



# THE BUDDHIST

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

“*Sīla Paññānato Jayam*”

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Vol. XXI.]

NOVEMBER, 1950

PUBLISHED BY THE  
COLOMBO Y.M.B.A.

[No. 7

## THE BODHI TREE

By S. PARANAVITANA (Archaeological Commissioner)

ASOKA, after he embraced Buddhism, concentrated all his energies and the vast resources of his empire on the diffusion of the humanitarian teachings of the Sakya sage throughout the then known world. He despatched religious missions to the border lands of his empire and to regions outside his frontiers, including Ceylon and Burma. The mission to Ceylon was headed by Mahinda, the emperor's own son, who had renounced the world and obtained spiritual insight.

Devanampiya Tissa, the then king of Ceylon, received the religious teachers from North India with great honour, listened to their preachings and embraced the doctrines of the Compassionate One with great fervour. So did many thousands of his subjects from all walks of life. The vast majority remained as lay devotees, but the urge to lead the higher life by renouncing all worldly attachments was felt not only by many hundreds of men but also by large numbers of women among whom were high-born ladies of the royal household.

In order to admit these ladies to the Order, Saint Mahinda sent for his sister, Sanghamitta, who, like himself, had exchanged the pleasures and luxuries of an Imperial Court for the serene happiness to be obtained by subduing one's own self. Saint Sanghamittā was also to bring with her a branch from the Bodhi tree at Gaya in whose shade the Buddha had gained Supreme insight. Envoys were sent by Devanampiya Tissa making these requests of Asoka.

The Emperor rejoiced at the tidings brought by the Sinhalese envoys and, in furtherance of the object that was so dear to his

heart, acquiesced in his daughter's leaving his protection for a remote Island, though the possibility was that he would never see her again. He also, without loss of time, made preparations to send the branch of the Sacred Bo-tree in order to strengthen the faith of the people of this Island. With all the paraphernalia of Imperial dignity, and accompanied by a mighty host, he came to that spot which, to the faithful, is the Navel of the Earth, paid his obeisance and saw to it that the branch was severed without any injury to the parent stem. The branch of the Sacred Tree, implanted in a golden vessel, was brought in great state to the sea-port and with Saint Sanghamitta as its guardian, was installed in a sea-going bark suitably decked for its precious cargo. With visible emotion the Emperor took leave of his daughter and the holy object and returned to his capital firmly convinced that the action of his would prove to be of blessing to countless beings for a long time to come. History has proved that the great Emperor's faith was justified.

The ship bringing the Bo-tree and Sanghamitta duly arrived at a sea-port on the north coast of Ceylon where Devanampiya Tissa was awaiting it with a royal welcome. After due celebrations at the spot, where the Bo-tree first rested on the soil of Lanka, it was brought to Anuradhapura in triumphal progress and was planted in the Mahamegha Garden, amidst the rejoicings of the assembled multitudes, on the 14th day of the bright half of the month of Maggasira, 236 years after the Parinirvana of the Buddha.

The planting of the Bo-tree at Anuradhapura was symbolized in the noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

Buddha's doctrine in this Island; just as the former has defied Time for twenty-two centuries, so has the latter survived the vicissitudes of history during this long period. The maintenance of the Bo-tree and its precincts was one of the chief cares of the Sinhalese kings of old and an extensive establishment was provided to attend to its needs. The Tree itself was inside a shrine and its precincts were encompassed by a *prakara* pierced with magnificent gateways. Within its extensive enclosure the subsidiary shrines were so laid out as to make the place a replica of the Bodhimanda in India. In its vicinity rose the lofty Lohapasada with its gilded roof and from its precincts was visible the soaring spire of the Mahathupa. Scores of magnificent edifices surrounding it served as the abodes of earnest men who strove to follow in the footsteps of the Great Teacher whose memory the Tree enshrined. For a thousand years and more the Bo-tree was the centre not only of the religious life of Anuradhapura but also of the whole of Lanka.

Even when its ancient glory departed from Anuradhapura and its palaces and temples were no more, the Bo-tree was never forgotten by the Buddhists of Ceylon. All throughout that long night of seven hundred years when desolation reigned supreme where once was a populous city, a yellow-clad bhikkhu was never absent to chant the praises of the Buddha at the foot of the Bodhi-tree at Anuradhapura. Braving the terrors of the jungle and risking the danger of malaria which held the country in its grip, devotees, too came to offer their

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# BUDDHISM AND THE VITAL PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME

By

Professor HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP

**B**UDDHISM venerates as its founder the Indian Prince Siddhartha of the family of the Shakyas (c.560-480 B.C.), whom his contemporaries were accustomed to call by his surname Gautama or by the honorific "Buddha". The word Buddha means the Awakened, the Enlightened, and was applied to the Indian men of those times who were believed to have fathomed the mystery of the world and to have discovered the way to salvation, by their own efforts and not through revelation. The gospel of Gautama spread quickly over the whole of India in his lifetime and after his death, but fell into decay by about 1000 A. D., and had to give way, in the country of its origin, to Hinduism and Islam. There are today only a few hundred thousand Buddhists in the Indian sub-continent.

But Buddhism found ample recompense for this loss in Ceylon and Further India, in China, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia. The number of Buddhists in the Far East is estimated at 5 to 600 million, but this figure does not give a clear idea of its extension, since the recognition of some of its doctrines or the following of the Buddhist customs is not incompatible, among the majority of its followers in Further India and the Far East, with adhesion to Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto and the various popular cults. For it has always been foreign to Buddhism to claim exclusive validity. On the contrary, in its all-embracing tolerance, it has always worked side by side with other religions, and taken up into itself ideas which were originally foreign to it and tried to imbue them with its spirit.

Present-day Buddhism flourishes in two different forms. In Ceylon and Further India the original doctrine prevails, which is called the Lesser Vehicle, or in India Hinayana; in the Far East and the Tibetan cultural area this "simple doctrine" has undergone a significant broadening as regards philosophy and ceremonial. This is called the Great Vehicle, in India Mahayana. But the basic ideas of all Buddhism have remained more or less the same, so that in our survey we need take no notice of the differences in detail.

Among the world religions, Buddhism is that whose area of influence lies farthest from us, and also that which is most different in its dogmatic theological teaching from Christianity and Islam.

## God

First of all and above all Buddhism does not teach the existence of any personal god who created and rules the world. It admits the existence of many gods; but these are only transitory beings with limited powers. They are born and pass away; they can exert no influence on the world process as a whole. Also the great saints and saviours, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, do not have the position which the Western religions ascribe to their one God. They can enlighten individuals, and according to the Great Vehicle can lead them by their grace to the path of salvation. But they are not able to interfere with the cosmic process or change the world.

The Universe follows its own unalterable natural and moral laws. The most important of these is the law of Karma, the law of moral causality involving reward and punishment. This brings it about that every ethically good or bad action inexorably finds its reward or punishment, because the agent is born again after his death as a new being, and in that life reaps what he has sown in the previous life.

## The soul

Another point on which Buddhism differs from Christianity and Islam is this: both Western religions accept immortal souls, created by God, which after death continue to exist in heaven or hell. Buddhism denies that there can be anything in the world which persists unchanged. According to its theory life is a stream of elements which are always coming into existence and ceasing to exist, which influence each other according to certain laws. The life-stream of man continues after his death as a new being, which has to pursue its happy or unhappy existence, as god, man, animal or inhabitant of hell, according as his deeds were good or evil. A life continues until the karma, the power of the deeds which a man is being into

existence, is exhausted. Then, on the basis of the actions performed in that life, a new being comes into existence which is the heir of the previous life, and so on.

Since each life is the consequence of the actions of a previous life, there can have been no beginning of the world. Since in each life new actions are performed which produce karma, there can in the natural course of things be no end of the world. A few beings succeed, through knowledge of truth, in getting rid of the passions, which are the root cause of the karmic process. They withdraw from the world, they enter into Nirvana, into the great peace. But, however, many beings enter into Nirvana, the cosmic process will never come to an end. For the number of beings who inhabit the infinitely many worlds as animals, men, spirits, gods and dwellers in hell, is infinitely great.

