

THE BUDDHIST

(Organ of the Colombo Young Men's Buddhist Association)

“Sīla Paññānato Jayam”



FOUNDED 1888

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Vol. XXX]

REGISTERED AS A
NEWSPAPER IN CEYLON

JANUARY, 1960

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

[No. 9

THE “CONQUEST” OF COLOMBO FORT!

By G. W. DAVID De SILVA

THE Wheel of the Eight-fold World Order “*Asta-Loka-Dharma-chakra*”—grinds slowly but heavily for ever, without fear or favour. In the process of the rise and subsidence of its formidable spokes the dispensation of the inexorable effects of a single spokesman glaringly and keenly felt by all animate and inanimate appear to be timed in accordance with the age-limit of the individual, state, country or empire concerned.

The inevitable imposition of those eight beneficial or dismal effects in opposing pairs:—gain-loss; glory-dishonour; adulation-reproach; joy-sorrow—on an individual could be checked in his life span from birth to death by those interested. The austere or soothing inescapable values descend on him with certainty as day follows night. The various vicissitudes of states, countries and empires that rose and fell to decay and disruption under the diverse spells of the Wheel are recorded in the histories of individual countries . . . And in that wake, this Thrice-Blest beautiful Island home of ours, too, had been no exception. The annals of regular calamities faced by our ancestors are too dismal for narration. They possess

latent wrath to cause spasms of impotent fury.

In such destructive onslaughts, formidable and unprecedented avalanches of dismal woe, confusion, frustration, destruction and carnage that were unleashed in waves of demonic tyranny by the Portuguese pirates in this land since 1505 pales into insignificance the atrocities committed in the Spanish Inquisition, let alone other butcheries carried out in various European countries. That succourless and calamitous era covering over a century is the darkest chapter in our history. It enforced on the whole Island in general, a venomous hollow culture diametrically opposite to that successfully nurtured through Buddhist principles and ethics. The major brunt of all that was chiefly borne by the coastal dwellers as the burden of the assaults were mostly pressed on in the maritime belt.

Looting, debauchery, bacchanalianism, homicide and destruction were the order of the day. Those in fighting lines consumed par-boiled meats mixed up with highly spiced “hot” pickles using heavy doses of crude alcoholic beverages in this hot climate and have to face the introduction of various new diseases.

Parallel to this, shiploads of useless indiscipline vagrants of that land brought in here for the desolation of this glorious Island, mostly suffering from advanced sex diseases for which they apparently possessed no radical cure, left us shocking legacies in the form of social diseases, parangi and allied skin diseases. Their destructive descent here accoutred with guns perplexed the inhabitants at first. Yet they fought valiantly and dauntlessly with primitive but destructive weapons gradually replaced by guns. In a lyric of the day describing the advent, one poem runs:—

“නම නමන්ගේ දෙ ස
හැර ඇවිත් ප්‍රතිකල් ද ස
සත් සේනගන් විල ස
කොළොම් පුරමල් තොටට ගොඩබැස”

Ever since the enforced descent of the intruder here, they were counting on the limitless potential advantages in creating chaos by force of crude arms aimed to enrich their mother country with ship-loads of treasures and riches thus plundered. If this plundering alone had been the only motive, at least a poor consolation would have prevailed. But to add insult to injury, it was the imposition of their terror-striking,

unconvincing and revolting theistic cult on a highly organised and a peace-loving nation tolerably moulded, zealously disciplined, devoutly cultured and pre-eminently emancipated through the aegis of the vastly superior code of Buddhist ethics and principles, that unleashed their utter disgust and fury against the "demonic" invaders.

Legions of undisciplined, crude human-vultures with their religious symbol in one hand and sword in the other, broke forth with murderous zeal upon innocent victims—men, women, and their tender sucklings and children and dismembered in thousands. Sacred monuments and architectural masterpieces were ruthlessly attacked and rased against much spirited opposition and looted . . . This process of pillaging continued for a century . . . There were no making of amends for the desolation driven deep into land and society.

The corrosion of the invaders' hearts was so thick and remorseless that the question of a single compensatory public work for common good or utility was never thought of, at least to serve as a poor symbol to cover extensive pillage, looting, arson and murder. Instead, with the forced proselytisation which effectually rent asunder the nation into suspicious religious factions and camps, a legacy was left behind in the creation of the now much ridiculed "Thuppahi" institution.

