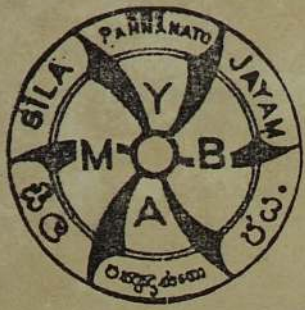


# THE BUDDHIST



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Editor : G. P. MALALASEKERA,  
D.LITT., M.A., PH.D.

Assistant: D. N. W. de SILVA

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## TIME AND MAN

By

N. WICKREMASINGHE,

*Guna Nivasa, Abangama*

“*The mind is the leader of all things. When man understands the mind he knows all things, because all things of the world are created by the mind.*”—Han-nyako (Prajnaparamita-sutra).

AS far as we know, time is a notion which is peculiar to thinking beings ; and as man is by general acceptance the only thinking being of whom we have actual knowledge, time may be described as a notion peculiar to man.

ANIMALS are said to be conscious only of the present, or, in other words, they live in the present with no concern for the past or future except as it may affect them instinctively. Little children, likewise, seem to have no notion of the past and the future—they, too, live in the present until the faculties of memory and imagination are developed in them ; for our past is the result of our memory, and our future that of our imagination.<sup>1</sup> It is to man alone, capable of recalling past events and anticipating future developments through the properties of his mind, that time has significance in its aspects of past, present and future.

In fact, there is no reality underlying the notion of time, and man when he acquired or became endowed with the capacity to think, undoubtedly his supreme and unique asset, he nevertheless through the instrumentality of that same asset overcomplicated his already complex life by the elaboration of this intangible, elusive time. Man was probably urged on to carry out this fact of intellectual abstraction by his longing for immortality and

the desire to realize the eternal and the infinite, but by reason of the very attempt he made at this futile task, immortality and the eternal have continued successfully to elude his knowledge-proud grasp.

What space is to matter and matter is to motion, time is to mind<sup>2</sup> Irrespective of a cognizant mind competent to judge the sequence of events by an accepted standard there can be no such notion as time. The most elementary standard by which we judge time and are conscious of its passage is by the movement of the earth resulting in day and night. But there is no definite point of cleavage between day and night except for the fact that it coincides with the gradual rise and setting of the sun with the accompanying onset of light and darkness. If we were capable of illuminating the night as well as the day, as it is, for instance done in the case of hens which as a consequence lay two eggs in 24 hours, time would have very much less significance for us.

The Esquimaux living in the frigid zone with long periods of continuous day and night must

have quite a different notion of time from those people who live in the torrid zone. In fact they would judge the passage of time by other events than the rise and setting of the sun—probably by the onset of hunger after the last meal, as I guess, animals appreciate time. Hence time may be defined as that concept by which mental states are distinguished in internal intuition.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, time may be defined as a concept resultant on the projection of the consciousness of a perceiver who is aware of the limitations of the duration of his existence. Thus to a stone or an animal (probably) time will have no significance, and to man, too, if he were eternal (deathless) it would not have the same significance as it has now.

The strongest proof of the subjectivity of time and space lies in their being infinite, and the ordinary concepts of time and space are thus unmasked as fictional, as mere auxiliary ideas, helpful pictures, developed by the logical function to bring order into reality and to understand it. It is precisely the subjective operation which admit

1. Cf. “Social Biology,”—Allan Dale, p. 92.

2. Cf. Anuruddha's Compendium of Philosophy,—S.Z. Aung, p. 10.

of the abuses to which these concepts have been subjected; only a subjective operation can be constantly thought of as if it were without end and were yet complete.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, if time with reference to the future and the past were inconceivable there would be no meaning left in the present, precisely because the present is only an activity or effort to bring about a result which refers to past or future.<sup>4</sup>

According to Kant time and space are necessary modes of thought, but we have found by experience that unconscious mental processes are in themselves "timeless." That is to say to begin with: they are not arranged chronologically, time alters nothing in them, nor can the idea of time be applied to them. These are negative characteristics which can be made plain only by instituting a comparison with conscious psychic processes. Our abstract conception of time seems rather to be derived wholly from the mode of functioning of the system of perceptual-consciousness, and to correspond with a self-perception of it.<sup>5</sup>

This view of time with reference to man which is held by Freud, the foremost psychologist of modern times, is worthy of the most serious consideration in any discussion concerning time, for it is from such that we can get an idea of time as it affects the mind of man, and it is this aspect which is the most important.

It is beyond the scope of such an essay as this to enter into a detailed consideration of time from this angle, but it would suffice to note that according to Freud time has no significance to the unconscious in man in the manner it has for the conscious, and from it we are justified in concluding that time is merely a resultant of the projection of the conscious into the external world. Through his mind man is capable of this operation and so time has significance for him, but at the same time we must not forget that this significance has direct reference to the duration of his conscious existence, and it is only a conscious being having the attributes of memory and imagination, subject to decay and death,

who can possibly conceive of time as we understand it.

