

THE BUDDHIST



OCTOBER, 1951
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No. 6

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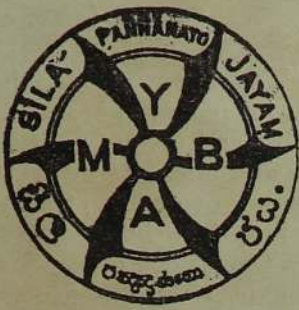
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THE BUDDHIST

(Organ of the Colombo Y.M.B.A.)

“*Sīla Paññānato Jayam*”

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[No. 6

THE INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM ON MODERN THOUGHT

[We give below the first instalment of a talk to the University Buddhist Brotherhood by Mr. L. H. Mettananda, Principal, Ananda College.—Ed., *Buddhist*.]

“THE influence of Buddhism on Modern Thought.” When I think of this subject, there come before my mind’s eye—I don’t know why—two incidents of my life which have had a profound effect on my outlook and which forever remain as stars in my imagination. The first incident is this.

In 1930, accompanied by my wife, I happened to be travelling by train, in Europe, and when the train arrived at a certain railway station, a Hungarian entered our compartment and sat down opposite to us. He fixed his eyes on us and at last broke the silence by asking us, “Are you from Gandhi’s country?” At the time the Civil Disobedience campaign launched by Mahatma Gandhi all over India was at its height. We replied that we were from Ceylon. He knew Gandhi but not Ceylon. Any way, he fell into a long conversation with us. He said that he was electrified to hear of unarmed men and women of India who took part in their national struggle remaining perfectly calm and unmoved when they were fiercely attacked by the police with their lathis. He added that this sort of thing was unknown in Europe. The European would return a blow for a blow—he did not believe in non-violence. So saying our Hungarian acquaintance marvelled at the new spiritual force released by the Mahatma for the liberation of down-trodden humanity.

Next I come to the second incident. One day, accompanied by an English friend, I went for a ramble in Hampstead Heath. During the ramble,

lo and behold! We came to a clearing in the wood marked by two gnarled oak trees, one standing at each end, a trysting place (as was explained to us by our English friend) where two gentlemen who had a dispute met armed with pistols and to settle the dispute it was a point of honour for them to fire at each other until one of them fell. While firing, one combatant took cover behind one tree and the other took cover behind the other tree. This was surely a barbarous method of settling disputes. Happily, it has now gone out of use.

Both these incidents have revealed to me an aspect of European tradition which is diametrically opposed to what we have become used to under the influence of Buddhism.

Nevertheless I am going to point out to you how definite ideas and definite principles set forth by the Buddha have of late begun to enter into the very stream of western thought, in spite of the fact that there has been no organisation or institution to carry on propaganda for the spread of Buddhism in the West. It appears that Buddhist ideas and ideals have caught on as a process of nature. There has been a natural spread of Buddhism through the stories of travellers and through the self-imposed labours of zealous scholars.

I must begin with the Jataka Stories which have had a remarkable influence on Western thought.

Late Mr. T. W. Rhys Davids holds that from the Jataka Stories are derived the Aesop’s Fables. Accord-

ing to Rhys Davids, Babrius, A Greek poet, who probably lived in the first Century before Christ, wrote a number of fables.

“Some of the fables of Babrius and Phaedrus, found in Planudes, were possibly derived by those authors from Buddhist sources. And lastly, other versions of the Jatakas, besides those which have been mentioned as coming through the Arabs, and reached Europe long before the time of Planudes; and some more of his stories have been traced back to Buddhist sources through these channels also.”

Rhys Davids also points out the Buddhist Tales of Karatak and Damanak—translated into Pahlavi or Ancient Persian and thence about 750 A. D. into Syriac—and into Arabic under the title of Kalilah and Dimnah—“became great favourites among the Arabs; and as the Arabs were gradually brought into contact with Europeans, and penetrated into the South of Europe, they brought the stories with them; and we soon afterwards find them translated into Western tongues.” According to Rhys Davids, it was at the court of the Khalif of Bagdad in the eighth century that the Arabic book Kalilah and Dimnah was written. “A Christian, high in office at his court, afterwards became a monk and is well known, under the name of St. John of Damascus, as the author in Greek . . . of a religious romance called Barlaam and Joasaph, giving the history of an Indian prince who was converted by Barlaam and became a hermit.

This history... is taken from the life of the Buddha; and Joasaph is merely the Buddha under another name, the word Joasaph, or Josaphat, being simply a corruption of the word Bodisat, that title of the future Buddha so constantly repeated in the Buddhist Birth Stories.

Pope Sixtus the Fifth (1585—90) authorized a particular Martyrologium... to be used throughout the Western Church. In that work... are included "The holy Saints Barlaam and Josaphat, of India, on the borders of Persia, whose wonderful acts Saint John of Damascus has described."

"And it was Professor Max Muller, who has done so much to infuse the glow of life into the dry bones of Oriental scholarship, who first pointed out the strange fact—almost incredible, were it not for the completeness of the proof—that Gotama the Buddha, under the name of St. Josaphat, is now officially recognized and honoured and worshipped throughout the whole of Catholic Christendom as a Christian Saint!"

Further, "A learned Italian has proved that a good many of the stories of the hero known throughout Europe as Sinbad the Sailor are derived" from the Buddhist book of Birth Stories "and a similar remark applies also to other well-known Tales included in the Arabian Nights. La Fontaine openly acknowledges his indebtedness to the French version of Kailah and Dimnah. And Professor Binfev and others have traced the same stories, or ideas drawn from them, to Poggio, Boccaccio, Gower, Chaucer, Spenser and many other later writers... In a similar way it has been shown that tales current among the Hungarians and the numerous peoples of Slavonic race have been derived from Buddhist sources, through translations made by or for the Huns, who penetrated in the time of Genghis Khan into the East of Europe. And finally yet other Indian tales, not included in the Kalidag and Damrag literature, have been brought into the opposite corner of Europe by the Arabs of Spain."

Bhikkhu Silabhadra in his article appearing in the January, 1950 number of the Maha Bodhi Journal thinks that the Nimi Jataka has influenced Dante's Divine Comedy. "In the Nimi Jataka we read how Indra, the Lord of the Devas, invited King Nimi of Mithila to his heavenly abode to enable the celestials to meet the king who was an ideal

ruler. Indra's Charioteer, Matali was commissioned to take the king to heaven in the former's chariot... The chariot proceeds in the air with the royal passenger, piloted by Matali." On the way Matali shows him round hell and heaven, just as in the Divine Comedy the spirit of Vergil guides Dante in the infernal regions and purgatory.

