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“*Sīla Paññānato Jayam*”

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TOLERANCE AND COMPROMISE

(How far can a Buddhist agree with the view that all religions should be encouraged and that he could take part in the observances connected with other religions? By way of answer we reproduce here an article written many years ago by a distinguished Buddhist scholar, Edmund J. Mills, F.R.S., D.Sc., LL.D.—Ed.)

IT is unnecessary to consider in this paper any such matters as the tolerance of the unmoral events of life, many of which are now inevitable and more economically endured: nor do I propose to refer to any of the numerous compromises that are constantly occurring in business and also are without moral significance. I wish rather to draw your attention to some of the graver aspects of life, where tolerance and compromise are constantly interwoven, and constantly thought of. As Pope on one occasion pithily summed up the situation:—

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Everyone remembers the story of the house of Rimmon: “In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow myself down in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, go in peace.” The disguise of his conversion was to be permitted, the compromising position tolerated. The prophet may have thought that more harm would be done by compelling his new convert to avow than to be silent, and so left the matter to Naaman’s own conscience and some later opportunity; but certainly the evasive benediction sounds very strange

from the representative of so jealous a God. As Lord Morley so ably puts it, “The interesting question in connection with compromise obviously turns upon the placing of the boundary that divides mere suspense in forming opinions, wise reserve in expressing them, and wise tardiness in trying to realise them, from unavowed disingenuousness and self-illusion, from voluntary dissimulation and from indolence and pusillanimity.” (*Compromise*, 2nd ed., p. 3).

Another instance in the sphere of politics is to be found in our own State. The Toleration Act was passed to enable any person to select and exercise his own mode of worship and faith without State interference. It was an insincere compromise with public pressure; for the Test Act was introduced much later, to abolish religious tests for public office. This it did not entirely do—certainly not as regards the monarchy. Following the ancient practice of the State, many religious bodies are still as intolerant as they can succeed in being. I very well remember a Roman Catholic priest of some position complaining to me of the bigotry and intolerance of a certain official of the Protestant Church. I could not repress a smile. My friend thereupon remarked, “Of course, we never profess tolerance; it is not our way.”

The early Western Church was, perhaps, the largest instance of compromise the world has ever witnessed; indeed, as its canonical scriptures show, it is itself a colossal compromise. It pursued the extremely politic plan of including a

sufficiently contradictory—and explaining “spiritually” the more obvious differences. As to the heathen gods, where necessary it canonised them. Even the Lord Buddha makes an appearance in the Calendar as St. Barlaam and St. Josaphat. There can be but one opinion about such practices. The excuse that has been made to me, is Whatever else were they to do?

The gradual progress of civil liberty has rendered possible the growth of experimental science. The discoveries of science have shown what a large amount of religious dogma is utterly inconsistent with the truth as we find it. Thereupon, religion has to defend it by the authority of some supposed external power, itself the creation of dogma; to explain the various contradictions by compromising on a spiritual interpretation, or by dropping the genuineness or authenticity of the document. All of these processes are very difficult; because the Church at once appears as an advocate of something that is not the truth, or at least of tolerating systematic insincerity. The last of her members to acquire liberty of investigation are its teachers, because they are tied in their early days by the formulae of their ordination. A young man in a state of comparative ignorance has to declare when taking deacon’s orders that he “unfeignedly believes all the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,” when in fact he does not personally admit certain important parts of them at all (e.g., the miracles) and others only with large reservations. Is a religious minister justified in publicly

stating every week at least that he personally believes in certain events (e.g., the Resurrection) as having actually occurred when if individually approached he declares his statement to be untrue, and that he was merely putting forward the "mind of the Church?"

All these are very practical questions. The very fact that they can be asked is a sad indication of the imperfect advance that the cult of sincerity has made in the Western mind.

Let me take a very recent instance:—¹

"My own belief is this (1) I accept the Nicene Creed. (2) At once I distinguish—I mentally shift the emphasis more and more on to the great spiritual affirmations of that venerable symbol, away from the detailed historical affirmations: (3) because the spiritual affirmations (e.g., 'I believe in one God . . . and in one Lord Jesus Christ . . . being of one substance with the Father . . . and I believe in the Holy Ghost . . . and I believe in one Catholick and Apostolick Church') appear to me to be the proper and sure exercises, and to be based on the inward experience, of the common Christian consciousness; whereas the detailed historical affirmations (e.g., 'He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into Heaven') literally interpreted, stand on the authority, and so to speak, at the mercy, of a small band of trained historical scholars. (4) This distinction obtains, in my judgment, even in the case of the central doctrine, viz., between (a) the spiritual affirmation of the Incarnation, on the one hand, and (b) on the other hand, the historical affirmation of the physical miracle—which is of the Incarnation the traditional mode and concomitant."

The author of this statement has been in deacon's orders in the Church of England, and is at present a priest in her service. At his ordination, a candidate for the office of deacon is asked by the bishop, "Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments?" And he answers, "I do believe them."

Can it be for a moment supposed that the framers of this question intended the Scriptures aforesaid or the Nicene Creed to be doubly considered as the author confesses is

his way? What would be the effect on the mind of an intelligent lad if he were instructed to shift his mental difficulties in any other subject on to some spiritual or theoretical point of view more pleasing to his teacher's views? The entire basis of his sincerity would be unfailingly undermined—and let us not forget the warning of Pope. Everybody recognises that there is only one sincere way of interpreting the Canonical Scriptures, and that mental reservations and compromise are wholly unpermissible. It is not too much to say that insincere juggling with language of this kind has done much to make it impossible in modern times to state what Western religion really is. Apparently two kinds of truth are adopted; and you never know where you have either.

It is time now to consider the Buddhist side of the question. I will begin with a story fairly parallel with that of Naaman. Sonadanda, a wealthy Brahman and landed proprietor, approaches the Blessed One for instructions, though many of his people suggest that it is for various reasons scarcely consistent with his dignity to do so, but rather that the Buddha should call upon him. All at length agree to go together. On the way, Sonadanda has some residual qualms of conscience, as to whether he may not come off with some loss of dignity in presence of all these people. There is a discussion, which as usual ends in the visitor taking his place as a disciple of the Master "as long as life endures." He invites him and the members of the Order to dinner next day, and speaks to him as follows—his object being to give the Buddha only part etiquette for the purpose of saving his position—much as one might imagine a bishop apologising in the early days to some Wesleyan minister for not being quite as polite as he ought. "If . . . when I am seated in the assembly I stretch forth my joined palms in salutation, let the venerable Gotama accept that from me as a rising up from my seat. And if when I am seated in the assembly I take off my turban, let the venerable Gotama accept that from me as a salutation from my head. So, if when I am in my chariot, I were to get down from the chariot to salute the venerable Gotama, the surrounderers would find fault with me. If then, when mounted on

my chariot, I bend down low the staff of my goad, let the venerable Gotama accept that from me as if I had got down. And if when mounted on my chariot, I should wave my hand, let the venerable Gotama accept that from me as if I had bowed the head in salutation."

Thus did that eminent man give notice of compromise to the Lord Buddha, and extricate himself as well as he could from a difficult position.

I have sometimes thought that the Master had a habit of smiling internally (*Sonadanda Sutta*).

Let us now consider some very clear doctrines which all Buddhists will very freely admit:—

"He who takes refuge with Buddha, the Norm, and the Assembly, he who with clear understanding sees the four holy truths . . . having gone to that refuge, a man is delivered from all pain" (*Dhammapada*, 190-2).

"He who adopts the whole Law is a bhikkhu, not only he who begs" (*Id.*, 266).

"The gift of the Law exceeds all gifts; the sweetness of the Law exceeds all sweetness; the delight in the Law exceeds all delights" (*Id.*, 354).