Without a reference to Einstein and his theories relating to time, space, motion and gravity, this essay would be singularly incomplete. It may be said that of all persons living to-day, Einstein is the one who probably has the clearest and soundest knowledge of time, space, motion and gravity, and it is with great humility that I venture to touch upon these subjects; nevertheless, I must plead that no man is capable of any reasoning beyond the stretch of his own mind, and perhaps it is due to my incapacity to grasp these ideas as Einstein does, which obliges me to treat them thus.

According to an authoritative interpretation of Einstein,<sup>6</sup> he is said to assert that as we move about, the geometrical properties of space, as evidenced by figures drawn in it, will alter by an amount depending on the speed of the observer's motion, thus (through the concept of velocity) linking space with time. He also asserts that the flow of time, always regarded as invariable, will likewise alter with the motion of the observer, again linking time with space. That is to say that on a given system the local time runs the more slowly the more rapidly the system itself moves.

Einstein extended this theory of relativity and predicted two previously unsuspected phenomena, a bending of light rays passing close by the sun, and a shift of the Fraunhofer lines in the solar spectrum. Both these predictions have now been experimentally verified. Einstein's explanation is sufficient, and up to the present no one has been able to show that it is not necessary. Mathematically Einstein's findings may be considered necessary, and perhaps also scientifically; but philosophically, from a Buddhist point of view, I venture to say that their elaboration have involved our modes of thought in unnecessary complexities.

The Buddha expounded a complete and satisfactory way of life without reference to such mathematical and scientific intricacies, and therefore I cannot help regarding these theories, for the most part, as the dead-sea fruit of the over-

elaborate strivings of hyper-scientific minds stretching forth their greedy tentacles of thought to grasp finalities which like tantalising mirages will for ever continue to recede further and further away into the infinite as man with his finite powers seems to draw nearer and nearer to them.

To speak of the geometrical properties of space and the drawing of figures in it appears to me simply as an ideal activity of the imagination—space as an infinitude can possibly have no geometrical properties—it amounts to a contradiction in terms to speak of such; and the figures drawn in space, they are bound to be as tenuous as the imaginations of their draughtsmen. But, that the distance between two points will have an apparent variation corresponding to the speed of movement of the person travelling between the two points is obvious. If John takes 20 days to travel by ship from Colombo to London, and Jack takes 20 hours to cover the same distance by plane, then both of them need not have the knowledge of an Einstein to realise the fact that the distance seems (and it may be said that it is actually so) longer to John than to Jack. The linkage of time and space in this sense is a matter which is evident to common-sense. That on a given system the local time runs more slowly the more rapidly the system itself moves is a fact of which I became aware even as a boy in another but less mathematical manner. For instance, I felt (and I think it is what it really amounts to) that a day in which I did more work was longer than a day in which I did less; or that when I travelled by car time, considered with reference to the outside world, seemed to me to pass more slowly than when I travelled in a bullock-cart—the realisation being conveyed to me by the fact that within a given length of time I was able to cover a greater distance travelling by car than by bullock-cart.

As to the bending of the light rays passing close by the sun which is a huge mass of highly active matter revolving at terrific velocity, there seems to be a simple explanation. I have often watched the currents of a stream sweeping past a whirlpool, and I have noticed by the

3. Cf. "The Philosophy of 'As If'"—H. Vaihinger, p. 62.

4. Cf. "The Real and the Negative," B. K. Mallik, p. 289.

5. Cf. Freud—"A General Selection," Rickman, p. 203.

6. Cf. "A Treasury of Science," Shapley, p. 172.

floes on the stream the currents which passed close by the whirlpool being deflected in the direction of the whirl.

Basing my reasoning on this simple observation it is not difficult to comprehend how light rays, which are not unlike currents of every, are bent inwards as they pass close by the sun which is a mass of heated whirling matter.<sup>7</sup> Einstein also speaks of the flow of time, but this is to me a difficult thing to understand, for there is nothing in time to flow. If there is anything which flows, moves or changes it is I, and this flow or change in me I perceive by means of the mile-posts of events which I have fixed up with the aid of my consciousness and memory and imagination.

I must, however, emphasize the fact that this is not an attempt to be little Einstein's wonderful findings, and whatever I have stated must be treated in the light of philosophical speculation indulged in by one who has lost his bearings in the profundities of Einstein's unfathomed, uncharted, oceans of space, time and fields of energy.

