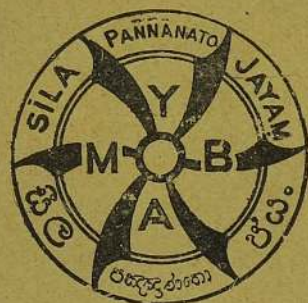


THE BUDDHIST



NOVEMBER, 1951
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No. 7

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THE BUDDHIST

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

“*Sīla Paññānato Jayam*”

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LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF BUDDHA

BY THE HON. Md. HABIBULLAH BAHAR,

Minister of E. Pakistan.

AROUND a date reckoned in the East to have been 630 B.C. in the West, 550 B.C., there was born to Suddhodana, a raja of the Provinces, in the Kingdom of Kosalan, a son whom he named Siddhartha, his own family name being Gotama, his clan, the Sakyans. The son was evidently no ordinary young squire. His father may have been chief of a province; the post may have been hereditary, and hence serious duties of administration may have lain before him in the future. We know that in his twenty-ninth year Gotama abandoned his home, his young wife, and his infant son, and went into the world to become a homeless wanderer, and to spend his life, first in thinking out for himself the deepest problems of experience, and then in spreading abroad to others the good tidings of the salvation which he deemed himself to have discovered. Having “gone forth,” as the technical expression runs, Gotama went first to Rajagaha, the capital city of the neighbouring Kingdom of Magadha. His visit is described in the Pabbajja Sutta. He met five recluses in his various wanderings. They accompanied him for sometime but ultimately forsook him and went away to Benares. Though he was left alone, one day

under the Bo-tree, Gotama the recluse attained Buddhahood and Nirvana and discovered the right solution of the mysteries of life, Gotama, then, resolved to preach his gospel to the world. The doctrine was preached peacefully. Throughout the long history of Buddhism, which is the history of more than half the people in the world for more than two thousand years, the Buddhists have been uniformly tolerant; and have appealed not to the sword but to intellectual and moral suasion. We have not a single instance, throughout the whole period, of any religious persecution.

So far as Buddhism is concerned, it is an essential doctrine, constantly insisted upon in the original Buddhist texts, and still held, that there is nothing, either divine or human, either animal, vegetable, or material, which is permanent. There is no being—there is only a becoming. The state of an individual, or a thing or person, distinct from its surroundings, bounded off from them, is unstable, temporary, sure to pass away. It may last, as for instance in the case of the gods, for hundreds of thousands of years; or as in the case of some insects, for some hours only, or as in the case of

some material things, for a few seconds only. But in every case, as soon as there is a beginning, there begins also, that moment, to be an ending. Buddhism says, that all those subtle and excellent qualities, emotions, sentiments, and desires which make up the noblest life of man are really discouraged and hindered by the belief in the permanence and eternity of a semi-material soul.

It is a belief common to all schools of the Buddhists that the origin of sorrow is precisely identical with the origin of individuality. Sorrow is in fact, the result of the effort which an individual has to make to keep separate from the rest of existence. Wherever an individual has become separate from the rest of existence, then immediately disease, decay, and death begin to act upon it. Wherever there is individuality, there must be limitation; wherever there is limitation, there must be ignorance; wherever there is ignorance, there must be error; wherever there is error, there must sorrow come. Birth is fraught with pain. It brings in its wake the liability to disease and to decay.

The theory of Karma, is doctrine which takes place in the Buddhist teaching of the very ancient theory

of "souls." It is, at the same time, the Buddhist explanation of the mystery of fate, of the weight of the universe, pressing against each individual. The good Buddhist cannot seek for any salvation which he is himself to enjoy in any future world. The result of this good actions, the print of his Karma, as the Buddhist would call it, will survive when he is dead, and advance the happiness of some other being, or of some other beings, who will have no conscious identity with himself. But, as far as he can reach salvation, he must reach it in this present world, he must enjoy it in this present life. The Buddhist books are constantly insisting upon the foolishness of wasting time in any hankering after a supposed happiness of heaven.

We have spoken of three fundamental doctrines which are to be understood as underlying all Buddhist statements. These are the three doctrines of *aniccam*, *dukkham* and *anattam*, that is to say, of

The Impermanence of every Individual,

The sorrow inherent in Individuality,

The Non-reality of any abiding Principle of any soul.

In one of his sermons the Buddha had laid down the essence of his system :

"There is a middle way, O recluses, discovered by the Tathagata—a path which opens the eyes and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nirvana.

"And which is that middle way? Verily it is the Noble Eightfold Path. That is to say :

"Right views free from superstition and delusion—

Right Aspirations, high, and worthy of the intelligent, earnest man—

Right speech kindly, open truthful—

Right conduct peaceful, honest, pure—

Right livelihood bringing hurt or danger to no living thing—

Right effort in self-training and in self-control.

Right mindfulness the active, watchful mind—

Right Rapture in deep meditation on the realities of life."

Gautama did not invent a new faith. He modified an existing one and in this respect his was a revolutionary ardour. The personality of Gautama was certainly an important factor. By all accounts his person was kingly, his diction eloquent and his intelligence super-human. Also, he led a revolt against a priestly caste, whose claims far exceeded their powers, and such a revolt is always popular.