"This excellent jewel is found in the Buddha . . . the Norm . . . the Assembly . . ." (*Kula vaggā*).

"For whom there is no desire, for the Bhikkhu who has cut off the stream (of existence) and abandoned all kinds of work, there is no pain" (*Mahāvaggā*, 37).

"Why do not the Samanas say one and the same thing? For the truth is one, there is not a second, about which one intelligent man might dispute with another intelligent man" (*Atthaakavaggā*, 6, 7).

Here is a passage spoken by the dying Buddha: "In whatsoever doctrine and discipline, Subhaddha, the noble eightfold path is not found, neither in it is there found a man of true saintliness of the first or of the second or of the third or of the fourth degree. And in whatsoever doctrine and discipline, Subhaddha, the noble eightfold path is found, is found the man of true saintliness of the first and the second and the third and the fourth degree. Now in this doctrine and discipline, Subhaddha, is found the noble eightfold path,

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SRI LANKA AND HER NEIGHBOURS—III.

~ CHINA ~

By
G. P. MALALASEKERA

WE have ample evidence to show that close connections existed between Lanka and China from quite early times, but curiously enough, not from any Ceylon records. Practically all the evidence available is from Chinese sources. A comparison of the dates and names occurring in these records, however, tally so well with the corresponding facts given in our own chronicles that their authenticity is beyond question.

The silence of the Ceylon chronicles—which were the works of Buddhist monks—about the Chinese is probably due to the fact that the latter were followers of the Mahayana School of Buddhism, who in the eyes of the orthodox followers of the Theravada form of Buddhism in Ceylon, were heretics. This is not the only instance of a complete blackout in our records about things Mahayanistic.

The Roman historian Pliny tells us of an embassy sent from Ceylon to Rome in the reign of the Emperor Claudius, in the first century C.E. but nothing seems to have come out of it. The earliest diplomatic intercourse recorded between Lanka and a foreign country is in the 4th century, when Ceylon sent ambassadors to the Court of the Emperor Julian. Almost at the same time Ceylon established friendly connections with China. But, if Pliny is correct in his statement, the Sinhalese ambassadors who were sent to Claudius much earlier are reported to have said that their ancestors had reached China by traversing India and the Himalayas long before ships had attempted the voyage by sea. This is not surprising, for from an address that was presented to the Chinese emperor by our king Mahanama of the 5th century, even at that time both routes were in use. The land route was a very long and tedious one. Once an embassy from Ceylon took ten years to traverse it.

In the 13th century a Chinese author wrote a remarkable encyclopedia which can well stand comparison with similar productions of today. Here the author, Ma Touan Lin, says that in the reign of the Emperor Nyan Ti (*i.e.* about 400 A.C.), ambassadors arrived from

Ceylon at the Chinese capital, bearing as gift a statue of the Buddha in jade stone, four feet two inches high, painted in five colours and of such singular beauty that one would almost have doubted of its being a work of human ingenuity. It was placed in the Buddhist temple of Nanking where it remained for several hundred years along with five other statues and three paintings all from Ceylon and considered masterpieces of art. The three paintings were called the Three Marvels.

During the same century, there were four other embassies from Ceylon. In the first of these sent by King Mahanama in 428, an address was presented to the Emperor in the course of which he said, "I desire respectfully in concert with the Son of Heaven—that being the usual term of reference to the Emperor—to magnify the Good Law (of the Buddha) in order to save creatures from the evil of transmigration." The address was accompanied by a model of the Tooth Relic which by that time had come to Ceylon. The names of the kings mentioned in the three other embassies are difficult to identify from their Chinese designations.

The embassy of 456 is of special interest. It was accompanied by five monks, among whom was a celebrated sculptor, a monk named Nanda. Nanda took with him three statues of the Buddha carved by himself. The Chinese chroniclers state that the people of the countries of Central Asia were full of admiration for these that they emulated with each other in getting copies made, but none could rival the productions of Nanda. They were of remarkable workmanship. On standing about ten paces away from them they appeared truly brilliant, but the lineaments gradually disappeared on a nearer approach.

A few years earlier, the famous Chinese pilgrim Fa Hsien had visited Ceylon. He wrote an account of his travels where he describes in glowing terms the geniality of the climate and remarks that the country enjoys a perennial springtime. The seasons for seed-time and harvest, he says, are determined by the wish of the

cultivators, referring of course to the multitude of the tanks which rendered agriculture independent of periodical rains.

Fa Hsien also speaks of the lofty dagobas erected in honour of the Buddha, mentioning in particular the Abhayagiri, which he translates as "Mountain of No Fear." (Our traditions, of course, say that it was a combination of two names Abhaya the king who built it and Giri the name of a Jain ascetic who had previously occupied the site). Fa Hsien speaks with wonder of the gems and gold that adorned the statue of the Buddha.

One figure in particular took his fancy, a figure in what he calls blue jasper, inlaid with jewels and other precious materials and holding in one hand a pearl of inestimable value. This was, no doubt, the famous Kalasilapatima, the Image of Blackstone mentioned in the Mahavamsa. Fa Hsien describes the sacred Bo-tree at Anuradhapura in terms which might almost be applied to its actual condition at the present day. He speaks also of a building which the king had recently erected near the palace to enshrine the sacred Tooth of the Buddha. The Tooth he says was exhibited to the people for worship in the middle of the third month of every year, corresponding to the month of August, which is even today the time of the Kandy Perahera—and the exhibition was accompanied by processions and ceremonies which he describes in great detail.

This contemporary description is of the greatest value to us. Fa Hsien remained at Anuradhapura for two years copying the sacred texts which took back with him. He does not seem to have seen much of Ceylon except the capital. He says that there were five thousand monks at Anuradhapura and 2,000 in Abhayagiri alone. The king maintained five or six thousand monks at his own expense, while in the whole Island there were between fifty and sixty thousand monks.

Fa Hsien was only one of the numerous pilgrims who visited Ceylon in the course of centuries. Another famous Chinese visitor was the monk Vairabuddha who went on a pilgrimage to Sripada and was

entertained by the king whom he calls Sri Sila.

These travellers published on their return itineraries and descriptions of the places they had visited and these give us very valuable information. Unfortunately, however, of many of these works only fragments remain and they have to be pieced together to get a satisfactory picture. The accounts yet available tell us of the impressions Chinese travellers and pilgrims got of Ceylon.

They were greatly struck, for instance, by the altitude of our hills above all by the lofty crest of Sripada which served as landmark for ships approaching Ceylon. They speak reverentially of the footprint and remark that the hollow of the sacred footstep contains water which never dries and that invalids recover by drinking from the well at the foot of the mountain into which the sea water enters free from salt. They admire the country for its fertility and singular beauty and the climate with refreshing showers in every period of the year. They also speak of the mythical history of the Island of the Yakshas and Nagas who once lived there, and of the two distinct races who later inhabited it, one occupying the northern and the other the southern parts of the Island.

The Chinese who came here in the seventh century describe the Sinhalese as having large ears, long eyes, purple faces, black bodies, moist and strong hands and feet and living to one hundred years and upwards. They wear their hair long, both males and females. The jackets of the girls were sometimes ornamented with gems. The men they say have the upper part of the body naked, but cover their limbs with a cloth called Kan-man, made of cotton. For their vests kings and nobles use material called cloud-cloth, for its transparency, and gathered into large folds, and fastened with golden cord. Men of rank wore earrings. The dead were burned, not buried. The port in Ceylon where the Chinese vessels came is called Lo-le (Galle) where ships anchor and men land.