Finally, I will quote this view of the Buddha as stated by Radhakrishnan "Everything is; this is one extreme; everything is not; this is the other extreme . . . The Perfect One proclaims the truth in the middle." The reality of the world is in becoming, which is different from both being and non-being. The world is a process which is governed by law. Its nature is not that of substance but of an immanent law of causality. There is no beginning of time when the law takes effect, no limit of space which encloses the world in which the law operates. It applies to all existence, gods and men heaven and hell. Everything exists in virtue of a cause and does not exist if that cause is absent.<sup>8</sup> I will not attempt to elucidate what is contained in Radhakrishnan's statement, but will leave the reader to arrive at his own conclusions. I will merely assert once more that time and space are concepts infinitudes, and their very infinity precludes them from being subject to laws which hold good for finite categories; and further that they are pure concepts without essential

reality—concepts for the conceptualizing of which conscious beings of human type or higher are indispensable.

To those of my readers to whom this may seem a fantastic contention, I would say that this is in reality much less fantastic a contention than that of the physicists who would assure us that there is no such thing as matter, or that of the psychologists who would assure us that there is no such thing as mind.<sup>9</sup> Time is not like a stream which is flowing past me—a stream which will flow on irrespective of the fact whether there is or there is not an observer to perceive it flow.

If we would compare time to a stream at all, it is but a stream which obtains its characteristic of flowing, may, its very being, because of me. Without me as an observer not only will the stream of time have no flowing, but the very stream itself will cease to be. In other words, man is the cause of time as far as this world of man is concerned.

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## VEDANTA AND BUDDHISM

By

Prof. HELMUTH VEN GLASENAPP

(Translated from the German\*)

VEDANTA and Buddhism are the high-lights of Indian philosophic thought. Since both have grown in the same spiritual soil, they share many basic ideas: both of them assert that the universe shows a periodical succession of arising, existing and vanishing, and that this process is without beginning and end. They believe in the causality which binds the consequence to the cause of an action (Karma), and in rebirth conditioned by this nexus. Both are convinced of the transitory, and therefore sorrowful character, of all individual existence in the world; they hope to attain gradually to a redeeming

knowledge through renunciation and meditation, and they assume the possibility of a blissful and serene state, in which all worldly imperfections have vanished for ever. The original form of these two doctrines shows however strong contrasts. The early Vedanta, formulated in most of the older and middle Upanishads, in some passages of the Mahabharata and the Purānas, and still alive to-day (although, greatly changed) as the basis of some Hinduistic systems—teaches an "ons realissimum" (an entity of highest reality) as the primordial cause of all existence, from which everything has arisen and into which

it again merges, either temporarily or for ever. With the monistic metaphysics of the Vedanta contrasts the pluralistic Philosophy of Becoming of the early Buddhism of the Pali texts which up to the present time flourishes in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam. In the whole empirical reality there is nowhere anything that persists; neither material nor mental substances exist independently by themselves; there is no primordial entity or primordial Being in whatsoever form it may be imagined, from which these substances might have developed. On the contrary, the manifold world of mental, and material

7. Arising from this it seems to me that the property of gravity is unlikely to be possessed of masses of matter without any movement of their own.

8. Cf. "The Teaching of the Buddha," Alpinia Ratnayake Trust Lecture by S. Radhakrishnan Public Trustee's Print, p. 9.

9. Cf. "What is the Soul?" 1928, by Bertrand Russell.

\* Abridged from "Vedanta and Buddhism," Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften n. d. Literatur Wiesbaden 1950.

elements arises solely through the causal co-operation of transitory factors of existence (dharma) which depend functionally upon each other; *i.e.* the material and mental universe arises through the concurrence of forces that, according to the Buddhists, are not reducible to something else. It is therefore obvious that deliverance from the Samsara cannot consist in the flowing back into an eternal Absolute which is at the root of all manifoldness, but can only be achieved by a complete extinguishing of all factor which condition the world—and life-process. The Buddhist Nirvana is therefore not the primordial ground which is at the basis of everything, and from which the whole world has arisen (the Brahman of the Upanishads) but the reverse of all that we know, something altogether different which must be characterized as a nothing in relation to the world, but which is experienced as highest bliss by those who have attained to it (Anguttara-Nik. 9,34, 1-3). Vedantists and Buddhists have been fully aware of the gulf between their doctrines, a gulf that cannot be bridged over. According to Majjhima 22, a doctrine that proclaims, "The same is the world and the self. This I shall be after death: imperishable, permanent, eternal!" (of Brh. Up. 4,4,13), was styled by the Buddha a perfectly foolish doctrine. The Katha Up. 4.14 does not see a way to deliverance in the dharma theory: He who supposes a profusion of particulars gets lost like rain water on a mountain slope; the truly wise man, however, must realize that his Atman is at one with the World Atman, and that the former, if purified from dress, is being absorbed in the latter," just as clear water poured into clear water becomes one with it, indistinguishably."

