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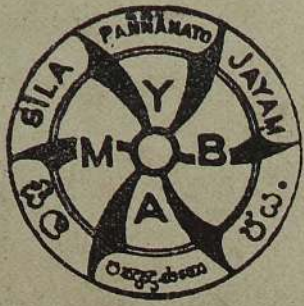
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THE BUDDHIST

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“Sila Paññānato Jayam”

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GOOD AND EVIL IN BUDDHISM

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IN this article I propose to take up for consideration the question what is good and what is evil (or bad) according to the Buddhist view. All, that is to say Buddhists as well as non-Buddhists, would agree that there are certain things and qualities which can be regarded as “good” and others which can be called “bad.” But the difficulty arises when we ask the question what each religion or individual means by calling a thing or quality good or bad. Here we strike at the fundamental bases of the various religions and philosophies, and I suppose that is why there is so much wrangling and disputation on morals and ethical problems. It will be seen on further inquiry that opinions may also differ violently about the origins of these two concepts, namely, the good and the bad.

The great German philosopher, Hegel, believed that “man is by nature good, man is by nature evil,” and I think that Buddhism could say the same of the individual involved in saṃsāric existence. With regard to the mental and physical activities of living beings Buddhist ethics characterize certain manifestations as *puñña* or *kusala* and some others as *pāpa* or *akusala*, that is to say, some actions, in the ultimate sense resulting in certain mental derivatives (*cetasikas*), are good and others bad. In a practical discussion of this nature it is not necessary to refer to the more exhaustive divisions found in the Dhamma of acts and their mental resultants such as the one into

good, bad and good-and-bad-mixed. In fact, it is in the study and analysis of these categories that Buddhist psychological ethics, Abhidhamma, makes a unique contribution as an ethical religion, excelling all other historical systems of morality. Here, the ethical is dealt with from the point of view of the practical psychologist and mere theorizing plays no part in it.

In the Second Discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya named the *Sabbā-sava Sutta* the Master deals with the arising of cankers and the seven-fold method of getting rid of them. No student of modern psychology, particularly of psycho-therapy, will fail to see the completely practical and scientific nature of the methods recommended. There are, says the Master, cankers or evil mental states which have to be got rid of by scrutiny or insight (*dassana*), others which have to be eliminated by checking their arising, that is, by restraint (*saṃvara*), others by thoughtful use or judicious indulgence (*patisevana*), others by endurance (*adhivāsana*), others by avoidance (*parivajjana*), others by removal (*vinodana*), and still others by mental culture (*bhāvanā*). The deep psychological insight displayed in this Discourse has not failed to impress even students of modern psychology. Thus Dr. Robert H. Thouless of Cambridge says “In this Discourse on *All the Āsavas*, the Buddha seems to be speaking with the voice of the modern psycho-therapist...” He characterizes Buddhism as “a system of psycho-therapy, dominated by the conception of cause

and effect” and adds “this is simply the holding in the moral field of a system of ideas which we hold in the field of natural causation.” He goes even further and points out the limitations of modern psycho-therapy when compared with Buddhism. “Modern psycho-therapy,” he argues, “is concerned only with giving a patient peace and harmony in this life; the Buddha regarded this as only part of the problem, since... this life is only one of a series [of rebirths].” Thus “the modern psycho-therapist seeks to relieve his patient from emotional burdens so that he may live happily and harmoniously in this life; the Buddha sought to relieve his disciples from emotional burdens both for the sake of this life and also of future lives.”¹

REBIRTH A BASIC TENET

It will be seen that this important distinction emphasizes the concept of *rebirth* as a basic tenet of Buddhism. It is the very concept of the Unsatisfactoriness of the continuity of saṃsāric existence or continual becoming (*bhava-dukkha*) which also constitutes the fundamental basis of Buddhist ethics in the higher sense. The individual, convinced of the fact of rebirth, ponders further in the light of the Buddha’s teaching and discovers for himself that there must also be a way out of this saṃsāric Dukkha, and this “way out” or *nissaraṇa*, as it is called in the Pali texts,² is at the same time deliverance (*mokkha*), the attainment of the Supreme Ideal of

1. Riddell, *Memorial Lectures* (1940), pp. 22-23.

2. Majjhima Nikāya, I, p. 38; ep. 326.

Nibbāna. It is because samsāric existence is a fact and because it is also possible for man by his own agency to overcome it that the need for ethics arises for the convinced Buddhist. This is a far deeper issue than the need for mere moral behaviour which seems imposed on all human beings by social exigencies, that is to say, incumbent on them as members of civilized communities. This latter kind of ethics are truly *relative* and must vary with each society or community. But the ethics which derives from the Buddhist's realization of the nature of samsāric life are indeed *absolute*, inasmuch as the Ideal of release therefrom is an absolute one free from all limitations and contingencies. Hence the essential basis of the Buddhist moral life lies not in some metaphysical hypothesis conceived by some *a priori* reasoning but in the Buddhist's conviction that there is a way out of the Unsatisfactoriness of samsāric existence which is technically called *Dukkhatā*.³

It may be questioned whether Buddhist ethics are thus not based on a mere dogma, namely the idea of rebirth, although it may be granted that they do not result from metaphysical speculation. The Buddhist's answer to this criticism would be that in Buddhism the notion of rebirth is not a dogma but a concept derived from experience, the direct, supernormal experience of the Perfected Ones, the Arahants. For, it is asserted in the Canon that there is a life beyond (*atthi paro loko*), proved by the supernormal experience of the Arahants, who are thus called the perceivers of the world beyond (*paralokaviduno*).⁴ They by their efforts have acquired the faculty of recollecting past births (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāna*) and also the faculty of observing the passing away and rebirth of beings (*sattānam cutūpapattiñāna*),⁵ which is also termed the "divine eye," that is to say, supernormal vision. The Buddha and his advanced disciples exercised this power on several occasions and it is not beyond the means of any disciple, however humble he may be to begin with, to develop these faculties with proper self-training. These con-

siderations emphasize the fact that ethics for the Buddhist become an absolute necessity once he decides to strive for the realization of his goal, and, as Dhammadinnā pointed out to Visākha, the moral life finds its apex, goal, and consummation in Nibbāna.⁶

Now, it should be clear that Good and Evil for the Buddhist have a specific connotation. Whatever promotes his and others' ending of all sorrow (*Dukkha*) or the realization of Nibbāna is *good* and whatever impedes that realization is *bad* or *evil*. This is the fundamental significance for the Buddhist in these two important terms. The whole of Buddhist ethics, nay, the whole of the Master's Teaching, can be said to be summarized in the simple Pali stanza :

*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ—kusalassa
upasampadā
Sacittapariyodapanam—etaṃ Bud-
dhāna sāsanaṃ.*

"To do no evil, to acquire the good, to purify one's mind,—this is the admonition of the Buddhas."

