

Y. M. B. A. SUNDAY SERMONS

Regular Sunday Bana Preaching

is held

at the Y. M. B. A. Hall

from 9 to 10 a.m.

on Stanzas from the

Dhammapada

Programme for June, 1951

1st SUNDAY : PITAKOTTE SOMANANDA THERA

Pilotika Therassa Katha Vatthu

There is scarcely a man in the world who is restrained by modesty, gives no occasion for reproach like a thorough-bred who needs not the whip.

2nd SUNDAY : THALALLE DHARMANANDA THERA

Sukha Samanerasse Katha Vatthu

Irrigators guide the water, fletchers fashion the arrow, carpenters bend the wood, the pious control themselves.

3rd SUNDAY : W. SUGATHANANDA THERA OF VAJIRARAMA

Jara Vagga Visakhaya Sahayikaran Katha Vatthu

What laughter, what merriment there be when the world is ever burning. You who are by darkness surrounded why will you not seek the light ?

4th SUNDAY : HEENATIYANE DHAMMALOKA THERA

Siri Maya Katha Vatthu

Behold the beautiful figure, a nest of disease, perishable. This putrid mass breaks up. Verily life ends in death.

“ MAY ALL BEINGS BE WELL AND HAPPY.”

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

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

THE BUDDHIST



JULY, 1951
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“Sila Paññānato Jayam”

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[No. 3

SIKKIM BUDDHISM TODAY AND TOMORROW

TO set out to provide a condensed, but not oversimplified description of a country's traditional life is never easy and for one who undertakes such a task the first question to ask himself is what constitutes the essential purpose in view? Is it a matter of piecing together a more or less documented account of the people of a given region, of their beliefs and institutions, by way of ministering to the insatiable appetite of modern scientific curiosity, after the manner of the countless articles by travellers, ethnologists and others which fill our journals, both those labelled with a serious-sounding title and the ones of a more popular kind? Or has the task in hand some relation to a purpose which touches one vitally and which, for reasons no less vital, unites one with those who have become temporarily the objects of one's study? It is in the latter spirit that we would fain approach the study of Sikkim Buddhism, as something having its own local character, admittedly, but which is a form of that which, knowing no boundaries, touches us all alike. The name Sikkim defines a certain field, to be sure, but the emphasis all along must rest on Buddhism.

The writer of this paper has been acquainted with Sikkim, off and on, for about fifteen years, the last visit (to the Western part) having taken place a few months ago. He has also enjoyed the society of many Sikkimese friends, both great and small, from whom he has gathered various impressions of their own attitude towards the Buddhism they profess. Lastly, he has had access, for an all too brief period and before he himself was ready to take full advantage of the opportunity, to the presence of one who occupied for many years a pre-eminent place in the spiritual

By

THUBTEN TENDZIN

life of the country, the late Gomchhen of Lachhen. It is on the basis of this fairly wide range of experiences that the present paper has been put together.

A is known to most people, Buddhism in Sikkim belongs entirely to that branch of the tradition that bears the name of Great Vehicle or Great Way, the *Mahayana*, an allegiance it shares with its neighbour Tibet, as well as with China and Japan; and, furthermore, it is by that section of the monastic congregation that is represented by the *Nyingmapa* Order or Order of the Ancients—the misleading word “sect” has been purposely avoided,—that is to say, by lamas of the line instituted by Padma Sambhava or the Precious Teacher, *Guru Rim-pochhe* as he is commonly called, that Sikkim was both evangelised in the first instance and still is spiritually governed. There is little in Sikkim to remind one of the large and highly organised monastic communities of Tibet itself, for the Sikkimese *gompa* in its typical form is usually quite small, consisting, more often than not, of an isolated temple with a few outbuildings which are only in full occupation on certain occasions when the monks, many of whom are not celibates, assemble for the purpose of carrying out rituals, either seasonal or else specially commissioned by some local person. The rest of the time they spend in their own homes and take part in the ordinary activities of the peasantry, while the temple itself remains in charge of a sacristan, who will open it on demand, even

in the few *gompas* of larger size their occupants, except at specified seasons, rarely add up to more than a handful. Thus the Sikkimese monk, on an average, leads a life less distinct from that of the laity than many of his fellows in other lands, an arrangement which, under favourable conditions and in periods of widespread spiritual activity, can have its advantages in that a continual permeation of the lay community by the traditional influence is promoted by this means, but which, in times of decay when spiritual initiative is at a discount, brings its own dangers, in that it is often the monk's aspirations that become submerged in the daily round of more worldly preoccupations, instead of the reverse being true, as in the other case.

Since space does not allow of a survey, however sketchy, extending to the whole field, it has seemed best to select one example of a Sikkimese community (Buddhist goes without saying) in order to let it serve as a type for the whole region; in the present instance the example chosen will be a small settlement in Western Sikkim called Sinen, situated on a spur some three hours' walk above the better known centre of Tashiding. Sinen is one of a whole series of such small pockets of Sikkimese race which extend along the higher ground overlooking the true left side of the Rangit valley, the lower reaches of which have by now become predominantly Nepali and Hindu. In all these places along the edges of the greater mountains the Sikkim way of life is to be found preserved almost untouched, and from what remains it is possible to form an idea of what the whole country was like before the coming of the British opened the floodgates of immigration, with consequent disturbance of the racial balance.

One thing strikes one most forcibly whenever one finds oneself in the midst of a predominantly Sikkimese environment, namely how successful a compromise has been effected as between the interests of the human beings concerned and those of their wild neighbours, animals, birds and plants, and how admirably the traditional Sikkimese methods of agriculture agree with the character of the country itself, not encroaching beyond reasonable limits nor seeking by violence to force Nature out of her appointed ways; for it is apparent that the Sikkimese attitude towards natural things has been largely free of that cupidity that has driven so many others, especially in more modern times, to exploit the earth's resources regardless of everything else, whereby so much of the world's surface has already been turned into a semi-desert. In the Sikkimese lands, though a certain amount of clearing naturally took place in order to make room for man's crops, this did not go to the point of wholesale obliteration of the forest and extermination of its animal inhabitants, as in the case of other peoples of a more pushing, but really less far-sighted character, and indeed it could well be said that across the Sikkim countryside, so long as its ancient economy remained unaltered (which to-day is unfortunately no longer the case), was writ large the fifth proposition of the Noble Eightfold Path, Perfect Livelihood, thanks to which man himself was the first to profit, since in sparing the trees and the animals he was in fact safeguarding the primitive sources of his own prosperity. Nor was that enlightened self-interest confined to the material sphere only, since Nature in her untamed state has from time immemorial been the nursery of the spirit, as attested by the history of countless Saints and *Yogins* who have found in the wilderness a favourable field for the exercising of the Contemplative Life. Afterwards, it may be, led by compassion, they would return to minister to those who were still struggling in the net of wordly distraction, but at first where would they themselves have been without their wilderness?