Says Bhikkhu Silabhadra:

"Both the pilgrims undergo their thrilling experience while in human body actually living in this world of ours. The division of hell into several circles to each of which a distinct class of sinners are consigned, is the same in both the books. Again there is hardly any difference between the nature of the sufferings of the sinners in one book and that in the other. The various transgressions mentioned in one book are almost identical with those in the other. The whole conception of the two books is the same. There is no other instance of such complete agreement in all essential respects between two books composed in two different ages by two different authors of two different continents. They appear to be two pictures of the same object in one frame, one in oriental setting, the other occidental... The Jatakas were composed before the Christian era, whereas Dante appeared in the fourteenth century A.C. The only conclusion is that Dante took from the Jatakas."

The following article appearing in the British Medical Journal, 22nd September, 1928, shows that it is to Buddha and his followers that the modern world owes the hospital idea.

"Some years ago it was not unusual to find in histories of the rise of Christianity on the ruins of paganism the statement that public charity to the sick and the establishment of hospitals were unknown before the days of Constantine the Great. A wider view of the ancient world, based on a greater knowledge of ancient society in Asia, as well as Europe and Northern Africa, has shown that hospitals for the sick were established long before the Christian era.

The Vicary Lecture on this subject, delivered by Dr. George Parker, of Bristol, has recently been published in the British Journal of Surgery. Dr. Parker has surveyed the whole field, and as a result of his studies is able to assure us that the earliest beginnings we know of

can be traced to about the sixth century B.C., in places far apart, both in the West and distant East." It is a curious and unexplained fact that there is no evidence of the existence of hospitals in Assyria, Babylon, early Egypt, or China. In the case of Egypt their absence is hardly surprising, seeing that the true Egyptian culture had disappeared by the sixth century B.C. It is, however, surprising that China, which so readily accepted Buddhist teaching, should not have adopted the *Buddhist practice of founding hospitals*. In England... as the population in 1400 is not likely to have exceeded three millions, and after the ravages of the Black Death was probably much less, this would give a ratio of one hospital or asylum to every 5,200 of population, leaving out of account the monastic infirmaries which Dr. Parker excludes. No doubt many, if not most, of these establishments were not hospitals in the modern sense of the word, but refuges for the sick poor, just as the existing St. Bartholomew's Hospital was in its earlier days. This is a distinction which Dr. Parker is careful to draw, but making, as he does, large deductions on this account, the number of places for the treatment of the sick and wounded, in non-Christian as well as in Christian lands, is simply astounding. *It is to Gautama and his followers that we owe, apparently, the hospital idea.* Buddhist hospitals in India existed before the invasion of Alexander, which, moreover, only touched the northern part of that country.

This view is supported by Rock Edict II of Asoka (274 to 232 B.C.) which says: "Medical practitioners, medicines and surgeries are provided in various parts of the Empire, and botanical gardens are instituted for the growth of the necessary herbs." (*The Buddhist Way of Life* by F. H. Smith, 1951).

It is remarkable that during the last three or four decades, a vast change has come over the face of Europe. We know that the Westerner, by his indefatigable energy, perseverance and ingenuity wrested from nature the secrets which she has jealously guarded and by so doing succeeded in making vast strides in the domain of science, industry and technology. By the help of his great inventions he has increased the comforts and conveniences of life to an extent undreamt of before. The influence of the West spread to the utmost ends

of the earth. England ruled an empire "over which the sun never set." Speaking of the life of the West in the years before the first World War, Mr. Harold Begbie said: "Look where you will, it is the spirit of I myself which is paramount. Life exists for Me: all the dim aeons behind have toiled to produce Me: This brief moment in the eternal duration of time is only an opportunity for My pleasure and My ease: I care not a jot for the ages ahead and the sons of men who shall inhabit the earth when I am dust beneath their feet. Give Me My Rights. Stand clear of My way. I want and I will have." (Benjamin Kidd's *Science of Power*).

The resulting militarism of the West produced two World Wars which brought the whole of humanity to the brink of utter ruin.

Then followed a tremendous re-orientation in the thought of mankind. The problem of cosmic suffering dawned on their minds and there were large numbers of people who sought spiritual guidance from the teaching of the Buddha. So we find the influence of Buddhism slowly but surely passing into the stream of modern thought.

Aldous Huxley, steeped in the religion of the Buddha considers the body to be the source of all ills and writes thus in his *Point Counter Points*:

"Ever since his mother's second marriage Spandrell had always perversely made the worst of things, chosen the worst course, deliberately encouraged his own worst tendencies. It was with debauchery that he distracted his endless leisures. . . . Most habitual debauchees are debauchees not because they enjoy debauchery, but because they are uncomfortable when deprived of it. Habit converts luxurious enjoyments into dull and daily necessities. The man who has formed a habit of women or gin, of opium-smoking or flagellation, finds it as difficult to live without his vice as to live without bread and water.

"Robbed gradually by habit both of his active enjoyment and of his active sense of wrong-doing (which had always been a part of his pleasure), Spandrell had turned with a kind of desperation to the refinements of vice. But the refinements of vice do not produce corresponding refinements of feeling. The contrary is in fact true; the more refined in its far-fetched extravagance, the more uncommon and abnormal the vice, the more dully and hopelessly

unemotional does the practice of it become.

.... "The body was like a wild beast that devoured the soul, annihilated the consciousness, abolished the real you and me. And as though by accident, somebody, that very evening, had sent him a mysterious parcel, which when he opened, as he now did, turned out to contain a portfolio full of pornographic French etchings, in which poor Harriet saw with a growing sense of horror and disgust all the actions she had so innocently and warm-heartedly accepted as love, represented in cold and lucid outlines and made to look so hideous, so low, so bottomlessly vulgar that but to glance was to hate and despise the whole human race."

Huxley adds: "It's not instinct that makes Casanovas and Byrons and Lady Castlemaines; it is a prurient imagination artificially tickling up the appetite; tickling up desires that have no natural existence.