There was evidently a brisk trade in various spices, oil and drugs, aloewood and ebony, elephants, and ivory, woven cotton, gold ornaments and jewellery including models of shrines and statues of the Buddha—pearls, corals and crystals. But of all articles the gems of Ceylon were the most popular, rubies, sapphires,

amethysts, carbuncles (the red precious stone, the lustre of which serves instead of a lamp at night) and topazes of four distinct tints those of the colour of wine, the delicate tint of young goslings, the deep amber-like beeswax and the pale tinge resembling the opening bud of the pine."

The Chinese authors warmly praise the patriotism of the Sinhala kings and their active exertions for the improvement of the country and the advancement of religion and the promotion of the people's prosperity. In all their accounts there are minute particulars about the Sinhalese which bear witness to a continued intercourse and intimate familiarity between the people of the two countries. It is interesting to note that, according to Chinese records, even in the 7th century the Sinhalese, both men and women, were addicted to the habit of chewing betel. The women, we are told, did not sit down to meals with their husbands but retired to their own private apartments to eat their food after having looked after the feeding of the menfolk.

This infinite knowledge of each other was because both peoples were followers of the Buddha, and Ceylon had become the chief centre of their common faith.

The Sinhalese naturally welcomed with sympathy and hospitality the frequent visits of their distant co-religionists. The Emperors of China sent ambassadors both laymen and monks to obtain relics and images of the Buddha and copies of the sacred books, while the kings of Ceylon sent embassies in return to reciprocate these religious sympathies and do homage to the imperial majesty of China. Chinese coins found in many parts of the Island and belonging to various dynasties show that the Chinese had visited not only the sea-coast but the interior of the country as well.

There is a story that on several occasions Chinese envoys were authorised to negotiate the purchase of the alms-bowl of the Buddha which was an object of veneration in Ceylon. Marco Polo tells us that this was ultimately given as a gift, but the king of Ceylon to the great Kublai Khan, who had once offered for it the price of a city. All that can be said is that the later history of this relic in Ceylon is obscure and its present whereabouts are not known.

At the beginning of the 15th century occurred an incident which had unfortunate repercussions. A mission from China sent with incense and offerings to the shrine of the Tooth was insulted by the king of Ceylon and only with difficulty escaped capture. The Emperor was indignant; he dreaded more than anything else a loss of face; he sent therefore Ching Ho, a soldier of distinction with a fleet of 62 ships and a large military escort. A detachment was sent to the capital; the reigning King Alagakkonara, decoyed the party into the interior in the hope of capturing them and obtaining ransom. But Ching Ho was not deceived. He laid siege to the capital, made the king prisoner and carried him to China with his queen and children and officers of state.

In the Chinese court the ministers asked that the king be executed, but the Emperor showed mercy and only demanded that another chosen by the Sinhalese ministers themselves should be made king. They chose a prince who afterwards became Parakramabahu VI. of Kotte.

For fifty years from this date Ceylon seems to have become a vassal of China and sent periodical tribute. A stone inscription in three languages, Chinese, Persian and Tamil recently discovered at Galle belongs to this period and refers to the earlier mission of Ching Ho when he came with another bearing offerings to various shrines. In 1459 the period of subjection seems to have ended, for in that year says a Chinese chronicler the king of Ceylon for the last time sent an envoy with tribute and after that none ever came again.

Early in the 16th century when the Portuguese arrived in the Island they found many evidence still remaining of the intercourse and influence of the Chinese. They found that there had been Chinese settlements in the south of the Island and their writers speak about them. Emerson Tennent, writing in 1859, says, "in process of time every trace has disappeared of the former presence of the Chinese in Ceylon—embassies ceased to arrive from 'the Flowery Kingdom,' Chinese vessels deserted the harbours of the Island, pilgrims no longer repaired to the shrines of Buddha, and even the inscriptions

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RISE AND FALL OF BUDDHISM IN INDIA

By Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR

DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR, Law Minister of India, delivered a lecture at the Colombo Y.M.B.A. on "The Rise and Decline of Buddhism in India."

Sir Ernest de Silva, presided and welcomed the lecturer. He said: "It is my very great privilege, on behalf of the Colombo Y.M.B.A., to extend a warm and cordial welcome to Dr. Ambedkar, a Minister of the Government of India. Dr. Ambedkar is one of the most distinguished social workers in India. Not only is he a great lawyer but his great work for the uplift of his people has won for him the admiration of all right thinking men and women. I should like to say that it is the fervent wish of the Buddhists in Ceylon that Dr. Ambedkar will become a Buddhist."

THE LECTURE

Dr. Ambedkar said: Not many of you perhaps, realise that the subject which I have taken for this address is a difficult one. The subject is "The Rise and Fall of Buddhism in India." I think most people who have studied Buddhism in India will agree that of the subject had not been dealt with as adequately and as fully as it should have been. In fact, so far as my study goes, I have not been able to place my hand on any single volume within the four corners of which one could find an adequate and clear exposition as to why Buddhism arose in India. A much more difficult subject is why it disappeared from the land of its birth.

Personally, I have found that among many subjects which anyone interested in the revival of Buddhism in India finds, it necessary to face this most important question. Anyone who today talks of reviving Buddhism in India is invariably, persistently, determinedly almost triumphantly asked, if Buddhism was a religion which had virtue in it, why it disappeared. The question as I have said, is persistently asked and I have no doubt in my mind that unless and until some scholar, who believes in the revival of Buddhism, is able to answer the question satisfactorily, progress of propaganda regarding the revival of Buddhism is going to be very difficult.

There has been a belief among Indian people that some how the religion of the Buddha was apathetic and had no life in it. It survived and lives in India, they say, owing to external props and support created by the Buddha in the form of the monkish order and partly because it received the favour and patronage of kings. If those agencies were withdrawn the religion had no life in it. That is the general line of argument. As one interested in this subject, I have been trying to collect bit by bit, here and there, the best available information in order to understand why exactly this religion took its birth in India, what were the forces which produced it and also what were the causes that led to its fall, decline and ultimate disappearance.

My study of this subject is by no means complete, nor can I state with express authority the conclusions to which I have arrived as a result of my research. That I shall not venture to do. But I have come to certain conclusions of a general character. I believe that after a definite detailed research is made in the matter, the conclusions to which I have come will ultimately be sustained. It is not possible within the time at my disposal to make a detailed examination and present an exposition of the subject. All I can do is to present to you my idea of the subject in a jumbled manner. It is only an outline, I am proposing to give you.

REASON FOR BIRTH

The first thing I propose to do is to tell you why exactly Buddhism arose in India. As a student of Buddhism I have come to the conclusion that the importance of Buddhism, its significance, its dynamic force will not be understood unless and until we know the circumstances which gave birth to it. In fact it is my view that it is only Indians particularly those Indians who understand the ancient past of their religion who would realise the significance of the religion of the Buddha, because unless and until you have that background you cannot know the religion. It is

against that background alone that you are in a position to appreciate its beauty, its virtue, its force and its necessity. Therefore, I propose to give you in a very brief manner the reason why the religion of Buddha did come into being, so to say.

Most people are under the impression that the religion of India ever since it appeared in history of the land and culturally, has been Hinduism and that India emerged culturally and spiritually through Hinduism and that today the religion of the Hindus was Hinduism. But I tell you that it is a great mistake. Hinduism is a phase of development of religious and social thought in India. Historically there have been three stages, distinct and definite in religious thought of the Indian people. The first stage we may call the Vedic, which is followed by a religion which is generally spoken as Brahmanism. Then came the stage known as Hinduism, which embodied both the Vedic and the Brahmanic. Yet it must never be forgotten that the Vedic religion taken by itself is quite distinct and separate from Hinduism in the same way as Brahmanism is distinct from the Vedic. Now, in order to understand the first part of my question "Why did Buddhism arise in India?" it is necessary to understand the concept embodied in the three religions, which ultimately got themselves amalgamated and synthesised as the Hindu religion.

