



# THE BUDDHIST

“ *Sila Paññānato Jayam* ”

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## VISĀKHĀ

VISĀKHĀ, the chief female lay disciple of the Buddha, we are told, was born in the city of Bhaddiya in the kingdom of Anga. *Dhananjaya*, the treasurer, was her father and *Sumanādevi* was her mother. Visākhā was but seven years of age when she devotedly listened to the clear-worded exposition of the Master and attained to the first stage of Sanctity (*Sovān*). At the age of sixteen, she was given in marriage to *Punṇavaddhana*, son of *Migāra* the treasurer.

### THE “ FIVE BEAUTIES ”

The story runs that when *Punṇa* was asked by his parents to choose for himself a suitable wife he is reported to have said :

“ If I can find a maiden endowed with the ‘ Five Beauties ’ (පංච කලසාස සම්පන්නාංගං උජ්ජනං) I will do as you say.” “ But, what are these ‘ Five Beauties,’ dear son ? ” asked the parents. “ Beauty of hair, beauty of flesh, beauty of bone, beauty of skin, and beauty of youth,” replied *Punṇa*. For in the case of a woman of great merit the hair is like a peacock’s tail, and when it is released and allowed to fall, it touches the hem of her skirt, and then the ends of the hair curl and turn upwards. This is (1) *Beauty of Hair*. (කෙස කලසාස). Her lips have a colour like that of a bright red gourd and are even and soft to the touch. This is (2) *Beauty of Flesh* (මොස කලසාස). Her teeth are white and even and without interstices and shine like a row of diamonds set upright or like an evenly cut conch-shell. This is (3) *Beauty of Bone* (අවච්චි කලසාස). Her skin, without the use of sandal-wood or rouge or any other cosmetic, is as smooth as a garland of water-lilies and as white as a garland of *Kanikāra* flowers. This is (4) *Beauty of Skin* (ඡ්චි කලසාස). Though she has brought forth ten times, her youth is just as fresh as though she had brought forth but once. This is (5) *Beauty of Youth*.” (මය කලසාස)<sup>1</sup>

Immediately, *Punṇavaddhana*’s mother invited a hundred and eight Brahmins, treated them cordially and asked them to set forth in search of a maid with the “ Five Beauties.”

Before they sent out the Brahmins they gave them much money and a costly golden garland and said : “ When you find a maid of these ‘ Five Beauties ’ deck her with this golden garland.”

Accordingly the Brahmins proceeded, and finding no such girl in all the great cities, they entered *Sāketa*. The day on

which they entered was the “ *Public Day* ” and the people were celebrating the festival. On this day, it is said, that all the people—even they who do not ordinarily go out of their houses—would come forth with their attendants and walk to the bank of the river. And it is said that young men of wealth and position of the warrior caste stand along the road, and when they see a beautiful girl of equal birth with themselves deck her with a garland of flowers.

Visākhā, (who was now about sixteen years of age, adorning herself beautifully, proceeded to the bank attended upon by many maids. But there was an unexpected rain on this day, and the maids scampered as fast as they could and sought shelter in a hall. Visākhā, however, in spite of the heavy rain, kept to her usual gait.

The Brahmins then said to Visākhā : “ Dear girl, your attendants hurried for shelter and entered the hall without having their garments and jewels soaked ; but, you failed to hasten your pace and has got drenched.” In response thus spake Visākhā : “ Dear friends, speak not thus. I am stronger than my attendants, and I have good reasons for not hurrying myself.

“ For, friends, there are four persons who do not appear to advantage while running; and there is another reason besides.

“ An anointed king, friends, does not appear to advantage if decked in all the glamour of his jewels, he girds up his loins and scurries about the palace court. By so doing he will certainly incur unfavourable criticism, and people will say of him : ‘ Why is this great king running about like a common householder ? ’

“ Likewise the king’s state elephant, when fully caparisoned, does not appear to advantage while running; but, when he moves with the natural grace and measured dignity of an elephant, he does appear to advantage.

“ A monk does not appear to advantage while running. By so doing he will evoke only unpleasant reproach, and people will say of him : ‘ Why does this monk gallop about like a common householder ? ’ But if he walks in a tranquil and serene gait he does appear to advantage.

“ A woman does not appear to advantage while running. By so doing she will evoke only unpleasant reproach

and people will say of her : ‘ Why does this woman scamper about like a man ? ’

“ These are the four persons that do not appear to advantage while running.”

But, what, *Gear* girl, is the other reason ? ” asked the Brahmins.

“ Dear friends, mothers and fathers bring up a daughter seeking to preserve intact and un-broken the bigger and smaller organs of her body ; for we are goods for sale and mere merchandise to be auctioned and they bring us up with the intention of bartering us off in marriage to some other family. The result is that were we, while running, to trip over the hem of our skirt or some obstacle on the ground, and fall and break either a hand or a foot, we would be a burden to our family. But if the clothes we wear get wet, they will dry. Bearing this consideration in mind, dear friends, I did not run.”

The Brahmins discerned that she possessed the ‘ Five Beauties ’ and applauding her, they decked her with the golden garland and brought the news to *Migara*, the treasurer.

### VISĀKHĀ’S MARRIAGE

Now, preparations were made for the wedding by both parties. *Dhananjaya*, the treasurer, gave his daughter much wealth, cattle, men-servants and women-servants, and provided all that was necessary for Visākhā, and in administering her the final admonition spake thus :

“ Dear daughter, there are these items of right conduct and good manners you must observe so long as you live with your husband : ”

1. *So long as you live in the house of your father-in-law, the indoor fire is not to be carried outside.*
2. *The outdoor fire is not to be carried inside.*
3. *Give only to him that gives.*
4. *Give not to him that gives not.*
5. *Give both to him that gives and to him that gives not.*
6. *Sit happily.*
7. *Eat happily.*
8. *Sleep happily.*
9. *Tend the fire.*
10. *Honour the household divinities.*



And this is the true meaning of the ten admonitions :

1. If you discern any fault in your father-in-law or in your husband, say nothing about it when you go to this neighbour's house, or to the other neighbour's house ; for there is no fire that may be compared to this fire.

2. If either women or men in your neighbour's houses speak ill of your father-in-law or of your husband, you must not bring home the slander that you have heard them utter, and repeat it, saying : ' So and so said this or that unkind thing about you ; ' for there is no fire comparable to this fire.

3. You should lend only to those who return borrowed articles.

4. You should not lend to those who do not return borrowed articles.

5. When poor kinsmen and friends seek your assistance, you should give to them, whether or not they are in a position to repay.

6. ' Sit happily ' means that when a wife sees the approach of her mother-in-law or her father-in-law or her husband she should stand as a sign of respect and not remain seated.

7. ' Eat happily ' means that a wife should not eat before her mother-in-law and her father-in-law and her husband have partaken of their meals. She should serve them first, and when she is sure that they have had all they care for, then, and not until then, may she herself partake of her meals.

8. ' Sleep happily ' means that a wife should not go to bed before her mother-in-law and her father-in-law and her husband have gone to bed. She should first perform the major and minor duties which she owes them as a

matter of conjugal obligation and when she has so done, then, she may herself lie down to sleep.

9. " Tend the fire " means that a wife should regard her mother-in-law and her father-in-law and her husband as a flame of fire.

10. " Honour the household divinities " means that a wife should look upon her mother-in-law and her father-in-law and her husband as her divinities deserving of her respect.

**HER GOOD QUALITIES**

Visākhā was very liberal in her ways. It is said that all the gifts she was showered with, on her wedding day, she distributed among the various families in the city.

Visākhā was also very kind and considerate. It is said that at midnight on the very day of her marriage, one of her maids gave birth to a foal. She immediately went with her maid-servants and caused the animal to be bathed in hot water and anointed it with oil.

Now, we are told that Migara, the treasurer, Visākhā's father-in-law, was a follower of the Niganthas. But because of her foresight and discerning nature she invited the Blessed One to her father-in-law's mansion, and made the whole family to follow the Buddha and His Teaching and her father-in-law attained even the first stage of sanctity.

Visākhā was renowned as the chief benefactress (Dayika) of the Buddha. Her faith and delight in the Dispensation of the Buddha (Buddhasasana) was boundless. She caused a large monastery (Pubbarama) to be erected for the Blessed One and His disciples.

The day on which the monastery was completed, and the opening ceremony was in progress, we are told that toward evening, Visākhā in the company of her children and grand-children circled round the monastery chanting five solemn stanzas in her voice of delicate cadence ; for she had consummated a wish which she had conceived in the distant past.

The monks, hearing her voice, informed the Master thus : ' Lord, we have never heard Visākhā singing. Today, however, she is walking round the monastery with her children and grand-children chanting and singing. Is she gone into a frenzy, Lord ? ' inquired the Monks.

Thereupon, the Blessed One explained to them : monks, she is not singing. Her ancient wish is now fulfilled and she is giving vent to a joyful utterance as she moves about, and related the story of the past to make known her aspiration of yore.

