

# THE BUDDHIST



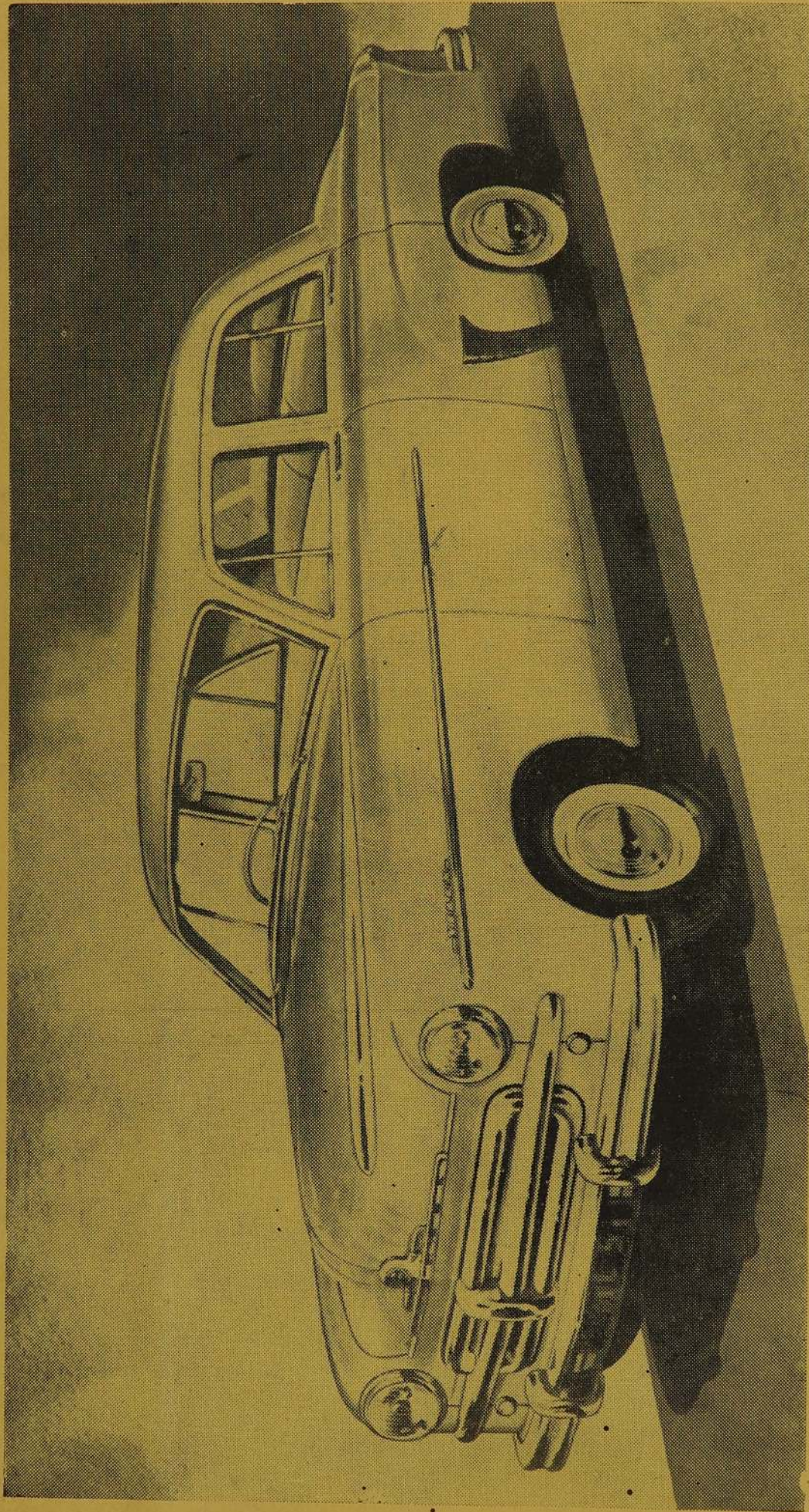
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# THE BUDDHIST

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

“*Sila Paññānato Jayam*”

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## REFLECTIONS ON MAITRI

By PIYADASA WEERAWARDANE

MAY these thoughts of Maitri help to awaken in us all a sense of fellowship with all beings and a proper realization of the purpose of life. Life indeed is drab, dreary and meaningless if it is not lived in conformity with this sense of fellowship, this spirit of utter benevolence and tender compassion towards all beings which is Maitri. As a mother watches over her only child ready even to sacrifice her life for its sake, so should one practise unlimited love towards all beings, for love towards all is true religion—it is the message of Maitri our Lord Buddha preached to the world 2,500 years ago. Be compassionate and pitiful towards each and every creature, great or small, in whom life is pulsating.

The absolute necessity for inculcating Maitri into our lives is well appreciated when we realize that not one of us can live for himself alone. Each life influences another. The complex relationships between man and man which the demands of society, of business and other activities of human life unceasingly create make it impossible for a man to do a good act or bad act without some reaction, some repercussion for good or bad occurring somewhere. Each life is thus not an isolated item in this universe. Every moment we act or even think, we are setting in motion forces for the good or bad of others. Just as a good man sheds his beneficial influence on others so does a bad man shed his evil influence on others. In doing bad for ourselves we are doing bad for others. In doing good for ourselves, we are doing good for others. Every one should keep in mind that the good of the family, the village, the

country and even the world is to his own good. Said the Lord Buddha—“As I am so are others—as others are so am I.”

One obvious result of the practice of Maitri is the realization that life should not be lived haphazardly but in conformity with righteous principles free from the disturbing and disintegrating elements of hatred, greed and jealousy. This is Right Living based on supreme morality—a living in respect of which none can raise the finger of scorn or criticism—a living devoid of misdeeds which can be whispered behind you. The criterion of acts which conform to this mode of living has thus been defined by Buddha to Rahula—“Find out as to whether this deed is conducive to your harm or to others' harm or to that of both. If it is a good deed entailing happiness, such deed must thou do again and again.” Thus one must so live his life as not to cause harm to himself or others. In this connection let us recall the words of the Dhammapada.

“All fear punishment—To all life is dear,

Comparing others with self—  
Let one neither hurt nor kill.”

“Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the volumes of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highnesses and the like, the name of Asoka shines and shines almost alone as a star. From the Volga to Japan his name is still honoured. China, Tibet, and India preserve the tradition of his greatness.”

Such is the great tribute paid by H. C. Wells to a great man  
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who followed the path of Maitri. Asoka a household word to every Easterner showed the world that an empire could be ruled by the principles of love and compassion. His greatness lay in this unique experiment which was a great success. It was not after defeat but after victory that Asoka began to follow the teachings of Lord Buddha. After the great massacre of Kalinga he changed over from *Dig Vijaya* to *Dharma Vijaya*.