.... It is not the possessive instinct that's made modern civilization insane about money. The possessive instinct has to be kept artificially tickled by education and tradition and moral principles."

The value of self-possession and serenity so devoutly wished for by a Buddhist is stressed thus:

"Mrs. Bidlake meanwhile preserved her metaphysical calm. Her soul swam on steadily like a great ship through a choppy sea; or perhaps it was more like a balloon, drifting high above the waters in the serene and windless world of fancy. She had been talking to Philip about Buddhism (Mrs. Bidlake had a special weakness for Buddhism). At the first screams, she had not even turned round to see what was the matter, contenting herself with raising her voice so as to make it audible above the tumult. The yelling was renewed, was continued. Mrs. Bidlake was silent and shut her eyes. A cross-legged Buddha, serene and golden appeared against the red background or her closed lids; she saw the yellow-robed priests around him, each in the attitude of the god and plunged in ecstatic meditation.

'Maya,' she said with a sigh, as though to herself, 'maya—the eternal illusion.' She opened her eyes again. 'It is rather tough,' she added, addressing herself to Elinor and Miss Fulkes who were desperately trying to make the child eat. Little Phil seized the excuse which

she had thus gratuitously given him. 'It's tough,' he shouted tearfully, pushing away the fork on which Miss Fulkes, her hand trembling with the excess of painful emotions, was offering him a shred of roast duck and half a new potato.

Mrs. Bidlake shut her eyes again for a moment; then turned to Philip and went on discussing the Eight-Fold Way."

Huxley sets out in the following passage the essentially Buddhist idea that happiness comes not from having a good time but from trying to become better.

"I feel so enormously much happier since I've been here, with you," she announced hardly more than a week after her arrival.

"It's because you're not trying to be happy or wondering why you should have been made unhappy, because you've stopped thinking in terms of happiness or unhappiness. That's the enormous stupidity of the young people of this generation," Mrs. Quarles went on; "they never think of life except in terms of happiness. How shall I have a good time? That's the question they ask. Or they complain. Why am I not having a better time? But this is world where good times, in their sense of the word, perhaps in any sense, simply cannot be had continuously, and by everybody. And even when they get their good times, it's inevitably a disappointment—for imagination is always brighter than reality. And after it's been had for a little, it becomes a bore. Everybody strains after happiness, and the result is that nobody's happy. It's because they're on the wrong road. The question they ought to be asking themselves isn't: Why aren't we happy, and how shall we have a good time? It's:..... why aren't we better? If people asked themselves those questions and answered them to the best of their ability in practice, they'd achieve happiness without ever thinking about it. For it's not by pursuing happiness that you find it; it's by pursuing salvation. And when people were wise, instead of merely clever, they thought of life in terms of salvation and damnation, not of good times and bad times. If you're feeling happy now, Marjorie, that's because you've stopped wishing you were happy and started trying to be better. Happiness is like coke—something you get as a by-product in the process of making something else."

Ends and Means

A clear exposition of the Buddha's doctrine is set out in "Ends and Means" which by the way happened to be one of the few books Jawaharlal Nehru took with him to the prison in which he was incarcerated by the British Government in India. It says: "The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possessions. Non-attached to the objects to these various desires. Non-attached to his anger and hatred, non-attached to his exclusive loves. Non-attached to wealth, fame, social position. Non-attached even to science, art, speculation, philanthropy. Yes, non-attached even to these. For, like patriotism, in Nurse Cavell's phrase, 'they are not enough.'

Non-attachment is negative only in name. The practice of non-attachment entails the practice of all the virtues. It entails the practice of charity, for example; for there are no more fatal impediments than anger (even 'righteous indignation') and cold-blooded malice to the identification of the self with the immanent and transcendent more-than-self. It entails the practice of courage; for fear is a painful and obsessive identification of the self with its body. (Fear is negative sensuality, just as sloth is negative malice). It entails the cultivation of intelligence; for insensitive stupidity is a main root of all the other vices. It entails the practice of generosity and disinterestedness; for avarice and the love of possessions constrain their victim to equate themselves with mere things. And so on. It is unnecessary any further to labour the point, sufficiently obvious to anyone who chooses to think about the matter, that non-attachment imposes upon those who would practise it the adoption of an intensely positive attitude towards the world.

The ideal of non-attachment.... is at the very heart of Buddhism."

The Planned Society

"In the contemporary world there are two classes of bad plans—the plans invented and put into practice by men who do not accept our ideal postulates, and the plans invented and put into practice by the men who accept them, but imagine that the ends proposed by the prophets can be achieved by wicked or un-

suitable means. Hell is paved with good intentions, and it is probable that plans made by well-meaning people of the second class may have results no less disastrous than plans made by the evil-intentioned people of the first class. Which only shows, yet once more, how right the Buddha was in classing unawareness and stupidity among the deadly sins."

Ahimsa

"Indian pacifism finds its completest expression in the teaching of Buddha. Buddhism, teaches ahimsa, or harmlessness towards all living beings. It forbids even laymen to have anything to do with

Age literature of the Old Testament. For Buddhists, anger is always and unconditionally disgraceful. For Christians, brought up to identify Jehovah with God, there is such a thing as 'righteous indignation.' Thanks to this possibility of indignation being righteous, Christians have always felt themselves justified in making war and committing the most hideous atrocities."

Cosmic Sense

"Perfect non-attachment demands of those who aspire to it, not only compassion and charity, but also the intelligence that perceives the general implications of particular acts, that sees the individual being within the system of social and cosmic relations of which he is but a part. In this respect, it seems to me, Buddhism shows itself decidedly superior to Christianity. In the Buddhist ethic stupidity, or unawareness, ranks as one of the principal sins. At the same time people are warned that they must take their share of responsibility for the social order in which they find themselves. One of the branches of the Eightfold Path is said to be 'right means of livelihood.' The Buddhist is expected to refrain from engaging in such socially harmful occupations as soldiering, or the manufacture of arms and intoxicating drugs. Christian moralists make the enormous mistake of not insisting upon right means of livelihood. The church allows people to believe that they can be good Christians and yet draw dividends from armament factories, can be good Christians and yet imperil the well-being of their fellows by speculating in stocks and shares, can be good Christians and yet be imperialists, yet participate in war. All that is required of the good Christian is chastity and a modicum charity in immediate personal relations. An intelligent understanding and appraisal of the long-range consequences of acts is not insisted upon by Christian moralists. One of the results of this doctrinal inadequacy is that there is a singular lack, as well in imaginative as in biographical literature, of intelligently virtuous, adultly non-attached personages, upon whom young people may model their behaviour. This is a deplorable state of things. Literary example is a powerful instrument for the moulding character. But most of our literary examples, as we have seen, are mere idealizations of the average sensual man."

