

THE BUDDHIST



JUNE, 1952
Vol. XXIII
No. 2

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THE BUDDHIST

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

“Sila Paññānato Jayam”

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Vol. XXIII.]

REGISTERED AS A
NEWSPAPER IN CEYLON.

JUNE, 1952

PUBLISHED BY THE
COLOMBO Y. M. B. A.

[No. 2

CHARACTERISTICS OF A “STREAM-ENTERER”

By W. AMARASIRI

THERE are four characteristics which distinguish the follower of the Buddha who is on the verge of Enlightenment through the Arahant Bodhi. Such a person is termed a “Sotapanna” (stream-enterer) or one who has attained the fruit of *Sotāpatti*, which is the first stage of Sainthood.

Now, according to the teaching of the Buddha, beings are bound to the endless chain of births and deaths, by ten fetters known as the “*dasa sanyojana*.” Of these ten, the “one who enters the stream” extricates himself from three bonds namely, *sakkāya-ditthi* (the Ego-delusion) “*silabbata-parāmāsa*” (belief in salvation through rites and ceremonies), and *viccikiccha* (doubt). Such a person who attains the first stage of sanctity, is certain of final emancipation from the woes of Sansāra, and is sure on the road to the eradication of all defilements and passions, in the final attainment of Enlightenment.

The Exalted One teaches, that the state of “entry into the stream” is a nobler, higher, and more desirable attainment than sole sovereignty over the earth, or any other conceivable type of sub-lunar happiness.

“*Pathavyā ekarajjena, saggassa gamanena vā
Sabbalokādhīpattena, sotāpatti-phalam varam.*”

—Dhp. 17

“More than any earthly power
More than all the joys of heaven,
More than rule o’er all the world,
Is the entrance to the stream.”

In the *Majjhima Nikāya Sutta* 22, the Buddha teaches :—

“But those disciples, on whom three fetters have vanished, they all have ‘entered the stream,’ have forever escaped the states of woe, and are assured of final enlightenment.” This achievement is the

outcome of self-conquest, which the Master has taught is better than overcoming thousands of others by force of arms. How many conquerors, and empire-builders have the world seen, but where are they now, and all their pomp and glory? Truly as Thomas Gray wrote “The paths of the glory lead but to the grave.” But it is only in the eradication of all passions and defilements, by getting rid of the ten fetters, in the attainment of the state of the Arahant, that one becomes a real victor. Then could one truly and triumphantly say, “O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory?”

Therefore, it should be our aspiration to work up to the first stage of sanctity called the *Sotāpatti-state*, because it is the prelude to the other three, viz., *Sakrudāgāmi*—once-returner, *Anāgāmi*—never-returner, and to the *Arahant* the Holy One. Hence it should interest us to know what are the characteristics of the one who has worked up his way to the proximity of sainthood, so that we too may emulate his example and cultivate those characteristics.

The four *Sotāpatti-angas* which characterise the noble disciple, are enumerated in the *Digha-Nikāya, Pātikavagga*, as follows :—

(1) *Sappurisa-sanvāsa*.—Association with *kalyānamittas* or noble, virtuous, and elevating types of friends.

(2) *Dhamma-savana* :—Listening to expositions of the Dhamma.

(3) *Yoniso-manasikāra* :—Seeing things as they truly are, in other words *sammā ditthi* or correct views.

(4) *Dhammānu-dhamma-patipadā* :—The practice, and the conduct of one self according to the Dhamma.

SAPPURISA SANVASA

We find that the Buddha, in many of his sermons has again and

again, stressed the value of noble companionship. In the *Rāhula Sutta* which contains advice to novices, the Enlightened One says, *mitte bhajassu kalyāne* “keep the company of noble, wise, and virtuous friends.” In the *Sanyutta Nikāya, Kosala Sanyutta*, we find the Buddha saying to King Pasenadi of Kosala, adverting to a previous conversation with Ānanda Thera :—

“The entire higher life here (in the Buddha-sāsana) is dependent on companionship with noble friends, and being amenable to their influence.”

“It is on account of companionship with noble friends, who are wise and virtuous, and being amenable to their influence, that one is able to progress on the noble Eightfold Path, and again and again make headway therein.”

In the *Anguttara Nikāya* too, we find the Buddha extolling the elevating influence, and the value of noble friendship in the following verse :—

“The one who associates with low friends will deteriorate morally. The person who associates with companions of equal moral calibre, would remain static. But the person who seeks the company of friends, nobler, wiser, and more virtuous than him would make steady upward progress. Therefore, seek the companionship of wiser, better, and nobler friends.”

Thus we find that constant association with good friends, who by example and precept, set us on the correct path, is a great advantage. The Master remarks that we should regard such noble friends as a treasure, “*Nidhinam va Pavatāram, Yan passe vajjadassanam.*”

It should be remembered in this connection that man is a gregarious animal, who is amenable to the influence of his associates, and environment. Therefore we should recognise this law, and utilise it in such a way as to enable us to work out our weal. The Buddha remarks in the *Iti-vuttaka* :

“Whatsoever is the type of companion that one makes friendship with, and constantly associates, even so will one be, by reason of his influence.”

Just as one poisoned arrow in a quiver, by constant friction, poisons the other arrows, just as putrid fish would bestow a foul odour on an article used for wrapping, and as the “*tagara*” scent would perfume its wrapper, even so is the influence of good and bad friends, teaches the Buddha, in the stanzas following the above quoted verse.

Therefore, it should be our care to cultivate the first “*Sotāpatti-anga*” namely *Sappurisa-saṅvāsa*, as it is a *sine qua non* for progress towards Enlightenment. “*Pāpamittas*” evil friends who induce us to drinking, gambling, debauchery and other vices, and friends who wean us away from the path of virtue should be avoided like the plague. They work untold harm and are at the bottom of the ruin of us all. Says the Buddha, “*Pāpamittatā bhikkave mahato anantthāya saṅvattate.*” Evil friends, O monks, bring about untold harm.”

DHAMMA-SAVANA

It is the Dhamma that sets us on the correct track repeatedly, when we stray off from the Noble Eightfold Path. Therefore listening to the Dhamma from time to time helps us to take stock of our position, and mend our ways, if we have faltered. Four benefits are acquired by one who makes it a habit to listen to the exposition of the Dhamma. They are as follows :—

(1) *Assutaṅ sunāti.*—One gets the opportunity of listening to portions and passages of the doctrine that one has not heard previously. Thus one becomes learned and gains erudition in the Dhamma. In the Discourse on the Beatitudes (*Maṅgala Sutta*) the Buddha remarks “To listen to the Dhamma in due season is also one of the blessings of life.” Gurulugomi, the brilliant scholar, and prince among Sinhalese writers of the Polonnaruwa period, was originally a commoner of low estate. He acquired much wisdom

by listening to the Dhamma, and became one of the best Sinhalese authors who ever lived, by virtue of the knowledge so gathered. And may it be remembered that the Mahāvamsa records, and it is confirmed by the records of the visitor Fa-Hien, that the ancient Sinhalese kings, built preaching-halls at every junction where four roads met in their cities, and appointed monks and lay lecturers to preach the Dhamma regularly. Thus, people had the maximum opportunity to listen to the doctrine, and became virtuous. Soon Lankā gained fame as the Dhamma dipa.

(2) *Sutaṅ patriyodapeti.*—Listening to the Dhamma serves as a refresher in the case of suttas, and aspects of the doctrine, which one has already heard. Moreover listening to the Dhamma being a *kusala-kamma*, is one which we have to do time and again, inasmuch as the Buddha teaches. If a person performs a meritorious act, he should do it again and again, taking pleasure therein, because the accumulation of merit redounds to one’s happiness, (both here and hereafter).