Vedanta and Buddhism have lived side by side for such a long time that obviously they must have influenced each other. The strong predilection of the Indian for a doctrine of universal unity has led the representatives of Mahayana to conceive Samsara and Nirvana as two aspects of the same true reality: for Nagarjuna the manifold world is a mere appearance, as all dharmas manifest in it, are perishable, and conditioned by others, without having any independent existence of their own.

Only the undefinable "Voidness" (sūnyatā), to be grasped in meditat-

ion, and realized in Nirvana, has true Reality. This so-called "Middle Doctrine" of Nagarjuna remains true to the Buddhist principle that there can be nowhere a substance, in so far as Nagarjuna sees the last unity as a kind of abyss, characterized only negatively, which has no genetical relation to the world. Asanga and Vasubandhu, however, their doctrine of Consciousness Only, have abandoned the Buddhist principle of denying a positive reality which is at the root of all phenomena, and in doing so, they have made a further approach to Vedanta to these Yogacaras, the highest reality is a pure, undifferentiated spiritual element that represents the non-relative substratum of all relative phenomena. To be sure, thereby they do not assert, as the (older) Vedanta does, that the *ens realissimum* is identical with the All (the universe); the relation between the two is rather being defined as "being neither different nor not different." It is only in the later Buddhist systems of the Far East that the undivided, absolute consciousness is taken to be the basis of the manifold world of phenomena. But—in contrast to the older Vedanta—it is never maintained that the world is an unfoldment from the unchangeable, eternal, blissful Absolute; suffering and passions, manifest in the world of manifoldness, are rather traced back to worldly delusion.

On the other hand, the doctrines of later Buddhist philosophy had a far-reaching influence on Vedanta. It is well known that Gaudapada, Sankara, and other representatives of later Vedanta, taught an illusionistic akosmism, for which true Reality is only "the eternally pure, eternally awakened, eternally redeemed" universal spirit whilst all manifoldness is only delusion; the Brahma has therefore not developed into the world, as asserted by the older Vedanta, but it forms only the world's unchangeable background comparable to the white screen on which appear the changing images of an unreal shadow play.

In my opinion, there was in later times, especially since the Christian era, much mutual influence of Vedanta and Buddhism, but originally the two systems are dimetrically opposed to each other. The Atman doctrine of the Vedanta and the dharma theory of Buddhism exclude each other. The Vedanta

tries to establish an Atman as the basis of everything, whilst Buddhism maintains that everything in the empirical world is only a stream of passing dharmas which therefore has to be characterized as "anattā," *i.e.* being without persisting self, without independent existence.

Again and again scholars have tried to prove a closer connection between the early Buddhism of the Pali texts, and the Vedanta of the Upanishads; they have even tried to interpret Buddhism as a further development of the Atman doctrine. There are, *e.g.*, two new books which show that tendency: "The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha" by J. G. Jennings (Oxford University Press 1947), and, in German language "The Soul Problem of Early Buddhism" by Herbert Guenther (Konstanz 1949).\*

The essential difference between the conception of liberation in Vedanta and Pali Buddhism lies in the following ideas: Vedanta sees liberation as the manifestation of a state which, though obscured, has been existing from time immemorial; for the Buddhist, however, Nirvana is a reality which differs entirely from all dharmas as manifested in Samsara, and which only becomes effective if they are abolished. To sum up: the Vedantin wishes to penetrate to the last reality which dwells within him as an immortal essence, or seed, out of which everything has arisen. The follower of Pali Buddhism, however, hopes by complete abandoning of all corporeality all sensations, all perceptions, all volitions, and all acts of consciousness, to realize a state of bliss which is entirely different from all that exists in the Samsara.

After these introductory remarks we shall now discuss systematically the relation of original Buddhism and Vedanta.

(1) First of all we have to clarify the knowledge of which Upanishadic text may be assumed for the canonical Pali scriptures. The five old prose Upanishads are, on reasons of contents and language, generally held to be pre-Buddhistic. The younger Upanishads, in any case those beginning from Maitrayana, were certainly written at a time when Buddhism already existed. The dating of the metrical Upanishads, especially of Katha and Svetasvatara, which are standing between the aforementioned two

\* A detailed critical review of these two books has been omitted in this abridged translation. (The Translator).

groups, is, however, doubtful. Formerly Katha was considered to be pre-Buddhistic, but against this stands the fact that Katha 4, 14 (see above) combats the Buddhist doctrine of the dharmas, by using a simile that is quoted in the Pali Canon on more than one place. Though there is the possibility that this verse which occurs in the second half of the Katha Up., thought by many to be younger, has been added in later times, this would strengthen earlier doubts with regard to the pre-Buddhist origin of the Katha and of those Upanishads following it immediately. It seems therefore advisable to refrain from adducing these Upanishads in historical considerations about the dependence of the old Buddhist texts on the Upanishads. This is of decisive importance with regard to the question, so often discussed, whether Sankhya has influenced Buddhism. Since terms and conceptions of the later Sankhya systems appear first in the Katha Up., it is not very probable that early Buddhism depended on Sankhya.