In conclusion, the Master uttered the following stanza :—

සඵලාපි පුප්පිරුසිමිතා—  
කසිර මාලාගුණෙ ධරු  
ඵලං ඵලෙන මචේචෙන—  
කත්තබ්බං කුසලං ධරු.

As from a heap of flowers many a garland is made, so by one born as a human being many a good deed should be done.

*May All Beings be Happy !*

PIYADASSI.

Vajirarama,  
Bambalapitiya.

# HISTORY OF BUDDHISM IN CHINA

## BUDDHIST INFLUENCE PERSISTS ON LIFE AND THOUGHT OF MILLIONS OF CHINESE

*(This article originally formed the substance of a talk given recently to the Sino-British Club of Hong-Kong at the Cosmo Club. The speaker was introduced as one who has specialized in Chinese Buddhist studies for many years, during which he once held a three-year research scholarship from the Chinese Ministry of Education for this purpose.)*

**By JOHN BLOFELD**

**I**F you look around the decaying sanctuaries of Buddhism in various parts of China and see the condition in which they are today, you may well come to the conclusion that Buddhism has lost whatever significance it once had for the Chinese and that careful study of it is therefore hardly of sufficient importance to be worth undertaking. I hope to be able to convince you, however, that the matter cannot be dismissed quite so lightly for several reasons. Until very recently—and perhaps even now—there were (or are) more Buddhists in the world than adherents of any other religion ; that is we include the majority of the Chinese people in our definition of Buddhists.

In fact, we may not be justified in doing this, as the majority of educated

Chinese are more inclined to agnosticism or to the largely ethical Confucian system of thought than to any particular religion, while the uneducated masses who form by the far greater part of the population generally exhibit varying degrees of belief in a host of deities properly belonging to quite a number of different religious systems. It may even be true to say that genuine Chinese Buddhists are outnumbered by the combined forces of Christian and Moslem China, or even by the adherents of one or other of those religions alone. Statistics of this kind are very hard to come by and not even vaguely accurate. Even so, the fact remains that Buddhism is still a great living force in many parts of Asia and that its influence in China is by no means negligible.

What is very much more important than the numerical strength of Buddhists in China today is the fact that, in the past, Buddhism has had an enormous and perhaps imperishable influence on the life and thought of the Chinese people as a whole. This influence persists today in no small measure, even among those Chinese who would not dream of applying to themselves the term " Buddhists. " A few examples of this influence, taken at random, are :—Art and Philosophy.

Here the influence is no less noticeable in the attitude of modern Chinese painters to man as a purely incidental part of nature (so different from the Western conception which makes him very much the centre of the universe) than in the magnificent sculptures of the Wei Dynasty



(442-543 A.D.). These latter are to be found in caves widely scattered throughout North China and are evidence of a lost spirit of religious fervour in no way less remarkable than the spirit which gave Europe its wonderful mediaeval cathedrals.

Here the influence of Buddhism is even more pronounced. It is well-known that Chu Hsi, the officially accepted commentator on the Confucian Classics, betrays unmistakable signs of (perhaps unconscious) Buddhist influence. A still more remarkable illustration of my point can be found in the works of several Sung Dynasty (965-1002 A.D.) philosophers who, in making severe attacks on Buddhism (which they characterized as "a foreign importation from India,") continually made use of Buddhist phraseology, logic and methods of argument—already so much a part of their mental equipment that they were unable to dispense with them, despite their hostile attitude to Buddhism.

The Chinese of today is eminently a practical man often largely concerned with the means of earning enough money to support his family with greatest degree of comfort he can afford, yet his character must seem strangely enigmatic to one who does not recognize the Buddhist inspiration of many of his thoughts, words and actions which constantly crop up as thought to disprove our opinion of him as a materialist. I have often surprised Chinese friends of mine by fastening on something they have said quite casually and pointing out the closeness of the thought uttered to some peculiarly Buddhist idea. Sometimes, they refuse to accept my explanation; but more often though they express genuine surprise, they concede that is at least some basis of truth for my interpretation.

Foreigners and Chinese alike are apt to underrate the importance of Buddhist influence on almost the deeper all aspects of Chinese life, but that would not happen if they were to carry their observation beyond the decaying state of the temples, toe ignorance of the majority of temporary monks and the mixture of religions and superstitions which the Chinese peasant vaguely refers to as "Buddhism." Indeed, an understanding of the part played by Buddhism is as vital to the proper comprehension of Chinese civilization as an understanding of Greek, Roman or Hebrew influences is to the attainment of a true estimate Western civilization.

### ORIGIN OF BUDDHISM

The Chinese name "Fu-t'o" (usually shortened to "Fu") is a transliteration of the Indian word Buddha (The Enlightened One) and the characters were almost certainly pronounced "Bu-do" in the Chinese of two thousand years ago. The title, Buddha, was given to Gautama, the Heir Apparent of a small state in Northern India, who renounced his succession to the throne in order to search for Truth and Enlightenment.

Gautama Buddha lived in the 6th and 5th Centuries B.C. and may even have been alive during the earlier part of Confucius' life. His teaching were at first handed down orally and, by the time of the great Buddhist Council of Kaniska, held in India during the 1st Century A.D., two great divisions based on variations of the oral tradition had been firmly established.

The first of these was the Hinayana (Hsiao Ch'eng) or "Lesser Vehicle," based on Pali transcriptions of the oral tradition. This school still flourishes in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia and other parts of South-East Asia. The second was the Mahayana (Ta Ch'ng) or "Greater Vehicle," based on Sanskrit transcriptions, and now the chief form of Buddhism in Tibet, Mongolia, Japan, Korea, Tongking, Annam, Cochin-China, parts of the U.S.S.R., etc., as well as virtually the only form of Buddhism in China.

The former, Hinayana, claims that its scriptures were recorded in writing at an earlier date than those of the other school and that its tradition is therefore the correct one. However, where two oral traditions exist side by side, it does not follow quite certainly that the first to be recorded must be the correct one (though there is a high degree of probability that this is so). Western orientalisists are now gradually coming over to the opinion (first held among Europeans by the Russians) that the later tradition, Mahayana, incorporates more of the actual teaching of the Buddha than the earlier school. Arguments can be advanced for both sides, but I personally am inclined to believe that Mahayana, at least in the days of its phenomenal and rapid expansion over so much of Asia, did (or does) contain certain vital principles missing in the more literal and dogmatic Hinayana. Otherwise, it is hard to understand how Buddhism could have swept over so many highly civilized Asiatic countries already possessing a considerable degree of sophistication—taking in, as it did, not only the countries mentioned above, but also the whole of India, Afghanistan, Java, Malaya and huge areas of Central Asia. The teaching of modern Hinayana, though admirable in many respects, does not seem to possess the fire and the vision to stir men's hearts to such a remarkable extent. However this may be, the Buddhism of China is purely Mahayana and so it is with that school that I shall deal exclusively, except in as far as there are certain fundamentals concerning which the teaching of the two schools does not differ. It must be understood, though, that Chinese Buddhism is now so heavily overlaid with superstition and purely Chinese beliefs, of Taoist origin that some delving is necessary before we reach the real Buddhism core of the religion.

### EMPEROR'S DREAM

Traditionally, Buddhism was introduced in the reign of the Han Emperor, Ming-ti. In A.D. 61, he is reputed to have dreamt of a golden image appearing in the West (the direction of India) and to have asked his Councillors to interpret the dream to him. One of the latter, explained that it must refer to a great sage who had appeared in the West (India) many centuries before. Accordingly, Ming-ti sent messengers to India, who returned in A.D. 67 with many Buddhist books and two Indian monks.

The reply of the Emperor's Councillor would seem to indicate that some knowledge of the Buddha and his teaching existed in China prior to the Emperor's dream and modern research has now led us to suppose that Buddhism reached the coast of Shantung by sea and West China by land one or two centuries before the Christian era.

The great periods of Buddhist expansion in China were the Wei (A.D. 442-543) and T'ang (618-960) Dynasties. Most of the enormous work of translating the thousands of volumes which form the Buddhist Tripitaka (The Three Baskets of Scripture, Commentaries and Rules of Conduct) was done during those dynasties. This work was so well performed that modern Chinese and Japanese scholars have been quite unable to improve the wording of the translations, which were the outcome of a patient and laborious method. First an Indian scholar with a knowledge of Chinese would make a preliminary translation in (presumably) unidiomatic Chinese. This would then be put into a good literary form by a Chinese scholar or scholars who were especially proficient in their own language, as well as knowing something of Sanskrit. This second version would be retranslated into Sanskrit and compared with the original text, after which corrections would be made and still another version produced. The process was repeated and repeated until the final version read as excellent Chinese, while being entirely faithful to the original. In this connection it is of interest to discover that Christianity failed to win over the Chinese literati, long after its introduction into China, just because in making the early translations of the Bible, the literary value of the Chinese versions was not stressed. The translators aimed at approaching the common people direct but, judging from the success of Buddhism in former times and from the immense respect in which the official literati (who wielded immense influence) were held, it might have been better if more attention had been paid to the literary value of the translations. Indeed the whole course of Christian expansion in China might have been very much more rapid and converts won in much greater numbers.