Standing on any lofty spot and thence letting one's gaze roam over the tangle of ridges and deep-cut valleys which together make up Western Sikkim, one notices that every second spur, of which Sinen is one, is crowned with its temple or small *gompa*, each a sentinel of

the Doctrine looking out across this once blessed region, and it is impossible not to feel a certain contemplative urge oneself at the mere scene displayed before one's gaze, the serenity of which is such as to make one imagine every forest recess or mountain cave as still harbouring its hermit Lama, as must have been the case down to quite recent times: to-day, however, these likely-looking places are mostly, if not all, deserted and it can be said that, in the higher sense, the Contemplative Life has largely ceased to be followed in these parts, and it is only the more outward things of the tradition which now serve to canalize the spiritual influence, more indirectly therefore and in a less active or conscious way. This is really a cardinal fact concerning Buddhism in Sikkim, one which any survey that is meant to be of practical use, as well as honest, must first of all take into account: for the contemplative or intellectual element (which must not be confused with what is merely mental or rational, due to a loose, modern misuse of the word "intellect"), being the central element in any true tradition, is the one essential factor in the absence of which all the others, necessary as they are in their own relative order, rituals, arts, moral legislation and the Active Life in general, are bound eventually to fall apart through lack of a principle to unify them. Knowledge constitutes the one and only stable guarantee of a normal existence in the Buddhist sense, and by knowledge is meant, not the variegated fruits of individual mental activity, but *That* which comes only by way of direct Intellection, without intermediary, *That* which being ever present shines by its own light so that it is perceptible from the moment that the mentally and physically created obstacles have, by applying the appropriate Method, been rendered fully transparent—it is this end that all spiritual disciplines have in view, and it is for this purpose that one resorts to a Spiritual Master, but it is Contemplation itself which makes of a man a master, so that here again one is back at the same point whence one started—Contemplation it is which constitutes the heart of a tradition and if that heart is allowed to grow weak, how then shall the rest of the organism continue in normal health? But now it is time that we resumed the description of the *gompa* of Sinen and its surroundings, since that is

to provide us with the pegs on which to hang a number of other comments and reflections each having a bearing on some aspect of the more general question of the present state of Buddhism.

Beyond the end of the spur, towards the main hillside, are to be found dotted about the thatched homesteads of the peasants, as beautiful in their own way as the sacred buildings, beautiful, that is to say, with the pure beauty of functional aptness, of faultless adaptation to landscape and climate and material, and also occasionally beautified by the addition of ornamental features, here a boldly decorated window frame, there a lattice, whereby a touch of lightness is imparted, though never at the expense of structural fidelity. As for the people themselves, they are characterized by an open and cheerful disposition, coupled with natural courtesy and a sense of hospitality unsurpassed anywhere in the world.

On the crest of the spur stands the temple itself which, as is usual in Sikkim, consists of two storeys, one of them being dedicated to Guru Rimpoche. The walls are formed from masonry of satisfying thickness, crowned with a cane-thatched roof the eaves of which spread out a long distance so as to meet the requirements of a particularly rainy climate; the construction is extremely ingenious as well as beautiful and the fact that it has to be repaired at intervals (of about eight years, so we were told) does not really constitute an argument in favour of altering a type of roofing otherwise so satisfactory; the introduction of corrugated iron in several other places has been a regrettable development, both because of the inescapable shoddiness of the material itself, and also because its use has destroyed the artistic homogeneousness of buildings otherwise beyond reproach, as at Tashiding for instance, not to mention the terrible noisiness of an iron roof during the rains, in a manner not at all conducive to meditation: besides, it is always a matter for hesitation when it comes to changing a method traditionally sanctioned, for such a change often brings other and unforeseen disadvantages in its train.

Certainly, if one wishes to gain a clear impression of the Sikkimese style in its purest form, one cannot do better than go to Sinen, because

of its compactness as well as by reason of the high quality of the work there to be seen: what one perceives is that this local style, though related to the general pattern of Tibetan art, possesses a number of features of its own, one of which is the wealth of bold and original woodwork in the interiors; especially remarkable are the great supporting piers with their spreading, bracketed capitals most splendidly carved and very aptly left uncoloured; the great temple at Tashiding provides another magnificent example.

And what manner of men, it may be asked, were the creators of these wonders? The answer is that they were quite simple, normal people not very obviously distinguishable from other descendants of the peasant stock to which they belonged; indeed the only secret of what, to us, appears like "genius," lay in their normality itself, that typically Buddhist virtue (in the sense of conformity to "the Norm," to *dharma*), and doubtless these same men would have felt hard put to it if asked to explain how they went about their creative achievement, and probably their only answer would have been that they had been so taught by their predecessors in the craft, who had shown them how, when one wishes to put up a temple or fashion a pillar, such a way is the "correct" one, as traditionally revealed in the ancient days, and any other way is not. The traditional mind, artistically engaged or otherwise, is a unanimous mind, and it is its very unanimity and the reduction in the sense of individual self-hood that goes with it which, by thus restricting the agent of restriction, causes that spontaneous and at the same time ordered originality to be released. That is the lesson of all traditional art, and beside its accomplishment how small do the supposed triumphs of artistic individualism seem, when once one has learned to see through the various tricks whereby it is wont to assert itself.

The interior walls of Sinen are covered with ancient paintings now somewhat faded, but still clear at such times of day as the light is shining in at the right angle. They fall nothing short of the other features already described, and the same applies to the images: certainly, were these things to be found, say, in Europe, Sinen would be a famous place and every precaution would be taken to

preserve its treasures by guarding them jealously against the dangers of a well-meaning but uninstructed restoration, as well as by an occasional repair rendered necessary by the climate; of the two dangers the first-named is the greater, however. In Europe if paintings like those at Sinen ever had to be retouched, none but experts would be allowed to go near them, who would in any case restrict their own work to the minimum so as to preserve the character of the previous painting as nearly unchanged as possible. Neglect of these precautions, or rather unconsciousness on the subject, has been responsible for the total destruction, by reckless repainting on the part of inferior artists, of many most precious paintings in Tibet itself, so that it is well to be warned of what is at stake in all similar cases; for the men who could paint like that were men who *knew* something, and by their art they were able to infuse something of their own contemplative experience into the work itself, whereby it in its turn became a source of spiritual edification for the beholder, a "means of grace" in the fullest sense.

If we have given tongue on the subject of Sinen, this was because it provided an example that simply asked one to be eloquent; however, the last thing one would wish to happen is that this pen of ours, by attracting the wrong kind of attention to the place, should help to turn it into a tourist centre, for that would be the surest way to destroy it and also the human beings who draw spiritual nourishment from its proximity, by profaning the one and exposing the others to powerful and unknown temptations: of what use is the shell, however beautiful its form, if once the spirit has abandoned it? Sinen deserves to be an occasional centre of pilgrimage and otherwise to be left in enjoyment of its own peace; and if anyone, because this is one of the most precious of our ancient monuments, makes it his business to watch over its safety, whether officially or otherwise, one can only pray, while sincerely welcoming the intention, that this task will be carried out in the most unobtrusive manner possible, efficiently indeed but with the lightest touch, for then it will be preservation in the truest sense.

Speaking for oneself, the experience at Sinen was unforgettable, the conviction of a more-than-

human influence, a *chinlap*, was most powerful. Apart from that, during the brief period when we were camping (my friend and I) under the shadow of its ancient walls that had remained standing, almost alone, when a great earthquake levelled Pemayangtse and so many other temples roundabout, we had a number of opportunities to observe the workings of the tradition in the daily life of the people, both by way of odd conversations and watching what went on in the vicinity of the temple. During that time, for instance, a service was held for the benefit of a local family, starting off with a procession round the building to the sound of music, the whole performance being conducted in a manner that many a larger place might well have envied for its dignity and spontaneity alike. From watching these operations and also through our talk with the old sacristan, whom we found to be well informed about all that related to his temple, we were further confirmed in the impression that, with these people, their almost exclusive conception of spiritual activity is the ritual one, coupled with a considerable degree of devotional favour but lacking doctrinal information of a precise kind. This does not mean, however, that such information is totally wanting (here the professional "scientific" observer obsessed with "facts" is often at sea), since there are ways of conveying knowledge other than by formulations couched in rational and analytical language (the stock-in-trade of the literate mind) and much can be assimilated through symbols, sacred myths and other such instruments and sometimes knowledge gained in this way can go pretty deep; but nevertheless one must admit that a general lack of doctrinal precision, of knowledge, that is to say, of the elementary dogmas of the tradition in their more explicit form, leaves a man in a rather vulnerable state of mind, especially in the face of false doctrines such as are being propagated on all sides in the modern world but which, in fully traditional times, would never have been encountered at all. The kind of precautions to be taken in times of epidemic must needs differ from those in force under more healthy conditions, when the dangers are relatively sporadic ones.