The number of passages in the Pali Canon dealing with Upanishadic doctrines, is very small. It is true that early Buddhism shares many doctrines with the Upanishads (Karma, rebirth, liberation through insight), but these tenets were so widely held in philosophical circles of those times, that we can no more regard the Upanishads as the direct source from which the Buddha has drawn. The special metaphysical concern of the Upanishads, the unity of the individual and the universal Atman, has been mentioned and rejected, only in a few passages, e.g., in the saying of the Buddha quoted above. The great distance that separates the Vedanta and the teachings of the Buddha, cannot be shown more clearly than by the fact that the two main concepts of Upanishadic wisdom, Atman and Brahman, do not appear anywhere in the Buddhist texts, with the clear and distinct meaning of a "primordial ground of the world, core of existence, *ens realissimum*," or similarly. As this holds likewise true for the early Jaina literature, one must assume that early Vedanta was of no great importance in Magadha, at the time of the Buddha and Mahavira; otherwise the opposition against it would have left more distinct traces in the texts of those two doctrines.

(2) It is of decisive importance

for examining the relation between Vedanta and Buddhism, clearly to establish the meaning of the words "attā" and "anattā," in Buddhist literature.

The meaning of the word "attan" (nominative: attā; Sanskrit: ātman, nom.: ātmā) divides into two groups: (1) In daily usage, "attan" ("self") serves for denoting one's own person, and has the function of a reflexive pronoun. This usage is, e.g., illustrated in the 12th Chapter of the Dhammapada. (2) As a philosophical concept "attan" denotes the individual soul as assumed by the Jains and other schools, but rejected by Buddhism. This individual soul was held to be an eternal, unchangeable spiritual monad, perfect and blissful by nature, although its qualities may be temporarily obscured through its connection with matter. Starting from this heretical conception, the Buddhists further denote as "Self" (ātman) any eternal, unchangeable, individual essence, i.e., what Western metaphysicians have called "substance": "something which exists by, and in itself, and not through something else; nor existing attached to, or in, something else." In the philosophical usage of the Buddhists, "attan" is therefore any entity of which the heretics wrongly assume that it exists independently of everything else, and that it has existence on its own strength.

The word "anattan" (nom.: anattā) is a noun; (Skr.: anātman) and means "not-self" or "un-self," in the sense of an entity that is not independent. The word "anātman" is found, in its meaning of "what is not the Soul (or Spirit)," also in brahmanical Sanskrit sources (Bhagavadgita, 6, 6; Sankara and Brahma Sutra I, 1, 1, Bibl. Indica, p. 16 Vedantasara 158). Its frequent use in Buddhism is accounted for by the Buddhist's peculiar preference of negative nouns, as akusala, akkhodha, aguna, etc., in Buddhist Sanskrit also anirvāna (Comy. to Madhyam. Kar. 25, 24), and similarly. Phrases like "rūpam anattā" are therefore to be translated "corporeality is a non-self," "corporeality is not an independent entity," or similarly.

As an adjective the word "anattan" (as occasionally "attan" too; see Dhammapada 379; Geiger, Pali Lit., para 92), changes (from the consonantal) to the a-declension:

"anatta" (see Sanskrit: anātmaka, anātmya), e.g., Samyutta 22, 55, 7 (III, p. 56), "anattam rūpam . . . anatte sankhāre . . . na pajānāti." The word "anatta" is therefore, to be translated here by "not having the nature of a self, not independent, without a (persisting) self, without an (eternal) substance," etc. The passage "anattam rūpam 'anattā rūpam' ti yathābhūtam pajānāti" has to be rendered: "With regard to corporeality having not the nature of a self ('nicht selbsthaft'), he does not know according to truth: 'Corporeality is a non-self (i.e., not an independent entity).'" The noun anattan and the adjective anatta can both be rendered by "without a self, without an independent essence, without a persisting core," since the Buddhists themselves do not make any difference in the use of these two grammatical forms. This becomes particularly evident in the case of the word "anattā," which may be a singular as well as a plural noun. In the well-known formula "sabbe sankhārā aniccā . . . sabbe dhammā anattā" (Dhp. 279), "all conditioned factors of existence are transitory . . . all factors of existence (Nirvana included) are without a self ('unselbsthaft')," it is undoubtedly a plural noun for the Sanskrit version has: "sarve dharmā anātmānah." Since noun and adjective are used indiscriminately, I do not see any difficulty in the fact that, on account of the consonance, Buddhists make use of both forms following shortly after another, e.g., "rūpam anattā, sankhārā anattā (instead of anattāno)," Samy. III, p. 179, unless we have to translate "The corporeality is a non-self, the formations (in their totality) are a non-self."