Another matter which requires to be touched on briefly is that the accusation of pessimism which has often been levelled at Buddhism is quite undeserved. So far from anything in the nature of predestination or possible damnation, Buddhism teaches that ultimately all sentient beings will enter Nirvana. Though many Buddhists believe in Heaven and Hell, either as mental states or as actual places, both are regarded as temporary abodes in which people are suitably rewarded for the good or evil they have done. Ultimately, however, the peace and bliss Nirvana await the denizens of either. Most educated Buddhists do not place much belief in the doctrines of Heaven and Hell, regarding the teachings concerning them as entirely metaphorical.

During the T'ang Dynasty, especially many Chinese pilgrims made the difficult overland journey to India, while Indian monks and others arrived in even larger numbers by land and sea. The Indian visitors and settlers left some marks on Chinese life which exist to this day. Moreover, some of the Chinese pilgrims, who spent many years in India, Ceylon and South-east Asia, wrote detailed and accurate descriptions of everything they saw. Many of the huge gaps in the history of India and other Asiatic peoples, who, unlike the Chinese, seem to have had little taste for historical records, can only be filled by studying the contemporary accounts of Chinese pilgrims and statesmen.



After the T'ang Dynasty, the work of translation slowed down and tailed off, but Buddhism was by then firmly implanted in China and there were many periods during which its influence was supreme. In addition to this, the Indian system of logic and certain other sciences became generally used in China, adding greatly to that country's store of intellectual equipment.

The two great schools of Buddhist thought agree on the basic importance of the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path and several of the other fundamentals of Buddhism outlined below.

#### A. THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

These are :—

1. Life is inseparable from suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is uncontrolled desire for what we lack and aversion for certain conditions which we cannot avoid.
3. The elimination of uncontrolled desire and aversion is the only means to put an end to suffering.
4. This can be accomplished by the Noble Eightfold Path.

#### B. THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH

1. Correct views of the Four Truths and freedom from delusion.
2. Correct thought and purpose to follow out the implications of those Truths.
3. Correct speech; the avoidance of lies and slander.
4. Correct (or pure and kind) actions.
5. Correct livelihood; the avoidance of impure or cruel ways of making a living.
6. Correct zeal in following the Path.
7. Correct memory, which retains the true and rejects the false.
8. Correct meditation; absorption in the Absolute, a state of mind beyond all notions of duality or plurality.

#### C. OTHER FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES

1. The Three Poisons—desire/aversion, anger and ignorance must be strenuously avoided.
2. The Virtues of Ahimsa (pu hai) or harmlessness and of meta (tz'u-pei) or compassion must be cultivated to the utmost extent. They must be extended even to the animal kingdom.
3. Superstition, meaningless rituals, religion (in the sense of blind belief in something which cannot be proved from experience or through the intuitive knowledge acquired by contemplation), as well as profitless metaphysical speculation must all be carefully avoided.

This last is MOST important.

The Buddha taught that we should be "lights unto ourselves" and was entirely opposed either to mere belief or to superstition, which he regarded as the same thing. His attitude may be summarized in these words: "Do not believe anything just because I, your teacher, say that it is so. Rather, test my words in the light of your own experience and by the intuitive knowledge gained from properly performed meditation. Accept only what you find to be true after applying such tests." In this respect, the Buddha differs sharply from other religious teachers who demand faith in their own divinity, or at least in their divinely inspired messages.

Some years ago, I found myself strangely attracted towards the Catholic Church and even went so far as to put myself under the instruction of a very learned and kindly priest. Many things he explained to me in the light of experience and logic, but there were others which he could not explain in this way. On the contrary, he advised me to "take a jump" and to have faith in certain things which were beyond the power of man to prove. This jump proved an insuperable obstacle to me and I imagine that orthodox Buddhists would have been restrained from going much further with Catholicism for the same reason.

Thus, we find among even the earliest Buddhists a spirit of scientific enquiry which seems to us strangely modern.

#### MONASTIC SYSTEM

All Buddhists put the greatest emphasis on Dhyana (Chinese "ch'an" and Japanese "zen") which can be loosely translated by the word "meditation." This practice is aimed at the gradual extinction of desire/aversion and at the perception of the true nature of ourselves and of existence, just as the Buddha perceived it 2,500 years ago, while sitting absorbed in meditation under the Tree of Enlightenment (P'u'ti-shu.) as it came to be called.

The Buddha adopted the theory of reincarnation from the Hindus among whom he was born and taught that Dhyana (meditation) practised through successive reincarnations will lead to the gradual cessation of desire/aversion and that, as the latter is the cause of the aggregation of the elements which bind us to a new round of birth and death, its elimination will result in the perfecting of a dispassionate mind, neither clinging to what is nor desiring what is not. Finally, the attainment of utter dispassion will bring with it deliverance from all ties and supreme Enlightenment, beyond which lies Nirvana and the cessation of further rounds of birth, decay and death.

Before we consider more closely the nature of Nirvana, I should like to say a few words about the theory of reincarnation. The average Westerner will often scoff at it and even refuse to discuss the subject, other than as an interesting "native" superstition. But why? Christians, Moslems, Jews and others believe in eternal life after death, but can there be eternity in one direction and not in the other? Wherever there is birth, death follows in due course. Surely only that which is birthless can also be deathless? Moreover, science teaches us to accept the theory of the conservation of energy and of matter. Either may undergo endless changes, but never diminution or increase. The particles of matter which form the paper and tobacco of a cigarette, may very easily be converted into smoke and ashes and, later on, will take on other forms in conjunction with other similar particles, but to imagine that even one of those particles can cease to exist, leaving nothing to take its place, is plainly so unscientific that even a school-boy would laugh at the notion. Now, if there is any part of man which is not comprised in his purely physical entity (call it soul, spirit, mind, or what you will), though it cannot be proved that it follows the same laws as energy and matter, surely it is no more "superstitious" to suppose that it does follow these great universal laws, than that it does. The Buddhist theory that "all

life is one," it will be readily perceived that a belief in reincarnation (or progression from form to form) follows naturally from the belief that the physical and spiritual man, like everything else in the whole universe, are composed of the same "substance," that substance which underlies the continually changing forms making up the tangible world.

#### DISAGREE ON NIRVANA

The exact nature of the state known as Nirvana is something on which even Buddhists disagree, accepting this disagreement as the natural result of trying to conceive the infinite in terms of the finite. It is seldom held, however, that Nirvana is synonymous with total extinction, as many Western critics of Buddhism have wrongly supposed. Mahayana Buddhists usually take Nirvana to mean a full realization of our complete union with the Absolute (Chenju) and a cessation from those delusions which have been the cause of continual rounds of rebirth. Of this, I shall have more to say later.

In passing, it should be noticed that the great monastic system, which has been the core of Buddhism ever since the lifetime of its founder, was instituted because the Buddha was convinced that men and women tied down by family and other worldly cares could never attain to a degree of dispassion sufficiently advanced to ensure deliverance from the delusions of form and the Enlightenment which results from absence of that delusion.

Another matter which requires to be touched on briefly is that the accusation of pessimism which has often been levelled at Buddhism is quite undeserved. So far from anything in the nature of predestination or possible damnation, Buddhism teaches that ultimately all sentient beings will enter Nirvana. Though many Buddhists believe in Heaven and Hell, either as mental, states or as actual places, both are regarded as temporary abodes in which people are suitably rewarded for the good or evil they have done. Ultimately, however, the peace and bliss Nirvana await the denizens of either. Most educated Buddhists do not place much belief in the doctrines of Heaven and Hell, regarding the teachings concerning them as entirely metaphorical.

#### BODHISATTVA

No description of Chinese Buddhism would be complete without some reference to the Bodhisattvas (P'usa). A Bodhisattva is one who has attained to the point where he can throw off the chains of existence in the universe of relative values and enter Nirvana. Having reached this point, however, he makes a solemn vow to remain within the tangible universe as a compassionate spiritual power until every sentient being has won its own way to Nirvana. How much justification for this doctrine is to be found in the original teaching of the Buddha often serves as matter for argument. Those who believe in the sacrifice of the Bodhisattvas regard it as the height of selflessness or self-denial and, though we may call it as superstition, it is not very different from the Christian doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement and voluntary sacrifice of himself for others. The Chinese look upon the Bodhisattvas as the embodiments of various spiritual qualities. Thus Kuan-yin is revered as the embodiment of compassion, Wenshu as the embodiment of wisdom, and so on.



The Chinese also believe in the existence of numerous Buddhas, or beings, already Enlightened and already in Nirvana, but the emphasis on the **oneness** of life (with which I will deal shortly) makes it necessary for them to regard these different Buddhas as differing from each other only on the relative plain and as being different aspects of the **one eternal truth**. This is not to say that there are no ignorant people who fail to appreciate the relativity of all such differences and who regard the various Buddhas as separate deities to be worshipped as such.