Thus as little can be said about an end of the world as about a beginning. And with this we come to a third important point of difference from Islam and Christianity. Both of these teach that the world was created by God out of nothing, that it remains under his governance for some thousands of years and that on the last day it will come to a definite end, when the dead will rise again, all men will receive their eternal reward or eternal punishment, and a new realm of eternal duration and splendour will be created. The ideas of an original creation and a definite end of the world are as foreign to Buddhism as that of a providential direction of cosmic events in accordance with a divine plan. It will be evident that, because of these divergences from the conceptions of the dogma of the theistic religions, Buddhism must give answers differing in many matters from theirs to the questions we are concerned with here.

Before I proceed to discuss these seven questions, I must say a word on my own personal attitude towards Buddhism. I am not a Buddhist, but a student of Buddhism. I have concerned myself for over thirty years with the Buddhist scriptures in the Indian languages, and have studied



the principal Buddhist countries (except Tibet and Mongolia) at first-hand on three prolonged visits. In view of my knowledge of the Buddhist sacred writings, and the many discussions I have had with Buddhist monks and laymen, I believe I can answer these questions objectively and correctly in the spirit of Buddhism. I hope in this way I shall be able to add to the understanding of a doctrine the study of which has been my life's work, and a knowledge of which, in my opinion, is necessary for anybody who seriously concerns himself with the various solutions which the riddle of existence puts before us.

### The meaning of life

(1) The first question which has been addressed to me is: "So far as we can see, both the life of the individual, and also the history of mankind as a whole, proceed according to definite laws and in definite phases. Apart from such causal regularities, has life any *meaning* which is comprehensible to us? Has man in the world any definite task? Or does this task merely consist in preparing himself to leave the world?"

"Regarded from the religious standpoint, is it ultimately unimportant how man behaves in this world? If not, where can he find directions as to his behaviour, and how can he know the validity of these directions? If the world has a comprehensible meaning, how is the suffering of innocent people to be explained?"

As I see it, there are in this group of questions no fewer than six separate questions. I shall answer them one by one.

(a) What is the goal of the cosmic process? According to the Buddhist view, which I have already outlined, this question cannot be answered. For Buddhism does not believe in a final outcome towards which history is striving. The cosmos is in eternal movement, and the numerous world systems of which it consists pass periodically through the four phases of coming into being, existence, dissolution and non-existence.

### Cosmology

The Buddhist philosophers customarily begin their expositions by describing how an existing world which is ripe for dissolution is emptied of its inhabitants. These beings are born again after their death in another world, and the

uninhabited world is destroyed completely by fire, water or wind. The world thus destroyed disappears for an enormous period of time, and there exists in its place only empty space. When the prescribed period of non-existence comes to an end, there arises a new world on the foundation of the latent karmic power of the beings of the world which was destroyed. In empty space there first springs up a faint breeze, which grows ever stronger, and finally the heaven of the gods, earth and hell are formed. These are then populated with the beings who have had to live through the intervening period in other worlds.

At the beginning of such a newly arisen world, men are without sex. They are endowed with a radiant body, they loiter over the earth's surface, and they need no physical nourishment. But because, out of curiosity they feed on the finer material of the earth, they become earthbound creatures with gross and perishable bodies. Desire, which grows ever stronger in them, causes them gradually to lose their original purity and virtue; they devote themselves to bodily pleasures and quarrel with one another over their hitherto common possessions. So that order may be re-established, property is introduced, and one man is installed as king. The need for a division of labour then leads to the formation of special callings and castes.

Over a period of millions of years, the natural and moral condition of the world deteriorates from generation to generation, so that human beings, who, in the beginning had an unimaginably long life, now never live beyond a hundred years. This position, in which we find ourselves now, will in the future become ever worse. At last Armageddon breaks out, which lasts for seven days, during which the greater part of mankind is killed.

During this period of horror a few men have gone back to live in the forest, and subsist peacefully on fruit and roots. Taught by the catastrophe, they determine for the future to live a peaceful, moral life. Henceforth conditions improve... so that men are good and happy. This better state of things again lasts only for a time, and then decline sets in. Twenty periods of this kind, of falling and rising culture, follow in succession. When in the last, the twentieth period, the highest point is reached, there takes place

the removal from the world of all living beings, and its destruction, as before described. In this manner the cosmos undergoes continuous change, as in accordance with eternal laws many worlds, one after another, come into existence and pass away.

(b) Thus Buddhism knows no ultimate goal of world evolutions. Nevertheless the world has a meaning. It is the ever-growing scene of the reward of good and evil deeds.

(c) The duty of man consists in this, through leading a moral life, in the first place to bring it about that in his next incarnation he is born in good surroundings and has a happy fate. As a distant and supreme goal Nirvana beckons to the religious man, but it can be attained only after long purification. The last task of man is then to prepare himself to leave the world.

(d) From the foregoing it follows that according to the Buddhist view, the conduct of man is of fundamental importance for his future fate. The whole of the Buddhist teaching is based on a belief in the moral structure of the universe. Such a belief rests not only on the conviction that all good and evil will have their reward, and that it is possible for man continually to perfect himself; it also presupposes that there is an objective criterion of what helps man on the way to perfection and of what obstructs his progress.

The Buddha proclaimed an ethics of intention. What decides whether an action produces good or bad karma is the intention with which it is performed. Therefore actions which are not performed as the result of a moral decision, positive or negative, have no result of the nature of karma.

It is understandable that this lofty philosophical view has not been maintained for long. In the course of its history Buddhism has developed the theory in very different forms, so that the giving of gifts to monks, and the performance of certain sacred rites, have been allowed of themselves to count as a store of good works. Indeed in many of the schools of the Great Vehicle, ritualism has attained such importance that the performance of magical rites, like the mechanical turning of prayer-wheels or the muttering of certain sacred formulae, have become a principal method of participation of the faithful. This



a regrettable, if understandable, degeneration, which indeed is not unknown in other religions.

### Reincarnation

(e) The Buddhists find empirical confirmation for their doctrine that good or evil deeds receive their reward or punishment in a new incarnation, in this, that according to their opinion, men who have reached a certain height of spiritual development are able to look back upon their own previous incarnations and the rebirths of other beings. Since only a few individuals have reached so high a stage of spiritual maturity, the rest of us must rely on the testimony of these saints, just as those who have not visited a foreign country have to put their trust in the statements of reliable travellers.

First among possessors of such knowledge come the Buddhas, *i.e.*, men to whom, by virtue of the enlightenment they have attained, the connection between natural events and the moral realm has been revealed. The word of a Buddha therefore ranks as the highest authority for all conduct; the Buddhist takes from the sayings of Gautama preserved in the holy scriptures the inspiration for his conduct.

(f) The doctrine of moral causality offers the Buddhists an explanation why one man is distinguished, rich and happy, and the other lowly, poor and miserable. The fact that good men often fare badly, while evil men are happy, is explained according to this doctrine by assuming that the good men have still to expiate in this life the sins of a previous existence, while a bad man who has done good deeds in his previous existence is now getting the reward for them. For the whole of the circumstances in which anyone now lives are a consequence of the actions of his previous existence, while on the other hand what he does now is done by the free decision of his will.

It can be objected to this theory that in his behaviour man is very largely determined by his predispositions, and that it is therefore difficult to establish the freedom of moral decisions. Buddhism replies on this point that as opposed to the fatalistic teaching of his time the Buddha always emphasised: "I teach action and will power," and that the law of karma explains matters for the understanding of which the grasp of the ordinary man does not suffice.

(2) The second question which I have to answer from the standpoint of Buddhism runs thus: "If the aim of man is righteousness, what are the conditions of life which guarantee him the quickest fulfilment of this task?"

According to the Buddhist view, man occupies an exceptional position among living beings. He alone is in a position to question the meaning of life and to achieve its transcendence. The animals cannot do so, since they are wholly sunk in the life of the senses. The heavenly beings also cannot do so, since because of their long life and the happiness they enjoy, the idea never occurs to them that life is transient and therefore meaningless and unsatisfactory.