By the influence of the teachings, Gautama has enriched and ennobled, the thought and lives of countless generations of Oriental peoples. Buddha has conferred throughout all the ages two priceless benefits upon those who have adhered to the religion he taught. He has freed them from the bondage of caste and he has taught them that life was not without hope.

RANDOM THOUGHTS (3)

By KINGSLEY HEENDENIYA

BLIND FAITH IN THE DHAMMA

THE average Buddhist (like me) has not or cannot, grasp the mere deep teachings of the Buddha. The *dhamma of anatta and nirvana*, for instance, is very profound. We cannot conceive the ultimate (or even the fundamental) truths embodied in the two doctrines. They are beyond the horizon of our understanding. We cannot see the truths. Nevertheless, we believe in their veracity. Our confidence in the utterances of the Buddha is so firm that we need not understand to believe him. After all, the dhamma was not preached for the average

like you and me. The Buddha after his enlightenment, realised with sorrow that there were few who could understand the profundity of his discoveries. Then the Brahmasahampatti entreated him: Lord, there are some who have little dust in their eyes. They can understand you. Please preach the noble dhamma you have realised.

So you see, the Buddha-dhamma was not meant for the many. However, our failing to understand the subtle doctrines of the dhamma does not in any way impede our moral and spiritual progress. For, even if one blindly follows the road

that one knows is *going* to take one home, one *will* eventually reach home!

FOUR KINDS OF PEOPLE

(1) There are people who give liberally and influence others also to be magnanimous. They like others to share with them the merits of their *punna-kamma*. These people believe that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

(2) There are people who like to do *dana*; but they want to do it alone. They are selfish. They want all the merit to accrue to them alone.

(3) There are people who themselves do not give *dana*, but encourage others to give. They like others to be virtuous; but they, perhaps through inability, do not give.

(4) There are people who neither gives nor make others give. These are the miserable misers.

Now, reader, tell yourself frankly to which kind you belong—and judge for yourself!

QUOTABLE QUOTES

“Yet a man overcome hatred by kindness, evil by goodness, greed by generosity and lies by telling the truth.” (The *Dhammapada*).

“Six things are conducive to the casting out of flurry and worry: knowledge; questioning; understanding of disciplinary rules; association with those mere experienced and older than oneself in the practice of things like virtue; sympathetic and helpful companionship; and stimulating talk that helps the rejection of flurry and worry.” (The Way of Mindfulness.—Bhikkhu Soma).

“Take time to live, for that is what time is for; killing time is suicide. Take time to work; it is the price of success. Take time to think; it is the source of power.

Take time to play, it is the fountain of wisdom. Take time to be friendly; it is the road to happiness. Take time to dream; it is hitching your wagon to a star. Take time to look round; it is too short a day to be selfish. Take time to laugh; it is the music of the soul. Take time to play with children; it is the joy of joys. Take time to be courteous; it is the mark of a gentleman.” (Unfortunately I do not remember the source).

413, Church Street,
Nugegoda.

REPORT OF THE BUDDHIST MEETING AT THE 36TH UNIVERSALA ESPERANTO-KONGRESO, MUNICH, GERMANY

By ERWIN PREIBISCH

Köln-Brück, Mauspfad 731, Germany.

THIS Congress was visited by more than 2000 Esperantists from about 50 nations. The Buddhist Meeting was arranged by the German representative of the “Internacia Budhana Ligo Esperantista” E. Preibisch, who invited the Buddhists, and Freethinkers to take part at the first Buddhist Meeting, during an International Esperanto-Congress. 40 persons, were present to listen to the speech about: “Buddha the first Freethinker.” The orator appealed to the freethinkers to honour the first and greatest freethinker of the world and not to ignore him any longer. After the explanation of his philosophical principles *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*, the meeting approved, that these 3 fundamental principles are to be preferred to the 12 or 14 fundamental principles arranged by European Buddhists. After having explained the moral principles of Buddhism, the meeting agreed to the following proposals for the next Buddhist World Congress.

The following proposals for the Buddhist World Fellowship Conference ought to be previously discussed in the Buddhist Communities and approved or recommended by the Conference:—

1. The *Dhammapadam*, being the most valuable book for the

BUDDHISM is in my opinion the most philosophical of all religions. I also can say that some of my metaphysical convictions are in conformity with Buddhistic ideas, especially regarding the idea of the Oneness of all living beings. All life, is one and all animals, and plants, are essentially, the same as man, but in a different form. Therefore the moral concept should include all living things.

Let us hope that the Buddha's wisdom will come to us Westerners. How many of the best of us desire to be liberated from the restlessness of life? We need to return to tranquillity and concentration. In short: We need Buddhism.

PROF. HANS DRIESCH
(Transl. E. PREIBISCH).

propagation of the Dhamma, ought to be translated only metrically.

2. Buddhist songs, as well as a worthy initiation and wedding ceremony after the example of the Buddhists in Hawaii are to be recommended by the Conference.

3. All healing methods based no vivisection may be refused by all Buddhists and natural cures and homeopathy may be preferred.

4. Food, clothing and knick-knacks based on cruelties or killing of animals like tortoise-shell, turtle-soup, furs, shoes of leather of lizards and serpents A.S.O. are to be refused as un-Buddhistic.

5. Buddhists are conscientious objectors. Voluntary fighters against totalitary powers which endanger human liberties, are not to be blamed.

6. The international world-language Esperanto is to be promoted, as Buddhists may not be blamed for not supporting international understanding.