SACRIFICES TO GODS

The Vedic religion was a very simple one which had no complications about it. It was a religion which believed that man cannot obtain salvation after death unless he performed certain sacrifices to the gods of whom there were about thirty-two. It was very simple. Its doctrine was very much like that of Judaism, the Old Testament religion, which believed in offering sacrifice to the gods. It must also be remembered that the sacrifice must be of the very best. That was the custom in the primitive Aryan society. The sacrifice was the best they had in their possession, namely a cow, bull or animal, the prized possession of a farming or agricultural population.

The Vedic religion was nothing more than offering sacrifice to the gods, and naturally, this practice became a religion. Then it took another shape which was called Brahamanism. This religion, while retaining the old Vedic practice of animal sacrifice, made certain fundamental, radical changes in the religious and social life of the Aryans. Several new doctrines were introduced, the most significant being the infallibility of the Vedas whose authority cannot be questioned, but must be explicitly followed.

SUPREMACY OF REASON

Then was introduced the division of society into four Varnas. Before Brahamanism, Aryan society consisted of one class, but Brahamanism laid down the principle of this division. The four classes created from various parts of the human body, were the Brahamin from the mouth, the Kshatriya from the arm, the Vaisya from the thigh and the Shudra from the lowest part, the foot. Another novel introduction was the division of the life of the individual into four ages, Brahmachari, Grihapati, Vana and Sannyasi. Then came the struggle between those who believed in the Vedas and those who accepted the Upanishads. One was hostile to the other. According to the doctrine of inequality the Shudras were for ever to be servers. The wife was the slave of the husband and the Shudras were the slaves of the three higher classes.

It is necessary that you should understand fully why Buddhism arose. That religion was a rebellion against the Brahamanic religion in view of the points I mentioned to you, which were contrary to the tenets of Buddhism which was against inequality, against the principle of infallibility of the Vedas. It asserted the supremacy of reason and insisted that every proposition must be examined, both its pros and cons, and must be presented if they are in accordance with reason and experience for acceptance. Buddhism was not prepared to accept their gods or offer sacrifice of animals. You well know what King Bimbisara said when he met the Buddha "Why do you want to give up your father's kingdom? If you are dissatisfied with your father, I am prepared to share my kingdom with you and you can stay here. You can do any offerings you like. I have animals in plenty." The

emphatic and ironic reply was "I have no desire to go to heaven at the cost of the life of another individual." He repudiated the doctrine of "himsa," similarly the four divisions of society into varnas. He believed in the doctrine of the equality of all human beings.

Some people say that the Buddhist religion is an offshoot of Brahamanism. No, it certainly is not. I think, that those who will bear in mind the fundamentals of faith, which formed the battle ground between Brahamanism and Buddhism will realise that the rise of Buddhism was not merely a religious movement, but a social and political revolution, and in my judgment if there can be any comparison which one could institute between the rise of Buddhism and a social upheaval in any part of the world, we have the example of the French Revolution.

The rise of Buddhism was as significant, as dynamic, as explosive as the French Revolution. Not many perhaps will appreciate it when I say that this doctrine gave freedom to the Shudras many of whom became kings, when they were born to serve. During the time the Buddhist religion prevailed in India there were many Shudra kings. You could realise what a revolution it was. Buddhism was a democratic movement, which upheld democracy in religion, democracy in society, democracy in politics.

TOLERANCE OF ASOKA

How was it that so great a religion ceased to exist in the land in which it was born? There is great paucity of material on this subject. Certain things are, however, very clear. The Buddha died in 483 B.C. Asoka ascended the throne in 274 B.C. What exactly happened to the religion of Buddha during this period of 209 years, between his death and the rise of Asoka? It is not known. One thing, however, is well-known that in the reign of Asoka and during the whole Mauriyan dynasty Buddhism was not merely flourishing but was the predominant religion in India. What is more, we know one fact, that Asoka was unreasonably tolerant of other religions in India. To a certain extent I am very angry with Asoka, though I admire him greatly. He allowed fundamentally opposed faiths to come into being and ulti-

mately what happened was something very extraordinary.

In the year 184 B.C. when the rule of the Mauriyan dynasty had carried on for 137 years the Commander-in-Chief, who was the head of the Army, assassinated the King, the last of the Mauriyans and installed himself on the throne, and that was the real beginning of the Brahamanic counter-revolution. I am sorry to say Indian historians have treated this subject in a light-hearted manner. The Commander-in-Chief belonged to what was called the Bramakshatriya class.

FAMILY DEITY

You must remember that this is not new or novel in India. The original Brahamanic religion recognised four varnas, the brahamin being the highest, next the kshatriya the warrior, next the Vaisia the trader, and last the Shudra, the serf. However strict the rule, the brahamin could absorb any other caste man into his superior class by a process known as "agni kula charita"—going through fire—whatever that may be. Anyway, when the brahamanic religion was failing fast the counter-move against the religion of the Buddha had to be intensified. So the fighting class the Kshatriyas were absorbed into the Brahaman. You find in Indian history a new class called bramakshatriya enjoying the privileges of both castes, Brahaman and Kshatriya. The Bramakshatriya could be a priest as well as a warrior. The brahamin could break any rules if he so chooses. To my mind this was done in order to bring about the suppression of the many upholders of the Buddhist religion. Nearly 90 per cent. of the disciples of Buddha was brahamin.

The question arises how is it that the brahamins suddenly turned against the religion of the Buddha? Why is it that they suddenly became the enemies of the religion of the Buddha? It seems that it did not happen throughout the Mauriyan rule. The reason given is very interesting. It is the custom in India that every family had its kuladeva apart from the grama devata, apart from the national deity. I do not know whether the custom exists here. That kuladeva was worshipped by the family priest who was a brahamin. You can imagine what a profitable occupation it is, particularly from the point of view of the brahamin who officiated everywhere from the king's

palace to the home of the ordinary man. He could easily control the actions and emotions of the queen who was always behind the curtain and plays a very great part in the politics of the country.

I am told on good authority that this practice of following the Buddha and at the same time maintaining the worship of the family deity continued up to the time of Asoka. When he became a Buddhist he said to himself, "if I accept the Buddha as supreme how could I at one and the same time divide my loyalty, my affection and my reverence between Buddha and kuladeva." He could not be true to the Buddha, the result was that he picked up the idols and threw them away, with the result that the brahmins lost their occupation of worshipping the kuladeva. That was a tremendous blow to the brahmins.

This was the beginning of the suppression of the Buddhist religion. That is why the brahmins made the somersault and started the campaign against the Buddhist religion. The absorption of the Kshatriya class was only one example of the quiet preparation the brahmins were making as a protest against the Buddhists. The year 184 B.C. was important in the history of India as well as in the history of the Buddhist religion. Who have been the kings of India then? It was the brahmin who was virtually the king. The king was only king in name.

Of course, the Minister was more important than the king. That was another matter. Now why was it that the brahmin wanted to become the minister? The reason again comes from an old tradition prevalent throughout India that the king always goes to hell. According to the shastras the duty of the king is to protect his subjects. Although that is the duty it is a fact that no king can fully and completely succeed in protecting his subjects. There are bound to be cases where the king's armies may fail in that duty and there is the possibility of the king going to hell. So the brahmin Minister was the real power. Now from this little history you can imagine how internal political circumstances resulted in the inhospitable attitude towards the Buddhist religion.

POLITICS

The political atmosphere was changed and was completely anti-Buddhist by reason of the fact that the whole of India became subject to brahmins and that was one of the causes for the decline of Buddhism in India. It lost the respect and favour of the king, thus creating a great deal of difficulty in the way of the religion of the Buddha. There were many internal political revolutions in India. Also from time to time India was invaded by foreigners.