This process of ruthless destruction continued for over a century when the Portuguese, as per mighty rolling of the Wheel decreed, had to face the Dutch who succeeded in driving the former out. The latter, after toeing in a slightly humane form the same path as ignominiously pursued by the vanquished Portuguese armies, in turn (after about a century and a half of ruling in maritime provinces) was ousted by the British. But none of these then great powers was able to bring to knees an ancient and a noble race with a glorious and a proud heritage.

The tangle created by the desolate activities of these three nations deprived the Sinhala race of means to maintain their culture and religion (Buddhism) in pristine glory. Their diplomatic activities would have squeezed out their religion from Lanka, but for the timely arrival, as had traditionally always happened at a very crucial stage of existence of religion and race, of a Colossus into the scene of despondency and

disorganisation. Under the sway of British rule, the embryonic town of Colombo was assuming proportions and the propagation of their religion was carried out in subtler methods which did not cost the physical life of Buddhists, but subtle ways were powerfully enacted gradually to squeeze out the despondent spirituality left in them.

Buildings, godowns and various other institutions slowly took shape for the use of expanding trading enterprises. Amidst the onward demoralising march under two regimes, a number of churches of various Christian factions were built, all over Colombo and other important towns slowly springing up in seaboard hamlets, in the name of all available Christian saints and thanked their Almighty for providing wisdom, courage and strength either to crush or proselytise the Sinhala race with those activities culminating in blood-baths. The British added their quota of churches.

Remaining militant Sinhala Buddhists retreated to pockets dominated by their own towards East and North of Colombo. But till about 1870 no Bhikkhu in particular or a Buddhist in general was allowed to move about freely. Scurrilous epithets were freely hurled both at the Maha-Sangha and the laity. In some instances even manhandling had taken place with somewhat ugly results. Those who indulged in such were the favoured of the governing class. They proudly regarded and claimed such barbarous actions to be their privilege and impulsively impressed on the victims the superiority of their religion!

As trade expanded, churches and missions were greatly benefited and expanded at the expense of the culture and the religion of the land. With these activities Fort became the pivotal centre of all activities pertaining to trade, government, religion, export etc. In this wake the "native" quarters, too, took cue and gradually started to assess things for their own welfare. But the start for the full swing was not appreciably attained due to numerous adverse circumstances until the arrival of the great educationalist and redoubtable reformer from America, Col. Henry Steele Olcott. Buddhist schools, temples and various institutions were founded in various places save in the Fort area which remained "out of bounds" for the natives. The presently used Buddhist flag, too, was originated by him.

Once again the Wheel had decreed a good "spoke" for us! Ruling power of the country had been procured by the Ceylonese. With it, after protracted discussions, a plot of land was released in the heart of Colombo Fort for the establishment of the first Buddhist venture—a branch of the Central Y.M.B.A. It was almost begging for a room in one's own mansion! With the zeal and energy that serves highest in fortitude so synonymous with Buddhist activities in the twentieth century, the Central Y.M.B.A. very judiciously completed first the most *Important and Sacred* arm of the venture—*The Buddha Mandira*—by about middle of 1958. It was the first of its kind ever to have been constructed in the Fort and the sagaciousness of this vital structure could easily be gauged by the extensive use derived of it by hundreds of Buddhists employed in Fort, visiting the Sanctuary morning and evening. The Padmasan Buddha Rupa in Samadhi posture—replica of the famous statue at Anuradhapura—cast in bronze, is the most venerated attraction within the structure. There it stands modest in sweet elegance, adorned with the famous inscrutable smile, surpassingly immaculate, commanding in impotent majesty and receiving uncatered homage of devoted hundreds, a veritable Mecca for Buddhist workers in the Fort.