THE TWO ASPECTS

Thus, there is both a negative and a positive aspect of Buddhist ethics. The negative statement of the moral precepts in Buddhism, as an abstaining from particular forms of bad or evil behaviour, may give the wrong impression that Buddhist ethics are merely negative. It cannot be too much emphasized that the Buddhist Canon abounds in contexts where the moral precepts are stated in positive terms as well, as for instance, in the *Sāmaññaphala Suttanta* of the Dīgha Nikāya. Thus, there is to be compassion (*dayā*) for all creatures in place of inflicting harm on any; there is to be the taking only of what is willingly given in place of taking what is not given; chastity in place of evil behaviour with regard to sense-pleasures; truth-speaking in place of uttering falsehood; reconciling those who are at variance and inducing harmony instead of causing separation among people by slanderous talk; employing gentle, affectionate, pleasant and agreeable speech in place of harsh speech; and, instead of frivolous chatter,

speaking about the true and the meaningful, the Dhamma and the Discipline.⁷ As a leading Western student of Buddhism, Miss I. B. Horner, says, "The positive side of Buddhism is as strongly stated as the negative, but has been far more overlooked. It is the task of this generation to reinstate the positive message that shines and scintillates in the teaching on 'the one sole Way for the purification of vision.'"⁸

It is not my intention here to enumerate the various lists of good and bad categories of morality as so profusely occurring in the Buddhist books. The particular Buddhist concept of what is good in the sense outlined above will be found discussed there under the heading *Sīla*. Primarily, it occurs as the first of the three parts of the Noble Eightfold Way, namely, the *Sīlakhandha*, *Samādhi-khandha* and *Paññā-kkhandha*, the three groups dealing respectively with the practice of Morality, the development of Concentration, and the cultivation of true Wisdom. Under the group of *Sīla*, the factors of right action, right speech and right means of livelihood are comprised, and these, as generally known, have an important place in the Noble Eightfold Path. In the actual practical training the general concept of *Sīla* or good conduct is defined in terms of what are known as 'the rules for moral discipline,' the *sikkhāpadas*.

RIGHT BEHAVIOUR

Firstly, there is the *Pañca-Sīla* or the group of five items of right behaviour, namely, restraint from harming, killing or hurting any living beings; from taking what is not given; from wrong indulgence in sense-pleasures; from lying speech; and from causing oneself to be indolent and senseless by the use of intoxicants. Next comes the higher training of the Eightfold *Sīla*, composed of the above five-fold formula and three others. In the Pali Canon this higher mode of right conduct is known generally as the *Upasatha*, the pledge taken by the layman on himself to keep unbroken the eight precepts on the full and dark moon days of the lunar month, and if possible even on the

3. Dīgha Nikāya, III, p. 216.

4. Majjhima Nikāya, I, p. 403.

5. Dīgha Nikāya, I, p. 82.

6. Majjhima Nikāya, I, p. 304.

7. Dīgha Nikāya, II, pp. 43 et. seq.

8. *Basic Position of Sīla* (1950), p. 12. [This and the succeeding paragraphs are based to a large extent on this lecture of Miss Horner.]

two quarter moon days. The last three precepts of this eightfold *Uposatha-Sīla* are taken temporarily from the higher ethics meant normally for the monks and nuns: namely, restraint from eating at the wrong time, that is after noon and till sunrise the next day; restraint from visiting shows and amusements where there is dancing, singing and music, and from using garlands and scented unguents and other forms of bodily decoration and ornamentation; and lastly, restraint from sleeping on luxurious and high beds. Then, finally, we have the *Dasa-Sīla*, the ten items for still higher moral training. It is said that the worthy person (*sappurisa*) observes all these restraints for himself, while he who is even more worthy besides observing them himself also encourages others to do likewise.⁹ These ten precepts are the first steps leading to the fuller and nobler life of the true recluses (*brahmacariya*). They comprise the first four items of the above lists and the following six: restraint from slander; from harsh or rough speech; from frivolous chatter; from covetousness; from malevolence; and, from false views.

It will be seen from the above graduation of precepts that the Buddhist moral training becomes more and more psychological as it rises higher and higher. In fact, in Buddhism morality is not simply an end in itself. If the Dhamma, that is to say, the whole religion, is comparable to a lake, morality would be but a ford (*dhammo rahado . . . sīla-titto*),¹⁰ as the Master himself once explained to a Brahman. Thus the moral training is not in itself the Ideal. *Sīla* is but the stepping-stone to the higher practice of *Samādhi* or Right Concentration, which term in Buddhism means all that is good and acceptable in "Yoga" as understood by the Hindus, as well as a good deal

more in spiritual development. Starting with *Sīla* and practising higher and higher, or rather deeper and deeper, modes of psychological and spiritual training through *bhāvanā* or mental culture, one ultimately attains the true Wisdom (*Paññā*) which is the very threshold of Nibbāna. It is not meant, of course, that this highest Ideal or *Summum Bonum* is attainable at once by all and sundry. People are of various inclinations and diverse capacities. Hence it may take longer for some to complete their self-training in the primary stage of *Sīla* itself.

FOR THE LAYMAN

The lay disciple, as distinct from the monk or the nun who has cut himself or herself away from the crude life of the pursuit of material ends, finds it difficult to devote the entire life to spiritual training in the higher precepts because of the shackles of lay life. But within limits he too can cultivate the good, and this discipline for the layman and the laywoman goes by the name of *Gihī-Vinaya*. Such a mode of behaviour devoted to a relatively lower plane of moral training must of necessity lead to relatively lower ideals such as the various heavens and the Brahma Worlds. It needs an immense effort for a person living the worldly life at home to reach the highest state, that is Nibbāna, in that very life. There are, of course, several cases in the Pali Canon of lay disciples, both male and female, who are stated to have achieved the Highest Ideal while living the lay life at home. But these were "lay" only in name and outward appearance, for their attainment of Nibbāna implies that they had traversed all the three stages of the Path, namely, *Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā*, although living at home.

This relatively lower ethic, the

Gihī-Vinaya, culminates in the practices of the Four *Brahma-Vihāras*, or the Four Noble Dwellings, namely, *Mettā*, amity or active friendly interest in others; *Karuṇā*, compassion or the desire to relieve the suffering of others; *Muditā*, the appreciative or sympathetic, yet disinterested, attitude to the good and happiness of others; and lastly, *Upekkhā*, equanimity—that serene and objective attitude of neutral benevolence which distinguishes the worthiest Buddhist disciple and perhaps no other kind of person in this world. One may imagine what a happy world this would be if all human beings practised at least the first and the second of these Four Noble Dwellings. It does not take one too long to realize that the real trouble with this world is not due merely to economic and other external factors but in a greater measure to the evils of individual and, therefore, when taken collectively, of social, *psychology*. That is why, as I pointed out at the beginning of this discussion, the Buddha in prescribing his remedy for all forms of *Dukkha*, that is to say, Ill, Pain and Suffering, emphasized the psychological aspect of the training. The greatest "good" comes by the "mastering of the heart's unrest." Buddhism postulates that social evils are for the greater part at bottom psychological, and therefore must be so treated. Many men in certain social classes have health and wealth but yet are mostly unhappy, as the modern sciences of psycho-analysis and psycho-therapy assure us. In the ultimate analysis such suffering is the direct form of Evil that can beset man. And, logically, the Highest Good will be the release (*nissaraṇa*) from such Evil, in other words, the Ending of All *Dukkha*, which constitutes the attainment of the Highest Peace, that is the Consummation of Nibbāna.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POSON

(A broadcast by Dr. G. P. Malalasekera on June 7th, 1952)

TO the Buddhists of Ceylon, the full-moon day of Poson, which falls in the month of June, is one of the most important dates in their religious calendar, rivalling even that of the Vesak Full-Moon.

For it was on a Poson full-moon day 2,259 years ago that the people of Ceylon, led by their king, Devanampiya Tissa, beloved of the Gods, accepted the teachings of the Buddha and dedicated themselves to its

custodianship and its propagation. The facts of the story are probably known to all of you, but they are worth recall.