The lesson of Asoka is that he showed how power and blood-thirstiness, jealousy and hatred could be replaced by love and compassion. Rich and poor, old and young are never too late nor too early to follow the path of Maitri. Nor is there a place and a time to practise Maitri—it should be the keynote of our whole life, every aspect of it, and every moment of it.

Man is a rational being, to him there is always a problem awaiting solution. It is the problem of life in the various spheres of human activity. It could be approached from two points of view. The right path of virtue and compassion on one side and that of hatred and self-seeking on the other. To choose the right path he must use his thoughts correctly. In this connection one should remember the opening lines of the Dhammapada:—

“Mind is the fore-runner of all good thoughts, mind is chief. All good thoughts are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with pure mind happiness follows one like the shadow that never leaves.”

One's salvation is left to oneself and this lies in the path of Maitri. Even though a person conquers

thousands in battle—know ye that he is the greatest conquerer who conquers himself—said the Lord Buddha. Maitri is the greatest weapon that a Buddhist could be equipped with in order to fight the battle of Sansāra. It is a weapon that could not only defeat all enemies but also win them over to your side. “Overcome the angry one by love—the bad one by goodness, the mean by liberality and the liar by truth” are the golden words of Lord Buddha.

If the great Asoka showed the world how the principle of Maitri could be the rule of an empire, why cannot we rule the small province of our “self” with the self-same principle ?

Hatred, jealousy, crime, bribery, corruption are the vices that haunt civilisation today. They are the vices that bring misery to humanity, they are the vices that determine the evil path for many a human being. If we are to stop for a while and make a thorough investigation, we would find that they are not external forces but forces emanating from the centre of the perverse and undisciplined self. Hence the solution cannot be left to other external forces but must be tackled by the individuals themselves. But in solving these problems, assistance could be drawn from other sources. The best of such sources is the Dhamma—the correct way of life preached by the Blessed One. First He gave us an excellent code of ethics and moral precepts as the preliminary training whereby man could overcome the difficulties of life and attain a higher life. Secondly he showed us the way of attaining this ideal—meditation and concentration as the path of mental purity. It is only by these means that man could develop his will-power and surmount the numerous evil tendencies that beset his life. Man like every other being in this world has to face dangers in this universe. The smaller animal is always at the mercy of the larger, in the same way the weaker and the fortunate are at the mercy of the stronger and more powerful. If the weaker lose all hope and give up all resistance they would never escape from this tangled web of suffering. The battle of life should be courageously fought and its dangers overcome by the force of Maitri. This would be the greatest of all victories, as it is achieved not by blood but by the most power-

ful power that the rational being possesses—Will Power.

Then there is the danger of the evil doer who victimizes the innocent and the weak. The innocent are often ignorant of the path they tread ; the realisation of the falsity of the steps taken comes often too late. This is the sad history of many a criminal. The actual facts are again the result of a character built on a baseless foundation. He has no criterion of what is good and what is bad, what is meritorious and what is sinful, what is moral and what is immoral. Here lies the task of every Buddhist—to make an attempt to spread the message of Maitri to every being so that the whole structure of one’s personality is built on this basic foundation. If the action of all beings is directed to the fullest happiness of all others, then there would be no misery in this world. No crime in this world. That is why Maitri is so important.

We have not come to this world to live for ever. Our existence here is like that of an actor on the stage. He walks, performs his part and disappears. The appreciation is left to the audience, the actor’s duty is to act his part well. In the same way, we too should play our part well in this vast stage of the universe so that not only the existing human beings but also those who are yet to come would learn and follow us. Hence every being should make a determined effort to lead a life of purity based on the principles of Maitri.

Boundless love towards all, tender compassion towards the weak, the sick and the down-trodden is the golden rule of Lord Buddha. The weakest first and then the others. If the need of your neighbour is greater than yours, never fail to help him first. Let us not forget the fact that this was one of the guiding rules of Lord Buddha. It was Buddha who attended on the ailing monk Tissa and showed the rest of the Sangha that the best way of propagating an ideal is by sheer practice. It is not the rich but the poor that need your help, it is not the healthy but the ailing that need your help and it is not the high intellectuals but the ignorant masses that need your help. Thus there is ample scope in life for every Buddhist to play his part. What the world today needs is not men of words but men of action. Men who are ready to show

others the correct way of living so that others too may follow them. Let us not forget the words of the Blessed One—“Before long indeed this body will lie upon the earth, discarded, void of consciousness and worthless as a log of wood.” Therefore it behoves us to do every thing possible within this short space.

Man gives expression to thought through words. If the thoughts are impure his words would never be pure. Falsehood is the external indication of the dishonesty within the mind of man. It destroys the very essence of a man’s self-respect and is a danger not only to those who associate with the liar but to the whole community in which he lives. The liar is a dangerous being—his motives are directed towards personal ends. We often feel that an occasional lie is harmless, but remember that, the danger lies in the circumstance that one lie is sufficient to destroy one’s self-respect, and with the loss of one’s self-respect the practice of further falsehoods is facilitated. That is why Lord Buddha condemned all grades of falsehood, hypocrisy, perjury, flattery and insincerity. Truthfulness is the greatest power that a human being could possess. It commends itself to others. It compels admiration. That is why it is so valuable. It always pays you in the long run. You might meet with situations where to speak the truth will be most unpalatable but yet if you are ready to stick to your principle and tell the truth, it would always reward you. A honest man is mentally strong because his conscience is clear, for the same reason, he is also happy and could be depended upon to tackle any difficult situation in life.

Therefore, at this moment when humanity is in the bitterest straits, faced with grave dangers, when the skies are dark with grim clouds of impending war, it is the duty of every human being to exemplify the message of the Compassionate One and to see that the weak, the sick and the down-trodden are cared for, that the actions of all are based on the pivots of truthfulness and love.

“Conquer anger by love—conquer evil by good—Conquer the niggard by generosity—and the speaker of falsehood by truth.”

This is the teaching of our Lord. It is the greatest message of Maitri delivered to humanity by Lord Buddha. This conquest of evil by

good is called the "Dhamma Vijaya." It is the noblest conquest. It is the one conquest that all Buddhists should aim at. Let us not hurt the feelings of anybody, friend or foe, relation or stranger.

The message of Maitri is based on tolerance. It moulds the character of man. It is the keynote for a happy life. It is the oar in the hand of man to guide his way through this gloomy ever-flowing river of Sansara. For he who keeps his head cool in the midst of dangers always succeeds. He is always fit enough to act quickly and correctly. This spirit of tolerance could be achieved only through the practice of Maitri.

