

THE BUDDHIST



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THE BUDDHIST

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“*Sila Paññānato Jayam*”

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THE BLUEPRINT OF HAPPINESS

BY BHIKKHU ANOMA MAHINDA

(*English Buddhist Monk*)

THE Buddha was neither a god or the prophet of a god. He was born, lived and died a man. He left no room in his teachings for any other supposition. The Buddha's mortality is man's greatest hope for the future, since in Him we have no deity or supernatural being, but one who showed the great heights to which a man could reach. He himself has become, acknowledged as the greatest man who ever lived, but few of us will possess the courage and determination to approximate his great example. Yet it is within the province of all of us to follow his Teachings and eventually attain the Goal of Sublime Peace. We can do this without becoming Buddhas ourselves, for it is not in the nature of everyman to become a Buddha, by following the Path of Deliverance which we call the Buddha Sasana, or as it is known among Western people: Buddhism.

For forty-five years the Buddha preached, counselled and instructed. Thousands followed His way of life or became His lay-followers. At the age of eighty the Lord passed away at Kusinara and so closed a life of unequalled struggle and unselfish service to mankind.

Soon after His death, His immediate followers, collected together all the sermons, teachings and rules of conduct for the monks. At first these were preserved in the memory but later written down in palm-leaf books. These Teachings have been carefully preserved and passed down through the centuries. Today, they rank as some of the world's greatest literature and serve as an unfailing guide as they have done in the past.

In the first sermon which the Buddha preached, after attaining His Enlightenment, He explained the Middle Way, The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. These may be likened to foundation stones on which the entire Dhamma is based. Everything which is found in the entire Buddhist Scriptures, is in fact, an expansion of the Four Noble Truths.

The Middle Way is the Path of moderation, the Path of balance. We are warned to avoid abandoning ourselves to a pleasure seeking life and the unbridled gratification of the senses. On the other hand, we should avoid a useless life of painful and unnecessary austerity or asceticism. Since the Four Noble Truths form such an important basis of the Buddhist life, we should study them seriously and not be deceived by their apparent simplicity. In the study of Buddhism, a mere superficial glance or even the learning and repetition of words is useless unless it leads us to deep understanding. A boy can learn the Four Noble Truths in ten minutes yet it may take thousands of lives before there is real understanding. The Master, Himself, stressed the importance of real understanding when He said:—

“It was through not understanding, not penetrating four things, that I, disciples, as well as you, have wandered so long through the long round of rebirths. What are these four things ?

They are, the Noble Truth of Suffering ;

the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering ;

the Noble Truth of the Cure of Suffering ;

the Noble Truth of the Path which leads to the End of Suffering.”

We understand this Truth when we awaken to the realisation that sorrow and suffering is one of the principal characteristics of life. All living beings (human or animal) are subject to the ever present danger of pain and suffering, without exception. There are no guaranteed conditions of happiness, peace or security. At any hour, or even any moment, we are likely to become victims.

What can be classified as suffering ? Birth, death, old-age ; hunger, thirst, heat and cold ; abnormal functioning of the body, disease, sickness and accidents. All these are suffering.

To be separated from the people we love or to live with unpleasant and difficult people ; mental worry, anxiety, anguish, grief, woe and despair ; not to obtain the objects of our desires ; dwelling in unfit or uncongenial surroundings or having unpleasant employment ; irritating noises and discordant sounds ; mental or physical ill-health of ourselves or of those we love ; suffering endured by those to whom we are attached.

Suffering must be viewed in its correct perspective. It has attended us in the past, envelops us in the present and will be with us in the future—unless we take active steps to escape it.

In this we learn of the desires and emotions which are the factors causing suffering, either in this life

or a subsequent one. They include greed; attachment to or infatuation with people, ideas or objects; the failure to obtain or satisfy our desires; the unhappiness and disgust which comes from these people, ideas or objects, sooner or later. Restlessness, ambition, self-exaltation, pride, vanity, delusion, craving; the belief that the ego, or personality, is a permanent soul or entity.

The failure to learn from our past experiences; forgetting the tragedies of life by losing them in a round of artificial pleasures; insufficient self-control, immoderate living; anger, ill-will, hatred and irritability; bad habits, sexual excess; and putting reliance in others. In the past and in the present, all these and many more, are the cause of suffering.

The threshold of understanding is reached when we realise that suffering can be brought to an end. The Path of the Master leads to this very goal. Suffering, although accepted by so many, is not without a remedy. Once the mind is awakened to the existence and causes, we are on the road to conquering them. Just how far we are prepared to go along the Path, depends entirely on ourselves. The causes can only be removed if we undertake a course of self-discipline and training. The knowledge that it is worth while to do so, is the first step.

No other religion or philosophy reveals so clearly the Path of Virtue, leading to deliverance. It is called the Noble Eightfold Path because it is actually one path but is subdivided into eight sections. It is the Buddhist code of mental and physical conduct which leads to the end of suffering, sorrow and despair; to the Perfect Peace, Nibbāna.

Right Understanding; Right Thoughts; Right Speech; Right Actions; Right Livelihood; Right Effort; Right Mindfulness; Right Concentration.

This is the Middle Path which the Perfect One has discovered, which makes us both see and know, which leads to peace, to discernment, to enlightenment and to Nibbāna." (*Sang. Nikāya*, 54, II.).

The eight sections of the Path are not intended to be cultivated in the order they are given and the perfection of one stage is not required before another is begun. They must be regarded as a complete whole, requiring progress in all the sections. We practise and develop as we are

able and progress in any section will lead to success in others. In its entirety, the Eightfold Path, leads to the cultured mind, for only when it is brought under control are we able to conquer greed, ill-will and delusion.

The goal of most religions is either vague, ill-defined or without appeal to the modern mind. Heaven and Hell, Paradise and Purgatory, are the products of man's primitive past and served to account for mysteries which could not be otherwise explained. None of these concepts occur in Buddhist Philosophy. Scientific discoveries and advancing knowledge are playing havoc with these legendary beliefs. As these, and many other ideas, crumble before the onslaught of science, we observe, the astounding fact that the Dhamma, in spite of its ancient origin, is being vindicated. We are finding, more and more, that the discoveries over the last decade, were taught by the Buddha more than twenty-five centuries ago. This, however, will not surprise those who understand the profound depth of the phenomena of Enlightenment, or that the Buddha when He attained it, had insight into the facts of life which would naturally conform to the knowledge which science has unravelled.

