buddhist virtues.

When the task is over, he lays the sword aside and becomes Vairocana sitting alone with all the worlds within himself. In either use the sword cuts the two heads of dualism, self-preservation and exploitation, and lets the one sword stand serenely by itself against the sky.

RELIGION OF REASON

By Bhikkhu Dhammapala

If it were true that "each tree is known by its own fruit" according to the words of Jesus recorded by Luke (VI,44) and if there were no other means of identification, all trees would be alike in the season when they do not bear, and Jesus' own doctrine would stand condemned, because from his own chosen twelve Apostles, one betrayed him, another denied him and all deserted him in the hour of peril.

It is therefore, not the fruits alone that we should consider when forming our judgment of a tree. Religion is for many like a tree rooted to the soil of

our daily life, but producing its fruits far above. As there are many kinds of trees, so there are many kinds of religions to satisfy the tastes of all.

Unfortunately however, unlike a fruit a religion is not a matter of taste, but of truth, and should not therefore be judged by its appearance or growth only, since there are weeds which grow luxuriantly but to no purpose. The test of a religion is its correspondence to truth. The fact that great men like Gotama and Jesus had as disciples a Devadatta and a Judas does not, in

any way bring discredit upon their teachings.

It is therefore not fair to condemn Buddhism because some monks are far from the ideal, or Christianity because some missionaries fail to follow the example of Christ.

War, however, seems to be contagious, and when a war-wave rolls over the physical world, even the mental plane feels its repercussions. Since the Buddhist revival of the last half century the two camps have more or less, settled down, each fortifying its own position. It is now clear that the Bud-

dhist revival is no last flare-up of a dying flame, but a real force gathering momentum and becoming conscious of its own worth, after a period of langour and inertia induced upon it by the narcotics of a foreign religion.

And now, even before we have regained lost ground, before we are back again on our own, we are subjected to renewed aggression, mainly by the pro-Christian English Press controversies which are closed prematurely, always leaving the last word, and therewith the appearance of victory to our opponents. Our leaders are severely criticised and blamed merely for internal action and organization. Pure motives are shown in a false light and if anyone dare defend himself he is accused of intolerance.

Have we no right to speak? Or have we no answer to give? We have an answer, and we have a right to make it known to the whole world. It is not only a right, but also a duty not an obligation to a superior being, but a regard for the truth.

EDUCATION SYSTEM

The point at issue at the moment, is our system of education. It should be regarded as a healthy sign that both parties are struggling hard to get in to their own hands the mental training of the young, for it shows an appreciation of the importance of education from the standpoint of religion. In the long run we Buddhists are bound to be successful since religion will no longer be fought in the emotional, but in the intellectual sphere, and the intellect of our coming generation will undoubtedly decide in favour of reason against revelation. The present may be somewhat gloomy and turbulent, yet as the battlefield has been shifted into the regions of the mind it contains the promise of a victorious future.

"The night keeps hidden in its gloom the search for light,

The storm still seeks its end in peace with all its might."

(Rabindranath Tagore).

Who wants the best must choose. Whoever wishes to select the best should begin to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the different objects offered to his choice. If we do not compare, how can we know that we have the best? How can we know that what we have is even good? It is not only our right but also our duty to compare. What is right and what is a duty in a material sense is a greater right and a higher duty in a spiritual sense. Therefore, when it comes to a question of religion and of truth it is the supreme duty of everybody to test his ancestral faith. To be a Christian or a Hindu, or a Buddhist, or a Mohammedan merely because one were

born into a family professing that faith will never make one strong, independent, or convinced.

There are certain people, who through a lack of education have not developed intellectually beyond childhood. To those "poor in spirit" is promised the "kingdom of heaven" (Matthew V 3). But at the same time we are informed by Jesus that the "kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say; lo, here! or, there! for, lo, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke XVII 20-21).

Buddha also tells us—nay—solemnly proclaims: "Verily I declare to you that within this very body, mortal as it is, and only a fathom high, but conscious and endowed with mind, is the world and the waxing thereof and the waning thereof and the way that leads to the passing away thereof" (Aug. N. 11.48). The Prophet Muhammed teaches; "God is closer than the jugular vein. Even though you do not know the Truth, the Truth shrouds you." (Quoted by Peer Bawa).

"Remain, O mind, within thyself, go not to anybody else's door; whatever thou seekest, thou shall obtain sitting at thy ease; only seek for it in the privacy of thy heart." (Kamalakanta).

"Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise

From outward things, whate'er you may believe.

