

# THE BUDDHIST

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## BUDDHISTS AND SOCIAL SERVICE

dhist Social Service Organizations can start moving and make their contribution felt. There is no attempt to co-ordinate the work done by various institutions. As such, we either rush all our aid to one place or neglect areas which sorely need assistance.

When the situation in the flood-stricken areas returns to normal, we are bound to be informed of the assistance given to the refugees by various organizations. At that stage, we need not be surprised if some of the non-Buddhist organizations could give very impressive records. This will not mean that they had, in their generosity, surpassed the Buddhists, who, in their own way, had been distributing a vast quantity of food, clothing and drugs among the refugees. But it will show that the lack of a proper organization to co-ordinate the efforts of the Buddhists has prevented them from taking stock of the over-all Buddhist contribution. This aspect, one is bound to say, is of no significance as long as the work has been well done. We certainly do agree that what matters is not the record but the actual contribution. Yet, when a charge has been levelled against the Buddhists that their response to social service is inadequate, every line of defence should be taken advantage

Let us as Buddhists, who follow one of the greatest exponents of the values of Social Service, organize ourselves and be prepared to mobilize all our efforts in relieving suffering when distress visits our country. We suggest that all Buddhist organizations should get together and set up a Central Organization which will, in future, tackle situations of this type. Let us train our youth to undertake efficient relief work. Let us build a reserve fund which can be utilized until contributions are received. This suggestion, we place before the Buddhists of this country for their active consideration.

Meanwhile, we appeal to every reader to send in his contribution towards the National Flood Relief Fund. The task of rehabilitating the numerous refugees, who have been rendered homeless, whose every worldly possession has been washed away and who suffer untold agony due to starvation and disease, is too vast to be undertaken without generous contributions from the public. Every cent counts. We trust that our readers will not hesitate to make their contribution whether in money or in kind and acquire for themselves and those dear to them “kusala-kamma” which will save them from similar suffering in this birth and others to come.

**T**HE Island-wide distress caused by the recent floods and landslides has, once again, drawn the attention of the Buddhists of Ceylon to a very grave need. Being far more fortunate than many other countries, we have not been called upon, very often, to relieve the suffering of a major section of our population caused by ravages of nature. Therefore, we are not suitably organized to meet such situations. Being unprepared, our efforts are wasted in experiments. It takes a considerable time before the Bud-

# THE PROBLEM OF REALITY AND APPEARANCE

By Rev. K. DHAMMAPALA

WHAT is the value of human testimony? Do our senses, in other words, reveal to us a real world, or do they give us a false distorted picture of Reality? Is there any substratum behind the passing show of the universe, or are things the result of blind chance? What is the Being that persists through all becoming and change, the Reality beneath all appearance and flux?

These questions which involve the central problem of all philosophy and science, of reality are as old as humanity itself. They have taxed the minds of the cave-dweller and the philosopher of yore, even as they grip the attention of modern men. In short they have revolutionised the entire history of human thought, Western and Eastern, throughout the centuries.

At the outset I must mention it is not my intention here to engage in a discussion of metaphysical or epistemological problems which I am, as a follower of the Buddha, constrained to regard as futile and, above all, detrimental to the attainment of that highest state of beatitude—Nirvana which the Buddha proclaimed to be the goal of every sentient being. Nevertheless, that the temptation of the human mind to probe into things unknown is irresistible, is undeniably true. Hence, I presume, a review however brief of some of the solutions offered by non-Buddhist thinkers to this problem of metaphysics and epistemology would prove interesting all the more when it is compared and contrasted with the deeper wisdom of the Buddha.

In tracing the historical origin of the concept of substance one naturally meets the early cave-dweller, remote from civilised life, to whom the problem presented itself in a crude form. Those early years of human history will ever be memorable for the growth of philosophical enquiry kindled by man's earliest attempt to understand this problem as it appeared to him. Viewed in this context the history of philosophy is the history of the development of this concept of *substans* in its varied aspects.

In the epistemological sense this concept is said to be psychological

in origin. It is evidently true that the human mind has an innate desire to live how-much-so-ever miserable life may appear. But since this desire cannot be fulfilled within this short span the mind cherishes the hope of life's continuance after the grave. Such continuance will however be impossible unless this life possesses some enduring principle over and above its perishable physical frame. This principle is none other than the soul, *ātma* that outlives the body. It is the "unborn part" (*Aja Bhag*) as designated by early Upanishadic Scripts.

When the reality of the subject was firmly established the attention of the philosophic mind was directed to the objective world. At a superficial level the mind perceives things as enduring through apparent change and transformations. In spite of the ever-changing ever-renewing nature of physical objects they seem to preserve some identity. For instance, an object lying in outer space is not recognised as entirely different from the object that existed yesterday or the day before, no matter what changes may have taken place in its colour, shape, weight etc. It was this surviving characteristic in things though imperceptible to the naked eye that thinkers characterised as the substratum behind things which gives the latter unity and coherence. The "Unmoved Mover" or the "Unseen Seer" of the Upanishadic thinkers and the "logos" or "nous" of early Greek thinkers are admittedly the outcome of such speculative thought. Later with the growth of critical intelligence reality came to be viewed pantheistically when the so-called microcosm was identified with a macrocosmic soul.

Let us now examine this problem in the light of our commonsense or everyday experience. Is there any evidence, other than the gross senses that betray us, for our acceptance of the reality of an external world? The senses, it will be clear on closer reflection, reveal to us mere qualities of things, patches of colour, shape, etc., which somehow are held together to form the objects of our sense-perception. But if the objects are stripped of their sense-data what remains? A thing shorn of its

colour, shape, smell, etc. would be non-existent.

Hence the Buddha affirmed centuries before Locke, Burkely, and Hume that the external world which we assume to be real is an illusion. He further substantiated his statement by a thorough analysis of matter in exactly the same way as modern scientists do with the aid of their laboratory instruments. What distinguished the Buddha from our scientists was that he did not resort to any external aid as instruments to understand this truth about matter, nor confine his research to mere physical realm. It was, in other words, not curiosity that prompted the Buddha in his research, but a deeper conviction of the unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*) of life and things. Thus Buddha began where scientists stopped and reached conclusions superior to those of the latter.

According to the Buddha the external world is a mere illusion. For what is called matter when analysed into its ultimate constituents is reducible to mere energy whose only reality is change or flux. All things in the universe from the enormous planets in infinite space to the tiny grain of sand are conglomerations of ultimate forces of energy—cohesion, extension, heat and motion which are in a perpetual state of flux. No underlying *substans* holds these forces together other than the natural law of Attraction and Repulsion (which is the physical aspect of the moral law of *Kamma*). So rapid is the change governing the physical world that the uninstructed mind is led to mistake it for permanent and real, just as a ball of fire when whirled round creates in our minds the illusion of a circle.