The rituals themselves, in the minds of these peasants, appear in the guise of an activity necessary

for the maintaining of the equilibrium of life, communal or private, as an element on the one hand of order and on the other of protection against dangers both material and subtle, and of course, in a more general way, the rites provide a link with the Higher Powers. This attitude, if limited and sometimes marred by superstitious misinterpretation of elements occurring in the rites themselves, is not altogether lacking in realism; for in point of fact the chief purpose of rites, all the world over, is to keep open channels of communication with something which, if it were once shut off (as happens when the profane point of view has come to prevail, with consequent cessation of ritual activity), would inevitably leave the beings concerned exposed, helplessly, to all kinds of obscure influences of a subtle order, emanating from a level far below the human, and these influences, finding the field clear, would tend to extend themselves more and more over the world of men: this is perhaps the greatest danger resulting from materialism, which may be compared to a general encrusting over the human scene, whereby the free circulation of the spiritual influence, of which tradition is the vehicle, is hindered more and more until that crust, which in man is so aptly described as a "hardening of the heart," begins to crack by its own rigidity, whereupon the obscure forces of dissolution already mentioned begin to pour in, bringing everything to a state of disintegration. This, broadly speaking, is the story of the modern world, and the loss of interest in the ritual function (itself the result of the growth of scepticism in regard to spiritual things, coupled with credulity in regard to the validity and value of "facts" and their applications) is not the smallest of the causes that are bringing about this result.

I have enlarged somewhat on this aspect of the question, not only because it is daily becoming more and more forced on one's attention, but also because, in relation to one's immediate purpose, namely an assessing of the chief factors affecting the Buddhist situation in Sikkim, it would be easy to under-estimate the value of what exists there because of its being predominantly ritual, in form; very many travellers have written down Sikkim Buddhism as being a mere residue, a tissue of superstitions, in which very little of

real Buddhism inheres. With this view I disagree, because, though doctrinal instruction is admittedly and often dangerously lacking among people of every walk of life (and it is often among the well-to-do that the danger is most apparent, because they are being subjected to much greater pressure from the side of modern profanity than are the simpler folk), yet the substructure still carries implicitly, as well as through its rituals and a hundred traditional practices of lesser degree, the original message, though with a local flavour added as must always be the case. All said and done, that which conditions the atmosphere of the place and the attitude of men still, despite all, remains characteristically Buddhist and not something else, and no amount of purveying of historical and ethnological red herrings is able to alter the fact.

There is one last question which, though it is an accessory one, deserves a passing mention, because it has a practical bearing upon the spiritual life as carried on in these parts, and moreover it is a question which has aroused a certain amount of controversy among Buddhists attached to different branches of the tradition: this question refers to the taking of alcoholic liquor in monasteries as well as by the laity which, though disallowed in a great part of the Buddhist world where the primitive injunction against wine still holds good, is permitted by exception to the followers of the *Nyingmapa* path according to the word of Guru Rimpochhe himself who, for them, represents the supreme embodiment of traditional authority; whence it follows that any fruitful discussion of this question must, if it is to remain "in context," take stock of that fact. Nor need the existence of divergences of this kind within one and the same tradition cause surprise, since at the level of form a certain variability is both normal and indicative of vitality, each such variation corresponding to a separate adaptation in view of the special needs of different kinds of men. In point of fact, Buddhism, no less than other traditions, has given birth to quite a number of different schools, each of which has developed certain ways of its own, and between these ways a certain incompatibility is noticeable in some cases, yet one and all of them are essentially Buddhist nevertheless.

All that need be said in the present instance is that the habitual use of alcohol has its obvious dangers and that while these must not be exaggerated it equally would be a mistake to underrate them; if, for example, the effects are such as to cause an appreciable number of persons who are spiritually inclined to sink, by dint of much drinking, into a kind of torpor to the point of causing their spiritual gift to become stillborn then clearly something must have gone wrong somewhere, since such a result cannot possibly be ascribed to the wishes of the Sage who gave the original permission. Whatever opinion one may hold oneself as to the causes at play, one must start out from the incontestable premise that Guru Rimpochhe, when he allowed a certain thing, did so in awareness of what he was doing, and not from carelessness and still less from a wish to gain popularity with his followers, after the manner of modern demagogues; in his case a spiritual motive has therefore to be postulated. But actually his attitude need not astonish when we remember that Padma Sambhava was a *Tantrika* and that it is in keeping with the Tantrik methods to utilise various substances in view of their symbolical properties and in disregard, to some extent, of the dangers to which their profane use might give rise, a use which naturally is excluded from any spiritual point of view by definition. Wine is a case in point, since traditionally it represents esoteric knowledge or, according to another version of its symbolism, the *Amrita* or liquor of immortality, itself a symbol of that knowledge which alone is able to bring about release from the limitations of this mortal state; the sacramental use of wine, wherever it occurs, rests on this analogy.

The foregoing very brief reference to the "technical" aspect of the use of wine will have afforded a slight inkling of what may have been behind the authorisation in question; for reasons of space it is not possible to pursue the matter into further detail. If then the question arises as to how abuse is to be prevented with a view to counteracting the wastage of good human material which undoubtedly has occurred at times, the answer would seem to lie in a better understanding of the doctrine covering this particular matter, as well as of the symbolical relationships

whence it derives, so that those who are minded to found their practice upon the permission given them by their supreme Lama may do so in accordance with the spirit of his teachings and not, as now often happens, with the letter only.

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This brings us to a point where it is possible to pause and take stock of the position, by assessing the principal known factors in terms of positive and negative, following which a few general conclusions may also be drawn. These factors fall roughly under two headings, namely those which consist of elements belonging to the tradition itself and those which, springing from outside causes, affect it indirectly. In the latter category must be placed such factors as the reduction, through changes in the composition of the population during the last few decades, of the area occupied by Buddhism, as well as the shifting of the balance of political power, consequent upon the same cause. Nor should one overlooked the increasing social and political disorder to which the entire world has fallen prey and which has spared no country, however remote, not even Tibet; anything tending to deprive the Sikkimese of the powerful source of moral support hitherto represented by an undisturbed Tibet must be regarded as a serious loss. Finally, into this category must enter one other factor of particular importance, one which ought by rights to belong to the other group but which, because of the spread of modern secularism, is to be found at present on the wrong side of the fence—one is referring to school education which, in so far as it affects the outlook of the rising generation, must be regarded, for good or evil, as a very potent influence in its own way.

It would be quite impossible, in the small space still available, to embark on anything like a full discussion of this vital subject, one which deserves a whole article to itself; but one remark at least should not be left unsaid, namely that the system of schooling that has been in vogue in all Indian territories since its first introduction by the British reflects in its every method the profane and materialistic outlook of its originators. This affects not only the way in which every subject is envisaged regardless, that is to say, of any possible connection with principles of a

spiritual order, but also, no less, it affects the "imponderables," the background, which will, in the long run, condition the results of the education received even more than what is expressly taught.

It is high time that some people turned their attention to the important problem of what constitutes an acceptable education in the Buddhist sense—the same applies to Hindus and indeed to all who have the spiritual welfare of their children at heart; as for material welfare, it is idle to try and encompass it apart from the spiritual, for without the latter to give form and direction and meaning there can be no true happiness and no contentment and no prosperity and no culture—one has only to compare impartially the state of mind and the quality of living of the average Sikkimese peasant (despite the comparative fewness of his worldly goods) with the alternation of harassment and boredom expressing itself in a frantic pursuit of happiness such as passes for life in so much of modern Europe and America, and that in spite of, rather should one have said because of, the quantity and bewildering variety of material possessions which that life demands—one has only to compare them in order to judge which of the two states of mind is the more fortunate. What then, it will be asked, is that essential factor which, while belonging to the one mentality is wanting in the other and which has made all the difference? It is awareness of the spiritual order and attention (be it even with a little accompanying superstition) to its claims which in the one case has remained in the forefront and has been let go of in the other, this it is that has made the difference.