The official introduction of Buddhism into Ceylon is associated with

9. Anguttara Nikāya, II, p. 220.

10. Saṃyutta Nikāya, I, 169.

the Arahata Mahinda, the son of the Great Indian Emperor, Asoka. But there is reason to think that Buddhism had been known in this Island even earlier. According to the ancient chronicles of Ceylon the Buddha himself is said to have visited the Island three times in order that he might honour and purify, with his holy presence, the land which was to be the future home of the Sinhalese race, who would be entrusted with the preservation of the sublime body of teaching which the Buddha gave to mankind. The old chronicles give vivid descriptions of the Buddha's visits, made in the 5th month, 5th year and 8th year after the Buddha's enlightenment. The first visit was to Mihintale, the second to Nāgadīpa in the north of the Island, and the last to Kelaniya near Colombo. These places have, as a result, become places of pilgrimage. During these visits the Buddha also went to the mountain now known as Sripāda, where he left his footprint at the request of the presiding deity of that mountain, and also to various spots at Anuradhapura, at each of which he spent a short time wrapt in meditation, that they might thereby be consecrated. He is also stated to have visited Katara-gama and Mutiyangana in Badulla, and thus we get sixteen places which are considered by the Buddhists of Ceylon as being associated with the Buddha's visits.

The known history of the Sinhalese people begins with the landing in Ceylon of Vijaya with 700 followers in 543 B.C. Ceylon was then inhabited by a race of men whom Vijaya and his followers called Yakkhas, and who evidently belonged to the earlier colonies of settlers who had migrated probably from South India. The country already possessed a certain degree of civilization. The Yakkhas had their own cities, social institutions, a fairly well developed language, and indubitable signs of accumulated wealth. Lankapura, the Yakkha capital was no mere city of imagination but an actual city whose site is still pointed out in the District of Matale. The Yakkha princess, Kuveni, whom Vijaya married soon after his arrival in Ceylon, appears to have been a very real and fascinating lady. Vijaya and his followers seem to have found many places in the Island well-populated by inhabitants of a peaceable character, and keeping a fairly high degree of civilization.

It is most improbable that into a community so cultured and well-established, some traces at least, should not have found their way of the great Buddhist spiritual movement which was making rapid strides in the mainland of India. Buddhism had been, from its very inception, a missionary religion—in fact, it was the first missionary religion of the world—and its votaries in the very life-time of the Buddha himself, with that enthusiasm which marks an allegiance to new cause, were carrying the glad tidings even into regions hitherto unexplored. It is worth remembering that only a few miles of rather shallow sea separate Ceylon from the mainland and that even today people come over in kattamarans, the most primitive of all makes of boats except that of the hollowed log.

Soon after the advent of Vijaya, the Island was visited by other colonists in ever-increasing numbers and they came from parts of India where Buddhism had become the dominant faith. Among these were the Pandiyans who actually claimed kinship with the Buddha, and it is reasonable to suppose that they carried over with them to Ceylon some knowledge of the Buddha and his teachings. Vijaya's immediate successor, Panduvasadeva, had as his queen, a princess, Bhadda Kumari, who was a maiden of the Sakhya clan, i.e., the clan to which the Buddha himself belonged. She and her companions who came with her into Ceylon undoubtedly were Buddhists, and it would be strange if with such intercourse with the mainland the Sinhala people of the day were not brought into touch with the religious movement which was then growing and spreading in power in the Eastern valley of the Ganges.

But it is in the time of King Devanampiya Tissa that Buddhism really took root in Lanka. At the time of his coronation many miracles are said to have occurred. In the whole land of Lanka, says the Mahavansa, treasures and jewels which had lain buried rose to the surface of the earth. Pearls of eight kinds came forth out of the ocean and lay upon the shore in heaps. Devanampiya Tissa's contemporary in India was the great Asoka, son of Bindusara. In his youth, Asoka had been cruel and merciless. After his succession was contested he put to death all his rivals, and having won the kingdom, was crowned

emperor. Eight years after his consecration he waged a war of annexation. This war was the turning point in his career, for to this war was due not only to the gradual development of Asoka's character and policy which converted him into the Buddhist faith, but also that movement which he later initiated. Buddhism, which formerly was a local sect came to be a world religion. This war thus became one of the decisive events in the history of the world.

When Asoka saw the carnage which his battles had wrought he was seized with repentance, and he thereafter wholly abjured war and violence. It is the only instance in history of a conqueror who having won victory abandoned his conquests in order to turn to the ways of peace. It was in this frame of mind that Asoka met a young Buddhist monk, Nigrodha, whose calm demeanour attracted him, because, here he thought was someone who had evidently attained that most difficult thing, peace of mind. Nigrodha told him of the teachings of the Buddha, and Asoka, having listened declared himself to be Buddha's follower. At first he became only a lay disciple upasaka, then he became the inheritor and kinsman of the Buddha's religion, a *sasana-dayaka* by persuading his only two children, his son, Mahinda and his daughter, Sanghamitta, to enter the Buddhist Order of the Sangha. In the 13th year after his coronation, as stated in his rock edicts, Asoka directed his whole energy and all the extensive resources of his vast empire to the realization of the noble ideals which the new faith had given him, with unbounded zeal and a high and lofty devotion, which was worthy of so great a cause. Asoka devised ways and means of bringing about a change of heart in all men—whom he considered as his children—so that seeing his instructions, based on the love of Piety, the teachings of the Buddha, they may guide their lives accordingly. He sent missionaries and dhammadutas to all parts of the then known world, to Egypt, Syria, Macedonia, to Epirus and Kyrene, to the Western shows of Burma, to the Colas and Pandiyans of South India and to Ceylon. Wherever these missionaries went they carried with them the message of the Buddha, with its noble ideals of Peace and Gentleness, Tolerance and Kindliness and Hospitality, the care for the sick and

the weary, the pursuit of the Good and the Beautiful, and Compassion towards all that lives and breathes. The Buddhist missionaries made no use of bribery and cajolery, they were not backed by show of power. They never claimed exclusive privileges for themselves, nor attempted to preserve power over the institutions they feared. No endeavour was made by them to promote the trade of their nations or to establish outposts for their empires.

Of all the missions sent out by Asoka the most successful was that which reached Ceylon. Asoka had a special affection for this little island. The ruler of Lanka at this time, Tissa, had soon after his accession sent envoys to Asoka with costly presents. The Emperor returned the courtesy. He sent back an embassy of his chosen ministers bearing gifts marvellous in splendour, so that Tissa might go through a coronation ceremony, similar to that of the Emperor himself. The messengers were also directed to give this special message to the king. "I have taken refuge in the Buddha, his Doctrine and His Order of Disciples. I have declared myself a lay disciple of the Sakya-muni Buddha. Seek then thou, O best of men, converting thy mind with believing heart, refuge in the best of gems." He followed this embassy up by despatching his son, Mahinda with six others to carry the glad tidings of the good law to Ceylon.

Our chronicle, the Mahavansa,

describes with ecstatic rapture the advent of Mahinda to this island, his aerial flight, his descent to Ambattala the peak of Mihintale where rising suddenly from the plain the mountain overlooks the city of Anuradhapura. The story proceeds to relate how the king, who was out hunting, was miraculously lured to the spot where Mahinda was standing and how the latter propounded the Doctrine to the ruler of the land who together with forty thousand followers embraced the new faith. Thus on a day before this full-moon day of Poson, 236 years after the passing away of the Buddha, Buddhism gained official recognition in the Island. From this day, for two thousand years up to 1815 when the Sinhalese lost their independence, Buddhism was the state religion of Lanka.