To come back to the subject of Nirvana, or rather to continue with the logical development of that theme—if Nirvana means the realization of our fundamental unity with the Absolute; what is the Absolute? The Chinese commentators say that this cannot be put into words, for to predicate anything of the absolute (positive or negative) is to limit the illimitable. At best, they can only hint at its nature, leaving full understanding to those who have advanced sufficiently with their meditations to have attained an intuitive knowledge of it. The Buddha always emphasized the relativity of all objects which can be perceived by the senses, using illustrations which even uneducated people could understand. Thus he often said that "there are 84,000 sentient beings in a single drop of water" and that "there are as many universes equal in size to our own as there are grains of sand on the bed of the Ganges River." For people with a more highly developed understanding the problem as to the nature of the Absolute is clothed in such phrases as "form is not different from void, nor void from form; for form is void and void is form," or "the voidness of non-void." Such phrases mean that in the absolute sense, everything is one (i hsin), but that, in a relative sense, each tangible form has its own qualified existence. By void is meant that:—

Nothing exists:—

- a. Independently of cause and effect,
- b. Independently of coexisting forms,
- c. Independently of subjective factors in the mind of the beholder,
- d. Of birth, growth, decay and death; or, in the case of manufactured articles, or creation, decay and destruction.
- e. Independently of continuous change, which never ceases even for a split second.

**NOTHING PERMANENT**

Thus, nothing is permanent or static and all forms, all differences are but expressions of an underlying unity. This is very similar to the theory of some of Einstein's followers and other modern scientific thinkers who regard matter and energy as one, and accept the whole universe as being made up of the transient forms in which that energy constantly reveals itself. Scientists sometimes refer to this energy as "the stuff of the universe," while philosophers who hold the same theory prefer to call it "mind." The Chinese term is "i hsin" which means "one mind" or "universal mind." Whatever we call it, is apparent that it is continually expressing itself in new, but transient forms which, in turn, give way to yet other forms. This is the very essence of Buddhism and would seem to be the ultimate theory of modern scientists.

Once this theory of existence is accepted, the folly of attachment (desire/aversion) becomes obvious. Even distinctions between I and You are seen to be relative. Hence the need for sympathetic understanding and compassion, since others are but reflections of ourselves, sharing our nature and, in the absolute sense, even our identity.

**PURE LAND SECT**

Most classifications of Chinese Buddhist sects list from eight to 13 as being of primary importance. Though they differ from each other points of doctrine or by placing particular emphasis on one or another aspect of the Buddhist Doctrine as a whole, yet all are based upon the same fundamental conception of the Absolute, and all aim at an inner realization of our unity with it. Buddhists explain these differences as being due to upaya (Chinese, fangpien), a Sanskrit word which connotes the different means used by the Buddha and his disciples to explain fundamental truths to audiences of varying intellectual capacity, which ranged from highly educated Brahmins to illiterate peasants.

Of the sects which still exist in China today, the following are the most important.

1. Wei Shih Tsung.—Members of this sect hold that nothing exists except pure consciousness. In many ways, it is the sect with tenets most in accord with the findings of modern science. Hence, though it had long remained dormant, it was revived only two decades ago by that well-known Buddhist figure, the late Venerable T'ai Hsu, in an effort to interest people with a modern scientific education in the study of Buddhism.

2. Ching Tu Tsung or the Pure Land Sect. This has the largest following of all, as it appeals to people who are unable to comprehend the more difficult teachings of the other sects. It is also one of the furthest removed from original Buddhism, being undoubtedly influenced by a sect of Hindus who worshiped Krishna, with whom they believed they could attain a mystical union based on infinite love.

The main teaching of the Pure Land Sect is as follows. Amita Buddha (Omit'o Fu) inhabits a spiritual land to the West of this universe, wherein anyone who calls upon his name with true faith and love in his heart can be born. Here the new-comer is not expected just to revel in the joys of that heavenly place, but to receive further teaching in the Buddhist doctrine until he is ready to shed the ties of desire/aversion which result in rebirth, and so to enter into the peace of Nirvana. Adherents of the sect are advised to repeat the holy name of this Buddha (prefixed by the respectful term 'namo') so often that the repetition continues at the back of their minds even when they are engaged in conversation, working, eating or sleeping. I suspect that the origin of this practice (though as I have said it is based on a similar practice of the Hindu devotees of Krishna) was the desire of the founders of the sect to teach concentration and one-pointedness of mind to simple people who would not be able to practise the more advanced forms of meditation and contemplation employed by the other sects. Whether this was so or not, it is important to note that the Pure Land Sect is no counterpart of the Christian Heaven,

but a mere stage on the road to the realization of the individual's unity with the Absolute.

3. Lu Tsung or the Law Sect. This sect emphasizes the practice of the Vinaya, or Sanskrit code of rules for the Buddhist way of life. In Christian terms, we may say that it advocates reliance upon "works" rather than upon contemplation or faith. Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of this sect is the same as that of all the others, namely conscious union with the Absolute, and only the method of achieving this union is different.

4 and 5. Hua Yen Tsung and T'ien T'ai Tsung. These sects are each based upon the teachings contained in a particular Sutra (Fu-Ching), as the records of the Buddha's teachings are called. In a brief account of this kind, it is impossible to go into the intricate differences which distinguish these sects from the others, yet their importance to Chinese Buddhism is such that to avoid all mention of them could hardly be justified. For a detailed description of these and other Chinese sects, the reader is referred to my "Jewel In The Lotus," about half of which is devoted to distinctions between various Buddhist schools of thought.

6. Chen Yen or Mi Tsung. This sect is enormously popular in Tibet and Mongolia, but it has followers among the inhabitants of North and West China as well. Indeed, it is one of the few sects which is numerically on the upgrade. Its principal teachings concern ritualistic practices aimed at establishing spiritual contact with the Bodhisattvas and enlisting their help in the struggle to free the mind from earthly ties. Though strongly influenced by the form of Tantric Hinduism which flourished in Bengal during the middle of the first millennium A.D., its Buddhism is quite orthodox as far as fundamentals are concerned. That is to say, though its practices differ widely from those of most Buddhists, its underlying theory and its ultimate goal show no such difference. As an example of this, I may quote what is known as the "pa kung" or "eight offerings." These offerings are set out on an altar opposite to a Buddhist image or picture and, in front of them, are placed eight identical offerings in the reverse order. The devotee, when being instructed into the meaning of this practice, is told the following: "Since ALL is ONE, it would be entirely wrong to suppose that the Buddha is any more closely connected with the image in front of you than with your own heart. Indeed, the Buddha, the image and you yourself are, in the absolute sense, one and the same, though the forms by which our senses are deluded may cause us to think otherwise. Hence, in making offerings to a statue, surely you should make the same offerings to the Buddha in your own heart." This, of course, is a simple way of bringing home a profound metaphysical doctrine to one whose education and mental attainments may not be above the average for undeveloped countries with largely illiterate populations, like Tibet.

7. Ch'an Tsung. This sect, known in the West by its Japanese name of Zen (which is a transliteration of the Sanskrit word Dhyana, meaning meditation) may well be called the Meditation Sect, for it emphasizes meditation to the exclusion of every other kind of spiritual practice. Next to the Pure Land Sect, it has a larger following in China than any other



sect and its followers include many of the most highly educated and deep thinking Far Eastern, European and American Buddhists of the present day. Sternly set against ritual or any outward manifestations, it aims at a rapid perception of our union with the Absolute, which may accomplish in this life. In other words, the sect may be regarded as a group of Buddhists attempting to achieve Nirvana here and now. Dr. Hu Shih, Chancellor of the National University of Peking and a noted Chinese scholar, with modern ideas, has called it a Chinese revolt against the intricate ways Indian metaphysical thought. This, in my opinion, is going too far, though the teachings of the sect show far less Indian and far more purely Chinese influence than any other. Traditionally, it was brought to China by the Patriarch Bodhidharma who claimed that the Patriarchate extended back in a direct spiritual line to Anandacamma, the favourite disciple of Gautama Buddha, from whom the doctrine was communicated to him without any need for words. Hence it is often called "the wordless doctrine." Some of the adherents of this sect have been extremists. Among them was one reputed to have warmed himself at a fire kindled with wood obtained chopping up a Buddhist image. Another produced the remarkable sentence (remarkable at least for a Buddhist monk): "The wise man seeks not for Buddha, but into his own heart; while the fool seeks for the Buddha and neglects to look into his own heart."

The Book most used by this sect is "The Sutra of Wei-Lang" (more properly romanised Hui Neng), translated into English by Wong Mou Lam and revised by Christmas Humphries. This book, which gives us a remarkable insight into the philosophy of the highest form of Chinese Buddhism, can be obtained from The Buddhist Society, 106 Great Russel Street, London, W.C. 1. (price 4/6). Though Hu Shih doubts its authenticity, it is a most fascinating book, and one which has played a very important part in the development of Chinese Buddhism.