(3) *Dilthiṃ ujumkaroti.*—By listening to the Dhamma our erroneous views become rectified. As though in a dark night we may see the landscape in a flash of lightning, and soon after the flash has gone darkness envelopes the land, even so we perceive the truth when listening to the Dhamma. But soon we go back to the darkness of the world with regard to the durability and felicity of the Ego and the external world, and the disirability of sense pleasures. Therefore, by listening to the exposition of the Dhamma, we regain our correct views, and come to realise the vanity, uselessness, and the transiency of the world and its pleasures. Thus our erroneous views are rectified, and we cling no more to the delusions. This is the third advantage in listening to the Dhamma.

(4) *Kankham Vitarati.*—By listening to the Dhamma, our doubts with regard to any details, knotty, or controversial points are clarified. Thus listening to the Dhamma helps the doubting one to make up his mind, as otherwise he would be stranded in the wilderness of doubts, and would find that his progress in the Eightfold Path is blocked and impeded. This is the fourth advantage of listening to the Dhamma.

YONISO MANASIKARA

This is seeing the world and all things therein as they really are, and not through the coloured glasses of delusion or infatuation. Worldlings inebriated with the intoxicants of youthfulness, health and wealth, often regard the world as *dhuva*—permanent, *subha*—desirable and *sukha*—pleasurable. These are the fallacious views of the many untaught folk, devoid of *Yoniso manasikāra*. These views engender lust, and attachment to the world. They lead to the endless thirst for the gratification of sense—desires, and incur us in much pain and suffering. By means of *Yoniso-manasikāra* one sees all things in their correct perspective, *i.e.*, as *Anicca*, Transient, *dukkha*—suffering, and *Anatta*, devoid of a permanent Ego-entity. Thus one develops a revulsion to the pain and suffering of Sansāra, and abandons the coarse desire for indulgence in sensuality. When sloth and lust enters ones mind, one quickly sees the danger and discards such thoughts, like a man who suddenly finds himself caught in the coils of a python. Then one diverts one’s mind to the peace, the steelness from passions, and the eternal bliss of Nibbāna. Thus we should aspire to cultivate the third characteristic of the ‘stream-enterer’ namely—“*Yoniso manasikāra.*”

Dhammānudhamma-patipadā, is the practice and conduct of oneself in accordance with the teachings of the Dhamma. It is the practice of *Sila*—observing the five precepts, ten precepts and so forth, without default. Thus one restrains and controls oneself from all wonted worldly ways, and manners. By restraining oneself from the low, coarse, and vulgar indulgence in sensuality, one prepares oneself for positive progress on the Eightfold Path that leads to, Enlightenment, cessation of passion, and to Nibbāna.

Then one practices *Samatha bhāvanā*, with a view to tranquillising the mind from the upheavals of desires, and passions, as these things debase us, and keep us bound to the world and its inevitable suffering. Then one proceeds to the practice of *vipassanā bhāvanā* so as to gain insight into the true nature of the five aggregates that go to form the human machine, consisting of mind and matter.

By this type of meditation the disciple gains insight into the *ti-lakkhana*, *viz.*, *Anicca* the tran-

sient nature of all conditioned phenomena *Dukkha*, that they constitute suffering, and *Anatta*, that they are devoid of a Ego-entity. It is this insight born of *Vipassanā-bhāvanā*, that purifies a being. Thus Buddhism begins with virtue, and finds its consummation in wisdom. Prayer, faith,

and charity are of no avail where ultimate purity, and liberation from suffering are concerned. It is the intuitive wisdom acquired by meditation which purifies a man, and brings about the cessation of suffering. As the Buddha taught:—

“*Atha nibbindati dukkhe esa maggo visuddiyā.*”

(Then by this understanding, one overcomes all suffering, this is the path to purity).

Therefore, may it be the endeavour of all followers of the Buddha, who aspire to the happiness of Enlightenment to cultivate these four characteristics, which bring one to the threshold of Nibbāna.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF VESAK

A TALK BROADCAST BY RADIO CEYLON ON 9TH MAY, 1952

TO-DAY we celebrate the joyous Festival of Vesak, in which we commemorate the Birth, the Enlightenment and the Passing Away of Gotama, the Buddha, whom we regard and many millions all over the world regard, as the greatest of the sons of men. We in Ceylon are not alone in this celebration. In whatever land Buddhists are to be found, in groups large or small, every Buddhist home will light lamps, offer sweet-scented flowers and burn incense in honour of their Teacher and Guide, the All-Compassionate One. Last year, the six-coloured Flag, with which we in Ceylon are familiar, and which has now come to be regarded as the international Buddhist Symbol, was hoisted on Vesak Day in 54 countries. This year the number of such countries will be very much more. Vesak Day has now become “Buddha Day,” and is being celebrated as such by Buddhists throughout the world.

The Buddha lived more than 2,500 years ago, yet His life is very real to us, and all around us we feel His living presence. We know many intimate details about Him, recorded by His loving disciples. He appeared on earth at a momentous period in the world's history, when the foundations of modern wisdom, philosophy and culture were being laid down in widely separated parts of the globe. Lao Tse and Confucius were teaching in China, Heraclitus, Plato and Socrates in Greece. In India itself there were numerous sages attempting to solve the riddle of life. It was at such a time that the Buddha was born, the son of a ruler of men. At an early age He voluntarily gave up everything that men hold most dear and went forth into the wilderness, alone and in rags, to find some way out of the revolving

By

G. P. MALALASEKERA

wheel of circumstance on which every form of life is bound. Every man, being born, must sometime die. What is the meaning of this circle of Life and Death, has it any purpose, does it lead to a goal where Life and Death are not? That was the question which the Buddha set to himself and in the solution to which He worked out the final processes of self-evolution and self-development which He had been carrying on throughout many, many lives.

Innumerable answers had been put forward by other teachers who claimed to have found the Path of Deliverance. The Buddha found that Path overgrown and lost to view. He, therefore, proclaimed it afresh in words more definite and precise than have ever before been given to mankind. To-day, about one-fourth of the whole of humanity listens to those words and tries to put into practice the teachings He gave. These teachings have as their goal the attainment of Enlightenment and the method for such attainment has been set forth by Him in what has come to be called the Noble Eightfold Path. It is the most detailed, definite and comprehensive scheme of self-perfection yet given to the world. That method is in harmony with the highest ideal of mankind; it suits itself to the needs of each individual, whatever be the stage of his spiritual development; it demands that one should be completely honest with oneself and that one should be self-reliant. It enjoins no blind faith; in fact, we are definitely asked by the Buddha not to accept any-

thing on mere trust or because there is authority and influence behind it, or the sanctity of age and the sanction of large numbers of men. The Buddha offers His teaching for investigation and experiment; no other religious teacher has ever done that before or since. If patiently and persistently followed, His teaching offers the most valuable help to a civilisation, such as ours, struggling with problems which seem almost incapable of solution.

A WAY OF LIFE

The teaching of the Buddha is not some system of metaphysics, though it contains some extremely metaphysical doctrines as its basis. But, primarily, it is a Way of Life, to be lived here and now, and made part and parcel of oneself. We Buddhists do not pray to God to remove the evils of existence. Every morning we survey the world and send out thoughts of friendliness, pity, sympathy and equanimity, to every living thing. We live our daily lives trying to lessen the suffering of the world. We meditate upon kindness and practise kindness. No living thing whatsoever is outside our love and pity; we proclaim the brotherhood of man and the kinship of all Life. Buddhism is a religion of understanding but that understanding is not a matter of intellect only. It is an understanding of both mind and heart. No progress in such understanding is possible unless it is based on the cultivation of Right Conduct. No amount of meditation or philosophic speculation is of any use to the individual if they are not accompanied by rightness of living. This is one of the main points of difference between the Buddha and the other teachers of His time. There were in His day in India many great ascetics who had developed wondrous psychic powers

and had even subdued the forces of Nature, just as scientists have done in the modern age with their marvellous discoveries and inventions. But the Buddha did not attach much value to these things for purposes of self-development which, in the Buddha's view, is the only true progress.