There were four different foreigners, the Greeks, Shahas, the Kushans and the Huns. It is interesting to note that out of the different foreigners who came only one, the Greeks completely accepted the religion of Buddha, a notable example of their attitude towards the Buddha being the case of Milinda receiving instructions on Buddhism from Nagasena. In my own province there are viharas built by the Greeks. Two other foreign nations too accepted the religion of Buddha, but not the Huns, who were defeated but remained in India as part and parcel of the people of India. They were defeated and lost their power during the Gupta period. According to the theory of the brahmins the Huns who had lived and were treated like shudras were absorbed as Bramakshatriyas and occupied Central India. They assumed a hostile attitude towards Buddhism. While the Vashiyas were inclined towards Jainism the Shudras remained Buddhists because the Buddha gave them freedom and equal status. The Huns were a fighting race and they persecuted the Buddhists after their absorption through the process of agnikula chatrya by the brahmins. The Rajputs of today were originally Huns and under the leadership of Thoraman. Buddhism received one of the greatest blows through the strategy of the brahmins. Thus we know one of the causes of the decline of Buddhism in India. There are people in India who think that Buddhism in India was destroyed by the dialectics of Sankarāchāriya who argued certain metaphysics and ultimately defeated the Buddhist monks that they surrendered. *How can this be accepted when Buddhism lived for six centuries after the death of Sankarāchāriya?* It is quite untrue to say that Buddhism was destroyed by disputations of Shanta Achary. Really it was the invasion

of the Muslims that destroyed temples and massacred monks and brought about destruction. Muslims are opposed to the worship of idols. Perhaps some of you may know that Alaudin on one occasion killed no less than five to six thousand Bhikkhus at the University of Nalanda under the impression that Nalanda was a fort and the bhikkhus were soldiers. The surviving bhikkhus or many of them migrated to other lands, like Tibet and Nepal.

You must know that the practice of the Buddhist religion is a very difficult one, unlike the Hindu or brahmanic religions. I do not think it is necessary to emphasise the fact that no religion could survive without the priestly class. It was necessary to have some kind of priest. Bhikkhus cannot exist unless there is the dayakaya who is prepared to give him food and maintain him. According to the Vinaya rules the bhikkhu should not go to the same house for "dane" more than a certain number of days. It would be great tyranny otherwise. He must continually change the houses where he has to beg from. It is estimated that to maintain a bhikkhu throughout a period of six months there must be more than ninety families. This was not possible owing to mass movements of bhikkhus and laymen leaving their homes for other countries. The Buddhists who survived were not in a position to raise another priesthood to take the place of those who migrated. You know that a bhikkhu begins as a novice and must be academically qualified before he is raised by ordination to be a priest. Thus for want of priests to minister to the Buddhists left behind, the religion of the Buddha became static. The brahmins did not find much difficulty in finding priests for among the brahmins. Every boy is born a priest. However, the forces which brought about the destruction of Buddhism in India did not result in the result in the entire disappearance of the religion from India.

There is one thing I want to say in conclusion. Some believe that Buddhism has disappeared from India. If they say that Buddhism in its material form has disappeared, I am prepared to agree with them—material form in the sense of pagodas, temples, prayer wheel, and such like. But as a spiritual force it still exists in undiminished vigour to this day.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN BUDDHISM

By

W. S. KARUNARATNE,
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THE Buddha denied the existence of a soul in man. This doctrine of soullessness was the result of the most careful analysis of the individual. The Buddha found the individual to consist of a combination of mental and physical phenomena subject to the laws of change and decay. Apart from these there is no soul (ātman) within the body, permanent and unchanging. How then does the body endure, both here and hereafter? The Buddha supplied the answer in the form of the doctrine of kamma. It is kamma alone that causes, continues and determines one's existence. Kamma does not literally transfer itself from one birth to another. It is the continuity of impulse (kamma santati) that determines one's continual state of becoming. The Buddha says 'Volition, O monks! I call kamma' (cetanā'ham bhikkhave kammam vadāmi). Further he says 'All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts and made up of our thoughts' (Manopubbangamā dhammā manoseṭṭhā manomayā). These statements show the importance of introspective psychology in Buddha's thought. The existence of a soul within the individual frame is a myth, declared the Buddha. The mental and physical phenomena being mutually interactive are in a continual state of flux, of becoming.

The Buddha seems to have been the only thinker of his day who seriously studied the psychological make-up of the individual. From the Upāli Sutta we learn that Jina; for instance, believed in the physical, rather than mental, origin of actions. Mahāvīra maintained the doctrine of 'Kāyadaṇḍa' but Buddha that of 'Manodaṇḍa.' In no other religion, either in India or outside, do we get this introspective study of the individual. However, though not systematically worked out as in Buddhism, there is a stray reference to the importance of psychology in the Sermon on the Mount. There Jesus says that an action, though not physically performed, yet so conceived in the mind, is as good as done, (St. Matthew, Cap. 5, para 28).

The doctrine of soullessness (anattavāda) in Buddhism has to be viewed against the background of Upanisadic developments in onto-

logy in order to gauge its significance in the history of Indian thought. The Anattalakkhana Sutta shows clearly the position of the Buddha as against that of the Upanisadic thinkers. While the latter asserted a personal ātman consubstantial with the universal ātman or Brahman, the Buddha denied both outright. But no pains have been spared by some scholars like J. G. Jennings and A. K. Coomarasamy to prove that the Buddha did not really deny the Upanisadic ātman. In such passages as 'attā hi attano nātho, kōhi nātho parosiyā,' 'atta dīpa attasarana anañña sarana,' 'attā te purisa jānāti saccam vā yadi vā musā,' 'atthi te kocañño attanā piyataro' they see references to ātman in the Upanisadic sense. What might lend support to their view is a statement in the Suttanipāta (Āmagandha Sutta) where the Buddha Kassapa denounces Nihilism (natthika diṭṭhi). Here, from the use of the word 'Natthika' (Sanskrit nāstika) with reference to other views opposed to Buddhism, one may be led to conclude that Buddhism is 'atthika' (Skt. Āstika) or orthodox. It has been held that only the Cārvākas were really 'natthika' or heterodox nihilists since only they denied everything. The Buddha, however, asserted the reality of change. Buddhism could be called atthika (or assertive) in the sense that Buddha denied the reality of the phenomenal world only, in contradiction of the absolute and positive world of Nibbāna. But Buddhism cannot be called atthika in the sense that it upheld the Upanisadic doctrine of ātman.

The Buddhist term to denote the individual is 'puggala.' Like the word 'atta,' 'puggala' is used in two senses in the Pali Canon, the conventional and philosophical. 'Attā' is used conventionally to denote an individual as in 'attānam upamam katvā.' But in such expressions as 'anattalakkhana' the word 'atta' is used in the philosophical sense. With regard to the word 'puggala' an apparent difficulty is the definition of

the individual in knowledge. All these things are discussed in the Kathāvatthu and more fully in the Milindapañha. According to the latter, when it is said 'Nagasena' or Virasena, it involves the conventional use of the term 'puggala.' But when the individual is analysed into the various parts, namely, the five groups of mental and physical phenomena, it is impossible to express the individual merely by the grouping of the five groups called technically the 'Vijjamāna paññattis' without reference to a 'puggala.' The synthesis of the five groups fails to convey to us an idea of the whole, without the idea of the individual being associated with it. As this point is fraught with difficulties of expression, it is not surprising that this led to a divergence of opinion within the Buddhist order itself. In the Milindapañha we have references to the Puggalavādins and in Mahayanism we get the upholders of the view of Ālayaviññāna. The question of defining things in knowledge, it is interesting to see, has also vexed the three English philosophers, Locke, Berkeley and Hume.