Let us from today start on this supreme ideal of achieving full control over ourselves by concentrating on "Maitri." Every day a few seconds could be devoted to thinking of this supreme message—"May all beings be well and happy." Extend your cloak of Maitri to cover everybody—from the miserable microscopic bacteria to the charging wild elephant. This message of Peace and Goodwill if achieved would be the greatest achievement of man.

The practicability of its ethical teaching is the most encouraging feature of the Dhamma. Buddha never preached anything that is impossible for man to practise. The opening words of his first sermon to the five Monks relate to the avoiding of the extremes of self-indulgence on the one hand, which is always demoralising, and self-mortification on the other which is severe and fantastic. After warning these ascetics regarding the exaggerated value they attribute to austerities, Buddha defined his Middle Path, and then went on to enunciate the four Truths of the nature of suffering, its origin, its cessation and the methods of reaching it.

Asoka's rock-edicts which are the earliest indications of Buddha's teaching are eminently practical in character. They deal with the supreme message of Maitri towards all beings. "Whatever good deeds have been done by me, these the people have followed, and these they will follow in future too."

The duty of everyone of us is clear. Let us strive to avoid hatred jealousy and bloodshed in this universe. It could only be achieved by following the footsteps of the Blessed One. We must take heart

from the Great Master. Be confident of your ability to do good. Let us strive to gain wisdom so that each one of us may help this suffering world. Let us not forget the sacrificing words of the Buddha—"Just for the world's good and welfare, this body of flesh and blood I bear"—This should be the selfless ideal of each one of us, justly remembering the fact that we exist in this world only for a short while during which period we should so act as to justify our existence.

Why does the drowning man cling even to the useless waterweed that floats on water? Why does the beautiful and harmless deer dash for his life when the hunting-dogs are sighted? Why does the mighty wild-elephant make a "live or die" desperate charge when he is shot at by the game-hunter? All this desperate struggle is due to the fact that life is dear to all. No being is born to be killed by another. No being is the food of another. However in the animal world there is the tendency of the stronger to make the weaker its food. If man too, attempts to eat the animal which, of course, is weaker than man, then we see hardly any difference between the two. Man is a rational being, his thought activity should be directed not for destruction but for construction.

In Buddhism to refrain from killing is not a mere negative virtue: it involves the fostering of the four excellent qualities of man—Love, Kindness, Sympathy and Equanimity. The Blessed One once said "Kill not, do not inflict pain on any creature put aside the cudgels and the sword, be kind and merciful to all creatures." Hence every Buddhist should keep in mind that killing and even the intention to do such an act is harmful to oneself.

It is often being argued that sudden provocation is the result of much crime today but very few ask the question as to the origin of this provocation. Every Buddhist knows that it is due to one's own self. A person who lives a good life would never attempt such an act. But then the question is asked—Are there not instances of harmless and pious men suddenly launching into crimes? To this the Buddhist would reply that he never would believe that such persons were ever really harmless

and pious. Piety is entirely a state of mind. The absence of criminal deeds does not necessarily imply that absence of criminal tendencies. Fear of punishment, social ostracism, the absence of opportunities or the means may well be factors that cause a temporary inhibition of crime. The man who kills is despised and neglected, the virtuous man whose principle is to refrain from killing and hurting beings are loved and honoured. He is looked upon as an example and as the embodiment of a perfect ideal. Referring to killers Buddha once said—"Here he grieves, hereafter he grieves, the evil doer grieves in both worlds. He grieves and perished seeing his own foul deeds."

There are three types of killing, some men kill for food, some for pleasure and some for power. Buddhism does not encourage any of these groups. Each is regarded as no better than the other. Buddhism has given plenty of other alternatives for the satisfactory solution of all such motives.

Not only Lord Buddha but many other great men who followed him up to the present day showed through sheer practice that one can do almost anything with the great weapon of non-violence used both for offence and defence. As such dear friends, forget not the message preached to humanity by the Compassionate One and see that you like many others in this world use the weapon of non-violence for all your struggles and thus help to bring the much needed Peace to this world.

Who is a Buddhist? By calling yourself Buddhist you will never become a Buddhist, nor will you become a Buddhist by merely studying the doctrine. It is only by practising what you have learnt from the Dhamma that you can become a Buddhist. Let us examine the main principles that a good Buddhist should follow.

First come Right Views which means the realisation of the Four Noble Truths and the doctrine of the Buddha. Without arming yourself with knowledge and knowing exactly what you intend doing, it is hardly possible for a man to advance. This doctrine as we already know is one devoid of all mysticism, superstitions and prejudices and is based on the highest rational principles.

Secondly come Right Aspirations, namely the firm resolution to live

according to this doctrine. As we all know it is one not imposed on us but which we ourselves by our own free will has recognised as true. The resolution not to harbour any ill-will against anybody and not to occasion any sorrow should dominate your mind.

Right Speech is also an indispensable pre-requisite for a good Buddhist. By this, one not only avoids lying and slander but also unnecessary gossip which is one of the prolific causes of misunderstanding and ill-will in society today. One must always weigh with one's own intelligence all words that one utters. This will not only avoid much unnecessary misunderstanding but also make one precise.

One must never attempt to harm another either physically or mentally. Your deeds should always be

focussed to some good act. There is much to be done by Buddhists in this world full of misery and misdeeds.

Next is Right Livelihood. The purpose of our short stay is not to live a life of misdeeds but of virtue. You must never indulge in any occupation or profession which causes suffering to others.

Right Endeavour, is the endeavour demanded from all Buddhists not to allow evil thoughts or desires to arise within you. This would decide all your actions and thus your whole character would depend on this principle. If you are pure at heart your influence would be powerful. One should always attempt to awaken non-existing good thoughts and develop the ones already existing.

Right Mindedness is deep reflection on the body, the sensations, the thoughts and things in general. Right Understanding of these objects shows that they originate and cease from certain causes and according to certain laws and that they are all transitory.

Finally comes Right Concentration. Concentration according to Lord Buddha should be substituted for prayer. This mental training builds up your will power and your knowledge of the Dhamma would not be based on opinion but on conviction, which alone has lasting power.

It is not difficult to be a good Buddhist and Lord Buddha's Noble Eightfold path which I have just outlined would guide you to a better and a happier life both in this world and thereafter.