In consequence of this middle position in the hierarchy of living forms which man occupies, existence as a man is always praised as a rare piece of good fortune. On this point it is said: "The chance is as small as that a blind turtle, emerging from the sea once in a hundred years, should put his head straight into a single-necked basket—so small is the chance that a being in the course of his series of rebirths should once become a man." (Majjhima, 159)

Man should, therefore, make use of the precious boon which has fallen to his lot, and take care that he improves himself morally, in order gradually to attain perfection. A famous speech in the Dhammapada (183) shows the way to the fulfilment of this task: "Shun all evil, do good, and purify your own heart: that is the teaching of the Buddha." The avoidance of evil consists in not killing, not stealing, not lying, not committing fornication and not using intoxicating drinks which decrease his activity of mind or lessen his sense of responsibility. He should, therefore, follow no calling in which he is bound to come into conflict with these probabilities; he cannot be a hunter, a butcher, an executioner, a fortune-teller, a publican, and so on. It is easiest for him if he isolates himself from the world, and thus escaped its temptations. But only a few are mature enough to enter the cloister or to live as a pious hermit.

Thus the Buddhist is not to be content with conditions as he finds them; he must try, where it is possible to change them in accordance with Buddhist principles.

Where that is not possible, his effort must be to make himself spiritually free from the surrounding world, so that he may detach himself from it and rise above it.

We now come to the third question which raises the following problem:

"Are all men alike? If not, in what do they differ? In what respects should all men aspire to equality, and in what should they preserve existing differences?"

Since even twins are not completely alike in their abilities and their destiny, there can in practice be no complete equality of all men. Buddhism has therefore never tried to make all men alike. In its view mankind as a whole resembles to a certain extent a great pyramid, the broad base of which consists of the crude worldlings who are still far removed from the light of truth, while the narrow summit contains only the few perfected ones. And between these two extremes are men ranged in infinitely many stages of virtue and knowledge. Buddhism tries to show them all the way to spiritual progress, by prescribing them all a spiritual diet suited to their individual needs. And just as it meets the many different levels of comprehension of men, it also tries to adapt itself to the peculiarities of the various cultures and people.

### The Amitabha cult

In its eagerness to take into account the most varied needs, the Great Vehicle in particular has taken over many theoretical conceptions which were originally foreign to it. Thus in East Asia today the cult of Buddha Amitabha is very widespread. This mythical saviour calls to his heavenly paradise after death all who in faith seek shelter with him, and they are protected from all evil influences, and they can prepare themselves for Nirvana. Here Buddhism has adopted modes of thought from the theistic religions of grace. But in doing so it has not abandoned its principle of an eternal cosmic law which governs everything, for Amitabha is only the bringer of good tidings into this sorrowful world. He has no part in creating or ruling it, for how could an omniscient spiritual being bring into existence this world full of pain, or hurl the wicked down into the abyss of hell for their misdeeds, or condemn them to reincarnation in miserable forms of life?



Thus Buddhism acknowledges the differences among men in spiritual-religious matters, and has therefore given its doctrine of salvation the most various forms. On the other hand, it attaches no weight to differences of race, nationality, class or caste. In contrast to Brahminism it has not excluded wide sections from its gospel of salvation, and entry into its orders stands open to believers of all kinds.

(4) The fourth question which has been put to me is this: "Which social arrangements belong to the unalterable fundament of human nature, and which are susceptible of alteration and development without harm to what is truly human? How does it stand in this regard with marriage, the family, the State, property, the right of self-determination of the individual, and so on?"

According to its doctrine that all things are in a continual process of change, Buddhism recognises no social institution as eternal or unalterable. While the Chinese consider the State an institution proper to mankind from the earliest times, Buddhism holds that it first arose in the course of the cosmic process and will later disappear. Caste, which for the Hindus rests on God-given foundations, is for Buddhism a system arising from the needs of the time, and having value only for India. Likewise marriage, the family, and property are obligatory only for worldly men of a limited historical period. With the emergence from the worldly state, all these institutions lose their significance. The monk, who abandons the world, is at least in theory, raised above these obligations.

It is not surprising that this standpoint, adopted by the Buddha and by the authoritative fathers of the Buddhist church, has in the course of history been much modified. Under the pressure of outside forces, Buddhism has made many concessions to the State in many countries, and the prevailing ideal of nationalism is not without influence on the thought of many Buddhists. It is well-known that in Japan among many sects loyalty to the monarch and patriotism have become articles of religious faith, and that in Tibet a kind of theocratic state has arisen.

#### No central authority

All these facts in no way alter the basic position which Buddhism adopts in relation to all earthly institutions; they have their value

and their sphere of application at a certain stage; for those who can see everything from a higher place, they are in themselves only temporary means whereby order is maintained in the world.

As I understand it Buddhism is, all through, a doctrine of salvation for the individual; the idea of a human collectivity, which has sinned and can be redeemed, is alien to it. Therefore it has no central authority which has the responsibility of issuing orders or proclaiming dogmas binding on all the Buddhists of the world. When the Buddha lay dying and was asked who henceforth would lead the community, he said "In future the dharma will be your master."

It is clear that this pronouncement of the Exalted One had various unfortunate consequences for the community. For the absence of a generally acknowledged supreme spiritual authority had the result, very soon after the Nirvana of the Perfect One, that quarrels broke out over the interpretation of contentious points in the doctrine or over individual cases of monastic discipline, and that again and again new sects appeared.

Buddhism has accepted this with open eyes, for the right of self-determination of the individual, and the local congregation governed by the monastic chapter, have always seemed to it to outweigh these disadvantages. How far reaching this right of self-determination is, can be seen from the fact that not only was it, and is it, open to the laymen, under certain conditions, to enter at any time into the circle of worshippers of the Exalted One, and to leave it again, but it was and is possible at the same time to belong to other religious communities and cults. The monk was always free to leave the order; it often happened that people repeatedly during their lives became monks and returned to the world again.

#### Buddhism and politics

In the 25 centuries of the history of Buddhism one naturally comes across instances in which the conditions described here have undergone modification for a time. But in general both the Lesser and the Great Vehicle have maintained the basic principle of the right of self-determination.

(5) The fifth question addressed to me runs as follows:

"So far as it appears possible and necessary to alter social institu-

tions, how far and by what means is it permissible to proceed against the existing system and its defenders? When may co-operation be refused in the undertakings carried on by the current holders of power? When is obedience to the conventions of the society in which one was born obligatory?"

The answer to this can be given briefly. Since Buddhism tried to establish a spiritual order, which is not for this world, it does not claim to be a protagonist of social reforms. It is a common error to believe that the Buddha wished to destroy the caste system in India; he did not attack the social order as it existed, when he laid it down that caste differences should no longer be observed within his order. This was no innovation, for this principle was observed in other Indian monastic communities.

To change existing conditions by violence must appear to all Buddhists completely opposed to the teaching of the Master. For any exercise of brute force is alien to the merciful spirit of the pure doctrine. The Buddha condemned any thought of hate-inspired retaliation. (Dhammapada 3-5)

Certainly departures from this hallowed principle often occurred, but in the whole course of the history of the Buddhist church they play no important part. It has, therefore, never known either a social revolution, or a crusade, or a war of religion. The struggle against conditions which are found to be oppressive, and against the unrighteous claims of the holders of power, is therefore to be conducted at the most in a peaceful manner by way of passive resistance.

#### The perfectibility of man

(6) The answer to the sixth question will also not take long. It is as follows:

"Is man capable of changing, through learning or revelation, to an unlimited extent? Where lie the limits of his capacity to become good and understanding?"

Buddhism knows no fundamental difference between the children of light and the children of darkness, foreordained to eternal salvation or to eternal damnation. On the contrary, it assumes that there are infinitely many stages in spiritual development, to which the being rises or falls in accordance with its actions in the course of its reincarnations. The story of the robber-chief



Angulimala, who had many murders on his conscience, shows that a man can, with instruction, evolve from a criminal to a saint in the course of one existence. Converted by the Buddha, he became an Arhat, and entered into Nirvana.