Puggala according to the Buddha consisted of rūpa, vedanā, saññā, sankhāra and viññāna. These could be brought under the two headings nāma and rūpa where nāma means mental and rūpa corporeal. Four of these phenomenal groups, it will be seen, are mental, namely, vedanā (feelings) saññā (perception), sankhāra (mental formations) and viññāna (consciousness). Under rūpa is included all the physical parts of the individual. Hence the term nāma rūpa covered the whole individual and in Buddhist metaphysics this term is used in this comprehensive sense. Our so-called individual existence is then nothing but a mere process of these mental and bodily (nāmarūpa) phenomena and in no way constitute an ego-entity. Further, even the five groups of phenomena are dependent on one another. This may be illustrated by an oft-quoted example. Supposing one were to see a thing, three agencies must come into play. Firstly, there must be the organ of sight, the eye, and secondly, the physical object, the sight or scene. To these two must be added contact or phassa. That is, there cannot take place the

experience of a sight unless contact is established between the physical object and the organ of sight, the eye, both of which depend on the eye-consciousness (cakkhuvīññāna). But this cakkhuvīññāna is again dependent on the eye and the scene for apart from them the eye-consciousness has no possibility of experiencing a sight. The example shows clearly the mutual interdependence of the five groups of phenomena.

The real nature of the individual being thus laid here by the critical analysis of the Buddha, the question of the existence of an ātman within it, distinct and apart from the five aggregates, could not arise. But the main difficulty in the matter of understanding this most important point in the Buddhist doctrine of the individual has been the question of the possibility of a collection of such groups enduring from birth to birth without a

central independent principle like ātman the misconception of the existence of a inner principle ātman is pointed out in the famous simile of the Milindapañha. The individual is compared to a chariot. Just as the name 'chariot' has no existence apart from the axle, shaft and wheels, etc. So also the name 'individual' has no existence apart from the continually becoming physical and mental phenomena. But within the body the Buddha found an agent that answered to the Upanisadic concept of ātman, though in an entirely different and metaphorical phenomena. In his joyous utterance immediately after the realization of Full Enlightenment the Buddha referred to an architect whom he had up to that time been searching for. That architect (gaha kāraka) was no other than craving (tanhā). This tanhā is the driving force of life. Tanhā is no substance but an impulse. One

impulse gives way to another, and this series helps to sustain and continue life, here and hereafter. No ātman passes from one life to another but this impulse. Life may be likened, as has been done in Buddhist books, to a wave and rebirth to a series of waves. Just as on a placid and tranquil lake the impulse of wind sets in motion a series of waves but water from one way does not pass into another, so also is the process in the continuation of the wave of life. The wind is the equivalent of the craving impulse (tanhā) and just as the wave ceases to be when the wind ceases to be, so also when the impulse of craving ceases to be, life itself ceases to be: To continue the same simile just as the lake attains the state of tranquillity when the wind ceases to blow, so also the individual when devoid of craving impulse attains the calm and changeless state of Nibbāna.

PROHIBITION

Nations which out of revenue-greed hesitate to abolish opium and whisky trades, fattening on the untold misery and degradation of millions of human beings, have no right to call themselves either Christian or civilized.

—H. P. Blavatsky.

You will not be deceived by the specious argument that India must not be made sober by compulsion, and that those who wish to drink must have facilities provided for them. The State does not cater to the vices of people . . . We do not provide facilities for thieves to indulge their propensity for thieving. I hold drink to be more damnable than thieving and perhaps even prostitution. Is it not often the parent of both ?

—M. K. Gandhi.

It will be a proud day for Bombay if Prohibition is ushered in amid the rejoicings of the whole population. Let it be remembered that this prohibition is not a superimposition. It is being introduced by Governments that are responsible for the people. It has been a plank in the national programme since 1920. It is coming, therefore, in due

fulfilment of the national will definitely expressed nearly 20 years ago.

—M. K. Gandhi.

There is great unanimity amongst authorities today on the point that the direct effect of alcohol upon the nervous system is to depress and suspend its functions. That it is, actually, from first to last, a narcotic drug. Madame Blavatsky in fact writes :—

Wine and spirit drinking is only less destructive to the inner powers, than the habitual use of hashish opium, and similar drugs.

It has been found that alcohol is actively harmful in many tropical diseases, e.g., dysentery, sprue and cholera. One investigator writes :—

Cholera ever attacks the intemperate first, and cholera prefers drinkers.

Alcoholic psychosis is a condition of mental disease of which alcohol is either the primary or the contributing cause. To quote from Dr. C. C. Weeks's *Alcohol and Human Life* :—

The amount of alcohol that is daily consumed by the pillars of society is quite sufficient to con-

vert an epileptic or potential lunatic, or certain feeble-minded individuals, into criminal or certifiable lunatics.

Dr. L. C. Duryea, Medical Director of the Research Council on Problems of Alcohol, in his book *Alcoholism as an Illness*, writes :—

The compulsive drinker finds it absolutely impossible to drink in moderation. This means *all* alcoholic beverages, as well as medicines or anything else containing alcohol. Complete abstinence is his only salvation. The person with an alcohol problem must remember that he is a sick person and that never again can he revert to social drinking. With the first drink he begins to lose control.

And in her book, *Public Education and Alcoholics Anonymous*, Mrs. M. Mann, Executive Director of the National Committee for Education on Alcohol (U.S.A.) explains about Alcoholics thus :—

The Alcoholic is one whose drinking is out of control . . . that is the nature of his disease, and like a diabetic who must forswear sugar, he must learn to live entirely without alcohol. This he can do.

She adds that it has been done by many with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous, which association offers a plan of action to reclaim those afflicted with Alcoholism to comparatively healthy and normal life. She defines the disease as: "an obsession of the mind coupled with an allergy of the body" and points out the unavoidable danger for all who drink:—

Every competent medical authority now knows . . . that there is no way yet discovered by which one can predict in advance who will succumb to alcoholism . . . One can predict that only a certain percentage of each new crop of youthful drinkers will become alcoholics, there is no possible way to pick out in advance that particular youth who in starting to drink is slated for alcoholism.

In *Abstinence as a Solution*, by D. B. Cloward, Secretary of the Council on Christian Social Progress, we read:—

Seriously to advocate temperance, therefore, in the sense of controlled moderation, is of highly doubtful value when dealing with a habit-forming drug of such high potency. . . . A large proportion of the excessive drinkers, even the alcoholics, as case records reveal, were for years controlled social drinkers.

To quote from the Yale University *Quarterly Journal of Studies in Alcohol, Lay Supplement No. 10*:—

The degree to which one is ready to accept that the world cannot be moulded to his wishes, the number of props he needs to support him against this inevitable fact, and the degree to which he avoids anxieties and frustrations, but particularly the degree to which his conduct is affected by these endeavours, make up the real difference between normal and neurotic and between neurotic and psychotic persons.

In *The Union Signal* (Dec. 10, 1949) Dr. Ernest Gordon states that three popular American magazines alone: *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune* (*Time Incorporated*) were paid \$12,712,000 by associated liquor manufacturers for advertising alcoholic drink in 1948! He quotes a number of the enticing advertisements from these journals and writes:—

Alcohol is recognized as the third great medical problem in America. It is indeed recognized as a carrier of disease. In its wake follow all kinds of bodily and mental sickness . . . *Time* and *Life*, netting their owner \$9,400,000, from drink-ads.

in 1947, appeal to the great public to which they minister week after week, to buy alcohol in numberless enticing forms . . . Its use is made to appear normal, desirable, harmless, the proper accompaniment of social life, a note of good form.