7. The belief in reincarnation in verbal sense ought not to be taught as essential at propagation, and morality may not be based on transcendental recompense or punishment.

The meeting was closed with an appeal to support our Budhana Ligo Esperantista, which is very important not only to spread Buddhism by our brother-language Esperanto, but also to care for propagating Esperanto in the Buddhist countries and so promote international understanding and peace.

TIME AND THE FUTURE

By N. WICKREMESINGHE

"IT is not to be wished that all men should be scientists or any other kind of specialists. The scientific temper of mind goes beyond specialist studies; if it were widespread it would be evident in our newspapers and selection of books. When such study is perverted to ends other than its proper aim the whole community is in danger of catching the disease. In our community the scientific temper is weak (in Ceylon it is very weak). We have become susceptible to absurdities from which we seemed to have freed ourselves. To give a definite instance: certain widely read newspapers offer to tell us what the stars foretell with regard to our coming luck or unluck. This is, to my mind, a most disquieting symptom of national unhealthiness."

This is what Susan Stebbing says of the British people. How much more is it applicable to us of the East, and to what an astronomical extent are we exploited by the hordes of mercenary men and women, who, profess to have the power, to predict our future? This craven dependence on astrology, palmistry, etc., is insidiously gaining a strong strangling hold upon us, and if we do not take timely warning and free ourselves from it by the creation of a rational public opinion with regard to it, we are likely to become in a few generations a nation of spineless imbeciles. If men will only realize the great harm they are doing to themselves by allowing this primitive and foolish desire for foreknowledge to seize hold of them, they will surely cease to make these vain attempts by which they hope to obtain an advantage which, in the final analysis, is a loss rather than a gain. We consider our freedom as dear almost as life, and we would fight for its preservation as earnestly, yet, what are we doing in seeking to know the future but manacled ourselves in fetters more binding than the bonds of the veriest slave? Not only will the acceptance of the possibility of knowing the future deprive us of all freedom, but it will also make of the majority of us unconscious, involuntary bondslaves of a select minority whom we invest with this ability of forecasting the future.

The mere contemplation of what human life would be if it were possible for some of us to forecast the future with absolute certainty raises up before my imagination a state of life which is well nigh awful. If such a thing were possible it would amount to the presence of omniscient gods among us, gods who will be a source of fearful permanent dread to us, a numbing dread which would exceed the anguish of hell. When I think of the possibility of some of my fellow-beings through the help of certain facts concerning me, such as my time of birth, the lines on my palm or the marks on my body, being able to know exactly what I shall do in the future, I feel as though I were a lifeless robot or a muzzled ox, a mere servile body with no will of its own, condemned to a course of life, which I have no power to alter. Such a state of life is surely abhorrent to any human being, yet why do we expose ourselves to it? Is it not crass folly to do so?

The appalling nature of a situation where the future is known is vividly conveyed by the following story. A sociable young man towards the end of his university career developed an incurable habit of thinking aloud. As this habit grew upon him his friends left him, one by one, until finally no one would remain in his company for any length of time. Eventually it became so impossible for him to associate with his fellows that he was obliged to give up all society and live entirely by himself with only a deaf mute as servant. This servant was not really deaf and dumb—he merely pretended to be so. By this means he learnt all about his master—the amount of his wealth and how it was invested, the particulars of his past life, and his intentions for the future. The servant had a marriageable daughter. This pretty and normal girl he introduced to his master as a deaf mute. The young man was attracted by her, and as it was only with such a one as wife that he could live, he married her. In due course she bore him a child. With painful patience she managed to live with him for about four years without uttering a word, but the strain proved too great and she became

consumptive and wasted away so fast that soon her husband was obliged to carry her about. One day as he was carrying her he thought (in his case, of course, he spoke the thought aloud) that it would be a good riddance if she died. This was too much for the poor woman. She thought of her child and cried out: "O my son!" The man thus became aware of the duplicity which had been practised upon him, and he also became aware as though a jagged dagger had pierced his heart, of the cruel torture to which he had subjected this long-suffering woman. Soon afterwards she died, but the man had no peace of mind. At last it became so intolerable that one day he summoned a surgeon to his house, and at the point of a pistol he got him to cut off his offending tongue. The wound healed, and after that this man who could not but think aloud began to mix with his fellows once again. Within a short time he became one of the most respected and lovable men in that town.

If some of our fellows were in a position to foretell our future and read our past with certainty we will be in a position not less appalling than that of the man in this story who by his habit of thinking aloud let his associates, know his past deeds and future intentions. Men who are as open books do not find it easy to live in this world, and this world gives them but short shrift. Imagine for a moment the conditions which would prevail in a world where some of our fellow-beings had the infallible ability to know the past and the future of the rest of his kind. In such a world life as we know it will become impossible, human relations as they exist at present will not be maintainable, and human speech and behaviour will become farcical, meaningless and futile. If, for instance, it was prophesied to me that I must die in the course of a sea-journey, I should, naturally refrain from all travel over the sea; and thus life would gradually dwindle down to nothing but inaction, pause and abstinence, a sort of vast desert where the embryos of still-born events would be gathered in heaps, and where nothing would grow,

flower and fruit; in short it would be a dreary world without ideals, without striving, shorn of all the joy and satisfaction which result from labour, perseverance, patience, courage and ability.³

As one who believes this world to be the creation of a beneficent deity, or as one who believes it to be outcome of evolutionary processes, neither would concede the possibility of men becoming capable of knowing with certainty the past and the future of their fellow-men,—God or the forces of evolution work in too rational a way for that. The hope of regeneration depends on the veil we can throw over the past, and on the unpredictability of the future rests opportunity and the joy of achievement; in the power vouchsafed to man to shape his own destiny, in his liberty of thought and action depends the zest and satisfaction of life—human life shorn of these would be worse than the life of beasts.