### MEDITATION SECT

Though the Meditation Sect shows obvious traces of Chinese Taoist influence and is historically the furthest removed from early Indian Buddhism, yet its almost agnostic rejection of religion in the ordinary sense, of metaphysical speculation and of ritual, together with its insistence on the supreme importance of meditation (leading to an intuitive knowledge of the true nature of ourselves and of the universe) have caused many people (including myself) to come to the conclusion that it has gone far closer to the Buddha's original teaching than any of the other

Mahayana sects. Many people also feel that it possesses what is needed by the too literally minded and scripture-conscious Hinayana sects to recover the great inspiration which once made Buddhism the light of all Asia.

Just near Hongkong, on the island of Lantau there is a monastery belonging to this sect, known as Pao Lien Ssu, the "Monastery of the Jewelled Lotus," where visitors who are prepared to accept nothing but vegetarian fare are welcome to stay for a few days in clean rooms surrounded by some of the most wonderful scenery in this part of China. The amount of payment to be made for their simple and kindly hospitality depends entirely upon the visitors themselves. I strongly recommend those who have found this article interesting to spend few days there and see something of Chinese Buddhism in practice. The most remarkable feature of the place from Western point of view is that, while there is a proper Meditation Hall around which the monks sit daily to perform the chief practice of their sect, there is also a big Shrine-Room in which services are conducted at dawn and, sometimes in the afternoon, according to the ritual of the Pure Land Sect. These services are for the benefit of numbers of Chinese Buddhists who find themselves unable to cope with the more difficult doctrines of the Meditation and other Sects. I like this typically Chinese spirit of compromise, which leaves the monks free to follow the Buddhists teaching in whichever way appeals most to them and caters also for the local people and the simple folk among the pilgrims, who would feel themselves rather lost in the Meditation Hall, but who like to approach the Shrine in a spirit of great reverence for the Founder of their religion.

### CONCLUSION

From what has been said, it will be seen that the real Buddhism, obscured by superstition and metaphysics equally foreign to it, was really a system of philosophy rather than a religion in the ordinary sense of the word. Indeed, religion is nothing but a convenient misnomer for it. To this philosophy is added a code of ethics (with which I have not had space to deal) strangely similar to the Christian code—so much so that there are some who believe that the almost identical passages in the Sermon on the Mount and in some of the Buddhist Sutras (recorded several centuries prior to the birth of Christ) are due to more than coincidence, but we have no historical proof of the correctness or emptiness of this claim. All we have to go on are two very slender pieces of information, neither very conclusive. The first is that there is no reason to believe that the inhabitants of the Middle and Near East at the time of Christ were much more familiar with Indian beliefs than is generally realized. The second is that, in the Bible, there is a complete gap in the life of Jesus from the time when he was baptized by John the Baptist (at the age of twelve) up to the time when (in his late twenties) he began

his ministry in earnest. However, despite the close similarity of Buddhist and Christian ethics, the two religions have little else in common.

What is much easier to show than any connection between Buddhism and Christianity is a close parallel between the Buddhist approach to the Truth and modern scientific methods directed at the same goal. The Buddha's insistence on putting everything to the proof of experience before accepting it as even relatively tame was the first known instance of the application of the scientific approach to the phenomena of the universe. In a longer article than this and with a rather better scientific education than I have had, I could point out numerous examples of modern scientific findings being anteceded in the Buddhist Sutras. Yet the conclusions recorded in the latter were reached at a time when few of the experimental aids employed modern scientists were available. This makes the parallel all the more remarkable.

Finally, a word about the future Buddhism. In my opinion, the Communists will rapidly put an end to the tottering remains of an organized Buddhist church in China, thereby causing the few scholarly monks to suffer for the laziness and ignorance of the great majority. Yet, judging from the growing number of Western intellectuals who are interesting themselves in Buddhism or even adopting it as their religion, the world may see a revival of Buddhist thought in a new guise. Those who feel that the total lack of any religion forms too great a void in their lives who are yet unprepared to accept a religion which demands Blind faith in what they cannot prove, are finding in Buddhism a scientific method of probing into the mystery of existence, coupled with a highly ethical system of morality based on the scientific perception of the interdependence of all sentient beings. If this claim seems too bold, I offer the reader the following recommendations:—

1. To remember that the host of superstitions which flourish in so many so-called Buddhist monasteries and homes have little in common with real Buddhism.

2. To take stock of the growing Buddhist communities in such countries as the U. S. A., Great Britain, France, Germany, Finland, etc., and to notice the high intellectual quality of the greater part of their membership.

3. To study the fundamental theories of Buddhism and to contrast them with those of the European philosophers of the last two or three centuries—such as Hegel, Schopenhuer, etc.—and with the well-attested findings of modern science.

I have tried to cover a vast field in a very small space, and must crave the reader's indulgence for having omitted or skirted by many points of interest, as well as for having dealt with each division of my subject in a manner so vague and so largely devoid of the premises up which most of my assertions have been made. I must ask him to believe that I have said nothing which is not the outcome of careful study and of premises sufficiently strong to lend adequate support to my statements. To those who wish to pursue the subject further, I recommend the books already mentioned, together with Mr. Christmas Humphries' little volume entitled "What is Buddhism?"



# BUDDHIST ESSAYS AND REVIEWS

[Buddhist Essays and Reviews being a collection of contributions to journals on the subject of Buddhism by the late A. D. Jayasundere, Proctor, Crown 8vo., pp. 15+210, with an Index, Maha Bodhi Society of Ceylon, Colombo, 1949, paper Rs. 3/-, full cloth Rs. 3/50.]

THE author was one of the foremost exponents of Buddhism, having had, as Dr. Malalasekera says in the Appendix, a "life-long attachment to the correct study of the Dhamma." The volume before us contains 34 Essays and Reviews in good English, and any interested reader will be reluctant to lay the book aside till he has finished reading the instructive articles many times over. Printed by the Colombo Apothecaries' Co., Ltd., the little book is very well got up and should find a ready sale.

The first 23 pages are devoted to a review of the late Bishop R. S. Copleston's "Buddhism" containing a "disguised attack on Buddhism." In spirited but restrained language, Mr. Jayasundere defends his religion and puts some inconvenient questions to the scholarly Bishop. This is an article written in 1893 and is well worth reading if only to appreciate the state of religious differences which existed in Ceylon half a century ago.

In another review, regardless of friendship, the author criticises Mrs. Rhys Davids, "the most brilliant Pali Scholar the West has produced," for her vagaries on *Atta* (soul) and her "pedantic hyper-criticism."

In reviewing a book by a writer who is master of his subject, one is afraid to say anything savouring of adverse comment, but one ventures to suggest that, had the learned author lived to see the volume through the press, he would have revised some passages with his later advanced knowledge of the Dhamma. For example, on page 53 it is said that "the seventh *javana* is the rebirth-producing thought." If this be so, rebirth must always take place by a *kamma citta* of the immediately preceding life, and therefore the second, the third, the fourth, and fifth and the sixth *javana citta*s (*aparāpariya-vedanīya*) can never produce a rebirth. Thus King Dhammasoka in whom appeared so many *tīhetuka kusala javana citta*s cannot have rebirth from any one of them in the future because some other low *akusala javana citta* which happened to be the seventh *javana* in this life gave rebirth as a boaconstrictor. This seventh *javana* can only give immediately succeeding birth and no other. Therefore it follows that Dhammasoka's third birth (the one next to the rock-snake) can only take place from one of the *javana citta*s of the boa state and never will Dhammasoka have the opportunity of a birth from the *tīhetuka javana citta*s of his Dhammasoka state. If in the future existence a person is in hell where no *kusala* rebirth-producing *javana citta* can take place, he can never have a rebirth in a heaven after dying in a hell, and therefore once fallen into the "bottomless perdition" (hell), he will for ever be in hell without being able to be born for want of a seventh *javana* committed in the hell capable of producing rebirth. This is a block on which the late renowned Buddhist guru, Mr. M. Dharmaratna

(Lakminipahana Editor) stumbled in his "Satvotpatti." Space does not permit elaboration.

Quoting Dr. Evans-Wentz, our author says on page 55: "The mental principle of cognition or perception (*sanna*) in each mental state of consciousness, with all its heritage of the past, is a re-cognising in the image reproduced the idea of the original object revived by the very marks which were observed by its predecessors in a certain reflection." Here memory is explained all right, but how is consciousness able to cognise the future events not yet taken place, *i.e.*, not a reproduction but a pre-production? This is a stumbling block to the superficial student. Consciousness does not merely reproduce but also pre-produces as well phenomena that had already appeared and that had not yet appeared. So far as memory is concerned, it is a reproduction of original objects in the past in the direct line of experience of each individual. But how does this explanation stand with regard to *para citta vijānana* (knowledge of the mind of others), or to the physical world phenomena in the past with which the direct line of experience of each individual process has had no previous experience?