Alcohol and Accidents: In this machine-age it has been imperative to discover the relationship between drink and industrial and traffic accidents. After country-wide investigation one Automobile Club of America summed up its recommendation: "If you must drink, don't drive; if you must drive, don't drink." Another investigation in the U.S.A. found alcohol causing 70 to 80 per cent. inefficiency in machine-workers and motorists; even drinking in such small amounts that the effect is unnoticeable to the drinker, causing a delay in reflex action from 6 to 10 per cent., thus endangering both motorists and pedestrians.

Alcohol and Crime: The intimate connection between drink and crimes of all sorts has been established in many countries. Experts of Europe and America find that—

. . . intemperance is the cause of nine-tenths of all the crime among civilized nations.

All recent research supports the statements of H. P. Blavatsky and of Gandhiji quoted at the beginning of this Tract; and in the same vein Gandhiji further declares:—

It (revenue from alcohol) is a revenue which must be sacrificed and whilst it lasts, it should be held as sacrosanct and be wholly dedicated to the purpose of eradicating the drink evil. But today it is being utilized for educating our children with the result that a tremendous barrier has been put against this necessary temperance legislation. People are made to think that they will not be able to educate their children if this revenue stops. If things go unchecked like this, a whole nation might have to perish. If the evil spreads, it may be too late to undertake legislation.

Young India, April, 1929.

. . . The drink curse has desolated many a labourer's home. There is no half-way house between drunkenness and prohibition. Well-to-do men may pretend to be moderate. But there is no such thing as moderation possible among labourers. You can, therefore, create an atmosphere favourable to total prohibition and earn the silent blessings of the silent victims.

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M. K. Gnanananda, Mysore, 1929.
noolaham.org | advanaham.org

THE BUDDHA'S EXHORTATION TO THE FIRST MISSIONARIES

Go ye O Bhikkhus, wander,
Go forth as Warriors can!
In great Compassion strive ye
For the Good, for the Gain of
Man!

Proclaim the Doctrine Glorious!
Live ye My Way of Life,
Tireless in service, blameless,
Forth, Warriors to the Strife!

Storm ye the forts of your
Enemies—
Man's Folly, Sloth and Greed!
In Love Compassion to the Erring
Preach ye the Buddha's
Creed—

"To shun all thought of Evil,
To glory in Good done,
In a Mind alert, untainted,
Until Nirvana's won!

Shout ye the Dhamma's War
Cry!

Beat ye the Drums of Truth!
To earth's remotest corner
Bear ye my Banner of Truth!
For the Good, the Gain of
Mankind
Wage ye the Wars of Truth!

B. A. PATHIRATNE.

SRI LANKA AND HER NEIGHBOURS—III.

(Continued from page 64)

became obliterated in which the imperial offerings to the temples were recorded on rocks.

The only mementos which remain at the present day to recall their ancient domestication in the Island is the occasional appearance in the mountain villages of an itinerant vendor of sweetmeats or a hut in the solitary forest near some cave from which an impoverished Chinese renter annually gathers the edible nests of the swallow." That was in 1859.

The picture is now happily different. There is a small but flourishing Chinese colony in Colombo with a Chinese Consul. Once more pilgrims have started to come from China to Ceylon. In 1941 a Goodwill Mission led by the Ven Tai Hsu, Chief Abbot and of the spiritual head of Buddhists of China, visited Ceylon on pilgrimage and spent two weeks here worshipping at the holy shrines; a few weeks ago a Chinese monk was appointed as Lecturer to teach Chinese Buddhism at the University of Ceylon. Once more the wheel has turned.

TOLERANCE AND COMPROMISE

(Continued from page 62)

and in it alone, Subhaddha, is the man of true saintliness. Void are the systems of other teachers—void of true saints. And in this one, Subhaddha, may the brethren live the Life that's Right (*Samma*), so that the world may not be bereft of Ara-hats" (*Mahaparinibbāna Sutta*, 62).

Nothing can be clearer or less compromising than this pronouncement. It is exactly reproduced later on in the Western Scriptures—"Neither is there salvation in any other."

Let us now pass over two-and-a-half centuries, and see how this teaching affected the great Indian convert King Asoka (*Rock-cut Edicts* (V. Smith)).

"But it is more than a year since I joined the Order, and have exerted myself strenuously. During that time, the gods who were regarded as true all over India have been shown to be untrue.

"Whatsoever, Reverend Sirs, has been said by the Venerable Buddha, all of that has been well said.

"His Majesty . . . does reverence to men of all sects, whether Ascetics or householders, by gifts and various forms of reverence. His . . . Majesty, however, cares not so much for gifts or external reverence, as that there should be a growth of the essence of the matter in all sects . . . the root of this is restraint of speech, to wit, a man must not do reverence to his own sect or disparage that of another man without reason. Depreciation should be for specific reasons only, because the sects of other people all deserve reverence for one reason or another. By thus acting a man exalts his own sect, and at the same time does service to the sects of other people.

"For this is the desire of His . . . Majesty, that all sects should hear much teaching and hold sound doctrine.¹

"Even upon the forest folk in his dominions His . . . Majesty looks kindly and he seeks their conversion, for (if he did not) repentance would come upon His . . . Majesty. They are bidden to turn from evil ways, that they be not chastised. For His . . . Majesty desires that all animate beings should have security, self-control, peace of mind, joyousness."

Asoka, however, will not tolerate schism. Though eager to tolerate

and attract outsiders, once they are in, he fully intends them to remain there. "But whosoever, monk or nun, shall break the unity of the Church, shall be compelled to wear white garments, and to dwell in a place not reserved for the clergy." The way of the Church must not be quitted.

What is it that made both the Buddha and his successor so uncompromising in their religion? *The nature of the religion itself.* Both of them were eminently kindly, compassionate, and utterly indisposed to do harm to anybody. But in those lone hours of supreme enlightenment the Buddha had seen the universe "face to face," and there can be no compromise with cosmic truth. Truth is one; there are not two kinds of truth. What man in his senses would propose to compromise with the law of gravitation?

Whatever in the teaching of any other sect agrees with the teaching of the Buddha is already Buddhism, and requires no compromise; the rest is barred from adoption by its inherent nature.

And therefore when an eminent teacher (or even monk) suggests to us that a compromise between Christianity and Buddhism will constitute the religion of the future, it is for us who love the truth to make "right effort" and apply the cosmic test up to the level of our intelligence—and this, whether in doctrine or practice. Whatever may remain will be found not to be a blend or compromise. *Buddhism is not soluble in water.*

As to practice, while our Western cult will have to give up its insincerities, its miracles, its shows, concerts, dancing exhibitions² and its married clergy, as means to holiness, our Eastern friends will have to purify the yellow robe from the taint of traffic in charms and mascots, the reception of money, the occasional use of ritual, and not a few other laxities in bhikkhu practice. And a religion that is truly cosmic will eventually be seen to depend on no historical event whatever.