The Buddha explained, in simple language, that if we fulfil the obligations of morality, we would overcome the continual horror of rebirth. This morality is the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to the end of greed, hatred and delusion. This is the goal and we call it Nibbāna. It is not a place where people go when they die or a land of departed spirits. It is a state of utter tranquility of the mind which we can enjoy in this life, leaving no conditions which will give rise to a new birth.

For most of us it has taken countless rebirths to arrive at our present standard. How many more will be required to reach the perfection of Nibbāna, depends on the efforts we are prepared to make now.

The Master never pretended that the Path was an easy one. The attainment of the goal requires both understanding and determination, but to say it is not easy does not mean that it is impossible for an intelligent man or woman.

Buddhism, or the Buddhist way of life, may be described as, good conduct brought about by mind

development and training and leading to Perfect Peace.

The Buddha made an unsurpassed analysis of the evils and troubles of mankind. They were due, He said, to *Greed, Ill-will and Delusion*.

It would be difficult to find any man-made evil or tragedy which did not fall under one or more of these categories. Yet it is precisely the conquest, the overcoming, of greed, hatred and delusion which lifts us to attain Nibbāna. The Enlightened One described Nibbāna as, "Tranquility of the mind when the passions are brought under control and all attachment ceases."

The fruits of the Buddhist way of life are both immediate and ultimate. Results are very quickly observed by those who find the Dhamma and begin to walk on the Path of the Master. If we do not attain Nibbāna in this life, the experiences and progress we have made, not only lead to a more rapid attainment in a successive birth, but will provide more favourable conditions to do so.

The more immediate fruits of happier living, contentment and peace of mind, are the priceless rewards of those who walk in the Light of the Buddha's Teaching.

"Through greed, ill-will and delusion and through being overwhelmed by them, one aims at the ruin of oneself, of others, and of both parties, and mental pain and grief come about. But when greed, ill-will and delusion are overcome, one aims at neither the ruin of oneself, of others, or of either party, and mental pain and grief are not brought about." (*Ang. Nikāya*, 3).

"There, Ananda, the disciple considers thus: This is Peace, this is the Sublime, this is the end of all rebirth producing kamma, the relinquishing of all the underlying causes of existence, the fading away of craving, the attainment of detachment, Nibbāna." (*Ibid*).

"The extinction of greed, the extinction of anger, and the extinction of delusion: this indeed is called Nibbāna." (*Sang. Nik.*, 38).

Kamma is a Pali word and means "action." We have no suitable word in the English language which exactly expresses the meaning. It is for this reason that we use the Pali term in this booklet. It is sometimes known by the Sanskrit term,

Karma, but the Hindu conception is very different from Kamma as taught by the Buddha and it would be better not to use it in this document.

Kamma can be described as the force which determines our circumstances in this life and fashions our conditions in the future. It is the energy which survives man at death and links this life with the next. If there is no kamma there can be no rebirth. Nothing of the mind or body is reborn but only this powerful energy of kamma.

We have already explained that the Buddha's Path was one of good conduct or high morality. By observing this code we do not perform bad actions or deeds and therefore, do not make bad kamma. If we live an unrestrained life, responding to desires, cravings, and passions of the senses, we produce bad kamma. Kamma is therefore, good or bad according to our deeds, of mind, speech or body. Both good or bad kamma can produce rebirth, but the good will naturally bring about conditions which are favourable, while the bad will produce circumstances which no wise individual would seek. The state of Nibbāna does not result from either good or bad kamma, but only from the extinction of all kamma. A person who reaches the state of Nibbana and who will not be reborn is called an Arahant.

The results of good or bad kamma can be experienced in this life, the next or a subsequent one.

The inconsistencies of life and the unequal conditions into which people are born, give the intelligent cause for very serious thinking. Why are some born to riches while others to poverty? Why does one prosper and another fail? Some are clever and some are dull; others are gifted with great charm and beauty while others lack these qualities. Why is one born maimed or to a life of sickness, while others, less worthy, enjoy good health? Why should one baby be taken to the grave while another lives to old age? The good man is often beset with misfortune while the scoundrel prospers.

Western philosophies have no answer to this problem and it can only be explained by Kamma. We have stressed the scientific nature of the Dhamma, but in the case of kamma and rebirth, we are in a similar position to the scientist when

he is asked to prove the atomic theory, gravity, evolution or electricity. We are told that 'proof,' as we often understand the word, cannot be given. Much scientific knowledge is accepted because there is no other possible explanation of a phenomenon. Most scientists are now learning to apply and use matter and radiation without waiting for it to be explained. The Buddhist is in the same position with kamma and learns to control it without waiting for it to be put into a test tube. Knowledge of kamma and rebirth is the logical outcome of the observation of natural phenomena.

The law of cause and effect, is so indisputably accepted today, even taught in schools, that we do not need to prove it here. We generally accept that nothing arises without a cause and that we can take the chain of causes beyond human conception. This can be applied to past, present and future. Nobody, would today, refute this simple principle, yet it is comparatively new to western thought although the Buddhists have known it for thousands of years. The Buddha, however, took the law to its logical conclusion and applied it to our lives. Through our ignorance in the past we have become possessed of rebirth producing kamma. With this kamma and the new birth there arises mind and body (including consciousness). These give rise to the senses, relationship with the senses and the sensations we experience. Our sensations manifest themselves as desires and attachments to things and ideas. These determine our actions and therefore kamma, which in turn brings about rebirth. Rebirth provides the condition for more mind and body, more senses and craving, more kamma, and further rebirth. So the chain goes on and on. It may go on and on, but only if we do not find the key to break the chain and bring it to an end. Where is the chain to be broken? The links which seem the strongest are also the only ones we can sever ourselves. They are the links of craving and attachment. Conquer these and you conquer rebirth, suffering, woe and despair.

The Signs of Life, sometimes known as the Three Characteristics, are the immutable laws which condition all beings. These three Signs, or laws, are, *Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta*. These mean, Impermanence, Suffering Without Self or Soul, All living beings, without

exception, are subject to these three characteristics. They constitute the natural laws of the physical world and are scientific in all their aspects.