Thus, a much cherished dream of Buddhist Ceylon denied fruition for centuries under foreign yoke, manifested itself in reality. The stark "darkness" that enveloped the "sealed" section of the metropolis vanished for ever. The "beginning of the end" had ushered in! The lingering fragrance of the "*Only Flower that Blossomed in the Royal Sakyam Lotus Cluster*" commenced to winnow the invitingly soft fragrance in all-embracing compassionate lovingness and permeated the entire surroundings . . . Thus, at long last Colombo Fort was conquered culturally, religiously and nationally! . . . To the credit of the pioneers of the Y.M.B.A. two great monumental achievements stand in eloquent testimony—the acquisition of "Mahānil" for the Central Y.M.B.A. and the gradual fruition of the Fort Y.M.B.A., not to mention equally important various ventures initiated (the colossal venture and its stupendous success of the Buddhist Sunday School Examination which is a staggering marvel to all) for the successful onward march of Buddhism.

THE SPIRIT OF THE VINAYA

By SRAMANERA JIVAKA

TO every Law there are two aspects, the letter and the spirit. Sometimes the one is observed, sometimes the other, sometimes both. If the letter is broken, normally punishment falls; it is easy to see the infringement and the culprit is called to account. If the spirit is broken but the letter kept, then there is less likelihood of any penalty being enforced, because the letter, being more tangible, makes it difficult to assert any offence. The culprit can point to his strict compliance with it.

Herein is the main defectiveness of Law as a whole, seen most clearly. For Law is necessary because of the innate tendency of man to wrongdoing, yet it is just because of that tendency that the Law fails to be efficient. Here one cannot but help recall that famous passage :

“What, Sir, is the cause and the reason why, in bygone days, there were fewer rules of conduct and more Arahants, whereas nowadays there are more rules and fewer Arahants ?”

“It is because, when men fall away and the Truth wanes, rules are multiplied and there are fewer Arahants . . .” (Majj. Nik I, 446.)

Hence those whose morals and principles are weak, will tend to observe the letter of the law when necessary to avoid reproof or punishment, whereas those whose sense of values run deeper, will perceive that the letter is unimportant compared with the spirit, and that if the spirit is broken then it is dishonourable to keep the letter. And if the principle on which the law is based either no longer applies or is impossible to keep (not merely inconvenient), then it is time for the letter to be abolished, lest the whole Principle of Law falls into disrepute.

Now like every other ancient code of rules, the Pātimokka, as the condensed version of the Vinaya, is suffering from the passage of time and the change in world conditions that has occurred during

2,500 years, the greatest and most rapid changes having taken place this century. Many Pātimokka rules can no longer be kept except by those few who, buried in their monasteries, spend a lifetime in meditation. But there is also the spread of the Dharma to be considered. Hence rules are freely broken. When challenged, the default is defended on the grounds that they are only minor rules.

But which are minor and which major rules? The First Council itself was unable to decide this knotty point even within months of the Master's death. How then are we able to do it now? The four Parijjikas are naturally major. But what else besides, if anything? What of the Ten Precepts? These were apparently singled out by the Buddha as the token of renunciation to be taken by all who wished to don the yellow robes. Should they continue to be taken in their present form by persons who know that they will unblushingly break them within a matter of days? Surely this makes a mockery of renunciation? But the only alternative is to alter the rules and this meets with rigid opposition from persons who seem to prefer to break rather than amend them.

The First Council, as it could not decide what were the minor rules that might be rescinded at the suggestion of the Buddha Himself, decided that all must be kept rigidly. One hundred years later we find the Vaisāli monks being ejected from the Sangha as a result of insisting that some of the rules should be relaxed to meet changing circumstances. *They had begun to handle money, amongst other things, to buy requisites for themselves. On this point the Buddha had been adamant. His monks were not to accept money or have anything to do with business.* But the Vaisāli monks were not being looked after by the laity in their district and had difficulty in keeping themselves alive. This comes out clearly in the story of the Vaisāli villagers

promise Yasa that in future they will make an effort with regard to food, lodgings, robes and medicines for the bhikkhus. Obviously they had not been doing so. The other monks, who were still being maintained, and possibly well maintained, merely accused the Vaisāli monks of wishing to return to a life of luxury. The Vaisali monks lose their case. Money is not to be accepted by individual members of the Sangha.