In Buddhism, Right Conduct does not consist of the acceptance of decrees given by someone outside oneself, as guides to moral conduct. Right Conduct is followed by the Buddhist not from a sense of fear but for its intrinsic rightness. It is a self-imposed discipline with a very definite end in view—self-purification. Refine the innermost nature of man, and he will progress, on and on, towards the goal of self-enlightenment. Pure living means unselfish living, a life of holiness, in thought, word and deed. Right Conduct is, thus, based on Love, the word used in the Buddhist books being Maitri, Friendliness or Compassion, friendliness and compassion not for men and women only but for all that lives and breathes. You remember the well-known text: "Just as with her own life, a Mother shields from hurt her own, her only child, let all-embracing thoughts for all that lives be thine,—an all-embracing love for all the universe, in all its heights and depths and breadth, unstinted love, unmarred by hate within, not rousing enmity."

COMPASSION THE ESSENCE

There is, thus, a total elimination of every form of cruelty, and the substitution of love and mercifulness in its place; not merely the avoidance of war and slaughter of human beings for any reason whatsoever, but also the avoidance of cruel sport and the killing of animals for food. This includes the avoidance of such things as capital punishment, and the exploitation of the weak by the strong. That is why we find in India, that during the Buddhist Age, according to the records of Chinese pilgrims, most crimes were punished merely by fines. In lands where Buddhism dominates the thought and influences the social lives of the people, one notices a certain thoughtfulness and consideration for both human beings and animals, which is not often associated with the people of the busy, bustling nations where power is the criterion of greatness. And, as you all probably know, the great Buddhist king Asoka established

hospitals for both men and animals three centuries before the Christian era.

When we examine the pages of a Buddhist book, like the *Dhammapada*, the *Path of Virtue*, as it is called—which is an old Anthology of Buddhism,—we find there laid down a very enlightened and practical course of behaviour, one which stresses the true virtues of compassion and mercy, rather than a conventional moral code. It is common experience that the highly conventionally moral man is often a very cruel and hard person. Compassion is of the very essence of Buddhism. It is because of the influence of this teaching that on Vesak Day, for instance, there is no feasting which involves the slaughter of animals. Even draught animals are given rest from their labours and servants will work only if they choose to do so. Of no other religious festival can a similar claim be made.

It is interesting to note that when the Buddha speaks of the benefits of Compassion, He says, among other things, that the compassionate man is tender to all that lives, his body is always in health, he is blessed with peaceful sleep, he is always composed and he has no evil dreams. In other words, the Buddha tells us that the Law of Love is also the Law of Health and this we know to be true in our own daily lives. Disease, weakness and misery often have their origin in the cruelty that is streaked in the mind and heart of civilised man. Thus, we see that the Buddha's teaching is a practical teaching, which touches our lives in all aspects. In one place the Buddha says that "Health is the highest gain" and in another He warns His followers that the Good Life cannot be lived on an empty stomach.

There is a story told of how, when the Body of the Buddha was being taken to the burning-ground at Kusinārā, a single cry arose from the vast multitude which had assembled to pay Him their last respects: "Behold, here passes the Great Teacher, who never spoke an unkind word to anyone." Amid a hundred tributes that might have been paid to Earth's Supreme Teacher, this was the one that seemed most appropriate, so vivid was the impression of His life of perfect love and understanding. A Buddhist is true to his Master only when he, in turn, excludes from his behaviour all harshness of thought,

word and deed. That is why the moral system of Buddhism stands above other systems. It does not seek to impose virtue from outside but to awaken something in man himself, placing compassion and understanding above doctrine and dogma.

HAPPINESS IS WITHIN

The Buddha asks us to attain Wisdom and Understanding within ourselves, not from external sources. A teaching such as His is of special value to us of the modern day when we are inclined in almost every plan to concentrate upon externals. We place enormous stress upon the claims of the physical body and often are prone to consider it the most important part of ourselves. We seek emotional stimulus in speed and noise and, mentally, we look outside ourselves for amusement and interest, away from boredom. Even in religious matters, most of our religion consists of looking on the actions of others and listening to them while they talk. We are hungry for spiritual food but do nothing to get the necessary sustenance. We try to find beauty by pulling to pieces lovely things; we hope to win Peace by talking about it at endless conferences, without expelling from our hearts, thoughts of conflict and war. We attempt to understand life by merely studying its forms. Truth, says the Buddha, will never be found by analysing its expressions; it must be found in the only place where it is to be discovered, within ourselves. "Be a refuge and shelter to yourselves," declared the Master, "let each one strive to work out his salvation with diligence."

THE BUDDHA NOT A "SAVIOUR"

Is the Buddha, then, not a "Saviour of Mankind?" He is not, except to the extent that we can call "Saviour" a man who, seeing a house on fire, arouses the inmates and directs them to the way of escape from danger. As a Western Buddhist has expressed it, "The Buddha provides the ticket; but it is we who must take the train and do the journey." The Buddha warns us that if we hope to ride to salvation on somebody else's back, we are doomed to disappointment. Mere faith avails nothing, nor ritual nor prayer, only right action and the development of understanding and wisdom. "Here," says the Buddha, "is Nirvana; here is the Way to Nirvana

and here stand I, the Instructor of the Way, but you yourself must tread the Path." We can, however, all of us, be *Kalyānamittas*, Good Friends to each other, helping each other, both by precept and example, chiefly by example, and the Buddha is the greatest of such Good Friends.

The Buddhist view of religion or Dhamma is not antagonistic to any other ideal of Beauty, Philosophy or Science; it includes them all. Buddhism is different from them because of the difference of the stress it lays upon them. Buddhism teaches us to value not the things that matter so infinitely little, in real reckoning, but the things that matter so infinitely more; not the outer facts but the inner spiritual reality. But if we are to find this reality we must secure a little calm and peace, so that we may attain that inner quietude which is in the heart of every one of us, we must sit back and ponder and try to understand not merely facts but

principles, seek not merely knowledge but deep, abiding wisdom. We must some time retire, even though for a few brief moments, from the hurly-burly and the rush of life and look within ourselves. Here there is no escape from conflict, but only a revival and refreshing of the best within us, to face life's problems with knowledge and awareness. The realm of the mind demands no money or passports to enter it but only determination and persistence. Its riches are immense and such as none can steal from us once we have obtained them. They are intangible, yet most precious, gems whose lustre never fades, Enlightenment and Perfect Peace. We need a map to show us the Way and this the Dhamma provides. The roads are straight and there are no tortuous by-paths, no treacherous valleys. The limpid heights, which are our goal, are visible to our eyes almost from the start of our journey. And we are most fortunate, for we

have not merely a Map but also a Guide. On a Full-Moon night, such as this, in the flowery month of May, some 2,500 years ago, the Blessed One, whom we call the Buddha, attained Enlightenment. Having found supreme bliss, He turned back upon the threshold thereof, to point the Way of Happiness to all Humanity. He is our Guide upon the journey to Nibbāna, in whom we this day once more take our Refuge. His message to all forms of life is the message which each one of us must ultimately for himself make real—the message of Love and Compassion and Peace—not by repeating it aloud nor by waiting for others to make it real for us, but by strenuously striving to find the Truth within ourselves. "Wide open are the doors of Immortality," is the Buddha's clarion-call, "let those who have ears, listen and pay heed." May all beings find Peace and Happiness.

