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Mg. Editor—THE ANAGARIKA DHARMAPALA

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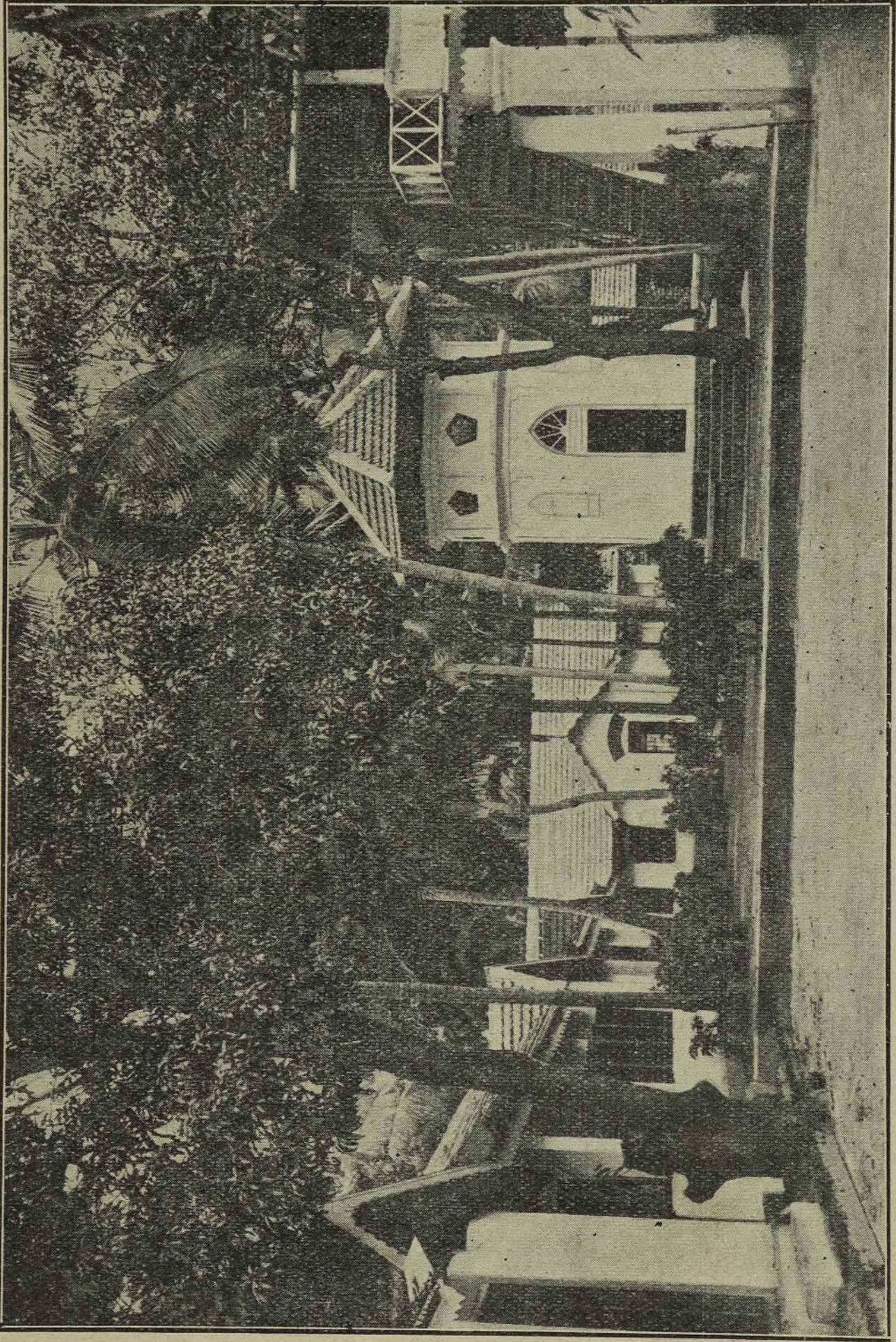
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THE MAHA-BODHI

FOUNDED BY THE ANAGARIKA H. DHARMAPALA

चरथ भिक्षुवे चारिक बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय लोकानुकम्पाय अत्याय
हिताय सुखाय देवमनुस्सानं देसिय भिक्षुवे धम्मं आदि कल्लारणं मज्जे कल्लारणं
परियोसाने कल्लारणं साय्यं सव्यञ्जनं केवलपरिपुष्पं परिसुद्धं ब्रह्मचरियं पक्कासेथ ।

“Go ye, O Bhikkhus, and wander forth for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Proclaim, O Bhikkhus, the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and pure.”—MAHAVAGGA, VINAYA PITAKA.

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[No. 7

THE RELIGION OF ASOKA

OPINION OF REV. HERAS

[*Criticism*]

DR. B. M. BARUA, M.A. (CAL.), D.LITT. (LOND.)

The Vedic Magazine for May, 1927, is pleased to reproduce *verbatim* from the Social Reformer of Bombay the opinion and pleadings of Rev. Heras about the religion of Asoka as against the accepted view that King Asoka professed the Buddhist faith, with the following introductory remarks printed in bold type :—

“Rev. H. Heras, S. J., M.A., makes a wonderful discovery. Asoka has so far been regarded as having been a Buddhist monarch. The authority for this

opinion has been the Buddhist tradition. This is made vicious by the incorporation in it of matter which cannot at all stand historical scrutiny. Incontrovertible, however, is the evidence of rocks and pillars on which the edicts of Asoka are engraved. And these Rev. Heras subjects in his article to critical examination, which leads him to the conclusion that Asoka professed Brahminism and not Buddhism, as popularly believed."

I will not comment on these sedulous remarks as these speak well for themselves as expressions of a magazine noted for its keen historical sense. I fail however to see how a mere opinion might be praised in bold type as "a wonderful discovery," and mere pleadings as "critical examinations." If dogmatism leads one to insist on treating the favourite opinion of the Missionary Professor of Bombay as a grand discovery, I may flatter one by saying that according to the claim made by Rev. Heras, his is nothing more than a rediscovery, the credit of the boldness to dispute the Buddhist faith of Asoka belonging, according to his own showing, not to him, but to Mr. H. H. Wilson. What the Vedic Magazine has prominently advertised as "a wonderful discovery" was proved, I am told, to be a "peculiar frenzy," when Rev. Heras made bold to read the paper containing his opinion in the Archæology Section of the Fourth All-India Oriental Congress held at Allahabad. This is, of course, not the first occasion when the famous magazine of the Gurukul Institution has praised 'frenzy' as 'discovery.'

Now, turning to the opinion and arguments of Rev. Heras, I might point out that he is sure to find in my friend Mr. Manindra Mohan Bose, M.A., the Lahiri Research Assistant and Lecturer in Subsidiary Languages in the Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University, a comrade sailing in the same boat. Mr. Bose has been seriously engaged these few years to collect evidence from the Edicts of Asoka to prove the following theories of his :

- (1) that Asoka, as his inscribed edicts go to show, was far from being a convert to the Buddhist faith ;
- (2) that Asoka, as he appears in his edicts, was rather a Buddha himself than a Buddhist votary ; and
- (3) that Asoka, according to his statements in some of his edicts, notably the First Separate Rock Edict, was rather anti-Buddhist than pro-Buddhist, which is to say, that he was pro-Brahmanist or Hindu.

Rev. Heras considers the value of the arguments generally used to prove the Buddhist faith of Asoka, and feels sure that no impartial unprejudiced historian will accept them as valuable to prove such a conclusion. The Buddhist chronicler, whether of the north or of the south, representing Asoka as a Buddhist monarch was a tale-teller, and must, therefore, be treated as a humbug. His account, so far as Asoka's religion is concerned, is incredible, and hence of little or no value. "We have been misled," says Rev. Heras, "by the Buddhist chronicles long ago. Modern criticism cannot accept other documents referring to Asoka than his own inscriptions. And these do not say that he embraced the doctrines of Gautama. No document records his embracing a new faith. We know moreover that his family, and especially his father Bindusāra, professed Brahmanical faith. Hence Asoka remained Hindu and Brahmanical till the end of his days."

That the evidence of Asoka's inscriptions is presumably of greater historical value than that of other documents referring to Asoka is a reasonable presumption to make. And where statements in Asoka's inscriptions are in conflict with those in other documents, the historian can generally be justified in giving preference to the former over the latter. But where other documents supplement the inscriptions without coming into conflict with them, these, because they are documents other than the inscriptions, are not to be shelved as myths or mere 'inventions of mendacious monks.'

In placing too much reliance on what Asoka says in his inscriptions, the historian must beware of what Prof. Rhys Davids appositely termed "royal rodomontade." In cases where other documents are in agreement with the inscriptions, the inference must be that these have a genuine tradition at their credit. The Missionary Professor who has a jack in the box to show is a stranger to this reasonable attitude. For with him one has to presume that, regarding the history of Asoka, his inscriptions are his only credentials, and other documents, such as the Buddhist chronicles, referring to Asoka as a pious Buddhist king are incredible credulities. Other documents are misleading myths. "*Idam eva saccam, mogham aññam.*" This is the classical expression for the dogmatic attitude as distinguished from the rational or critical.

From this postulate of Rev. Heras, one is to expect that to prove his case he will not cite evidence from any of the 'other documents,' whether they be the *Rājatarangini*, the Sanskrit chronicle of Kashmere, or the *Mahāvamsa*, the Pali chronicle of Ceylon, or the *Divyâvadāna*, the Sanskrit Indian Buddhist book of edifying legends, or the Travels of the Chinese pilgrims. He is to prove his case only by the authority of Asoka's own statements as we find them engraved on rocks and pillars.

One of the legends in the *Divyâvadāna* says that Asoka went out on pilgrimage under the guidance of his Buddhist preceptor Upagupta, and visited all the important Buddhist holy places in India, the park of Lumbini where the Buddha was delivered and the Deer-park at *Rsipattana* where he first proclaimed the truths formulated by him being counted among them. It also says that to whatever Buddhist sacred spot he went, there he paid his homage and erected a shrine (*caitya*) as a matter of favour to the future visitors.¹ The *Rummindei Pillar* inscription records that Asoka actually visited the village

¹ *Divyâvadāna*, pp. 389-97, quoted and discussed in my "Asoka Edicts In New Light," p. 54.

of Lumbini where the Blessed One was delivered, paid his homage there, and set up a stone-pillar adorned with a crowning animal figure (the figure of a horse, according to Hwen Thsang).² The Nigāli-Sāgar Pillar inscription records that he personally went in the 20th year of his reign to consecrate the Stupa of Konāgamana, the Divine Master, the stupa which he had enlarged five years back. The pillars, inscribed as well as uninscribed, which were set up by Asoka at Sārnāth, Pātaliputra, Samkāśya, Kausāmbi and Sānchi, have been discovered, and their find-spots go to show these were all set up in Buddhist holy places.

A second legend in the Divyāvadāna says that Asoka introduced a quinquennial system, which he even followed in making public gifts and large money-grants to the Buddhist Sangha. The Third Edict of the Rock series records that Asoka inaugurated the quinquennial tours for official inspection when he was consecrated twelve years. The internal evidence of his edicts goes to prove that there were issued or engraved at the interval of five years. Though here the Buddhist tradition is in agreement, at least, not in conflict with the evidence of Asoka's inscriptions, one is precluded, under the ordinance of Rev. Heras, from giving any credence to it.

Be that as may, Rev. Heras cannot but admit, if he has at all read Asoka's inscriptions well, that these indelible records contain the incontrovertible evidence, showing that Asoka visited and paid homage, which is to say, went on pilgrimage to, the places considered sacred in the religion of Gautama, the Buddha Sākyamuni, and that these do not refer to his visiting any places which might be identified with the Hindu or Brahmanical Tīrthasthāna's. But he cites the authority of Kalhan's *Rājatarangini*, a chronicle written not earlier than the twelfth century A.D., which says that Asoka built many Hindu temples in Kashmere. The account in the

² See my "Asoka Edicts In New Light," pp. 63-64.