Anicca, or impermanence, goes beyond the scope of living beings and applies to everything in the universe. Nothing which takes form can endure for eternity. Sooner or later it will be worn away, broken, destroyed or disintegrated, providing the material from which new forms come into being. This law operates without limit, from the tiniest grain of dust to the largest star in the universe. Everything is in a constant state of flux, coming into being and passing away. Nothing is still for a moment and therefore nothing can be enduring or permanent. Only in the mind's eye do we conceive things as still or stationary. All phenomena and all natural laws are the result of this flux or movement.

Dukkha, or suffering, has already been discussed under the Four Noble Truths. It will, however, be of value to consider why suffering is not always so obvious to all human beings. People whom we know have been through 'living-hell' in the manifold aspects of life, often astound us when we hear them say that life is not so bad after all. To understand this strange attitude, and also the incongruity that those who suffer most are seldom the ones who are seeking an escape from suffering, we must consider the delusive instrument that the mind can be.

There is a very interesting mechanism in the mind which makes us forget unpleasant things and experiences. Let us take any single individual at the moment of great suffering or sorrow and compare them in a later period.

One moment tragedy, next moment laughter. What has happened to these people? Why is it that the disaster of today can become the jest of tomorrow? The answer is, of course, this mysterious mechanism of the mind which makes us forget. If it were not for its ability to do this, we would either lose our life or reason because the human mind could not stand such suffering, week after week and month after month. Yet this faculty of the mind which preserves our health and sanity, also deludes us into thinking that life is much happier than it actually is. At the height of a tragedy, people are quite willing to acknowledge the futility and uselessness of life, but when the sorrow is passed and almost for-

gotten, then living and all its delusions presents a very different picture.

Meditation awakens the mind to the realities of life and clears away these delusions.

Suffering, in this life, comes from three main causes or instruments :

1. Man in conflict with nature.
2. Man in conflict with other human beings.
3. Man in conflict with himself.

A huge percentage of the suffering we experience is brought about through man's inhumanity to man. It can manifest itself as the antics of the practical joker, who under the cloak of good clean honest fun, makes the lives of his friends and family miserable. Or we find it in the surly individual who wishes to share his unhappiness with others. At the extreme end of the chain are men in conflict with men they have never known or met, raining death and destruction on a world-wide scale. Such is the nature of things. Yet this war among humans has gone on for thousands of years and even has its counterpart in the animal kingdom. The solution is not in reforming the world at large, but in reforming ourselves. The Dhamma will place us in a better relationship with things as they exist and will guide us along the road until suffering ceases. The Buddha has shown us that although we should help others to find the path, we cannot earn or give salvation to others. In this sense, Buddhism is a very personal religion or philosophy because each must walk this path for himself and win his own Nibbāna.

Anattā, or soullessness, applies to everything that exists but we are concerned with it mainly in relation to living beings. All things that live are without a soul, self, or spirit, without a permanent and enduring ego or personality. Soul, self and spirit are philosophical conceptions of an immaterial part of man which survives and endures death and destruction of the body. Science today does not support this legendary belief but recognises the existence of the human ego or personality, as an aspect of the mind. It is astounding how close Buddhism is running with the scientific thinking of today. This ego or personality is often confused by unenlightened people, with a soul or spirit. This individual character has nothing to do with soul-theory for while we can

recognise the versatile and changing character of the personality, a permanent soul or spirit cannot exist in nature. Western people generally begin an investigation into the Buddha's Doctrine of Anattā, at a great disadvantage. From childhood they have been raised and taught to accept this soul teaching and some do not find it easy to reject. Those who experience any difficulty with this or any other aspect of the Dhamma, should not worry because everything will unfold itself as you progress.

Whereas the soul is supposed to be capable of separate existence, we know that the Dhamma clearly reveals that the ego or personality can have no existence apart from the functioning of the mind and body. It is in fact only a function of the mind and not an entity. This ego may play a great part in making kamma (good or bad), but it cannot pass beyond death and therefore into a new birth.

Its greatest importance is that it gives rise to the delusions of 'I,' 'me' and 'mine.' In our relationships with other beings, this is one of the factors which matters most.

Modern psychology has made some wonderful discoveries over the past few years and yet they are old by Buddhist standards.

Let us quote from Dr. Graham Howe, one of Britain's top-ranking Psychiatrists and a Harley Street Specialist :

"To read a little of Buddhism is to realise that the Buddhists knew, two thousand five hundred years ago, far more about our modern problems of psychology than they have been given credit for. They studied these problems long ago and found the answers also. We are now rediscovering the Ancient Wisdom of the East."

The Buddha was the first to throw intelligent light on the mind process. The important thing for us to remember is that the mind controls the speech and body action, so that the nature of the mind determines what we say and do.

This mind process, being a constant feature of our lives, is often interpreted as a soul or spirit. It is now known that the soul illusion grew out of primitive man's dream experiences. Seeing departed friends and relatives in the mind's eye during sleep, must have

suggested to him that they were living a spirit existence in a spirit land. However, primitive this belief and though science has discarded it, we still find many people hanging on to their souls and selves with even more tenacity than their primitive ancestors.

The Dhamma and modern science, both teach the same fundamental ; that man is composed of Mind and Body ; nothing else. These two are interrelated and one does not survive the other at death. Both are one complete unit which we call a human being and sooner or later will yield to the law of impermanence.

Because the Buddha taught his followers, that they themselves make or mar their own happiness, it becomes necessary for us to rely on our own efforts and not seek salvation from a deity or supernatural being. Now if man must rely on himself, it is weakness to seek aid and favours by praying. Instead of prayer, He taught us to meditate and develop the mind so that we would be able to face the difficulties of life, and overcome them.

Neither suffering nor happiness is permanent. It only requires a little patience and fortitude to wait for things to change. The Buddhist is at a great advantage with this knowledge, because he does not lose sight of reality during the happy moments and he does not give way to despair in the face of misfortune. The Buddhist knows that existence is controlled by balanced natural laws and prayer can only be to express a desire that these shall change for one's individual benefit, or that we wish for something we have not earned or are entitled to. If natural laws could be upset in this way we would be obtaining things at the expense of someone else.

The Buddha was not silent on the matter of deities possessing creative powers or controlling the destiny of men. He not only explained the real nature of things but derided the idea of the all-powerful Creator. He went further and showed us that such superstitious beliefs were harmful if people relied on gods to do what only they could do for themselves.