There is an inmost centre in us all,
Where Truth abides in fulness, and around,

Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems us in.

....."To know."

Rather consists in opening out a way

whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,

Than in effecting entry for a light supposed to be without."

(Browning's Paraulsus).

SPIRIT OF TOLERANCE

All these quotations taken from such widely different sources, direct us somehow or other to the meeting place, the origin of all religions. When comparing religions we should not be guided by a principle of Tolerance, for "to tolerate means that I think that you are wrong and that I am just allowing you to live." This may be the spirit of those who, monopolizing faith and truth, claim to be the only soul-saving Church. We should, however, condemn no one "a priori" even without hearing his case. No, we must begin by placing ourselves, all of us, on a common platform, where we can discuss matters. But a prohibition to investigate the theses of the opponent must necessarily lead to narrow-mindedness, intolerance, persecution, as History proves beyond doubt. We must, therefore, lay down some principle which we all can accept.

From the various quotations given above, it is clear that every religion starts within, is produced by a desire to transcend the limitations of self. We find ourselves hemmed in by our impotency to fulfil our wishes, we feel ourselves subject to a law of which even Saint Paul complained, "I see a different law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom. VII. 23).

The germ of all religions should be sought in this desire to free ourselves from this captivity, this impotency which limits the movements of body and mind by place and time. The knowledge of our impotency and limited freedom produces a double effect in opposite directions:

(1) A desire for freedom resulting in a belief of self.

(2) A fear for the power unknown which limits our freedom.

The belief of self grows into a soul which will be free one day and hence for ever, an everlasting soul in everlasting happiness with all desires satisfied.

The fear of a higher power of nature, of supernature, of death, will induce the mind to befriend that power, in order to attain its own happiness with the help of the unknown strength it fears.

CURIOSITY AND FEAR

It is the unsolved mystery of life which simultaneously awakens our curiosity and fear. When curiosity fails to be satisfied, fear tends to grow into a feeling of awe; perplexity leads to submission. Thus it is truly said that "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalm III. Line 10).

"But so long as religions themselves are the impressions of fear the security and protection they afford us succeed only in distorting human life." (Sir S. Radhakrishnan).

"We find the universe terrifying because it appears to be indifferent to life like our own: emotion, ambition and achievement, art and religion. All seem equally foreign to its plan." (Sir James Jeans).

Thus from this common fear of the unknown and common desire for freedom and independence rise the different means all directed towards the same end.

Some will try to placate that fear by submission, prayer and penance, while others will face it boldly and try to overcome it.

Here, therefore, we see the first parting of the ways, and though we shall meet later with many divisions and subdivisions, all will carry with them the one or the other of those two birthmarks which will characterize them for ever and which will give us in broad outline a distinction to discern the truth.

ELECTION OF NEW HEAD OF THE MALWATTA CHAPTER

The Ven. Rambukvelle Sri Dharmarakshita Sobhita

On Sunday, January 6th, 1946, amidst a colourful scene, and to the accompaniment of age-long ritual, the new Head of the "Siamese" Sect of Bhikkhus in Ceylon was installed in office. The venue was the Hall attached to the Malwatta Vihara of Kandy. The voters were the twenty Venerable monks who form the Malwatta Chapter, in whose hands lies the administration of the "Siamese" Sect, the largest and most influential body of Bhikkhus in the Island.

The vacancy was caused by the death of the Ven. Pahamune Dharmakirti Sri Saranankara Sumangala who had been Mahanayaka for twelve years.

Only one nomination had been received for the appointment and the election was, therefore, unanimous. Before the meeting there were rumours of a contest which, happily, proved groundless.

The chairman of the meeting was the Ven. Asarana-sarana Velivita Siri Saranankara, who is the Anunayaka of the Malwatta Chapter.

The new Head of the "Siamese" Sect has himself been Anunayaka of the Chapter for twelve years. He comes from a very distinguished Kandyan family and is a lineal descendant of the Sangharaja Velivita Siri Saranankara, who with the help of the King, Kirti Sri, effected many reforms in the Order and resuscitated it to its position of great power and influence in the country. The new Mahanayaka Thera was born in 1868 and is, therefore, 77 years old. He entered the Order in 1876, his teacher being the Ven. Sri Dharmarakshita Sonuttara, Chief Incumbent of the Gangarama Vihara in Kandy.