The true explanation is that *citta* is *pabhassara* (very bright) when freed from the *nivaraṇas*, and this *pabhassara citta* every time it arises, arises in contact with the other two points of the trinity, namely, *ajjhātikāyatana* and *bāhirāyatana*.

The *ajjhātikāyatana* is related to the entirety of the past, present and future organs of sense. The *bāhirāyatana* is related to the entirety of the past, present and future objects of sense. The *citta* is that which links. This linking is *phassa* (contact). That which links is *citta* which when exposed to the *ārammaṇa* (sense-object) becomes consciousness (*viññāna*). No single *ajjhātikāyatana* or *bāhirāyatana* can be isolated so as to have no connexion (*paccaya*) with the rest of the actuality. Hence it is that *pañcaekhandha* is a mighty process without beginning, without end, without limitation and everywhere connected. Thus said Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa: "Viññānam viññānakkhandheti ādisu rūhito khandho nāma." (Sammohavinodani, Khandha Niddesa). Each individual moment of *viññāna* is one point of the ocean of *viññāna* existing at a particular moment which is connected with the past, present and future by way of *purejāta* (happening before), *paccājāta* (happening afterwards) and other *paccaya*. *Pabhassara citta* properly attuned senses the past, present and future, irrespective of whether a phenomenon appertains to one's own past or to another's past and irrespective of whether the phenomenon has already occurred or has not yet occurred. Dr. Evans-Wentz was probably unaware of this aspect and hence had not unravelled the puzzle of the sphinx-riddle.

On the same page (55) we find: "The reality consists in *Kamma*, not in the

physical identity as maintained by the *Attavādi*." The *Attavādi* maintains not only physical identities (*rupam attato samanupassati*) but also *nāma* (non-material) identities (*ved'nā attato samanupassati, saññā . . . sañkhāra . . . viññāna attato samanupassati*) of the *sakkāya-dīp'ti* where even the *kamma* reality is a *micchādīp'thi* when viewed as *atta*.

The statement on page 59 that "the fact that the *Ti-Pitaka* in one solitary place has laid down twelve additional *nidānas* dealing with Sorrow's Ceasing and the Way thereto has not yet received the attention nor aroused the interest of the student of Buddhism," is too sweeping since it is true only of a large section of the modern students of Buddhism.

The Master's illustration of the Causal Formula (on page 65) appears to be a condensation of Mrs. Rhys Davids's translation in her "Kindred Sayings," Vol. II, p. 27. In reducing her twenty lines to fourteen, her "there is" has been altered to "where," with the result that the sentence is incomplete. But this is a very minor lapse (which may even be a copyist's error).

At page 83 the author says "But a virtuous person never could accept the gift of another's body or flesh. The *Bodhisatta* was therefore obliged on all occasions to make the supreme gift to a being of no virtue whatever, be it a demon, a cannibal, or a wild beast." The student of Buddhism will here naturally ask "Is not the gift of *Dhamma* the supreme gift and is not that gift given to virtuous persons? How is this principle in keeping with the purification of the three points of *Dāna*—donor, property donated, the recipient? Is it not that when these points are purified that *dāna kamma* becomes intensified?"

The property subjected to donation should have been procured without the contemination of *adattādāna* and *pānātipātā*. The recipient should be qualified (*dakkhineyya*). The donor's consciousness which releases the grasp (*upadana*) of the property donated should be whole-hearted and unreserved. When these three points are perfect, the *dāna kamma* becomes perfect and highly effective.

Jūjaka came and asked for the children of *Bodhisatta* to be employed as servants. There were no virtues in Jūjaka; otherwise he would never have asked for those children. Here is an instance of the *kamma* being kept in balance by the abnormal increase of the intensity of non-grasping (*nirlobha*) of the donor compensating the abnormal decrease of the intensity of virtue of the recipient. The donor's releasing consciousness (*nirlobha*) can reach its climax only when the attachment to the object released is the highest, when the most strongly grasped object is given away without reserve to a recipient whose virtues have sunk to the lowest. A mother will not find it very hard to allow her child to be taken away by another to be adopted; but she will find it very hard to allow her child to be taken away to be cooked as food. The attachment in the latter



case is the strongest and it can only arise when the purpose of the recipient is the basest. The basest recipient here becomes the highest qualified to receive the gift. It is not that the highest gift can never be made to a righteous person but that the highest gift of the giving away of children can occur only when there is the greatest *upādāna* resulting in the greatest mental opposition. In the case of children the Bodhisatta gave them away overcoming the greatest *upādāna* opposition. The recipient in such a case must necessarily be non-virtuous.

Similarly *mettā paramattha pāramitā* can only arise where the bitterest animosity,

the bitterest foe, come into contact with *mettā*. Here is an instance where the highest love arises to oppose the bitterest animosity.

The point of view that should be taken is the development of one's own powers to oppose the greatest *upādāna* clinging. Ignorance of this aspect of *dāna* viewed from the point of *upādāna* resistance had led the Padre referred to by the author to pass severe strictures on an act of suicide committed by the Bodhisatta in jumping into the mouth of a famished tigress. The Padre had failed to see the difference between suicide and release of *upādāna* attachment to the body. The conduct of

Jesus Christ referred to by the author was not a release of *upādāna* attachment to his body but the payment of penalty for the sins of his own creation which includes a case of undergoing the agonies of the effect before the happening of its own cause.

The book is one which every student of Buddhism should read and study. It is hoped that the publishers—one of whose objects is to work for and assist in the propagation of the Buddhist religion—will endeavour to give publicity to it not only in the East but in occidental countries as well.

T. N. G.

## Drink, Horse-Racing and Cards are Inventions of the Devil

### E. T. G. CITES THE DEAN OF ROCHESTER TO SUPPORT THAT DRINK MINISTERS TO LUST AND EVERY EVIL PASSION

SOME extracts from a very impressive sermon, on the subject of the use of intoxicating liquor preached by the Dean of Rochester many years ago is well worth reproduction. We trust that those among the Sinhalese who have been led by evil example into the commission of the deadly sin of drink will take the solemn warning conveyed by this glimpse of the awful degradation brought on a so-called "civilized" country by this terrible crime.

The Dean says :—

"There is many a man who is 'the worse for drink'—whose physical and mental strength is weakened by it, whose home is rendered unhappy—who never shows signs of what is called drunkenness. The man who goes on 'sipping' through the day and every day, is not seldom a worst drunkard than he who, taking a quantity of intoxicating drink now and then, in a short space of time is conspicuously and ostentatiously drunk."

"But what about the more potent results of drunkenness? It is not only that millions of money and centuries of labour are wasted by it: not only that the brain is diseased, and the heart weakened, and the limbs crippled, and the face disfigured."

"Wine (drink) above all things doth God's stamp deface; that the man is abased, the home made miserable; that women are outraged, beaten, and murdered, children untaught, starved, and in rags; not only that all which is high, and noble, and generous, and brave, and pure is destroyed by drunkards; not only that this sin has tarnished our national honour and enfeebled our influence; that our emigrants have brought a curse and not a blessing to those whom

they have taught the use of it; it is not only that earthly sorrows have been multiplied a thousand-fold, that temporal happiness has been marred, and the bodily health has been ruined—but countless souls have been lost also." "Not only at home but abroad, for our missionary efforts have been sorely let and hindered by this vice. It has been said to our missionaries "You come to us with the Bible in one hand and in the other there is a cup of deadly wine; you tell us to give our full strength of mind and body to Christ; and then you Christians stupify us with opium. So it was said by an Indian who was reproved for drinking Whisky; "Yes, it is true, we use it too freely; *but we do not make it,*" and again, when a British officer was trying to persuade a Mohammedan to be a Christian, and a drunken Englishman happened to pass, the native said, "Would you have me be like that? My religion makes it impossible, but yours does not."

Drunkenness ministers to lust and to every evil passion. The Police have given frequent evidence that most of the men and women whom they have seen going into brothels were more or less intoxicated. How often do we read in our Police and Assize reports of the prisoner saying, "I was mad with drink." The Chaplain and Governor of the Stafford Gaol made a long and patient investigation and arrived at the result that 92 per cent of the convicted cases had to do with drunkenness. How often we read in the last terrible confessions which take place in the condemned cell, that these wretched men, who were soon to die in obedience to the law, have expected their nearest and dearest, and sometimes all who could bear them from the Scaffold, to keep away from drink.

"Drunkenness enslaves a man's soul more than any other vice, because it disarms him of his reason and of the wisdom whereby he might be cured; and therefore commonly it grows upon him with age, making him more and more a fool, and less and less a man. The miserable results of drunkenness may be seen in our streets tonight. Men and women glorify in their filthy conversation, in the mockery

of religion, "having their understanding darkened because of the blindness of their heart, who being past feeling have given themselves up to work all uncleanness with greediness" having a devilish delight in sin, akin to that of the murderer in Whitechapel and Spitalfields.