The fact that the Anattā doctrine only purports to state that a dharma is "void of a self," is evident from the passage Samyutta-Nik. 35, 85 (IV, p. 54) where it is said "rūpā suññā attena vā attaniyena vā," i.e., "forms are void of a self (an independent essence) and of anything pertaining to a self (or 'self-like')."

(5) As far as I can see there is not a single passage in the Pali Canon where the word "attā" is used in the sense of the Upanishadic Atman.\* This is not surprising, since the word "ātman," common to all philosophical systems, has the meaning of "Universal Soul, *Ens*

\* Except in passages rejecting it as that quoted by the author: "The same is the world and the self . . . ." (The Translator).

*Realissimum*, the Absolute," exclusively in the pan-on-theistic and theopantistic Vedanta, but, in that sense, it is alien to all other brahmanical and heretical doctrines. Why, then, should it have a Vedantic meaning in Buddhism? As far as I know, no one has ever conceived the idea to give to the term "ātman" a Vedantic interpretation, in the case of Nyaya, Vaisesika, classical Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, or Jainism.

(6) The fact that, in the Pali Canon, it is said that all worldly phenomena are anattā, has induced some scholars of the West to seek for an Atman in Buddhism. For instance, the following "great syllogism" was formulated by Georg Grimm: "What I perceive to arise and to cease, and to cause suffering to me, on account of that impermanence, cannot be my ego. Now I perceive that everything cognizable in me and around me, arises and ceases, and causes me suffering, on account of its impermanence. Therefore nothing cognizable is my ego!" From that Grimm concludes that there must be an eternal ego-substance that is free from all suffering, and above all cognizability. This is a rash conclusion. By teaching that there is nowhere in the world a persisting Atman, the Buddha has not made the assertion that there must be a transcendent Atman (*i.e.*, one beyond the world). This kind of logic resembles that of a certain sect which worships its masters as "Christs on earth," and tries to prove the simultaneous existence of several Christs from Marc 13, 22, where it is said: "There will arise false Christs and prophets"; if there are false Christs there, must be also genuine Christs! The denial of an unchangeable Atman is common ground for all systems of Hinayana as well as Mahayana, and there is therefore no reason

for the assumption that Buddhist tradition, unanimous in that point, has deviated from the fundamental doctrine of the Buddha. If the Buddha, contrary to the entire tradition, had actually proclaimed a transcendent Atman, a reminiscence of it would have been preserved somehow by one of the numerous Buddhist sects... He who advocates such a revolutionary conception of the Buddha's teachings, has also the duty to show evidence, how such a complete transformation started and grew, suddenly or gradually. But none of those who advocate the attā-theory has taken pains to comply with that demand which is indispensable to a historian.

(7) In addition to the aforementioned reasons there are other grounds too, which speak against the supposition that the Buddha had called the Atman "Nirvana." It is entirely incomprehensible why the Buddha should have used this expression which is quite unsuitable for Nirvana, and would have aroused only wrong associations of thought, in the listener. Though it is true that Nirvana shares with Atman the qualification of eternal peace into which the liberated ones enter for ever, but on the other hand, the Atman is, in brahmanical opinion, something spiritual and conscious, a description which does not hold true for Nirvana. Furthermore, Nirvana is not, like the Atman, the primordial ground or basis of the world (Aitareya Up. 1, 1), nor that which preserves order in the world (Bhādaranyaka Up. 3, 8, 9); it is also not the substance from which everything evolves, nor the core of all material elements.

(8) Since the scholarly researches made by Otto Rosenberg (published in Russian 1918, in German transl. 1924), Th. Stcherbatsky (1923), and the great work of translation done by Louis de la Vallée Poussin

("Abhidharmakosa," 1923-31), there cannot be any doubt about the fundamental principle of Buddhist metaphysics. In the light of these researches, all attempts to give to the Atman a place in the Buddhist doctrine, appear to be rather antiquated. We know now that all Hinayana and Mahayana schools are based on the "anātma-dharma" theory. This theory explains the world through the causal co-operation of a multitude of transitory factors (dharma), arising in mutual functional dependence. This theory maintains that the entire process of liberation consists in the tranquillization of these unceasingly arising and disappearing factors. But for that process of liberation is required, apart from moral restraint (sīla) and meditative absorption (samādhi), the insight (prajñā) that all conditioned factors of existence (saṅskāra) are transitory, without a permanent, independent existence, and therefore subject to grief and suffering. Nirvana which the saint experiences already in this life, and which he enters for ever after death, is certainly a "reality" (dharma), but as it neither arises nor vanishes, it is not subject to suffering, and is thereby distinguished from all conditioned realities. Nirvana, being a "dharma," is likewise "anattā," just as the transitory, conditioned dharmas of the Samsara which, as caused by volitions, *i.e.*, karma-producing energies (saṅskāra), are themselves also called "saṅskāra." Like them, Nirvana is no individual entity with individual volitions and actions. The fundamental idea of the entire system is just the doctrine that all dharmas are void of Atman, and, without a cogent proof, we cannot assume that the Buddha Himself has taught something different from that what, since more than two millenniums, His followers have considered to be the quintessence of His teachings.