People should educate themselves to examine this question of some of us being able to read our past and predict our future along some of the lines. I have attempted

to trace in this essay, and persons responsible for the creation of public opinion should do all they can to guide the public in the formation of good and rational opinions concerning matters of this nature. Our newspapers and magazines instead of discouraging and attempting to stamp out this harmful and foolish tendency are actually helping its growth by the wide and regular publicity they give to astrological and other forecasts. Very probably the people who publish this type of material are aware of the basic unsoundness of these attempts at reading the past and predicting the future, and they must be derisively smiling at the easy gullibility of the common man who can be so easily persuaded to part with his money simply in order to avail himself of some guesswork which, apart from being not worth the money he spends on it, exposes him to the much more dreadful danger of killing all initiative and reconciling him to the acceptance of poverty and unhappiness without a struggle.

As Buddhists if we accept the possibility of man achieving the

capacity for exact prediction we will undermine a fundamental doctrine of Buddhism: that of Kamma. Kamma which means action-reaction, which governs all existence, and by which man becomes the sole creator of his circumstances and his re-action to them, his future condition, and his final destiny. Therefore, as Buddhists we must eschew all dealings with astrology, palmistry and the like. If we do so, not only shall we become better Buddhists, but we shall also become better men and women, self-reliant and free, worthy heirs to the great heritage of noble manhood. Remember these words of the Buddha, and they will be a shield to you, whenever you are beset by the temptation to know your future: "When you wish to know about your future life, know that the cause of it lies in what you have done in this life."⁴

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"Guna Nivasa,"
Ahangama.

4. Cf. "Mahayana Buddhism," by B. L. Susuki, p. 144, & p. 116, Ingwa-kyo (Sutra on the Cause and Effect of the Past and Present.)

INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM ON MODERN THOUGHT

By L. H. METTANANDA

Principal, Ananda College

(Continued from last issue)

ALDOUS Huxley quotes Professor, Irving Babbitt's "Buddha and the Occident" on this subject: "We came here to what is for Buddha fundamental in religion . . . without the act of recollection or spiritual concentration he holds that the religious life cannot subsist at all."

Huxley holds that "from a humanistic point of view, meditation is a particularly effective method of self-education."

Ultimate Reality

"The modern conception of man's intellectual relationship to the universe was anticipated by the Buddhist doctrine that desire is the source of illusion. To the extent that it has overcome desire, a mind is free from illusion. This is true, not only of the man of science, but also of the artist and the philosopher.

Only the disinterested mind can transcend common sense and pass beyond the boundaries of animal or average sensual human life. The mystic exhibits disinterestedness in the highest degree possible to human beings and is therefore able to transcend ordinary limitations more completely than the man of science, the artist or the philosopher. That which he discovers beyond the frontiers of the average sensual man's universe, is a spiritual reality underlying and uniting all apparently separate existents—a reality with which he can merge himself and from which he can draw moral and even physical powers which, by ordinary standards, can only be described as supernormal."

Serenity

"It is clear, then, that if we would transcend personality, we

must first take the trouble to become persons. But we cannot become persons unless we make ourselves self-conscious. In one of the discourses attributed to the Buddha, we read an interesting passage about the self-possessed person. 'And how, brethren, is a brother self-possessed' . . . In looking forward and in looking back he acts composedly (*i.e.* with consciousness of what is being done, of the self who is doing and of the reasons for which the self is performing the act). In bending or stretching arm or body he acts composedly. In eating, drinking, chewing, swallowing in relieving nature's needs, in going, standing, sitting, sleeping, waking, speaking, keeping silence, he acts composedly. That, brethren, is how a brother is self-possessed." 'Oil' by Upton Sinclair, the Noble Prize-winner, extols the Buddhist ideal

of renunciation for the purpose of social uplift. It is the story of the meteoric rise of a mule-driver to the position of Oil King. His only son was J. Arnold Ross, Junior, alias Bunny. Bunny came under diverse influences. His mother divorced his father and her second husband had basely left her. His only sister was 'flying very high, with a fast set, and didn't have time for any of her family.' He found the University to be 'a Kaleidoscope of smiles and flashing eyes, a perpetual Zephyr of soft scents' and 'petting parties.' The Oil Prince comes into contact with lax morality among men and women wherever, he goes. Pagan civilization with latest freaks of the idle rich such as the amazing spectacle of an entirely naked youth running a race on the beach with a nude woman on horse-back. Bunny's father together with his partner Verne employing all sorts of devious methods to pile millions upon millions of dollars—buying government officials right and left, and newspapermen also. "Dad had lies that he told to the public; and perhaps he had others that he told to his son, and yet others that he told to himself." Instead of sympathizing with his father's lies, Bunny was criticizing them and making his father ashamed!