Sunday Vana

PROGRAMME FOR OCTOBER, 1951

1st Sunday : Pitakotte Somananda Thera

Chulakala Upasakassa Katha Vattu.—If one does evil one comes to grief, if one does good one comes to happiness. Happiness and grief belong to the doers, no one can purify another.

2nd Sunday : Pandita Thallalle Dhammananda Thera

Attadattha Therassa Katha Vattu.—Let no man neglect his own welfare for the good of another, however great it may be. Knowing what is good for him, let him pursue it.

3rd Sunday : W. Sugathananda Thera of Vajirarama

Annataradahara Bhikkhussa Katha Vattu.—Do not follow mean things, live not in heedlessness. Do not embrace false views, do not be a world upholder.

4th Sunday : Heenatiyane Dhammaloka Thera

Suddhodhanassa Katha Vattu.—Be alert, be not heedless, lead a righteous life. The righteous live happily both in this world and in the next.

the manufacture and sale of arms, with the making of poisons and toxicants, with soldiering or the slaughter of animals. Alone of all the great world religions, Buddhism made its way without persecution, censorship or inquisition. In all these respects its record is enormously superior to that of Christianity, which made its way among people wedded to militarism and which was able to justify the blood-thirsty tendencies of its adherents by an appeal to the savage Bronze-

TIME AND THE FUTURE

By N. WICKREMESINGHE

(Continued from last issue)

IF there is any ability at all to forecast events or trends of behaviour in the lives of individuals, the accuracy of such forecasts will largely depend on the data already in hand. Thus, in respect of astrological forecasts if we know, for example, that a thousand persons who were born when the planet Venus was in a given position in the constellation of Libra led lives devoted to the fine arts, had many affairs of the heart, and lived to the age of sixty, then, it is very probable that the 1001 persons born under the same planetary position would lead a similar life. In like manner with the aid of palmistry, if it is known that a 1000 persons whose palms are marked with a grill formation on the mount of Venus, and the heart-line of which is crossed by many fine lines, lived the lives of Don Juans, it is very likely for the 1001 persons with like markings on his palm to lead a Don Juan life, too. In so far only do I see the reasonable possibility of foretelling with approximate certainty future events in the lives of persons through the aid of astrology and palmistry. Even so, there is an important factor contributing to error in such forecasts; for, with the aid of a person's horoscope or the lines on his palm we can only expect to know on the above basis events and trends of behaviour solely as far as that individual himself is concerned; we do not know, and a man's horoscope or palm can in no way help to indicate, what external conditions determined by other persons will be brought to bear upon the individual having the particular horoscope or palm. Thus in order to be able to forecast even with approximate accuracy the manner of life a person will lead, not only must we know his line of future

action but also the lines of the future action of those among whom he may happen to live in that future, as well as the future lay-out of the non-human environment in which he may be placed. Considered thus, even on this basis, the likelihood of arriving at approximate certainty with regard to forecasts of the what is yet to happen in the lives of men and nations, is a matter open to much doubt.

For example, we know from accumulated experience that in Ceylon a well-matured bean seed buried half an inch deep in moist soil will germinate within three days, barring accidents such as attacks by insects, etc.; but can we forecast, even with approximate certainty, that a similar bean seed buried in the same manner in the soil of Alaska will germinate in the same way? The quantity of data which we must take into account in order to make a forecast, even of approximate accuracy, about the life of a person is so great and so difficult to collect, nay impossible of ascertaining, that it is practically outside the limits of the reach of normal human capacity to be able to do so.

In a certain sense astrology, palmistry, and allied means devised for the purpose of achieving foreknowledge, all have something in common with psychology, psychometry, etc. But these professors who claim to have the ability to read the future, not only attempt to cover the legitimate field of psychology, but even dare to go beyond the limits of psychology proper. No sound psycho-analyst will ever make a claim to the ability which astrologers and their ilk arrogate to themselves with such easy conceit. Genuine psychologists know how impossible it is to ascertain all the data essential for making forecasts of such professed accuracy as they so blatantly advertise. Regarding psychologists, more particularly those who profess to be able to predict the course of events in

human life, it would be of interest to quote the following from Comte: "It is yet more out of the question to make an intellectual observations of intellectual processes. The observing and the observed organ are here the same, and its action cannot be pure and natural. In order to observe, your intellect must pause from activity; yet it is this very activity that you want to observe. The results of such a method are in proportion to its absurdity. After 2,000 years of psychological pursuit, no one proposition is established to the satisfaction of (all) its followers."¹

In all forecasting of events in the lives of individuals (even groups) we must not overlook the positive effects of auto-suggestion and the bearing such effects have upon the partial or complete fulfilment of the predictions. Astrologists and others of the same genus, as well as unscrupulous and clever propagandists are shrewd enough to make the most of this power of auto-suggestion; for its effect on our future action is considerable—the greater our belief in the reliability of astrology and the like, and also the deeper our interest in the matter which is foretold, the greater is the unconscious or sub-conscious drive set up within us to achieve the fulfilment of the forecast.

Therefore, it is we ourselves who are, in the final analysis, largely responsible for the shaping of our future lives. There are, of course, certain external factors which contribute to the determination of what shape that future shall take, such as our human contacts, our physical environment, the books we read, the things we see and hear, the food and drink we consume, the condition of our bodies and the hereditary tendencies with which we are born. All these and the way we think determine the shape and colour, tune and tempo of our future lives, but as to how they shall combine and with what resultant effects at different stages in our lives, no human being with normal powers can ever infallibly predict.

¹ Cf. "Positive Philosophy,"—Comte, Trans. M. Martineau, Vol. 1, p. 10.

RANDOM THOUGHTS (2)

By KINGSLEY HEENDENIYA

SÓ THAT IS WHY YOU BELIEVE IN A GOD ?