Mahinda was soon followed by his sister, Sanghamitta, who arrived in the island and founded the Order of Bikshunis or Nuns in Ceylon. It is significant to note that the first person to realise the attainment of the fruit of the Teaching was a woman, the princess Anula. Sanghamitta brought with her a branch of the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha had reached Enlightenment. It was planted at Anuradhapura. Even today the descendants of the princely escort who accompanied it from India continue to be its custodians. And the pilgrims who visit it tonight to pay their homage will hear its heart-shaped leaves on their slender stalks

ceaselessly quiver and sigh as they have quivered and sighed for 23 centuries. Like its pliant roots which find sustenance on the face of the bare rock and cleave their way through the stoutest fabric the influence of what it represents has penetrated into the innermost being of the people.

The spiritual movement thus introduced on the full-moon day of Poson found a permanent abode in this little island home. If the criterion of the greatness of that movement be the beneficial influence it has exerted on the character of those who came under its sway, then certainly the mission of Asoka to Lanka has been among the greatest civilizing influences of the world, for, it bequeathed to the Sinhalese people a gentleness of disposition, a love of peace, a nobility and refinement of character of which neither the ravages of time, nor centuries of ruthless warfare, nor the insidious attacks of modern commercialism have succeeded in depriving them.

The word Poson means flowering; it was in India that Buddhism was born, but it is in Lanka, in this beautiful land, that it has produced its fairest blossoms. From here the message of the Buddha was carried to the lands of South-East Asia and even further East. Today there is promise that from Lanka the Dhamma will find its way to the remotest corners of the earth, till all mankind will be influenced by its ideals of Happiness, Joy and Peace.

" THIS MUDDY VESTURE OF DECAY "

By BHIKKHU SHANTI BHADRA

SIRIMĀ, the beauty-queen of Rājagaha, -was a courtesan. On hearing the Dhamma preached by the Lord Buddha she attained the Sotapanna stage. From that day onwards it became one of her regular and pleasing household duties to offer *dāna* to bhikkhus. The variety and the deliciousness of the *dāna* she offered, her genial, sweet, and charitable disposition, her beauty and angelic grace—these were often spoken of by the monks whenever they gathered together.

One day, a young bhikkhu hearing of the ineffable beauty and charity of Sirimā, longed to see her. Goaded

by this desire he walked many weary miles and stood before her door to receive alms. With down-cast eyes and aesthetically robed, he appeared quiet and peaceful outwardly, but inwardly all was pandemonium, his mind restlessly yearned for the sight of Sirimā.

But Sirimā was sick in bed on that day. Her maid served the *dāna* and led the monk to the inner chamber where she was resting to enable her to pay obeisance to him. In her thin and loose garments she appeared like a full-blossomed rose just fading away; her beauty and shape surpassed the

mental image the monk had formed of her. The sight sent a thrill of pleasure dancing round his body; but it was just a fleeting sensation, for soon discord and restlessness began to play havoc within him.

Weary in body and mind he returned to his temple towards sun-down. In the morning his companions missed him in the dining-hall. They found him in bed tossing about feverishly. They tried to comfort him and quieten his disturbed mind; but everything proved futile; he daily grew weak in body and delirious in mind. The sorry plight of the monk was

brought to the notice of the Lord Buddha.

It was not long before the news of the death of Sirimā reached that temple, when the sick monk knew that the Lord Buddha with a retinue of bhikkhus would visit Sirimā's grave-yard that evening, he plucked up courage and prepared to join the retinue. There he found the object of his adoration—once the beauty-queen of Rajagaha—a lifeless corpse, swollen and exuding pus and a nasty stench. Yet the psychological grasp he had of her was so deep-rooted

that he could not but find beauty and attraction in the rotting mass of flesh. The Lord Buddha delivered a sermon on these lines: "See this painted image, this mass of sores, huddled together, corrupt, once possessed of many thoughts, but now possessing neither strength nor stability." The sick-bhikkhu gained comfort and mental release on hearing the words of the Lord.

The *puthujjana* (the worldling) clings on to this body with the same determination and certainty as a drowning man clutches at anything; be it the tenderest weed,

in his reach. Looking at it, as it truly is, it is nothing but a clod of ailments, a hot-bed of microbes and a conglomeration of various decomposing material. In his book called 'Life' Sir Arthur Shiply says that "even the Archbishop of Canterbury comprises of 59% water." However worthless and despicable the body may be, yet it has to be maintained in health and strength with sufficient and wholesome food, not to enjoy life as the phrase goes, which is mere madness, but to help work our salvation from the tormenting bonds of Samsāra.

NAMO THASSA BHAGAVATHO ARAHATHO SAMMA SAMBUDHASSA

By JAYANANDA RATNAYAKA

THERE was once, my brothers and sisters, a very wretched prisoner who had suffered tedious years in a dismal dungeon. A fortunate thought occurred to him one morning. He got up and went to the door and he found it open! It had been open all along. We ourselves are like this prisoner. We too are all unfortunate miserable victims in a sad den of continued existence. Our freedom is pitifully curtailed by stern unrelenting walls of the cycle of causation. Our prison is so dark that we hardly see things in their true light, unless we strain and strive to. Some of us have stayed in here so long that we even ask "What is this thing called light? Does it exist at all?"

Yet our fate is not so dim, as it first appears. We all have our minds and the mind that has made us prisoners can also make us free. The mind that has chained us in the dungeon of life and delivered us into thralldom can also, through the disruption of the fetters, lead us triumphant into the bliss of freedom. However, the deliverance of each of us lies absolutely in our own hands. The prisoner had no need to plead for the Golden Key on bended knee. The door was always free from all locks and bars except those which the prisoner himself thrust upon it. Man's sorrow is his own making—not the handing down of a family curse—not the original

sin of an ancestor that has come to haunt from beyond the grave. Man is his own jailor.

Buddhism is often blamed for overstressing the fact that man is in a prison-cell. Such critics forget the even greater existence on the remarkable fact that the prisoner need not stay any longer than he chooses—and that he need not even depend on others. We recall a well-known verse from the Dhammapada—

"By self alone is evil done,
by self alone is one defiled

By self is evil undone, by self
alone is one purified.

Purity and impurity depend on
self.

No one purifies another."

The teaching of the Enlightened One is unique in its supreme emphasis on the capability of man to work out for himself his salvation. He did not lay down any dogmas and he does not recognize anything except that which arises out of knowledge. Perhaps this utter lack of dogma has contributed largely to the absence of all traces of fanaticism from our religion. There is no coercion—no force at all. All that is done is to point the way. The individual is left to do the rest. "The Thathagatha sets flowing the Fount of Salvation. Whosoever is thirsty let him drink," he says: "But let him first be convinced.

Let him not accept even the word of the Perfect One except through conviction."

There is, however, a danger that must be watched for. With its mathematical exactitude and logical thought our Buddhism easily lends itself to reasoning and debate. But let us remember not to be carried away by the tool and leave the Ideal neglected. The Dhamma has not been given us merely for the delectation of critical minds—but for the complete practice of it in our effort to break through into Nibbana. Even though we be in the humble position of laymen in the valleys of daily life we must strive in the practice of the Dhamma—in the freezing of our inner fires so that smoke may clear from the minds-eye and the pure light of truth and understanding may shine unobstructed and unblemished.

The Master has taught that the cause of man's suffering was his craving for sensation. He has demonstrated that its sure remedy was to put an end to that great thirst and its unfailing method—that leads unerring to the calm and emotionless equilibrium of Nibbana—the Noble 8-Fold Path.