We are not asked to accept that the universe was created from nothing or that a deity had achieved the impossible. Matter, we know today, cannot be destroyed and cannot be produced from nothing. For centuries, men have speculated about

the beginning and end of life and the universe, although they are matters beyond the conception of the human mind. The Master advises us not to participate in this useless speculation because they are problems to which we cannot find the answer, and nothing to do with the moral life or helping us to the goal of Nibbāna.

In practically every one of the great religions of the world, 'faith' is required of the followers, because many of the teachings and doctrines are incompatible with reason. The Dhamma strikes a great contrast in this respect. The Buddha asked only for confidence, based on understanding and reason. Blind acceptance is of no use to an individual because it does not require the depth of knowledge which makes it of value or serve as a guide on the Path. This broad outlook is probably one of the reasons why it is now finding so many ready converts in the West.

There are no dogmas or articles of creed or faith in Buddhism. No disciple is asked to accept anything until they are ready to do so and there are no confirmations of belief or creeds to recite.

The Master, on many occasions, stressed the need for one to consider and carefully investigate, before acceptance. That is why, in Buddhism, there are no records where it has sought converts at the point of a gun or under the threat of torture. People can only become good followers of the Enlightened One when they are convinced of the superiority of the Buddha Sāsana, as a way of life over all other systems. He never encouraged hysterical or emotional acceptance of the Dhamma. If people appeared too ready to do so, He advised that they took more time to carefully consider the matter.

At this stage, we must quote the instructions given by the Buddha to the Kālāmas of Kesaputta, when they pointed out that all teachers extol and magnify their own views, claiming that their doctrine is the only right one. This only left them confused and they did not know how to judge the true from the false. After explaining that they did right to doubt if they did not properly understand, He said :

"Do not go by what is reported by others, what is hearsay or taught by tradition. Do not go by proficiency in reciting the scriptures or by mere logic and inference ; nor because it fits in with views already held ; nor out of respect for your teacher. It is only when you know for yourselves that these teachings are good, they

are acceptable by the wise, that when practised they do not conduce to loss or suffering ; then only should you accept them."

The homage and respect paid to the Buddha, is but a symbolic veneration of His greatness and the happiness we find in His Teaching. The master is, at all times, an example in thought and deed, of the way and manner we should conduct ourselves. It is therefore, not unnatural that this respect should express itself in some of the finest and most beautiful art and sculpture the world has ever seen.

The images we see of the Buddha, are symbolic representations of qualities and do not pretend to be 'photographic' likenesses. It was hundreds of years after the Master's death that these images began to appear. In the very oldest sculptures and paintings, the Buddha was represented by a wheel or footprint, while in some cases, a blank space was used to indicate, rather than portray, His presence. The first images were made by Greek converts to Buddhism, at Gandahara in North-West India. These Greek craftsmen gave the images the same likeness as Apollo. These sculptures, and the millions which have followed, have given a tangible representation of the Buddha to many.

There are no esoteric or exoteric Teachings of the Master. He did not expound one thing to the public and keep back some secret information for a few chosen disciples. That which he knew was necessary for man's salvation, He taught freely to all. It must, however, be realised, that though there is none of this esoteric and exoteric discrimination, there remains a considerable difference of understanding among the millions of His followers. Complete understanding of the Dhamma, requires a greater depth of vision than many possess. In Asia today, there are among the many millions, those to whom the Buddha is simply an object of veneration. Yet because the Dhamma is an all-embracing way of life, the simple peasant with his simple views, is just as much a disciple as the monk or scholar. Simple people of all races require simple doctrines and many only conceive a mental idea through a symbolic image or ceremony. Without these tangible forms of devotion, they would have little to grasp.

Consistent with the Master's Teaching, we know that those who

are not ready for right understanding in this life, will do so in a successive birth. The important thing is to guide these people along a path of good morality so that their development is advanced in another birth. Within the Buddha Sāsana we must respect the degree of another's understanding and the point of view of those differing from ourselves. The enlightened Buddhist should be a guide but not a critic.

The Buddha, Himself, had little time for ceremonies and rituals because His way of life is a practical one of deeds and actions. In its higher stages, rule and rituals become fetters which impede the progress. The Master tells us that, the man who honours Him most is the one who practises His Teachings best.

It should also be stressed, that to follow the Buddha does not require one to abandon their home and family and live the life of a recluse. There are many fine Buddhists today, who are married men and women with families and go about their daily life in a normal way. They become outstanding among their fellow men, by virtue of their morality and good conduct and the work they are doing to make the Dhamma available to others. The great beauty of the Dhamma is that each goes only as far as he is able. Not all are ready or willing to become Buddhist monks and it is better to be a good layman than a failure in the Saṅgha.

It is a frequent request of Buddhist friends for a summary of Buddhism in a few words. Perhaps the best and shortest definition I can give is that 'Buddhism is the adaptation of one's life to harmonise with natural laws.' Can the Dhamma do this ? It both can and does.

The Pali word Dhamma is one of those all embracing expressions which mean several things, though all of them are related. In its most common use it means Doctrine, Teaching Law, but it also can mean, Justice, Righteousness or simply Nature or Natural Law. These definitions will help us to understand the wide conception of the word and what it stands for. If each and everyone practises this Dhamma, to the best of their ability, it means they are putting themselves in harmony with Nature and the natural laws which govern the universe. This Dhamma provides us with a pattern for living which we can truly call, a "Blueprint of Happiness."

PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH TO BUDDHISM

BY J. P. PATHIRANA

DOES modern psychology offer a solution of the stresses and difficulties of life? Does the sub-conscious of the psychologist explain the past history of man? What is the sub-conscious and has it as much power over our actions as the psychologists claim?

These are questions that occur to every thinking man and woman struggling through the spate of words written and uttered on this subject. Never was Mind so discussed and analysed as today and its manifestations brought into every day usage. We have mind-culture applied to business, to prosperity and to social relations.

There is no doubt that the psychologists have gained information about the mind processes that will be of benefit to mankind, but on the other hand they seem to flounder beyond their depth when they try to understand man's higher nature and to attribute certain manifestations of this nature to the lower phases of life, which do not properly so belong. The psycho-analysts say in substance "Tell me what you dream and I will tell you what you are."