IT is surprising how clear-thinking can often be clouded by bursts of sentimental feeling. We have all heard the able politician exploiting public sanity by harping on our emotions. We have also read the clever writer distorting the everyday facts of life by rousing our passions.

A. J. Cronin, a distinguished novelist "in his youth an unbeliever, examines the springs of his mature faith" in an article on "Why I Believe in God" (October, 1950, *Readers' Digest*). As a medical student he had been a confirmed aesthet. "None of the autopsies showed anything I could identify with an immortal soul. When I thought of God it was with a superior smile indicative of scorn for an outworn myth. Then, as a doctor I went out to a mining community in South Wales. Here I began to see life at first hand, to observe the courage and good humour of my fellow-creatures struggling under great hardships... As I assisted at the miracle of birth, sat with the dying, heard the faint inexorable beating of the dark wings of death, my outlook became less self-assured... In short I lost my superiority and this, though I was not aware of it, is the first step towards finding God... Seldom a week passed without some evidence that brought home to me this per-

meating reliance God... and a great deal of my work was done in conjunction with the district nurse... For nearly 20 years she had nursed single-handed in this district... I marvelled at her fortitude, her patience, her cheerfulness... I realized that her whole existence, in its service and self-sacrifice, was a perpetual testimony to her belief in God..."

ON LIARS AND LYING

Almost everyone in the world is prone to lie. This, though a very damaging sentence is, you will admit, a truism. But, it does not follow that everyone in the world is a Liar. For there are a variety of liars. In fact, the number is legion. There are people who lie "for fun"; there are people who lie "now and then"; there are people, who lie through force of habit; there are people who lie for a living; there are people who... that's enough! The reader may, as a mental exercise think of the others.

Lying, like all actions, has its peculiar effects. The reader must have met people with sore mouths; people with distorted and repulsive mouths; people with obnoxious breadth; people with no tongues; people who have had their mouths operated. And has the reader wondered why these people should be so? And have you, with your knowledge of *karma* and *vipaka* tried to control your speech, too?

CASTE-PREJUDICE

It is a shame to see caste-prejudice so firmly-rooted in all our Buddhist homes. Our grandfathers, our parents, our uncles and aunts, our relations and our friends are all caste-guided. This, I repeat, is a shame on all of us the more, because we have learned the Dhamma, appreciated the Dhamma and are striving to follow the Dhamma! In the Buddha's words: One is not by birth a low-caste, one is a low caste by deed.

THE WORD OF THE BUDDHA

Today, a great movement, known to you, but yet unknown, is taking place in the world. It is the revival and radiation of the Buddha-word. In every part of the world this movement is either going on or shaping. In Britain, America, Germany, Russia, Japan, China, France the word of the Buddha is being propagated. Particularly in India, Burma and Ceylon there is a new awakening of the people. Various societies, funds and organisations are blooming. The people are becoming fervently interested in the Dhamma. Others are getting influenced. More and more non-Buddhists are beginning to perceive the Truth in the Buddha-word. And all this, dear reader, is taking place with *your* help. Your support, your patronage, your assistance, your contributions and your deep love for the *Thun-sarana* is giving life to this great movement. Otherwise how?

(To be continued)

DIAMOND JUBILEE OF MAHA BODHI SOCIETY OF INDIA

THE Maha Bodhi Society of India which is today the premier International Buddhist Association was founded on May 31, 1891, by the late Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala, the greatest Buddhist missionary of modern times. When he visited Buddhagaya and Sarnath, two of the most hallowed spots associated with the life of Lord Buddha, he was deeply pained to see the utter neglect of those places which, for long periods in the past, had been flourishing centres of Buddhist culture and religious endeavour. Sitting in the shade of the Bodhi tree he,

therefore, vowed to restore them to their ancient glory and to dedicate his life for the propagation of Buddhism in the land of its birth. It was mainly with these objects that the Maha Bodhi Society saw the light of day.

What the Society has been able to achieve in the course of its career of 60 years is now a matter of history. From a small beginning in 1891, the Society has attained a place of honour and pre-eminence not only among the different Buddhist organisations but also as an

international institution where people belonging to diverse nationalities could meet and foster friendly relations. The Society has specially become the meeting place for Indians, Burmese, Ceylonese, Tibetans, Thais and other Asian nationalities.

As regards the principal objects of the Society for which the great Founder toiled hard and sacrificed his life, we can record that substantial results have been achieved. Sarnath has been restored to some of its ancient grandeur by the establishment there of several institutions

which are flourishing at present. From a wild jungle with pigs roaming about, the place has been converted into an attractive park with the magnificent Mulagandhakuti Vihara as the centre of attraction. It is visited and admired by tens of thousands of people annually. The commodious Rest House which owes its existence to the munificence of Raja Baldeo Das Birla accommodates visitors to the place. The Maha Bodhi Free Dispensary affords medical aid to thousands of villagers. The Maha Bodhi Vidyalaya which has recently been raised to a secondary Arts College imparts education on sound lines while the Primary School started as early as 1904 is continuing to give free elementary education to village children. Mulagandhakuti Vihara Library with its fine collection of Buddhist books is the cynosure of serious students of Buddhism.

At Buddhagaya, the holiest of holy places to the Buddhist, the Society's sixty years' efforts are about to bear fruit. The Government of Bihar has passed a Bill vesting the management of the Vihara in the hands of a Joint Committee of Buddhists and Hindus and when this Committee actually takes control it will be the greatest achievement of the Society.

In Calcutta, where the Headquarters are situated the Sri Dharmarajika Vihara in College Square is well-known as an important centre of cultural activities in this vast city. Situated in the intellectual centre, its Lecture Hall, Library, Reading Room and Guest House are much sought after.

In addition to the above, the Society maintains centres of activity in many important towns such as New Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Gaya, Lucknow, Calicut, etc.

The Society's monthly journal "*The Maha Bodhi*" is now in the 59th year of its publication. It has served as a valuable medium for the dissemination of Buddha Dhamma and Indian culture in general. The Society's Hindi monthly "*Dharmaduta*" issued from the Sarnath Centre, is now in the 12th year of publication.

In the important field of Buddhist Literature, the Society's achievements have been remarkable. Valuable books on Buddhism in Hindi, Bengali, English and even Tibetan have been published besides several scores of pamphlets. The Society has taken up the monumental

task of translating the Tripitaka into Hindi and Bengali. Several volumes have already appeared which are highly appreciated by scholars as well as the general public.