"Money! Money! Money! It was pouring in upon Dad and Verne. Never had oil prices been so high, never the flow at Paradise been so rapid. Millions and Millions—and they were scheming to make it tens of Millions. It was a game, marvellous irresistible; every-body was playing it—and why could not Bunny, be interested? Why did he have to go sneaking around in the dressing-rooms and behind the grand-stands, finding out dirty and disreputable facts about the players of this game and their methods."

All these varying circumstances had such a withering effect on Bunny, the heir to the vast fortunes of the Oil King, that finally he refuses to take up the father's oil business but decides to live like a common man.

Bunny completed his University education and 'graduation time was at hand.' 'Dad asked Bunny if he had made up his mind' in choosing his future career, and Bunny answered that he had, 'But I had to tell you, Dad, because it's going to make you unhappy.'

Bunny decides to take up as his future career, the uplift of suffering humanity. Good Lord, son, let me help you! I've been there. It means dirt and vermin and disease—I thought I was saving you from it, and making things easier for you!

"I know, Dad, but it's a mistake; it doesn't work out as you thought. When a young fellow has everything too easy for him, he gets soft, he has no will of his own. I know what you've done, and I'm grateful for it, but I have to try something different..." There was a long pause. "And you really mean this seriously?"

"Yes, Dad, I'm going to do it."

"It's pretty hard on a father that has only one son, and had hopes for him. You know, I've really thought a lot about you—it's been the main reason I worked so hard."

"I know, Dad, and don't think I haven't suffered about it: but I just can't help doing it."

Another pause. "Have you thought about Vee?"

"Yes."

"Have you told her?"

"No, I've been putting it off, just as I did with you. I know she won't stand for it. I shall have to give her up."

"A man ought to think a long time before he throws away his happiness like that, son."

"I have thought, all I know how. But I couldn't spend my life as an appendage to Vee's moving picture career. I should be suffocated with luxury. I have convictions of my own, and I have to follow them. I want to try to help the workers, and first I have to know how they feel."

"It seems to me, son, you talk like one of them—I mean the red ones."

"May be so, Dad, but I assure you it doesn't seem that way to the reds." Again there was a silence. Dad's supply of words was running short: "I never heard of such a thing in my life!"

"It is really quite an old idea—at least twenty-four hundred years." And Bunny went on to tell about that young Lord Siddhartha, in

far off India, who is known to the western world as Buddha; how he gave up his lands and his treasures and went out to wander with a begger's bowl, in the hope of finding some truth about life that was not known at court. "The palace which the king had given to the prince was resplendent with the luxuries of India; for the king was anxious to see his son happy. All sorrowful sights, all misery and all knowledge of misery were kept away from Siddhartha, and he knew not that there was evil in the world. But as the chained elephant longs for the wilds of the jungle, so the prince was eager to see the world and he asked his father, the king, for permission to do so. And Suddhodana ordered a jewel-fronted chariot with four stately horses to be held ready and commanded the roads to be adorned where his son would pass. "And then Bunny, seeing the bewildered look on his father's face, began to laugh. "Which, would you rather, I became, Dad, a Buddhist or a Bolshevik? And truly Dad would not have known what to decide."

The Razor's Edge by Maugham tells the story of Larry, a typical American belonging to the idle bourgeois class who, though normal before the war, became a changed man afterwards and at last gains peace, in the conceptions so familiar to us: Karma, Rebirth and Nirwana.

The incident during an air-raid that completely changed his outlook is described thus:—

"Suddenly we came bang up against some German planes, and before we knew where we were, in the middle of a dog-fight. One of them came after me, but I got in first. I took a look to see if he was going to crash and then out of the corner of my eye I saw another plane on my tail. I dived to get away from him, but he was on to me like a flash and I thought I was done for; then I saw Patsy come down on him like a streak of lightning and give him all he'd got. They'd had enough and sheered off and we made for home. My machine had got pretty well knocked about and I only just made it. Patsy got in before me. When I got out of my plane they'd just got him out of his. He was lying on the ground and they were waiting for the ambulance to come up. When he saw me he grinned.

“ ‘I got that blighter who was on your tail,’ he said.

“ ‘What’s the matter, Patsy?’ I asked.

“ ‘Oh, it’s nothing. He winked me.’

“He was looking deathly white. Suddenly a strange look came over his face. It had just come to him that he was dying, and the possibility of death had never so much as crossed his mind. Before, they could stop him he sat up and gave a laugh.

“ ‘Well, I’m jiggered,’ he said.

“He fell back dead. He was twenty-two. He was going to marry a girl in Ireland after the war.”

This tragic incident set Larry a problem which he was out to solve. He cut himself adrift from his moorings. He spent two years in Paris, studying, reading and attending lectures at the Sorbonne. To his fiancée, he said “I’m on the threshold. I see vast lands of the spirit stretching out before me, beckoning, and I’m eager to travel them.... I want to find out why evil exists.”

Once Larry worked in a coal-mine. He tramped across Belgium into Germany and down the Rhine. He travelled in Spain and Italy. As a deck-hand he went to India.

Very soon he buried himself in the mysticism of India. He practised meditation. So life had a new meaning for him. “Can there be anything more stupendous than the conception that the universe has no beginning and no end, but passes everlastingly from growth to equilibrium, from equilibrium to decline, from decline to dissolution, from dissolution to growth, and so on to all eternity.”