That the worst sinner can finally attain perfection is also shown by the story of the Buddha's cousin Devadatta. This man committed the two worst sins known to Buddhism: he had sought, inspired by ambition, to murder the Buddha, and he had brought about a schism in the order. As punishment he died of a haemorrhage and went to hell. When he had atoned for his misdeeds by staying in hell for a hundred thousand aeons, he was purified of evil, and finally attained enlightenment and became a Buddha. The belief in an unlimited capacity for change could hardly go farther than that.

The related question, whether all beings have the capacity, in the course of their reincarnations, to become enlightened and good and thereby finally to be saved, was not answered by the Buddha. The later dogmatists expressed themselves on it in various senses. While many seem to have accepted it others believe that there are beings who are by nature incapable of assimilating the highest knowledge, and therefore must remain forever subject to reincarnation.

### Buddhism and modern science

(7) I now turn to the seventh and last question. It runs: "How far is what science today can say about man and the world in harmony or in contradiction to the teachings of Buddhism?"

Buddhism originated 25 centuries ago in India, and until the beginning of the last century it was confined to countries which were entirely untouched by modern science. It, therefore, goes without saying that many of its doctrines, so far as they touch upon scientific cosmological, and geographical matters, are irreconcilable with the results of modern Western science. It was born and grew in an era when an unlimited credulity prevailed; if we read the holy scriptures as we should read works of later times, in the spirit of literal history, we shall find things which do not fit into our modern picture of the world. We read that the Buddha, was conceived by his mother miraculously, that he was able to fly through the air to Ceylon three

times, that he increased food by magic, walked on water, and so on. And similar miracles are reported of his followers and of later saints; visions, magical cures, fantasies and the like, in short almost all those things which were natural to the mode of thought of antiquity and mediaeval times in all parts of the world.

### A law-governed universe

Notwithstanding many such features, so strange to us, which like a thick undergrowth over-spread more especially the later literature, we do, on the other hand, find much, even in the old texts, which strikes us as quite modern.

(a) First and above all is to be noted the principle of general and throughgoing conformity to natural law which rules the whole Buddhist system. Again and again it says: "This basic principle stands firm, this universal conformity to law, the conditioning of one thing by another." (Sanyutta, 12-20-4) Profound is this law of dependent origination. "Since it does not know, understand or grasp this law, this generation has become confused, like a ball of thread." (ib. 12.4). But a well-trained disciple ponders thoroughly the "dependent origination," for he propounds this: "When that is, this comes into being; through the destruction of that, this is destroyed." (ib. 12-41-51, etc.)

(b) A further point of agreement is its positivistic character. For the Buddhist doctrine denies the existence of eternal substances: matter and spirit are false abstractions; in reality there are only changing factors (dharma) which stand in regular connection, which arise in functional dependence one on the other. Like Ernst Mach, the Buddha therefore resolves the ego into a stream of regularly connected elements, and can say with him: "The ego is as little an absolute permanent entity as the body. The apparent permanence of the ego consists only in its continuity."

In the philosophy of the Great Vehicle Buddhism goes to the point of denying the reality of the external world. It is characteristic of the philosophical spirit of Asia that such epistemological doctrines do not, as with us, remain without close relation to the true religious life, but enter deeply into it, and

occupy the thought of wide circles. The consistent idealism of the theory of mere consciousness not only forms the basis of the Zen sect, widespread in China and Japan, which tries through meditation to realise the "void" which is above contradictions, but is also the basis of the priestly magic and mysticism of Tibet.

(c) It is in harmony with modern modes of thought when the Buddha teaches that there are many problems that man, with his limited intellectual capacity, will never be able to solve, but in his meditation upon them involves himself in repeated contradictions—such as karma, the nature of the world, the question whether the world is eternal or not, finite or infinite, how the vital principle connects itself with the body, and what is the state of the saint who has entered into Nirvana.

(d) Buddhism also agrees with modern science in its picture of a world of great spatial extent and unending time. The Buddha taught that there exist side by side infinitely many world systems, which are continually coming into existence and perishing. It is not that he anticipated Copernicus; for each world system has an Earth at the centre, and sun, moon and stars revolve round it. It is rather that the conception of a multiplicity of worlds appears in his teaching as the natural consequence of the principle of causality. The number of actions which have to be punished is so infinitely great, that the appropriate rewards and punishments could not be contained in one world, with its regular alternation of rising and falling cultural levels.

(e) Buddhism finds itself again in agreement with modern biology in that it acknowledges no essential difference, but only a difference of degree, between man and animal. However, it is far from the Darwinian line of thought.

(f) Finally, it can also be said that the Indians discovered the unconscious earlier than the Western psychologists. For that is what is constituted by the totality of the impressions which sleep in the individual as the inheritance from his previous existence. The Buddhist technique of meditation, which is concerned with these latent forces, is thus a forerunner of modern psychoanalysis, and of mental self-training, etc.



The attitudes of present-day Buddhists towards modern science are various. So far as I can see, three attitudes can be distinguished :

(a) The great mass of Buddhist laymen and monks in Asia are still untouched by the modern natural sciences. For them the words of the Buddha and the commentaries on them are still the infallible source of all knowledge of the universe and its appearances.

(b) Many Buddhists try to prove that the cosmological ideas and miraculous history of the Canon conform to fact, and for this purpose interpret the texts in an artificial sense or draw upon the pronouncements of modern occultism as proofs. It is noteworthy that they do not consider miracles breaches of the laws of nature brought about by a supernatural power, but assume that there are unknown forces and laws which cause events which to us seem miracles but are really not so.

(c) Other Buddhists regard the statements of the texts on natural

phenomena as conditioned by the times and therefore no longer authoritative. They deduce that the Buddha was not concerned to put forward a scientific world view which would be valid for all time, but rather that the essential core of Buddhism is its practical doctrine of salvation. The Buddha always maintained that everything of this earth is transitory, unreal and therefore unsatisfactory, and that so long as man is still under the subjection of the three cardinal vices of hatred, greed and ignorance he will never attain to inner peace and serene clarity. Only through the purification of all desires and the complete realisation of absolute selflessness, through the moral conduct of life and constant absorption in meditation, can he approach a state in which he lives in peace with himself and with the world. A man can build himself up and rise towards the example of the Buddha, sitting calm in meditation, whose face shines in triumphant peace ; and then he will raise himself above the stream of time to the condition of the imperishable,

superior to the unrest of suffering and becoming at the mercy of external forces. There stands as the ideal that state of unshakable composure which a Buddhist verse describes.

He whose mind is like a rock  
Firmly anchored, shakes no more,  
Who has escaped from all  
passion,

Is no more angry and no more  
afraid,

He whose mind is thus without  
equal,

How can sorrow defeat him ?

(Udana 4.4)

(This paper, by Prof. Glasenapp of the University of Tübingen, one of the greatest living authorities on Buddhism, was broadcast from Munich as a contribution to a symposium on the world religions in relation to modern problems. It was printed in *Universitas*, Stuttgart, and was read and discussed at the Indian Institute of Culture, Basavangudi, Bangalore, recently. —Ed.)