The new Mahanayaka Thera, at the conclusion of the ceremony, expressed his deep sense of the responsibilities that devolved upon him by virtue of his exalted office and asked for the co-operation of the monks and the laity in discharging them satisfactorily. His predecessor had taken certain initial steps in the reform of the administration of the Nikaya and he hoped to be able to take them to a further and

really effective stage. The monks of the Chapter chanted Pirit to the Mahanayaka by way of blessing him.

At the same meeting of the Chapter the vacancy created by the new appointment in the office of Anunayaka was also filled, by the unanimous election of the Ven. Heramitigala Sri Dhirananda Thera, Principal of the Sastralankara Pirivena in Kaduganawa.

The new Anunayaka Thera is a well-known scholar and a famous preacher. He was Secretary of the Chapter for many years and has wide administrative experience. He, too, is a keen reformer, very much alive to modern needs and it is confidently expected that his tenure of office will be marked by far-reaching changes in the present position of Buddhist Temporalities.

We convey our respectful homage to both Venerable Theras and our humble good wishes for their long life and success in their endeavours on behalf of the Sasana.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

NEW MEMBERS 8.1.46:—

Mr. Lachlan Kumarasinhe, 46, Deanstone Place, Kollupitiya; Mr. K. T. Dharmasena, Headquarters, C.C. M.P., Colombo; Mr. K. B. Wijesinghe, Messrs. Brown and Co., Ltd., Colombo; Mr. D. H. de Silva, C.W.E. New Stores, Maradana; Mr. Dudley C. C. Wickramaratne, "Seelena," Serpentine Road, Borella; Mr. D. Bandaranayake, Manager, Colombo Co-operative Central Bank, Chatham Street, Colombo; Mr. E. L. M. Abayaweera, St. Mathew's College, Dematagoda; Mr. K. Karthikeyan, Lanka Pottery Works, Hendala, Wattala; and Mr. P. V. Rajan, 53/2, Torrington Avenue, Colombo.

SONG & DANCE RECITAL

An Oriental Song and Dance Recital, in aid of the Social Activities Branch, will be held at the Colombo Town Hall on Saturday, February 9th.

Rates: Reserved Rs. 5. Unreserved: Rs. 3. Box plan is available at the Office.

HANDICAP BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT

In the Final of the 1945 Handicap Billiards Tournament played on Tuesday, January 15th, Sir Ernest de Silva (-150) defeated H. G. J. Silva (-75) by 75 points in a game of 200 up and thus won his own cup. He made a break of 35.

H. G. J. Silva wins the cup to the Runner-up awarded by Mr. E. P. A. Fernando, and G. R. Ambalavanar, who earlier made a break of 42,

wins the cup for the Highest Break, awarded by Mr. S. M. H. Mashoor.

All the trophy winners are well over 50 years of age, the President being the most senior.

We congratulate them on their successes.

Sir Ernest has re-awarded his cup for competition and another tournament is, therefore, being held immediately. When announcing his desire to re-award the cup, Sir Ernest made special mention of his view that in a handicap tournament the weaker players should be given a very good chance of winning.

NOTICE

The 47th Annual General Meeting of the Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association (Incorporated) will be held at the Association Headquarters, Borella, at 3 p.m. on Saturday, February 23, 1946.

AGENDA

Notice convening the meeting.
Minutes of last special general meeting and of last annual general meeting.

Annual Report and Accounts.

Election of Office-bearers.

Any other business of which seven clear days' notice has been given before the meeting in accordance with the Rules.

N.B.—No individual notice will be sent.

D. N. W. DE SILVA,

Hon. Col. General Secretary.
February 7, 1946. www.aavanaham.org

ORIENTAL ORCHESTRA

The Oriental Orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Lionel Edirisinghe, and the Singing Class, under the direction of Mr. Ananda Samarakoon, broadcast their second programme of vocal and instrumental music on January 20. Members of the Orchestra and the Singing Class will be pleased to know that listeners-in now look forward to their appearance before the microphone.

LIBRARY

The Library has been extended with the addition of a large collection of books on various subjects.

We have so far received only a part of the late Sir Baron Jayatilaka's library. We are holding over the classification until the remaining books are given over to us by the Public Trustee.

Narada Thera, of Vajiraramaya, Bambalapitiya, has kindly donated to us two of his books, "The Bodhisatta Ideal" and "Buddhism in a Nutshell."

The number of readers has steadily risen to 177.

PERSONAL

Mr. A. B. Perera, formerly Principal of Ananda College, Colombo, and Mrs. Perera have left for England.

Mr. A. V. de Silva, Mr. C. S. Wijeratne and Mr. A. E. S. Wijesekera will be leaving for England shortly.