Interest in Buddhism in India is now widespread. The Government of India has adopted the *Dharma Chakra*, the Buddhist Wheel of Law, as an integral part of the National Flag while the famous Asoka capital of Sarnath has been selected as its official seal.

It may surprise our friends and well-wishers to know that the Society has worked with comparatively limited resources. The income from endowments of the Society which has to its credit such a fine record of work is not even Rs. 5,000/- a year! The main assistance had come from the estate of the Founder and the monetary gifts of the late Mrs. Mary E. Foster of Honolulu, Hawaii, and the rest of the heavy expenditure is met from stray donations.

In view of the fact that the activities of the Society have increased enormously and its responsibilities as the representative Society of the Buddhist World in the Land of Buddha's birth are heavy, the need for a permanent Fund is extremely urgent. In coming December we shall be celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the Society and the event is a fit occasion to place the Society's finances on a sound footing. Of the new undertakings, the acquisition of about 19 cottas of land adjoining the Headquarters for the enlargement of its premises and for the establishment of an Inter-Asian Cultural Institute where students can gather for the study of Indian culture takes priority. The Government of West Bengal has very kindly agreed to acquire the land for which funds have to be provided in the course of the next few months.

We, therefore, make an appeal to our numerous friends and well-wishers throughout India, Burma,

Ceylon and other countries to contribute most generously to the "**Diamond Jubilee Fund**" which will be utilised as follows:

Purchase of huts adjoining the Headquarters	.. Rs. 169,450/-
For buildings and endowment	.. Rs. 830,550/-

The Anagarika Dharmapala Trust of Ceylon has very kindly sent Rs. 40,000/- for the purchase of the land and Rs. 5,725/6/3 are available in the "Golden Jubilee Fund." We have therefore to raise the balance of Rs. 954,274/9/9 before the end of next December.

Historians are unanimous in their opinion that the Buddhist period is the most glorious period in the chequered history of this ancient land. Inspired by the teachings of Lord Buddha which lay emphasis on compassion and service, the people then worked unitedly for the happiness and well-being of humanity. Art, architecture, painting, sculpture, medicine and other sciences developed at a remarkably rapid speed. We refer with pride to Emperor Asoka as one of India's greatest men and rulers, one who adopted the noble path of *Dharma Vijaya*, conquest by truth, by which alone human civilisation can be saved from disaster. The Maha Bodhi Society's ambition is to help to propagate this great message. We hope and trust all lovers of India and Buddhism will strengthen the work of the Society by making generous contributions to the above fund.

All contributions may be addressed to the Treasurer, Maha Bodhi Society of India, 4A, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta—12, or to the Society's Account in Bank of Ceylon, Foreign Dept., G.O.H., Fort, Colombo, Ceylon.

SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE

President,

Maha Bodhi Society of India.

D. VALISINHA

General Secretary.

WHO IS MORE PERVERSE— MAN OR WOMAN?

By E. T. GOONEWARDENE

THE Jataka stories, the living heritage of the Buddhist countries in Asia—which are the stories of the former lives of Buddha Gautama—were according to tradition, related by the Great Sage himself. These stories were intended to inculcate virtues that all followers of

the Enlightened One must cultivate. The craving for sensual pleasure that flesh is heir to led to the falling away of virtues such as truth, love, compassion, selflessness, equanimity, patience, and steadfast endeavour.

As lust is the principal source of moral laxity, one of the main

themes running through the Jataka stories is the dangerous snare of the female sex, the wickedness and perversity of woman.

It was on account of this inherent weakness of human nature that the omniscient Buddha was at first reluctant to admit women to the Order of Sangha. He was alive to the danger of monastic population being distracted by lustful thoughts from their holy meditations, from the life of renunciation which monks had entered upon. The Buddha enjoined His disciples to adopt towards women an attitude of respectful detachment in order to avoid the pitfalls that the guiles of women lead to. The aim of a true Buddhist is not only a repression of the passions but also the replacing of them with the nobler goal of uplifting mental activity, and spiritual development.

The following is one of the five hundred and forty-seven Jataka stories presented in "readable" form for the benefit not only Buddhists but of others as well:—

Once upon a time, the King of Hastinapura possessed a parrot of great intelligence, named Vigdacuda. His queen also had a female parrot called Sonika, likewise uncommonly intelligent. These two parrots were kept in one large golden cage. Vigdacuda soon became enamoured of the parrot-maiden, Sonika, who was very beautiful and gentle. One morning he summoned up courage and said to her:

"Fair Sonika, it seems to me that it would be most natural if you and I should marry—without ceremony, but according to the simple usage of us bird-folk. Do we not occupy the same dwelling, share perch and board like any married couple—though kept in confinement? Such close companionship lacks decorum unless legitimised by bonds of matrimony. So let us marry each other, Sonika, my love!"

But Sonika, looking askance at her companion, drawled out:

"I have no great desire for the married state. My spinsterhood is good enough. A husband would be no acquisition. Are not all males wicked and depraved, dangerous and calamitous?"

"Nay, Love, thou misappliest this wisest of sayings, this truth of truths, proclaimed by all great Sages at all times, speak thus of *women*, not of men!"

But Sonika would not be convinced, and thus they argued on this point day and night. At last Vigdacuda suggested a truce to their

strife: "Our King is famed for his learning and justice; let him decide who is right. But if mine should be the truth, thou shalt there and then marry me and be my bond-maid!" "Agreed!" said the parrot-maiden, "but if I win, thou shalt be slave to me!" They forthwith left the open cage, flew to the Council-chamber where the King dispensed justice, told him of the point at issue, and begged for his judgment. The King asked Sonika for *her* proof that men are depraved. "Irrefutable proof have I," O Royal Judge!" answered Sonika. "Grant me permission to tell the story of my previous life":—

"I was born as the daughter of a wealthy merchant of Kamandaki. At the age of five, my father got me married to the eight-year-old son of another wealthy merchant. When I was twelve and he fifteen, he took me to his father's house, where we lived happily together for several years. Our parents died one after the other, and we inherited great wealth. My husband, Dhanadatta, soon began a life of dissipation; drank spirituous liquors, gambled with dissolute men, and sought the company of dancing girls, lute-players, and the like. Nevertheless I loved him and served him with great fidelity, and finally when he had squandered the wealth of the two families, I gave him, without a word of reproach, my jewels and golden ornaments, as demanded by him. At last our house did not hold a thing of value, except an amulet studded with sparkling diamonds which I wore day and night about my neck in accordance with a solemn promise made to my mother when she was dying. Because I, despite all his entreaties and threats, stoutly refused to yield my precious talisman to be put to base use, he fell upon me during my sleep and strangled me to death. Then, with the gold of my amulet, he fled to the Isle of Lanka where he continued his life of debauchery. Of such depravity are men, O Mighty King!" the parrot-maiden finished her tale, her eyes covered with tears.