## BUDDHIST THOUGHTS

By JAYANANDA RATNAYAKA

### ADINNA DANA.....

OUR second precept, brothers and sisters, says Adhinnā dhanā veramani sikkapadan samadiyami. I undertake not to take from any one that which has not been given me. I think this precept is not given its due significance—perhaps because its full implication is not understood—or, is it that we do not want to think that far to understand it fully, for, as blind Homer said, "None are so blind as those who will not see!" We often see that some of our employed brothers demand more and get more than the equivalent they dole out to the employees. We also see that at the slightest chance, many of our employees dishonestly underwork, or draw their pay on false names. In both cases these brothers are committing the same crime of taking possession of that which is not their own by right. Some of us had a good opportunity while doing a survey for the UNESCO in the Vanni, to see for ourselves the extent to which some of our Buddhist brothers unmercifully exploited those poor ignorant villagers, and these were by no means unique cases. I wonder whether a sadder example of the criminal and callous breaking of the second precept by our self-seeking brothers could be found.

And yet they called themselves followers of the Master of Compassion, and they even gave donations to temples, but for what use? Do they think these will atone for their crimes against their fellow-beings? Land-grabbing is rampant and the poor villager very soon hands over his possessions to the mortgage-holding mudalali—and that at only a fraction of the value. Of course, the honourable mudalali is legally right, but how right is he in the eyes of the Dhamma—How right in the eyes of Compassion? The exploitation in trade, the extraction of unfair earnings and the charging of exorbitant fees by certain professional men that tend to suck their victims dry: All these will not exist if proper heed and not mere lipservice is paid to this precept.

The primary cause for class conflict is greed, and this is exhibited by both employer and employee. If we could make ourselves to conform to this precept not only will we be removing the cut-throat competition, bitterness, and hatred, but we would have forged a good step towards Nibbana by lessening our basic greed. On a race day, we see the most depressing sight of crowds herding into the Race-course—and so many of them very prominent Buddhists. Whose

money do they win? The money of all those who lost, including those poor people who packed themselves under the blazing sun in the cheap enclosures. It is, my brothers and sisters, the blood and sweat-stained money of these unfortunate poor-seanty money which in their ignorance or desperation they thought they could multiply so that, perhaps, their already starving children may have at least a meal. No, that money does not belong to the brothers and sisters who won, but those who lost. It is an open disregard for the second precept. At least, let us Buddhists realize that this is money not belonging to us, but saturated with the tears of children and the sorrows of broken families. Let us remember that by doing this we are throwing Compassion and Maitriya to the winds.

How much of our Noble teachings has been imbibed in this gaunt structure called society we see today? We live in an era of bribery probes. We see sometimes large scale robbery from even the State and we are all the more ashamed because among the culprits we see more than one who calls himself a good Buddhist.

In international affairs too one must allow the ugly hydra of greed

to raise its head. Mean advantage, even when gained in the name of one's country is unethical and against the truth of the Master. There are no new values for States. There is but one Ethical Truth.

The 2nd precept is undoubtedly an essential condition for harmonious community-existence. When we fail to recognize another's rights no society can function well. As with all the other precepts there is also underneath the ultimate striving for Nibbana. By keeping to this precept, we train our minds to break away from Tanha: Not to attach attention and importance to the valueless impermanent temporal possessions. When our minds are firm not to yield to the greed of possessing our neighbour's goods we would be able to deal with fellowman with unreserved confidence and mutual esteem. Others bread will not be gambled with or withheld from them that our coffers might be stored with gold.

#### KAMESU MICHCHACHARA.....

Perhaps the most formidable force, always impinging on man dragging him into the horrible mire of suffering is found in the field of sexual pleasure. We are often horrified at the overpowering strength of this de-mo-ni-ac urge which can overwhelm even some of the strongest in its vice grip of sexual passion. We are not infrequent witnesses to the pathetic sight of those wishing in their own minds to resist, yet completely bending to its tyranny. How often have we been revulsed at the way even some of our educated and comfortable brothers and sisters act. Here is solid proof that a spiritual and cultural millenium need not be heralded by the removal of privation as is boastfully predicted by the communists, for here we see men and women well above privation level having plenty of leisure, not using it for cultural advancement, but for whirling further and further down in spirals voluntarily fingering the muck of mental putrefaction. To anyone who has the least spark of humanity in him such degradation is a piteous thing. No doubt it accompanies moral looseness and divorce cases. No doubt its superficiality poisons and corrodes wholesome family life, and leaves disrupted homes where innocent children growing up, in this muck taught to be the height of supreme fashion carry into their own lives the fruits and germs for further corrosion. There are many

of us who are such Buddhists and we even deign to visit a temple on a full moon night occasionally. But, of course, we must be dressed in silks and grandeur. We even repeat parrot-like our Master's teachings but where is the practice of the Dharma? Where the realization that these passing material pleasures are valueless but only tend to drag us deeper rather than carry us aloft into peace? And who pray is deceived, except just ourselves? Sensual pleasure is emotion without intelligence as of animals. What is so commonly called love is really the manifestation of unsatisfaction conditioned by the inner discontentment with our surroundings. We love for a purpose—the satisfaction of the self.

It is in youth that this sexual force has to be curbed. Being an organic urge it is far stronger than the habit vices of smoking and drinking intoxicating liquor. It is in youth that we must strengthen our minds that we could keep our body, our servant and not let it become our tyrant. This self control is very difficult. But it could be done if we go about it in a sensible way. To the best of our ability we must try to put out completely all thought of it and of everything exciting it, and be even on the alert for the approach of such thoughts so as to ready to turn away. This is how we must wage a winning battle against the enemy of our maturity and the obstacle to our pilgrimage. If we fall let us not cease in our determination but redouble our efforts. If we succeed then we would be in that glorious state which the teachings speak of where in purity of heart, every member of the opposite sex is a mother or a father—a sister or a brother—all joined in the abundant peacefulness of friendship, trustworthiness and sympathy. We certainly exclude self-pity which is another guise of self-love. Perfect sympathy feels the sorrow but is disinterested in the individual and is interested only in the cause of suffering.

Even if we, in this birth, cannot reap such abundant fruits by the very fight and victory we will not only have been saved from premature decrepitude and a deceased-death but would also have to that extent won against craving and bolstered the mind and reinforced it in preparation for the final release in Nibbana.

#### MUSAVADA.....

In this age of hypocrisy, ill-will, corrupt politics and base living make a mockery of moral platitudes. As long as large scale offenders consistently escape punishment and exposure, and politicians and pseudo-leaders pal up with corrupt elements, the task of removing crime and suffering will not succeed. What is more, we also fail to exhibit to our youth a consistent set of wholesome moral values. That is the reason why so much preaching to our youth is greeted by them with ridicule and annoyed cynicism. They know us for what we are. Morality has been slipping, or, is unsure in home discipline and training, in honesty of dealing, in strictness of self-control. The daily records in the Press of instances of dishonesty and corruption represent only a few cases that are detected out of myriads that go completely undetected. What is at issue is an attitude towards life and an assessment of its values. Is there only a base material element in life? Do personal integrity, principle, character matter? Are adultery, divorce to be regarded as normal and casual incidents in the common round of daily occurrence? Is it of any consequence how the hours of leisure are spent—how money is spent, and on what? Whether emphasis is on self-development or on self-gratification?