"Yes, all may reach the wondrous heights," the Master's calm voice speaks. Blest we will be if listening to that voice we too could understand and follow along his steps."

RIGHT-MINDEDNESS AND RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

AT the very start of the Eight-Fold Path we meet two important bastions. Right Understanding and Right Mindedness. These are powerful aids but the most complex and difficult to align ourselves with and are so important that they affect every other position yet to pass on the Path. When the Master speaks of Right Understanding he does not, for instance, mean the understanding of whether the cosmos is finite or infinite. It may be one or the other without affecting in the least the only task of the Buddha—*i.e.*, Release—final and complete from the throes of Suffering. The entire purpose and principle of the Buddha Word is summed up in, "One thing only I teach . . . Ill and ending of Ill." Of course, it is silly for us to interpret his "Only one thing do I teach" to mean "Only one thing do I know." Let us never lose sight of this Buddha Purpose especially when we get ourselves involved in arguments attempting to explain material phenomenon through the Buddha Word.

When he admonished us to be Islands unto ourselves he tells us that the Realisation of Truth is only possible if and only if the individual process is understood. But as long as we are blind or as long as we tie up our individuality to the dictates of selfishness, fear, custom, habit, indecision or environment—then self-delusion, the prime fetter to progress is fortified. When we despond and succumb to some illusory fate against which we feel we cannot stand up and fight we are only allowing our past action to take the upperhand and overwhelm us through our lack of will. We have our Present—the dynamic Present—in which to determine the future. This has no fatalism. We are able. Our present can be far more powerful than our past if only we will so and have the courage to act. We must however remember that good

is not infrequently performed with the idea of acquiring merit. When action is performed with an underlying motive—when it becomes means to an end that action is valueless. Goodness will then be but a means of exchange—a mere commercial commodity. Social Service as a means of acquiring merit is then an exploitation of the needy and their need for our benefit. Moreover a happy rebirth need not produce better conditions for maturity. We know of many instances where wealth and other material possessions have made people degenerate and placed serious obstacles in their development towards Release.

Vichikichcha or Indecision is another formidable fetter to Mind culture: Brain and heart pulling in opposite directions: Intellect *vs.* Emotion, etc., and thanks to a weak backbone and lack of clarity of our principles we let vacillation and doubt and stultification increase. Soon Action is frozen: personality fragmented: procrastination induced and the golden Present passed by unheeded and unused. It nourishes clumsiness of the mind with its opiating inertia and may manifest itself in outer life even as pseudo-religious conservatism, blind faith, etc. Fear to break from a degrading routine or fear to disagree from others even when they are wrong can feed this inertia. That is how some of us prefer a ready-made religion and will only repeat parrot-like the Buddha Word or attend to mere rituals without trying to make His Words live within our own lives.

The attitude of mind that turns away from ourselves, from unloveliness and impermanence, from things valueless, not victim to vichikichcha and the dragging inertia of ritual and routine towards the Truth in a calm and serene manner has been called by our Teacher, Right Mindedness. It is common for us to associate renunciation with a suggestion of loss or privation and therefore of sorrow. That, to the right minded who has renounced, is furthest from his thoughts. As far as he is concerned he has really renounced nothing as he does not crave for what he gave up. They have been seen in their true light—to be worthless. It is as if he left his childhood playthings behind as he grew into more mature years. Renunciation then is a natural,

normal change for one who has rightly seen what writhing misery our self-delusion and action brings down on us and others. It is very difficult for those fathers, mothers, relations and friends of the renounced to understand this for these brothers and sisters are looking through dim glasses of attachment—but they should realize that their attachment only puts extra difficulties across the path of the struggler on his humble way to Release. The renounced overflows with boundless goodwill and compassion. No longer is his immense fund of energy bottled up and perverted in a shut-in reservoir of private selfish personal ends. It is free now to gush out into the open to flow ceaselessly—no longer a stagnant, stinking pool but a singing dynamic force. His task then is to live unhating among those filled with hate that they may cease from hate and return to love; to live unfearful among the fearful that at length they may rid themselves of their fearfulness and learn to trust; to abide unclinging among the lustful that they may be moved to shake themselves free from the cruel bondage of their lust and taste the bliss of freedom. All the while he emanates only thoughts of utmost goodwill and Maithriya. Though these may be the most glorious manifestations of Right Understanding and Mindedness yet to get to these fruits there are no sudden miraculous leaps. "Drop by drop is the pitcher filled," said the Buddha speaking of mind purification. Even while yet engaged in the ordinary ways of existence we may begin mind cultivation for in the mode of our daily life we do find abundant opportunities for renunciation of our selfish ends for the sake of others: letting go of our greed and craving for the sake of the beggar in the street or the delinquent in the slums. Yes we have endless opportunities for expression in both word and deed of goodwill and loving kindness. For a start we could show this affection to our family and home—to our children, parents—to servants and labourers—and as we grow in vision, strength and sympathy we could extend beyond the narrow confines of the family to our village and city—to our country and then to all beings—knowing no barrier whatever to the warmth of our outstretching and radiant Maithriya.

May all beings be free from anguish.

FRANK LEE WOODWARD

By P. D. RATNATUNGA

(“We are very glad to publish this appreciation of Woodward by our esteemed friend Mudaliyar Ratnatunga, because he was one of the very few in Lanka who kept in close contact with Woodward right up to the end.” – Editor, “The Buddhist.”)

THE sorrow with which those who knew Woodward in Ceylon heard on 3rd June the news of his death had no parallel in recent times except that felt by the Theravāda Buddhists the world over on being informed of the demise of J. F. McKechnie (former Bhikkhu Silācāra), which occurred early last year.

In spite of his age, Mr. Woodward who retired to Tasmania more than thirty years ago, enjoyed good health doing his “daily tramp to town for the necessaries of life, to post his letters and get his mails.” Towards the end of May he developed heart attacks and was admitted to hospital but in vain, for he died on the 27th and the remains were cremated two days later.

At the time of his death he was in his 82nd year, “calculating in the Indian way from the date of conception or thereabouts, since he must have decided on taking up another carcase about August, 1870” (to quote his own words).

Discussing age, he wrote that in Tasmania “eighty years is considered childhood, often second childhood, but one is not respected till ninety and wondered at on reaching the century. There is quite a number of people over 100. They generally celebrate the 100th year with excess in eating and drinking and die the next day!” Of politics he said little, but his opinion of those representing labour in the Australian Parliament was poor.

At the request of the late Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, to whom the Buddhists of Ceylon are ever grateful for establishing Buddhist schools in Srī Lankā, Woodward came to us fifty years ago to take charge of Mahinda College, Galle, which, after Dr. Bowles Daly’s departure in the early nineties of the last century, had gradually reached a low level with sixty boys and no funds when Woodward assumed duties as its Principal.

Within a few years he improved the school and the average attendance rose rapidly until he found no further accommodation to admit more boys. By this time, Muhan-

diram Thomas Amarasuriya, whose generosity had enabled the bare existence of the school, had died causing a grievous loss to the cause of Buddhist education in the Galle District.