Rājatarangini cannot, according to his postulate, be treated as a credential, it being one of the 'other documents referring to Asoka.' And none of the Hindu temples said to have been built by Asoka has been referred to in Asoka's inscriptions hitherto discovered, and no temples, to my knowledge, have as yet been discovered in Kashmere which might be regarded as Asokan. In the last resort the resourceful Bombay Professor would cite the authority of the Nigāli-Sāgar Pillar inscription to show that Asoka not only went on pilgrimage to Lumbini, the birth-place of Gautama Sākyamuni, but also to the Stupa of Konâgamana, premising that Konâgamana (Konakamana in Asokan phraseology) "was one of the previous Buddhas, most likely a mythical person, worshipped by a rival sect of Buddhism founded by Devadatta, Buddha's cousin."

I must ask: Does Asoka himself say in any of his inscriptions that the Buddha Konâgamana was worshipped by a rival sect of Buddhism founded by Devadatta, and not by the followers of Gautama Sākyamuni? What does Rev. Heras mean by premising that "Konakamana was one of the previous Buddhas, most likely a mythical person, worshipped by a rival sect of Buddhism founded by Devadatta," and what is his authority for it, if he is not determined to rely upon the documents other than Asoka's own records? Is it not the implication of what he says that this mythical person was an invention of Devadatta himself or of the followers of his Buddhism? This is "a wonderful discovery" indeed. So far as I know, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Fa-Hian, who visited India towards the close of the 4th century A.D., is the first to have recorded in his travels, referring to the time of his visit, that there lived at Srāvasti the followers of Devadatta and that they revered the three of the previous Buddhas, Kakucchanda, Konâgamana and Kāsyapa, but not Gautama. This is all the information one can have about the worship of Konâgamana by the rival sect of Buddhism founded by Devadatta. Fa-Hian nowhere suggests that

Konâgamana as well as two other Buddhas revered by the followers of Devadatta whom he met at Srāvastī in the early part of the 5th century A.D., were mythical inventions of Devadatta or of his followers. If these previous Buddhas were mythical inventions of any sect, it is none other than that founded by Gautama Sākyamuni, for the reason that the previous Buddhas including both Konâgamana and Gautama Sākyamuni were canonised long ago by the followers of Gautama Buddha, and their list and biographies and praises can be traced in the Pali canonical texts themselves, which are decidedly far earlier, earlier at least by six centuries, than the travels of Fa-Hian. If a man be found, as Asoka is, going on pilgrimage both to the birth-place of Gautama Sākyamuni and to the Stupa of the Buddha Konâgamana and not going to a place associated with a previous Buddha to the exclusion of that associated with Gautama, he must necessarily be identified with the follower of Gautama, and not with that of Devadatta. Thus it is a vain pleading on the authority of Asoka's inscriptions that he went on pilgrimage to any holy place other than those held sacred in the religion of Gautama Buddha. The name of Konâgamana as a hero eponymos occurs neither in the Brahmanical Hindu nor Jaina writings; it occurs only in the writings and scriptures of the followers of the Buddha Sākyamuni.

Rev. Heras maintains that Asoka's visit to the village of Lumbini and the Stupa of Konâgamana "does not prove anything in favour of his supposed Buddhism. This is only an individual instance of that general rule: *'All sects have been honoured by me with honours of various kinds.'* Even now-a-days the Hindus go to both the places to worship there the memory and the relics of the Buddha."

Is this a sound argument, I ask, to be pressed against the supposed Buddhism of Asoka? The eighteen Purānas and eighteen Upapurānas of the Brahmanical Hindus enumerate their principal holy places. It will be news to me if Rev. Heras can prove on their authority that Lumbini

as the birth-place of Gautama Sākyamuni and Nigāli-Sāgar as the spot hallowed by the Stupa of Konāgamana Buddha are counted among the Brahmanical Hindu holy places. If a Hindu goes to Lumbini for worship, he does so not primarily to honour the birth-place of Gautama Sākyamuni, but to worship at the temple of Rummindei, the presiding female deity of Rummin (a modern corruption of Lumbini). Lumbini to a Brahmanical Hindu is Rummin, where the temple of Rummin-Devi stands. A Hindu going to Gaya, to Vishnu-Gaya, to offer *pinda*, may also go to Budh Gaya to pour milk at the foot of the sacred Bo Tree, or going to Kāsi, may also go to Sārnāth and may even stand with his folded hands before a Buddhist Stupa or a Buddha-statue. But when he started out, he did so consciously and primarily with the idea of offering *pinda* at Vishnu-Gaya, or of going on pilgrimage to the Hindu city of Benares to see the temple of Visvanātha. Similarly a Buddhist going to Buddha Gaya for worship at the foot of the Bo Tree, may also visit the Hindu shrines in Gaya proper, or going to Sārnāth may also visit the Hindu temples in the Benares city and may even perform ablutions in the Ganges as a Hindu does, and yet when you ask him, he is sure to tell you that he started from home with the idea of undertaking a pilgrimage to Budh Gaya and Sārnāth. To a Hindu Gaya means primarily the Vishnu Gaya, and Kāsi, primarily the city of Benares. To a Buddhist Gaya means primarily the Budh Gaya, and Kāsi, primarily Sārnāth. A Hindu may initiate a Buddhist or a Buddhist may initiate a Hindu in the matter of worship, and yet a subtle but real distinction remains between the two. Doing something by the way, as a matter of curiosity or as a matter of favour is one thing, and doing something as a boasted work of merit, another.

I say that Asoka's recorded visit to the village of Lumbini and the Stupa of the Buddha Konāgamana distinctly proves his Buddhist faith, and nothing else. For the Rummindei pillar inscription records that 'His Gifted Majesty and Grace

the King' came there personally for worship not because there was a shrine of the Hindu female deity Rummin-dei (Lumbini-devi) but because the village of Lumbini was the place where the Blessed One was delivered. The Nigāli-Sāgar or Niglīva pillar inscription similarly records that he came personally for worship at the Stupa of Konâgamana Buddha which he had caused to be enlarged, which is to say, that he came personally to perform the ceremonial consecration of the Buddha-Stupa enlarged by him. If he had not been a Buddhist, he would have stopped at the completion of the work of enlargement of the Buddha-Stupa in the 14th year of his reign, and would not have taken the trouble of coming there personally in the 20th year for its ceremonial consecration.

Let us see if Asoka's inscriptions, which are the real authorities with Rev. Heras, record any instances where Asoka erected non-Buddhist buildings and came to formally consecrate them. Rev. Heras may cite the authority of the Barabar Hill Cave inscriptions. But what do these record? Two of them record that Asoka offered to the *Ajivikas* two cave dwellings, the Nigoha-Kubhā and the Kubhā in the Khalatika-hill when he had been consecrated 12 years. The third inscription records that he offered to the same religious sect another cave-dwelling in the same hill when he had been consecrated 19 years, that is, just one year previous to his visit to the village of Lumbini and the Stupa of Konâgamana. In none of these inscriptions Asoka says in so many words as he does in his Rummindei and Nigāli-Sāgar pillar inscriptions, that he went there personally to formally consecrate the cave-dwellings. The mere bestowal of cave-dwellings upon the *Ajivikas* without the ceremonial consecration does not disprove the Buddhist faith of Asoka. The Pāli *Upāli-Sutta* represents *Upāli* as an intelligent man who was at first a staunch follower of the Jaina recluses and subsequently, after he had a discussion with the Buddha, became a Buddhist by faith. He instructed his men, saying, "If the Jaina recluses

want to have an interview with me, tell them I am not to be seen by them, but do not deprive them of liberality from my house if they want it." Upāli never feared that the showing of liberality to the Jainas as a matter of favour would have upset his Buddhist faith. The Buddhist Thera Buddhaddatta lived at Kāveripattana, in a monastery erected by one Vishnudāsa or Krishnadāsa, during the reign of the Chola King Acyutavikrānta of the Kadamba dynasty. This Vishnudāsa has been represented in the Skanda-Purāna as a Vaishnava reformer. There is a great difference between mere erection of a monastery and its ceremonial consecration. If the Great Akbar caused a temple to be built to please his Hindu wife, it does not mean that he ceased to be a Musalman. Nearer home, H. E. Lord Ronaldshay, and after him, his successor Lord Lytton, the Governor of Bengal, made a donation of Rs. 500 each to the Buddhist monastery in Chittagong town when each of them visited it. It does not mean that either Lord Ronaldshay or Lord Lytton ceased to be Christian. For they made the donation as a matter of favour, in expression of their sympathy with an institution which, in their opinion, was doing excellent work. Had they been Buddhists, they would have formally consecrated their gifts, as the Buddhist Banker Anāthapindika had done in dedicating the Jetavana monastery to the Buddhist Sangha with the Buddha at its head.

Rev. Heras fails to understand that Asoka appears in his inscriptions mainly in a double capacity, as Asoka the king and as Asoka the follower of a faith. If he had bestowed the cave-dwellings in the Khalatika-hill upon the Ajivikas, he had done so as Asoka the king, as a matter of favour. King Dasaratha, Asoka's grandson and successor, too, dedicated some cave-dwellings to the Ajivikas in an adjacent and parallel hill-range, now known as Nāgārjuni. These are all inscribed. In the votive inscriptions caused to be engraved by Asoka, the Ajivikas are referred to simply as Ajivikas, that is, without such honorific prefix as "*Bhadanta*," "*The Reverend*," or "*The*

Venerable.” But in the votive inscriptions of Dasaratha, they are invariably referred to as Bhadanta Ajivikas. If any inference is to be drawn from this difference, it is that Dasaratha was an avowed votary and supporter of the Ajivikas, while Asoka was not so.

The compiler of the Divyâvadâna and the commentator of the Mahāvamsa seem to have been aware of the special royal favours shown by Asoka to the Ajivikas. For both of them have sought to set forth the reason why he was eager to show such favours to them. They tell us that a certain Ajivika teacher, named Pilindavatsa or Janasāna served as an astrologer in the court of Bindusāra and was the *guru* or religious preceptor of Asoka’s mother. He predicted the prosperous career of Asoka. It is for this reason that Asoka became eager on his accession to the throne of Magadha to show his gratitude to him.

My point is that an argument based on Asoka’s statement, “*All sects have been honoured by me with honours of various kinds*” is no argument against his Buddhist faith, so long as ‘honours’ mean nothing more than ‘favours.’ The Dharma-mahāmātras, as Asoka himself says in his Seventh Pillar Edict, were appointed to distribute royal favours and render services of various kinds among all the *religieux*, the Buddhists, the Brahmins, the Ajivikas, the Jainas and the rest. As a king, he felt it to be his duty to deal with them impartially, respect the faiths they professed, grant them freedom to follow their respective religions, vouchsafe for the protection of the law and maintain peace and order. “Freedom of faith and worship was guaranteed to all classes by the Queen’s Proclamation of 1858.” This does not mean that Queen Victoria had no religion or ceased to be Christian. For in her Proclamations of 1858, she distinctly says, “Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and the desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise

favoured, none molested or disquieted, by reason of their religious faith or observances but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the law." All that Queen Victoria or Great Akbar proclaimed on this score was but a reiteration of the declared policy of the Buddhist monarch Asoka.

Prof. D. R. Bhandarkar pointed out long ago that Prof. Kern and Dr. Bühler utterly missed the implication of the figure of rhetoric called Upalakshana, illustrated by Utpala, the commentator of Varāhamihira's Brihajjātaka, by the typical instance of the Ajivikas and the worshippers of Nārāyana. The implication of the figure of speech is that 'to accept one as an Ajivika is not to denote a worshipper of Nārāyana, a Bhāgavata or a Vaishnava'. Heedless of this correction made by the Carmichael Professor of Calcutta, and unmindful of other contributions on the Ajivikas the Missionary Professor of Bombay has tended stolidly to represent the Ajivikas as a Vaishnava sect founded by Gósāla. Is it because the Calcutta Professor has 'not kept in countenance' Mr. H. H. Wilson who ventured to dispute the Buddhist faith of Asoka and establish his Jaina faith? But what is the use feeding a dead cow, for it will never come back to life? The Ajivikas were never the Vaishnavas.