More than this cannot be said now; but it is to be hoped that these few remarks will have helped to arouse the attention of all who are interested in the question of education, so that that they may bend their minds to a fresh consideration of the whole subject, casting aside all preconceptions and ready-made solutions that cost no effort, until they find a new and better way, one which will agree, in form as in purpose, with their own deepest spiritual convictions.

Turning now to the other side of the picture, the field of traditional life as such, a discrimination has to be effected, as already explained,

between factors of a positive and negative kind. Of the former two must be singled out as being of great importance: firstly, there is the maintenance of the continuity of ritual activity, in all its many forms, whereby the channels of spiritual influence are kept open and many adverse influences neutralised, and secondly, there is the immense fund of devotional fervour as displayed by people of every type and kind, whereby they have kept themselves, even when knowledge has been somewhat restricted, in a state of spiritual receptivity, proof against many a temptation. Who could doubt the truth of this statement who had witnessed like the writer, the scenes at the building of the *chhorten* in memory of their late Lama by the people of Lachhen, when all from the very old down to children barely out of their mothers' arms bent their backs to the task of carrying the stones with an ardour that no hired labourer could emulate? Or again, could anyone doubt it who, in the same district, had stood close to the gigantic tree-trunks lying ready to be man-handled all the way across some fifty miles of mountain country, over a pass of over 17,000 feet, for the purpose of repairing the great temple at Sakya? A modern engineer with all his gadgets would not have found the handling of these great cedars in such country an easy task, but for these peasants it was but a case of putting a team of sixty or more men and women to each tree who, singing and moving in rhythm, would shift it so many miles each day and then hand over to the next team who, no less light-heartedly, would take it over and what for?—for merit, that is all, for love of the Divine. None who has come in contact with these things can ever doubt that Sikkim Buddhism still possesses a substratum of spiritual power which would take a lot of undermining, though one knows that the adversary has not spared his efforts and that he has even met with some success.

On the negative side of the balance sheet it must be said that the strictly intellectual element in the tradition, that of doctrine, both in its more theoretical form and as actualised by method and experience, has largely disappeared and this is a matter for very serious misgiving, since the loss affects the most essential element of all, Knowledge, starting point and final term of all spiritual endeavour. In

a more outward sense, this lack expresses itself in a very general absence of doctrinal instruction affecting all classes, even monks, and which often extends to quite elementary information concerning the fundamentals of Buddhism. Further insight into this state of affairs was gained quite recently when some lectures were given at Gangtok upon such themes as the Four Truths and the Noble Eight-fold Path, for some members of the audience were led to remark enthusiastically that it was news to them that Buddhism taught all these wonderful things! Such ignorance ought not to be, for, as was mentioned previously, it leaves a man terribly vulnerable in the face of false doctrines which to-day are being disseminated on every side both purposely and, still oftener, through unconscious infiltration under the disguise of seemingly innocent things.

If anyone should wonder how such apparent indifference to the need for theoretical instruction should have come about, it can be explained (apart from the more immediate causes which are manifold) by the fact that in former times the traditional structure was so free from fissures that many things were then unnecessary which, under the peculiar circumstances of the last hundred years, have become more and more imperative; at that time one had to do with what was a practically unanimous society, one in which the authority of the tradition was unquestioned and unquestionable, and moreover the level of spirituality itself was undoubtedly higher, thanks to the continual presence in the land of unbroken lines of eminent Lamas and their disciples, and though the imparting of theoretical instruction outside the ranks of the clergy may not have been any more organised than it is to-day yet there was, for the reasons given above, a continual flow of knowledge from the various spiritual centres outwards and a continual contact and exchange between those

who knew at first-hand and the receptive generality of the people around them so that the knowledge under its more theoretical form did in fact circulate freely and without let or interruption. This way, which follows the normal mode of traditional inter-communication, is superior to any form of catechism organised according to a set pattern, and while it lasted it provided what was wanted automatically; we have inherited the framework, but meanwhile the sources have themselves partly run dry while at the same time adverse forces from outside have increased their pressure, hence the problem that has arisen, one which must be solved as best one can under the circumstances: if it is solved successfully, even after great effort, then assuredly the power of underlying devotion among the people is such as to promise incalculable results, because to the warmth of love there will then have been added the precision of knowledge, and both of these together go to make up true spiritual health.

* * *

Much has been said already, but nevertheless the heart of the matter has yet to be touched, since the theoretical form of knowledge, indispensable though it is at every stage, remains perforce an experience at second hand which requires faith, the power of passive participation in knowledge, to complete it; from which it can be seen that this form of knowledge is not in itself complete and self-sufficing, but partial and dependant on something that will actualise its latent possibilities. For theory, doctrine expressed, is after all but a preparation for Knowledge unqualified and the latter is only to be realized intuitively through the Intellect, the true Intelligence, which, for its part is not to be regarded as an intermediary, like another Mind, but as a prolongation of the Knowledge itself, a ray which, though it is not the sun, is not other than the sun.

The highest order of Knowledge—this is the one omission in our balance sheet which no merely human artifice can rectify: other things can be improvised, more or less, yet without its vivifying presence, in the persons of one or two at least who have realized it, the rest of the traditional edifice will remain shaky for lack of intellectual foundation. One must face the truth: to-day the Great Lights have been dimmed, the

twilight has descended. Sikkim has its long tale of saints and teachers second to none; even a few years ago one still heard echoes of great names like Bermiak Rimpochhe and others of like eminence, and the Lachhen Gomchhen was still there, he could be visited, round him were disciples, but now who is going to fill the vacant places?

Is there then reason for despair? That can never be said, for the Compassion of the Bodhisattva is inexhaustible and so long as one blade of grass remains undelivered He will not quit the Round of Existence nor abandon creatures in their need, only those who want His help must prove that they are in earnest. Therefore, even while not deluding oneself with the idea that the essential Knowledge can be either dispensed with or else replaced with some other thing, one should preserve an attitude of "prayerful expectancy" and meantime one should continue to work at the preparation of the ground, the field of oneself and others, so that all may be in readiness if and when the Lama reappears. Besides, there is another possibility to be considered in the same connection; if perchance it is known that somewhere in the Buddhist world, in Tibet perhaps or in Kham, a Lama is to be found, preferably one of the spiritual family of the *Nyingmapa* or of one allied to it, who might, in response to pressing entreaty and from Compassion, consent to come and dwell among us for the purpose of fanning back into flame the still smouldering embers of Sikkimese spirituality, then assuredly no time should be lost nor any effort spared in bringing him hither.

Should such a Lama arrive (or more than one) then there is little doubt that his presence would act as a magnet upon all who are endowed with a true qualification, and disciples would hasten towards him from all sides like moths flying into a flame, and many latent spiritual possibilities would wake up from their present state of torpor at his mere touch, and the holy *Nyingma* tradition, its intellectual poise restored, might see a day of renewal. This, then, should be one's prayer, that the sun of Knowledge may yet rise over Sikkim and with its warming rays cause to dissolve the mists that veil the face of Kangehendzonga. "*Stepping Stones*," Kalimpong.