Mr. B. D. Fernando, of the Magistrate's Court, Colombo, has been appointed Deputy Fiscal, Panadura.

Mr. G. S. Peiris, C.C.S., Deputy Price Controller, has been appointed A.G.A., Colombo.

Mr. S. L. de Silva, Emergency A.G.A., Urugala, has been transferred to the Govt. Employment Exchange Bureau.

Our congratulations to Dr. E. A. Blok, one of our Vice-Presidents, and Mrs. Blok on attaining the 25th anniversary of their marriage.

Mr. H. J. Schoorman has been selected to represent the Ceylon Amateur Wrestling Association in Olympic Games.

Mr. K. Adamally has been elected Deputy Mayor of Colombo.

Mr. E. D. Nagahawatte has been elected Mayor of Galle.

Mr. G. Keerthisinghe has been elected Deputy Mayor of Galle.

Muhandiram D. A. G. Jayatileke was awarded a gold medal by the Government for long and meritorious service.

Mr. V. S. Nanayakkara, Secretary of the Social Activities Branch, was away in India for three weeks.

Mr. Rajah Hewavitarne, one of our Vice-Presidents, and Dr. A. Ratnapala, a member of the Committee of Management, were members of the Maha Bodhi Society Delegation that went to Bhopal in connexion with the conference to make arrangements for the enshrinement of the relics of the two chief disciples of the Buddha.

Mr. D. N. W. de Silva, Hony. General Secretary, has left for Bangalore.

Mr. R. Sri Pathmanathan has been successful in the L.I.B. Final Examination of the London University.

Mr. S. P. Jayasinghe, Stationmaster, C.G.R., Nanuoya, who was promoted to the Special Class of the Railway Clerical Service, with effect from 1.3.1944, had assumed duties as S.M., Peradeniya Junction. He was recently elected President of the Ceylon Railway Clerical Association in succession to Mr. W. A. de Silva, Station Superintendent, Maradana. He has been a member of the Y.M.B.A., for over 20 years, and Vice-President of the Ceylon Railway Clerical Association for a continuous period of over 10 years.

OBITUARY

We record with regret the deaths of Mr. A. P. Wijetunga of the Railway Accountant's Office, Colombo.

Mr. M. E. George Hewage, brother of Mr. M. D. Hewage.

Mrs. Florence Salgado, wife of Mr. M. A. L. Salgado.

Our sympathy to the bereaved families.

RELIGIOUS EXAMINATIONS BRANCH

The following Dhamma Schools have been registered in the past few months:—

Hiramadagama Sunday School, Atakalanpenna; Sri Swarnajothi Sunday School, Gampola; Sri Buddhaghosa Dharma Sastralaya, Andagala, Weuda; Anyonyadara Sunday School, Rambukkana; Mahiyangane Gamini Sunday School, Alutnuwara; Hemmatagama Sunday School, Aranayaka; Duttugemunu Sunday School, Melegoda, Wanchawala; Uparatana Sunday School, Boossa; Sanghamitta Sunday School, Hikkaduwa; Kalutara Vidyalaya; Wijaya Sunday School, Ihala Welikada, Rajagiriya; Udagaladeniya Buddhist Mixed School, Rambukkana; Sri Sucharitodaya Sunday School, Kobbekaduwa, Murutalawa; Sri Dheeralankara Sunday School, Urumee-wala, Bulathkohupitiya; Rotumba Government Sinhalese Mixed School, Gomila-Wawarala; Damunupola Buddhist Mixed School, Kegalla; Parakrama Sunday School, Etkandura, Elpitiya; Kamarangapitiya Mixed School, Pelmadulla; Siri Devamitta Dhammapala Sunday School, Rambodagalla; Sri Seelawanse Buddhist Dhamma School, Warapalana, Gampaha; Sri Pragnaloka Sunday School, Mirissa; Deltara Government School, Kesbawa; Jayatilake Sunday School, Jaffna; Makoora Sunday School, Hettimulla; Sanghamitta Sunday School, Kuleegoda, Ambalangoda; Minuwangoda Sunday School, Minuwangoda; Dharmodaya Sunday School, Talgampola; Sri Dharma Buddhist Mixed School, Kumbalwella, Richmond Hill, Galle; Sri Sucharitawardena Sunday School, Narahenpita; Unuwinna Buddhist Mixed School, Hanguranketa; Punnananda Sunday School, Tanabaddegama, Elpitiya; Gamini Sunday School, Pelpitiya, Udahentenna; Gamini Sunday School, Nindana, Batapola; Jayatilaka Sunday School, Boyagane, Kurunegala; Siri Vijayothsawa Sunday School, Kurupita, Polgampola; Sanghamitta Sunday School, Wellawilamulla, Kalleliya; Jayasiri Buddhist Mixed School, Weerangula, Yakkala; Indrarama Sunday School, Kalugalahena, Deniyaya; Sri Sudarsanarama Sunday School, Yattogoda; Visakha Sunday School, Gorakagoda; Nivattakachetiya Sunday School, Anuradhapura; Jayatilaka Sunday School, Ekiriyaigala, Hettimulla; Sri Sudharmodaya Sunday School, Gehenuwala, Meegoda; Mahinda Sunday School, Ballegama, Halloluwa, Kandy; Nandana Mahananda Sunday School, Imbulpitiya, Elkaduwa; Yasodara Sun-