Encouraged, however, by the greater enthusiasm and liberality of the deceased benefactor’s son, the late Mr. Henry Amarasuriya, and with the help of other well-to-do prominent Buddhists like the late Vāsala Mudaliyar E. R. Gooneratne and Muhandiram Francis Wickramasinha and other generous donors who contributed funds liberally, Mr. Woodward brought into existence, in Elliott Road, the present buildings of the College out of the crowded Fort. It may be added that among the donors perhaps the largest amount towards the cost of erecting the new buildings was contributed by Woodward himself. He, like Highfield of Wesley, collected funds without resorting to questionable methods like carnivals and games of chance which have in modern times become a feature of finding the means to educate the rising young generation in letters and in morals.

Of his great services to Mahinda College, it is to be hoped that some of his pupils brought up in the “Woodward tradition” will make a full record elsewhere to inspire Mahinda’s pupils of the future.

It is probable that Mr. Woodward came to Ceylon as a Theosophist, but soon he embraced Buddhism and led a simple celibate life of absolute purity to the end. His chief characteristic may be said to have been his selflessness: service to others, he thought, was a means of realising the doctrine of *Anattā*. He was deeply religious. One remembers with a degree of inexpressible rapture the devotion and *saddhā* with which he treated the several Bhikkhus who came for a *Sanghika-dāna* at the present College premises.

In the temple, like a born Buddhist accustomed to rites and ceremonies, he moved with the crowd round the Dāgaba and the Boṭhi and in the Image-house with flowers, candies and joss-sticks in hand

as offerings. He took a special delight in burning the last named odoriferous substance as a *dhūma-pūjā*.

Up to about the end of the first decade of this century, it was unusual for members of the English educated classes to observe *aṭṭhaṅga-sīla* on Poya days. It was, therefore, a unique and very important feature of the observance of the Vesak day in 1909 when the members of the Buddha Dhamma Sangama of Galle, together with several prominent Buddhist professional men and senior Government officers, set the example to others to observe *aṭṭasil*. This *sil* party consisted of 24 intelligent and influential Buddhists of the town, many of whom are no more with us. Mr. Woodward was one of them and as an *aṭṭasil upāsaka* he conducted himself with an enthusiasm rare even in a born Buddhist. The *Dāna* for both meals of the day was provided by the late Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Jayasundere who also made all the necessary arrangements for the occasion and otherwise looked after the *Upāsakas*. After the midday repast, Mr. Woodward delivered quite a long sermon dealing with the vast amount of merit acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Jayasundere by giving alms to those who were as beggars that day. He had been in Ceylon only six years then but he had learned sufficient of Buddhism to understand and explain to others the *Dānānisaṃsa*. To a member of the party who was 93 years old he observed that his own age was the same as the nonagenarian’s, reversed! The observance of *aṭṭasil* on full moon days was repeated during several years (though not regularly) and our English *Upāsaka* was one of the party each time.

Woodward was a distinguished linguist. Apart from the Classics, he acquired a knowledge of Pali after coming to Ceylon and he devoted his time since he retired to Tasmania almost exclusively to the study of Theravāda Buddhism, editing and translating Pali texts. On one occasion, a well-known local student of Buddhism adversely criticized Mr. Woodward in an annual publication in regard to a transla-

tion of his. The translator made no reply and it is now known that the critic was wrong! "His output in Buddhist literature is gigantic" as Miss Horner, the Hon. Secretary of the Pali Text Society, said recently.

Although Woodward disclaimed a knowledge of Sinhala, he was able to read and understand the language to some extent and he used sometimes to subscribe his English letters to Sinhala friends in Sinhala characters as චන්ද්‍රවංශ (a literal translation of his name). In his last letter to the present writer he added the ominous farewell word ආයුබෝවන්.

Many of his books have been published by the Pali Text Society (of which he was a member of the Council) and in the "Sacred Books of the Buddhists" Series. There are others awaiting publication, among them the third and concluding part of his edition of the Theragāthā-Atthakathā completed in 1940 with an index running to 70 pages, is still with the printer. It is not known whether the volume on Asoka's Inscriptions which was revised and edited by Mr. Woodward two years ago has been published. It was prepared for the Adyar Library with the text to be printed in Devanagari characters, Roman

type Pali and English translation. He was of opinion that we in Ceylon were not sufficiently familiar with the inscriptions of the great Buddhist emperor.

Perhaps Mr. Woodward's *magnum opus* is his Pali Tipitaka Concordance of which the first part containing a portion of the letter *a* went to press last year under the direction of his colleague Mr. E. M. Hare. The deceased scholar undertook this difficult work after he had read all the books of the Tipitaka twenty times. With the exception of Anguttara Nikāya, Sutta Nipāta and Niddesa, Woodward worked on all the other 28 books for the Concordance. The work has been laborious and so laborious that it may be said to be somewhat like the compilation of the Oxford Dictionary. Many words and forms of words not listed in that excellent reference book the "Critical Pali Dictionary" begun by Trenkner about a century ago (of which the first volume was completed by Prof. Helmer Smith in 1948), find a place in the Concordance. Woodward thought that if he lived to one hundred years, he might see half of his Concordance printed, but "where is the money?" he queried. The onerous task of continuing the work has fallen on the shoulders of Mr. Hare,

the translator of Sutta Nipāta and two volumes of the Anguttara Nikāya.

One remembers with gratitude that in one of his letters about ten years ago, quoting the Master's words "Jhāyatha bhikkhave, mā pamādattha, mā pacchā vippatiṣā rino ahuvattha," Mr. Woodward urged him to practise bhāvanā, which, one was reminded, "is the only way to enlightenment." He deplored the present state of the Sangha in Ceylon, the majority of whose members do not practise bhāvanā, and was amused at the "political" bhikkhus who, he thought, should "throw off their robes and become place-seekers. All this is a fulfilment of the prophecies in the Anāgatavaṃsa which says that 'in due course monks will give up the robes and forget the Dhamma and take to trade.'"

Permit me to conclude by quoting the eloquent words of a deceased admirer of Mr. Woodward in a contribution entitled "A Buddhist Idealist":

"The spiritual, mental and physical faculties were so combined in him (Mr. Woodward) that in course of evolution he approached the 'Bodhisatta' ideal. May his memory be always cherished by the Sinhalese and prove a source of inspiration to posterity."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE "DHAMMAPADA"

The Editor,

"The Buddhist."

Sir,

The Ven. Lokanatha, through the medium of your organ (*The Buddhist*, September, 1951, page 61), made known the fact that the

"Dhammapada" was the book that completely changed his life.

He says: "No man came to me. No man came to teach me Buddhism. One book—The Dhammapada—completely changed my life."

The people of Lanka, Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, will be grateful to the Y.M.B.A., if suitable

arrangements could be made to publish in your magazine, the verses of the "Dhammapada" in their numerical order, together with their English translation.

It would be a great service, indeed, if it could be done.

Yours, etc.,

E. R. De ZOYSA.

COLOMBO Y.M.B.A. NEWS

VESAK CELEBRATIONS

THE Hon. General Secretary acknowledges with thanks the following donations on account of Vesak celebrations:—

Sir Ernest de Silva, 100; Senator Cyril de Zoysa, 100; Messrs. W. H. Buddhadasa, 100; R. L. Pereira, Q.C., 50; M. D. Guna-

sen & Co., Ltd., 50; Lady A. M. de Silva, 50; Messrs. U. N. Wijetunge, 25; B. H. William, 25; E. Upasena, 25; N. J. V. Cooray, 25; G. S. Fernando, 25; P. Kumaraswamy, 25; Mrs. E. Sirimanne, 25; Mrs. Susantha de Fonseka, 25; Messrs. C. P. Amarasinghe, 15; Richard Salgado, 15; A. G. Wickremapala, 15; A. G. Himmiappubamy, 15; H. S. Gunasekera, 15; N. D. de Silva, 15; Jayawardene, 15; nodaham.org | aavanaham.org

H. W. Amarasuriya, 10; Dr. B. S. Jayawardene, 10; Mrs. S. Meegama, 10; Messrs. H. M. Gunasekera, 10; N. J. S. Cooray, 10; D. L. F. Pedris, 10; T. D. Piyadasa, 10; A. B. Hemachandra, 10; H. D. Bastian, 10; G. G. Perera, 10; Dr. A. Simon Silva, 10; Muhandiram S. C. Umagiliya, 5; Dr. W. E. A. Fonseka, 5; Mr. E. De S. Wijeratne, 5.