THE BODHISATTVA AS A CHRISTIAN SAINT

By

KINGSLEY HEENDENIYA

THE good that men do live after them; they are seldom interred with their bones. And good men are never denied honour. It is for this reason that the Bodhisattva came to be honoured as a Christian Saint. It happened like this:

"In the Middle Ages (about the 8th century A.C.) there lived a certain Christian monk called St. John of Damascus. He held high office in the court of Alamansur, the Khalif of Bagdad and was famous as the author of many theological works. Among these was a "romance" called "Barlaam and Josaphat." This book had an immense popularity in Europe. Its circulation would have been envied by all the "best-sellers" of this modern age. To-day, reputed scholars admit that at last ninety different versions including sixty separate translations of this book exist. These include Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, and Icelandic translations. The original was written in Greek.

The popularity of this book, scholars maintain, was due to a large extent to its parables and stories. The "romance" was replete with absorbing parables. The story of Barlaam and Josaphat is itself a fascinating one. It concerns, in brief, the conversion of Josaphat into the Christian faith by Barlaam. The author then, very ingeniously enriches his story with short stories (mostly parables). The following is an illuminating example:

"A man saw a raging unicorn, and flying from him fell into a pit. But as he fell he caught hold of a branch which saved him from falling to the bottom, which he rested his feet upon a projecting stone. Looking about him he saw two mice one white and one black, gnawing at the root of the branch which he was holding which at the bottom of the well he saw a fiery dragon, and near the stone on which his feet rested, a serpent with four heads. But just at this moment he noticed on the branch he was holding a few drops of honey trickling down, and forgetting the unicorn, the dragon, the snake and the mice he directed

his whole thoughts how he might obtain the sweet honey.

"Now the unicorn is death, the well is the world full of manifold evil, the two mice are night and day which eat away the branch of life, which the four serpents are the four elements of the man's body and the fiery dragon represent hell."

The reader will agree that this is indeed a very fine parable. The reader will also note that the story has a striking resemblance to the Buddhist parable about the man in the well. In fact, the origin of this story lies in the Mahabarata. Not only this, the majority of the parables in "Barlaam and Josaphat" have been traced to Indian scriptures and have found parallels in the Bodhisattva's Jataka Stories.

Let us now return to the main story about Barlaam and Josaphat. Barlaam, converts Josaphat into the orthodox faith. In so doing he, strangely, recounts the definite prediction of Kondannā the Sage and the surmises of the other gages who saw the Bodhisattva not long after his birth. Some incidents in the life of the Bodhisattva also recur in the narrative. The dream of Maha Maya Devi and the three excursions of Prince Goutama during at which he was introduced to (inevitable) Disease Decay and Death, are two principal events. These, and many other information drawn from this book "Barlaam and Josaphat" led to the view that Josaphat is none other than the Bodhisattva idolised. This is a fact which has been established without the shadow of a doubt to-day Maurice Winternitz writes, "In course of centuries, the characters in this work had grown so familiar to the Christian peoples, that they were regarded as a pious Christian men who had really lived and taught, so that the Catholic Church finally made the two heroes of the story Barlaam and Josaphat, into Saints. Josaphat is however none other than the Bodhisattva."

The reader has only to ponder over the history, during which this story "happened," to visualise this migration of literature and agree that it is a remarkable one indeed!

"A certain king caused four caskets to be made: two covered with gold and precious stones, but containing naught but dry bones. The other two however he covered only with clay, but filled them with jewels and pearls. He then summoned his courtiers to him and asked them to give judgment as to the value of the caskets. They replied that those covered with gold must contain the royal jewels which the clay could be of no particular value. Thereupon the king ordered the caskets to be opened, and pointing to the golden ones he said, "These represent the men who go about clothed in fine raiment but within are full of evil deeds "But these" he added, turning to the caskets of clay, "represent holy men, who though ill-clad are full of jewels of the faith."

The reader would have immediately recollected the four caskets in Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice." It may be possible that Shakespeare got the idea from one of the many translations of "Barlaam and Josaphat" prevalent at that time. The Buddhist version of this parable is well-known.

OVER ONE HUNDRED HARIJANS EMBRACE BUDDHISM

On Sunday, June 10th, more than one hundred persons of both sexes belonging to the scheduled castes formally embraced Buddhism by taking Pancha-Sila from Hammalawa Saddhatissa Thera at the Buddha Vihara, New Delhi.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said he was happy that so many educated young men and women had seen light at last and had taken refuge in the Buddha Dhamma.

An All-India Y.M.B.A. was formed with Dr. Ambedkar as President. Saddhatissa Thera spoke on the importance of such an institution for the creation of an active interest in Buddhism in India and abroad.—*Cor.*

Sri Gopal Nandan Sinha, B.A., Asst. Teacher of Rajendra High School, Gaya and all the six members of his family who have been studying Buddhism under the guidance of the Ven. Pandit P. Pannananda Thero, of the Maha Bodhi Society Gaya Centre embraced Buddhism. The initiation ceremony was performed at the Maha Bodhi Hall.—*Cor.*

WHY INDIA SHOULD BECOME BUDDHIST

BUDDHISM was in vogue for about one thousand years in India and our aim should be to revive it again here. Without doing that, neither our community, *i.e.*, untouchables nor India can achieve their objectives and social and moral evils will remain as they are.

Hindus also agree that there is no peace in India. That there is no unity in India. They also agree that it is all because of the "chaturvarna" on which Hindu philosophy is based and the evils which India is facing cannot be eradicated so long as this caste system exists in India. But they do not know how these evils can end and how they should transform India into a peaceful and a united one. And also they do not want to ask others about it. They do not want to follow what is right. They have only in mind to eradicate the evils and do not do anything practically in this direction. Why Hindus want to retain caste system is because they are benefited by it.

I want to impress upon them that the caste system should go from India and they should change their ideas. But how their ideas can be changed. They follow Vedas and take everything written in them as true and binding on all Hindus. Vedas are based on caste system and so long as they follow them, this caste system will remain and India will suffer from the social evils for ever. If Hindus are keen to abolish the caste system and remove the consequent social evils, I would advise them in the sooner they change their ideas about the Hindu Dharma the better. So long as they do not follow the right way of eradicating the social evils and only talk about their abolition, it is all nonsense. They will never be able to better their lot.

I want to ask the people who hate Buddhism that who were the Bhikkhus at the time when Buddha was preaching his gospel? Buddha never believed in caste system. He included even sweepers in his fold. Buddha preached among his followers that they should never forget that they are all equal. Nobody should rule over others simply because he gave birth in a ruling family. Nobody is Brahmin by birth. There is no distinction between a man and a man. We attain rank in the world by our actions and deeds and not by birth. Lord

Buddha preached that as the water, whether it is from Ganges, whether it is from Jumna or whether it is from a drainage, it when enters the sea, it is sea water and likewise there is no distinction between a man and a man when he enters his fold. All are equal in his fold. Everybody can become a Bhikkhu. To eradicate the caste system, the Lord took people from all communities as Bhikkhus.

Out of every hundred Bhikkhus, ninety were Brahmins. Now the question is, why the Brahmins

By



Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR, M.A..

*Ph.D., D.Sc., Barrister-at-Law,
Minister for Law, Government of
India.*

accepted and followed Buddhism? I want to ask the Brahmins of the present day, what has happened to them? Why they hate Buddhism, when ninety out of every hundred Bhikkhus were Brahmins.

People follow Hinduism only to fill their bellies. Brahmins in the temples are there simply because by doing so they can lead a life which gives them plenty to eat and be merry in the temples. Last year on my way back from Ceylon, when I visited Madras, Brahmins came to me and requested that I should visit their temples. I was surprised that the province whose people were so orthodox Hindus should ask me to visit their temples, although they never allowed the untouchables to

enter the temples before. Some Brahmins brought elephants, some brought band and what not!