We see around us a world in agony; poverty, unemployment, frustration, pain, sickness, distress, and fear. We know there are people who are nearly mad with their nerves and sleepless with worry and tortured by temptation. We know of many others who are hungry more for friendship and understanding than even for gold. Whose hostility, pride, indifference, or stilted manners are but the cloak that their wounded spirits wear.

And is this nothing to all of us who are followers of the Master of Compassion? Should we squeeze the last drop of pleasure out of this life saying to ourselves, "How can I have the best time possible"—without any thought of those who are crushed?

As we scanned the precepts as constituents of the Ethical Trio we found over and over that it was this will to dominate—this determination to secure our own selfish desires regardless of whom we hurt—this thrusting out of our ego—that was at the bottom of most of

our all action. This will never lead us to emancipation—and what are we Buddhists for, if we do not work for emancipation? “We are followers of the Master of Compassion and Truth, who taught, ‘As I am, so are they.’” If we remain genuine followers of Him, who due only to compassion sacrificed his wealth, his kingdom, and even his family, how can we selfishly go out and inflict hurt on others? And do we want to go on for ever in this miserable cycle of continued existence?—knowing all the time that under whatever conditions, existence was unsatisfactory and impermanent.

This is an era of expectancy and tension—of shattered nerves and fright. The very earth seems big and trembling—in her expectancy . . . but whether the child of the tomorrow will be a healthier manikin, or a freak contorted son of evil adding to the already too great store of misery, will depend on our individual action.

#### SURAMERAYA . . . . .

Have any of my brothers or sisters had the misfortune of getting lost in one of our dense jungles. It's a frightful experience especially when one realises the danger that lurks in the darkness and impregnable mass of tangled thorns and crawling undergrowth. The only means to escape is to cut one's way through. Now what would you say to one so lost if, without utilising his *only* axe to cut the thorns and branches in his way, he consciously blunts it against boulders removing temporarily or even permanently the possibility of breaking through into light? Even so in this tangled sprawling mass of continued existence we have but one weapon and we all have it in our mind. Is it not sadly foolish for us to dull and waste it and even destroy it beyond repair by maltreating it? This is the view

the Buddha takes about intoxicating drink.

In the 5th and last precept we have—

*Surameraya majja pamadhathana vera mani sikkhapadan samadiyami.*

I undertake to abstain from the partaking of all forms of stupefying and intoxicating drugs. This is indeed, a very serious matter for us Buddhists. The whole tendency underlying the teachings of the Exalted One is to lead its followers into clarity of thought—so that without least delay through mental discipline, truth may be perceived and the final exit achieved. Obviously the clarity of understanding does not come by dulling the mind. The 5th precept warns us that the consumption of alcohol is most effective in taking the sharpness off our mental axe, and corroding it into uselessness. There is but one sensible thing to do and that is to shun this leprosy of mental equilibrium which alone can lead us into sorrowlessness.

In Lanka unfortunately to take to alcohol has become the fashion of the day. One is not considered cultured enough if one does not partake of drink. One is not a sport. No wedding—no function is complete without it and Oh! what an inestimable qualification to have it said that so and so's wedding liquor was flowing—but, of course, no mention is made that many guests were swimming and crawling about disgracefully on the ground—and all of them very respectable gentlemen—perhaps even very good Buddhists or children of very good Buddhists. Why do we refuse to perceive the ignoble level to which this demon reduces us? Some of us take to it to drown our sorrows forgetting that this works in vicious circles—worries increasing with the misery and the drink. We also forget that we cannot run away

from the bitterness of reality by drink. The doctrine of Karma is the irrevocable law of conservation of energy. Nothing ever gets lost. Whatever befalls due to former deeds we must meet like men, because it is unalterable. And we recall how many homes have been broken asunder and how many families thrown on the streets to suffer untold agonies? How many of normally decent people in their sober senses just by the partaking of this pernicious fluid have made themselves criminals? We saw that the lack of alcohol during the last few months has greatly lowered the crime curve in many unruly areas.

Yes, we know all about this but we must stay in fashion. We must ape the West especially in all its ugliness. We cannot be rustics. Is that not so? Surely, my brothers and sisters, we are not weak-minded, backboneless jellyfish who have no voice of our own—who cannot speak up and refuse anything we know to be incorrect. We well know what our Master has taught about intoxicating liquor and we see clearly the horrible effects of it on us and around us. Will we still too be so cowardly and base as to be slaves to an established yet pernicious fashion? Have we not the courage and manliness to break this fashion up in our ceaseless effort to remove suffering? In our pilgrimage from Darkness and Ignorance into the cool light of realization?

The five precepts lose their value if they are but a ceremony—a mere conglomeration of sounds—to be performed on a poya day. They must be genuinely striven for. Each one is a rung towards the control of the self. Each one a very definite step in the correct direction—on the Road of Right Conduct—each reducing our indefatigable urge and impulse to grasp and crave.

## BUDDHISM IN THE WESTERN WORLD

By CARMEN ENNESCH

THIS title makes us think generally of the sanghas in the great cities of Europe or America such as “Buddhist Society” and “Buddhist Vihara” in London, “Buddhistische Gemeinde Mission” in Berlin, “Le sentier bouddhique”

in Brussels or “Les amis du bouddhisme” in Paris. But the number of occidental Buddhists is much more important than that of the members of those societies who have a very intense life, and where the Vesakha is celebrated in a spirit of

• communion with the Buddhists over the whole world.

• In France, at the beginning of the last century, Eugène Burnouf revealed Buddhism to the western world by his book “Introduction



à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme" (1840). A brilliant group of skilful men continued the great traditions of Burnouf and through them France has become one of the leading places of Oriental studies in the western world. Numerous are the orientalists or French people who had lived in Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam who followed the Dhamma. In many French houses our guests from eastern countries are often astonished to find beautiful Buddhist shrines or statues of Lord Buddha. But often French or European Buddhists do not talk about their conversion to Buddhism for several reasons, such as: family or social discipline, fear of misunderstanding and mockery or the lack of toleration of the Catholic Church.

In the past as in the present eminent European minds have been influenced by Buddhist teaching or philosophy.