But what is this that we see happening but one hundred years later? In the Mahāvamsa, a Sinhalese Scriptural work, we read the following, naively put down and apparently without the writer being aware of the implications of what he writes: “With the spending of 30,000 coins, this king (Asoka), who was a friend of the doctrine, freed from indebtedness such bhikkhus as were in debt. (*Mahāvamsa* xxxvi, 39) Bhikkhus in debt And to such a tune! Within one century of the great schism, apparently Theravādin monks were doing exactly that for which they had driven out their brethren! And yet ever since the Second Council, the fiction has been perpetuated that the Theravādin School is the upholder of the Pātimokka and the Mahāyāna, which developed from the Vaisāli offshoot, an ignorer of it. In fact, as we shall see, neither school keeps it, only the Mahāyanists sin openly and unashamedly and the *Theravādin cover up their defaults with hypocrisy and even lies.*

The subterfuge adopted in some countries over the difficult question of handling money, by ensuring that a cloth separates the money from the monk's hand, or that of taking an upāsaka with a monk on his travels, which doubles the expenses, do not even so, keep within the letter of the law; for attention is focussed on the phrase: “Handling money” and the wording of the actual rule in the Vinaya is overlooked: “Yo pana bhikkhu jātaruparajatam ugganheya vā ugganhapeyya vā upanikkhittam

vā sādīyeyya, nissaggiyan pācittiyam ti."¹ "Whatever monk should take gold and silver or should get another to take it or should consent to its being taken and kept in deposit for him, there is an offence of expiration involving forfeiture." (*Nissaggiya* xviii, 1.)

If the Rules were upheld today, what a substantial Trust Fund could be created for the Sangha out of private bank balances!

The letter of the Vinaya is frequently analysed and appealed to. But what of its Spirit? Seldom do we hear anything of that. What was the purpose in forming a Code of Rules for the Sangha?

In the first place it was to distinguish the Buddha's bhikkhus from the host of other bhikkhus which roamed India. The Buddha's Sangha was to be disciplined and knit together. It is true, as Dutt says, (*Early Buddhist Monachism*) that it was the Pātimokka that made the Sangha a unified and corporate body instead of a mass of people who were followers of Gautama, the Sakyan. Rules and uniform are the two things that create a body out of a group of individuals, that make a school, an army or a sangha. When the uniform is treated with disrespect by additions or subtractions according to individual taste, when the rules are kept only nominally, then the body is disintegrating. Bhikkhus may remain but the Sangha will disappear.

The second reason for a Code of Discipline was to prevent monks from falling into the slough of greed and desire, to help them break attachments, not create them. Indeed, what eventually had come to be allowed by the time Pātimokka was written down, was already far removed from what would keep alive a hermit devoted to meditation, or an itinerant preacher. The growth of viharas altered the shape of the Sangha from the earliest days. Originally intended as hostels for travelling monks and as a rainy Season Retreat for all who needed to refresh themselves in spirit and body, they soon became hotels, not far removed from the ordinary

house in comfort and furnishings, as they are still.

The third reason the Code was made was to prevent giving offence to the laity by ignorant and half savage recluses who had spent most of their lives in the jungle and who were not conversant with ordinary table manners or the ways of polite society. For if the laity were too often offended it would not readily be converted.

The Spirit of the Vinaya is in the reasons for its formulation. When the motive for framing a rule ceases to exist, the principle or spirit of that rule disappears. Only the letter remains. Then it is time for that rule to be abolished.

Too little regard is paid to the attitude inevitably developed towards a Code of Discipline that is kept or not according to private judgement. No body corporate that depends on rules for its unity, can run on such a system. At present private judgement in all matters of personal comfort is used. Only when the individual monk is unaffected by a rule or rules, does he piously affirm his adherence to the Code.

Gone is the moderate asceticism which is essential for, and a necessary corollary of, the development of detachment, the breaking of āsavas, without which no one can enter the stream. Monks who cannot or are reluctant to give up their desires, ignore the rules and suit themselves on the plea of necessity. The spirit of the Vinaya is ignored. Even in Burma, the Sangha which claims to hold to the Pātimokka the most rigidly of all the Buddhist countries, takes privileges on the basis of the letter of the law in defiance of the spirit. Luxuries like cigarettes, cinema visiting, radio shows, even motor cars, are not banned in the Vinaya, for obvious reasons, therefore they may be permitted . . .