Peculiarities of character are put down to mental injuries received in childhood, when we were not allowed to have all our own way. Since the psychologists began to broadcast their views, the tendency has been to remove discipline from the lives of children and to allow them to indulge in all their whims and desires in order to avoid "repressions" which they grow up. Schools are founded in which children govern themselves and are subject only to the lightest touch of adult discipline. Young people talk glibly about freedom and the right to express themselves, but alas, often act as well as talk.

It is perfectly evident that psychology, like the cinema has come to stay, and is already becoming part of our general education, will it confer the benefit that knowledge ought to confer? Not unless it goes further than the half-digested information that is given out to us today. The modern psychologist with his material outlook will never understand the nature of man until he admits the spiritual inheritance

of mankind. It is the key-piece needed to complete his jig-saw puzzle. The study of the mind is indeed essential for the proper understanding of mankind, but it must be founded on correct knowledge. False premises can never produce anything but incorrect conclusions.

The psychologists are good analysts, and they remind of trying scientists wresting the secrets of life from quivering nerves of a vivisected animal. The psychologists strip life bare of all its illusions, they bring our most secrets, thoughts and emotions to the light of day, and only too often go badly astray in their deductions. There are many parallelisms between medical research and modern psychology: both seek to cure disease by wallowing in disease conditions. They do not realise that disease can never be cured by disease, any more than darkness can be dispelled by darkness. "The mind is the great slayer of the real" is an Eastern saying full of significance. It is the peculiarity of a certain measure of intellectual development that it should deny anything higher than itself.

We have to turn to Eastern philosophy for an explanation of man's complicated structure for it seems to be only in that direction that light is to be found. The study of the mind has been pursued for many centuries in the East and self-mastery has been held out in religions and philosophy as the ideal and as the only path to knowledge and a fuller life. In the East the spiritual nature of man has never been denied. The great religions of the East have advocated the necessity of moral development and of keeping the physical nature in subjection and for that reason their study of the mind has not been marred by the unpleasantness and animalism that characterise certain schools of psychology.

Modern psychologists give great importance to the sub-conscious mind. It is a favourite peg on which to hang the manifestations of mind which are imperfectly understood. Mental life is described as an iceberg, the great part of which is hidden, the hidden portion regarded as the sub-conscious and as the more important. On the other hand, sub-conscious can

surely be none other than our own past. The happenings of yesterday become the sub-conscious of today, and the deeper we dig into the sub-conscious, the further we delve into the past of the human race. Happiness as well as unhappiness lies hid in the sub-conscious, but how many psychologists are consulted to dig up out of the past the memory of previous happiness?

The happiness has gone to the making of character and the unhappy experiences should do the same if they followed their normal course. Eastern philosophy teaches us that when the proper time arrives, that is, when man has become sufficiently evolved, his own past will be open to him to the smallest detail and he will not need the aid of a psycho-analyst.

The sub-conscious mind is like all the involuntary processes of the lower bodies, we only become aware of them when they are not functioning properly. No one is conscious of the workings of a healthy heart, though he depends for his life upon it, but as soon as it commences to work in an abnormal manner, he immediately becomes aware of its existence.

The same applies to the mind. As soon as attention is directed to processes that should not have conscious attention, trouble arises. It is wiser to take care of the waking consciousness and the sub-conscious will take of itself. It is the reaction of the individual to the incidents of daily life that are so important, and when the attitude towards life is wholesome and sound, the stirrings of the sub-conscious are scarcely heard.

The great trouble with humanity is its absorption in the lower self and its manifestations, and this is where the Buddha shows us a better way. Even our limited experience proves to us that no permanent happiness is to be found in earthly pleasures, for everything on earth is impermanent. Buddhism with its ethical code, its Noble Eightfold Path, gives us an ideal of conduct which is unsurpassed in any religion man has ever known.

The world needs the ethics of Buddhism as a sick man needs a physician. In its teaching of the Law of Cause and Effect, in its stress

upon the unity of all life and the relative unimportance of the personal self, it emancipates the ego from the enthrallment of the lower nature and its striving for self. It shows us the perfected man in the form of the Buddha, and holds out to all human beings the glory of achievement. It teaches that self-mastery is absolutely essential to a fuller life. The glorification of the lower ego and the pursuit of physical pleasures lead only to sufferings, because the very nature of the physical world is transitory.

Everything that has a beginning has an end, and sorrow, disillusionment and pain are con-committants of physical existence. For this reason Buddha taught men to subdue their lower desires and to strive for spiritual wisdom. Only spiritual knowledge can release man from the endless round of birth and death. Buddha taught that man is a divine being, that his essential nature is of the spirit and that he must claim rightful place and heritage. Only in this recognition can man loosen the clinging fetters of physical existence.

It is a curious fact that psychologists feel so chary of admitting the spiritual heritage of man. Do they expect to feel and handle something that has to clothe itself in the psychological matter in order to manifest on this plane? Sir Oliver Lodge, in speaking of physical science said, "In the science of physics we are continually dealing with things which we can never hope to see or handle." Why, therefore, should man's spiritual nature be regarded with suspicion and scepticism? The moral needs of man should surely indicate the existence of an urge that is non-physical, which in fact can make him act contrary to his physical interests, even to giving up his life. It is not reasonable to

assume that the intricate nature of man belongs only to his physical desires.

There is no doubt that the psychologists have gained much information about mind processes that will be of benefit to mankind, but on the other hand they seem to flounder beyond their depth when they try to understand man's higher nature, and attribute certain manifestations of the nature to the lower phases of life, which not properly so belong.

Now, why should this be? It is the fault of the Western temperament that puts religion into a separate compartment and is half-ashamed of admitting its existence? Eastern philosophy has always acknowledged the power of religious aspiration and there is no divorce between religion and everyday life. On the other hand, the East has neglected development in other ways of being too absorbed in religion and metaphysics.

In the path of indulgence, of self-pity, of unhealthy absorption in self which supplies the psychologist with his clientele and fills his waiting room with victims of their own ignorance. The ethics of philosophy of Buddhism constitute a more bracing tonic than anything a psychologist can offer. The cure for our ills, as the cause of them, lies in ourselves. The need of man for spiritual food is greater than his need for physical food and it is to supply this need that Spiritual teachers have appeared among mankind. Spiritual leaders having trodden the Path themselves, are eminently fitted to become "Wayshowers" and to follow in their footsteps is to become emancipated as they.