Among them let us mention Heraklitos from Ephesus who lived from 576 to 480 B.C. If the philosophy of Heraklitos had prevailed in the occidental minds we would have seen a conception of life very near to that of Buddhism. Miss G. Constant Lounsbury, the distinguished president of the "Amis du Bouddhisme" in Paris and C. F. Rhys Davids in England have developed the main idea of Heraklitos in a remarkable way which relates him with the Dhamma.

Modern philosophers and writers strongly influenced by Buddhist ideology are very numerous. The most famous of them are the great German philosopher, Schopenhauer, our French writer, Anatole France, and H. G. Wells and Aldous Huxley in England.

But, to my mind, it was in the early middle-age that the penetration of Buddhism into the western world was the strongest.

Did the teaching of Buddha come to Europe through Buddhist monks or through people from India and

other Eastern countries? Came it through the channel of *manichean* beliefs? We are not quite sure, but it is a matter of fact that there were in those times in the south of France, in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, sects whose doctrines remind us of Buddhism and the philosophy of the Far East.

In France the Cathars or Albigensians living around Toulouse have been called by several authors *The Buddhists of Occident*.

Those Cathars were Christians, but they belonged to the very primitive church and therefore, to them Christ was a very wise man, an instructor, who came to show the way to men and to help them by his wisdom and not, as says the Catholic dogma, to save them by his suffering. Such an importance was given by them to spiritual values that they rejected the Incarnation of Christ and His Crucifixion was regarded as a *semblance*.

The so-called "Buddhists of Occident" had towards life the same attitude as their brothers from the East—recognition of the instability of material things, the same ideal of perfection leading to liberation from the chain of sufferings, stern asceticism as a means of detachment from human bondage, spiritual development, abstinence from shedding the blood of a human being or an animal and, of course, they were vegetarians.

About the end of the twelfth century the Cathars or "the Pure" had become so important a sect in the south of France that the Roman Church, very corrupted, seeing its authority undermined, determined to put an end to what she called an "heresy." Pope Innocent III proclaimed a Crusade inciting the princes to take up arms against Raymond VI, Count of Toulouse, and all his vassals who protected the heretic faith. The Crusade turned into a political war. The South of France with its brilliant refined civilisation became

a prey of the powerful barons of Burgundy and Flanders grouped around Philippe-Auguste, king of France, who joined the Crusade for reasons which had nothing to do with the protection of the Roman Catholic faith. In the year 1244, on the top of a high mountain, in the Pyrenees, the fortress of Montségur, where the lords of the South mingled with the Cathars defended their freedom, fell. It was the end of Southern freedom and the Cathars who were thrown into the flames.

\* \* \*

From the Cathar period dates the famous spiritual romance of *Barlaam and Josaphat*. It is a very curious document and very characteristic of its time.

This collection of Christian and Buddhist stories, novels and parables may be compared to the Greco-Buddhist art discovered in Afghanistan. In that art where the influences from Asia and Europe mingle, we can see a Buddha in the capitals of Greek columns as Greek ornaments or Greek styles are seen in objects from India . . .

The romance of *Barlaam and Josaphat* is based on *manichean* beliefs and Eastern legends. It has been translated in Occitan (=the language of the south of France) by Cathars. It relates how Barlaam, the "bonhomme" (=good man as people called the Cathars who chose monastic life), travels to India to bring a marvellous, miraculous stone to the Indian prince, Josaphat, who is nobody other than—the *Boddhi-sattva, the Future Buddha*!

The apparent Romanist canonization of the Buddha under the character of Josaphat is an additional proof of how things Eastern may become things Western. It is the meeting of the spirits and the words of Kipling that "East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet" is disproved.

11, rue Theodule Ribot,  
Paris (17e).

## THE PEERLESS PHYSICIAN OF THE MIND

By The Ven. SHANTI BHADRA

GOTAMI, nicknamed Kisā-Gotami, lived in Savatthi during the time of Lord Buddha. Her poverty and her thin and slight figure were objects of ridicule

to the relations of her husband. In the course of time, she gave birth to a son. The evil whisperings and the biting mockery of the relations, turned into respect, for

a mother, in spite of all her drawbacks, is always held in high esteem in India—particularly so when the child happens to be a son. The son was a joy to her; her dry and

bony figure grew a little plump, blithe and debonair. But her happiness was only a precursor to sorrow, for her dear child became sick and weak. Despite care and medicine it wasted away and died.

Kisa-Gotami's sorrow was boundless. She reached the border-line of insanity. With the dead child in her arms she went all over Savatthi searching for a medicine to give it life. Many spoke words of cheer and comfort to her, but some—and there are many such unthinking men whose hearts are dry and are impervious to others' sorrows—jeered and hissed at her foolishness. Tired and crestfallen she came to Jetavanaramaya where the Lord Buddha was then residing. The Lord Buddha understood her pitiable plight. Promising to bring back the child to life. He asked her to bring a handful of mustard seeds from a house where death had not made its dreadful visitation.

Happy at finding a physician of such skill she hurriedly went to the city to fetch the mustard-seeds. Everyone willingly gave her hand-

fuls of mustard-seeds, but no offer was acceptable as death had darkened every home sometime or other. This set her thinking. It dawned upon her slow understanding that man in the midst of life is in death. Her sorrow abated considerably.

She returned to the Lord Buddha with a composed mind. He preached to her a sermon based on attachment and the attendant pangs and sorrows that follow in its wake. At the termination of the discourse she became a Sotapanna. Finding no more delight in a worldly life she was admitted into the Order of the Bhikkhunis and before long she shed all the "leaden weights" that bind down man to an interminable chain of sorrows and arrows of life and attained Arahathood. Even today after 2,000 years—she is remembered as one in a long line of illustrious Bhikkhunis who added lustre to Buddhism.

Once a great sculptor was going round a building which was in the process of construction. He noticed a ragged, misshapen block of rough

marble lying in a corner apparently worthless for any kind of work. He got the block removed to his studio remarking that there was an angel imprisoned in it and that he must set it free. By the magic of his genius and skill the worthless lump was cut and shaped into a life-like image that turned the whole world in admiration towards him. It is even so among human beings. There are many who in the eyes of the world are useless but within them lie concealed the germs of greatness which when touched by the understanding teacher sprouts and puts forth all their glory. Among such teachers the Lord Buddha stands apart, peerless and incomparable. The golden touch of the Lord Buddha transmuted countless numbers of men who in the eyes of the society were considered mere valueless scraps. It is teachers with love and understanding imbued with the true spirit of the Buddha dhamma who could redeem mankind from evil ways and save the world moving towards the shambles—another great World War.