## VALUE OF PRESERVING THE POPULAR POETRY OF THE SINHALESE

A GREAT deal has been talked and written about the modern poets and the poetry of the Sinhalese, as also about the Classical poetry of the Sinhalese, and still scholars are wholly enwrapped in detailing the merits and demerits of classical poetry ; but about the poetry which appeals to the popular taste, nothing of value has been said nor is anything being produced by scholars of the present day ; perhaps because they think that they should not "jump up with common spirits." Mr. W. H. de Silva and Mr. James de Alwis have written at length on the subject of "The Popular Poetry of the Sinhalese" and so has Mr. Austin de Silva of the Colombo Museum Library done some research in this connection, but the average scholar to-day prefers to handle the more difficult classical books about which invariably many others have written before, rather than to deal with anything that is considered as being below classical standards. Even schools rigidly follow a verse text

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book which very often is beyond the apprehension of the students and thereby they tend to cultivate in the minds of the pupils a distaste for any kind of Sinhalese poetry. Another reason for creating this distaste in the pupil is the way the teacher conducts the poetry lesson. In many schools the teacher never gets the pupil to chant the verse nor does the teacher himself or herself do so. It is a matter of reading the verse and trying to drive into the mind of the pupil the meaning and grammatical details of the verse. At this rate it is natural that the pupil begins to abhor Sinhalese poetry.. I should at this stage define what I mean by popular poetry. This is the kind of

poetry that is being read by the well educated as well as the less educated people. The kind of poetry that can be easily read and understood by the average educated man or at least understood and enjoyed by the non-educated man when he hears it being read. This Popular Poetry, therefore, becomes distinctly separate from the classical poetry which is read and understood only by the educated class and, therefore is confined to a minority. The Folk Songs of the Sinhalese, the books like *Vessantara Jātakaya*, *Yasodarāwatha*, *Ganadevi Hālla*, *Waduge Hatana*, *Dunuwila Hatana*, and many others written in simple style and language and, therefore, accessible to the average educated man, come under the category of Popular Poetry. Of the classical poetry books which are not very many in number and are more popular to-day than the Popular Poetry, I need not mention names for any Sinhalese student knows what they are. I shall, however, add this comment by Mr. W. A. de



Silva on Classical Poetry. He says :—

"The works that formed this class in no way represented the general tastes of the people. They became recognised as they were more or less composed in a style that was understood by the scholars only and their study required considerable time and attention. Most of these works have followed Sanskrit poems both in style and ideas and some have slavishly copied them. Others contain intricate arrangement of letter and words which evidently required great labour and thought in their composition...."

The classical poet in his composition is concerned more with the facts and ideas of another world and this is directly a result, as Mr. W. A. de Silva aptly says, of his attempt to imitate the great Indian poets. The classical poet very often forgets his environment and soars to the heavens in search of ideas and facts, while the popular poetry always tries to preserve the local surroundings of the poet; the classical poetry is concerned more with "Parasatu flowers," "Madārā flowers," the "Mahamēruwa," the "Milky Ocean," etc., none of which the poet himself has seen, while the writer of popular poetry is interested in the common ploughshare, the Kitul flower, the Thal flower, the paddy field, and whatever else that he comes across in his everyday-life. Therefore, in the popular poetry we find a certain sincerity, while the classical poet shows a remarkable lack of it.

Let us take two verses from these two kinds of poetry. The following is a verse from the famous book the Selalihini Sandesaya of Sri Rahula :—

සුරරඳු සමත් සමභිත් සුරභන  
 පැහැනද මදරා පරසකු මල්  
 කර පුද වදින රැදි මුනිසිරි  
 සකිසද පෙහෙ සමනොසුගල

In this verse the main idea of the poet is to tell the bird that he could see the "Samanala Kanda" on the Eastern side. But consider how the poet brings into the stanza words like සුරරඳු, සමත්, පරසකු, මදරා, etc. None of these things has the

poet seen nor the reader either. None, perhaps, will ever see them; yet the poet in an insincere poetic fancy mentions these gods and celestical flowers while he could easily and more correctly have brought in facts from his world. But consider this stanza from the folk poetry :—

පෙරකාලේ නැනු පැල දුන්  
 චීම කාලේ බැඳපු වැටගොනු  
 පැලපහේ ගොයම් ර රක  
 නිඳි මතේ කියමු සිචිපද

The verse evidently conveys the sorrows and the difficulties that the "Goviya" had to undergo, and amidst all these difficulties he has to keep on singing songs throughout the night in order to protect his field from being destroyed by wild animals. In the whole stanza there is not a word that the average reader cannot understand; nothing foreign to the villager is brought into the stanza; all that is said pertains to what he sees and therefore about which he genuinely feels, for he has lived that experience. Therefore, it is this genuine poetry that we should try to preserve, for it brings us closer to reality.

Popular poetry should be preserved for a second reason also. Some of the sweetest tunes are found in this poetry. Yet, however, some people try to sing these verses to ribald tunes introducing foreign accents and thereby destroy the whole value of it. A lullaby, for instance, can be sung very sweetly, for its purpose is to put a child to sleep. For a child to go to sleep the lullaby must necessarily be sung to a pleasant note. Among the folk songs of the Sinhalese are to be found some of the finest tunes; tunes that convey a very happy feeling, tunes that convey the sad moments of some person; and there are verses even to suggest the sounds of birds. The following verse is one which is very often sung to a wrong tune; many sing this verse to the tune of a carter's song which definitely is wrong. This verse is one which conveys the sad thoughts of a mother who has been ill-treated at the hands of her son and daughter-in-law. Therefore this should be sung to a such a tune as would bring out

the original sad feelings of that ill-fated mother. Here is the verse :—

බඩගිනි වෙලා මම ලියකල  
 මැනලා වි විකක් දුන්නය  
 ගන්දෝ නොගන්දෝ කියලා  
 මැනලද පුවෙ කිරි දුන්නේ

It is interesting to note how well the sound of a bird, the Kirala, is suggested by this verse :—

කිරලන් කිරලින් කිරලගෙ  
 කිරලගෙ වන්නම හොටට  
 පැටියන් රි කුන්සම නද දෙසි  
 හෙටැ යන කිරලිගෙ වන්නම  
 පැටියගෙ වන්නම විකිරි  
 තටමි.....කිරලගෙ සුර සවිදමි.

The words "හොටට හොටැ," "රිවිවිකි රිවිවිකි," "විකිරි විකිරි" suggest the sounds of the birds. Then the boatman's song, the carter's song, the miner's song can all be sung to express the moods and feelings of these craftsmen in a very natural rhythm.

The majority of the Sinhalese then as now were Buddhists. Much of the popular poetry, therefore, is concerned with Buddhist ideas. The preservation of the popular poetry, therefore, will be in a way a preservation of the ideas of our forefathers about religion. The Samanala Hālla, Vessantara Jātakaya, Bōdhivandanāwa are some of the popular religious poems. The Vessantara Jātakaya is a favourite book that can be found in any home. One can hardly restrain oneself from tears when reading it silently, but some of the verses if properly sung will easily make anyone shed tears. The most touching section of the whole book is that which deals with the giving away of the two children by king Vessantara. Here is a verse from the Vessantara Jātakaya, note the simplicity of the verse :—

කුමරන් දෙන්නා දුලෙලාගෙන  
 හීනෙන් අවුදිත් වරලෙස අලලා  
 කෙත් දෙක උදුරා ගත් තේ  
 සීනේ දුටු සැටි අසමත් වෙස  
 තුරු වි වච විමසාසින් තේ  
 පලවැල අරගෙන නොපමාවෙන්  
 එමි මාරසි දරුවන් දෙය් තේ

The following is a verse from the Bōdhivandanāwa; note again not



only the simplicity of the language but also the loftiness of the thought :—

බෝධි කියන්නේ මර සෙන්  
බින්දු ට  
බෝධි කියන්නේ මුදු රැස්  
දිව්ව ට  
බෝධි කියන්නේ මුද්ඛිය  
ලැබුව ට  
බෝධි කියන්නේ පැතුවා  
බෝව ට

How the villager's activities are intimately connected with his religious thoughts is well seen in the following folk song :—

මුදුන් වඩිනි මේ කමන ට  
සඳුන් හුවද ඉසිරෙසි ව ට  
යොදුන් උසට තිබෙනා වැ ට  
මුදුන් අඹන් එන් කමන ට

Popular poetry also gives us an insight into the modes of thought of the common man ; it helps us to know what these men relished and what they disliked ; in a way, it reveals to us their culture and environment. It is this popular poetry that will bring to us the true culture of the people of the past, for in it there is sincerity of thought and language while the classical poetry because it has mixed too much with the Sanskritic poetry fail to do so. Here is a verse from Vessantara Jātakaya which tells us something about the garments then worn by ladies :—

බොළු පෙම්බර කොන්ඩා බැන්දන්  
තපසට තොගනනි මන් හා  
දෙකනේ රන්මිණි තෝඩු ලැබුමන්  
තපසට තොගනනි මන් හා  
දුගේ සුළඹලී රන්මුදු ලුමන්  
තපසට තොගනනි මන් හා  
මංගි දෙමංගි පනපොට බැන්දන්  
තපසට තොගනනි මන් හා

“රන්මිණි තෝඩු,” “රන්මුදු,” “තනපොට,” a kind of earrings, rings for the fingers, and a kind of brassiers respectively are usual garments worn by ladies then, and not strangely we find them worn by ladies to-day also.