When I visited the Minakshi Temple in Madura, I saw that all that they do in the temples was to worship the 'moortis' and perform 'dhoop' and 'kapoor' ceremonies. When I asked them what they do in the temples, they stated that they receive about rupees one and a half lakh as a financial assistance from the Government every year which is sufficient for the upkeep of all the Brahmins performing the religious ceremonies on behalf of others in the temples. The Images of gods in some temples are decorated with golden and silver ornaments worth rupees five crores each while millions of Indian people are dying of starvation. Our Government says that there is no money for the development of industries in India and so much is being wasted in the temples. Brahmins talk about only eating. They take meals all the day long: morning meals, noon meals and evening meals. In some temples more than hundred and forty Brahmins are living and are enjoying at the public expense as well as Government grants. This is Hindu Dharma.

Indian social and moral life is becoming more and more degenerate. Corruption is rampant in every branch of administration of the Government. If someone is appointed a Controller to-day, the first thing he would think of is how to secure money from public and what methods he would adopt for making money. There is no sense of duty in our public servants because there is no dharma in the real sense.

Our dharma should be based on some sound principles. Lord Buddha never preached that in the world anybody is super-human. All are equal. The end of human beings is to attain Nirvana, peace and prosperity for all.

Hindus argue that if we want to embrace Buddhism, why we abuse Brahminism. I want to ask, is Hindu Dharma a Dharma? The reason we should make people aware of the evils of Brahminism is that if we allowed Brahminism to flourish along with Buddhism. Brahminism which is based on caste system and evil grounds, will hinder the progress of Buddhism which is based on peace, liberty, equality, fraternity

and justice. This is why we put the defects of Brahminism before the public. If we allow the dirty water to flow along with the pure water, whole water will become dirty. Brahminism is like dirty water and Buddhism is like pure water. To keep it pure, we must not allow the dirty water of Brahminism flow side by side.

Although Hinduism is also based on 'ahimsa' like Buddhism, the

fact that it is also based on 'chaturvarna'; is worth condemnable. So long as Hinduism is based on 'chaturvarna' it cannot flourish and we must discard it and embrace Buddhism, which is based on sound lines of peace, equality, liberty, fraternity and justice, and which is the only remedy for the present day social, moral and economic evils.

But we must not be hasty about this. We should go slowly and

slowly and in course of time, we will achieve our object. I do not want that old people, who have all along been following Hinduism should be asked all of a sudden to discard it which they may be reluctant to do. But I am very confident about the young men who, I am certain, will follow the correct path which will lead them to peace and prosperity in future. I wish that all the untouchables of India should follow the teachings of Lord Buddha.

BUDDHIST VIHARA SOCIETY IN ENGLAND

THE following report for 1950 of the Buddhist Vihara Society in England has been received by us:—

The year 1950 was of particular importance to the entire Buddhist world, for it witnessed the inauguration of the World Fellowship of Buddhists as a result of the International Buddhist Conference held at Colombo. Your Society was represented at that Conference by three of its Vice-Presidents, *viz.* Miss G. C. Lounsbury, Miss I. B. Horner, and U. Tun Hla Oung. They did excellent work in confirming and strengthening existing contacts and establishing new ones. In fact, U Tun Hla Oung, who has now settled in Ceylon, is still doing all he can to rouse and maintain interest in our London Vihāra project and collecting money for the London Vihara Fund.

In London, the Society had the honour of receiving some distinguished visitors. Our meeting on May 14th was attended by His Excellency Thakin Nu, the Prime Minister of the Union of Burma, and the Hon. Ratnayake, Food Minister of Ceylon, attended, and spoke at, our September gathering.

Another important event in the life of the Society—and at the same time a great loss—was the departure of our former Hon. Treasurer, Mr. Fran Allen, who left for Ceylon with the intention of joining the Sangha at the Vajirārāma, Colombo.

Public meetings were held monthly except during July and August. Speakers included the Ven. U. Thittila, Miss I. B. Horner, Miss G. C. Lounsbury, Lt./Col. E. F. J. Payne and Mr. F. J. Payne.

Buddhist literature was once again widely distributed, both in the U.K.

and abroad, *e.g.*, in Singapore, S. Africa (Cape Town) and the U.S.A.

The Hon. Secretary's mother made a Braille copy of the President's translation of the Dhammapada for use by the blind in Ceylon. She also put into Braille a translation by Miss Horner of ten Jātaka tales illustrating the ten Pāramīs.

We are again happy to acknowledge many gifts and donations from several of our members and friends. In particular Mrs. L. S. Polpitiya, who sent parcels of books and pamphlets on no fewer than eight occasions, helped us to spread the Buddha-word. Mr. H. R. Seneviratne, of Minuwangoda, sent two valuable books from his private collection for our reference library. Books of great value were also received from Dr. E. J. Thomas of Cambridge, Mr. Paul Oberdove, of Akron, Ohio, U.S.A., and Mr. Seah Mui Kok, of Singapore, whilst Mr. Fran Allen contributed a copy of Buddhadatta's "Concise Pali-English Dictionary."

Mr. R. H. F. Rose, now a wearer of the Yellow Robe in Ceylon, generously bore the cost of reprinting 1,000 copies of "The Word of the Buddha" for re-sale by our Society.

Miss S. Y. Eu, of Singapore, made a donation of £100 to our Vihāra Fund.

In January, Mrs. Rant resigned the Hon. Secretaryship for reasons of health and because her professional duties were rapidly increasing. She undertook the Hon. Treasurer-ship instead, which involved less strenuous work. When in August Mr. Allen, who had undertaken the Secretaryship jointly with U Tun Hla Oung, resigned because of his

forthcoming departure for Ceylon, Mrs. Rant once again shouldered the Secretaryship and Mr. J. McLeod became the Society's Hon. Treasurer.

The Ven. U Thittila continued his Pali and Abhidhamma' classes throughout the year. The small group meetings for meditation, also held under his guidance, are proving most successful and are regularly well attended.

In this connexion your Executive Committee wish to draw your attention to the great debt of gratitude which the Society owes to the Venerable Bhikkhu for the help and advice he gives so generously and selflessly. We appeal to all members to bear in mind the ever rising cost of living and the fact that the Bhikkhu is dependent upon voluntary contributions for his maintenance and that of the "Sāsana Kārī Vihāra." Although these very modest premises are by no means a Vihara in the Eastern sense of the term and although in the eyes of some they may not be worthy of the name, yet it cannot be denied that they form a focal point where Buddhists of all nationalities converge, where the word of the Buddha is heard and homage is paid to the Blessed One. The cost of the upkeep of the "Sāsana Kārī Vihāra" is borne by the Burmese Kappiya Group (body of *dāyakas*), but they need help, and our Society, which holds its meetings at the Vihāra and is enabled to house its reference library there, has every reason to be grateful for its existence. We therefore appeal to our members to give tangible expression to their appreciation of the work done by the Venerable U Thittila and the ameni-

(Continued on page 40)

THE BUDDHA-FACE

By J. P. PATHIRANA

So calm and serene with Compassionate looks,
My Master's face radiates a golden hue.
That smile of Karuna and Metta makes
One, a refreshing flower of scented dew.

How glistening are the eyes of Sakyamuni
So wide and whispering the Dhamma dear
To those "sufferers" a gateway of sanctuary,
The awakening light of the face so clear.

That smile make my heart aglow,
With light of Compassion darkening woes,
Give me my Master more and more
Thy glowing Dhamma to cleanse our sores.

Oh ! how fine and serene my Teacher's face
Like a lilly in bloom it shines and sways
Scented incense and flowers do grace
Pay homage in silence with devout pace.

The symbol of Metta in complexion calm
Reminds the smiling-face of the Enlightened-one
Thy serene smile is a soothing balm
Which paved the Path of Peace for everyone.