day School, Katukelle, Kandy; Sri Seewali Sunday School, Kudaheenatiyagala, Kalutara; Jayamaha Vihara Sunday School, Matara; F. R. Senanayake Sunday School, Beddegama, Kobeigane; Tissamaharama Sunday School, Tissa; Sri Siddharta Sunday School, Uruwala, Weliwariya; Sri Ratnajothi Sunday School, Welpalla.

MEMORIAL TO THE LATE VEN. HIKKADUWE SRI SUMANGALA NAYAKE THERA

Sir,—Owing to the want of a separate ward, considerable inconvenience is experienced by Bhikkhus undergoing surgical treatment in the General Hospital.

Although there is a separate ward for medical cases, built in memory of the late Mr. F. R. Senanayake, there is no such separate ward for surgical cases and consequently Bhikkhu patients who come from all parts of the Island for specialised surgical treatment are now scattered over all the male wards of the General Hospital.

The Sri Sumangala Gunanusmarana Sabha is of opinion that better provision should be made for them and that there should be a separate ward for this purpose, where they could have greater privacy and convenience. The Sabha has obtained permission from the Hon. the Minister of Health, who has temporarily demarcated a site on which the new ward is to be constructed.

The authorities of the Hospital will reserve to themselves the right of making use of the beds in this ward, whenever they are unoccupied by Bhikkhus, to accommodate serious lay patients.

The new ward is proposed to be built in memory of the Ven. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Nayake Thera, one of the greatest Bhikkhus of modern times.

A sum of Rs. 25,000 is necessary. Will all those in sympathy with the movement, kindly send donations to Dr. W. E. A. Fonseka, Pamankada, Vice-President of the Sabha.—Yours etc.

D. S. SENANAYAKE,
(President).

R. C. PERERA,
(Hony. Secretary).

SIR BARON JAYATILAKA MEMORIAL FUND

The following is a statement of donations received towards the above fund up to January 15, 1946:—

Already acknowledged: Rs. 30,234.25.
Per list of Mr. E. de S. Wijayaratne—Mr. E. de S. Wijayaratne Rs. 100.
Per list of Mr. D. C. K. Widanapathirana—Mr. D. C. K. Widanapathirana Rs. 25.

Total: Rs. 30,359.25.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"OMENS AND BUDDHISM"

Sir,—I have read the article appearing in the November, 1945, issue of "The Buddhist," contributed by Mr. John M. Seneviratna and am compelled to offer the following comments as the impression left after reading it is likely to misguide at least a few.

I would wish to take the other side of the story why the clothes gnawed by the rats were thrown away by the young Brahmin as unlucky. A rat will usually go through and through a heap of clothes before it sits down to gnaw and, as it goes through the clothes it disseminates the disease-breeding lice with which its body is infested. We cannot be certain whether that particular rat carried plague-infested lice or not except by an elaborate scientific test. Therefore, to give ourselves the benefit of that doubt we avoid wearing rat-gnawed clothes, except after proper disinfection by washing or such other treatment. If, however, the young people in our homes ask why it is bad to wear rat-gnawed clothes, we say it is unlucky, for the purpose of cutting a long story short. Modern methods of disinfection may not have been known then.

I will not offer any contrary views about Mr. Seneviratna's paragraph relating to dreams because the mention of Mahamaya's white-tusker before Siddhartha's birth is sufficient.—Yours etc.

H. S. MIRANDO.

BUDDHIST REFORM MOVEMENT

Sir,—I read in your journal the article under the heading 'Some Tentative Suggestions for a Buddhist Reform Movement' with pleasure. Therein I saw some constructive suggestions expressed in all sincerity. But, from my point of view, I found a few points of much import omitted altogether. I shall state them here for your consideration.