SOME BUDDHIST NEEDS

STATEMENT BY THE ALL-CEYLON BUDDHIST CONGRESS

[The following statement has been made by the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress in connection with the General Elections.]

1. The Constitution of the All-Ceylon Buddhist Congress states among the Objects of the Congress that "it shall safeguard the interests of Buddhism and the Buddhists and promote their welfare." It's the duty of the Congress, therefore, that whenever an opportunity occurs to further these interests it should take necessary action. A General Election provides such an opportunity; it is an appropriate occasion for the Buddhists to take stock of their position and to focus their attention on some, at least, of the problems affecting them and awaiting solution.

2. For nearly four hundred years the Buddhists of Ceylon had gone through a period of great adversity, during which they suffered many hardships. Following upon internecine warfare, they were under the domination of three successive foreign governments, whose rulers sought to wean them away from their traditional loyalty to Buddhism

and the Buddhist Way of Life and to impose upon religious beliefs and manners and customs completely alien to them. There is no need now to dwell at length on the results of these events—the demoralisation and degradation, the disunity and disintegration of the Buddhist community, leading to almost complete collapse—because these things are only too well known. Buddhist monastic institutions were disestablished and shorn of most of their possessions and their power; educational policies were followed which removed the laity from the influence of the Bhikkhus; the affairs of the Sangha were thrown into chaos.

3. For the past fifty years or so, there has been some slight opportunity for rehabilitation but the ruin has been too great for speedy restoration. The foreign influence still persisted and for the Buddhists it was always a fight against heavy odds. But, once more, Lanka is free and the Buddhists now have the freedom to win back their lost rights, to retrieve the position from which they had been dislodged, and to make a definite, advance

for the regeneration of their culture. The opportunity is there, but it needs careful planning and bold resolution to make full use of it. Buddhist aspiration cannot be attained overnight but the time is now ripe to make a bold and determined bid for their fulfilment.

4. How can the Buddhists win back the ground that had been cut under their feet and secure for Buddhism the position which it should occupy in Free Lanka? That is the question which Buddhists must pose for themselves and to which they must ultimately find the answer. The glory of Buddhism in Lanka will redound to the promotion of Buddhism throughout the world and be a live force in the promotion of peace and happiness to all mankind. It is, therefore, a task worthy of our greatest endeavour; it demands courage and sacrifice, vision and purity of motive. It is a very complicated problem, having many aspects. It is not possible to deal with all these aspects in a short document such as this, nor is it proposed to do so. All that is intended here is to make mention of a few of the

many matters which, in the opinion of the Buddhist Congress, deserve the attention of the Buddhists if they are to attain their objectives.

In view of the fact that this statement is issued in the context of a General Election, the matters discussed here are, generally speaking, confined to those which the Government that will be returned to power, whatever Party it may be, will be called upon to consider and deal with. In the opinion of the Buddhist Congress, in a democracy such as ours, a Government returned by the will of the people, must be provided for the needs of the community in spiritual as well as material things.

This Statement is an attempt to bring before the Buddhist public a few of the problems which are of vital concern to them :—

(i) The Buddhists are anxious that there shall be the fullest freedom of worship to all persons, to whatever religion or denomination they belong and that no person shall suffer from any disability by reason of the religion which he professes. Whilst the Buddhists shall make every endeavour to advance their own welfare, their attitude towards the adherents of other religions shall be one of sympathy, goodwill, tolerance and understanding.

(ii) Buddhists must grow up with a satisfactory knowledge of their religion and imbued with Buddhist culture. For this, Buddhist children must be educated in Buddhist schools. This was done in the past in Temple Schools still these were deliberately done away with during the period of foreign rule. The Government of free Lanka should give every facility to Buddhist organisations to establish and maintain Buddhist schools. In areas, which are predominantly Buddhist but where there are no Buddhist schools at present, Government should forthwith establish schools and conduct them as Buddhist schools.

(iii) It is now part of the country's educational policy that no education is complete unless it has a definitely religious background. Every child must, therefore, be provided with ample opportunity to learn his religion as a vital part of his education and training. For this purpose, facilities must be provided in every school for each child to be taught the religion of his parents and to be trained in the practice and the observances of that religion.

(iv) Denominational school, if State-aided, must be denominational not only in name but also in fact, *i.e.*, they must be meant for the children belonging to the denomination of the management. Where, for some special reason, other children are admitted, such children must be taught their own religion by their own religious teachers duly appointed by a responsible authority belonging to that religion. Provision must also be made for such children to be trained in their religious observances.

(v) It shall be made illegal for persons under the age of eighteen, either in schools, orphanages, hospitals or in other similar institutions conducted by religious or denominational bodies, to be converted from one religion to another.

(vi) No orphan, destitute child, young offender or any other such person, shall normally be admitted to any Institution provided for such persons, if that Institution is managed by a religious body other than that of the person admitted. Where, in exceptional cases, such admissions are made, provision shall be made for their own religious instruction and religious observances.

(vii) All members of the nursing staffs of Government hospitals and similar institutions shall normally be lay persons. Where members of religious organisations are employed for these purposes, their employment shall not involve the provision of special facilities or privileges.

(viii) One or more Ecclesiastical Tribunals shall be established by law to deal with matters exclusively concerning the Sangha.

(ix) Legislation shall be enacted to enable the enforcement of decisions made by the Karaka Maha Sangha Sabha of the different Nikayas.

(x) Bhikkhu Vidyalayas and Training Schools for teachers of Pirivenas shall be established by Government, as the ancient Buddhist monastic Foundations, having been dispossessed of most of their lands, are not in a position to undertake this work.

(xi) In as much as Buddhist Culture is the main contribution Lanka can provide to the rest of the world, Government shall establish and maintain an International Academy for Buddhist Studies, preferably attached to the University of Ceylon.

(xii) Government shall provide funds for the publication of the Pali Tripitaka in Sinhala characters and its translation into the Sinhala language and also for preparation and publication of a special series of books for use in Pirivenas.

(xiii) All Full-Moon Days shall be declared Public and Bank Holidays.

(xiv) An Advisory Council of Bhikkhus and laymen shall be appointed once in five years for consultation by the Archaeological Department. No excavation or conservation of Buddhist monuments shall be undertaken except in consultation with this Council. The disposal of all articles found in Buddhist monuments shall be made in accordance with the decisions of this Council.

(xv) A Supreme Advisory Council of Bhikkhus and laymen shall be appointed by Government for consultation in all matters of special concern to the Buddhists.

(xvi) All necessary steps shall be taken by Government to implement with the least possible delay the repeated declarations made by Government that the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of liquor is its ultimate aim. In this connection, temperance education and propaganda shall be undertaken by Government and Government shall refrain from measures calculated to likely to provide inducement to or encouragement of drink.

(xvii) A Commission shall be appointed by Government without further delay to inquire into the grievances and the disabilities of the Buddhists and to make recommendations for the removal of such grievances and disabilities.

DETACHMENT

“WHAT, O monks, is the noble truth of the origin of suffering?” asked the Buddha about 2,500 years ago, and He Himself answered thus: “It is craving which leads to rebirth, arising together with joy and lust, finding its pleasure in this or that, namely—sensual craving, craving for existence, craving for annihilation.” Now, apart from the great and distant goal of Nibbana for the attainment of which we must thoroughly cleanse ourselves of every vestige of craving, even in this worldly life of ours excessive attachment to the things of this world is the greatest hindrance to our leading a life of joy and contentment. The Chinese, from whom we have much to learn, considered a man with a well-developed sense of detachment as the highest ideal of their culture, for it is evident that it is only from such detachment we can gain that high-mindedness which is the only sure means of avoiding that suffering which always follows the inevitable vicissitudes of worldly life.