BUDDHIST VIHARA SOCIETY IN ENGLAND

(Continued from page 39)

ties provided by the Vihāra by contributing freely to our special U Thittila Fund.

Our Society's membership continued to increase during the year 1950, and it is noteworthy that we gained many more English members.

Particularly of the Society's financial position will be found in the attached Financial Report. From this it will be seen that our Vihāra Fund has been substantially increased, especially in Ceylon. More funds are needed for our general work, and it is hoped that members will renew their subscriptions promptly and so save postage expenses on "reminders."

Although this has been by no means a spectacular year, we have quietly and steadfastly continued to work for our Objects and on the whole been successful. Please help us to make 1951 a year of progress and outstanding success.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

Dr. MALALASEKERA

Dr. G. P. Malalasekera has returned after an extensive tour of Vietnam, Cambodia, Siam and Burma, Malaya and Singapore, where he was enthusiastically received by Buddhist organisations. On June 27 he delivered a lecture on "Buddhism in Vietnam" under the auspices of our Literary Branch.

NEW YEAR AND VESAK

The Hony. General Secretary acknowledges with thanks the following donations for the New Year Day and Vesak Celebrations:—

Sir Ernest de Silva, Rs. 100; Senator Cyril de Zoysa, Rs. 100; Mr. W. H. Buddhadasa, Rs. 100; Mr. W. D. Fernando, Rs. 100; Mr. R. L. Pereira, Rs. 50; Messrs. M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., Rs. 50; Mudaliyar B. J. Fernando, Rs. 50; Lady A. M. de Silva, Rs. 50; Rt. Hon. D. S. Senanayake, Rs. 30; Mr. N. Porolis Fernando, Rs. 25; Mr. Richard Salgado, Rs. 25; Mr. B. H. William, Rs. 25; Dr. B. S. Jayawardena, Rs. 25; Mrs. Susantha de Fonseka, Rs. 25; Mrs. E. Sirimanne, Rs. 25; Mr. U. N.

Wijetunga, Rs. 25; Mr. G. S. Fernando, Rs. 25; Mr. D. A. S. Nanayakkara, Rs. 25; Mr. M. D. P. Fernando, Rs. 25; Mr. W. Leo Fernando, Rs. 25; Mr. N. J. V. Cooray, Rs. 25; Mr. T. D. Amaradasa, Rs. 25; Messrs. W. E. Bastian & Co., Rs. 25; Mr. P. Kumaraswamy, Rs. 25;

LIGHT OF ASIA ELOCUTION CONTEST

Entries close: 17th July, 1951.

Semi Finals: 21st and 22nd July, 1951.

Finals: 4th August, 1951.

Apply for entry forms to—
The Hony. Secretary,
English Literary Branch

Mr. T. G. M. Perera, Rs. 25; Mr. K. D. C. Gunatilaka, Rs. 20; Mr. W. H. de Zoysa, Rs. 20; Mrs. S. Meegama, Rs. 20; Mr. Clarence P. Amarasingha, Rs. 15; Mr. A. G. Wickramapala, Rs. 15; Mr. A. G. Hinniappuhamy, Rs. 15; Mr. D. H. Jayawardena, Rs. 15; Mr. H. S. Gunasekera, Rs. 15; Mr. E. de S. Wijeyaratne, Rs. 15;

Dr. Simon Silva, Rs. 21; Mr. H. M. Gunasekera, Rs. 10; Mr. D. L. F. Pedris, Rs. 10; Hon. Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya; Rs. 10; Mr. U. A. Jayasundera, Rs. 10; Dr. W. E. A. Fonseka, Rs. 10; Messrs. Hemachandra & Sons, Rs. 10; Mr. T. D. Piyadasa, Rs. 10; Mr. A. J. Peiris, Rs. 10; Mr. S. Kuruppu, Rs. 10; Mr. N. J. S. Cooray, Rs. 10; Mr. E. Upasena, Rs. 10; Ratnakara Book Depot, Rs. 5; Mr. M. C. Jinadasa, Rs. 5; Mud. D. S. C. Umagiliya, Rs. 5; Mr. S. R. Bastian, Rs. 10; Mr. K. D. S. Samarasingha, Rs. 5; Mr. H. D. Seneviratne, Rs. 10; Mr. E. S. Amarasingha, Rs. 15; Mr. L. D. Weerasingha, Rs. 5; Mr. W. P. Daluwatte, Rs. 5; Mr. B. A. Mendis, Rs. 10; Major Gen. Tun Hla Oung, Rs. 20; Mr. G. D. P. Gunawardena, Rs. 2; Mr. G. H. de Zoysa, Rs. 5; Mr. J. P. Wijesutiya, Rs. 5; Mr. Alles Rs. 5. Total Rs. 1,423

PERSONAL

Our congratulations to Sir Ukwatte Jayasundere, K.C. He was conferred Knighthood on King's Birthday.

RESIGNATION

Mr. S. K. Kodikara.

NEW MEMBERS

14-5-51 : Mr. S. Nagalingam, 233/14, Cotta Road, Colombo 8; Mr. M. K. Perera, No. 373, Etul-Kotte, Kotte; Mr. W. S. Perera, Medagama, Gampaha; Mr. N. A. Byramjee, 33, Mahawatta, Narahenpita; Mr. M. Kumariah, 204, Nawala Road, Nugegoda.

28-5-51 : Mr. U. A. Dharmasiri, Lello-pitiya S.P.O.; Mr. M. C. Fernando, Police Hospital, Colombo; Mr. S. A. Gnana-tillake, Income Tax Office (Unit 7), Colombo 3; Mr. S. Singarayar, No. 306, Modara Street, Mutwal, Colombo; Mr. E. B. R. I. Perera, No. 160, Battaramulla, Talangama; Mr. N. R. Kulatunga, 19/1, Kandawatta Road, Nugegoda; Mr. A. Edirisinghe, 10, Sabha Lane, Thimbirigasyaya Road, Colombo 5; Mr. R. W. Amarasena, 627, Baseline Road, Dematagoda; Mr. S. P. Silva, 187, Cotta Road, Colombo 8; Mr. J. P. Suriapperuma, 449/4, 2nd Division, Maradana; Mr. M. R. Perera, 1404, Wanatha Road, Udahamulla, Nugegoda; Mr. V. R. Nanayakkara, 11, Campbell Terrace, Colombo 10; Mr. A. R. Abeyasinghe, No. 7, Matha Road, Manning Town, Borella.

11-6-51 : N. R. Perera, Ceylon Wharfage Co., Ltd., Colombo; Dr. K. D. Peiris Gunaratne, 11, Dematagoda Road, Dematagoda; W. D. Joseph, 347, Etul Kotte, Kotte; M. S. Salgado, 10, New Bullers Road, Colombo 4; H. J. C.

Pieries, Ministry of Health and Local Government, Colombo; A. J. Fernando-pulle, Auditor-General's Dept., Colombo; R. Wijesekera, 87, Cotta Road, Colombo 8.

BADMINTON

Y.M.B.A. "B" team beat K.C.Y.M.A. "B" vs. Wellawatta Recreation Club on 7th June, 1951, and 11th June, 1951 respectively. The scores are as follows:—

Vs. K.C.Y.M.A. "B"

Stanley Peiris vs. J. Sandarasagara, 22/20, 21/10 (Y); R. Wijesingha vs. F. X. Cassie Chetty, 12/21, 14/21 (K); M. V. Gnanasekera vs. H. D. Kingsley, 21/12, 21/14 (Y); Ashley Perera vs. C. D. Kelly, 23/21, 21/17 (Y); Stanley Peiris vs. F. X. J. Casie Chetty, 21/12, 21/14 (Y); R. Wijesingha vs. J. Sandarasagara, 21/19, 21/19 (Y).