Life for so many people is empty and unsatisfying. Men and women realize that they are caught in a machine of their own making. They

wish to free themselves, but do not know how. The cry goes up continually: "What is this Life for?" The psychologists and scientists have widened our horizons, but they have not given us a purpose. Only religion can do that, and it needs a religion that is at once logically sound and inspiring in its motif. Buddhism fulfills these conditions, for it satisfies man's most profound and lofty aspirations, and yet bears the strain of everyday life and helps him in his contact with his fellow-men. Few religions can bear that strain.

The great test of a religion is how far its philosophy can be applied to man's human problems. Yet these human problems are cosmic, for man himself a cosmos. The cry of man's heart for a purpose is the dim recognition of this fact. When a man feels his divine nature quickening to life in his human everyday self, he no longer cries for a purpose in life, for he realises that he himself that very purpose. "Thou art thyself the object of thy search." He is impelled by a divine urge to push on to the goal of realisation.

The magnetic power of Buddhism carries a message of hope to even the most abandoned criminal whose divine nature is thickly overlaid with ignorance, but no ignorance is so dense that it cannot be pierced by the words of a great spiritual Teacher. Buddhism has been accused of being a religion of pessimism, but to those who understand its Teachings the contrary is true. It is the religion of hope, of enlightenment, of serenity; because it shows man the Path of Knowledge is open to all and it unmistakably indicates that true freedom lies in self-mastery. No one who is a slave to his thoughts and emotions can know what Truth is, either Truth about man's nature or of the visible cosmos about him.

THE HANSA SANDESAYA

(The Message through a Swan)

BY AMARASIRI WEERARATNE

THE Hansa Sandesaya occupies a unique place in the Sandesa poems of Sinhalese literature. The Sandesa poems consist of messages sent through various birds to popular gods in order to invoke blessings on

the kings of the times. The description of the route, places, persons, dawn, sunset, aquatic sports, etc. enhance the value of these poems and bring light on some obscure points of our history.

The uniqueness of the Hansa Sandesa is due to the following reasons:—

(1) It is the only Sandesa among the classics that is not directly addressed to a God. The author

was too conscious of the inconsistency for a Buddhist to pray to the Gods and godlings for boons. Instead the Sandesa is addressed to the Head of the Buddhist Clergy of Ceylon at the time, the great Sangharāja Vanaratana. The Sangharāja is petitioned to recite the Buddhist Sutras (parittas) and thereby win over the favour of the gods by transferring the merit thus gained. After the gods are won over in this manner they are to be requested by the Sangharāja to protect the King and the Ministers, granting them peace and longevity. Thus a departure is made from the established practice of directly praying to the gods. The Mayura Sandesaya which is the oldest of the extant Sandesa poems petitions the God Uppalavanna at Devinuvara (Dondra) to protect King Bhuvaneka Bahu of Gampola. The Tisara Sandesaya is addressed to the same God to bless and protect King Parakrama of Detigampura. The Selalihini was composed by Totagamuve Rāhula the predecessor of Ven. Vanaratna to pray to God Vibhisana for a son to King Parakrabahu VI's daughter. But the Ven. Vidāgama Thero would not follow these un-Buddhistic practices of imploring Hindu gods—he addressed his Sandesa poem to the towering personality of the times among the Buddhist clergy—the Sangharāja Vanaratana, whose virtues are eulogised in this poem.

(2) Unlike in the other Sandesas the Ven. Vidāgāma did not look for an "auspicious moment" to send out his messenger. Thus he displays his disbelief in Astrology and other semi-Hindu practices which had gained ground during the times because of strong Dravidian influence.

(3) The Ven. Vidāgāma describes the King's court in a special way giving details regarding its personnell and the names of two Chief Ministers. The descriptive details given here cannot be found in the other Sandesas.

(4) The Ven. Vidāgama did not give pride of place to Sringāra Rasa—with all its lewd, voluptuous and vulgar descriptions, such as we find in the other Sandesas, notably in the Paravi. He did not imitate the Hindu poets of the decadent period of Sanskrit literature by indulging in lascivious descriptions but drew his inspiration from great Buddhist poets like Asvaghosa, Gurulugomi and Vidyachakravarti. Thereby he wins the admiration of true lovers of

poetry, and shows the refined taste of a highly cultured mind.

(5) The Hansa Sandesa is permeated with Sānta Rasa, the quality of simplicity and serenity; the hallmark of a true artist.

(6) The Hansa Sandesa displays originality of thought and introduces the use of Sanskrit words to Sinhalese poetry—which hitherto used only pure Sinhalese (Elu) words. It gives a wealth of historical information.

In some of the manuscript copies the verses giving the name of the author were omitted. Hence some scholars were confused as to the authorship of this poem. But since then manuscripts have been found which contain the verses identifying the author of the work as Ven. Vidāgama. They are these:—

(301)

මනරම් ලකළ මල් පලරම්	
රඳන නි	සි
නොවිභිම් උතුම් ගෙවුයනු දුල	
නිනොර දී	සි
රයිගම් නුවර තුර රැඳී පිරි	
ඉසුරු ර	සි
විභිගම් පොදුරු විදගම	
වෙහෙර වැ	සි

(302)

සත් වෙත මෙන් පතුරණ සිහ	
එකම ලෙ	සි
දත් නොක සත් එළ සකු මගද	
ආ නි	සි
කින් යස කොත් බඳ දිග යටග	
සහ නො	සි
මෙන් මහනෙන් පාමුල කෙරිදු	
සඳ වී	සි

The Ven. Vidāgama was one of the brilliant luminaries among the scholars of the Kotte period. He is the author of Buduguna Alankāraya, Loweda Sangarāwa and Kawlakunu Minimala. The Loweda Sangarāwa is alone sufficient to prove his skill and proficiency as an exponent of the Buddha-Dhamma. Vidāgama Thero was a silver-tongued orator, and as a preacher he was unrivalled. King Bhuvaneka Bāhu VI once listened to an exposition of the Dhamma by this Elder and was so overjoyed with his skill that he offered him with certain land endowments the title deeds of which are referred to by Sin E. B. Jayatilaka in his Essays on Sinhalese Literature.