But the rejection of a metaphysical *substans* in the objective world does not necessarily imply the acceptance of it in the subjective realm. That was the mistake Bishop Burkely committed when he reduced the entire physical world to mere "ideas" in our minds. Since what the mind knows are not things as they are, but qualities of things in so far as they affect our minds' objective reality is a fiction. "To be" therefore "is to be perceived" (*esse est percipi*). Mind alone is real.

Buddha agreed with Bishop Burkely that what the senses reveal are deceptive sense-data that do not in any way correspond to reality; but he refuted Burkely's idealism by denying subjective reality too. Buddha's position would apparently raise further questions concerning survival, memory, recognition, knowledge etc. for which answers will not be difficult if the philosophy of Buddha is grasped in its proper context.

One of the earliest philosophers in Europe to have developed an attitude similar to that of Buddha was Hume. He showed in much the same way as did Buddha centuries before him that what is termed "mind" is in reality a collection of mental states, of sensations, perceptions etc. each succeeding the other with tremendous rapidity. What gives unity to these scattered thoughts is not a mysterious unifying agency called Self but the laws of Association, which, strangely enough, seem to be a faint re-echo of the laws or conditions (paccaya) elaborated in Paṭṭhanappakarana of the Abhidhammapīṭaka. Hume was an able analyst even though his new theory could not provide a sufficient explanation of the synthetic element involved in experience. Nevertheless the revolution he wrought in Western philosophy by striking a new path produced far reaching consequences in later history of thought.

In spite of such strong opposition maintained against the dogmatic concept of a self by thinkers like Hume the tendency to assert its existence was equally strong among others; and a new path was trailed in this connection by that idealist Descartes who perceived in subjectivity—*cogito* (I think), a cogent proof for the existence of self within and substance without. But as was pointed out by later thinkers, notably by Kant, Descartes was wrong in so far as the *cogito* was not a self-evident fact but a dogmatic assumption. One cannot help wondering how an eminent scholar of science and mathematics of the calibre of Descartes could have made so simple a blunder. This indeed is not surprising when one thinks of those eminent scholars of today who though nurtured in the lap of science, still hug to their bosom the dogma of "theos" and to whom any assertion to the contrary is very revolting.

This same line of Cartesian thought, if not one, closely akin to it, finds an echo in early Vedas and Upanishads and in their later developments by Sankara and Ramanuja. According to Sankara, the self, like the axioms in mathematics, or postulates in science, is a self-evident fact for whose existence no other proof is necessary. His argument, though appealing to the mind *prima facie*, is no less a self-contradiction than that of Descartes. It will be seen how antithetical this dogmatic procedure in philosophy is from the positive rational method of Buddha who in the true scientific spirit based his system on verifiable facts drawn from experiential life of the individual. Nowhere has Buddha asserted the reality of a metaphysical *substans*, though numerous attempts have been made by scholars to show that he did. On one occasion the Buddha took a grain of earth in his hand and addressed his pupils "Not even so much as this, is reachable of a self-condition that persists, permanent, lasting, enduring, external, unchanging."<sup>1</sup> This alone suffices to show that Buddha's vision was not circumscribed by the narrow human horizon of dualistic thought as it was with the thinkers of the schools of idealism and realism.

Nor could Kant make any marked contribution to the elucidation of the problem of reality though he was, in many respects, an advance on his predecessors. Unlike Descartes he held to a *cogito* which though permanent is yet related somehow to the passing mental states. This obviously is a self-contradiction. Further, in his attempt to solve the dualism between mind and matter a still wider gulf was made between subject and object (epistemological) on the one hand, and world and phenomena (metaphysical) on the other. But the credit of having introduced an *a priori* element into knowledge goes to him. Knowledge is the result not merely of the function of the analytical mind but of its synthetic activity too. In the act of knowing, however, the mind confuses the result and *ipso facto* the things in the selves (*dinge an sich*) from which the former is derived must remain unknowable to human mind.

In his psychology of mind without a psyche, William James strikes a note remarkably Buddhistic. The

mind is a "bundle of conscious happenings" or in Buddhist parlance, a "continuum" (*saṅgati*) in which each moment is charged with all the past. The one is related to the other as Paṭṭhāna explains by way of condition (*paccaya*) and not of Cause—which explains the possibility of continuity in the process without having recourse to an identical principle of individuality within. In this process each state is said to transmit its latent potentiality (*satti*) to its successor as it perishes.

This dynamic conception of mind whilst serving as a substitute for a permanent substance, or surviving principle, avoids also the difficulties such a principle naturally involves. It provides "if not an explanation, still the possibility of an explanation of the facts of memory" (Keith: *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 177). This is indeed significant, for if the facts of memory could be explained without reference to a permanent factor in individuality, then the claim of Buddhism as the only religion that can satisfactorily solve the problems of science and philosophy in our age remains undisputable.

Buddhist Psychology, therefore, concludes there is no thinker behind thought, no actor apart from action. So does William James conclude in the proper Buddhistic spirit "the thoughts themselves are the thinkers."<sup>2</sup>

Schopenhauer, another thinker with Buddhistic proclivities, believes that the external world is a manifestation of the "will to live"—a psychic principle which may be likened to Kamma in Buddhism. The idea of Kamma was taught by Indian sages and in Western Philosophy by thinkers like Plato.<sup>3</sup> But with the Buddha the concept assumed a deeper significance; he showed it was not merely a law of retribution in the narrow sense, but an all-pervading principle governing the entire wheel of existence, past, present and future. Like electricity Kamma is an invisible law but it manifests in external world as in beings, human, divine or animal. Schopenhauer seems to have sensed, if not understood fully, the idea of the Buddha when he declares that Reality is attained through immediate awareness of our own volition.

Among extreme subjectivists like Fichte, Schelling and Hegel a new

approach to the dualism of mind and matter, hitherto unattempted by any, is conspicuous. The Universe is viewed as pure spirit or absolute idea—a principle of pure activity containing within itself all difference and change. In this unfolding process of reality the natural (science) and intellectual (philosophy) represent different phases or grades of reality. The postulation of Absolute conceived as an immanent or transcendent principle could not solve the dualism of the later thinkers and so the same was maintained only in a different guise.

In subsequent philosophy the dualism was either upheld by some or resolved by others by resort to non-spatial, non-temporal entity-Absolute, God. Among the few who support the Buddha's view mention may be made of Eddington who reduces matter to mind stuff, or Bradley who reduces soul to phenomena.<sup>4</sup> Even modern scientists are divided into two groups, one envisaging a mechanical interpretation of life and things, the other though not denying the psycho-physical parallelism of organisms yet holding that a non-physical entity governs life according to its purpose.