In folk poetry we come across verses which tell us about something on the skin of a woman known as “Gōmara.” This “gōmara” was very pleasing to the eye of the villager and a woman who was lucky enough to have them was

considered very beautiful. Here is a verse pertaining to gōmara :—

අනේ ඔතන ඉපනැලුලේ  
වේලෙන වා  
කරේ තිබෙන සලුපට  
සුළඟට යන වා  
ලැමදේ තිබෙන ගෝමර  
අව්වට දන වා  
ලදේ මෙනත ගසයට  
සෙවනට එන වා

The man apparently is sorry that the “gōmara” about the breast of the woman will be burnt by the heat of the sun and calls her to a shade under a tree. They valued “gōmara” so highly then, but to-day if we were to tell one of our ladies that she has “gōmara” on her body we would be lucky enough if she lets us go scot-free after such a “remark.” Here is another verse that speaks about “gōmara.”

වෙලක මහිම බල මාචි  
පැසී ලා  
පැලක මහිම බල බටකොල  
ගොයා ලා  
මලක මහිම බල අතු අග  
පිපි ලා  
ලියක මහිම බල ගෝමර  
ඉසී ලා

The last line says : “Look at the glory of the woman who has a sprinkling of ‘gōmara’ (on her body).”

Popular poetry will also intimate to us incidents of topical and even of historical interest. Such events will always bring us a moment's joy while reading the verse. The Waduge Hatana, is a book which deals with the last king of Kandy and incidentally with the beheading of the children of Ehalapole. A verse from that will show us how contemptible the king was in the eye of his subjects :—

මහර තොමමන දනන් විගනන්වන්ට  
ලෙසකුණ තොමන බල් ලා  
තොසැර දුටු දුටු දනන් මැරැමට මිනි  
මිස් කනරකුණ පොළ ලා  
සහර තොමදන පැසැර ගන්තට  
කැදුන ගම් පහරනා බල් ලා  
නිසර දීමර පොළොම් බිඳනට මෙරට  
සපැමිණි පොළෝ පල් ලා

The sister of King Rajasinghe, who happened to know about an unholy relationship between the Queen and Daskon, is said to have said thus, to Daskon :—

අතුරු කළේ කුමටද නුවන්  
මද ඉ රු  
තතුරු කැලේ දුමටද දිනිති  
යනු තු රු

කපුරු මලේ සුවඳට වැන  
සෙති බම රු  
නපුරු මැලේ දැන දැන  
නොකරන් විස රු

Daskon is said to have replied thus :—

අදිතත් තල් දුන්න උරඹා  
අදිත් ට සි  
විදිතත් ගසති රාජයෙකුට  
විදිත් ට සි  
බඳිතත් වරල මල් ගවසා  
බඳිත් ට සි  
නසිතත් වංශ ලියෙකුට කල්  
බඳිත් ට සි

Then there are other interesting incidents relating to Andare and Gajaman Nōna two popular figures in the field of popular poetry. Yet space does not permit me to deal in detail with them.

A final reason, and again a very important one, why we should try to preserve the popular poetry of the Sinhalese is because it is really in this poetry that we can trace the pure poetic art of the Sinhalese.

We are greatly indebted to Mr. W. A. de Silva and Dr. Malalasekara for their collection of folk songs of the Sinhalese. Yet a mere collection will not help in popularising that poetry. Popular poetry should be introduced into schools, and students should be encouraged to do some research on it. Had it not been for the research done in stone inscriptions thus making it a part of a subject at higher examinations these inscriptions of Ceylon would have no significance at all to-day. The wealth of information they give was only realised when people started to do research work on them.

Mr. Edwin Kottogoda is one of the few who is doing something constructive towards popularising popular poetry at a time when it was fast dying away. At first he revived the popular poetry, especially the folk song, by repeated broadcasts ; and a new step he has taken, which shows the keen interest he has in popular poetry, is to hold a “Gambada-Gee Maduwa” at least once a month at various parts of the Island. This has always been a success for crowds gather not only to hear him sing, but also to sing what they know as well. We should wish him all success and should encourage him by giving a supporting hand.



## REVIEWS

# “BUDDHIST SHRINES IN INDIA”

By DEVĀPRIYA VALISINHA, *Maha Bodhi Society of Ceylon.*—Rs. 5

THE shortcomings of Mr. Valisinha's book are those of an erudite and enthusiastic man writing on a circumscribed subject. In his preface he says he intends this book to be “a short guide to the Buddhist Sacred Places in India.” But his book is most certainly not what he intends it to be. Instead of a slim brochure to meet the needs of the touring pilgrim he has produced an authoritative historical and religious survey of the Buddhist Sacred Places in India together with an account of the work of the Maha Bodhi Society in that land.

A guide-book is generally criticised for the insufficiency or the inaccuracy of its information. But Mr. Valisinha's book is about criticism on these counts. It is chock-a-block with all sorts of information relating to the Buddhist Sacred Places in India. Its ingredients are varied—religious, historical, archaeological, literary; but unfortunately these various ingredients, though very interesting in themselves, are not very happily compounded in the general scheme of the book. This criticism has to be justified. Each chapter deals with one of the Sacred Places. The author sets about dealing with each of these in a methodical manner most useful for the tourist pilgrim. He first gives a short paragraph on how to reach the place, then he enumerates the objects of interest, next he goes into a more detailed description of these objects and finally he gives a short history of the place. This scheme to which the writer adheres in every chapter is an excellent method of exposition. But what seems to me unfortunate is that he often includes within his exposition much material that is not very relevant. For instance, he includes within his lists of objects of interest such things as Hindu temples, Jain temples and schools which I do not think can be legitimately considered of much interest to the average Buddhist pilgrim, in spite of the latter being proud records of Buddhist philanthropy and missionary enterprise. Opinions may, however, differ on this point.

But, I think, there is more logical ground for objection to what the author includes in his history of

each sacred place at the end of a chapter. He must either assume that the reader knows very little of the sacred books and remedy this ignorance by consistently filling each chapter with relevant quotations from them, or he must assume that the reader is completely familiar with them and then restrict himself to passing references. I think that the latter alternative is preferable in a book of this scope. But the author follows neither assumption. At times in dealing with the history of a place he never quotes a sacred book but at other times he quotes them excessively. Particularly unfortunate is his history of Kusinārā in which he includes seventeen pages of the Mahāparinirvāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya. This is surely too much to include in a “short” history. Fa Hien and Houen Tsang are most interesting writers on the Buddhist Sacred Places in India, but I think they are quoted a bit too often by the author. His history of Rajagriha covers eight pages—seven of which consist of Fa Hien's account of that city. The story of the Anagarika Dhammapala and the Maha Bodhi Society's struggle for Buddhist control of Buddhagaya is of great interest to every Buddhist, but this does not seem to me to justify the inclusion of a detailed ten-page account of it quoting letters, judicial decisions and commissions' Reports in the history of this shrine. Such an account is rather too weighty for a short history of a shrine in a pilgrim guide book. If necessary this account could have been included in the last chapter “The Maha Bodhi Society and its Work.”

The last two chapters are among the most interesting in the book. In his “Description of Images in Indian Museums” the author supplies the pilgrim and the general reader with an authoritative little study and classification of Buddhist images. The author is to be admired for packing so much valuable information into one chapter.

The last chapter, “The Maha Bodhi Society and its Work,” and indeed the whole book presents us with some idea of the magnificent work the Maha Bodhi Society is doing for Buddhism in the land of its birth.

A most useful little appendix presents in a short space all the practical information an intending pilgrim requires.

The plan, according to which the book has been drawn up, excellently serves its purpose of guiding and teaching the pilgrim. The author first deals with the four specially sacred places Lumbini, Buddhagaya, Sarnath and Kusinara where the most important events in the life of the Buddha occurred. He next goes on to deal in order of descending merit with other places connected with the Buddha and important Buddhist sites in India. Each chapter is very conveniently divided into sections which admirably serve the purpose of the touring pilgrim.