In his moments of meditation, he irradiated the serenity, the goodness, the peace and the selflessness. His overwhelming sense of its reality filled him. Nevertheless, it was not for him to leave the world and retire to a cloister, but to live in the world and love the objects of the world, not indeed for themselves, but for the infinite that is in them.

On his return from India, Larry had got a job of work to finish in France and then he would go back to America.

“What to do?”

“Live.”

“How?”

“With calmness, forbearance, compassion, selflessness and continence.”

“And why continence?”

“I know by personal experience that in nothing are the wise men of India, more dead right than in their contention that chastity intensely enhances the power of the spirit.”

Aldous Huxley reverts to his theme of enslavement to bodily pleasures in ‘Time must have a stop.’

Uncle Eustace, who only wallows in the pleasures of the body, meets his death in the lavatory of a Florentine palace. Uncle and nephew dine together. Dinner is exquisite. Eustace gives vent to a belch. A sip of brandy. Another swig of brandy. Over the stimulative effects of the alcohol, he sucked voluptuously at his cigar. Heartburn: violent spasm. From the upper shelf in the lavatory, he took a double dose. And then suddenly the pain was like a red-hot poker boring through his chest. Dizzy. Groping blindly. He lowered himself unsteadily on the seat and almost immediately felt a great deal better.

Then all at once, the pain shot down his left arm-like getting a blow on the genitals.

“Help.” “Don’t let me die.”

He took three steps towards the door and turned the key....Face downwards on the tiled floor, he continued to gasp....no air.... only a smell of cigar smoke. The time was a quarter to twelve midnight.

Next we come to the reflections of his soul, after its release from the body. We hear the refrain.

“Under the bamboo,
Probably constipation.”

In the brightness and the silence his thoughts were like lumps of excrement, like the noise of vomiting. Next there were the repetitions of these corpse-cold sensualities, the fondlings, the dandlings, the endless obligatory fumbings to the accompaniment of “Probably Constipation.”

Bruno is held up as the ideal of detachment. “When I do something wrong,” he said, “or merely stupid, I find it very useful to draw up—not exactly a balance sheet; no, it’s more like a genealogy, if you see what I mean, a family tree of the offence. Who or what were its parents, ancestors, collaterals?”

What are likely to be its descendants, in my own life and other people’s? It’s surprising how far a little honest research will take one. Down into the rat-holes of one’s own character. Back into past history. Out into the world around one. Forward into possible consequences. It makes one realize that nothing one does is unimportant and nothing wholly private.”

“For those of us who are not content to remain in the darkness of spiritual ignorance, the squalor of vice or that other squalor, of mere respectability, the minimum working hypothesis would seem to be as follows:

“That there is a law of Dharma, which must be obeyed, a Tao or Way, which must be followed, if men are to achieve their final end.

That the more there is of I, me, mine, the less there is of the Ground; and that consequently the Tao is a Way of humility and compassion, the Dharma, a Law of mortification and self-transcending awareness. Which accounts, of course, for the facts of human history. People love their egos and don’t wish to mortify them, don’t wish to see why they shouldn’t ‘express their personalities’ and ‘have a good time.’ They get their good times; but also and inevitably they get wars and syphilis and revolution and alcoholism, tyranny.”

“Unutterable miseries! But throughout recorded history most men and women, have preferred the risks, the positive certainty, of such disastrous to the laborious whole-time job of trying to get to know the divine Ground of all being. In the long run we get exactly what we ask for.

“But thought’s the slave of life. “To Bergson” Mind is nothing but a tool for making tools; controlled by unconscious forces, either sexual or aggressive; the product of social and economic pressures; a bundle of conditioned reflexes.

“All quite true, so far as it goes; but false if it goes no further. For, obviously, if mind is only some kind of nothing-but, none of its affirmations can make any claim to general validity. But all nothing-but, philosophies make such claims. Therefore, they can’t be true; for if they were true, that would be the proof that they were false. Thought’s the slave of life-undoubtedly. But if it weren’t also something else, we couldn’t make even this partially valid generalization.”

“Buddhist writers distinguish between compassion and Great Compassion-pity in the raw, as a mere visceral and emotional disturbance, and pity informed by principle, enlightened by insight into the nature of the world, aware of the causes of suffering and the only remedy. Action depends on thought, and thought, to a large extent, depends on vocabulary. Based on the jargons of economics, psychology, and sentimental religiosity, the vocabulary in terms of which we think nowadays about man’s nature and destiny is about the worst....”

Bruno who embodies the ideal of detachment is thus described by Sebastian to his father.

“What was it you found in him ?” he asked.

“What was it ?” Sebastian repeated slowly. He hesitated, uncertain what to answer. There were so many things one could mention. That candour, for example that extraordinary truthfulness. Or his simplicity, the absence in him of all pretensions. Or that tenderness of his, so intense and yet so completely unsentimental and even impersonal—but impersonal, in some sort, above the level of personality, not below it, as his own sensuality had been impersonal. Or else there was the fact that, at the end, Bruno had been no more than a kind of thin transparent shell, enclosing something incommensurably other than himself—an unearthly beauty of peace and power and knowledge.”

Paul Dahlke

The following quotation from Paul Dahlke, “Die Brockensammlung” translated from German by Bhikkhu Silacara will suffice to show the profound influence of Buddhism on German thought.