In Buddhist Philosophy it is no exaggeration to say, this duality of mind and matter is solved once for all, or more accurately stated, transcended nobly. Just as the quantum theory of Physics has revealed today the substancelessness of matter, Buddha forestalled it and declared matter to be a construction of mind. According to Buddha an act of preception, for instance, is an attunement of mind to external reality which is a perpetual movement or flux. In this process three factors come into play the visual organ of sense (in the case of perception) sense datum, and the collision of the former with the latter. The senses are thus constantly affected by the ever mobile outer world which creates in the mind sensations of pleasure or pain (Sanskaras). And these Sanskaras or Kamma-formations serve as fuel for the ever burning flame of life which wonders in Samsara through repeated birth and death.

Buddha shows that it is the mistaking of matter as *substance* which creates in man a longing (Tanha) to possess it; and through the force of this Tanha he naturally expresses himself again and again

in new physical organisms after death. Thus the process of life goes on *ad infinitum* falling a prey to the perils and tribulations that mortals are doomed to.

It will thus be clear that mind and matter are inter-dependent, for one cannot exist without the other. Mind, whether taken as a "passive recipient of sensations"<sup>5</sup> or as a support independent of floating sensations, etc., is never an active agent, never the "spectator of the play of life" in the Vedantic sense. It is true this has become a subject of acute controversy, and scholars there are who treat this psychological phenomenon as a metaphysical principle of individuality. This is erroneous.

Life, as we saw earlier, is action and nothing more. Even as in a flame what is actual is not the wick, nor the fuel, but the act of burning; so in personality what is actual is not the elements, but action. And the ceasing of this action by the destruction of impulses (Asava) that impel it is the final goal of life, otherwise called Nibbana.

Is this Negativism or extinction, one may be prone to ask. The answer lies in meditation, or more properly stated, in the development of an intuitive mind beyond the narrow ken of intellectualism.

The Zen school of Japanese Buddhism provides, I think, an answer that will satisfy the curiosity of those who, disregarding the Buddha's warning not to indulge in vain speculation, demand a definite answer in the affirmative or negative to the above question. According to Zen, if Nirvana refuses to be caught in the framework of definition or logic it is not because Nirvana is something arbitrary or lawless but because it is law itself as transcending science and philosophy.

If Nirvana is negation it will mean intellectual suicide; to say it is affirmation will lead to self-contradiction. The mind disciplined from its very inception under the strictest rules of logical dualism categorizes things in terms of affirmation and negation. But unless this frailty is overcome by penetrating the thick walls of thesis and antithesis reality cannot be apprehended. In assertion, for instance, we limit ourselves; in denial we exclude. Limitation and exclusion, which mean the same thing, retard the

growth of intuitive mind (Yathabhuta Nanadassana). Real Freedom lies in a higher form of affirmation transcending both the antithesis of denial and assertion. Nibbana as the highest freedom is the Absolute Affirmation transcending all possible conditions.

There is no royal road to the practical realisation of this highest truth as was maintained before other than that of meditation; and it is commendable on the part of our government, representing, as it does, the majority of Ceylonese who are Buddhists, to have extended its patronage to the practice of meditation all over the country. At a time when the true significance of the Buddha's message lies buried under the debris of communalism and ritual, superstition and dogma, the attempt to resuscitate the practice of *Bhavana*, which is the essence of the Buddha word, is all the more necessary.

The method of meditation as outlined in *Visuddhi Magga* is a methodical training of the mind designed to still the passions (Samatha) and to the gradual strengthening of Bodhi-mind or intuitive insight (Vipassana). In this context meditation involves "inner progress," the rousing or building up of ideals in our inner life. As a psychological process meditation does not lead to any morbid state of mind as is understood by some; it is purely a method of concentrating the attention on some high ideal and even in the preliminary stages is productive of some good in external life of the individual. Nor does the practice of meditation demand absolute solitude or complete withdrawal from social life. For a beginner even amidst active life this could be practised provided he is alert and is not easily distracted by other people.

Nibbana as the only reality is the opposite of manifest existence and will be present when the latter is terminated. On the other hand what leads to manifest existence is consciousness, for we have seen earlier that matter is dependent on mind which in turn is conditioned by craving (Kamma). Craving, again, is the result of ignorance (Avijja), ignorance of life and things as mere process devoid of any enduring substance or self. Thus the concept of substance is at the root of all human problems. It is the illusion

<sup>4</sup> Bradley: Appearance and Reality, p. 305.

<sup>5</sup> Majjhima Nikaya I, 295.

that binds men to the prison walls of the senses. When the true value of existence is understood through Vipassana meditation as an endless process of arising and ceasing to be, when the external world is perceived in its true perspective as a ceaseless movement of atomic particles in varying combinations without any permanent substratum behind, then

there arises in one a feeling of repulsion, or aversion for continued existence. As a methodical system of mental culture in opposition to Dhyana whose objective is confined to the absorption of mind in a Deity, Vipassana meditation is not so much a state of trance as an insight into things as they are (Yathabhutanana dassana). When

this wisdom is gained the individual would have accomplished the task of life (katam karaniyam) and attained the Nibbāna—"the unconditioned." This is the invaluable Prize, the highest reward of all human endeavours which Buddhism as a practical religion above philosophy and science bequeathes to mankind.

## THE THREE BASKETS OF THE BUDDHA DHAMMA

By Ven. BADULLE SHANTI BHADRA,

Tiratana Vihara, Da-Nang, Vietnam

THE teachings of the Buddha are divided into three pitakas—baskets—namely the Vinaya (The Book of Discipline), the Sutta (the popular Book of Discourse) and the Abhidhamma (The Book of abstruse Philosophy). All the rules and regulations framed for the conduct and guidance of Buddhist monks and nuns are put together in the Vinaya Pitaka. The Sutta Pitaka consists of all popular discourses delivered by the Buddha for a period of over forty-five years. The Abhidhamma teaches the deeper side of Buddhist Philosophy. The better part of what is contained in the Abhidhamma is included in the Sutta pitaka, but it is in the Abhidhamma pitaka that the philosophy is clearly set forth, explained, and codified.

The Vinaya Pitaka is divided into five parts. It is arranged thus: (A) Khandhakas containing Maha Vagga and Culla Vagga, (B) the Sutta Vibhanga consisting of Pārājika to Nissaggiya and Pacittiya to Sekhiya and Bhikkhuni Vibhanga and (C) Parivāra. Though this arrangement of this pitaka may not be chronologically correct, yet it gives a clear picture of the growth and development of the Sangha.