The main argument advanced by Rev. Heras to explain away the supposed change of faith in the life of Asoka in favour of Buddhism is that the inscriptions of Asoka "do not say that he embraced the doctrines of Gautama." Is it so? Asoka in his First Minor Rock Edict, says that for two-and-half years and somewhat more, when he had remained a mere *upāsaka*, he did not exert himself strenuously, but when for one year and somewhat more he had been associated with the Sangha, he exerted himself strenuously. I am not prepared to accept the reading 'prakāsa Saka' suggested by late Dr. Hultzsch for the Rupnāth text, nor the reading 'Budha-Saka' suggested by him for the Māski version. Rev. Heras does not challenge these readings, and yet he seems to think he has good reasons

to maintain his position. If Asoka distinctly says that when for two-and-half years and somewhat more he had openly called himself a Sākya or a Buddha-Sākya, that is, a Buddhist who was a follower of the religion founded by a teacher of the Sākya clan, is it not going too far to argue that here he has not referred to his conversion to the doctrines of Gautama Sākyamuni? My reading for all the texts is *upāsaka*, and the intended contrast in two stages is one between Asoka the *upāsaka* and Asoka the *Samghe-upayita*, *Samgha-upeta* or *samgham-upagata*. Here it is immaterial to discuss whether Asoka has enumerated four years ($2\frac{1}{2} + 1\frac{1}{2}$), or just two-and-half years ($1 + 1\frac{1}{2}$). The evidence of the Seventh Pillar Edict is conclusive that by Sangha Asoka meant the Buddhist monastic order. Rev. Heras is right in saying that the scholars have differed in their interpretation of Asoka's expression '*Samghe-upayita*', and that in their opinion these are the possible interpretations of it: (1) that Asoka entered the Buddhist order, turned a Buddhist monk, or (2) that he waited upon the members of the Buddhist order, paid a visit to them, or (3) that he became a *Bhikkhugatika*, a Buddhist layman keeping to the ways of a monk and living in a monastery. But he is not aware that a fourth interpretation has been suggested, namely, that Asoka became associated with the members of the Buddhist monastic order, identified with the cause espoused by the Buddhist Sangha. It is certain that Asoka's is the same expression as the Pāli '*Sangha-gata*' which unmistakably means 'being in the midst of an assembly or a chapter of the members of the Buddhist ecclesiastical order.' The use of the expression '*Sangha-gata*' in this very sense by Buddhaghosha in his *Visuddhimagga* (P. T. S. Ed., Vol. I, p. 18) settles once for all the controversy as to what Asoka possibly meant by '*Samghe-upayāta*' or '*Samgham-upagata*.' He could not mean that he entered the Buddhist order by assuming the vows of a monk. He cannot be supposed to have meant waiting upon the members of the Buddhist order in the sense of paying just one visit. The sense must have been

deeper, otherwise, the period of time, 'one year and somewhat more,' referred to in this connexion remains unexplained. The *Bhikkhugatikā*-theory is proffered by those who do not know the full particulars of a *Bhikkhugatikā* Buddhist. The intended meaning must have been that he became associated with the members of the Buddhist Sangha and identified with its cause as a result of repeated visits interviews and private discussions. From the context it is clear that Asoka had remained a *upāsaka* or mere lay admirer and supporter of some one of the Buddhist Sangha for a little over two-and-half years. Here the all important phrase is 'for a little over two-and-half years'. If Asoka be not taken to have referred to his change of faith, this phrase becomes unmeaning. Whose *upāsaka* was he previous to the specified period of time? The reply is suggested in the next statement referring to his association with the Buddhist monastic order. Four years had elapsed from the waging of the Kalinga war to the issuing of the first Dhammalipi by Asoka. The intense remorse felt by him as a result of his reflections on the scene of carnage, cruelty and pain during the Kalinga war fought in the eighth year of his reign has been vividly recorded in his Thirteenth Rock Edict. In the same edict he has stated how deeply he felt a longing for the Dhamma. In his Sixth Pillar Edict he has clearly referred to the first issuing of the Dhammalipi in the twelfth year. And the First Minor Rock Edict contains an enumeration of the interim of four years, as well as an account of two successive stages of advance towards an active mission of the Dhamma. Thus the connexions are clearly brought out in his inscriptions. Is it not rash to make a statement like one made by Rev. Heras, that Asoka's inscriptions do not say that he embraced the Buddhist faith?

Another argument of Rev. Heras is that the First Minor Rock Edict, 'though it is the first exposition of the Dhamma after his visit to the Samgha, does not give any precept we might call Buddhist.' Can there be anything more misleading than this? This only goes to show that Rev. Hears is a mere

enthusiast who is out to adumbrate a pet theory, to hold a brief on behalf of the Brahminical Hindu without the study of the case and without a knowledge of the law. Whether the First Minor Rock Edict is the earliest or the latest among Asoka's inscriptions is only a side-issue. Rev. Heras has lost sight of a grand distinction drawn by Asoka himself between the two classes of his edicts, viz., (1) those containing *dhamma-sāvana*, and (2) those containing *dhammānusathi*. The First Minor Rock Edict is an individual instance of *dhamma-sāvana* or announcement of happy message by Asoka to his subjects. Here a precept is out of place. In conveying the happy message, the king has rejoiced to refer to his great achievements which were the fruits of his own manly exertion (*praḥrama* or which were the fruits of his own manly exertion (*praḥrama* or *parāḥrama*). *Praḥrama* or *Parāḥrama* is but a synonym for *Apramāda* or *Utthāna*. *Parāḥrama* or manly effort is the keynote of Asoka's Dhamma, and it is also the cardinal principle of Buddhism. In the opinion of the Buddha, if there be any single principle whereby his whole life and teaching might be summed up, it is *Parāḥrama* or *Apramāda*. Such is the emphasis laid on this principle in Buddhism. Is it right to say that the First Minor Rock Edict "does not give any precept we might call Buddhist"? Without *Purusa-parāḥrama* Buddhism is sure to dwindle into the fatalism of Maskari Gosāla whose doctrines have been sharply criticised and repudiated in Buddhism.

It appears that Rev. Heras has too lightly taken the evidence of Asoka's Bhabru Edict, otherwise known as Calcutta-Bairāt or Second Bairāt Edict. In this particular document, Asoka has respectfully addressed the members of the Buddhist monastic order, inquiring of their health and safety as an expression of cordiality and civility. Here he has assured them of his deep faith in the Buddhist Holy Triad: "It is known to you Venerable Sirs, how far extend my veneration for and joyful faith in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha." In this very document, he has concerned himself to

make the Good Faith long endure : '*hevam sadhamme cilathilike hosatī'ti*, 'thus, indeed, the Good Faith will long endure.' Here, with this noble end in view, he has recommended seven passages, selected by him out of the embodied teachings of the Blessed One, for the constant study and meditation by all the members of the Buddhist community : the Bhikkhus, the Bhikkhunis, the Upāsakas and the Upāsikās.

A Brahminical Hindu may say that he accepts the Buddha as an Incarnation of Vishnu, but he will never say that he is a believer in the Buddhist Holy Triad. A non-Christian may readily say that he accepts Christ as a great saviour of mankind, but he will never say that he is a believer in the Christian Trinity. Here Asoka distinctly assures the members of the Buddhist Sangha of his deep faith in the Holy Triad. If Rev. Heras can show that there are instances of non-Buddhists professing faith in the Buddhist Triad, his would be really a wonderful discovery. He has also to cite instances where a non-Buddhist ventured to make selections out of the Buddhist scriptures and recommend them as texts to be constantly studied and meditated upon by all the members of a Buddhist community. In recommending these selections, Asoka's interest was to make the Saddhamma long endure. This is the very motive which led the Buddhist teachers to compile handbooks containing similar selections, notably the Suttasāṅgaha. Rev. Heras is to answer why, if Asoka had been a Brahminical Hindu, he has not made selections out of Brahminical or Hindu scriptures.

The Mahābhārata is the far earlier and much greater authority for Brahminical Hinduism than the Rājatarāṅgini. Rev. Heras is to explain why, if Asoka had remained Hindu and Brahminical, the Mahābhārata has represented him as an incarnation of a Demon-king named Yastvasva? The Great Epic has not done the same honour to Asoka's father Bindusāra, nor to his grandfather Chandragupta, though they, too, were the kings of Magadha. Because his family, and specially his father Bindusāra, professed Brahminism, does it

follow that Asoka remained Hindu and Brahminical till the end of his days? All the ancient Buddhist writers, such as Moggaliputta-Tissa, Buddhaghosha, Nāgārjuna and Dipankara Srijñāna, were born and brought up in Brahminical Hindu families. Their fathers professed Brahmanism. Does it follow from this that they too remained Hindu and Brahminical till the end of their days? We know that the Buddha has nowhere said that he taught anything which was not taught by the previous Buddhas. We know moreover that his family, specially his father Suddhodana, professed Brahminism. Does it follow from this that the Buddha himself remained Hindu and Brahminical till the end of his days?

Asoka was a man, a member of Hindu society, an Indian king, and, above all, a Buddhist. His inscriptions themselves, as I have sought to show, contain evidences proving his Buddhist faith. These evidences may now be summed up as follows:—

1. Asoka went on pilgrimage to Lumbini and worshipped there, because, as he knew, it was the village where the Buddha Sākyamuni was delivered. A Brahminical Hindu is never known to have gone on pilgrimage to Lumbini because it is the birthplace of Gautama Buddha.
2. Asoka undertook a pilgrimage to Nigāli-Sāgar on the road to Nepal for the consecration of the Stupa of the Buddha Konāgamana enlarged by him five years back.
3. If Asoka had been a supporter of the Buddhist sect founded by Devadatta, he would have gone to the Stupa of a previous Buddha, such as Konāgamāna and avoided going to Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautama Sākyamuni, the Buddha whose name was *ex hypothesi* repugnant to a follower of Devadatta.
4. Asoka bestowed certain cave-dwellings upon the Ajivikas. But there is no evidence to show that

he formally conserated them. In the votive inscriptions Asoka has referred to the donee simply as *Ajivikas*, without such honorific prefix as 'Bhadanta,' while in the votive inscriptions of Dasaratha, the grandson and successor of Asoka, they are invariably honoured with such a prefix.

5. Asoka's statement that for a little over two-and-half years he remained a *upāsaka*, and subsequently became associated with the Buddhist Sangha is clear enough to indicate that he embraced the doctrines of Gautama. If it be not taken to imply his change of faith in favour of Buddhism, the successive periods of time during which he remained a *upasaka* and became associated with the Sangha are rendered unmeaning.
6. The First Minor Rock Edict which is an instance of *Dhammasāvana* greatly emphasises the Buddhist cardinal principle of *Parākrama* or *Apramāda*.
7. Asoka in his Bhabru Edict, assures the members of the Buddhist Brethren of his deep and extensive faith in the Buddhist Triad, which he could not have done if he were not a Buddhist.
8. In the same Bhabru Edict, Asoka has been concerned to recommend seven texts selected out of the Buddhist scriptures then known to him for the constant study and meditation by the Bhikkhus, Bhikkhunis, *Upāsakas* and *Upāsikas* of the Buddhist community, and that with a view to making the Good Faith long endure. If he had been a non-Buddhist, he would not have referred to Buddhism as *Saddhamma*, nor interested himself to make it long endure and ventured to recommend the selections made by him out of the Buddhist scriptures for the constant study among the Buddhists.
9. Asoka honoured all the sects with various kinds of honours in the sense that he showed various kinds

of favours to them. If he had tolerated the different faiths and impartially protected the law, he did so as a wise Indian monarch.