DOUBLES

J. Sandarasegara and F. X. J. Casie Chetty vs. Stanley Peiris and R. Wijesingha, 21/15, 18/21, 21/11 (Y).

Won by 5—1.

Vs. WELLAWATTA RECREATION CLUB

Stanley Peiris vs. N. Vythilingam, 21/19, 21/12 (Y); R. Wijesingha vs. T. Sivagnanasundaram, 21/13, 21/19 (Y);

M. V. Gnanasekera vs. V. Kathirvel, 21/10, 21/9 (Y); Ashley Perera vs. S. Sangarapillai, 10/21, 9/21 (W); Stanley Peiris vs. T. Sivagnanasundaram, 21/16 21/17 (Y); R. Wijesingha vs. N. Vythilingam, 16/21, 15/21 (W).

DOUBLES

Stanley Peiris and R. Wijesingha vs. N. Vythilingam and T. Sivagnanasundaram, 15/21, 16/21 (Y).

Won by 5—2.

FILM SHOW

Through the courtesy of the Medical Officer, Department of V. D. Clinic, General Hospital, there was a Film Show on Social Hygiene on June 8, 1951, in the Association Hall.

DINNER

The Dinner-Concert on June 30th organised by the Hon. Gen. Secretary was a successful event. A large number of members and their wives was present and a delightful evening was spent by all.

OBITUARY

We record with regret the death of Muhandiram D. R. C. Nanayakkara.

We extend our sympathy to Mr. N. E. Weerasuriya, K.C., on the death of his mother.

We record with regret the death of Mrs. A. E. Gomes, wife of Mr. A. B. Gomes, one of our benefactors.

NEWS AND NOTES**RELIEF ACTIVITIES AMONG REFUGEES**

THE Maha Bodhi Society of India sent a mission of mercy to the refugee colonies of Boogla and Saluva in Nadia District. The party consisted of Pandit Viswanath Sastri, member of the Governing Body, Bhikkhu Kassapa of Germany, Bhikkhu L. Ariyawansa of Chittagong, Sri Ramendra Kishore Mallick, Secretary, Rehabilitation Committee, Sri S. C. Sen Gupta, Chief Officer of Government Refugee Camps and Sri D. Valisinha, the General Secretary of the Society. At Boogla station a large gathering including representatives of 27 refugee colonies gave the party a rousing reception. Those present included Sri S. K. Gupta, Principal, Boogla College, Sri Promode

Chandra Sen, Secretary, Sri Krishna Asram, Sri Kiran Roy and Sri Nihar Dutt.

The party was taken round the Boogla College and other institutions which owe their existence to the enterprise of the refugees. The party then went to the Dak Bungalow where arrangements had been made for the distribution of dhutis and saris to the most needy. In the presence of the Chief Officer of the Refugee Camps, Sri D. Valisinha distributed the clothes to the refugees from the 27 colonies. Sri D. Valisinha, Pandit Viswanath Sastri, Sri Ramendra Kishore Mallick and Bhikkhu Kassapa then addressed the gathering and explained the significance of the occasion. There was great rejoicing among the refugees who shouted cries of "Bhagwan Buddhaki Jai" and other slogans.

From here the party proceeded to Asoka Colony in Saluva which was started by Seth Jugol Kishore Birla, the great philanthropist. Here too dhutis, saris and frocks for children were distributed among a large number of refugees. Some of them expressed a desire to see a Buddhist temple established at this place. It may be mentioned that this colony was declared open on 4th April, last by N. Jinaratana Thera, Jt. Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society.—Cor.

VESAK IN NEPAL

This year the Vaisakha festival was celebrated in Nepal on an unprecedented scale. To commemorate the thirce sacred day a public meeting convened by the Dharmodaya Sabha, Katmandu and attended by thousands of both Buddhists and Hindus was held on the historical

ground of Bhukhel—a ground just below the sacred hill of Swayambhu, under the chairmanship of His Majesty the King of Nepal. Ministers to the Interim Cabinet were also present on the occasion.

Bhikkhu Amritananda, Sister Madhavi, Sri B. P. Koirala, the Home Minister, Sri Ganesh Man Singh, the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Sri Nripa Jung, the Education Minister, all spoke on this historic occasion. Bhikkhu Amritananda, speaking on the importance of the day, tried to bring home to the minds of the people the point that Buddha belonged not only to the Buddhists but to all the Nepalese and the whole world.

Sri B. P. Koirala, speaking on Buddhism and democracy, laid special emphasis on the necessity of the peace message of Lord Buddha in Nepal and outside.

Sri Ganesh Man Singh, remarked that the celebration of the Vaisakha day would be a mere show if they did not practise Buddhism in its spirit.

The King expressed his pleasure at being able to take the chair on the

occasion and asked all to follow the peace message of Buddha and establish peace in Nepal. The King gave the evidence of his large heartedness and reverence for Lord Buddha by performing Buddha Puja at Anandakuti and listening to the chanting of Paritta by the Bhikkhus.

Before the conclusion of the meeting, Bhikkhu Amritananda, on behalf of the Dharmodaya Sabha, placed before the King and his government three demands which were read out by him before the meeting. They were as follows :—

(1) To declare Vaisakha day a state holiday to all the Govt. officials irrespective of their faiths.

(2) To prohibit hunting round about the sacred hillock of Swayambhu.

(3) To forbid the cutting down of the trees on the hillock.

(It is learnt that all these demands have been granted).

In the afternoon, at the conclusion of the religious ceremonies, a procession attended by thousands of Buddhists and

Hindus and several different national musical parties, was taken out. The relics of Lord Buddha were carried in a decorated coach drawn by five beautifully caparisoned horses—which was the most notable feature and the chief object of attraction in the long procession which moved very orderly and peacefully along the crowded narrow streets. Monks and nuns chanting Paritta, devout men, women and children with Buddhist flags, flowers and incense-sticks, young men singing devotional songs, voluntary workers of Paropakar (a charitable institute in Nepal) serving with cool drinks and controlling the crowd, constituted this historic religious procession.

The Buddhists cherish this unprecedented occasion with profound gratitude to His Majesty, the King of Nepal, for accepting the chair on the occasion and thus making it a success and for declaring the Buddha-Jayanti day a state holiday not only to the government officials of the Buddhist faith but also to all other officials holding other faiths.—
Cor.

Y. M. B. A. SUNDAY SERMONS

Regular Sunday Bana Preaching

is held

at the Y. M. B. A. Hall

from 9 to 10 a.m.

on Stanzas from the

Dhammapada

Programme for July, 1951

1st SUNDAY : PITAKOTTE SOMANANDA THERA

Abhidammanaka Bikkhunan Katha Vattu

Like gourds cast away in autumn are these dove-hued bones. What pleasure is there in looking at them.

2nd SUNDAY : THALALLE DHAMMANANDA THERA

Janapadakalyani Rupananda Theriya Katha Vattu

Of bones is this body made, plastered with flesh and blood, wherein are deposited decay and death, conceit and detraction.

3rd SUNDAY : GORAKANE CHANDINA THERA OF VAJIRARAMA

Mallika Deviya Katha Vattu

Even the ornamented royal chariots wear out, the body likewise approaches old age, but the Dhamma of the good decays not. Thus does the good reveal it among the good.

4th SUNDAY : HEENATTIVANE DHAMMALOKA THERA

Lāludayayi Therassa Katha Vattu

The man of little learning grows old like the bull. His muscles grow, his wisdom grows not.

5th SUNDAY : KOTTE SANGHARATANA THERA

Ananda Therassa Udāhagatha Katha Vattu

Through many a birth in Samsara wandered I seeking but not finding, the builder of this house. Sorrowful is this repeated birth.

“MAY ALL BEINGS BE WELL AND HAPPY.”

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

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