The Sutta pitaka consists of five collections—Nikāyas. They are the Dīgha, the Majjhima, the Samyutta,

the Anguttara and the Khuddaka Nikāyas. Some are of opinion that as writing was unknown during the time of the Buddha the arrangement of the Sutta Pitaka is based on the Bhanaka system prevalent in the early days—Dīgha Bhanakas and Majjhima Bhanakas. The Khuddaka Nikāya consists of fifteen books namely, Khuddaka pāṭha, Dhammapada, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Suttanipāta, Vimāna vatthu, Peta vatthu, Thera gāthā, Theri gāthā, Jātaka, Niddesa, Patisambhidā, Apadāna, Buddhavamsa and Cariyāpitaka.

The Abhidhamma pitaka—collection of books on abstruse Philosophy—consists of seven books. They are Dhamma Sangani, Vibhanga, Dhātu-kathā, Puggala-paññatti, Kathā-vathu, Yamaka and Patthāna. Scholars are divided in their opinion as to the authenticity of the Abhidhamma as a direct teaching of the Buddha. Whatever the wranglings and fine hair-splittings of the scholars may be, which are often more confusing and nebulous than enlightening, yet it is clear that the study of the Abhidhamma and constant meditation on it leads one away from passion and to the gradual destruction of defilements; it releases one from the bondage of selfishness and opens the gates of deliverance; it helps to do away

with the constant piling up of rebirths; it makes one to be happy with little thereby leading to a life of contentment; it makes solitude desirable, sweet and enduring; its fruits are exertion and moderation. If these things the Abhidhamma could give, it is worth the study.

Before one takes up seriously the study of the seven books of the Abhidhamma, it is necessary to get some "first aid" as to the fundamentals of this mighty philosophy. This could be done quite conveniently by the study of books like the Abhidhammathā-sanghaha, Abhidhammāvatāra, Nāma-rūpa pariccheda, Paramattha vinicchaya, Nāma-rūpa samāsa, etc. Of these the one held in the highest esteem in all Theravada countries is the Abhidhammatha-sanghaha by Ācariya Anuruddha. There are many ancillary works to this book in many languages. In English such books as the Compendium of Buddhist Philosophy, Buddhist Philosophy, The approach to Patthana, the Psychological attitude of Early Buddhism, Buddhist Dictionary are some which may be helpful.

(From "Stepping Stones to Abhidhamma" (in preparation) by Bhikkhu Shānti Bhadra.)

## THE PURPOSE OF RELIGION

By N. WICKREMASINGHA

"IF one were to do nothing except for a certainty one would do nothing for religion, for it is not certain." says Pascal. We expect our religion to provide a solution to

the riddle of being, but no religion has been found to be capable of doing so. As Macneile Dixon says: "No one can base a belief of intelligence, as to suppose it within the

compass of any man to solve the overwhelming riddle of being, or to fancy that the best of minds can do more than perceive the profundity of the abyss."

There will remain throughout time and beyond time the final unaccountableness. That man should succeed in an inquiry into his own origin is to me a notion never to be realized this side of sanity. The Buddha in his wisdom exhorted us not to seek to know the beginning and the end of man and the universe. Is it not sufficient for us to be satisfied with the proverb: "He who knows that he does not know is never a fool?"

Reality is not to be caught in the meshes of the net of human understanding. However fine the nets we cast, they will come back to us with but a few drops of water clinging to them. As Athanasius confessed: "the more he thought, the less he comprehended," so will it be with the best of us. The understanding on which we place so much reliance draws back in humility from the mysteries of Being and the Universe as we increase in knowledge. If we were to proceed along this path of final unravelment we will journey but never arrive; and so it will be wise to follow the advice of the Buddha and make it our concern to remove the thorn which causes the ache and not delve into the endless story behind it and before it. The fact should suffice that the pain is there and we suffer because of it.

We have now arrived at the answer to the question with which we started. The purpose of religion should be to remove, or at least alleviate the pain of the thorn which is rankling in the hearts of us all. Briefly the pain consists of disease and decay, and all the woe and weariness with which we must eke out our existence. That we should have to struggle with nature to wrest from her the requisite of life is something about which we cannot murmur, but that we should be engaged in a ceaseless conflict with our fellows in achieving this common purpose of us all—to live out our lives in comfort and die in peace—is something which we as beings endowed with powers of will and thought should strive to eliminate. A religion will be serving its purpose to the extent it is successful in the elimination of this conflict between man and man.

The degree to which a religion can create harmony among men is, I consider, the proper criterion by which its value to man should be judged. It is of secondary importance whether a religion shows us the

way to heaven and not to hell, for of the hereafter we know very little of which we are certain; but it is of the utmost concern to all of us to make of this our present life as much of a heaven and as less of a hell as we possibly could. The pains of birth, the sorrows resulting from loss and failure of our crops and substance through fire, flood, drought and their like, and the grief we suffer from the loss of our loved ones are common to us all, and we must perforce put up with them. But the pain and hardship, injustice, privations and losses we suffer as the result of the actions of our fellow-beings—these are ills which we bring upon ourselves, and we must and can free ourselves of them. If a religion will teach us the way to reduce, if not end altogether, this painful friction and opposition among us, such a religion can, I think, be said to serve its purpose.

All religions with any following to speak of attempt to serve this purpose, and their usefulness to man depends on the amount of success they achieve in this. This statement must, however, be taken with this modification. The effectiveness of any religion however eminent it may be suited to bring about harmony and happiness among its adherents will largely depend on the faithfulness with which they practise such teachings. I am inclined to think that religions which are more concerned with taking us to heaven than with making a heaven of this earth are less likely to meet with success than religions which have as their chief objective the establishment of a state of peace and goodwill among us here and now. In this connection it would be to the point to quote Confucius. Replying to a question of Tsz-lu, Confucius said: "Where there is scarcely the ability to minister to living men, how shall there be ability to minister to the spirits;" and again to a question about death, he answered: "Where there is scarcely any knowledge about life, how shall there be any about death?" If according to some of our interpreters of religion today there are heavens for which many of us are said to receive passports by reason of certain meritorious acts of ours. I sometimes wonder how these 'good' souls manage to live in harmony in their heavenly abodes. The revolt of Lucifer against a non-forbearing Jehovah ought to show us how necessary

it is that we should learn to live in peace here before we take up residence in heaven.

However appropriate the precepts of a religion may be for creating peace, amity and happiness among people it can only be as effective as the instructions of a teacher on a group of students in a class—all the students will not benefit equally from the instructions they receive. Therefore the hopes of the virtuous, though followers of the best of religions, to make all the people of even one land live in peace and happiness are doomed to failure by the very nature of men themselves.

Nevertheless, this is no reason to call a halt to our efforts to propagate among our fellows the teachings of our enlightened teachers. Let us, therefore, now examine the teachings of the Buddha and see how far his doctrine will be effective in helping us to eliminate the friction and opposition which poisons human relationships.