BUDDHISTS IN EALING

WESAK CELEBRATIONS.

Members of the British Mahabodhi Society joined in a Wesak commemoration festival at "Foster House," Madeley road, Ealing, the headquarters of the British Buddhist Mission, on Sunday, the eve of the great festival of the Buddhist year.

Wesak, which is observed on the day of the fifth full moon of the year, is to Buddhists something rather more than Christmas is to Christians, for it is the anniversary not only of the birth of the Lord Buddha, but also of his "Enlightenment," and his Parinibbana or death on earth.

In Buddhist countries it is, like Christmas with Christians, a time of great rejoicing, and on that day, even the horse and the bullock are allowed to go free."

The garden and rooms of Foster House were gaily decorated with flags and paper hangings, and the proceedings on Sunday, which were conducted by the Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala, the head of the British Buddhist Mission, began with Malpujawa, "The Offering of Flowers," a daily practice in Buddhist countries. Headed by the Anagarika, the company, numbering between fifty and sixty persons (more than half of whom were English) walked in procession to the shrine which has recently been erected in an upstairs room, carrying flowers which they placed before a marble figure of the Buddha, by the side of which were lighted candles and sticks of burning incense. Each worshipper as he withdrew after laying his offering on the shrine made obeisance to the figure of the Buddha, whom they believe still to be living.

THE BUDDHIST CREED—AND ENGLAND.

Then followed the "Pansil" or taking of the Five Precepts" :—

"I promise not to destroy any living thing."

"I promise to abstain from taking that which is not mine."

"I promise to avoid sensual indulgence."

"I promise to abstain from false-hood."

"I promise to abstain from intoxicants."

Anagarika, in a few sentences, then recounted the history and broad principles of Buddhism, adding that having realised that the English nation had reached the foremost place among the nations of the world in material things, he had found himself impelled to bring to England the great truth of this religion of love, justice and renunciation.

The company then returned to a down-stairs room for the ceremony of Pirith, or the chanting of Suttas in Pali. Each person in the room sat holding a white cord of four separate strands—the Pirith Nula—which bound the company in unity while they wished for the whole universe the greatest blessings enumerated to them in the Sutta chanted by five Ceylonese seated in the centre of the room. A second Sutta which was chanted was that of "The Greatest Wisdom."

BUDDHIST TEMPLE FOR EALING?

An interval for tea followed, and then the Anagarika spoke at length of the outlook of the Buddhists of Ceylon on his mission and of what he hoped to do while in England. He said that he had just returned from a visit to his aged mother, and while in Ceylon had found an opportunity to tell the Buddhists there what he was doing here. The wealthy Buddhists did not look upon the venture with favour, but the women and poorer Buddhists were enthusiastic about it. He was not concerned to make converts, but, imbued with a desire to serve humanity, he was anxious to tell the English people of the teaching of the Lord Buddha, and, accordingly he had decided to spend the last two years of his life before he

renounced the world altogether, teaching the people of this country. He hoped to build a Buddhist temple in this country ; he had asked the people of Ceylon for £5,000 for this purpose, to which he promised to add another £5,000 which he had inherited from his parents. He was not asking the people of this country for monetary support, but he did appeal for a little sympathy and interest.

The Venerable Anagarika Dharmapala also spoke at the Buddhist festival held at the Essex Hall, Strand, on Monday evening.

WAISAKHA CELEBRATIONS IN INDIA

This year the Maha Bodhi Society celebrated the Waisakha festival with great eclat at Calcutta, Gaya and Benares. The programme was improved by continuing the festival for three days. The celebrations at the Sri Dharmarājika Vihāra, Calcutta, were on a grander scale than in previous years. The Vihāra premises were decorated with numerous Buddhist flags, flowers, lanterns and greenery. At the entrance of the Vihāra were hung lanterns illuminated with electric bulbs with the inscription "Happy Wesak" and the artistic lanterns made by the Sinhalese students in Calcutta were one of the chief attractions of the decorations.

The first day's programme consisted of a public meeting presided over by the Hon. Mr. Justice Manmatha Nath Mukerji. The hall was packed to suffocation and many were seen hanging on to the windows and other places from where a glimpse of the hall could be had. There was a distinguished gathering among whom the following were noticed:—Dr. E. Koester, Vice-Consul for Germany, Drs. D. R. Bhandarkar, Kalidas Nag, Bijanraj Chatterjee, B. M. Barua, Babu Krishna Kumar Mitra, Dr. Bhupendranath Dutta, Messrs. K. Z. Hla, Maung Yin Maung, B. K. Mallik, Deveswar Mookerjee, Sachindra Nath Mookerjee, K. W. Banerjee, and C. C. Bose.

The proceedings of the meeting were begun with the administration of Panca Sila by Revd. Dharmaratana. After

this was over Mr. Banerjee sang the opening song in a melodious voice. He was followed by Mr. S. C. Mookerjee with his welcome address and the Report on behalf of the Society. This will be inserted in full in the next number. After the Report was read Mrs. Anadi Dastidar and others sang the song specially composed for the occasion by Dr. Tagore.

Dr. Koester, who was the first speaker, dealt at length on the expansion of Buddhist religion and literature, especially of the Mahayana Buddhism in the Far Eastern countries and the west. He also said that he was greatly interested in the doctrine of the coming of the future Maitriya Buddha.

Dr. Bhandarkar in an eloquent speech proved the historicity of the Buddha and the rational and positive nature of Buddhism. He also referred to the various Asiatic nations which were influenced by Buddhism. He further said that if Indians are really proud of India they must be proud of the Buddha whose message of universal love brought India into relationship with various other Asiatic countries. He then gave an instance how the people of Konkan whose policy was an "eye for an eye" were subdued by the Buddhist missionaries with their exemplary love and devotion to duty.

Dr. Kalidas Nag said that Indians did not deserve to be called India's real sons if they did not pay homage to the Buddha in their own homes. The appearance of Buddha, he said, was a great phenomenon in the history of Asia. His doctrines of purity in life and Nirvāna are sources of inspiration to all. The marvellous monuments of Boro Budur in Jāva and Angkor in Indo-China are awe-inspiring monuments of Buddhism.

Dr. B. M. Barua in his address said that they had united to worship Buddha on that day but really they had to come to worship his enlightenment—the enlightened mind. They can recollect how an Indian Prince left home in the quest of Truth and attained Buddhahood when he had acquired a new vision of the world. Buddha may be regarded as an enlightened mind which expressed a new mode of thinking. The problem

was what should be the mode of thinking befitting a human being. It is here that Buddhism and Brahminism differ. While Brahminism emphasises on tradition Buddhism deals with the evolution of human progress. Buddha never postulated dogmatic truths. In this respect he differs from many other teachers. Buddha never even claimed to be the leader of the Sangha although one third of the population of the world revere him as the great Teacher. It is but meet that they had gathered there to hear the message that the Blessed One gave 2500 years ago.

Mr. S. N. Mookerjee in a long discourse compared Buddhism with Hinduism bringing out the similarities of the two great systems.

The president, in bringing the proceedings to a close, said in a few words that he did not come there that day to discuss the various philosophies but to pay homage to Buddha whose great religion created a greater India and united the whole of Asia. He promulgated the great principles of Ahimsa, toleration and sympathy for all. Be they Hindus or Buddhists they all had to understand the great ideal that he placed before humanity. He finally said that he had received great inspiration by that evening's function.

After the closing song was sung by Mr. Pramatha Nath Ray the proceedings came to a close.

The second day being the actual full moon day it was spent in religious functions. In the morning worship was offered to the sacred relics and at 11 A.M. a Buddhapuja was held. This was followed by a feast to the Buddhist monks. In the evening a regular service was held at the Shrine when Bhikkhus recited sacred texts both from Sanskrit and Pāli. Short speeches were also made by Revd. Saranankara, Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutta, Messrs. C. C. Bose and Kiran Chandra Dutt.

The third day was spent in giving alms to the poor and distributing fruits to hospital patients.

BRAHMAN AND DHAMMA

BY DR. GEORGE GRIMM

(Continued)

II.

In closer relationship to the concept Brahman stands the concept Dharma. Dharma comes from *dhar*, what one holds by. That, however, which one holds by in practical life are the *norms*, the *laws*, and just on that account the original meaning of Dharma in the Veda is "Norm, Law, Order." In this its original sense, Dharma is the *completion* of Brahman: Brahman is *the eternal*, the supra-mundane, as in prayer, in deep meditation, we experience it within ourselves; the Dharma however is the order of *temporality*, it is *the world-order*: "O earth and heaven, through the law of Varuna (Varunasya dharmanā) are ye divided, established."¹

This world-order came into consideration for the Indians, above all as *moral* world-order, *i.e.*, so far as it rules the actions of men, and therewith as *eternal statute*: "If unwittingly we have transgressed thy holy law (tava dharmā), do not punish us, O God (Varuna) for this sin."² And so one can understand when in the Atharvaveda³ mention is made of the sacred "order of Varuna" as well as of the earth which is established through the cosmic "order,"⁴ as also of the sacred "orders of sacrifice,"⁵ the latter in respect to the fact that the cult of sacrifice was adapted as much as possible to the current knowledge of the world-order in allegorical interpretation. The like is comprehensible, without further words

¹ Rgv. 6, 70, 1.

² Rv. 7, 89, 5.

³ 6, 132, 1—5.

⁴ Av. 12, 1, 17.

⁵ Av. 7, 5, 1.

when in the Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa⁶ it is said of Indra that he is “protector of Brahman, protector of Dharma,” inasmuch as this simply means: Indra is protector of the—to *the Eternal*—conducting—prayer, and protector of the order ruling *the world*.

This fundamental meaning as moral world-order, inclusive of action in accord with this, the word Dharma also retained subsequently. Thus, in the Mahānārāyana-Upanishad⁷ it is said: “The Dharma, so they say. Through the Dharma is this whole world encompassed. Nothing is more difficult to carry on than the Dharma. Therefore they delight in the Dharma. The Dharma is the foundation of this whole world, and in life, creatures hold to him who observes most zealously the Dharma. Through Dharma one wards off the evil. Upon the Dharma rests the All. Therefore they declare Dharma to be the highest.”

With the gradual raising of Brahman to Brahman *svayambhu*, to absolute world-principle—“It is the highest, the concealed, in that the whole world has its nest, the entrance-point and exit-point of the world”⁸—the Dharma becomes, an emanation of Brahman in this sense: “Verily in the beginning this world was Brahman alone. This, since it was alone, was not unfolded. Itself it created beyond itself —[i.e., after it had manifested itself (as is also set forth in the passage) as the god Agni, that is, as the essence of light] —as a more nobly formed, the Princedom, those who are princes among the gods, by name, Indra, Varuna.....Therefore there is nothing higher than the Princedom....He⁹ was not yet unfolded; then he created beyond himself as a more nobly formed, *the Dharma*—[the moral world-order]. This is the Lord of Lords, which is the Dharma. Therefore there is nothing higher than the Dharma. Therefore also the weaker

⁶ 8, 12, 5.

⁷ 62, 6 & 63, 7.

⁸ Vāj. Samh. 32, 8.

⁹ Brh-Up. 1, 4, 13.

in contention against the stronger, sets his hope upon the Dharma—[upon the immanent world-law]—as upon a king. Verily, what this Dharma is, that is reality [satyam]. Therefore when one speaks according to reality, then one says he speaks according to reality ; for these two are one and the same."¹⁰

Precisely to the exposition of this moral *world-order* grounded in Brahman is devoted a large part of the Veda, alongside of, and in *contrast* to, the practice of the *prayer* (Brahman) leading to immortality, i.e., to the *eternal*. This contrasting of Dharma as the moral order *within* the world whose observance, precisely on this account also, only leads upwards to sacred *worlds* ; and of Brahman as the prayer leading to immortality, thus leading right *out* of the world ; is urged with special sharpness in the Chāndogya-Upanishad : "There are three branches of *Dharma* ; Sacrifice, Study of Veda and almsgiving is the first ; asceticism is the second ; the Brahmin's pupil who lives in the house of his teacher is the third, in so far as the same settles down for always in the house of his teacher. All these bring as reward sacred *worlds*. Whoso, however, is established in *Brahman*, enters into *immortality*."