Here, then, all the difficulties with science come to an end. No event, no document, no teaching is sacred, or can in the long run be the subject of compromise. Pure Buddhism claims to be pure truth, and all of

it, and to be attainable by any cultivated mind, unflinchingly exercised. Our duty is to give it all possible liberty. And if, in any given case, we can come for the time being to no final decision, let us ever bear in mind the golden rule—to *leave off in a position of the least doubt.* For those who have not enjoyed the same advantages, the wise and tolerant precepts of Asoka are well worthy of imitation, and we can see that his disciplinary measures were mild for the time. He who was himself the truth and taught nothing else has told us that miracles and the claim of super-human powers should be met with the strongest aversion. And, inasmuch as moral and religious truth cannot depend upon time, we may set aside as unworthy of discussion all questions as to the historicity of the Teacher. Much as every Buddhist delights in calling to mind the venerable figure of the great Founder, much as he may love to think of that pilgrim through the aeons—his pity, his patience, his sweetness—he ranks all these far below the Instruction. "The gift of the Law is the greatest of all gifts."³

EDMUND J. MILLS.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR INHUMANITY OF MAN

Sir,—The following extract from an article relating to seal-hunting, written by an eye-witness to the "News Review" dated March 2, 1950, illustrates to what extent man can exceed the brute in his cruel savagery, when greed for wealth overwhelms love and gentleness. This 'Massacre of the Innocents' is done annually in order to obtain the pelts of baby seals known as 'white coats' to adorn the shoulders of 'fashionable' women. The condition prevailing in the hunting field at the time of the massacre can be better imagined than described. When will the brutality of man give in to the all-pervading love of the Great Teacher, the Compassionate One, the Lord Buddha? It is futile to speak of abolishing wars and federation of man so long as man is actuated by greed and hate. The fear of death is common to all living beings, and one may have heard the peculiar death cry uttered

1. Observe the great stress laid on mental culture.

2. The Rev. A. W. F. Blunt states that "At present our success, so far as we succeed, is that of a compromise with the world."

3. In connection with the general subject of this address, Prof. H. Sidgwick's *Practical Ethics*, 1898 (Essays V. and VI.), may be consulted with advantage.

by a fowl, or a goat or by cattle when it is about to be slaughtered. This is the greatest of all fears.

Extract referred to:—

"Each man carries a club or gaff weighted with metal. Killing the baby seals is a simple task. They are unable to swim, cannot escape through water-holes like the older ones, and are quite helpless before the hunters who club them on the head.

Though the victims put up no fight novice sealers and even seasoned veterans have to steel themselves against the little "white coats" piteous, almost human way of looking up at the killer, and whimpering like children, tears streaming from their large brown eyes.

Carcasses are stripped of the pelt and thick layer of fat beneath. As the skinning goes on the ice

turns from glistening white to gory red.

Killing goes on for four weeks.

In the old days the average catch was in the region of 300,000 pelts with a record of more than 600,000. Now it averages 100,000."

Yours, etc.,

A. JAYASINGHE.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

"LIGHT OF ASIA" ELOCUTION CONTEST

The semi-finals were held in the Y.M.B.A. Hall on July 15th and resulted as follows:—

Senior Boys: M. E. P. Abeysingha, A. F. C. Bartholomeusz, Sidat Sri Nandalochana, Robert Wilson.

Senior Girls: Dulcie Bastiansz, Anoma Karunaratne; G. Olive Phillips; Ellierine Wijetunga; Amara Weerasooria.

Junior Boys: Melroy Campbell, Shantilal A. De Silva; Desmond Joshua; Ralph Wickramaratne.

Junior Girls: Deanna Campbell; Manni Dadabhoy; Balesvari Sivalingam; Poorani Zoysa.

The judges were:—Miss D. Karawita, Miss S. S. Gunawardhana, Miss M. Wani-gasundera, and Messrs. T. B. Dissanayake, D. N. W. de Silva O. M. L. da Silva, H. M. L. de Silva, S. Sivasithamparam, C. Thurai-ratnam, A. Thavathurai, V. Ratnasabapathy, R. S. Wanasundera and G. K. C. Sundarampillai.

The finals will be held on August 2nd.

LECTURES

Mr. John Coats, a leading theosophist, delivered a lecture at the Y.M.B.A. Hall on July 25, on One World and Why. Dr. G. P. Malalasekera presided.

SINHALESE DEPARTMENT

Mr. Edwin Kottegodra delivered a series of lectures on "The Outfit of Sinhala Kavi."

PERSONAL

Mr. N. U. Jayawardene has been appointed Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Ceylon.

The Hon. Mr. A. E. Goonesinha has been appointed a Minister of State.

Dr. C. W. W. Kannangara has been appointed Ceylon's Ambassador to Indonesia.

NEW MEMBERS:—

4.7.50: Messrs. S. G. Fernando, P. N. Thavunalingam, D. A. G. Kumara, V. Jayawardhana, U. N. Gunasekara, J. L. Robert de Silva, A. Sunderaraj.

11.7.50: Messrs. W. S. Molligoda, M. K. Perera, L. K. Weerasinghe, T. Balendra, R. Weerasingham.

18.7.50: Messrs. T. Parameswaran, Wijaya S. Kadigawe, S. M. D. Jayasundere, D. D. Colombage, W. M. P. de Silva.

25-7-50: N. G. Gunatunga, W. M. K. B. Arembepola, D. N. K. Jayawardene.

WEDDINGS

We offer our congratulations to the following newly-wedded couples:—

Mr. T. B. Dissanayake, Advocate, and Miss Chandra Wickremeratne.

Mr. S. L. Tirimanne and Miss Iranganie Perera, daughter of **Mr. and Mrs. Tudor V. Perera**.

Mr. Kamal S. G. Punchihewa and Miss Yaso Fernando, daughter of **Mr. W. D. Fernando**.

BILLIARDS

The 1950 Billiard and Snooker Tournament will be held in September.

The Rules are as follows:—

1. Entries will close on September 9th, 1950, at the Y.M.B.A. Office.

2. The Tournaments are open to members of the Y.M.B.A. who have enrolled on or before April 30th, 1950.

3. The Tournaments will commence on September 15th, 1950, and will be continued on the succeeding days. *All ties must be completed on the dates and at the hours notified; otherwise a "walk-over" will be conceded to the competitor present.*

4. All events will be brought to a close on October 31st unless otherwise the Sports Committee decide otherwise.

5. *No member who is in arrears of membership fees up to the end of September will be allowed to take part.*

Event 1.—Handicap Billiards Singles:

250 points up, in all ties except the Final which shall be 500 points up; the handicaps of the finalists will be doubled.

Event 2.—Open Snooker Singles (English):

Best of three frames in all ties, except the Final, which shall be the best five frames.

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In any matter concerning these Tournaments, the decision of the Sports Committee will be final.

NADAGAM

There will be Nadagam songs and music and a Marionette show in the Association Hall on Sunday, August 6th. The programme has been arranged by Gate Mudaliyar N. Wickremeratne.

TABLE TENNIS AND CARROM

A Table Tennis Tournament for members of the Colombo Y.M.B.A. will be held in September. The exact dates will be notified to Competitors by letter. Entries close on 2nd September, 1950.

Table Tennis Events—

Singles Entry Fee Re. 1/-
Doubles Entry Fee Re. 1/-

(Players will select their own partners).

Carrom Events—

Singles Entry Fee Re. 1/-
Doubles Entry Fee Re. 1/-

(Players will select their own partners).

No member who is in arrears of membership fees up to the end of September will be allowed to take part in any of the above Tournaments.

NEWS AND NOTES

AHOM LEADERS EMBRACE BUDDHISM

AT the fifth All-Assam Buddhism Conference held at Disangfani recently four leading Ahom families took the five precepts and declared themselves Buddhists. The well-known Ahom leader Mr. Thanuram Gogoi, President of the All-Assam Ahom Association, Mr. Durganath Gogoi, Assistant General Secretary of the All-Assam Ahom Association, and Mr. Jayachandra Bargohain, Head Master, Kendaguri High School, were the leaders who embraced Buddhism. Prof. Tan Yun Shan, Director, Chinese Bhavaa and Mr. D. Valisinha, General Secretary, Maha Bodhi Society of India, wished them long life and happiness. Ahom had about three lakhs of Buddhists till very recently. It is now their desire to go back to their ancestral Buddhist faith.—*Cor.*