Let us take the Pancha Seela (five precepts) which followers of the Buddha daily promise to observe. We promise to abstain from killing. (This, I take it, though it may sound strangely unorthodox, implies that we are in a position to supply the needs of life without resorting to killing.) We promise not to steal. (This implies that we live in a community in which we can earn our living without resorting to theft). We promise to abstain from unrighteous sexual relationships. (This implies that the conditions under which we live make it possible for us to satisfy our legitimate sexual needs within the limits laid down). We promise not to lie. (This implies that the conditions under which we live are such that it is possible for us to procure that which is essential for the maintenance of life without resorting to falsehood). We promise to abstain from intoxicants. (This implies that we are free from worries which are not of our own seeking, and that the conditions under which we live are such that we are able to have our legitimate share of enjoyment without having to resort to intoxicants in order to bring about a fleeting state of happiness.\*)

That the Buddha in announcing these precepts for the laity did not exclude from consideration the above implications underlying them is borne out by the fact that in the

Sigalovada Sutta it is said that these precepts are violated only when we are actuated to do so by affection, anger, fear and ignorance. Therefore, I am inclined to think that we have good grounds for concluding that no culpable violation of the precepts is involved in actions solely motivated by the irresistible driving force of self-preservation. This conclusion gains further support from the Vyaggapajja Sutta where the Buddha deems it justifiable for the householder to protect his rightfully gotten goods (and his legitimate civil rights, too) from burglars, jealous relatives, neighbours, etc.; and there is no stipulation that in doing so he must restrict his protective measures to the limits of the five precepts. This contention is further buttressed by the contents of the Mangala Sutta where the Buddha in enumerating that which is good for us mentions such conditions as residence in a favourable place where good and virtuous people live, associating with the wise and avoiding association with the unwise, respecting those worthy of respect, and looking after, supporting and helping aged parents, wife and children, and kith and kin.

This view of the five precepts and the Buddha's advice to the laity which it is my intention to drive home to the reader is of the greatest value to make our earthly life free from a great majority of the ills from which it suffers at present. There is little use in mouthing a set of precepts, a perfect adherent of which can scarcely be found among the entire Buddhist population of Ceylon. The very interpretation of the precepts as done by our religious instructors which in its demands upon us is so much more exacting than what the Buddha intended, reduces their value as a guide for the householder. It is this over-strict interpretation which, I think,

is largely responsible for making the Pancha Seela a set of rules about the observance of which very few persons trouble themselves. Thus, I believe, the best set of precepts which humanity has received from any teacher has lost much of its power as an instrument for the discipline of human beings.

There are few religions which are the equal, and none which surpass Buddhism in the thoroughness of its instruction to the laymen for making their earthly lives happy and peaceful. The Sigalovada, Vyaggapajja and Parabawa suttas are unparalleled in the comprehensiveness of the advice they contain for the layman. The rest of the Tripitaka, too, contains a vast profusion of exhortation intended for our guidance in everyday life. The Buddha made this plain to us by the manner in which he concluded so many of these suttas: "This will be conducive to your happiness in this life and the next." And from the Jataka (Birth) stories the layman can cull a store of information for the wise and proper management of our daily lives which is almost unique.

"When you see men in disharmony," says the Thathagatha in the Upasika-sila-sutta, "try to create harmony. Speak of good in others and never of their faults. Cherish a good mind even for your enemy. Hold to the mind of compassion and regard all beings as your parents." In another sutta he says: "Do not advise others to do things which you do not desire for yourself.

Now it may be asked how it is that in spite of being heirs to this exhaustive legacy of worldly wisdom we have failed so miserably in occupying the topmost rung among the non-violent, law-abiding peoples of the world. This is largely due to our failure to pay sufficient heed in accordance with the first principle of

Buddhism to the effects of the law of transiency on religion. We have failed to take into account the fact that Buddhism as taught 2000 years ago to a people under a system of feudalism in an age of faith and unquestioning dependence on an oligarchy consisting of a handful of the laity and clergy is far from suitable for a people who have changed in a period of 19 centuries into a highly literate democratic nation rationalistic in outlook and scientific in thought. Convincing proof of the correctness of the above conclusion came to hand this very moment. A learned Bhikkhu was giving a talk over the wireless on the Buddha words: "*Māhā pithū upatthanaṃ . . . etaṃ mangala muttamaṃ.*" In his discourse of nearly half an hour he expatiated much on filial duties and their efficacy in gaining a passport to heaven; but not a word did he say as to the worldly benefits children would derive from the fulfilment of their duty to their parents—the regard, helpfulness and confidence with which their neighbours would treat such dutiful children, and thus prove to his listeners how the performance of filial duties becomes a mangallya (an action which brings us prosperity and happiness in this very life).

The most urgent need of Buddhism today is an effective method of teaching and a right way of life in regard to both layman and monk. Mere erudite knowledge of the Tripitaka and sacrosanct ritualism must give way to the most important matter of making Buddhism a living experience and not something we flaunt in the face of the world as a treasure we have most zealously guarded these two thousand odd years.

"Field View,"

Totagoda, Akmeemana.

5th May, 1957.

## THE FORUM

We are commencing, with this issue, another discussion. The question proposed by "Gemunu", who wishes to remain unknown, is very important in view of the controversy which has been going on for some time regarding the Tāpasa monks and the Vinayavardhana Movement.

### WILL BUDDHISM BE DESTROYED FROM WITHIN?

IN an article appearing in an Indian publication sometime ago an Indian Buddhist writing on Buddha Jayanthi, discussed the ceaseless

efforts made by the Hindu Brahmins to destroy the Buddha Sasana in India. He said that tradition still speaks of the tremendous

made in this direction and how ultimately they succeeded in destroying the foundations of the Bhikkhu Order leading to the disap-

pearance of the Sasana from its motherland.

\* \* \*

Tradition has it, so the writer said that the Sasana was flourishing in India inspite of all efforts to destroy it, and this occasioned great jealousy and anger among the Brahamin priesthood. They, therefore, summoned a Council of the top-ranking and eminent Brahamins from all over India and the question of what steps should be taken to destroy and banish this "heresy" from India was discussed at this Council. It was on this occasion that a young and brilliant Brahamin, who was later to distinguish himself as a great Dialectician, drew the attention of the council to Buddha's own question: *Eka Nāma kim?* and the answer: *Aharattithica* (meaning "What is the first essential (of the Order)?" and the answer: "Food") and pointed out that if the first essential of the Order as propounded by Buddha Himself, namely alms to the Bhikkhus was denied to them, they could not exist and would automatically disappear! This was hailed as a brilliant suggestion by the Council, as it undoubtedly was, and they discussed ways and means of implementing it.

To this to the young Brahamin gave the solution. He suggested that they should carry out intensive propaganda that the Buddha's Order had fallen on evil days; that the Bhikkhus no longer observed the *Vinaya* rules; that they were therefore not deserving of alms; that it was more meritorious to give alms to beggars and the poor in these circumstances; that the people should, therefore, desist from housing, feeding and supporting the Bhikkhus.