## BOOK REVIEWS

"**Buddhism Outlined**" (107 pp. price Re. 1/8 As., published at the Mahabodhi Society, Gaya, by Pandit P. Pannananda Thera), is a collection of seven essays by Parawahera Vajiranana Maha Thera which should prove of inestimable value to every student of Buddhism in

English. The topics are of current and modern interest. One of the best is "Buddhism in Daily Life" wherein the Maha Thera, meeting pedant and sceptic, shows that it is man who is unaccommodating. In the "Conception of God and the Value of Buddha's Teaching,"

and "How Buddhism Can Help the World" are two other essays of vast interest; not less, is the essay on "Bodhi Pakkiya Bhavana." Written in simple, clear language the book should be made widely available in Ceylon.

D. T. D.



**"The Teachings of Bhagavan,"** published for free distribution by the Divine Life Society (Colombo Branch), is a 23-paged booklet containing four short essays, of which three compare the Marshi Ramana (the Bhagavan) with the Buddha, Christ and Sankaracharya. The Marshi was perhaps the most remarkable spiritual personality of the recent Hindu world and it was before him that the questionings of

Paul Brunton in his "Search in Secret India" were stilled. The pamphlet should interest all, irrespective of special religious persuasions, who have the time "to sit and stare."

D.

**"Thus Spake the Mahatma,"** the last of a series of three, published on the third anniversary, by M. K.

Krishnan (Coimbatore), is a 152-paged clear-typed pocket booklet displayed in *ola* book fashion to the reader. The excerpts from Mahatma Gandhi's sayings, arranged according to the publisher's choice, will no doubt be used by admirers Bible-wise. The trade notice on the cover mars the dignity of the contents and might have been removed.

D.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SPIRITUAL CONVOCATIONS

THE Colombo Visakha Vidyalyaya in inaugurating a spiritual convocation has set a leading example to many of our Buddhist institutions. I think this premier Buddhist Girls' School has taken a very wise step to propagate the Dhamma of the Sakyamuni, through

the medium of these periodical convocations. Why not our leading Buddhist schools like Ananda, Nalanda, Mahinda and Dharmarajah conduct similar convocations in their institutions?

I would earnestly appeal to the Religious Committee of the leading premier Buddhist institution—the

Colombo Y.M.B.A. to start forthwith spiritual convocations and discussion groups for the welfare of its members in particular and the public in general.

J. P. PATHIRANA.

100/6, Maligakanda Road,  
Colombo 10.

## COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

### DHAMMA EXAMINATIONS PRIZE-GIVING

The prize distribution in respect of the Colombo Y.M.B.A. Dhamma Examinations, 1950, was held on Saturday, February 10, 1951, at the Association Hall. Hon. Justice Hema H. Basnayake presided and Mrs. Basnayake distributed the prizes.

The following donators to the Prize Fund are acknowledged with thanks:—

Muhandiram A. Dharmatilaka, Rs. 10; Mr. P. K. Dharmasena, Rs. 10; Rev. Pandit W. Medhananda Thero, Rs. 10; Rev. A. Gunaratana Thero, Rs. 10; Mr. C. Kathriachchi, Rs. 10; Mr. R. M. Arthanayaka, Rs. 10; Rev. T. Buddhappiya Thero, Rs. 10; Mr. D. A. Dissanayaka, Rs. 25; Mr. H. Ekanayake, Rs. 10; Mr. B. D. Piyadasa, Rs. 10; Mr. W. D. Thomas Silva, Rs. 10; Mr. H. M. Avusadahamy, Rs. 10; Mr. C. P. Jayasinghe, Rs. 30; Sri Saddharmodaya Taruna Samitiya, Egoda Uyana, Rs. 10; Mr. T. M. K. B. Chandrasekara, Rs. 10; Mr. Patiraja M. Mudiyanse, Rs. 10; Mr. W. L. P. Banda, Rs. 10; Mrs. C. G. Kuruppu, Rs. 10; Mrs. W. S. Wijayasundera, Rs. 10; The Late Muhandiram K. D. Karunaratna Trust, Rs. 10; Mr. R. Semage, Rs. 100; Rev. P. Gunaratana Thero, Rs. 10; Mr. D. M. Neegoda, Rs. 10; Mr. D. S. W. Samarakone, Rs. 30; Adeline Gomes Trust, Rs. 350; Mudaliyar Edmund Peiris Trust, Rs. 30; Dr. B. S. Jayawardene, Rs. 10; Mr. D. E. Hettiarachchi, (Baddegama) Rs. 15; Mr. Richard