Verily our Lord had good reason for so strictly prohibiting us to touch this accursed thing; would that we all obeyed him! Well might the king of poets complain:

O that men should put an enemy in  
Their mouths to steal away their brains  
Should with joy, pleasure revel and  
applause

Transform themselves to beasts!"

To this sermon we would add this:

Many a bacchant has pretended to pay heed to good counsel and promised to abandon the filthy habit for good, but this "giving up" of the worship of Bacchus was only for so long as the addicts were within sight of their families; the moment they were out of sight of their kith and kin they not only dived deep into the poison bottle but, returning home in a bacchanation mood, destroyed their own hard-earned property—the cost of replacing which they had to add to their drink bills.

What a terrible picture is this? What a pity it is that the average middle-class Ceylonese in particular is so utterly devoid of a spiritual outlook that he thinks so lightly of his spirituous addiction—and thereby procuring his own and his dependents ruin. It is a farcical comedy that the Government provides facilities for drinking and penalises drunkenness!

Another two promiscuous vices are Horse Race betting—with its concomitant of "bucket-shopping"—and Card gambling. The pack of Cards is veritably a double-edged invention of the devil. It is very often used to murder (cut) the "Baby!" A very significant expression, indeed!

Devotees of the turf, the bottle, and the Card-pack often commit ruthless and shameful malversation of the booties of their kith and kin which they artfully contrive to grab! They become dead to all sense of shame and self-respect,







fate of the bulls. He knows the law of Karma and that the suffering of the bull is due to its past sins, of its past crimes and so he says :

කඹු ගල් තලාලයි  
පාරට දමන්                    නේ  
ඵම ගල් පැහිලයි  
ගොන් කුර ගෙවෙත්        නේ  
අකුසල් කළ නිසයි  
ගොන්වි උපත්                නේ  
කිරිගල්පොත්තෙ  
කන්දයි මේ අදින්         නේ

In the past even conversation was not infrequently interrupted by verse. Once, the story goes, that a certain poor boy was fishing by the side of a river, where the king chanced to pass by. Seeing the boy he summoned him. The youth overjoyed at being addressed by a king is said to have burst into the following verse :

මාවැනි බිළින්                    ද  
වර වර ලඟට කැන්             ද  
දුක් සැප කුමන්                 ද  
අසන තිරිඳෝ වෙන කොහින්ද

It was this little boy, who, later under the name of Sri Rahula, grew up to be a luminary in the field of poetry. To accept this standard from a present day boy or girl, educated in an English or even in a Sinhalese school, would be an impossible hope. Far from spontaneous versification, one can even hardly expect these children or even most of their Sinhalese teachers to recite a Sinhalese verse correctly expressing the poet's feelings and thoughts in its original vigour and strength. At a recent competition the "Kokila-Hatana," an extremely well-organised literary contest, one of the judges in his criticism very aptly stated that some of the competitors instead of reciting in effect really "sang" the verses to Hindustani tunes. This is the bane of all school-going children today. Songs invariably creep into their Sinhalese verse and at times they deliberately introduce song-tunes into Sinhalese verse and thereby bastardise its purity. Mr. Edwin Kottegoda has emphasized this point when he says that ".....the art of reciting Sinhalese poetry is gradually deteriorating." (Vide: *The Buddhist*, Oct., 1948., Vol. XIX, No. 6). Many children and even grown ups, adopt an English accent while they recite simple Sinhalese verses. It is a pity that a Sinhalese cannot pronounce a Sinhalese word without a foreign accent.

This foreign accent perhaps became essential with the introduction of the piano, guitar and other musical instruments to accompany the reciting of a simple Sinhalese verse. The boatman

did not recite his verse to the accompaniment of a guitar nor did the "goviya" in his lonely hut or pāla play a violin as he recited his verse. Yet these instruments are eagerly resorted to by the "great artists" who actually "sing" these verses and thereby deliberately kill the rustic simplicity of the folk-verse.

I might quote another instance from a later period in our Sinhalese literature to show poetry flourished then.

The South was very famous for its poets and poetesses. Gajaman Nona of Malara, called the "Singing Bird of Ruhuna" by Mr. Austin de Silva, was a clever poetess whose verses so inspired the then Governor that he bestowed on her many riches. Once she had come to a well to get water; she drew a pot of water and leaving the pot near the wall encircling the well had gone out; in the meantime someone in way of a joke hid the pot; on her return she found the pot missing and immediately composed the following invective :

පු.විරුචි. පු.විරුචි.  
පු.වි ක                               ලේ  
වතුර අරන් ලීඳ උඩ  
නිබ්බාය ක                         ලේ  
අට පහ නොදන්නා  
ජබයෙකි මේක ක               ලේ  
ගෙදර යන්ඩි දෙනවදි  
මගෙ පු.වි ක                       ලේ

The pot was promptly returned.

One cannot, however, forget the well-known poet of the palace—Kawata Anderé. It is said that the king was walking along accompanied by Anderé and at a distance they sighted some maidens of the Padu caste going to fetch water. The king, delighted by the beauty of one, keenly turned his attention towards her. Anderé, however, did not allow this incident to escape unnoticed and is said to have recited this verse :

කද්දි වනට වැඩියෙන්  
මාලුවම පන                       යි  
වැද්දි පුචා දුටුවිට  
හිමියා නොනක                   යි  
සුද්දි ඵමට හිටියන්  
බිසවන් ගෙදර                   යි  
පැද්දි නොබලනන්  
පද්ද යොදට හින                   යි

Instances can be multiplied to show what an importance poetry had in the past among the Sinhalese and how much it is debased today. The degeneracy of Sinhalese Poetry and its correct recitation is due to wrong standard of values among the educated classes of today. While the other countries preserve and respect their national languages, though they too learn English, we, in Ceylon, attempt to become entirely English and disown our national language or make it as corrupt as possible. Annual literary competitions or verse recitation competitions on the lines of the recent Kokila Hatana will undoubtedly bring about a revival or at least an appreciable improvement in our standards of recitation and might lead to a realising of the true meaning of the saying "සංගීතං භාෂාංගිකං"

# BEFORE THE BUDDHA

## (A CONTEMPLATION)

(Translated by a bhikkhu from the original Czechoslovakia)

Let me remember Thee in my sad hours ; crosses are solace only for the weak, who have not felt the dignity of human life yet.

We alone should make joy out of the grief of our vain pursuits, not waiting for help from a redeemer ; just so, by our own thinking, we can avoid error, which reigns not only among the thoughtless, but also amidst the learned, the would-be helpers.

The cause being known, it is easy to conquer suffering.

Therefore Thou art for us suffering folk the greatest of all Sages, because Thou hast realised and taught the cause of sorrow and the passing thereof, and Thou hast proclaimed the grandiose words :—

"Go not by mere saying ; don't go by rumours, just because they're ancient and handed down to us through many generations ;

Believe not aught just because they show a written record of a Sage from times long past.

Don't believe something that you imagine to have received as revelation from god, and go not by custom or assumption.

Follow not blindly, submitting to th' authority of your teachers and priests :

But what you find by own experience and long test of time to agree with sound reason and lead to your own good and the welfare of others, that you should accept as Truth and then live up to it for ever."

E. PREIBISCH.

From Esperanto original of 'La Dharmo,' 19, the Esperanto organ of the Society for Oriental Culture (Sweden and England), translated by C. Nyānasatta, through the courtesy of Mr. G. D. K. Haththotuwa, Hony. President of the Society.

**Note 1** :—According to the Esperanto magazine 'La Dharmo,' No. 19, the following are anxious to exchange letters :—

- (1) Mr. Riecau Hsu, The Editorial Dept., The Maha Dharmacakra Book Store, Shanghai, China.
- (2) Mr. J. Juan Forne, Gil Y Morte 24, Valencia, Espana, Spain.
- (3) Mr. Jan Kavan, Komenského 4, Litomerice, Czechoslovakia. (This gentleman is able to correspond in any of the following languages :— Esperanto, Czech, English, French, Russian, Spanish, German or Latin).



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## RESPICE FINEM

Sir,  
**B**UDDHA Gotama's reluctance to admit women to the Order was presumably for the same fundamental reasons as the Ceylon Government's for its reluctance to admit women to the higher rank of the Public Service. Not even a Buddha could alter human nature. He had to take humanity as he found it. Similarly a Government had to take the human race at its face-value. Women have been advisedly called the "weaker sex." That they are weak in more than one sense no one would dare to deny.

"Reverend Sir, did you see a *woman* pass this way?" And the elder replied "I have seen a set of bones pass this way." *Visuddhi Magga*, ch. 1.

A good number of the Jataka stories of Gautama point to the moral of feminine iniquity. A psychologist has said, "women are the very devil."

"Adam" got on well till "Eve" was introduced into the "Garden of Eden." As soon as "Eve" came on the scene she corrupted "Adam!"

The Ceylon Government fears that as soon as women are introduced into the administrative ranks of the Public Service they are sure to corrupt men occupying responsible positions in the Service.