Therewith it will be understood then, without anything further, that Dharma can signify also "good custom," "duty," or "the Good," "virtue," and that there are handed down to us whole Dharmashāstras, i.e., books of instruction about manners and right behaviour which lay down the special duties of the castes and the stages of life.

Further, there, is nothing very shocking in the fact that the Dharma, as the all-embracing concept of the physical, and above all, also of the moral, world-order, in the course of time, among the populace who were under the influence of the Vedas, was hypostatised into a particular personal divinity.

¹⁰ It is a frequent usage in the Vedānta to refer to Brahman as neuter by a pronoun of the masculine gender,—“he” and so forth.

In the Upanishads there is to be found a still further meaning of Dharma, which later in the Doctrine of the Buddha attained to great significance. Dharma in the proper sense is the *world-order*. When we speak of the world-order we think thereby, first of all, only of the regulation of the relations of the individual things in the world to one another, assuming in advance these things themselves as already given. According to the Veda, however, the world-laws grounded in Brahman, which in their inclusive concept yield the world-order, are not mere laws which regulate the *relations* of things to one another, but as such already shape these things themselves, which thus make the tree a tree, the animal an animal. In other words: Whatever in any way is actual, is actual only on the ground of these laws, and is only actual in so far as these laws appear in it. Accordingly, the world-order or the Dharma, in the highest sense, is directly identical with *actuality*, as we have already heard emphasised above in the sacred Upanishad: "Verily, what this Dharma is, that is the actuality." Certainly the only actual is Brahman: "As actuality (*satyam*), whoso thus knows Brahman, concealed in the hollow of the heart and in the highest space, he obtains all wishes,"¹¹ yea, Brahman is the actuality of actuality; "Its secret name is the actuality of actuality (*satyasya satyam*)." ¹² But the Dharma is precisely only this actuality of Brahman, *viewed as the world*, inasmuch as in the laws shaping and maintaining the world *is revealed* only the particular nature of Brahman, at least for him who regards the matter rightly, on which very account, for such an one the world possesses only just so much actuality according as it is Brahman itself.

If thus, however, the Dharma is the actuality of Brahman itself, viewed as the world-order, then the entire Dharma must come into manifestation in every individual thing—

¹¹ Taitt.-Up. 2, 1.

¹² Brh-Up. 2, 1, 20.

taking this word in its widest thinkable sense—just as Brahman comes into manifestation in every individual thing. Just as every individual thing, in so far as—in the highest sense—it is at all actual, is Brahman “He desired: ‘I will be many’then he created the entire world; after he had created it, *he entered it; as reality he became all that is in anywise present; for this they call the Reality*¹³—so, precisely on the same account, is every individual thing also Dharma, actuality, reality of Brahman.—“He himself is all Dharmas, from which he seems different: who knows this, will represent to himself without shrinking how it *really* is.”¹⁴ With this, accordingly, we get this result: Every individual thing in the world is a Dharma, a reality; and the totality of these countless individual Dharmas is *the Dharma, the Reality*. Hence it comes about that already in the Veda, of *everything* in the world it can be said that it is a Dharma, and that *in itself*, even as a means of expression of the eternal Brahman, an *eternal Dharma, an eternal reality*: “Unborn and undying are the Dharmas—[the individual realities, the things]—by their essence. He is unacquainted with a Dharma, who has it arise and die.”¹⁵

But—be it well noted!—the Dharmas, the individual realities, the individual things, are immortal *only by their essence*, in so far, namely, as Brahman is concealed in them, thus, as a something purely spiritual. In this sense it is also said further on: “As the sun shines through itself, so also knowledge without the Dharmas;—all Dharmas are *only knowledge, untellable* even to the awakened one.”¹⁶

On the other hand, freed from their relationship to Brahman, thus, regarded as *individual, self-existent realities*—

¹³ Taitt.-Up. 2, 6.

¹⁴ Mānd.-Up. 2, 30.

¹⁵ Mānd.-Up. 4, 10.

¹⁶ Mānd.-Up. 4, 99.

and along with this, for him who only sees their ever-changing external wrapping—the Dharmas, as pure illusions, are vain and transient, are, in so far, mere creations of *Māyā*, which “brings into appearance now this, now that, and is continually passing away.”¹⁷ On this very account, whoever is attached to the Dharmas as individual phenomena, himself melts into them: “As water, raining down in the mountains, loses its way on the slopes, so, whoever follows the Dharmas *individually*, loses his way behind them.”¹⁸

According to the Upanishads the Dharma is Brahman in his *activity* as the principle shaping and ordering the world in contradistinction to Brahman as the primal essence taking back into himself the whole world, thus, the *avyaktam* Brahman, the *unrevealed* Brahman, that is “free from good and evil, free from happening and non-happening, free from past and future.”¹⁹ Into this *unrevealed* Brahman, the fully delivered one “goes home”: “To this [world-traffic] I shall belong only until I shall be released, *thereupon I shall go home.*”²⁰ Thus he frees himself also from all that belongs to the *revealed* Brahman, i.e., to *Dharma* in any sense whatever: “The Ancient One, the hard to perceive, the mysterious, deep-hidden in the hollow (of the heart) [the *Atman*, our real *I*]—whoso by Immersion (Yoga) grasps that *in his own innermost* as God, leaves lust and sorrow behind. The mortal who perceived and grasped this, he doffed *what was of the Dharma-kind* (Dharmiam), grasped the subtle: he will be joyous, he indeed possesses what makes joyous,”²¹ namely, that precisely which “is free from good and evil, free from happening and non-happening, free from past and future.”

17 Nrs.-utt.-tāp.-Up. 9.

18 Kāth.-Up. 4, 14.

19 Kāth.-Up. 2, 14.

20 Chānd.-Up. 6, 14.

21 Kāth.-Up. 2, 12—13.

III.

Such was the content which in India was bound up with the conceptions, Brahman and Dharma when the Buddha proceeded to clothe in concepts and words the truth he had found. As we know, he summed up his doctrine in the concept *Dhamma*, the Pāli form of Dharma. Therewith, thus he marked it out as the doctrine of the *world-order*, or of *actuality* as it is in *truth*—"He has known the whole world as it is"²²—at the same time with the inclusion of the consequence which result for us from this actuality ; in short, with the word *Dhamma* he characterises his teaching as a *teaching of actuality*, and at the same time as *eternal law*, which "protects him who practises it."²³

LEGISLATION FOR BUDDHIST LAW

The Buddha most probably did not pay any attention to the law of the land pertaining to Civil rights in matters of marriage, divorce, inheritance etc. Nor, does it appear from Buddhistic literature that he particularly aimed at the disintegration of Caste System, although naturally placing converts on a common platform socially must have resulted in some sort of fusion of some castes, as is evident from certain non-descript castes which have survived Buddhism.

I, for one, cannot easily understand how on the revival of Brahmanism readjustment of castes was feasible except that despite change of creed marriages still continued to be confined to castes of parties respectively, some-what like we see to-day in certain sects which are off-shoots of Hinduism. If these new sects were to drop their denominations to-day, there will be no difficulty in relegating their followers to their original hereditary castes.

²² Itivuttaka 112.

²³ Theragāthā, v. 303.

Caste System in this country, perhaps for some merit of it aught we know, has hitherto baffled the efforts of all reformers. It has a fascination, which curiously enough has appealed to some Indian Christians as well as to many a Muhammadan clan both exotic and indigenous..

It is an undeniable fact that Hindu Law has maintained Caste because it placed restrictions on marriage outside a caste. Hindus have not, until recently, revolted against these restrictions, as marriage markets *inter se* were wide enough within each caste.

It is recently that Hindus have begun to feel that Caste System is in the way of their organization as one Hindu nation. This need of organization has resulted in their change of mentality towards "Untouchable" classes; they are no longer despised, their status is being improved lest they leave Hinduism and embrace another religion. Hindus have obtained a legislative enactment whereby inter-caste marriages have been declared valid. If inter-caste marriages become frequent, it will certainly be a step in advance in the formation of a Hindu Nation. They are now willing also to open the gates of Hinduism to all who desire to enter its fold.

Let us remember that what is called Hindu Law is not like a modern legislative enactment uniformly applicable to all concerned. It has territorial Schools, it has undergone local modifications, it has passed through some stages of evolution and it would have received further development but for the stagnation caused by Muhammadan rule. On the advent of British rule, some provisions of it were abrogated by legislature, e.g., Widow marriages were recognised and change of religion ceased to entail forfeiture of inheritance.

Students of customary Law in vogue in the Punjab and some other parts of India, tell us that it is really Hindu Law modified by local conditions. Even Muhammadan Agriculturists in the Punjab follow customary Law in preference to the *Shara*. It is strange that some Bombay Muhammadans too follow Hindu Law in matters of inheritance.

Students of comparative Jurisprudence, at least some of them, assign the first rank to Manu among the Law givers of the world. That Hindu Law is a marvel of Juristic ingenuity will be readily conceded. That is why Hindus do not feel the necessity of materially altering it though minor changes are called for by exigencies of times. Indeed it has worked successfully for centuries back and Hindus are not convinced of the superiority of any other System of Law.

Now, it is well known, that marriage according to Hindu Law is indissoluble, and that inheritance is based on some sort of religious fiction. Did Buddhism bring about any change in these two important matters? My own view is that since Buddhism had to deal with a population following Hindu Law at a time when Christianity or Islam had not been born, the change of creed did not involve any change in Civil rights and as a corollary one may say Caste System was not materially undermined.

When Buddhistic Missionaries went out of India proper, it seems they carried their notions of Civil right with them. In the neighbouring countries they influenced local customs to a limited extent, for instance mark Burma where Civil rights are regulated by what is called *Manu Keyun*, which is of course *Manu* modified. Ceylon too could not remain uninfluenced particularly considering that the island had been some times ruled by Hindu Kings. One cannot, however, say how far the local laws and customs in distant countries like China, Japan, Central Asia, where Buddhism spread, were affected by Indian notions of civil rights.

Now that Buddhism is seeking to re-appear in India, it will have to face a variety of religions and their Civil Laws. If successful it will embrace a field much wider than it did in its earlier course in this country. It has to be preached not only to Hindu Law following population, but to certain Non-Hindu indigenous castes. It has also to take in its fold Jews, Christians, Muhammadans, Parsis, and others if they desire to come in.

My suggestion therefore is that legislature should be invoked to pass an Act regulating civil rights for Buddhists in India, Burma and Ceylon.

The task of evolving a code of civil rights for Buddhists is not easy. My plan will be somewhat like the following:—

- (a) Either Gour's Hindu Code or the smaller book of Mulla on the same subject will be best as initial basis for a Buddhistic Code. These learned authors have formulated Hindu Code with great skill saving considerably the labour of a codifier.
- (b) The laws and customs prevalent in Burma, Ceylon, Siam, Nepal, Bhutan and some sub-Himalayan countries may be consulted and the Hindu Codes above referred to may be adopted to the requirements of the Buddhistic population of course keeping in mind the spirit of Buddhism.
- (c) We may also take into consideration comparative laws of the civilized world and borrow from them what may appeal to us as worthy of adoption.

In conclusion I may state that when any person proposes to abjure his religion in favour of another, he always considers whether, apart from creed the civil rights of the religion he wants to substitute, will be acceptable to him. It is possible that a creed may be good but the civil rights may not be based on justice. It is premature yet to suggest on what lines should the proposed Buddhistic Code be framed. Sufficient to say at present that the juster the law regulating civil rights, the greater the chance of success for a religion.