Most of the photographs in this book are unfortunately mediocre in quality poorly reproduced.

Mr Valisinha deserves our congratulations and thanks for producing this informative, interesting and invaluable book—most certainly a “must” in the equipment of every Buddhist pilgrim to India.

TISSA DEVENDRA.

## HIGHEST TRUTH IS ONLY ONE

Highest truth is only one, life means suffering.  
Welfare, pleasure passes on, mere shine of lightning  
Pain is transitory, Bliss is the eternity,  
Free of all grieving.  
All sufferings origin roots in hate and greed.  
Conquer all the might of sin, be prepared to enter in  
That land where flows no tear,  
No more yearning for the dear, timelessness to win  
Treading the Right Path before overcoming craze  
Buddha reached the yonder shore,  
Blew out sufferings blaze.  
Joyful we all follow Him,  
Fleeing from delusions dim on Nirvana's ways.

Music : Curt Oelzner, words : H. Dorn,  
translation : L. Stuetzer.



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## MAITRIYA WORKERS

Sir,—I read with great interest Major Tun Hla Oung's most inspiring and interesting article on Mettā (Maitriya) which appeared in the October issue of *The Buddhist*.

Mr. Oung advocates a band of young maitriya workers in Ceylon in the formation of a Mettā Committee or Samiti. A very wise suggestion indeed and a well organised group of maitriya workers will, I hope, not only alleviate hatred, selfishness, enmity and anger among mankind but also will be a beacon light to this world of unrest.

Mettā (Maitriya) as we all know is one of the greatest characteristics of the Buddha Dhamma; and there is no universal force so strong and stable to smash ill-will and violence than Mettā as preached by the Sakyamuni. Let us put into action with united effort the supreme power of the master and organise forthwith a band of Maitriya Workers in this thrice blessed Isle of Dhammadvipa and lead the world to the goal of happiness, peace and prosperity.

With Mettā

Yours, &c.,

J. P. PATHIRANA.

100/6, Maligakanda Road,  
Colombo 10.

## LONDON VIHARA FUND

Sir,—The proposed Vihara would be the centre for the establishment of the Buddha Sasana in the West. It would be a meeting place for all Buddhists and would include a permanent Monastery for Bhikkhus, a preaching hall, a shrine room, a library, a *sima*, and meeting and meditation rooms for all Buddhists to conduct their religious activities.

As European Buddhists are comparatively few they need the assistance and co-operation of all Asian Buddhists to accomplish this noble object.

The Fund Committee has already appealed to the British Government for a suitable piece of land and the Hon'ble the Prime Minister of Lanka has nobly promised his support.

All Funds received would be placed under a Registered Trust and the Trustees representing Lanka will include the Hon. Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, Lady A. E. De Silva and Mrs. H. Amarasuriya.

Contributions, however small, will be highly appreciated, and may be sent to The Hon. Mr. J. R. Jayawardene, 66, Ward Place, Colombo, or Miss Yasoma Fernando, Sripadnasri, Kirillapona Road, Colombo, who have consented to act as Hony. Treasurer and Assistant Hony. Treasurer for Lanka respectively.

## THE BODHI TREE

(Continued from page 97)

homage to it seasonally. To the Buddhists of Burma and other lands of Further India, too, the Bo-tree at Anuradhapura took the place of its parent at Gaya which, by this time, had ceased to exist. The Burmese religious mission which came to Ceylon in the time of Dhammaceti of Pegu visited, among other shrines, this holy spot. We can imagine the difficulties which these devotees would have undergone in their religious ardour to pay homage to the Venerable Tree.

To countless numbers of human beings, throughout a period of over two thousand years, has the Bo-tree at Anuradhapura proved a source of inspiration. In its presence they would have felt as if they were in the presence of that Great Being who, during incalculable aeons of time, went through untold sufferings so that the world may be happy; in the rustling of its leaves they would have heard that Voice Divine which brought consolation to lacerated hearts; in its cool shade they would have, momentarily at least, enjoyed a foretaste of that incomparable Bliss—the absence of Scorching synonymous with the process of Becoming.

Formal receipts for donations over Rs. 15 will be sent.

TUN HLA OUNG,  
General Secretary,

The London Vihara Fund Committee.

# COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

## ROYAL VISITORS

The King and Queen of Laos, on their way back home from Europe, were in Colombo for a few hours on October 26. They were met on board ship by Dr. G. P. Malalasekera and the Ven. Narada Thera. Later they visited the Kelaniya Vihare. In the evening the Royal party were entertained to tea by Sir Ernest de Silva, our President, and Lady de Silva, at their residence.

**Our General Secretary.**—Our members will be sorry to learn that the Hony. General Secretary, Mr. V. S. Nanayakkara, was taken seriously ill last month. He has been ordered complete rest for some time. Mr. L. Piyasena is acting for him.

**Treats to Children.**—The Committee of Management has decided to entertain about 150 children on every Full Moon Day. The first of such treats took place on October 25, and included a film show.

## NEW MEMBERS:—

26.9.50 : D. S. P. Sirisena, Union

Hostel; E. D. B. Ratnayake Govt. Analyst's Department; A. Y. S. de Silva, Ketawalamulla, Maradana.

3.10.50 : E. J. Wijekoon, Income Tax Office; S. C. Jayawardhana, Office of the D. I. T. (S), C. T. O.; W. K. W. Kamangara, Mahabodhi College, Maradana; Sarath B. Weerasuriya, Telecommunication Inspector (Power Room), C. T. O.

10.10.50 : M. P. P. Jayatilleke, 43, Cotta Road, Borella; L. G. Weerasuriya, 20/2, Tichbourne Lane, Maradana; V. D. Q. Ranawake, Advertising Dept., Lake House, Colombo; Benette Gamalath.

17.10.50 : B. Nissanka Jayawardhana, 49, Talawatugoda Road, Madiwela, Kotte.

24.10.50 : Mr. H. N. B. Silva, 226, Temple Road, Colombo 10; Mr. Upali Sirisena, No. 312, Temple Road, Maradana; and Mr. M. A. Jinadasa, "Siri Sevana," Kehelwatta, Panadura.

Resignation Noolaham Foundation,  
noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

## LITERARY ACTIVITIES.—

The Sinhalese Literary Branch is conducting a series of lectures on "Our National Heritage," by Mr. H. L. Caldera of the Colombo Museum. The first of the series on "Our Stone Sculptures" and the second, on "Our Lithic Inscriptions," were delivered on September 27 and October 11. The third, "Our Frescoes" which was fixed for October 25th, was postponed on November 6. But it may have to be postponed once again owing to the illness of Mr. Caldera.

## Y.M.B.A. HANDICAP BILLIARD AND OPEN SNOOKER TOURNAMENTS

### BILLIARDS

1st Round.—Ahsley Perera (-110) beat K. Wijesingha (-30), 350-276; J. Hewavitarne (-40) beat D. A. S. Perera (-150), 350-345; D. E. Welaratne (-80) beat E. S. Amarasingha (-30), 350-321; Lionel de Silva (-70) beat G. D. Senarath (-70), 350-297; R. B. Tammita (-200) W. O.; P. H. J. Wij-



sekera (-50); D. J. Denegama (-200) W.O. D. L. Dissanayake (-30); Dr. P. A. Abeyratne (-100) W.O., Siri Perera (-100); B. A. Mendis (-50) beat W. P. P. de Silva (-30), 350-185; C. B. Fernando (-150) beat L. B. T. Premaratne (-70), 350-321; R. Wijesingha\* (-60) beat L. Wijesekera (-175), 350-218.

**2nd Round.**—M. C. F. Abeykoon beat A. S. Amaradasa, 350-325; Percy Jayakody, W.O. Ashley Perera; D. E. Welaratne beat J. W. Hewavitarnne, 350-198; Lionel de Silva beat R. B. Tammita, 350-254; D. J. Denagama, W.O. Dr. P. A. Abeyratne; C. B. Fernando beat B. A. Mendis, 350-229; G. J. Dick beat R. Wijeyasingha, 350-265; G. R. Ambalavanar beat Ben Samarasingha, 350-295.