## " LORD BUDDHA IS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION EVEN TODAY "

" **E**VEN in the present scientific age Lord Buddha is a source of inspiration to the people of advanced countries. He tops the list of prophets in this modern age also," observed Shri Srikrishna Sinha, Chief Minister, Bihar, while performing the unveiling ceremony of the statue of Lord Buddha recently set up by the Patna City Municipality at Kadamkuan. The ceremony was an impressive one and was attended by a large and distinguished gathering.

Shri Srikrishna Sinha pointed out that as days passed, Lord Buddha was rising high in the veneration of the people. Fortunately, those days were gone when the teachings of Lord Buddha were failing into utter oblivion and there were many who began to think that Buddha was a fictitious person and a mere figment of imagination. It was thought that a great teacher like Buddha was never born and he was a mythical being set up ancient

history of India to conjure the people in the name of religion. It was a matter of great satisfaction that such a current of thought was dead and gone for ever.

The Chief Minister stated that the world was passing through a crisis and it was a happy sign that the teachings of Lord Buddha were finding place among the hearts of the people. Great thinkers, like philosophers and scientists, had now begun to think that doctrines propounded by Buddha were scientific and not metaphysical altogether. He was of the view that Russians did not accept any truth without putting it under close examination. They rejected old ideas and adopted new ones. Even such Russians were of the belief that it was Buddha who could guide the mankind to its proper destiny. Siddhartha came to this ancient city of Patliputra over 2,000 years ago in the form of a sanyasi and passed 50 years of life here.

### " INSPIRATION FROM HISTORY "

Shri Sinha observed that it must be the bounden duty of every Indian to take inspiration from the ancient history of India. We must pause and think as to why it that Buddha was held in high veneration even today and why his teachings were still acceptable to the people. It was also to thought that how it was that old ideas were being attacked and replaced for the new, but the teachings of Buddha were as valid as today was over 2,000 years ago. If we did not think all this, then we could not gauge the height of greatness reached by Buddha.

The Chief Minister observed that a great scientist of Europe was greatly influenced by the teachings of Lord Buddha and though this scientist struggled hard, he could not attain the sublimity which Buddha did.

The statue of this great soul would always remind the people of

the town of great principle of Buddhism, he said.

Shri Sinha pointed out that history showed that advent of prophets and divine incarnates had taken place in most critical moments when humanity was face to face a grave crisis. At such moments the people loved old ideas and were guided by prejudices. Divine incarnations took their birth in such critical hours to raise man's fallen condition. Buddha was one of them and he thought ahead of times. He gave civilisation new shape and new direction. He replaced old outmoded ideas with new useful ones.

Shri Sinha described the age when Buddha flourished. He said that those were the days when the people were engaged in finding out the existence or otherwise of God and of ultimate reality. Metaphysics was their favourite subject. The depended more on institution. There were people who performed sacrifices of animals to propitiate gods and goddesses. There were Vedantists who made searches for Brahma. There were also those who considered themselves as sinners and who thought that the relationship between man and God was that of a sinner and forger.

#### " LORD'S TEACHINGS "

The Chief Minister pointed out that it was at such a time that Lord Buddha sent forth his message for ending the misery of mankind. He preached that the attempt to

find out the existence of God was a fruitless one. It was a wild goose chase. Such enquiry about Brahma must be stopped forthwith. This was sheer wastage of time and energy. He asked all to forsake all metaphysical thoughts.

Lord Buddha preached that liberation could not come through penance or through search of God. The liberation of the self would come from the very self. So the Lord asked people to look within their own selves. Therein lay the causes and remedies of all ills and miseries. It was a fruitless pursuit to look to God or to sky for the remedy of man's miseries.

The Chief Minister observed that it was Lord Buddha who had found out the panacea of all evils and miseries. The Lord came to the conclusion that ignorance was the real enemy of Man. It was ignorance from which all miseries sprang up. Ignorance was the mother of lust. Buddha preached that ignorance and lust must be conquered.

Like Socrates of ancient Greece, observed Shri Sinha, Lord Buddha went round making contacts with people and interrogation them. The Lord asked people to analyse their own actions to end all troubles Buddha studied man to find out the ways and means of the liberation of the soul.

Concluding Shri Srikrishna Sinha expressed his belief that the statue of Lord Buddha would always send forth its inspiration to the people

of ancient Patliputra and enable them to conquer their ignorance and lust. He congratulated Mr. J. N. Banerjee and Shrimati Amita Das for their success in executing the statue of Lord Buddha. He thanked the Special officer, Mr. R. N. Pandey, for his services in setting up the statue.

### NEW SINGAPORE BUDDHIST TEMPLE

**H**ISTORY was made for the Buddhist Union on August, 1952, at 3 p.m., when a lay sister member, Madam Wee Beng Kim, wife of Bro. Tay Siong Moh, presented to the Buddhist Union a piece of vacant land for the erection of a Temple, at a simple ceremony conducted by Bhikkhus the Ven. M. M. Mahaweera Thera, Ven. Seck Hong Choon, Ven. Seck Kong Hiap, Bhikkhu Dhamaratana Pundit, Ven. Panna Siri Thero, and Ven. Ashin U. Wandiya Thera, at Jalan Senyum, off Changi Road. Following this there was an anonymous contribution of \$5,000 through the kind offices of Bro. Tan Kim Teck, and it is hoped to erect a suitable building very soon on this land.—*Cor.*

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

I shall be grateful if any of your readers will provide or sell "the Buddha Sahitya Sabha," a copy of Bhikkhu Silacara's "Four Noble Truths," which the Sabha intends to publish, revised and edited by a Buddhist scholar.

Thanking you,

Yours &c.,

THE HON. SECRETARY,  
Buddha Sahitya Sabha.

34, Kynsey Road,  
Colombo.

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

### ENGLISH LITERARY ACTIVITIES BRANCH

#### LIBRARY

The following books on Ceylon have been added to the Library:—

The People of Ceylon—Dr. N. D. Wijesekera; Ceylon Pearl of the East—Harry Williams; Jungle Tide—John Still; Ceylon Beaten Track—W. T. Keble; The Legislature of Ceylon—S. Namasivayam; Ceylon—Sydney D. Bailey; Vanished Trails—R. L. Spittel; Island Story—J. Vijayatunga; The Constitution of Ceylon—Sir Ivor Jennings; Robert Knox in the Kandyan Kingdom—Edited by Ludowyk; Where the White Sambhur Roam—R. L. Spittel; Green Aisles—Hennessy; Elephant Walk—Robert Standish; The Economic Development of Ceylon—World Bank Report (for Reference only).

Donated by the American Embassy.—  
Reconstruction of Philosophy—John

Dewey; American Paintings (3 copies); Tutt and Mrs. Tutt—Train; Taps for Private Tussies—J. Stuart; The Big Sky—A. B. Guthrie; Thunder on the Left—Christopher Morley.