SHEONARAIN.

Lahore, 22nd May.

THROUGH CENTURIES

IV.

(A PASSING GLIMPSE OF BUDDHISM IN ITS PROGRESS.)

The real advantage which truth has consists in this : when an opinion is true, it may be extinguished once, twice, or many times, but in the course of ages there will generally be found persons to rediscover it, until some one of its reappearances falls on a time when from favourable circumstances it escapes persecution until it has made such head as to withstand all subsequent attempts to suppress it. (John Stuart Mill: On Liberty).

Shortly after the Maha Pari Nirvāna of the Master, a Council of five hundred disciples was held at Rajagriha under the patronage of Ajātasatru to treasure up the oral teachings of the Master.

Kasyapa recited the philosophic doctrine, as he had heard from the Master's lips. Upali gave out the rules of discipline concerning the Sangha, the Order of Brotherhood. Ananda recited the sermons as preached by the Master. The first is set forth in the Abhidharma Pitaka, the second in the Vinaya Pitaka, and the third in the Sutta Pitaka. The Pitakas henceforth were recited from memory by the Order till they were reduced to writing at a later period.

A century later a Second Council of seven hundred was held at Vaisali under Kalasoka to suppress heresies.

Yet a century and a quarter after a Third Council of a thousand selected priests was held at Pataliputra under Asoka to purify and codify the Dharma.

Two centuries more. A Fourth Council of five thousand monks and five hundred Arhats met under Kanishka at Kusana in Kashmere to have the then existing differences thoroughly restated and the theories and practices clearly defined.

At the close of the Third Council missionaries went out to different corners of the world. From Benares to Afghanistan, from China to Japan, the Dharma was carried.

And at the close of the Fourth Council, the Pitakas were written in Pāli and Sanskrit. Those preserved in Pāli called the Hinayana prevail from Ceylon to Eastern Archipelago. And those in Sanskrit called the Mahayana prevail from Tibet to Japan. Buddhism universally prevailed throughout the length and breadth of India, though it counts only a few millions now. Having lived in India for about three and ten centuries, it went out to bring under its sway the other parts of the world. While in India it was the state religion in the time of Asoka and Kanishka.

Asoka,—than whom there never was a kinder and a wiser emperor, did his best to unfurl the banner of Buddhism far and wide. Under Buddhism India was at the height of its zenith, in literature and architecture, the effects of which can be seen even to this day. Asoka was a worthy, kingly disciple of a worthy, kingly master. He was the pioneer among emperors of Civilization. He built hospitals for man and beast: dug wells and planted trees along the road: promoted female and general education: had sermons engraven upon pillars, caves, and rocks throughout India: and for the dissemination of the Dharma sent his son Mahinda and his daughter Sangamitta to Ceylon. King he was by nature and by position. He identified his interests with those of his subjects, and the subjects looked up to him as their friend, guide and philosopher. And who would not admire that great and good Siladitya, the emperor of Northern India, known to fame by a singular renunciation? He was an honour to Buddhism. How he relieved himself of all his royal treasures, how he sacrificed his royal self to the good of humanity, how he exchanged his royal robe for a rag, how he cast aside the honour of the world for a clear conscience and a joyous heart, are all matters of history. He worked and loved in the name of the Blessed Master.

For about ten centuries Buddhism had been away from India. Yet, as the historian Hunter says: "Even in India Buddhism did not altogether die. Many of its best doctrines still live in Hinduism..... The noblest survivals of Buddhism in India are to be found, however, not among any peculiar body, but in the religion of the people; in that principle of the brotherhood of man, with the re-assertion of which each new revival starts; in the asylum which the great Hindu sect of Vaishnavas affords to women who have fallen victims to caste rules, to the widow and the outcast; in that gentleness and charity to all men, which take the place of a poor-law in India, and give a high significance to the half-satirical epithet of the mild 'Hindu'. Buddhism was in banishment. Yet, the great historian writes: "It has won greater triumphs in its exile than it could have ever achieved in the land of its birth. It has created a literature and a religion for nearly one-half of the human race, and has modified the beliefs of the other half. Five hundred millions of men, or forty per cent. of the inhabitants of the world still follow the teaching of Buddha. Afghanistan, Nepal, Eastern Turkistan, Tibet, Mongolia, Manchuria, China, Japan, the Eastern Archipelago, Siam, Burma, Ceylon and India, at one time or another marked the magnificent circle of its conquests. Its shrines and monasteries stretched in a line, from what are now the boundaries of the Russian empire, to the islands of the Pacific. During twenty-four centuries, Buddhism has encountered and outlived a series of rival faiths. At this day it forms with Christianity and Islam, one of the three great religions of the world; and the most numerous followed of the three.

Buddhism is the greatest religion not only in the number of its followers, but in the solidarity, the rationality, the universality, of its doctrines. Even men of science and thought bear testimony to its excellence. To Huxley it was "A system which knows no God in the western sense; which denies a soul to man; which counts the belief in immortality a blunder and the hope of it a sin; which refuses any efficacy to prayer

and sacrifice ; which bids men look to nothing but their own efforts for salvation ; which, in its original purity, knew nothing of vows of obedience, abhorred intolerance and never sought the aid of the secular arm ; yet spread over a considerable moiety of the Old World in marvellous rapidity, and is still, with whatever base admixture of foreign superstitions, the dominant creed of a large fraction of mankind." To Tyndall, "a pure human ethics." To Sir Leslie Stephen, "a stupendous fact." Schopenhauer "was obliged to concede to Buddhism the pre-eminence over the rest". To Prof. Rhys-Davids, it was "not only that the ideal was a noble one, but it was nobly carried out"; To Mrs. Frederik Macdonald, "Buddhism....stands out as the one religion that bids man *trust himself*, that calls upon him to raise himself by his own strength ; to govern and control and form himself ; that assures him not only that there is no strength outside of himself to help him, but also none that can prevail against him, if he conquers and holds the sovereignty over himself." To Dr. Paul Carus, "A conflict between religion and science is impossible in Buddhism." In fact, as Major-General D. M. Strong puts it, "Buddhism is so ethically sound and incontestably religious in the highest sense, which was, moreover, based on a philosophy strikingly in accord with the latest developments of scientific thought and research..... in the distant future every sectarian difference on the domain of religion will be laid to rest in the everlasting arms of this all-embracing system."

The revival of Buddhism in India a lapse of centuries, to use the words of Sir William Hunter, "is one of the present possibilities of India." The beautiful life and the peaceful teaching of Buddha have not only influenced the East, but they are also, in the words of Hunter, "beginning to exercise a new influence on religious thought in Europe and America."

Cast aside the details of sects, of sectarian teachers and of sectarian tenets. For above sects and creeds is Truth. Let us seek it and abide in it. Let go all the stories, the traditions,

the mythologies, let them go—the phantoms of the air: the ghosts of imagination. Seek the beautiful which is the useful. Let all that is naught of use be buried deep in forgetfulness. In Buddha we see the grandest personality ever known. And in his glorious teachings we find the greatest consolation, inspiration, peace and joy. In the great merges the small. Let go the petty gods of petty sects. Buddha never cared for sects. Sects in Buddhism are an anomaly born of ignorance and vanity. Sects all the world over ebb and flow—but the Religion of Truth remains a rock amidst the surging billows of Time. No sect can be deeper than Truth. No pope can be grander than Buddha.

Buddha never cared for authority. He urged his disciples to hold fast to truth. He formulated certain rules to suit the times he lived in. But he foresaw that the garb would change with the change of times. But the truth he uttered undergoes no change. Let us take up the truth and clothe it according to the requirements of the times. Truth is the Religion of Humanity, of Philosophy and of Science. Disputation as to the minor, sectarian details are idle and vain. They change with the times. They are in themselves of no necessity. There is nothing great about them. In fact, the thoughtful, following in the footsteps of the Master, do quite well without them. Take the Master and take the Dharma, and see if they do not out-weigh all the philosophies of the world. The Master is the pioneer. And the Dharma is the truth. And what can be grander and more glorious than to live, move, and have our being in Truth? Beyond Truth, there is naught.

In some form and to some extent, Buddhism pervades here there and everywhere. Some touches of Buddhism can be found in every new-fangled creed; in the pity for the oppressed; in the sorrow for the poor; in the enthusiasm for a righteous cause; in the heroic daring and endurance for truth and right. Entombed among thick clouds of misconception, there shines truth divinely beautiful. Amidst countless changes, amidst a thousand rivalries, disputations,

and cruelties, truth remains serene. Struggling in countless forms, in myriad ways, among various peoples, and through different ages,—have come down to us the teaching of the Master, deepening in significance and gorgeous with hope. Follow the Blessed One, and you will behold Truth in all her majestic grandeur.

Centuries are gone,—let them go! Through almost half of the human race,—may be faintly and imperfectly—the Doctrine of Buddha speaks truth to the soul. And let us do homage at its shrine. Buddhism, the permanent element in the passing details, brightens the brow of sorrow. To hearts that have ached and despaired there never has yet been given a purer faith and a divine doctrine than which the Apostle of Light and Love has delivered some five and twenty centuries ago. And in his utterances which comprise the simple, luminous system of a cosmic religion known as Buddhism, freed from every wearisome detail of history lost in the mist of obscurity science and thought come to find their best and noblest expression.

HOW TO BECOME A BUDDHA

[BY A. P. DE ZOYSA.]

To be a Buddha is to attain to the highest possible enlightenment. Such an achievement is open to all who are prepared to use all effort for it. When a person makes a determination to be a future Buddha, he is called a *Bodhi-sathva*—a candidate for Buddhahood. A mere wish or desire to be a Buddha is not sufficient unless the determination is followed by the necessary effort. It is a person's actions that mark him out as a would-be-Buddha; and such actions should be directed towards certain definite ends.

Thus the Path of the *Bodhi-sathvas* is not a flowery one. They have "to toil upwards while their 'fellow sufferers' sleep," for they have to attain perfection in the ten mighty virtues—

The Dasa Parami Dhamma.

Knowledge of those ten virtues will act as a guide for a person who strives to be a future Buddha, and it will enable us to recognise a *Bodhi-sathva* if ever we are fortunate enough to get the opportunity of coming across a *Bodhi-sathva* in our journey through *samsara*—the boundless ocean of suffering.

The ten virtues referred to are:—

1. *Dana*: Generosity and charity even to the extent of self-sacrifice.
2. *Seela*: Complete self-control and disciplined conduct which leads to mental purity.
3. *Nekkhamma*: Perfect altruism that renounce all pleasures and comforts for the welfare of others.
4. *Pañña*: Acquisition of wisdom which removes ignorance. It is not mere acquisition of knowledge.
5. *Viriya*: Courage, effort and perseverance that admit of neither failure nor defeat.
6. *Khanti*: Limitless patience so as not to be affected by envy, prejudice or anger.
7. *Sacca*: Truthfulness to the extent of even losing one's life rather than be untruthful.
8. *Adhitthāna*: Strong determination never to abandon the virtuous life, but to achieve perfection.
9. *Mettā*: Love and compassion towards all beings, thereby refraining from causing pain or harm to any being.
10. *Upekkhā*: Perfect peace of mind, which gives that equanimity which makes the treatment of friend and foe alike.

If a person do not want to be a Buddha or even if he do not want to call himself a Buddhist, the practice of the above ten virtues will no doubt mark him out as a man of men, as one worthy to be honoured, to be worshipped.

THE BRITISH BUDDHIST.

THE PATH TO PEACE

(THRO' BUDDHISM.)