This decision was carried out with great vigour throughout India, and the propaganda against the Bhikkhus was so intense that people began to accept it and cease giving alms and supporting the Bhikkhu Order. This naturally had the desired and inevitable result of starving Bhikkhus leaving the Order for the lay life or embracing Hinduism. And before very long Buddhism, which had written the most glorious pages in Indian History and Culture, disappeared from the face of India leaving only its traces!

\* \* \*

It is very strange indeed that on the eve of Buddha Jayanthi, an

exactly similar movement came to be initiated in this Island by some misguided evil-genius and his followers who set out to reform the Sangha! Their professed aim is to make the Bhikkhus more *Vinaya-garuka* (observe the rules of the Order more strictly) and they deny alms to those whom they consider *Alajjis* and *Dusseelas* (those who have relaxed the observance of the rules). But, strange as it may seem, *the methods adopted by these people to persuade the Sangha to observe the rules are precisely the same as those adopted by the Brahamins in India to destroy the Sasana in its motherland!*

One may even wonder whether the self-same Brahamins have been reborn in this land to destroy the religion from within! This is not as far-fetched as it may seem. It is an accepted fact among Buddhists that people who devote great concentration and energy in any direction are reborn to carry on the same work in subsequent lives. It is not an impossibility for those campaigning Brahamins to have vowed to be reborn as Buddhists where traces of Buddhism still remained and destroy the remaining traces from within!

Be that as it may, there are misguided Buddhists amongst us who have supported and continue to support this movement little realising that thereby they are helping to destroy the very foundations of the religion. They are also unaware of the disconcerting fact that the propaganda and the methods of this movement were the identical propaganda and methods which contributed to the total destruction of the Sasana in India!!

\* \* \*

The Buddhist public in this country should give serious thought and consideration to this question and also to the following alarming facts:

This movement is now rapidly gaining ground throughout the Island and is receiving ample financial support.

The movement now has nearly 200 schools throughout the Island. It has built new and spacious premises at Head Quarters, purchased an expensive Motor Van for propaganda work, established a Printing Press which publishes a periodical that carries articles questioning and ridiculing all that is considered sacred by the Buddhists. Where the financial

assistance for all this comes from is somewhat of a mystery.

Take an average of 250 pupils for each of these 200 schools, and take an average of ten people in each of the Buddhist family from which these children come. It means that 50,000 Buddhist adults in this country have already accepted the view that the Bhikkhus of today are not deserving of respect, support or alms and have ceased to give alms; it also means that into the minds of 50,000 Buddhist children this poison is being daily injected and they will grow up in the firm view that the present-day Bhikkhus should be despised and not supported! There will thus be 100,000 Buddhists very soon who will not respect, give alms to or support the Bhikkhus. And the numbers are increasing as the movement is growing and will continue to grow under the financial support it is so freely receiving! Add to them those who have accepted the irreligious Communist Creed, and you have there the beginnings of the end of the Sasana in this land!

\* \* \*

Need there be any other movement in this country to destroy all traces of Buddhism from this Dhamma Deepa, than this misguided movement which some misguided evil-genius has started from within? The easiest method of destroying an organisation is to initiate a movement from within itself calculated to destroy it. That movement is now well established thanks to the Buddhists themselves. And no wonder there are foreign organisations eager to help the movement!

\* \* \*

The Buddhists are today wide awake and are fighting on every front to preserve their noble heritage and hand it down to posterity. May they open their eyes to the enemy within its gates before it is too late.

\* \* \*

Is it too much to hope that these misguided people, who are developing this Anti-Sasana movement, will themselves realise its sinister implications, as compared with the similar Indian movement which destroyed the Sasana in India, and change their methods even at this date? Immense damage has already been done and is being done every day this Doctrine of Hate against the Bhikkhus is preached.



It may be that the leader of this movement is quite well-intentioned and quite honest in his endeavours to reform the Bhikkhu-Sasana. If he is, will he seriously consider the sinister implications of the movements he has fathered on his Buddhist brethren and even now change the methods which will undoubtedly lead to the destruction of the Sasana from this Dhamma-Deepa ?

Surely it is common sense that no wrong-doer can be reformed by criticising him, abusing him and boycotting him ! The Bhikkhus can exist only on the charity of their followers. Deny alms to them and boycott them, and you force them out of the Order or force them to seek other means of livelihood as it happened in India ! And, is it

the aim of these misguided people to achieve the same end in Sri Lanka ? May they open their eyes even at this date and may they arrest the immense mischief and the immense harm they have already done and are doing to the Sasana in this Dhamma Deepa. May they cease to be the grave-diggers of the Sasana they unwittingly are at present. May they see light !!

## THE BUDDHIST LAW OF KAMMA

By CHANDRA GOONETILLEKE

“ By Kamma the world moves,  
By Kamma men live,  
And by Kamma are beings  
bound,  
As by its pin the rolling chariot  
wheel ;  
By Kamma one attains glory  
and praise,  
By Kamma bondage, ruin, ty-  
ranny,  
Knowing that Kamma bears  
fruit manifold,  
Why say ye, ‘ In this world no  
Kamma is ’ ? ”

“ **KAMMA** ” literally means “ ac-  
tion.” In its ultimate sense  
Kamma means good and bad volition  
(Kusala Akusala Cetana). The Bud-  
dha declared “ O Bhikkhus, volition  
is Kamma. Having willed, one acts  
by body, speech and thought.”  
There is no Kamma where there is  
no consciousness (Nama) nor is any  
action a Kamma which is uninten-  
tional, for Kamma depends on the  
will or volition that is involved in  
the doing. Any deed which is de-  
void of intention is therefore not  
called Kamma. In the working of  
Kamma, mind is the most important  
factor. All our actions, words and  
thoughts are biased by the mind or  
consciousness we experience at such  
particular moments. For it is said  
“ By mind is the world led, by mind  
is drawn and all men own sovereignty  
of mind.” When we perceive the  
inequalities and the manifold desti-

nies of men and the various grada-  
tions of beings prevalent in the  
world today, we begin to wonder  
why it is that one is born into a  
condition of affluence and another  
into a condition of poverty and  
wretchedness ? Why it is that  
when a man is virtuous and good, ill-  
luck should always dodge his foot-  
steps ? Why is a man poor in spite  
of his honest dealings and another  
rich and respected despite his  
numerous short-comings and evil  
modes of life ? Why should a child  
die when still a baby, why should one  
be sick and infirm and another  
strong and healthy ? Why should  
one be beautiful and another repul-  
sive ? Why should one be a mental  
prodigy and another an idiot or an  
imbecile ? Why should one be  
brought up in the lap of luxury and  
another steeped to the lips in misery ?  
How are we to account for this  
immense diversity ?