SUNDAY SERMONS

from 9 to 10 a.m.
on stanzas from the

DHAMMAPADA**PROGRAMME FOR JULY, 1952****1st Sunday : Pitakotte Somananda Thera**

Rohinikhattiya Kanna Katha Vattu.—Let a man leave anger, let him forsake pride, let him overcome all bondage. No sufferings befall the man who is not attached to name and form, and who call nothing his own.

2nd Sunday : Panditha Thalalle Dhammananda Thera

Annatara Bhikkhu Katha Vattu.—He who holds back rising anger, like a rolling chariot, him I call a real driver, other people are but holding the reins.

3rd Sunday : W. Gnanaratana Thera

Uttarapāsika Katha Vattu.—Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth.

4th Sunday : Heenatiyane Dhammaloka Thera

Mahamoggallana Thera Panna Katha Vattu.—Speak the truth, do not yield to anger, give if thou art asked for: by these three steps thou wilt go near the gods.

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

“MAY ALL BEINGS BE WELL
AND HAPPY.”

L. R. GOONETILLEKE,
Hony. Secretary,
Religious Activities Branch,
Y.M.B.A., Colombo.

**ENGLISH LITERARY ACTIVITIES
BRANCH****LIBRARY**

The Library and Reading Room is opened for members every day, except Mondays from 12.30 p.m. to 8 p.m. On Sundays it is opened from 8 a.m. to 12 noon.

The following books, many of which were donations, were added to the

Library:—Book of Discipline, Pt. IV, translated by I. B. Horner; Muscle Moulding by Hurray B. Paschall; Development of Strength by Hurray B. Paschall.

Donated by the British Council.—British Survey of Reference and Information.

Donated by the American Embassy.—The Reds Take a City by Riley and Schramms; The Room on the Route by Godfrey Blunder.

Donated by Dr. Kewal Motwani.—Beveridge Explained by G. D. H. Cole; The Diary of World Affairs (Penguin Special); Paramountcy in Indian Politics; Where do we go from here; Instruction in the Social Studies; Report of the Mahashatri University Committee; Report of Dr. C. R. Reddy on Education in Mysore State; Report of the Primary and Secondary Education Re-organization Committee; The Truth about the American Diplomats; The Ancient Wisdom; Report of the Health Survey and Development Committee; A New Approach to Life; (b) Way of Living; (c) The Way of Peace by J. Krishnamurthi.

LECTURES AND DISCUSSIONS

Lecture of the Month Series.—This Series was inaugurated by Dr. G. P. Malalasekere on Tuesday, June 17th, with a lecture on “The Buddhist Doctrine of Karma.” Mr. Cyril Moore of the Buddhist Society, London, presided.

It is our desire to maintain a high standard in these lectures, for in our opinion a more critical and analytical approach to our study of Buddhism would stimulate more interest among the listeners and make them more reflective on the problems that face them. Please look out for a Press Announcement regarding the next Lecture.

Mr. N. Shanmuganathan will deliver a Talk entitled “Buddhist Antiquities in Ceylon” on Tuesday the 1st July, 1952, at 6 p.m. in the Association Hall. This does not come under the abovementioned series.

Mr. E. W. Adikaram is holding weekly Discussions every Sunday beginning from June 15th, at 5.30 p.m.

WALTER WIMALACHANDRA,
Hony. Secretary,
Literary Activities Branch
(English).

DHAMMA EXAMINATION, 1952

The annual Dhamma Examination, (Sinhalese Medium) will be conducted on July 13, at 1,395 centres. The total number of entries received is 97,347. This number exceeds last year's entries by about 13,000.

NEW MEMBERS

2.6.52 : A. K. de Zoysa, 38, Visaka Road, Bambalapitiya; A. Benjamin Herath, 38, Visaka Road, Bambalapitiya; M. M. Albert, 1068, Maradana Road, Borella; S. M. Walter Somaratne, 89, Gothami Road, Colombo 8; Percival D. Arnolda, 22, Perth Road, Colombo 9; G. H. Van Dort, 105, Nawala Road, Rajagiriya; W. Jayatissa, 21, St. Mary's Lane, Kelaniya; C. A. Perera, “Agnes Villa,” Biyagama Road, Kelaniya; L. G. Stainwall, 53, Dematagoda Place, Colombo; Mervyn Paranavitha, 337, Ekwatte, Mirihana, Nugegoda.

16.6.52 : H. C. Devendra, 63, Godaparahawatte Estate, Kottawa Junction, Pannipitiya; U. Balasuriya, 223, Ward Place, Borella; R. A. S. Fernando, Riverside Estate, Peradeniya; E. P. Fernando, 915, Peradeniya Road, Kandy.

RESIGNATION FROM MEMBERSHIP

Mr. A. M. Rakeem.

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Mr. N. E. Weerasooriya, Q.C., was elected a member of the Committee of Management.

Mr. D. W. G. Ranasinghe was elected a member of the Committee of Management.

**RESIGNATION FROM THE COMMITTEE
OF MANAGEMENT**

We announce with regret the resignation of Mr. B. A. Mendis from the Committee of Management.

OBITUARY

We record with regret the death of Mr. A. J. Pieris.

NEWS AND NOTES

**LORD BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY
CELEBRATIONS IN INDIA**

UNDER the auspices of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, Vaisakha Purnima Day was celebrated in a grand scale at the Sri Dharmarajika Vihara, 4A, Bankim Chatterjee Street, Calcutta, on the 9th and 10th May. From early morning of the 9th hundreds of devotees came to offer special puja in the temple. Among them there were Chinese, Tibetans, Nepalis, Burmese, etc. There were also a large number of Bengali Buddhists. At 12 noon Bhikkhus were offered dana.

In connection with the celebration a public meeting was held at the Society premises at 6-30 p.m. under the Chairmanship of Sri Naresh Nath Mookerjee, Deputy Mayor of Calcutta, whose family

has been connected with the work of the Society from the time of the late Ven. Anagarika Dharmapala, the founder. The premises and the road in front of the Vihara were gaily decorated with Buddhist flags and bunting. The hall was packed to suffocation and those who could not gain admittance listened to the lectures from the Square in front where loud-speakers had been fixed.

After the administration of the Panca Sila and the singing of the specially composed songs, Mr. Keshab Chandra Gupta, Vice-President of the Society, welcomed the guests on behalf of the Society. Inaugurating the celebration, the Hon'ble Justice S. N. Banerjee, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, said that Lord Buddha was a human being and

not a God. He felt intense sympathy for humanity and that was why he left worldly comforts in order to find a path to remove their sufferings. A remarkable teaching of Lord Buddha was his advice to his followers not to accept anything on mere hearsay. He asked them to judge everything with their intelligence and accept only those which were reasonable and beneficial.