By this detachment I do not mean to imply the austere, religious, non-attachment of the ascetic but the care-free nonchalance, the high indifference of the perfect sportsman who can accept either victory or defeat with a smile on his face and no qualms in his heart. I mean by this detachment an aloofness from the activities of this world as regards their adverse or advantageous effects on us. This sense of detachment is not easy to develop. It is a state only a little less difficult to achieve than the Buddhistic *upekkhā* (indifference) and like it, it must be fostered by equanimity or the balance of the mind which is an indispensable factor of true wisdom. For the proper development of this sense of detachment we must regard all conditioned things as subject, without exception, to the universally common attributes of impermanence, ill and soullessness (*anicca*,

dukkha and *anattā*). If we are able to keep in mind constantly that all things are subject to change, that in life sorrow is unavoidable, that, understood by right knowledge according to their real nature, all sensations, perceptions, volitional activities and consciousness, past, present or future, personal or extraneous, coarse or subtle, low or high, far or near are not truly mine, not belonging to my “soul,” then shall we be able to remain calm and serene in the face of the effects of profit and loss, praise and blame, disgrace and honour, and health and sickness.

We, who are Buddhists, are so in name alone, for there is scarcely one among us who is possessed of this quality of detachment in its fulness, and very few who can truly claim to have even a moderate share of it. This is deplorable, for apart from the disquietude and repining with which our lives are filled as a result of our lack of this precious sense of detachment, we are undeniably guilty of hypocrisy—we profess to be Buddhists but we hardly make a sincere effort to model our lives according to the teachings of the Master.

To one who is without this quality of detachment, every loss is a cause for poignant grief, and every gain a source of joy-destroying fear lest that which is gained be taken away. One longs for fame and when he does not get it he is miserable. One wants to do something but he is afraid that the world will censure him, and so he goes through life embittered with frustrated longing. We fail in something we attempt to do and we suffer from the disgrace thereof. We gain a coveted honour as that of a championship in sport and thence forward we are beset with fear and anxiety that it may be wrested from us by the next challenger. Proportionate to the craving with which we pursue an object is our disappointment and consequent suffering which follows on our failure to obtain it.

By N. WICKRAMASINGHE

We struggle to obtain a superfluity of this world's goods, depriving ourselves of many a joy in the struggle, and when we obtain the wealth we continuously tremble with the fear that our enemies may take it away from us, that thieves may steal it, that flood, fire or wind may destroy it, that members of our families may squander it away, or at last when we have to go on that journey the end of which we know not of, and on which we may not take any luggage, that we may have to leave it all behind.

The things we crave for are numberless: tasty foods, costly apparel, luxurious dwellings, beautiful wives or handsome husbands, intelligent and affectionate children, faithful friends, honest associates, great strength, able minds and long lives. And when we do not get these in as full a measure as we would wish for we grumble and worry and are unhappy in proportion to the degree of our unfulfilled desires. But if we had that right sense of detachment we would lay no such great store by any of these things as to sour and embitter our lives and destroy the tranquillity of our minds which is the true elixir of life. But if we were possessed of that detachment, hedonic *upekkhā* or neutrality of response as regards the effects of things and persons upon us, our lives would then be blessed with that calm serenity which is worth more than all the wealth and power of this world.

And so the Buddha was right as was Shakespeare when he put to song the same great truth in the words: “Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly,” and recommended to us with a “heigh ho the holly,” the wisdom of leading a life of detachment which is not too dependent on external things and persons for its happiness. This happiness which is the product of one's own well-disciplined mind, tended by one's own efforts, rooted in one's own being is the only true and lasting happiness in this world, for it is immune to all disruption from external factors over all of which we can possibly have no control. If the stony road cuts your feet and burns your soles the wise will put on shoes, and only the foolish will attempt to cover the road with a carpet.

DEATH IN THE MIDST OF LIFE

By SHANTI BHADRA

KING Pasenadi Kosala's frontier was in a state of disorder. The unrest in his kingdom had its repercussions in his mind, too, for he was restless and worried. But when news reached him that his minister, Santati, had skilfully suppressed the uprisings on the frontier, his trepidation gave way to boundless joy. He was so pleased with the minister that he ordered a week's festivities throughout his kingdom.

Santati was in the midst of revelry and merry-making for full seven days; it was for him a period of riotous living. He soaked himself in liquor and surrounded himself with nautch girls. On the seventh day the merriment was at its boisterous heights. He spent the better part of that day in the open air bathing-place and towards sun-down entered his pleasure garden. There his favourite woman danced and sang to

him. While in the very midst of life and merriment, she fell down dead at his feet.

The shock went deep down into his heart. He was dazed for quite awhile. On recovery he found the loss unbearable and irreplaceable. His mind was upset; his thoughts turned towards the Lord Buddha. Thoroughly crestfallen, he went before the Lord and disclosed to Him his pitiable plight, and the pain in his mind. The Lord calmed him and pronounced the following stanza:—

“What is past—let that seem best. Before thee let there be nothing. And if thou wilt not grasp what lies between, thou shalt walk in peace.”

At the conclusion of the sermon he attained the “Peace” that passeth all sense-bound and mind-limited understanding. He knew

fully well, “all birth is ended, the holy life lived out, done that which is to do; no more is the world for me.”

Death follows birth, as night, the day. It is common to all, to the poor and the rich, to the young and the old; but it is the very thing that the Puthujjana (worldling) quickly forgets; he lives and acts as if he is immortal. When it does come, as it surely must come someday, it comes to him as a great sorrow with its attendant stings and pangs. It is the Arahant alone who goes free, for all craving and attachment has ceased and where there are no bindings Death and Life are one. Living as we do, in this world of utter forgetfulness of things that really matter, it is with alert awakefulness that we could free ourselves from the tormenting bonds of Samsara.

COLOMBO Y.M.B.A. NEWS

LITERARY ACTIVITIES (ENGLISH) BRANCH

Lending Library

Members may be glad to learn that the Lending Library is in the process of re-organisation. Books are being re-classified and re-catalogued. Members are now able to pick out any books they need without difficulty in the Buddhism, Fiction, Biography, Ceylon, Useful Arts and Reference Sections as they are being arranged in the alphabetical order. “Wisdom of the East” and “Thinker's Library” Series are classified separately. The rest would be arranged in due course. The following books and journals too were added to the Library:—

Books:—“Wisdom of the East Series”

(1) The Road to Nirvana; (2) The Quest of Enlightenment; (3) Poems of Cloister and Jungle; (4) Karma and Re-birth; (5) The Song of the Lord; (6) The Persian Mystics; (7) Hafiz of Shiraz; (8) Buddhism by Christmas Humphreys; (9) Early History of Buddhism in Ceylon by Dr. E. W. Adikaram; (10) Four Essential Doctrines by Dr. C. L. A. de Silva; (11) Buddhist Essays and Reviews by A. D. Jaysundere; (12) Buddhism: Its Essence and

Development by Edward Conze; (13) Buddhist Way of Life by Harold Smith; (14) Way of Mindfulness by Bhikkhu Soma; (15) The Real Tripitaka by Arthur Waley.

Journals:—

“Ceylon Historical Journal” and “Advent” (Organ of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry).

A Suggestion Book is also available with the Librarian, and if you wish to express your opinion or advance any suggestions you are welcomed to do so; they would be gladly entertained by us.

DISCUSSIONS

Members would welcome the news that Dr. E. W. Adikaram has kindly consented to conduct a series of Discussions from June. We feel that the originality of his presentation and the stimulating nature of their contents would evoke a good response among members. Please look out for a Press Announcement regarding these Discussions.