How many men whose names are on the lips of millions and in the lines of countless newspapers have not already been engulfed in oblivion? How many persons whom the kings and dukes courted and admired for their wealth and position, for their dignity and reputation, for their beauty and learning, have not already disappeared into nought? How many persons of social supremacy and political authority, who were in their time the centre of all wonder and power, have not already passed away into nothing? Death marks the end of every self-aggrandizement, of every self-glorification, of every greatness and glory, and of every sorrow and shame. What a frail life!—and yet, what a toil, what an anxiety, what a rush, what a bitterness and hate all to satisfy the petty longings of a fleeting self. Can delusion go further? How many ambitious magnates have even preserved their names for a thousand centuries? And what is hundred thousand centuries in proportion to Infinite Time? Slowly but surely the large seeming present disappears as a drop in the mighty ocean of Time! Slowly but surely the great-seeming moral disappears as an atom into the vast boundless space. This is the Law. And no hand, however mighty, can change it. There remains nought but Truth. There is a reason for every sorrow and joy. We make and unmake sorrow and joy. Under countless forms and names elements aggregate and disintegrate. Where is the individuality about the aggregation? The complete effacement of a morbid cleaving to a flickering self, is a Bliss that tongue cannot say nor ears hear.

Where there is no idea of I and Mine,—there life would be strifeless, terrorless, and painless: there every infatuation and injustice, shall have been doctored into a

healthy and useful character : there every insult and injury would either be thoughtfully avoided or bravely borne : there would be a brave and joyous indifference to things beyond control : there manhood would unflinchingly witness against false social maxims : there artificial wants, conventional distinctions and cruelties would not be manufactured : there greed would be a beggar, and content a millionaire : there competition would be a savage, and co-operation a sage : there power would not be an apish vagabond, but a willing and thoughtful servant : there every brand of honour and fame would mean as unsubstantial as a puff of smoke : every care and fear shall have passed away, there every shame and ignoring shall have been stripped of their poisonous fangs : there would be neither plenty nor poverty, neither tyranny nor tears, neither self-seeking rascality nor moral loss : there every vain and villianous passion shall have been lulled into repose : there every one would see his or her lot in the lot of every other : there thought would do the bravest, and courage the noblest : there every labour would bespeak honour : there love and justice would answer every wrong and misery : there men would not be money-catching children but sages rich in love and thought : there a brave character of noble make and of incorruptible sincerity, would be the judge of judges and the lord of lords, and be the symbol and the substance of every human greatness : there truth would fearlessly be uttered with the exactitude of justice and the solicitude of love : there the undeveloped humanity in man shall have been roused into a full and free manhood : there every fate would be welcome and every circumstance, cheerful or malignant, would inspire strength and peace : there a calm, wise mind would stand free and fearless amidst the smiles and terrors of life : and there would reign supreme Freedom and Undying Peace.



HEATHEN AND KAFIR

The God of the Jews, happy in the Garden of Eden, strolling leisurely in the cool of the evening, the balmy air playing gently over him, left prophecy alone. He had to call out to Adam to find him. The Jews in consequence of this defect in the nature of their God, had to have recourse to Seers and Prophets for satisfying the yearnings of the heart ; they gathered a plentiful harvest of these mysterious men, and depended upon divination and sacrifices to the diety. But how worthless are the seers' tricks, how fall of falsehood ; nor is there after all aught trustworthy in the blaze of sacrifice. The human reason and intellect, well cultivated and exercised, sees the futility of them all and teaches mankind to use sound judgment and discernment in the conduct of life and in the relation to one another. They sacrificed animals at the altar of the diety, but did they come to the oblation with a pure heart ? Their God, like other gods in other religions, required animal sacrifice for appeasing himself. There is no enlightenment in such acts of sacrifice. One gets the elevation of the mind in acts and feelings such as;—“*Compositum jus fasque animo, sanctusque recessus mentis, et incoctum generoso pectus honesto*, “that is” Justice to God and man enshrined within the heart, the inner chambers of the soul free from pollution ; the breast imbued with generous honour”. This is just what Lord Buddha had preached and enjoined his disciples and mankind in general to bear it with them. The Hebrew prophets and seers with constant lamentations and complainings impressed their peoples with a deep sense of the apprehension of danger in this world and in the imaginary world hereafter. They became timid, sank down through fear and were unable to propagage their religion among various nations around them. They were not a martial race, had no armies and not having the sanction of force behind

them, could not introduce their religion to the outsiders or to thrust it upon them. Even so the Arabs, the Semetic in blood and mental faculty, who were a warlike race, were left untouched by the Jewish religion. All religions, backed by the armies, have extended beyond their own frontiers and range. The system of Lord Buddha, misnamed religion spread abroad by reason of its peculiar rational qualities and moral and emotional excellencies. Emotion is a natural factor in man's composition and runs down through all the living species in all the religious of the globe. They called their God father, a male person, and why not mother a female person? They have not explained the mystery. They were afraid to give the world the solution. It is a superstition, and those who reverence it are heathens.

Jesus, who founded his religion mostly upon the old testament and the traditions of his race, had the belief in all the prophets who had gone before him. In invoking the name of God, Jesus adhered to the word father—a masculine being. He could not get away from his country's habit of conceiving a masculine god. All human beings are vain and ambitious to shine and make a name in the world. Jesus was not without such ambition. His faith in his country's god and angels was inexpugnable, and in order to make himself superior to the proud prophets of yore, he brought down from the clouds an element, impenetrable as to its constitution and difficult of explanation, and set it on the godhead of his race. Some of his countrymen, sunk in ignorance and superstition and their minds held in chains by the inscrutable power of the god of the prophets, were struck with awe and embraced the mystic, ununderstandable essence and began to reverence and worship it. Jesus achieved in adding a new superstition to the old one. It was a brilliant move on his part ; he would not rest contented with the success he gained but take the last and highest step and declare himself an intimate portion of his country's god and the judge and arbiter of the living and the dead. This is the second superstition he introduced as a new

constituent into the godhead. The imagination of his disciples took fire and grasped the idea with ardour. Jesus worked upon the highly wrought fancy of his disciples with the magnificent stroke of consummate art. It was a supreme art and perfect of its kind and was conceived by a living artist. The art and the artist are the material things. And those who made obeisance to them are superstitious and idolators and are therefore heathens. The religion of Jesus was carried from people to people, fighting its way with the aid of the armies. (*Vide Neander's the History of the Christian Church*).

The Jews having discarded or suppressed the natural feeling of the primitive man in regard to the heightened sanctity of the woman as the mother and nurse of the race, and having had little illumination, and imperfect knowledge of the constitution and evolution of human nature, looked down upon the woman as the origin and source of moral perversion in this world and shut her out from the intellectual privilege and stripped her of moral sense. Their understanding was vague and reason was in an undeveloped state ; their mind swayed to and fro. They looked for a stern master and judge holding in his hand a rod of chastisement and threatening them to bring it down on their backs at the slightest deviation from the right path. They found such a master and judge in a masculine being. Woman is too humane and kindly to use such a terrible instrument of punishment or to inspire men with fear. In these circumstances, the discovery of a male god was natural. Jesus, reared in the tradition and mode of thought of his race, accepted the masculine god of his people and in divers ways manifested his antipathy against women. He allowed the truth of the existence of a hell and a heaven and accommodated his vision to the pictures of these regions. It is a material picture and has become an idolum. A mental image of any object is an idol. And those who fear, reverence and worship these phantoms are superstitious and idolatrous. Lord Buddha had rejected these delusive notions and warned humanity against these false conceptions and admonished it

to exercise its reason, to observe facts in nature and to improve itself on ethical basis. Is Lord Buddha's system of like superstition and unenlightenment? The European dictionary meaning of the word heathen is arbitrary, false and illogical. If the Buddhists can ever get an army of their own behind them they will write an honest dictionary for the Europeans and the Semetic races.

N. CHATTERJEE.

(To be continued.)

CALICUT

A BUDDHIST TEMPLE.

Perhaps the first and at present the only Buddhist Temple on this coast was formally opened on Monday the 16th May 1927 in the presence of the large number of people of all castes and creeds in the Paran Square belonging to Mr. C. Krishnan, B. A., B. L., Editor, "Mitavadi" and President of the local branch of the South India Liberal Federation. There is quite a small band of Buddhists in Calicut who have organised themselves into a Sangham and Mr. Krishnan is the President of this organisation. The temple is a handsome little structure picturesquely situated in the garden of the Paran Square. Last Monday a large number of citizens of Calicut gathered in response to the invitation of the founder to take part in the celebration of the Vaisakh day and to witness the installation of a Buddha image in the new temple. The ceremony was performed by Swami Jina Vamsa of Ceylon assisted by Mr. Manjeri Rama Iyer, another prominent Buddhist worker and well-known Theosophist. It is significant that when this ceremony was being performed in Calicut two Sankaracharyas of Sringeri and Kumbhakonam respectively are sojourning in our midst and their orthodox and primitive interpretations of Hinduism are creating great discontent among the non-

Brahmins particularly the classes now treated as polluting, in this District. A number of Ezhavas (Thiyyas) of the Palghat taluk are said to have been converted to Christianity, within a few miles off where the Kumbhakonam Swamiar is living. At Palghat a Chetti who went to see the Pooja of the Kumbhakonam Swamiar was, it seems, beaten by Patters. The movement towards Buddhism is really a protest by the non-Brahmin classes against caste and privilege and Mr. C. Krishnan's paper the "Mitavadi" with a large circulation among these classes is doing yeoman service in the work of awaking of the masses to a sense of their rights as men. This characteristic of the Buddhist movement in Malabar was strikingly brought out in the speeches of the several speakers on the occasion of the Vaisakh celebration which a Brahmin paper of Calicut describes as "Anti-Brahminical." Mr. E. V. Ramaswami Naikkar the well-known non-Brahmin leader of Erode and Mr. Ayyappan, Editor of the Sahodaran and a life worker in the crusade against caste which is the most significant movement in the public life of Kerala to-day both condemned the ultra Brahminical tendencies and doctrines of Hinduism which believes that caste is preordained by a man's Karma and therefore is part of divine scheme which no man can question. This scheme may be a comfortable one for the few who get the benefit of it but make slaves of the many whose place under it is that of mere hewers of wood and drawers of water for the castes pampered by Hinduism. Mr. Naikkar vehemently criticised the attitude of the Brahmin politicians who condemn the Hindu Religious Endowments Act. He also exposed the ways of our Madhadhipatis and Priests in temples like Madura, Trichinopoly, Srirangam, Tiruppati, Rameswaram etc. Mr. Ayyappan referred to the many disabilities of caste under Hinduism and exhorted the audience to follow the religion of equality and goodwill among men preached by the Lord Buddha. Mr. Manjeri Ramakrishna Iyer delivered an instructive speech giving evidences of the prevalence of Buddhism in ancient Kerala such as the large number of

Buddha's statues found in Travancore and Cochin. Tributes to Lord Buddha were also paid by an Aryasamajist workers, Swami Siva Prasad and the Malabar communist K. Velayudha Menon. Mr. Manjeri Rama Iyer's erudite and beautiful speech which brought a pleasant evening to its close was much admired by the large audience present. Mr. Rama Iyer is a Brahmin, who has undergone much oppression at the hands of his community for his liberal social opinions and his fearless condemnation of the caste tyrannies of Malabar. His exposition of the gentle doctrines of the Buddha was much appreciated even by the orthodox Hindus present. The Pancha Seela was taken by a large number of the guests, the same being administered by Swami Jina Vamsa of Ceylon. Between the speeches beautiful Buddhist songs were sung by the little sons of Mr. E. K. Ayyakutty, the retired District Judge of Cochin State and a prominent Buddhist. A long poem dealing with the teachings of the Lord written by Mr. Koyipillil Parameswara Kurup, assistant Editor of the Mitavadi was recited on the occasion by Mr. Mooliyil Kesavan. The proceedings ended with a prayer from Jina Vamsa Swami. The opening of the temple and the creation of a Buddhist organisation in Malabar have caused a mild flutter in the sleepy devotees of Hindu orthodoxy.

WAY-SIDE JOTTINGS

BY S. HALDAR.