Donated by Mr. J. Malalgoda.—  
"Review of Reviews."

#### LECTURES

*July.*—The Second "Lecture of the Month" was delivered by Mr. Cyril Moore of the Buddhist Society, London, on "Skilful Living" on the 22nd Dr. Parawehara Vajiranana Thero presided.

Mr. D. B. Ellepola, former Director of Rural Development delivered a talk on "Rural Ceylon and Its Development" on the 30th. Mr. D. J. Dayaratne, Director of Rural Development presided.

*August.*—The Third "Lecture of the Month" was delivered by Dr. O. H. de A. Wijesekera on "Buddhism and Living" noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

on the 20th. Mr. H. Sri Nissanka presided.

### LITERARY ACTIVITIES (SINHALESE) BRANCH

The following lectures were delivered during August and September, 1952:—

The Ven. Mirisse Gunasiri Thera on "Buddhism in the Far East" on August 14th, 1952.

Mr. U. G. P. de Silva, the Principal Govt. Training College, Katukurunda on "The Psychological Basis of Appreciation" on September 18th, 1952.

### "AN EVENING WITH Dr. ANANDA COOMARASWAMY"

An Evening with Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy was held as scheduled on the 22nd August in the presence of a gathering which according to the Chairman Mr. J. Padmanabha was one of the best "Coomaraswamy" gatherings. An imposing portrait of the late Doctor, kindly

lent by Dr. G. P. Malalasekere adorned the stage. Mr. S. Sanmuganathan, who too helped us in many ways, was unable to make his presence owing to ill-health; his paper was read by Mr. Ananda Nagendram. The following were the papers contributed: "The Reconciliation of Opposites" by Mr. Jayanta Padmanabha, Dr. Coomaraswamy's Work as an Art Critic" by Mr. D. B. Dhana-pala; "The Spiritual Development of a Nationalist" by Mr. Martin Wickrema-singhe; Dr. Coomaraswamy's Contribution to Art in Ceylon" by Mr. S. Sanmuga-nathan.

September.—The Fourth "Lecture of the Month" was delivered by Dr. E. R. Sarathchandra, Lecturer of the University of Ceylon on "Buddha on the Mind" on September 23rd.

Dr. N. M. Perera, M.P., delivered a talk on "The Present Economic Situation of Ceylon" on September 16th in the presence of a vast gathering that overflowed the Hall. Mr. V. Ratnasabhapathy presided.

October.—The Fifth "Lecture of the Month" will be delivered by Mr. Ananda Mivanapalana on October 21st. Please look out for Press announcement.

November.—We are glad to inform members that a "Fundamentals of Living Faiths" series will be inaugurated in November when authorities on Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, Sikhism, Suffism, Theology and Zoroastrianism will be invited to expound the basic tenets that go to form each respective living faith. Please look out for Press Notification.

**FILMS**

September.—A Film Show, through the courtesy of the American Embassy, was

given on September 12th, in the presence of an audience of about 400.

WALTER WIMALACHANDRA,  
Hony. Secretary,  
English Literary Activities.

**NEW MEMBERS**

**11.8.52 :** D. W. H. Pathiwille, 5/1, Abhaya Road, Kolonnawa; D. F. G. Meegama, "Gilbert House," Panadura; N. R. Perera, 54, Perth Road, Colombo; S. B. Attanayake, 20, Hunupitiya Road, Colombo 2; P. W. Goonewardene, 19, Clifford Place, Bambalapitiya.

**18.8.52 :** R. M. Jayatilleke, Botiyawatte, Minuwangoda; M. D. S. Goonetilleke, Licensed Surveyor, Panadura; D. J. P. Magodaratne, "Mahagodagiri," Panadura; A. Zarook Hassen, 231, Ward Place, Colombo; T. W. White, 38, Forbes Lane, Maradana; Kulasiri Amaratunge, Arakawila, Handapangoda; M. K. William, 23/7, Goulding Lane, Slave Island; R. Ariyapala, 500, Dematagoda Road, Maradana; S. M. Goonesekere, 8, Ripon Road, Colombo 3.

**25.8.52 :** Asoka Weeraratne, 592, 2nd Division Maradana; D. B. Paranavithana, 31, Kamatawatte, Rajagiriya; D. C. P. Ratnakara, Akkaradahanavaya, Gampaha; A. B. Nugapitiya, No. 9, Nelson Place, Wellawatte; R. F. Jayasuriya, 38, Ridgeway Place, Bambalapitiya; A. K. Jinadasa, 13, Quarry Road, Ratmalana; J. W. T. de Silva, 30/1, Gotami Road, Colombo; H. P. Jayasinghe, 297, Galle Road, Colombo.

**1.9.52 :** L. A. M. Perera, K 112, Sedawatte, Wellampitiya; S. Kadirkamanathan, 81, Kynsey Road, Colombo 8; M. Chandrasekaran, 116, Ward Place, Borella.

**8.9.52 :** G. V. P. Amarasekera, 19, Silva Lane, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 4; M. B. Abeywickrema, 30, Ketawalamulla Place, Colombo; Neil Gunewardene, "Sriani," Hokandara North, Kokandara; and Mr. D. H. Jayawardene, Galphela Group, Panwila was elected a Life Member.

**22-9-52 :** M. H. Salay, 37, Temple Avenue, Maradana; D. G. P. de Silva, "Alfred House," Asgiriya, Gampaha; V. W. Kularatne, "The Tower," Baseline Road, Colombo 8; R. A. Ranasinghe, 28/8, Thappawatte, Rajagiriya; B. R. Perera, Hydroponic Research Farm, 57, Battaramulla, Talangama; S. W. Dahamayake, 8, "Amaragiri," Campbell Terrace, Colombo 10; H. E. Dias Abeyagunawardene, 232, Richmond Hill Road, Galle; R. P. Amarasinghe, 484/4, Dematagoda Road, Colombo; M. Tillekeratne, "Ayodhiya," Gampaha (W.P.); Rajah Senanayake, "Senani," 464, Dematagoda Road, Colombo 9; L. D. Hindle, 63, Kanatte Road, Borella; Tony Amath, 75, Gotami Road, Borella, Colombo; W. D. Jinadasa, Anderson Camp, Narahepita, Colombo 5.

**RESIGNATION**

G. H. Vandort.

**RESIGNATION FROM THE COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT**

We announce with regret the resignation of Mr. M. C. F. Abeykoon from the Committee of Management.

**CHANGE OF OFFICE-BEARERS**

Mr. D. G. C. Weerapperuma resigned from the Literary Activities (English) Branch, and Mr. Bandula Paranavitana was elected in his place.

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