WALTER WIMALACHANDRA,

Hony. Secretary,

Literary Activities (English)

PUBLIC LECTURE

A lecture was delivered by Sir Clutha Mackenzie, The United Nations Consultant, on Deaf and Blind Welfare on Friday, May 16th, 1952, in the Association Hall on “The Blind.” Dr. G. P. Malalasekera presided.

CHANGE OF OFFICE-BEARERS

Mr. D. W. G. Ranasinghe resigned from the office of Hony. Treasurer of the Association and Mr. D. L. Dissanayake was duly appointed in his place.

NEW MEMBERS

5.5.52: Dr. N. K. G. Mendis, Chest Hospital, Welisara; R. S. Sundaram, 56/15, Barber St., Colombo 13; K. D. B. Abeyratne, 6, Vidyala Place, Colombo; S. Sinniah, 12, Mahawatte Rd., Narahenpita; E. A. V. C. Egalle, “Swarna Villa,” Police Station Rd., Nugegoda.

12.5.52: D. V. N. Jeevaratne, 105/36, Kent Rd., Dematagoda, Colombo; Douglas Cecil Hesse, 24, Sea Avenue, Colpetty; A. D. David de Alwis, Polgasowita; P. Ramanathan, Labour Department, Colombo.

19.5.52: J. Y. E. de Silva, 513, High Level Road, Gangodawila, Nugegoda; G. Pussegoda, 90, Quarry Road, Dehiwala; A. Sangadasa, 41, Mart Terrace, Colombo 9.

NEWS AND NOTES

BUDDHA-JAYANTI

Vaishakh Celebration at Sarnath

“THE Full-Moon day of Vaishakh, the day which commemorates the birth, the enlightenment and the death of Lord Buddha was celebrated under the auspices of Maha Bodhi Society, Sarnath, at the Mulagandha Kuti Vihara at 7 a.m. Acharya Hazari Prasad Dwivedi, the head of the Hindi Department, B.H.U., presided over the function. The meeting constituted of the delegates from Burma, Ceylon, Japan, China and Laddakh. It opened with the administering of Panchasila. In his address Acharyaji very highly applauded the greatness of the Buddha. He said that Lord Buddha was the most perfect man whom the world had ever produced. It is really a matter of great humiliation to us who have lost everything, yet there are recesses and shadow lights which peep out of Indian culture, Art, Literature, Philosophy. It still pervades in every sphere of our social and cultural life. The work of the Hindi Poet, Jayashankar Prasad, Ravindra Nath Tagore and the paintings of Nandal Basu are the best manifestation of the Buddhist heritage that the Indian Society had been able to produce. The day is not far when Buddhism will take the widest place in its own land.

The following gentlemen spoke at the occasion:—Rev. U. Kittima, the Burmese Monk; Rev. J. Fuji Yoshi, the Japanese monk; Pt. Mahendra Kumarji, Shri A. C. Banerjee, Curator; and Shri Krishna Dass, the editor of “Amrita Patrika.” The meeting concluded with the Mangala recitation by the Bhikkhus.

Then the party was conducted by the Secretary, Maha Bodhi Society, to Mulagandha Kuti Vihara Library where a nice arrangement was made for their refreshment. Bhikkhu M. Sangharatana, Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society, distributed fruits to the patients in Sarnath Sanitorium. Rice and cloths were also distributed to the lame and blind people of the vicinity.

In the evening, a grand illumination was arranged in the temple and around the sacred Maha Bodhi Tree (Peepal). At about 7.30 p.m. people assembled for the worship of Lord Buddha, turned into a shape of meeting. Bhikkhu M. Sangharatanaji, Shri Anrup Lama, Shri V. Shrivastavaji and others delivered speeches, and also blessed wholeheartedly the contributors for their generous help and earnestly desired the transfer of their merits to all those whose help made the function a great success. The meeting concluded with a prayer for the peace and prosperity of the world at large.”

VAISAKH CELEBRATION IN NEPAL

Katmandu, 14-5-52.

IN commemoration of Birth, Enlightenment and Maha Parinirvana of the Buddha, the first historic Vaisakh Celebration was held at Lumbini Park (Nepal), the birth place of the Buddha, on 9th May, 1952, under the auspices of Dharmodaya Sabha. Thousands of villagers and almost all the Zemindars of the surrounding villages attended the function. Many shops and stalls and

tents were erected and a big Mela was held. Ven. Ananda Kaushalyayan, the Vice-President of Dharmodaya Sabha had gone from Calcutta to attend the function. Rev. Dhammaloka and Rev. Chunda also were present.

The ancient temple of Maya Devi, the mother of the Buddha and the Asoka Pillar (the exact spot where He was born), were gorgeously decorated with flags and flowers. Function began with Buddha Puja and sermon on the Dhamma, a huge crowd of devotees participating in a solemn manner. The main item of the function was the public meeting which started at 3 p.m. Ven. Ananda spoke at great length on the importance of the day and the sacred place Lumbini. People were very happy in being able to celebrate this function at the very place where Buddha was born. The public meeting terminated with the recitation of Jayamangala Gathas by Upasika Devkumari of Butowal (Nepal).

The function was also celebrated at Katmandu, the capital of Nepal, under the presidentship of His Majesty the King of Nepal. Other notable persons who attended were H.R.H. the Crown Prince, Defence Minister, Law Minister, Health Deputy Minister, Forest Deputy Minister, H.E. the Indian Ambassador in Nepal and other Diplomatic corps.

His Majesty expressed great pleasure in celebrating this sacred function with his own people. He advised people to follow the teachings of the Buddha, who having been born in their country twenty-five centuries ago gave light to the whole world. He hoped that the light of the Buddha will spread more and more and all human beings will live in peace and happiness. His Majesty praised the good works being done by Dharmodaya Sabha for the spread of the sublime Dhamma in Nepal and wished all success and good wishes to the Sabha. Many other distinguished speakers spoke on the occasion.

Rev. Amritananda, Secretary of Dharmodaya Sabha, proposed a resolution requesting H.M.'s Government to restore Lumbini and Kapilavastu to their pristine glory. The resolution was unanimously passed. His Majesty, in reply, assured the audience that his Government will give due consideration to the matter.

Another similar function was held at Kalimpong, Dharmodaya Vihara, the Sabha's headquarters. It was conducted by Rev. Aniruddha. A grand public meeting was arranged and Sriman Babu Motichand Pradhan presided.

All the three functions were organised by Dharmodaya Sabha. Apart from public meetings, Buddha Puja, Dana to Bhikkhus, Alms to poor, Sermons on Dhamma, Processions, Illumination at night and flag hoistings were the other main items of the programme.

WESAK IN PARIS

THE Buddhist Society of Paris, “les Amis du Bouddhisme,” at 31, rue de Seine, Paris, celebrated Vesak in a manner that was purely Buddhist in spirit. Devoid of all the pageantry with which a Vesak is normally associated in the Buddhist countries in the East it appeared simple for any religious cere-

mony, but in effect it was this lack of pomp that made Vesak in Paris so Buddhist. There were gathered a few hundreds of devotees who had as their object nothing but paying homage and respect to their Master and contemplating on His teaching. It was a representative gathering of Buddhists from East and West.

The simple ceremony started with the offering of flowers, a Ceylonese tray of flowers which everybody touched in veneration as usual, was placed before the statue of the Buddha resting serenely on a *dais* covered all over with heaps of white flowers, and lit up by 108 little oil lamps which formed the only decoration. Simple, peaceful Ven. Rahula administered Pansil which was followed by the recital of the traditional Gāthas of honour to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha.

Three Suttas (translated in French) on the Birth of the Master, His Enlightenment and His Death were next read out by Mrs. Charpentier, Mr. Bocane and Mr. Adam respectively.