“What better idea could be imprinted upon a child’s mind than

this : “That thou art as thou art, that thou art what thou art,—this thou owest to thy action in a previous birth. Thou art not a being responsible to some god ; and thou mayest not hope for any forgiveness of thy misdeeds. Thou art not a being responsible to any man who, can make good again thy misdeeds by some allotted punishment ; instead thou art a being responsible to thyself. Grasp the high obligation and the dignity which lie in this fact and which alone give sense and meaning to the whole of life, and then act accordingly ! Have no fear of God, have no fear of man, only have fear of thyself, and that will be thy surest protector, the best guide, who in all perils will point thee aright as the needle of a magnet points to the Pole.”

“The craving for self-indulgence, to get enjoyment at any price today has mounted to the highest point ; and the two authorities which formerly used to hold this craving in check the fear of God on one hand, and the fear of a powerful and just state organization on the other, are today tottering. Today the most important question of all is to create new authorities ; and these Buddhism alone can create, inasmuch as with its teaching of re-birth it sets up an authority which can never fall in ruins. In place of fear of God, and fear of the state and officialdom, it sets up fear of oneself.

“We need Buddhism.” We do indeed need it ; it is perhaps more needful to us than our daily bread. In the last analysis, all our misery arises, not from lack of physical nourishment but from false thinking. Here there is only *one* real help—Buddhism !

The French servant, *Rene Guenon*, takes Schopenhauer to task for calling Buddhism ‘pessimistic’. René Guénon says that Buddhism

is neither ‘pessimistic’ nor ‘optimistic ;’ “to look at things in terms of optimism or pessimism requires western sentimentality and the deep serenity....in pure intellectual contemplation lies far beyond these contingencies.”

René Guénon, in his ‘East and West’ explains that Westerners have made the world of the senses the one exclusive field of their activity. With specialisation—with over specialisation, he says : “The amount of fragmentary knowledge may increase indefinitely within this domain not through deeper penetration, but through the division and sub-division carried out always more and more minutely ; it is indeed the science of matter and multitude.” Further he points out that “material development and pure intellectuality go in opposite directions : he who sinks himself in the one becomes necessarily further removed from the other.” René Guénon, therefore concludes that “where intellectuality is reduced to a minimum, it is quite natural that sentiment should assume the mastery” and that the conceptions of ‘optimism’ and ‘pessimism’ spring from this disparity.

“With the suppression of pure intellectuality,” says René Guénon, “each special and contingent domain is looked on as independent ; one infringes on the other, and everything is mingled and confused in an inextricable chaos. Natural relations are turned upside down and what should be subordinate proclaims itself autonomous mentally as well as socially, all hierarchy is done away with....fake hierarchies are created, in which anything, no matter what, is given the highest rank, whether it be science, industry, morals, politics or finance, for want of the one thing which can and must normally assume the supremacy,

that is, once again, for want of true principles.”

René Guénon holds that western science means analysis and dispersion and eastern knowledge means synthesis and concentration, and he asserts that what the Westerners call civilization, the others would call barbarity.

Generally accepted view in the West accordingly to René Guénon, is that intelligence is “nothing but a means of acting on matter and turning it to practical ends and... science... is above all important in so far as it may be applied to industrial purposes... Intelligence... is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, in particular tools to make tools, and of indefinitely varying the manufacture.”

“When Bergson says that the natural object of intelligence is a matter, he is wrong in giving the name intelligence to what he means, and he does so through his ignorance of what is truly intellectual....

“When a man is imprisoned... in life and in the conceptions directly connected with it, he can know nothing about what escapes from change, about the transcendent and immutable order, which is that of the universal principles..... Action is not generally considered except in its most outward forms, in those that strictly correspond to physical movement: hence this growing desire for speed and this feverish restlessness which are peculiar to modern life....”

René Guénon declares that this is “incompatible... with all that concerns reflection and concentration or in other words with the essential means of all true knowledge; it is indeed the triumph of dispersion.”

René Guénon adds that reflection and concentration produce “an inner power... against which no brutal force can prevail. This power is beyond life, it is superior to action and to see that takes place, it has nothing to do with time, and partakes of supreme immutability; if the Oriental can patiently undergo the material domination of the West, it is because he knows how relative transitory things are, and because he carries in the very depth of his being the consciousness of eternity.”

Réne Guénon thinks that it is the total absence of pure intellectuality and the haphazard material development that characterise western civilization today; besides, “gigantic collective hallucination by a whole section of humanity has come to take the vainest fantasies for incontestable realities; and among these idols of modern worship, perhaps the most pernicious of all” are so-called ‘Progress’ and ‘Civilization.’

T. S. Elliot’s *The Waste Land* reveals the fatalism and unreality of modern civilization. The third part of this poem is entitled *The Fire Sermon* in which Elliot speaks of the Buddha’s Fire Sermon which he found translated in the late Henry Clarke Warren’s *Buddhism in Translation* (Harvard Oriental Series) from *Mahavagga: Aditta Pariyaya*.

Elliot Says :

“ Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest
Burning.”

The Buddha’s Sermon, among other things, speaks of mankind burning in the flames of lust, hatred and delusion : ගහන්ඨිතා දෙසස්
භිතා මොහස්භිතා

The fifth part of Elliot’s poem points out that the barrenness of the waste land can only be changed by self-surrender, sympathy and self-control which lead to Shanti—
—“the Peace that passeth understanding.”