Salgado, Rs. 50; Mr. W. D. Paulis Appuhamy, Rs. 10; Mrs. H. M. Gunasekara, Rs. 5; Muhandiram D. S. C. Umagiliya, Rs. 5; M/s. M. Y. Hemachandra & Co., Rs. 15; Dr. L. C. Gunasekera, Rs. 10; Mr. H. de S. Kularatna, Rs. 10; M/s. U. P. Ekanayaka & Co., Rs. 25; Galle Gymkhana Club, Rs. 150; Mrs. D. S. Senanayake, Rs. 50; Senator Justin Kotalawala, Rs. 25; Hon. Mr. H. W.

of works on religion and sociology, delivered a lecture on "Trend of Religion in the Modern World." Prof. O. H. de A. Wijesekara presided.

On March 18th, Mr. K. J. Van Ginkel, of the Theosophical Society, delivered a lecture on "Towards a Better World."

### BRANCH SECRETARIES

The following Branch Secretaries have been appointed:—

Religious Examinations: Mr. D. S. Abeyasinghe; Religious Activities: Mr. L. R. Goonetilleke; Social Service: Mr. Daya Hewavitane; Literary Activities (Sinhalese): Mr. J. A. Dharmadasa; Literary Activities (English): Mr. Walter Wimalachandra; Sports: Mr. B. M. Perera.

Manager of the Free English Night School: Mr. T. B. Dissanayaka.

### NEW MEMBERS

**19.2.51:** B. E. D. Nagahawatta, 41, China Garden, Galle; V. Yoganathan, 18, Borella Cross Road, Colombo 8; D. B. Wijesingha, 89, Temple Avenue, Colombo 10; W. A. Wijayasiri, Charity Commissioner's Office, Colombo; Victor Coomasaru, Uppertambawitta Estate, Mawanella; and K. Balasingham, 12, Tieborne Road, Maradana.

**5.3.51:** J. Y. D. de Silva, 15, Elia Place, Maradana; A. A. Jayawardena, 24, Borella Cross Road, Borella; M. E. A. Perera, Mawella Road, Petiyagoda, Kela-

### "THE BUDDHIST"

Will those members, who, by an unfortunate error, were sent two copies of the February issue of *The Buddhist*, be so kind as to return one copy to the Hony. General Secretary, Y.M.B.A. ? Thank you.

Amarasuriya, Rs. 15; Mr. N. H. Keertiratne (M.P.), Rs. 20; A. Jayasinghe, Rs. 50; Mr. R. L. Pereira, K.C., Rs. 25; Mrs. C. Samarawickrama, Rs. 10; Mr. U. Jayaratna, Rs. 15; Mr. H. S. Gunasekara, Rs. 10.

### LITERARY ACTIVITIES

On March 13th, Dr. G. H. Mees, M.A., D.D., of Holland, distinguished author



# Y. M. B. A. SUNDAY SERMONS

Regular Sunday Bana Preaching

is held

at the **Y. M. B. A. Hall**

from 9 to 10 A.M.

on Stanzas from the

**DHAMMAPADA.**

**Programme for April, 1951**

1st SUNDAY · PITAKOTTE SOMANANDA THERA

**Jabbaggiyanan Katha Vastuva**

Not in the air, not in the middle of the ocean, nor in the caves of hills, nowhere in the whole world could a man find a spot where he might not overcome death.

2nd SUNDAY : PANDITHA THALALLE DHAMMANANDA THERA

**Sambahulanan Kumarakanan Katha Vastuva**

All fear punishment, all fear death, judging others by yourself kill not, nor cause to kill.

3rd SUNDAY : P. VIPASSI THERA, OF VAJIRARAMA

**Kunda-dana Therassa Katha Vastuva**

All fear punishment, to all life is dear. Judging others by yourself kill not, nor cause to kill.

4th SUNDAY : VEN. HEENATIYANE DHAMMALOKA THERA

**Visakhadinan Upasikanan Uposatha Kammassa Katha Vastuva**

Whoso injures creatures, desirous of happiness seeking thereby happiness to himself hereafter he shall not have happiness.

5th SUNDAY : KOTTE SANGHARATANA THERA

**Ajagara Pethassa Katha Vastuva**

Speak not harsh words to any, others may accost you the same, irritating words bring suffering, blows may light upon you.

“MAY ALL BEINGS BE WELL AND HAPPY.”

Members and well-wishers please make it a point to attend these instructive sermons.

L. R. GOONETILLEKE,  
Hony. Secretary,  
Religious Activities Branch.