Ven. Rahula then gave a sermon on a few basic principles of Buddhism. He made it clear that Buddhism is an always truly world religion, that it had been so and would be so. One of the cardinal teachings of the Buddha is Metta, and Metta, he maintained, is the one remedy for this war-born society of ours. That is why according to Ven. Rahula, Buddhism has to become a world force as it is already an important force in Asia. There is nothing mysterious about the teachings of the Buddha, Ven. Rahula continued, it appeals to those who seek intellectual satisfaction, to those who seek moral gratification and to those who seek spiritual serenity. It is not dogmatic and so by nature universal. The Buddha was a human being, only a superior human being who fought the evils of His times as a social reformer and the evil of all times as a religious Teacher. Buddhism is a way of life, and a reasonable way of life.

This was followed by two talks by Mr. Barbarin and Mr. Adam who emphasized the need of Buddhism for the West. Immediately Miss G. Constant Lounsbury Prés of les Amis du Bouddhisme thanked those present and said that Buddhism would bring peace and happiness to the West which is now so badly distorted.

The short ceremony came to a close with the chanting of Metta Sutta by Ven. Rahula who in real Buddhist manner wished everybody Peace and Happiness.

BUDDHIST VIHARA SOCIETY IN ENGLAND

On Sunday, May 4th, the Buddhist Vihara Society in England celebrated the Vesak Festival by a meeting at the Ethical Hall, London, W. 2. His Excellency U Ka Si, Burmese Ambassador in the U.K. and Patron of the Society, presided over the meeting which was well attended. Those present included Mrs. E. A. P. Wijeyeratne, wife of His Excellency the High Commissioner for Ceylon, who was unfortunately unable to attend himself on account of illness; the G.O.M. of Buddhism in the West, 83-year-old Mr. F. J. Payne (father of the Society's Deputy-President, Lt.-Col. E.F.J. Payne),

and a yellow-robed Englishman, Mr. Purfurst, who was recently ordained a Samanera by the Venerable U Thittila, of Burma.

After the taking of Pansil, which was administered by the Venerable Bhikkhu U Thittila, and the Chairman's opening address, there was a short reading from the Scriptures by the Society's Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Rant. The Venerable U Thittila then delivered his Vesak discourse, which was followed by an admirable speech by U Maung Maung Ji, M.A. (Cantab.), who represented the Burmese Kappiya Group. Next, Mr. Christmas Humphreys, President of the Buddhist Society, London, addressed the meeting. The following speaker was Mrs. Braun, who spoke on behalf of the Birmingham Buddhist Study Group. His Excellency the Burmese Ambassador, read out messages of greeting and goodwill from Miss G. C. Lounsbury, Vice-President of the Society and President of "Les Amis du Bouddhisme," Paris, and from Mr. C. J. Bartlett, President of the Buddhist Society, Manchester. After a brief summing up by the Chairman, the meeting closed with a recitation in Pāli of the Metta Suttanta by the Venerable U Thittila.

May, 1952/2496.

VESAK CELEBRATIONS IN SINGAPORE

VESAK celebrations in Singapore commenced with a talk on the Significance of Vesak broadcast over Radio Malaya by Ven. Piyadassi of Vajirarama, Colombo on May 8, at 7.25 p.m. On the 9th the Buddhists of Singapore gathered at the Sri Lankarama to observe the Buddha Day. The Temple precinct was decked with large Buddhist flags, and at night, hundreds of flickering oil lamps that encircled the entire Arama, attracted the attention of the devotees and non-Buddhists.

A solemn ceremony was witnessed when all the Ceylonese Buddhists and the Chinese Buddhists lined up to honour the memory of the Buddha with fresh flowers and fragrant incense that they lavished on His shrine. The Theras Piyadassi and Mahavira delivered sermons in English and Sinhalese respectively.

The biggest event of the day was a meeting organized by the Singapore Regional Centre of the World Fellowship of Buddhists at the Maha Bodhi school attended by many Buddhists and non-Buddhist Government and Consular representatives. After the recitation of the Five Precepts, and hymns in Pali and Chinese by school children, Miss Pitt Chin Hui, President of the

Regional Centre, made the opening speech.

The Ven. Piyadassi who briefly outlined the life of the Buddha, said that Buddhism had spread all over Central Asia, parts of South East Asia and in the Far East. "It penetrated to these lands," he said, "peaceably and without disturbing the creeds that were already in existence, for Buddhism is a religion of love and tolerance."

"Truth is never out of date and obsolete. The words of the Buddha uttered more than 25 centuries ago, have ennobled the lives of millions of Buddhists as well as non-Buddhists. It was through Buddhism that China, India and Ceylon came near to each other and developed many contacts," said the Ven. Piyadassi.

The Ceylon Commissioner, Mr. M. Saravanamuttu, said that the teachings of the Buddha have, for centuries, influenced the destinies of the people of the world, and it is a pity that the Singapore Government has not realized the significance of such a sacred day as Vesak. "It is a shame," he said, "that the Government has not recognized the day as a public holiday." The Hon. Mrs. Elizabeth Choy, O.B.E., and Mr. T. A. Simon also addressed the meeting.

The members of the Singapore Buddhist Association paid their annual visit to the Trafalgar Home (Lepar Asylum) with gifts of cakes, fruits, sweets and cool drinks, etc., to 720 patients. At the hospital premises many captive birds were released.

THE BUDDHIST VIHARA SOCIETY IN ENGLAND REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1951

YOUR Executive Committee have pleasure in presenting a report of the Society's activities and progress during the fourth year of its existence.

General Survey—Death of Ex-Bhikkhu Silacara

It cannot be said that 1951 was an eventful year. No spectacular happenings occurred, but the life of the Society flowed on smoothly and steady progress was maintained. The main event worthy of note was the passing of Mr. J. F. McKechnie (ex-Bhikkhu Silacara), who died at Chichester Hospital on January 27th

in his 81st year. The cremation took place on February 2nd. Thanks to the timely intervention of the Hon. Secretary, this once famous Buddhist monk was given a Buddhist funeral, conducted by the Ven. U. Thittila in the presence of a few friends.

On February 25th, the Society held a Memorial Meeting for ex-Bhikkhu Silacara, at which various speakers, including Mr. F. J. Payne, the G.O.M. of Buddhism in the West, related their reminiscences of Mr. McKechnie and an article by the ex-Bhikkhu was read by the Hon. Secretary.

Meetings

Public meetings were held monthly except during July and August. Speakers included the Ven. U. Thittila and U Maung Maung Ji, M.A. (Cantab). The Vesak meeting on May 20th was a specially happy event. His Excellency the High Commissioner for Ceylon presided, and the close of the meeting was rendered impressive by the chanting of the Metta and Mangala Suttas by the Ven. U Thittila and the Ven. Wayama.

Distribution of Literature

As in previous years, Buddhist Literature was again distributed far and wide, both in the U.K. and abroad. The fact that the number of enquiries and requests for literature received from all parts of the U.K. is steadily increasing is an encouraging sign of the growing interest in the Dhamma in this country.

Gifts to the Society

Once again we are happy to record the many gifts and donations received from members and well-wishers. Our staunch supporter in Ceylon, Mrs. L. S. Polpitiya, sent no fewer than five valuable parcels of books and pamphlets for distribution. Mr. Kaser Lall, of Katmandu, Nepal, sent a copy of the Ven. Narada's "Elementary Pali Grammar," a most welcome gift as this book is out of print. The Island Hermitage, Dodanduwa, Ceylon, presented the Society with a copy of "A Buddhist Dictionary" by the Ven. Nyanatiloka, an invaluable work for students. Signor Carlo Gentile, of Foggia, Italy, contributed one of his books to our library, and Mr. E. A. Samaraweera sent back numbers of Buddhist periodicals for distribution.