Now I must conclude. I have only touched the fringe of a vast subject. The influence of Buddhism on modern thought can be traced in a great many works other than those I have dwelt upon. I venture to think that it is a fascinating study. There can be no doubt that we derive genuine pleasure from the discovery that the things that we have so long held dear in our own country are passing on to the rest of mankind not through coercion or compulsion but as a process of natural and spontaneous development—a development that will probably awaken human consciousness to the concept of a universal order which knows no caste, creed, clime or colour. An inevitable corollary to this discovery is our wincing at the harmful effects of being subject to a wide variety of sinister influences tending to lock us up within the world of the senses by coaxing us to wallow in the pleasures of the body, while at same time tearing us asunder from our Buddhist Way of Life.

It is possible that there will be many ladies and gentlemen in this house who are keenly interested in the subject of my talk which covers a field hitherto almost unexplored... To them I say, that it is worth while to pursue it in right earnest.

(Concluded)

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

NEW MEMBERS

24-9-51 : K. H. S. Ratnasiri, 373, 4th Canal Road, Kalubowila, Dehiwela ; A. M. Rakeem, 182, Maligakande Road, Colombo 10 ; D. W. D. Bulugahapitiya, No. 113, Stanley Place, Maradana ; A. C. Branerd, 22/8, Mission Road, Kotte ; Roy Jayasuriya, 38, Ridgeway Place, Bambalapitiya ; Jayasena Weerakoon, No. 1257, Kesbawa Road, Gangodawila, Nugegoda ; Francis Amerasinghe, 37, De Alwis Place, Dehiwela ; G. W. Ratnayake, 127, Ketawalamulla Lane, Maradana.

1-10-51 : G. A. de Zoysa, Gnanawimala Road, Dematagoda ; D. A. J. Fernando, 351, Uyana, Moratuwa ; Chandra Sena Batugedera, Handapangoda.

8-10-51 : D. C. J. Matugama, 39, Mount Mary Road, Colombo 10 ; G. U. de Silva, 39, Mount Mary Road, Colombo 10, D. M. Diego, 932/4, 3rd Division, Maradana ; H. K. W. Perera, 27/20, Campbell Place, Colombo ; H. R. S. Hendrick, 11/8, Ford Place, Colombo ; H. L. A. Martyn, 236/1, Old Kolonnawa Road, Colombo.

15.10.51 : A. R. W. Wijekoon, 803, Gangodawila, Nugegoda ; W. Douglas Weerasinghe, c/o Dr. V. E. P. Seneviratne, 36, Ward Place, Colombo ; P. B. Sakalasuriya, Menikdiwela ; C. Gunasekera, 136/1, Stanley Place, Maradana ; M. H. M. Fernando, Police Station, Maradana ; R. M. Dharmapala, 949/4, 3rd Division, Maradana.

22.10.51 : M. A. Thabrew, "Sriyani," No. 17, 1st Lane, Rajagiriya.

RESIGNATION

M. R. S. Dowd ; Mr. K. Gunasekera.
G. R. Wickramaratne.
Dr. L. C. Wijesinghe.

DINNER-CONCERT

The 2nd Dinner-Concert for the year will be held on Friday, November 2nd, 1951, at 8 p.m. An entirely different programme of Music, Songs and dances will be presented and a different menu will be served.

Subscription is Rs. 3.50 per head.

Please join and make the function a success.

NEWS AND NOTES

BUDDHIST MISSION TO NEPAL

New Delhi.

Majesty King Tribhuvan Saha of Nepal.

The Sri Sariputta-Maha Moggallana Arahants' Sacred Relics Reception Committee and Sri Dharmaodaya Sabha, both of Katmandu, Nepal, have extended a special invitation to Hammalawa Saddhatissa Thero, presently at New Delhi, to visit Nepal for the Relic Exhibition there commencing November 6th, 1951. While in Nepal he will be the guest of His

Saddhatissa Thero is well-known for his untiring and zealous missionary work in India. In co-operation with Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, till recently Law Minister of the Government of India, he is primarily engaged in propagating Buddhism amongst the so-called Scheduled Castes and other victims of Brahmanism in India.—Cor

Sunday Sermons

Regular Bana Preaching is held at the Y.M.B.A. Hall from 9 to 10 a.m. on stanzas from the Dhammapada.

PROGRAMME FOR NOVEMBER, 1951

1st Sunday : Pitakotte Somananda Thera

Panchasata Vipassaka Bhikkhunan Katha Vattu.—As one would view a bubble, as one would view a mirage, even so if a person looks upon the world, the king of Death sees him.

2nd Sunday : Panditha Thalalle Dhammananda Thera

Abhayaraja Kumarassa Katha Vattu.—Come ! behold this world, like unto an ornamented royal chariot. Herein fools flounder, but for the wise there is no attraction.

3rd Sunday : U. Somananda Thera of Vajirarama

Sammunjani Therassa Katha Vattu.—Whosoever was heedless before, and afterwards is not so, such a one illumines this world like the moon freed from clouds.

4th Sunday : Heenatiyane Dhammaloka Thera

Angulimala Therassa Katha Vattu.—Whosoever by good deeds covers the evil done such a one illumines this world like the moon freed from clouds.

*May All Beings Be Well
and Happy.*

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

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