In view of the conditions that prevail today, concerning the nursing and housing of the invalided monks, a suggestion providing for the establishment of a hospital or a large ward within the General Hospital itself, exclusively for monks, should have been included. The comparatively small ward, supposed to be kept exclusively for monks cannot house very many patients at one time. Therefore monks suffer the indignity of being thrown in together with sick laymen in the same ward.

Some practise medicine for gain under cover of the yellow robe. To eliminate these malpractices a law should be enacted by the Sangha or by the State, which could command those evildoers to give up the robe in favour of their profession or the profession for the sake of the robe. Some of these monks practising medicine are undoubtedly clever physicians, possessing

miraculous medicines and ola-books containing valuable prescriptions.

A monk may be allowed to practise medicine at leisure, free of charge, if he so desires; but the precaution of not allowing him to retain any secret prescription or preparation of medicine, as personal property, should be taken to discourage him from taking to the medical profession as a career. The valuable medicines and prescriptions in the possession of monks should be handed over to a select committee, through which a recognised Vaidya Sabha should get the same to be distributed equally among the members of the profession.

Avasas are seen to spring up like mushrooms, in every nook and corner of the city lanes. Monks should be prohibited to live in these unhealthy places, as soon as a central place of residence for priests could be found within the city. If monks are prohibited to hold private property in their own name and if the revenue from all the temple lands be vested in an incorporated board, as suggested, then, the above project of a central place of residence for monks, will not be the dream of an idealist. Then the Karaka Sabha will be able to appoint priests to various temples from those in the central temple or Sanghavaasa, according to their seniority.

I, as President of the Sri Sasanaloka Samitiya, discussed with other members of the Samitiya some of these very suggestions in the article in your journal over six months ago. In fact, we hoped to present our suggestions for a Buddhist Reform Movement, at the

All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress Sessions, in the form of a resolution. Unfortunately, we could not attend the Congress Sessions at Kegalla last time, as we had not come of age then to join the Congress, for our Samitiya had not passed the one year age limit.

Therefore, I am overjoyed to find the very things, for which my friends and I were labouring to find voice, expressed better by you and the other Buddhist leaders. The sooner the means of implementing the suggestions are found the better it is for the preservation of the pristine glory of the Sasana.—Yours etc.

D. P. DOLAWATTE.

AN APPEAL TO YOUNG BUDDHISTS

Sir,—We recently celebrated the birthday anniversary of the late Ven. Devamitta Dharmapala. The main idea in celebrating the birthday of this great social reformer and religious leader has been to honour him for the worthy cause—the spread of the Dhamma—for which he had sacrificed his life and wealth.

But very few realize that the real honour done to an eminent personality is by acting according to his wishes and

The Late Venerable Devamitta Dharmapala, better known by us as the Anagarika Dharmapala, had the courage to call a spade a spade in those gloomy days when the religion of the land as well as the manners and customs of the indigenous population were rapidly deteriorating, giving way to the religions and customs and manners of European races.

Without any discrimination whatsoever, without fear or favour to the rich or privileged classes he carried on a campaign of lectures to the people of this country who had emerged to be a race of 'flunkys, coated, trousered and booted' overwhelmed with a desire to follow the westerners in all aspects of life and submerged with a contemptuous feeling towards their own customs and manners.

Such a man was the Anagarika Dharmapala and therefore it is rather ludicrous to observe the way in which we congregate in the best of our European apparel in a tropical atmosphere and adore this great reformer who appealed that the Sinhalese people should have their own costumes which should be adaptable to the climate of the country. He also requested that the Sinhalese as a race should indulge in the formation of companies and introduce commerce and industry a large proportion of which is presently in the hands of foreign businessman. He strongly advocated that trade and industry should be rapidly developed if the Sinhalese desire to maintain the prestige of their race. Coming to education, he said that the education which was then prevalent in the country was deplorable. The majority of the younger generation were provided with an education which was only sufficient for one to seek a clerical job for a menial subsistence.

Is it not possible for the young men to float small companies with small capital to start with and launch upon trade? It would be quite honourable for our youths to indulge in trade than to spend their lives as mere quill drivers for the mere remuneration of a paltry subsistence.

The best way of honouring any great leader would be to follow his footsteps as far as possible and to act according to what he has advised us to do. The mere celebration of a birthday anniversary of a great leader will not be of any benefit to us.—Yours etc.

W. DIXON DE SILVA.

THE BUDDHIST

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