The Ven. Vidāgama was one of the Elders who took part in the ordination of Burmese monks at the Kalyāni Simā—and this fact is on record in the Kalyāni Simā inscription of Pegu in Burma. This was erected by King Dhammazedi (A.C. 1472-1492) who sent a Buddhist mission to Ceylon.

The Hansa Sandesaya was written during the reign of King Parakramabahu VI. (A.C. 1473-1480). It is obvious that this poem was written after the Girā Sandesaya on which I have dealt with in the June issue of *The Buddhist*. It is evident that there were two schools of Buddhist thought at the time, viz., the Grāmavāsi and Vanavāsi sections of the Buddhist Clergy. The present Malvatte and Asgiriya sections represent these two factions. It is obvious that though the name implied so all Vanavāsi monks were not forest dwellers. The only perceptible difference is that the Vanavāsi monks were more rigid in the observance of Vinaya rules, and did not believe in astrology, palmistry, and sooth saying and did not encourage the pursuit of Hindu Scriptures. They rejected the semi-Hindu practices of the Grāmavāsi monks.

The Ven. Totagamuve Rāhula Thero was eulogised in the Girā Sandesaya. The Vijayabāhu Pirivena over which he was chief was also delineated in glowing terms. The Ven. Vidāgama was no admirer of the Grāmavāsi monks nor their chief Totagamuve Sri Rāhula. Ven. Vidāgama eulogises the chief of his sect and in doing so animadverts the chief of the Grāmavāsis with a thin vein of sarcasm.

The contents of the Hansa Sandesaya can be summarised in the following descriptions. Firstly there is the description of Jayavardena pura (Kotte), its moats, ramparts, the wealth and virtues of its inhabitants, the beauty of the maidens, etc. Then he proceeds to describe the virtues and the valour of the monarch, Sri Parākramabāhu. He does not fail to stress the Buddhist virtues of the King.

සිත් නිතියෙන් මුනි පුද්ගම	
නමා	ලිය
සත් ගුණයෙන් සවි සත සිත	
ආමා	ලිය
ගත් විකුමෙන් රුපු නිරිදුන්	
දමා	ලිය
මෙන් සිලිලෙන් මුළු කෙදින	
නෙමා	ලිය

King Parākramabāhu bent his mind towards the adoration of the Buddha. In beneficence he was a Celestial Tree. By might of his arms he overcame all rival monarchs. He drenched the whole world with the waters of his univdrsal love (mettā).

Then he proceeds to describe the King's court. These verses are of unparalleled interest. In describing the Chief Justice who was also the Chief of the Treasury, the Ven. Vidā-gama deviates from all established conventions of Sinhalese poetry by introducing Sanskrit words. Thereby he created a precedent which was taken up with gusto by all subsequent poets in the Sinhalese panegyrics. The verses are these :—

වන්ධා නප කිරණ වන් තද
 තෙදින් දූ
 බණ්ඩාර නායක නනතුරු
 සිරින් හෙ
 වික්‍රම වීර විරිද්ධන් දක
 නොපැ පී
 සක්‍රම නිබොරු බස් මිස
 නොතෙපලන සැ
 අක්‍රම වංක ගුණ මදකුන්
 නොගෙන සී
 වික්‍රමසිංහ අදිකාරග
 මැතිදු සී

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 ටී
 ටී
 ටී
 ටී

“In majesty he resembled the powerful rays of the sun. He was entrusted with the office of Chief of the Treasury. Seeing powerful hordes of enemies he would never retreat. He speaks only what is factual and in accordance with truth. He does not have even a shade of crookedness or hypocrisy. The Chief Justice Vickramasinha stood there (in his place at the Royal Court).”

After describing the scene at the court the poet describes the route. There before crossing the Kelani River and entering the city of Kelaniya he describes a Monastery called Kitsirime Vehera, replete with a Dagaba containing Buddha relics, a Bo-tree and an artistic image of the Buddha.

Then he crosses the Kelani where he sees merchants from Colombo

plying a brisk trade in their river craft. Then follows a description of aquatic sports in the Kelani River. The bird enters Kelaniya, the special landmark of which is the Kelani Temple erected on the spot where the Buddha partook his mid-day meal on his visit to Ceylon. From the following lines we can gain some idea of what Kelaniya temple was like before it was ransacked by the Portuguese brigands :—

මුනිදා දිව බොජුන් වැළදු
 තැනෙහි න
 මුනි ද පිහිටුවා කළ
 දගැබට වැ
 දෙමහල් කුන්මහල් මුනිහල්
 දිළි නොම
 ගනනිල් දුල් නිමල් බෝසල්
 පුද වැ
 සුවිසල් පස් මහල් සහසතු
 ගෙවල් මැ
 මහසල් දන් මහල් දක
 උන්සඳ සබ

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“Worship the resplendent image houses two storeys and three storeys high, and make offering at the Bo-tree shrine in the premises. The monastic buildings there which were five storeys high. There were large refectories and spacious assembly halls.” The Chief of the Kelani temple at the time was an Elder called Buvanekabuja who we are told was related to the Chief, Kos-gama Ekanayaka, who held a distinguished place in Royal Service.

Then follows a description of a dancing show, the famous shrine of God Vibhishana, dawn, and the route wherein the scenes of a forest too are depicted. From there the bird proceeds through Senegama, Weliveriya and Nakandepala and arrives at Keragala.

The description of the peaceful hamlet of Keragala dominated by its Monastery is unparalleled for its charm and beauty. The poet delineates the tranquil scenes of a Ceylon village with the utmost reality and ineffable charm.

(154)

සාර පලය අබ දඹ රඹද වල්
 මීර ජලය ඇල දෙල කඳු පිවිත්
 නිර ශ්‍රීමච්ච වාඩහන
 කැරලය වැජැමෙයි මේ ලෙසින්

පිට
 බට
 හට
 සිට

(155)

කළින් කුලම සිහිලබි වැහෙන
 කදු
 දෙළින් දෙලම කල්යල් කරන
 කුඹු
 පළින් පළම තල් පොල් ගෙවතු
 මැදු
 කළින් කුලම පුල් පියුමුපුල
 පබේ

රැය
 රැය
 රැය
 රැය

(156)

පැසෙයි නිබද සුවදැල්
 කෙන්වත් අව
 ඇසෙයි ළමා වසු පැටියන්
 හබ දුර
 දිසෙයි වෙහෙර එහි සුර
 විමනක් ලෙස
 රසෙයි අමා රසමය ඒ
 පියස දු

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 ට
 ට

Then follows a description of Pad-māvati Pirivena which was a great centre of learning of the Vanavāsi monks. We are introduced to a group of novices studying the “Heranasika” or Sāmanera Sikshā—a book of rules and precepts for novices written in Sinhalese. We learn that the following books were studied there :—

“මුන්සික සික වළද විමසන සහගණය”

Munsikha or Mūla Sikshā and Sikhavalanda Vinisa were two ancient Sinhalese books on Vinaya.