The King next addressed the parrot, Vigdacuda: "What is thy proof of the wickedness of women?" Vigdacuda answered:

"O Your Righteous Majesty, my previous life supplies a positive proof of the infallible truth. Women are depraved, and dangerous and calamitous. They are like poisoned liquor, twisted like the

horns of antelopes, double-tongued like serpents, treacherous like pits covered with leaves and twigs, insatiate like hell, turning whosoever they list like the wind. Their disposition is erratic, their mind shifts to and fro like the shadow of a tree. Their falsehood sounds like truth. They possess morbid imagination."

"Know thou, O Lord, I was born at Paliputra as a son of the wealthiest of merchants. My father drove me from his house together with my wife as, loving, beyond just measure, my younger brother, born to his second wife, he grudged me even a mite of his vast fortune. We—my wife and I—wandered far, and finally were lost within a desert devoid of water and of vegetation. The heat of the sun was so great that the two of us, hungry and thirsty, well-nigh perished. For seven days we strayed about, I, despite my own weakness, carrying my cherished wife upon my shoulders, and keeping her alive by opening a vein above my knee, from which she sipped my blood.

At last we reached the sacred waters of the Ganges, built a hut of leaves in a shady grove, and eating luscious forest-fruit, regained our strength.

"One day a robber, escaping from his pursuers, passed our dwelling. As he had exhausted his strength, we fed him, bathed his wounds, and sheltered him. As he was a handsome youth, the woman who owed her very life to me was soon smitten by his physical charms and yielded to her licentious cravings. The pair, shamed me, and shamed humanity, and finally, persuaded by my wife, the young man crushed my skull. This was how woman served me, mighty King, and thus they serve all men, returning evil deeds for loving acts, and completely forgetting men's sacrifices for their sake."

The King, in spite of his great wisdom and knowledge of the man-laws, did not take upon himself to pronounce judgment in this case of far-reaching implications. Therefore, he burnt sacrifice and invoked Dharma, the Judge Celestial, who in the Brahma-paradise among gods to pronounce judgment on the question in dispute between the he-parrot and the she-parrot. The god, in gracious consideration of the quest of mankind for Truth, descending from the heavenly realm with all his Court, gave utterance to the following decision:—

“Women, and not men, are de-praved and dangerous and calamitous! It may perchance exceptionally happen that a man infected or enraged by a woman’s wickedness, may commit an evil deed, but this is but an exception to the rule that man strives ever for the good.

Women, on the other hand, are prone to evil from their very nature; evil is the key-note of their life. Not even I, Omniscient God and Judge, infallibly know a single instance of a woman who passed her life from birth to death without committing evil deed, at least in

thought, being often afraid may be of translating thought into action.” Thus ruled the heavenly Dharma, and immediately disappeared. Then Sonika, the parrot-maiden, having lost her case, was sentenced by the King to marry and to serve the parrot, Vigdacuda.

BUDDHIST SOCIETY, LONDON

THE Annual General Meeting of the Buddhist Society, London, was held at the Society’s headquarters, 106 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. on 18th July, at 6.30 p.m. In his Presidential Address, Mr. Christmas Humphreys pointed out the significance of the Full Moon of July as representing the anniversary of the First Sermon given by the Buddha after His Enlightenment. Mr. Humphreys drew attention to the enormous increase in interest in Buddhism, 30,000 copies of his work *Buddhism* (Pelican Edition) having been sold within six weeks of publication, while an earlier work *Zen Buddhism* has been translated into Japanese and German. *Twelve Principles of Buddhism* is now

available in fifteen languages. Many Buddhist groups are in process of formation in Australia, while a new Centre has been established in Manchester. In London membership has increased during the past year by 103, and meetings have been so well attended that many more are being arranged at Caxton Hall than formerly.

In the Library two new Philosophy Sections have been opened, and 121 new books added during the year. *The Middle Way*, editorship of which has passed to the Librarian, we hope to increase to a bi-monthly, or even a monthly, issue. We are greatly indebted to the Trustees of the Anagarika Dharmapala Fund for the gift of £204 to be used in dissemin-

ating the ethics of Buddhism through journals in English.

The President expressed gratitude for the work of the Ven. Bhikkhu U Thittila on behalf of the Society, and thanked the General Secretary and all volunteers for their devoted labours. He congratulated Gen. Tun Hla Oung on being the founder of the first Buddhist newspaper, and gave news of the activities of well-known members abroad. Welcoming new members he stated that, though an increase in funds is always necessary, their greatest value lay in their studying the Dhamma and applying it in their own lives, for thereby is increased the reflection of the Light of the Enlightenment of the Blessed One.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WORLD DAY FOR ANIMALS

October 4th is the World Day for Animals inaugurated by the World League against Vivisection and for the Protection of Animals, London, in 1928 in honour of St. Francis of Assisi, Patron Saint of Animals.

At our request on this day meat-stalls were closed at 8, 15 and 18 places in Ceylon in 1948, 1949 and 1950 respectively. According to a resolution passed in 1948 by the President of the Union of Burma in the last two years all the meat-stalls

in Burma were closed on this day.

We kindly appeal to all your readers to put into practice whatever they can of the following:—

(1) To appeal to the Chairmen and the members of Municipalities, Urban Councils, Town Councils and Village Committees to stop slaughtering animals and close the meat-stalls on October 4; (2) To feed hungry animals; (3) To abstain from killing and eating flesh-food; (4) To illuminate your homes with lanterns bearing texts on Ahimsa and other lights;

(5) To set free animals passed for slaughter and animals that are caged; (6) To give rest to animals at least half a day and to abstain from travelling in vehicles drawn by animals on that day; (7) To lecture on Ahimsa in churches and temples. (8) To have Pahan Pinkam in Buddhist temples; (9) To offer vegetarian Sanghika Danas; (10) To conduct Ahimsa processions.