Classes and Meditation Meetings— the "Sasana Kari Vihara"

It is impossible adequately to express our feelings of gratitude and veneration towards the Ven. Bhikkhu U Thittila for the immense amount of work he does in the service of the Dhamma. Throughout the year he continued his Pali and Abhidhamma classes and Meditation meetings, in addition to lecturing up and down the country as well as to our Society. The "Sasana Kari Vihara," which was established by the Burmese "Kappiya Group" three years ago, is now an established central point for all Buddhists in London, whether resident or visiting, and many regular students look forward to their fortnightly or monthly instruction at these humble premises. It is not possible to overestimate the importance of the Ven. Bhikkhu's work or the part played by the "Sasana Kari Vihara." In our previous Report we drew your attention to the fact that the Ven. Bhikkhu is dependent upon voluntary contributions for his maintenance and that of the "Vihara," and we are forced to do so again this year. Contributions are still insufficient; as a matter of fact, at one time during the year the position of the "Vihara," and therefore of the Ven. Bhikkhu, was highly precarious. Our doughty Vice-President, Miss G. C. Lounsbury, appealed for support to the Burmese Prime Minister, Thakin Nu, and this appeal, combined with the many similar requests made by the Kappiya Group, led to monthly contributions towards the Ven. Bhikkhu's maintenance being sent to the Hon. Secretary by the Buddha Sasana Nuggaha Organization, Rangoon, for a period of ten months, from March to December, 1951. Now the funds of this Organization are exhausted, and although there is every likelihood of the support from Burma being continued, it has not yet been resumed. Your Executive Committee, therefore, appeal to you to help the Ven. Bhikkhu carry on his invaluable work by contribut-

ing to our U Thittila Fund. This appeal is addressed especially to the Ven. Bhikkhu's students and all others who benefit by his work and presence amongst us. It would, indeed, be a calamity if, for lack of funds, the "Sasana Kari Vihara" should have to be closed and the Ven. Bhikkhu were to be precluded from teaching Dhamma. We beg you to show your appreciation and to give generously.

Increase of Membership

The Society's membership increased again during the year 1951 by the addition of several English members, including one Life Member.

Finance, and a Summary

Particulars of the Society's financial position will be found in the attached Financial Report. From this it will be clear that we need more funds to carry on our general work, and members are requested to renew their subscriptions promptly, thus obviating unnecessary expenditure on "reminders."

We should like to thank all who have helped us throughout the year, in particular Mrs. E. E. Grant who, as Assistant Hon. Secretary, has done much to ease the Hon. Secretary's work. It is to be hoped that all our members will co-operate in making 1952 a successful year and a step nearer to the realization of our objects.

May all beings be well and happy!

April, 1952/2495.

BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION OF THAILAND

(Under Royal Patronage)

Phra Sumeru Road, Bangkok.
1st May, B.E. 2495

Dear Friend,

Herewith the Buddhist Association of Thailand offers its message of goodwill to Buddhist friends of your esteemed Association on this great occasion of Visakha, being the full moon of May, B.E. 2495.

Buddhists in our country will observe this day with due solemnity and Buddhists everywhere are asked to join in celebrating the Visakha as the day specially sacred to the memory of our Great Master.

I fully hope that you will be so kind as to make public this message to members of your Association, and, if you deem expedient, to the people of your country as well.

With Metta,

Yours in the Dhamma,

PHYA BHARATA RAJSUBICH,
President.

VISAKHA MESSAGE

From The Buddhist Association of Thailand, Under Royal Patronage to Buddhists Organisations, all over the World

TO-DAY, Visakha Day, being the anniversary Holy Day, commemorating the Birth of Our Lord Buddha—His Enlightenment—His Death and Attainment of Nirvana, the Buddhist Association of Thailand avail itself of this auspicious occasion to extend to you all, our very best wishes for peace, happiness and prosperity.

Since our last message on Visakha Day B.E. 2494, there is still no peace on certain parts of the Globe, there is still so much doubt, and mistrust among peoples of the world.

Therefore, Brother and Sister Buddhists, again let us all join force on this great occasion, to carry on with firmer and greater determination to spread the teaching of Our Lord. All of us Buddhists feel deeply moved while we think of the encounter in arms and fire as this Visakha Day dawns, the unhappy lot of the wounded, death and destruction which warfare had inflicted upon cities, populations, the wealth of Nations thrown away and hundred thousands of men whom war has driven to despair. As Buddhists, we love with equal affection all peoples without any exceptions. We have the conviction that if all of us Buddhists keep on promoting and propagating the Buddhist virtues, we shall surely make a certain contribution to the peace of the world and the welfare of mankind as expressed in the lofty ideals of the Holy Lord Buddha.

To all of you Buddhists, and to all the people of the world, we beg to send you our sincere greetings and best wishes, and by virtue of the Triple Gem, may you be blessed!

Peace to all Beings.

Visakha Day,
8 May, B.E. 2495,
Bangkok, Thailand.

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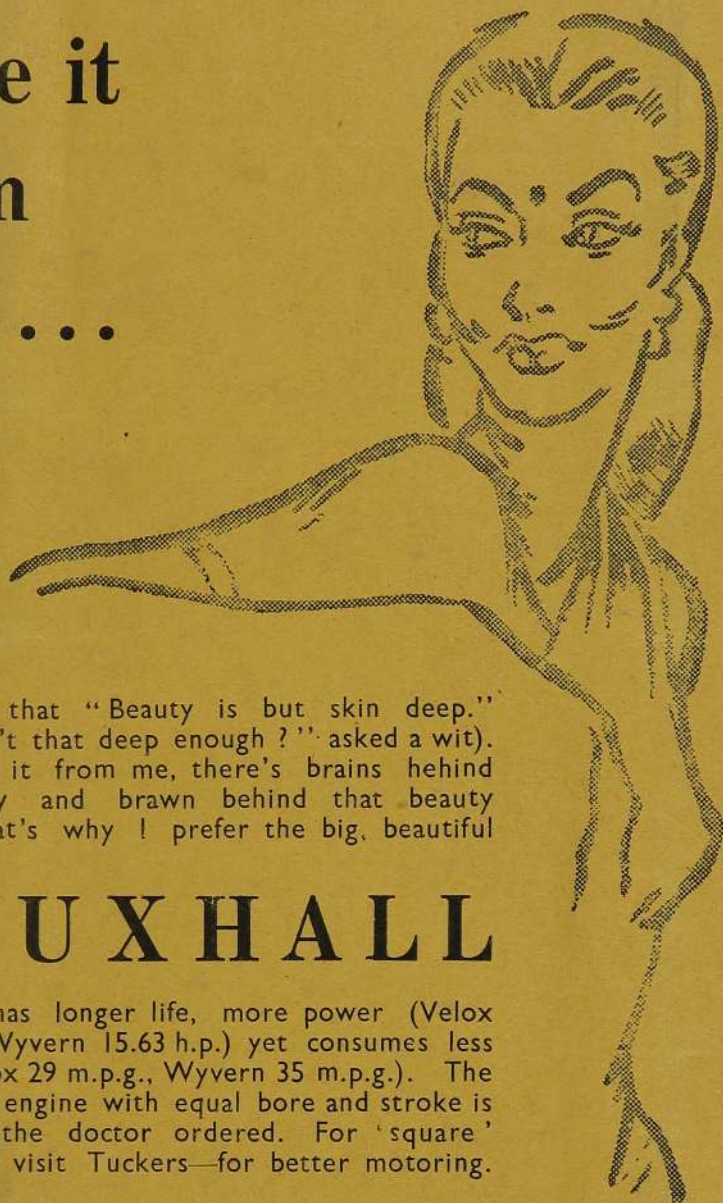
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