“අසමින් නැස විකා විනය
 සැක නැ
 කසයින් විවිත සමහරු වන
 පොත් කර

කී
 කී”

Kasayin Virita or Kaccāyana Vutti was a book written for teaching Pali Grammar by an Elder at Anuradhapura called Kaccāyana.

The students of Abhidharma and Sūtra Piṭakas are depicted thus :—

“මියුරු බසින් සැක හැර දෙසන
 විසි
 ගැඹුරු විජම් පෙළරුත් අසනි
 සම

තුරු
 හරු”

“උදක් ලෙසට මිස දිටු මුල් සිද
 පැව
 අයෙක් සුතුරු පෙළදම් පදරුත්
 අස

කී
 කී”

The lecturers teaching Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric are portrayed, thus :—

පැනවත් පසිඳු පඩිවර ඉඳු
වෙහෙර තුර
පවසන් නොයෙක් තකු විසරන
සඳල කර

Then follows a description of the Saṅgharāja Vanaratana who is eulogised in the highest terms in respect of his wisdom, learning, virtue and as an able exponent of the Dhamma.

We are told that he was a descendant of the Ven. Nāgasena who was the chief of the Vanavāsa Vihāra at Wattala. It should be remembered that Wattala which is now a Roman Catholic stronghold was a flourishing centre of Buddhist learning where the Vanavāsa Vihāra celebrated in the Mayūra Sandesa stood. The Roman Catholics in a publication against the Buddhist Commission's report say: that the Portuguese ruled over only the low country and left intact the strongholds of Buddhism and Buddhist learning. On reading the Hansa and Mayūra Sandesas especially the descriptions of the monasteries at Kelaniya and Vanavāsa at Wattala they should revise their opinion.

The family of the Ven. Vanaratana is traced to the Chief Sword Bearer, Sudharsana who distinguished himself by winning royal favours. In the following verse Ven. Viḍāgama requests the swan to worship Ven. Vanaratana in adoration :—

(184)
පසිඳු වන රත්න ගිරි මෙන්
මුළු ලොව ට
මුරුදු වන රත්න රුව මෙන්
දිලි රුව ට
මැනිඳු වන රත්න දිව ලද
මුනි රජු ට
නමදු වන රත්න මාහිමි
හිමි සඳු ට

“He is famous throughout the world as the Mahāmeru mountain. In beauty he resembles a statue of

gold. To the Supreme King of Enlightenment (Buddha) he is the Prime Minister in Ceylon. Make obeisance and worship the Ven. Vanaratana.”

In the Girā Sandesaya (verse 235) the chief of the Grā mavāsi monks, the Ven. Totagamuve Rahula is depicted as an expert in the Eighteen Purānas. In verse 190 of the Hansa Sandesa while extolling the virtues of Vanaratana Thero, emphasis is laid on the fact that he rejected the Eighteen Purānas of the Hindus as erroneous and not worthy of belief.

(190)

ඇසට පෙනෙන මිස දිව ඉසිවර
කෙනෙ කි
බසට ඔහුගෙ ලොව නැත සර්වත
රසෙ කි
දෙසැට දිටුම විමසා නුවණින්
නිසැ කි
දසට පොරණ ඔහු වරදයි
හල දෙය කි

“He (Vanaratana Thero) is a Celestial Sage but for the fact that he is perceptible to the human eye. There is nothing in the world to equal the charm of his oratory. He has examined the sixty-four heretical views with his keen intellect. The Eighteen Purānas (such as Brahma, Padma, Vishnu, Shiva, Bhagavat, Narada, etc.) he dismissed as so much trash.”

He was no exponent nor admirer of drama, poetry and all that passes as culture. He was strict hermit and a saint of the highest order.

(191)

“ගලා රසෙයි පැවසූ කවි නළු
ගැඹු රු
බලා පලාපසෙකැයි නොක
ලේස ග රු”

Since the time of great Masters of Anuradhapura, there is none to compare with him in fame. The length and breadth of his fame is as great as the four quarters of the earth. He had mastered the science of astrology through he was not too

enthusiastic an exponent of this science.

In verse 195 we are told that the Ven. Vanaratana was able to discover obscure points not hitherto seen by the great teachers of former times. He protects all friends and foes as his children. He has won the position of the Royal preceptor. He has won land endowments and the leadership of the Buddhist Monastic Order. He became famous having mastered all arts and sciences.

In verse 196 we are told that even his adversaries accept that there is no equal to him. Such a noble Elder has appeared on account of the good kamma of the people. On account of the perfection of his methods of preaching it looked as if a second Lord Mahinda had come to Ceylon. (Mihindu māhimi—Lord Mahinda was the apostle who brought Buddhism to Ceylon).

“මෙයිඳු මිහිඳු මාහිමියන් පැමිණි
වැ නි”

And finally this great Elder is beseeched to chant the Ratana Sūtra a hundred thousand times and win the favour of the gods by transferring merit, and to ask them to grant peace, freedom from internal disorder, and long life to King Parākrama Bahu VI.

THE COLOMBO Y.M.B.A. NEWS

MR. D. N. W. De SILVA has severed his connection with “The Buddhist” which began in 1921. Reason : Ill-health. EDITOR.

NEW MEMBERS

10.12.56 : B. Richard Fernando, 215, Cotta Road, Colombo 8 ; R. M. Fernando, 47/3, Norris Canal Road, Colombo 10.

18.12.1956 : R. P. Senaratne, ‘Woodlands,’ 538, Aluthmawatte Road, Colombo 15 ; W. G. E. Weerasinghe, 50/7, Forbes Road, Colombo 10 ; W. R. de S, Senaratne, ‘Ratnagiri,’ Ediriweera Avenue, Dehiwela ; W. S. Karunaratne, 12, Lauries Place, Colombo 4.

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