W. S. FERNANDO.

Universal College,
Panadura.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

REMEMBRANCE DAY PIRIT

The annual Pirit Pinkama of the Colombo Y.M.B.A. in memory of dead members was held on Saturday, August 25th, followed by a Sanghika Dana on Sunday. The Bhikkhus came from the Sri Saraswathie Pirivena, Balagalla, led by the Ven. Pandita Sri Gnanodaya Thera.

The following contributed towards the expenses:—Mr. C. P. Amarasinghe 10.00; Dr. B.S. Jayawardena 10.00; Mr. D.S. Abeyasinghe 10.00; Sir Ernest de Silva 25.00; Mr. A. G. Wickramapala 25.00; Mr. N. Paules Fernando 25.00; Hon. Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya 10.00; Senator Cyril de Zoysa 15.00; Mr. Cecil C. Senaratne 25.00; Mr. Bernard Mendis 10.00; Mr. H. S. Gunasekera 10.00; Mrs. E. Sirimanne

30.00; Mr. N. J. V. Cooray 10.00; Mr. E. S. Amarasinghe 10.00; Messrs. U. P. Ekanayake & Co. 10.00; Mr. W. A. De Silva 25.00; Mr. H. M. C. Jinadasa 5.00; Mr. R. Samarasinghe 2.50; Mr. S. Kuruppu 10.00; Mr. G. G. Perera 10.00; Mr. K. T. Wimalasekera 5.00; Mr. W. H. de Zoysa 10.00; Mr. D. L. Dissanayake 5.00. Total Rs. 307.50.

NEW MEMBERS

10.9.51: Thomas J. Wijayasiri, Wijayasiri Stores, Hingurakgoda; D. J. Atukorala, Sedawatta, Wellampitiya; Dr. N. M. P. Mendis, 10, Zaleski Place, Maradana.

17.9.51: T. A. M. Chitty, Mahiyawa Estate, Angoda; A. G. D. de Silva, 25, Mill Bank Place, Colombo 10; T. B.

Dissanayake, 35, Upatissa Road, Bambalapitiya.

RESIGNATIONS

M. V. A. Balasekera, L. Don Charles and R. L. Balasooriya.

COLOMBO Y.M.B.A. TOURNAMENTS

1951

For Members Only

Open Billiards	..	Rs.	5.00
Open Snookers	..	..	5.00
Handicap Billiards	..	..	3.00
Handicap Snookers	..	..	3.00
All Four Events	..	..	13.50

Entries will close on

October 13, 1951

For Full Particulars Apply to :

HONY. SPORTS SECRETARY.

NEWS AND NOTES

ASOKAN BUDDHA HEAD FOR THAILAND

Mr. Sala Siwaraksa, Chancellor of the Royal Thai Legation, New Delhi accepted from Bhikkhu Saddhatissa and Bhikkhu Sangharatana, of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, a sculptured stone-head of Lord Buddha belonging to the Asoka period excavated recently in Sarnath-Isipatana ancient Buddhist Shrines. The Buddha Head was presented to the people of Thailand by the Maha Bodhi Society of India.—*Cor.*

SARNATH BUDDHA MELA

New Delhi.

The installation of a Buddha image at the residence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Minister of Law, Government of India, was performed by Bhikkhu Saddhatissa and Bhikkhu Sangharatana, of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, at a simple ceremony held on September 13.

Dr. Ambedkar has also accepted to preside over the anniversary celebrations of the opening of the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, Sarnath on November 11 when a large number of Harijans of Uttar Pradesh will formally embrace Buddhism.—*Cor.*

BAUDDHA SĀHITYA SĀBHĀ

The annual meeting of the Buddha Sāhitya Sabhā was held on July 27, 1951, with the Ven. Kassapa in the chair. A vote of condolence on the

death of the late Mrs. Wijeygooneratne was passed.

After the Report for 1948-50 was adopted the following office-bearers were elected for the ensuing year, together with a Committee.

President: Ven. Nynāthiloka Maha Thera; Hony. Secy: Mr. A. B. Coorey; Hony. Treasurer: Mrs. Thos. Amarasuriya.

The Report for 1948-1950 states:—

During the period under review the Sabha has issued two publications, "The Fundamentals of Buddhism" by our President, the Ven. Nyānathiloka and a reprint of "The Word of the Buddha" also by him. The former was published to celebrate the 70th birthday of our President under whose guidance and inspiration the Sabha may be expected to fulfil its functions effectively, viz., the propagation of the Dhamma in Ceylon and other countries. The reprint of the "Word of the Buddha," for which there is a demand from all Buddhist countries, was published as a commemoration volume of the late Mrs. Wijeygooneratne, who had provided the funds for the purpose and whose services to the Sabha were invaluable. The Sabha desires to place on record its deep sense of the loss to itself and to the Buddhist cause in general sustained by the death of Mrs. Wijeygooneratne.

The Committee is pleased to announce that it has been requested by Miss Hofner to publish the lecture delivered by her,

under the auspices of the Dona Alpina Ratnayake Trust. The subject of the lecture is "The Basic Position of Sila," and is now the latest publication of the Sabha. It is hardly necessary to say that the greatest need of the Sabha is the lack of funds for the publication of the various books that require immediate publicity. The best way to propagate the Dhamma is to publish books dealing with the elementary principles which affect the daily life of the Buddhist.

During the period under review we had inquiries and orders for our books from Finland, West Germany, America, Great Britain and Australia. We have received a small contribution to our funds from Brown University Rhode Island U.S.A. to whom Ven. Nyānathiloka had sent some books on request. It is evident that there is a great scope to widen the usefulness of the Sabha and extend its activities. We invite the co-operation of the members in carrying out the primary purpose of the Sabha, viz., the propagation of the Dhamma by contributing liberally to its funds.

Members who have paid their subscriptions for the period under review are entitled to the publications mentioned in the Report.

OBITUARY

The death has occurred in Singapore of Mr. A. W. Fernando, a valuable member of the Ceylonese Buddhist community of Malaya. The Kuala Lumpur Buddhist Temple was mainly the result of his efforts. He was the first Sinhalese Station Master in the F.M.S. Railways.—*Cor.*

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