A number of thinking men believe  
that variations of this nature are  
entirely due to heredity and environ-  
ment. No doubt they are partly  
instrumental, but surely they cannot  
be solely responsible for the subtle  
distinctions that exist between cer-  
tain individuals. Take the case of  
twins for example, who may be  
physically alike and may share equal  
privileges of upbringing, yet turn  
out to be both intellectually and  
temperamentally different. Accord-  
ing to Buddhism this variation is due

not only to heredity and environ-  
ment but also to our own Kamma, or  
in other words, our own actions.  
For it is said that we ourselves are  
responsible for our own happiness  
and our own sorrow. We create our  
own heavens and our own hells. In  
short we are the architects of our  
own fate.

According to the Chulakamma-  
Vibhanga Sutta of the Majjhima  
Nikaya, it is said that on one occa-  
sion a certain young man named  
Subha approached the Buddha, and  
questioned him as to why it was  
that there were low and high states  
among human beings. “ For,” said  
he, “ we find among mankind those  
of brief life, the hale and the ailing,  
the good-looking and ill looking, the  
influential and the uninfluential, the  
poor and the rich, the low-born and  
the high-born, the ignorant and the  
intelligent.”

The Buddha replied “ Every living  
being has Kamma as its own, its  
inheritance, its cause, its kinsman,  
its refuge. Kamma is that which  
differentiates all living beings into  
low and high states.” In enumer-  
ating the causes for such differences  
he went on to say that if a person  
destroys life, is a hunter who besmers  
his hands with blood and is not  
merciful towards living beings. He,  
as a result of his killing, when born  
amongst mankind, would have a  
brief life. On the other hand, if a  
person avoids killing and is merci-

ful towards all living beings, he, as a result of it, when born amongst mankind, would enjoy long life. If a man is in the habit of harming others with fist or cudgel, he, as a result of his harmfulness, when born amongst mankind, would suffer from various diseases. While if a person is not in the habit of harming others, he, as a result of his harmlessness, would enjoy good health. If a person is wrathful and easily irritated by trivial words and gives way to anger, ill-will and resentment, he, as a result of his irritability, when born amongst mankind, would be unprepossessing. While if a person is not wrathful and does not easily give vent to anger, ill-will and resentment, he, as a result of his amiability, would be good-looking when born amongst mankind. If a person is jealous, envies the gains of others and stores jealousy in his heart, he, as a result of his jealousy, when born amongst mankind, would be uninfluential. While if a person is not jealous, does not envy the gains of others, he, as a result of his non-jealousy, would be born influential. If a person is stubborn and haughty and honours not those worthy of honour, he, as a result of his arrogance and irreverence, when born amongst mankind, would be reborn in a low family. If a person is not stubborn or haughty and honours those worthy of honour, he, on account of his humility and deference, when born amongst mankind, would be reborn in a high family. If a person does not approach the learned and the virtuous in order to inquire what is evil and what is good, what is right and what is wrong, what conduces to one's welfare and what to the reverse, he, as result of his non-inquiring spirit, when born amongst mankind, will be of low intelligence. While if a person does approach the learned and the virtuous and makes the above inquiries, he, as a result of his inquiring spirit, when born amongst mankind, will be intelligent. "Depending on this difference in Kamma appears the difference in the birth of beings, high and low,

base and exalted, happy and miserable. Depending on this difference appears the difference in the individual features of beings as beautiful and ugly, high-born and low-born, well-built and deformed. Depending also on this difference in Kamma appears the difference in the worldly conditions of beings as gains and loss, fame and dishonour, blame and praise, happiness and misery. Thus, we see that our mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual differences are mainly due to our own actions. Yet we must bear in mind the fact that although Buddhism attributes this variation to Kamma, yet it does not assert that *everything is due to Kamma*.

This gives rise to the question ; Is one bound to reap all that one has sown in just proportion ? Not necessarily is the answer because in the Anguttara Nikaya the Buddha states :—" If any one says, O Bhikkhus, that a man must reap according to his deeds, in that case, O Bhikkhus, there is no religious life nor is an opportunity afforded for the entire extinction of sorrow (Dukkha). But if any one says, O Bhikkhus, that what a man reaps accords with his deeds, in that case, O Bhikkhus, there is a religious life and an opportunity is afforded for the entire extinction of sorrow." In Buddhism therefore it is always possible to mould one's Kamma as one is not always compelled by an iron necessity. Although it is stated that neither in heaven nor in mid-sea is there a place where one can escape one's evil Kamma, yet one is not bound to pay all the past arrears of past Kamma. There is a chance for even the most vicious person to become virtuous by his own effort. We are always becoming something and that something depends on our own will and actions. Who thought that Angulimala the highway robber and murderer would have become a saint ? But he did become an arahat and erased, so to say, all his past Akusala Kamma. Who ever thought that Asoka who was nicknamed Candā or Wicked Asoka on

account of the atrocieties committed by him to expand his empire would ever win the noble title Dhammasoka or Asoka the Righteous ? But he did completely change his career to such an extent that historians commented thus : " Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history, their majesties and graciousnesses and serenities and royal highness and the like, the name of Asoka shines and shines almost alone above a star." These two instances illustrate the fact that a complete reformation of character could be brought about by our own thoughts and actions.

In the working of Kamma it should be understood that there are forces that counteract and support this self-operating law. Birth (Gati) time or conditions (Kala) beauty (Upadhi) and effort (Payoga) are such aids and hinderances to the fruition of Kamma. If for instance a person is born in a noble family, his fortunate birth will act sometimes as a hinderance to the fruition of his evil Kamma. If on the other hand he is born in a poor unfortunate family his unfavourable birth will provide an easy opportunity for his evil Kamma to work. This is known as Gati Sapathi (Favourable Birth) and Gati Vipathi (Unfavourable Birth). An unintelligent person who by some good Kamma is born in a royal family will on account of his noble parentage be honoured by the people. If the same person were to have a less fortunate birth, he would not be similarly treated. Thus it is seen that due to counteractive and supportive factors Kamma is sometimes influenced by external circumstances.

Every birth is conditioned by a past good or bad Kamma which predominates at the moment of death. The Kamma that conditions the future birth is called Janaka Kamma. Our forms are but the outward manifestations of the invisible Kammic force. This all-pervading force carries with it all our characteristics, which usually lie

latent, but may rise to the surface at unexpected moments. The death of an individual is merely a temporal end of a temporal phenomenon, though the present form perishes another form which is neither the same nor entirely different takes place according to the thought that was powerful at the moment of death, as the Kammic force which propels the life flux still survives. It is this last thought which is technically called Janaka Kamma, that determines the states of the individual in his subsequent birth.