The other speakers were Sri H. S. Ghosh Chowdhury, Commissioner of Police, Calcutta, Dr. Parimal Roy, Director of Public Instruction, West Bengal, Sri N. C. Ghosh, Director-General of Transportation, West Bengal, Dr. Kalidas Nag, M.A., D.Litt., Dr. M. R. Soft, Vice-President of the Maha Bodhi Society of India and Sri J. K. Biswas.

The President, in bringing the proceedings to a close, said that he felt happy to join the sacred festival as his family was intimately connected with the activities of the Society from the time of its foundation. He said that it was necessary to accept Lord Buddha's teachings and put them into practice and not merely talk about the same. Buddha was not a God but a man who attained to the highest possible perfection by His own efforts. He further said that when he thought about the present day situation in the world he felt that the teachings of the Lord Buddha were the only solution to the various problems.

After the meeting was over those present were treated to light refreshment.

The next day's celebration commenced at 8 a.m. with worship in the temple. Buddhists kept visiting the shrine throughout the day. At 12 noon a large number of orphans were fed.

The most important event on the second day's celebration was the international Buddhist procession. It started from the Maidan and reached the Vihara after passing through the main streets of the town. Nearly a thousand Buddhists belonging to all nationalities took part. The Chinese and the Tibetans took a most prominent part with tableaux depicting the arrival of Bodhidharma in China, the famous Chinese lion dance, etc. After the procession dispersed in College Square, Buddhist Scriptures were recited by Bhikkhus and the year's celebrations came to a close.

The celebrations were also organised by the Society at the following centres which were all a great success:—New Delhi, Sarnath, Budhgaya, Bombay, Lucknow, Madras, Nautanwa (Lumbini) and Gaya.

"WESAK" IN THE CITY OF BOMBAY

WESAK was celebrated in the city of Bombay on the following dates and in the following places:—

May 9th, 1952.—The day was celebrated in the Bombay branch of the Maha Bodhi Society and the day was full of festivities from morning to evening and from evening to mid-night. The festivities commenced with the administration of Pancha-sila by the Bhikkhu-in-charge, before a gathering of Sinhalese, Burmese, Chinese and a number of Siamese research students who by chance happened to visit the city.

The tasteful "Wesak-decorations" of the young Sinhalese residents of the city together with the various offerings of the Burmese, Chinese and Sinhalese attracted the neighbouring Hindu-bhaktas towards the shrine. The age-old national custom of feeding the poor on the auspicious occasion could not be forgotten by the handful of young Sinhalese Buddhists at any rate. A typical Sinhalese Dansala was opened within the premises of the Maha Bodhi Society and there even Muslims, Hindus, and Christians too among those who were entertained. A group of Bengali musicians headed by the famous Cinema Artist, Mr. Pavitra Dey, were obliged to give a detailed programme of music free of charge due to the intimacy with the Bhikkhu-in-charge.

A Public meeting was held under the distinguished presidentship of Dr. B. G. Gokhale the reputed Buddhist scholar and the Prof. of Ancient Indian History

and Culture, St. Xavier's College. The members of the Buddhist procession who arrived from the Worli arranged by the incumbent, Sangharakkhita Thera, were received at the commencement of the meeting and entertained. Mr. G. A. Fernando, the Commercial Secretary to the Ceylon's High Commissioner in India, welcomed the audience as the president of the Celebration Committee. The following speakers addressed the gathering:—

Swamy Rasajnananda, Ramakrishna Mission, Khar, Mr. D. S. Devendra and Mr. H. G. Halgamuwa, Sinhalese Buddhist Association, Bombay, Mr. Sirisoma Jayasinha, Radio Ceylon, and Bhikkhu H. Dhammananda, the incumbent monk. Mr. D. K. Acharya, the Secretary, Buddha-ja-yanti Celebration Committee, thanked the chair and the audience at the close of the meeting.

May 10th, 1952.—The celebration took place both in the Ananda Vihara Nair Hospital Compound, Lemington Road, and in the Worli Vihara. At Ananda Vihara the function was presided over by Mr. Wadia, the pro-vice-chancellor of the Baroda University who gave an illuminating speech in course of which he stressed the deep necessity of Buddhist missionaries and uselessness of Buddhist parasites. Few other speakers paid their homage to the Lord. The function at Worli which continued from 9th to 11th May, 1952, was presided over by the Chief Minister of Bombay and two other distinguished members of the city. Bhikkhu H. Dhammananda, Swamy Rasajnananda, Bhikkhu Sangharakkhita, and few others addressed the gathering.

May 11th, 1952.—The day was celebrated at the Ramakrishna Mission, Khar, under the presidentship of Bhikkhu H. Dhammananda, the Bombay representative of the Maha Bodhi Society. The presidential speech was followed by a series of interesting speeches in English Marathi, and in Gujarathi.

May 12th, 1952.—The day was celebrated by the followers of Dr. Ambedkar on the occasion of the opening of a newly-built library by Mr. D. N. Pagare a great lover of Buddhism. Bhikkhu H. Dhammananda presided over the function and gave a sermon in Hindi.

SUNDAY SCHOOL PRIZE DISTRIBUTION IN SINGAPORE

THE annual prize distribution of the Sri Lankarama Sunday School was held in the temple premises on the 10th of May with Ven. Piyadassi in the chair. After the chanting of the Jayamangala Gathas the Ven. Mahavira made a short speech in Sinhalese. The first prize of the school was won by Siri Lim who is also a winner of one of the cash prizes of the Colombo Y.M.B.A.

The oratorical contest in English was won by Susila Simon and Upali Sena. Dialogues in English and Sinhalese were special features at the Prize Distribution. There were many valuable prizes amongst which were gold and silver medals

and silver cups. Mrs. G. C. de Silva gave away the prizes.

As there were many Chinese present at the meeting, the Ven. Piyadassi made a speech in English. He appealed to parents and well-wishers to take a lively interest in the activities of the Sunday Dhamma School, the only place in Singapore, where the children could learn the Dhamma. Mr. T. A. Simon proposed a vote of thanks. Messrs. J. M. Jayapala and K. S. Perera supplied refreshments.

REFLECTIONS

BE not like the stagnant pool whose muddy waters breed pollution and disease, but for ever flow like the softly flowing stream, whose limpid waters run their gentle course quenching the thirst of man and beast, sheltering the happy fishes and frogs; in whose cool and refreshing waters bathe and revel bird, beast and man. It flows and flows, watering the thirsty fields, gurgling, singing, babbling, dancing to join the rivers and seas. If hindered in its progress at one place, it will seek smoother ground elsewhere, and flow its course. It only seeks to flow.

In stagnation there is no progress. In moving, flowing there is always life, and life abundant. So may your life flow like the pure and placid stream for ever blessing, for ever going forward, cooling, quenching, refreshing, watering with the sweet, cooling waters of Metta till at last, it is forever merged in the fathomless ocean of Nibbana.

* * * * *

Waste not your energy in destruction, but spend it wisely in construction.

Think constructive thoughts—thoughts of love, harmony, happiness, peace and goodwill all tend to build up, elevate and ennoble life. They increase energy, and lead to success.

Destructive thoughts—thoughts of hate, jealousy, ill-will and greed all tend to destroy, weaken, and contaminate life. They dissipate energy, and lead to downfall.

A destructive thought is like a discordant note jarring upon the music and harmony of life.

Your beautiful, constructive thoughts will build up a life of harmony and peace. Let not the discordant notes jar upon the music of it.

HENRIETTA B. GUNETILLEKE.

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