Educated Hindus generally and more particularly those who are interested in theism may be expected to be familiar with the name of Theodore Parker, the eminent American theologian and scholar of last century. Although Parker chose the profession of a religious minister, he preferred to think for himself ; and, as a result, he left the old theological position far behind and built up a higher system of his own

under the style of "Spiritual Theism." He was a great exponent of Unitarian Christianity. He was a valuable contributor to Emerson's *Dial* and he preached resolutely against war, slavery and false religion. He rendered great service to the negro slaves, in whose cause he even risked his life. Such is the man who has expressed his religious views in the following terms :

I do not believe in the miraculous origin of the Hebrew Church, or the Buddhist Church, or the Christian Church ; nor even Jesus of Nazareth for my master. I feel not at all bound to believe what the Church says is true, nor what any writer in the Old or New Testament declares true ; and I am ready to believe that Jesus taught, as I think, eternal torment, the existence of a devil, and that he himself should ere long come back in the clouds of heaven. I do not accept these things on his authority. I try all things by the human faculties ; intellectual things by the intellect, moral things by the affections and religious things by the soul. Has God given us anything better than our nature? How can we serve Him and his purposes but by its normal use?

The trend of modern thought in Christendom is manifesting itself in various ways. The heathen may well ask : "Why do the Christians so furiously rage together?" Fourteen of the Bishop of Birmingham's vicars have defied him by disregarding his instruction "concerning the withdrawal of certain Church practices which he holds illegal." Dr. Barnes, the Bishop, is religiously much in advance of his time. In the words of the Rev. Rosenthal, the Bishop has ventured to attack the doctrine of the "Real Presence" in the Communion Service by stigmatizing it as magic, fetish-worship and superstition. The late Dr. Rashdall, Dean of Carlisle, by his bold pronouncement in Oxford in October 1921 on the Divinity of Jesus and Dean Inge by his criticism in the *Daily Express* of November 2, 1925 of the Resurrection and of the Bible miracles have laid the axe to the root of traditional Christianity. Dr. Gore, the last Bishop of Oxford, has recently said : "The

true orthodoxy of a hundred years ago has received a succession of the rudest shocks from the startling and revolutionary discoveries of science." He admitted that some of the Bible would have to go.* So much, then, for the religion which is supposed by many to embody the highest ethical ideal!

Most people are content to rely without question upon the authority of tradition and inherited custom. But, as has been held by Fichte, the person who acts on the strength of authority acts necessarily unconscientiously, for he is uncertain. As Whately has expressed it, there is no right faith in believing what is true, unless we believe it from conviction of its truth. Truth, according to the Rev. J. Cranbrook, is the correspondence of our thoughts with reality. The distinction of right and wrong grows up, as W. K. Clifford has said, in the broad light of day out of natural causes wherever men live together. Dr. George Gore has stated in "The Scientific Basis of Morality" that the rules of morality are based upon the great principles of science because all the phenomena of human conduct consist of causes and effects. Mr. Hutton tells us, however, in his "English Saints," of the Welsh, that the strength of victory came to that eminently Christian nation from a passionate attachment to dogmatic religion. The Welsh, he says, "did not learn to be moral through morality but through doctrine." The Lord Bishop of Calcutta, Dr. Foss Westcott, preaching in St. Paul's Cathedral in August, 1926, expressed the prevailing Christian view when he said that faith was the basis of conduct. The Christian nations of Europe are to a great extent what their faith has made them. But the universal principle of obligation is to follow that which reason dictates as right. Rightly has W. S. Lilly said that ethics are independent of theological mysteries. A struggle between the two opposing principles is to be seen going on at the present time in the intellectual circles of the West. In "Can We Then Believe?" the Rt. Rev. Charles Gore, D. D.,

* *The Statesman*, March 14, 1926.

a man of pronounced ecclesiastical bias, avows that the idea that "the early chapters of Genesis record literal history..... is now quite untenable." But he takes good care to keep Christianity well apart from "intellectualism" and he is ready to give full value to the mystical element in Christianity and to recognize that its ultimate proof lies not in demonstration to the intellect but in satisfaction to the needs of the soul. But to cast off the early chapters of Genesis as mythology is to discredit the theory of Original Sin and of the story of atonement which depends upon it. No reconciliation can be effected except through the theory of mystery. Christianity execrates reason. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart ; and learn not unto thine own understanding." (Prov. iii, 5). Thomas á Kempis states in "The Imitation of Christ" ; "Cease from an inordinate desire of knowledge, for therein is much distraction and deceit." Luther denounced Reason as "the bride of the devil."

To those who entertain confident notions as to the consolations of Faith we would commend the observations of Joseph Ernest Renan :

I have tasted in my childhood and early youth the purest joys of the believer, and I say from the bottom of my heart that these joys are nothing by comparison with what I have felt in the pure contemplation of the beautiful and the passionate search after truth. I wish to all who have remained orthodox the peace in which I live—this great Pacific Ocean—without wind or shore, upon which one has no star but reason, no compass but one's own heart.

Professor Chamberlin, retired octogenarian professor of Chicago University, told a reporter of the *Chicago Tribune* in 1925 that he believed that those who looked at things from the theological point of view "will have to accept something bigger than a God who was a special patron of the Jews. They have got to have a God of the world, which is rather large and which has been running for millions of years and is likely to run millions more."

All strict believers have at all times stood by the sole authority of the "pure Word of God" without "note or comment." The motto of the Puritans was: "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." This is the attitude of the majority of true believers even at the present day. But there are exceptions here and there. The Edinburgh Conference Report, vol. iv., contains the view of a missionary who has boldly said: "For a missionary to teach the Bible just as it was taught a hundred years ago is folly, in the light of all that has been learned about the Bible since." The same volume embodies the opinion of another missionary who has said with great candour: "To preach the theory of verbal inspiration and Bible as a text-book of science is to court disaster sooner or later." Christian morality indeed stands on frail foundations. In the course of a discussion in the New Zealand Legislative Council on August 13, 1926 the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Stout adduced evidence from many sources as to the excellent character of the New Zealand soldiers who served in the Great War. After quoting official statistics and referring to his own experience as a member of the Prisons Board since 1911, he said that so far as crime is concerned native-born New Zealanders were most law abiding. He went on:

If it be said, "that the giving of religious education to citizens lessens crime," I ask, Does it? What evidence is there that this is so? Is there a tittle of evidence that can be given to that effect?

CORRESPONDENCE

QUESTION.

THE EDITOR,

"Maha Bodhi,"

Sir,

I have read with interest most of the English and Tamil Buddhist journals and books relating to Buddhism. During the course of my study I have found the date and the age of Gautama Buddha to vary as under mentioned.

The "History of India" says Buddha Born 557 B. C.

"Early Buddhism" says Buddha Born 560 B. C. •

"Encyclopaedia" says Buddha Born 600 B. C.

Now which is correct and which is incorrect? And again according to the "Manimagali" the principal Tamil book of the Tamilian sects and the South India Sakya Buddhist Society

of Kolar Gold Feld District and the "Tamilian" weekly paper the age of Buddha is stated to be 3412.

Now comparing the above numbers will you explain me through the medium of this journal which is correct and which is incorrect. If so why and how?

C. C. SWAMI.

NOTES AND NEWS

BIRTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION IN NOAKHALI.

To celebrate the birth anniversary of the Lord Buddha, the members of the Sabui-Sangha arranged a charming function on the 16th May under the Presidency of Mr. K. C. Chunder, I.C.S., District Judge. The congregation squatted on the Town Hall lawn under the moonlight of the Baisakhi Purnima. After the reading of the address of welcome by Babu Charu Lal Mukherjee, pleader, Sriman Anil Banerji read a paper on the "Light of Asia."

After the function was over, Babu Ananda Charan Dutta, Vakil of Chittagong and Babu Nagendra Kumar Gugha Roy, muktear, delivered speeches on the teachings of Buddha and the President in his address dwelt on some aspects of Buddhist Philosophy.

THE BIBLE SOCIETY

The 123rd annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society was held at Queen's Hall, London. This year Mr. Baldwin becomes one of the vice-presidents of the society. He was to have presided yesterday, but was unable to do so owing to the pressure of other duties. His place was taken by Lord Salisbury.

Lord Salisbury said that the Prime Minister had upon his shoulders a burden almost heavier than any man could bear. The administration of this vast Empire stretched to the farthest limits of the globe, but Mr. Baldwin had been able while Prime Minister to add to his political labours speeches upon other subjects which had deeply impressed the country—speeches on scholarship, on art, and on social and political ethics, which he (Lord Salisbury) believed had done immense work in raising public sentiment and public conviction.

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The following items in the report summarize the work of the society during the year :—

Income	...	...	...	£396,344
Expenditure	...	...	...	£412,654
Languages added to the society's list	...	...	...	14
Number of languages now included in the list	...	...	...	593
Number of volumes issued during the year	...	...	...	10,128,087
Deficiency on the year's working	...	...	...	£16,310

WAIKA IN LONDON.

That there are more Buddhists in London than is usually supposed was shown by the size of the meeting held in Exeter Hall to celebrate the Vaisakh Festival, the anniversary of the birth of Buddha. Many nationalities had contributed to this gathering of 400 and most of the Orientals—Indians, Chinese, Japanese, Siamese and Burmese—had come in their national dress, bringing variegated colour to the Strand. There were a number of British and other European Buddhists in conventional Western dress. The festival began with readings from the sacred books of Buddha, and then there were short addresses from representatives of the several nationalities. All the historic religions of the Orient are represented in the complex organism of London, but Islam is by far the strongest numerically, and possesses the largest number of Western converts.—*Statesman*.

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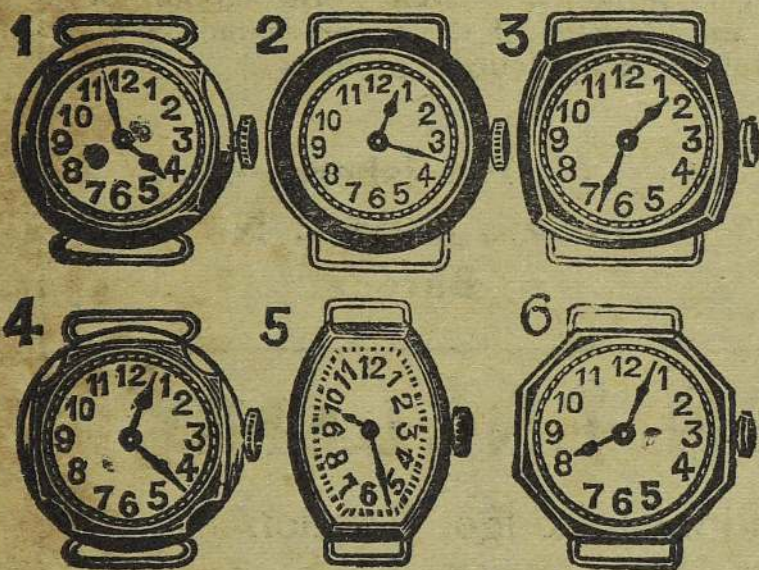
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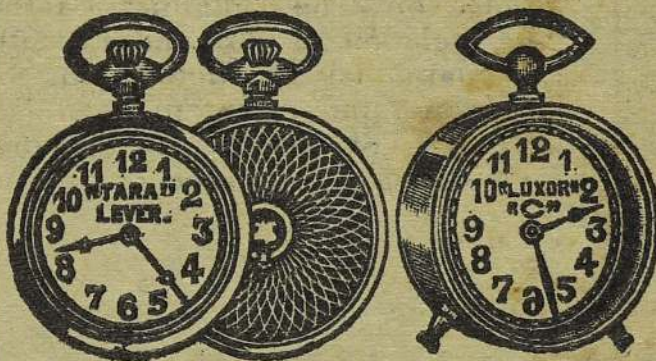
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