Kamma as we have seen is action and Vipaka, fruit is its re-action. It is not fate. It is not pre-destination which is imposed on us by some mysterious unknown power, to which we must helplessly submit ourselves. It is one's own doing which reacts on one's own self. It is a law in itself. It is this doctrine of Kamma which a mother teaches her child when she says: "Be good and you will be happy and others will love you. But if you are bad, you will be unhappy and others will hate you."

The Samyutta Nikaya states :—

"According to the seed that's sown,

So is the fruit ye reap therefrom,

Doer of good will gather good,

Doer of evil, evil reaps,

Sown is the seed, and thou shalt taste,

The fruit thereof."

The so-called "I" which is composed of mind and matter is compelled to act. It receives impressions from internal and external stimuli. Sensations arise thereby and owing to the latent ignorance and craving one does both good and evil, which consequently produces rebirth in states of happiness. Evil acts lead to misery, good acts lead to happiness. Furthermore, good actions are necessary to escape this cycle of rebirth. One accumulates Kamma by not knowing things as they truly are, as it is said that no Kamma is accumulated by a person who has completely eradicated his craving.

It is this doctrine of Kamma that gives consolation, hope and self-

reliance to a Buddhist. When the unexpected happens to him and when he is beset with insurmountable difficulties and unbearable misfortunes he consoles himself with the thought that they are the results of his own past doings. A Buddhist who is fully convinced of the truth of the doctrine of Kamma does not pray to another to be saved but confidently relies on himself for his salvation. It is this belief that validates his effort and kindles his enthusiasm and prompts him to refrain from evil and do good without ever being frightened of any punishments or tempted by any rewards. The words, "rewards" and "punishments" do not enter into discussions, concerning Kamma as we Buddhists do not recognize an Almighty Being who sits on judgment in the heavens above. On the contrary, we do firmly believe that we are the architects of our own fate.

*"Sabbe satta bhavantu  
sukhitatta"*

"May all beings be well  
and happy"

1, Ripon Road, Colombo 3.

## MR. LOGANATHAN'S PLAN FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ASIA

MR. Loganathan, General Manager of the Bank of Ceylon, has issued a pamphlet on the subject of "The Private Sector and Economic Development in the Underdeveloped Countries of Asia." This is an elaboration of a paper which Mr. Loganathan contributed to the International Industrial Development Conference held recently in San Francisco. He has in this paper put forward a new idea for the economic development of Asia within a democratic political structure. The scheme if adopted will enable the workers initially, and all sections of the people progressively,

to be shareholders in the various industries of the country.

Capitalism as we have in Asia today does not look after the interests of the workers; and Communism again creates a new bureaucratic class which in practice has no identity of interests with the workers, who will be like a flock of wage earners. Mr. Loganathan's scheme provides for the workers themselves to be part owners of Industry and Agriculture. It also will enable a rapid increase in the country's national output, and progressively reduce inequalities of

wealth and opportunity without jeopardising our democratic way of life.

Democracy is necessary for the existence of individual freedom as long as it does not lead to any excesses or activities which run counter to community interests. All religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Mohammedanism will have no meaning without individual freedom and it is hoped therefore that Mr. Loganathan's scheme will attract the attention of not only Government, but every Asian whether he be employer or employee.

# NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MAHA BODHI SOCIETY OF INDIA

**T**HE 64th Annual General Meeting of the Maha Bodhi Society of India was held at the Society Headquarters in College Square, Calcutta, on Sunday, the 1st December, 1957, at 4 p.m.

The Maharaj Kumar of Sikkim, President of the Society, took the Chair and there was a fair gathering of members present. The following office-bearers were elected for 1958-1959 :—

*President* : The Maharaj Kumar of Sikkim.

*Vice-Presidents* : Sri Keshab Chandra Gupta, Dr. M. R. Soft, Sri N. C. Ghosh, Dr. Nalinaksha Dutt, Sri Saila Kumar Mukherjee.

*General Secretary* : Sri D. Valisinha.

*Joint Secretaries* : Ven. N. Jinaratana, Ven. M. Sangharatana.

*Treasurer* : Sri J. M. Majumdar.

*Assistant Treasurer* : Sri Amiya Kanta Ganguly.

Sri D. Valisinha, General Secretary, placed before the meeting report of the Society from 1954 to 1956 giving a short account of the activities during this period.

The following resolutions were passed :—

Resolved that this Annual General Meeting of the Maha Bodhi Society of India held at the Society's Headquarters in Calcutta, on Sunday, 1st December, 1957, under the chairmanship of its President, the Maharaj Kumar of Sikkim, heartily congratulates the depressed classes of India on their wise decision to embrace Buddhism, their former faith, which had transformed India into a holy land for five hundred

million people professing Buddhism all over the world. This meeting observes with great satisfaction that already over 5,000,000 people have declared themselves Buddhists and that others will follow in due course.

This meeting records with profound regret and deep concern at the reports from various places where there has been recent conversions of scheduled castes and backward classes to Buddhism that special privileges of scheduled castes which they were enjoying have been taken away from them. This meeting urges that by simple conversion into Buddhism their social and economic backwardness does not suddenly change. This meeting, therefore, draws the attention of the authorities that these newly converted Buddhists should, for the present, continue to enjoy special privileges of backward and scheduled caste communities and, if necessary, suitable legislation be undertaken to give effect thereto.

Resolved that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers of different States.

Resolved that a Deputation under the leadership of the President of the Society do wait upon the Prime Minister to place before him all facts regarding the position of the neo-Buddhists and seek his advice.

Resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister.

Resolved that this meeting, while deeply appreciating the action of the

Government of India in declaring the birthday of Lord Buddha as a Government of India holiday ; requests, them to declare it a public holiday under the Negotiable Instruments Act in view of the fact that all members of the Hindu and Buddhist Communities in India observe the sacred event with religious rites and ceremonies.

Resolved that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the Prime Minister and other Ministers concerned.

The General Secretary then addressed the meeting appealing to members to give the fullest co-operation possible in carrying out the future activities of the Society.

The Maharaj Kumar of Sikkim, President, thanked the members for the confidence placed in him by re-electing him as the President of the Society.

Sri N. C. Ghosh, one of the Vice-Presidents, treated those present with light refreshments.

### NOTE

**D**UE to circumstances beyond our control the last three issues of "the Buddhist" could not be sent to our readers in time. We are doing our best to ensure that from the next issue "The Buddhist" reaches you within the first week of the month.

We will appreciate very much any assistance our readers give us in sending us articles for publication.

EDITORS.

All members are kindly requested to donate at least one year's membership fee to the Fort Branch Building Fund, and enrol a new member each month.

*For particulars please write*

**Hony. General Secretary,  
Y. M. B. A.,  
Colombo.**