**3rd Round.**—M. C. F. Abeykoon beat Percy Jayakody, 350-334; D. E. Welaratne beat Lionel de Silva, 350-322; C. B. Fernando beat D. J. Denagama, 350-222; G. J. Dick beat G. R. Ambalavanar, 350-270.

**Semi-Finals.**—M. C. F. Abeykoon beat D. E. Welaratne, 350-320; G. J. Dick beat C. B. Fernando, 350-220.

## SNOOKERS

**1st Round.**—L. B. T. Premaratne beat G. J. Dick 18-48; 37-28; 62-21; D. J. Denegama beat Ben Samarasingha, 48-18; 18-56; 72-62; Benny Perera beat Dr. P. Abeyratne, 50-43; 40-27; D. A. S. Perera beat B. A. Mendis, 61-20; 49-31.

**2nd Round.**—D. E. Welaratne beat A. S. Amaradasa, 31-66; 31-23; 45-23; R. B. Tammita, W.O., P. N. Withanathic; Lionel de Silva beat Percy Jayakody, 60-42; 30-40; 37-35; Benny Perera beat D. A. S. Perera, 53-21; 56-31; L. Wijayasekera beat M. C. F. Abeykoon, 45-36; 33-46; 57-19; C. B. Fernando beat R. Wijeyasingha, 52-40; 65-21; J. W. Hewavitarnne, W.O., P. H. J. Wijesekera.

**3rd Round.**—D. E. Welaratne W.O., R. B. Tammita; D. J. Denagama beat Lionel de Silva, 48-35; 71-41; Benny Perera beat L. J. Wijeyasekera, 65-48; 59-37; C. B. Fernando beat J. W. Hewavitarnne, 43-68; 65-43; 64-22.

**Semi-Finals.**—D. E. Welaratne beat D. J. Denagama, 63-28; 61-41; C. B. Fernando beat Benny Perera, 71-42; 55-12.

The finals of both events were played on Sunday, October 15th.

## BADMINTON INTER-CLUB TOURNAMENT

Vs. Varsity "A" Lost 2-3

**Singles.**—Ratnasabapathy, "Y" lost to Wijesekera "V" 15-6; 15-2; Pulendiram "Y" beat Thevendaram "V" 15-9; 15-11; Weerakone "Y" beat Ravindaram "V" 15-9; 15-12.

**Doubles.**—Raheem and Pulenthiran "Y" lost to Wijesekera and Ravindaram "V" 15-5; 15-3; Raheem and Roland "Y" beat Balasundaram and Thavendram "V" 15-4; 13-18; 15-9.

Vs. Kotahena Club.—Won 5—Nil.

Weerakone "Y" beat A. Savundaranayagam "K" 15-10; 15-9; Ratnasabapathy "Y" beat Kelly "K" 15-1; 15-4; Pulendiram "Y" beat Fernando "K" 15-13; 20-17; Weerakone & Pulendiram "Y" beat G. Fernando & A. Savundaranayagam "K" 18-20—15-2. Raheem & Ratnasabapathy "Y" beat R. Savundaranayagam & Kelly "K" 15-7; 15-4.

# NEWS AND NOTES

## DHAMMAPALA DAY

THE 89th birth day anniversary of the founder of the Maha Bodhi Society was celebrated at the Maha Bodhi Society, Bombay Branch, Parel, with Shri M. V. Donde, Principal of the R. M. Bhatta High School, in the chair.

A Puja in the Vihara with "magulbera" before the shrine, preceded the meeting. Cries of "Sadhu" rent the air, reminding the Sinhalese Buddhist residents of Bombay the familiar atmosphere of a "Pinkama" in Ceylon.

Bhikkhu H. Dhammanandan, B.A. (Hons.), Calcutta, Bombay, representative of the Maha Bodhi Society, explained the significance of the day to the Hindu-Buddhist gathering, after welcoming the guests. Bhikkhu M. Dhammissara, B.A. (Cal.), said that he had the privilege of associating himself with the late Dhammapala. He also cited instances of the intimate relations between Swami Vivekananda and the late founder.

Prof. Bhagawat in his Marathi speech drew a comparison between the lives of the late Dr. Nair and the late Rev. Dhammapala. After Mr. Halgamuwa had spoken in Sinhalese, the Chairman addressed the gathering in Marathi. Mr. Ananda Samarakoon, the Ceylon Artist, proposed a vote of thanks to the chair.

An entertainment was also given with a few items of "Kandyani Dancing" by Mr. Odiris and party who are on a tour in India. Mr. Bhuj Bal Singh, a film actor, gave a display of yogic feats.

Among those present were Mrs. Nair, on behalf of Ananda Vihara and the Buddha Society, which was founded by late Dr. Nair (a devotee of the late Rev. Dhammapala), Dr. Keikani and Prof. Bhagawat who represented the same society. The Rev. W. Sangharakkhita Thero, the Rev. M. Dhammissara Thero,

B.A., and the Rev. Dhammapala Thero on behalf of the Buddha Duta Society, Mr. Fernando, Secretary to the Trade Commissioner for Ceylon and Mr. M. G. Mane, Bar-at-law, a pupil of the late Prof. Dharmananda Kosambi, the founder of the Bahujana Vihara, Parel.—*Cor.*

\* \* \*

"TO the Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala the citizens of India owe a debt immeasurable for all his devoted labours for the revival of Buddhism in the land of its birth. That his labours have already begun to bear fruit is evident, and that the harvest will in coming years become richer and richer is again beyond doubt. It is meet and proper that under the auspices of the Maha Bodhi Society of India, which he founded, the citizens of Calcutta should every year meet together to remember his and to praise that famous man."

So said His Excellency Dr. Kailas Nath Katju, Governor of West Bengal, in the course of a message he sent to the public meeting held at the Society's Hall to observe the birthday anniversaries of the late Ven. Dharmapala and Mrs. Mary E. Foster.

His Excellency continuing said, "Just two years ago I had occasion to pay my tribute to the memory of the Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala and Mrs. Mary E. Foster at the 1948 celebration of their birthday anniversaries. These last two years have been a period of growing stress and anxiety in all countries. We in India have just passed through a series of calamitous events; and the war in Korea causes distress and much searching of the heart throughout the world. It is at such times that the teaching of the great Blessed One, Gautama Buddha, comes to the rescue of humanity. It is India's glory that it gave birth to the Blessed One, and that this was the land where he gave

the message which has proved the healing balm all these centuries to men and women in distress and pain. With the emergence of a free India will also emerge in still greater effulgence the figure of Gautama Buddha to point out for all time the noble eightfold path which leads to the safety and security of mankind."

The meeting, which was presided over by the Hon. Mr. Justice Sambhu Nath Benerjee, Judge, Calcutta High Court, and Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, was largely attended and was addressed by several leading citizens of Calcutta who paid glowing tributes to the memory of the great Buddhist leader. The speakers included Sir Bijoy Prasad Singh Roy, Sir Keshab Chandra Gupta, Dr. Pramatha Nath Bannerjee, Bhikkhu Silabadra, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Sri Devapriya Walisinha, and the Justice Banerjee, who said:—"Many supermen were born who were brought up in the faith of Lord Buddha. One of such supermen was Devamitta Dharmapala."—*Cor.*

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At Sarnath the celebrations which incorporated the anniversary of the late Mrs. E. Marry Foster, were under the chairmanship of Dr. Raj Bali Pande, M.A., Ph.D., of the Banaras Hindu University. Bhikkhu Dharmarakshitji, Tripitak Acharya, Shri A. C. Bannerjee, Curator of the Sarnath Museum, and Shri A. R. Kulkarni, Secretary, Buddha Society, Nagpur, paid homage to the memory of Anagarika Dharmapala.

The Chairman at his speech praised the missionary zeal of Dharmapala. Bhikkhu M. Sangharatana, Secretary of the Maha Bodhi Society at Sarnath, thanked the audience and also bestowed his own as also the Sangha's blessing on the gathering.—*Cor.*