We must understand that the early Buddhist want of sympathy with women, like the Ceylon Government's want of sympathy with the aspirations of women of Ceylon to equal status with men has fear as its basis. For of all the snares of the senses which ignorance sets before the unwary, the most insidious, the most dangerous, the most alluring, is woman.

In answer to a question propounded by Ananda, Gautama Buddha replies:—

"Women are soon angered, Ananda; women are full of passion; women are

envious; women are stupid, Ananda. That is the cause, Ananda, that is the reason why, women have no place in public business and do not earn their living by any *profession*."

The saying that "woman's place is the home" has more meaning than appears on the surface. It is because woman has cultivated too many interests outside the "home" that the younger generation of the present day is growing up to be people without a religious or spiritual outlook at all. Few young people today are "Hereafter-minded."

Owing to Ananda's persistent appeals, Gotama did consent to admit women to the Order and those thus admitted "made good." Similarly, *carefully* selected women admitted to the higher grades of the Public Service might make good, who knows. But it might be at the expense of social virtue!

E. T. G.

# COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

## LIGHT OF ASIA ELOCUTION CONTEST

The finals of the Light of Asia Elocution Contest, conducted by the Colombo Y.M.B.A. were held on Saturday, July 30.

The following were the winners:—

*Senior Girls*.—(1) Jenita Perera, Wendy Whatmore School of Elocution; (2) Amara Weerasuriya, Visakha Vidyalaya; (3) Myra L. Senaratne, Little More School of Elocution.

*Senior Boys*.—(1) Ian Louise Campbell, Wesley College; (2) Bernard Cruse, St. Joseph's College; (3) Sena Liyanasuriya, Private.

*Junior Girls*.—(1) A. Y. S. Dayanti de Silva, Moratu Vidyalaya, Moratuwa; (2) Loretta Ohlmus, Whatmore; (3) Swinitha Goonetilleke, Visaka.

*Junior Boys*.—(1) Wilhelm Woutersz, Miss E. L. Ohlmus; (2) Rex Francis, Whatmore; (3) Robert Wilson, Whatmore.

Mr. Christopher Hales, Examiner of the Trinity College of Music, judged the competitors. Mr. C. V. Ranavake, Advocate, presided and Lady de Silva distributed the prizes.

Mr. Hales, giving a useful commentary on the performance of each of the candidates, said that the standard of elocution was a definite improvement on that of last year.

## FORT BUILDING

A panel of architects, headed by Mr. Oliver Weerasingha, Government Town

ation in due course. In the meantime Senator Cyril de Zoysa has interviewed the Minister of Agriculture and Lands and requested him to stop the erection of further buildings in the site allotted to us. Steps are also being taken to study the plans of certain modern buildings of similar institutions in other parts of the world, with a view to evolving a plan which should rank high in modern architecture.

## PRINTING PRESS

The Hony. General Secretary writes:— It is with regret that we have to announce the closing of our printing establishment, the chief reason being the absence of all the equipment that is necessary to make it a paying concern. We are also prevented by law in undertaking any private work. The cost of maintenance was so high that it was found unprofitable to continue it for the sole purpose of printing our Religious text books. The building has been rented for a photographic studio.

## NEW MEMBERS:—

26.7.49 : S. S. Perera, Koraliagodā Estate, Telijjiwila, Matara; H. Bennette, No. 77, 1st Lane Gotami Road, Borella; K. D. Jayasinghe, Ceylon Wharfage Co., Ltd., Colombo; B. Don Abraham, Chief

## COLOMBO Y.M.B.A. NOTICE TO MEMBERS

A Special General Meeting of the Young Men's Buddhist Association, Colombo, will be held on Teuesday, the September 13th, 1949, at 5.30 p.m. to appoint an Auditor.

No individual notices will be sent.

V. S. NANAYAKKARA,  
*Hony. General Secretary.*

Planner, met a few members of the Committee of Management and representatives of the Y.M.C.A. at a preliminary conference to consider what accommodation should be provided in the proposed building and the purpose for which such accommodation is required. Their proposals will be submitted to the Committee of Management for consideration.



Clerk, Lake House, Colombo; K. D. Priyaseela Gooneratne, 146/28, Silver-smith Street, Colombo.

**2.8.49**: A. B. H. de Silva, 37, Templar Road, Mt. Lavinia; E. S. T. Fernando, 174, Castle Street, Colombo; B. A. Fernando, 14/2, Vajira Road, Bambalapitiya; G. Sunders, 31, Kanatta Road, Colombo; Tilakasiri Fernando, The Refuge, Panadura; S. D. A. Gunasekera, No. 77, 1st Lane, Gotami Road, Borella.

**9.8.49**: G. L. Piyaratne, No. 38, School Avenue, Kalubowila, Dehiwala; D. J. Hettiaratchy, Makola North, Kadawatha; D. C. G. Wijesinghe, 479, Narahenpitiya Road, Narahenpita; P. de Lana-

rolle, Pavilion Hotel, Maradana; G. D. Karunaratne, No. 4, Siriniwasa, Rajagiriya; K. Gunadasa, Village No. 280A, Malwana.

**16.8.49**: W. E. Tillekeratne, 241, Dematagoda Road, Colombo; R. L. Balasooriya, "Joslin Cottage," Kalutara South; M. D. H. Perera, 417, Etul Kotte, Kotte; M. B. P. Jayawardena, 35, Gravets Road, Panadura; D. B. G. Cramer, 30, Talawutugoda Road, Kotte; A. W. H. de Zoysa, 137, Ketawalamulla Lane, Maradana; C. G. Weerasingha, 117, Nikape, Dehiwala; W. H. Samson Fernando, 102, Mohandiram Road, Colpetty; W. A. Jayasooriya, 789,

Wijerama Junction, High Level Road, Nugegoda.

#### PERSONAL

Dr. G. P. Malalasekera returned home on August 21st after attending the Conference of Philosophers at Honolulu.

Mr. D. W. G. Ranasinghe has been appointed an assistant Assessor of the Colombo Municipal Council.

#### OBITUARY

We record with regret the death of Mr. M. H. Jayatilleke, one of our old members. Mr. Jayatilleke was once President of the Buddhist Congress.

## NEWS AND NOTES

### TIBETAN PRINCE AT DELHI VIHARA

PRINCE GYALO THONDUP, brother of Dalai Lama and his wife paid a visit to the Buddha Vihara, New Delhi, in August. They were accorded a warm welcome by the Maha Bodhi Society of India and the Indian Buddhist Association. Pandit Hammalawa Saddhatissa Thera recited the Mangala Sutta and invoked blessings upon the couple. In the course of his speech Saddhatissa Thera said, "Under the Dalai Lama, your brother, Tibet found peace and protection and our holy Dhamma has continued to receive benevolent priority in all affairs of the state. Dalai Lama is not only the spiritual head of Buddhists in Tibet but is also its ruler. Religion lies deep in the hearts of the people of the East and more among the Tibetans."

Saddhatissa Thera further added, "The cultural and the spiritual relationship that exist between India and Tibet in the days of yore under the holy influence of Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy will receive a new impetus through this August visit of yours and we hope that

the continued co-operation between these two countries will remain forever."

In an address of welcome presented to the Prince Gyalo, the Maha Bodhi Society conveyed "love and goodwill" to the people of Tibet and specially to the Dalai Lama. Replying to the address of welcome Prince expressed the hope that Buddhism in India would receive an impetus by the closer relations between India and Tibet.

Prince and Princess offered flowers and burned incense at the shrine.—*Cor.*

### NOW THEY ARE BUDDHISTS

SARANATH

THE grandeur of the Vaishakha Purnima Celebrations at the famous Kusinagara Buddha Vihara were further enhanced by the inclusion of two Hindu monks into the Order of the Buddha. These two monks were roaming the Indian continent as Anagarika Satyapriya and Dharmapriya. Anagarika Satyapriya comes from a Bengali Brahmin

family and was an engineer by profession in his civil life and Anagarika Dharmapriya comes from an English family and was a student and writer on religion and philosophy. Both of them travelled quite widely together in various Buddhist countries abroad and are quite well-known here in this country for their writings. After the Pabbaja Satyapriya is named as Samanera Buddharakshit and Dharmapriya as Samanera Sangharakshit by the most Ven'ble Bhikkhu Chandramani Mahasthavira of the Kusinagara fame, who conferred the ordination on them.

After their Pabbaja these two newly-ordained young monks went to Nepal, which happened to be the nearest Buddhist country, to have a first-hand knowledge of the Buddhist way of living and also to study the condition of Buddhism there. A few weeks ago they returned and are now staying with the Ven. J. Kashyap, Professor of Pali in the Banaras University. Samanera Buddharakshit is proceeding to Ceylon within a couple of weeks for further studies.

## REMEMBRANCE DAY

Saturday, Sept. 3, 1949 — All Night Pirit from 9 p.m.  
 Sunday, Sept. 4, 1949 — Sanghika Dana 11 a.m.