Yet the Spirit of the Vinaya is all important for it was the Spirit and not the letter that the Lord tried to engender in His followers as can be seen by the numerous emendations to rules once framed and by His own affirmation: "I make distinction of persons." Above all the Buddha was reasonable. A literal rigid obedience was not envisaged by Him. Can this be said of those who would interpret the rule,

for example, that a bhikkhu must not touch a woman, into meaning that he must not even give his own mother a helping hand if she falls? Yet thus it has been interpreted by some. Rules were a means to an end and not an end in themselves, as the whole purport of the Vinaya makes clear.

One wonders how the assertion can come to be made, which is sometimes heard, that the Vinaya is a much loved Code of Discipline, when it is treated so scurvily by so many, when its spirit is so generally ignored even when the letter is kept.

Another argument to prevent any change is that the Sangha has no authority for altering the Rules. This is, of course, based on the assumption that every word issued from the lips of the Buddha Himself, despite the verdict of textual evidence. Yet, even granting that, *ex-hypothesi*, it was from the Buddha that emanated the suggestion that minor rules could be rescinded, if the Order agreed. And it was a single monk, Kassapa the Great, who decided on behalf of the rest that they should not be. And if one monk can so decide, the Sangha has authority; for there is no justification for assuming that the Buddha's offer stood only for the monks of His time; there is nothing to support that belief. If the Order agrees at any time, it has His authority for its action.

Surely, it is better to have a Pātimokka which is kept and recited and which embodies the Spirit of the Vinaya, than to have one and which is outworn and dead, which is neither kept nor recited. The Spirit is all important; the letter is nothing.

The Buddha Himself was all too well aware of this: "Of little concern, Ānanda, are quarrels respecting rigours or regimen or of the code; it is possible quarrels in the Order about the Path or course of training which really matter." (*Majj. Nik. II*, 245) The Path, the Dhamma, the Spirit, that is what matters.

Revision of the Vinaya requires a quorum of the Sangha made up of learned and travelled monks, who are monks in spirit as well as in dress, who have genuinely renounced the world and whose possessions do not include luxuries, whose two concerns are Enlightenment and spread of the Dharma.

1. It finishes thus:—"Sace so tena parivattetva kappiyam āharati, rūpiya patiggāhāham thapetva sabbeti 'eva paribūmjitabbam.'"

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ANATTA-DOCTRINE IN BUDDHISM

By R. WIJERATNE

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IT is a striking feature to note that most of the doctrines that relate to the notions current among the non-Buddhists of the Pre-Buddhist era are about the nature of the soul and its existence. A glance at the Vedantic literature—specially the Upanishads and *Bhagavadgītā* reveals an unique conception of *Ātman*—sometimes also called *Brahman*. It was conceived as a divinity, universally immanent, regarded materialistically as a fine substance located in the heart and compared as to size and shape to a variety of small objects and was said to be possessing the essential qualities of immutability, bliss and omnipotence. It is on this point of soul or spirit, as a thing different in kind from the rest of the individual, that Buddhism is in fundamental antithesis. Buddhism wholly and categorically denies the existence of the soul which is permanent, immaculate, and unaffected by karma; and in this denial there is no difference of opinion between the Hinayānists and the Mahāyānists. The Buddhist philosophy of life may said to be based on the axioms—*sabbam aniccaṃ* and *sabbam dukkhaṃ*. And in no constituent of the living being can any exception to these rules of nature be found.

Soul is an extremely ambiguous term. The principal terms in the canonical literature which translators have rendered as "soul", are *jīva*, *attā*, *satta* and in the *Abhidhamma* section, *puggala*. The earlier Sutta literature uses this term also in the meaning of self.

Pāli texts equate the belief in the existence of the soul, with the heresy of individuality or *sakkāyaditthi* which arises due to the misapprehension of one of the five *khandha* soul. This is further explained in the following four ways:—

- (i) *Attā* is the same as *rūpa*, or *vedanā*, or *saññā* or *sañkhāra* or *viññāna*—(*Rūpaṃ attato samanupassati*).
- (ii) *Attā* is possessed of *rūpa* etc. (*rūpavantaṃ attānaṃ samanupassati*).
- (iii) *Attā* is in *rūpa* etc. (*rūpasarīṃ attānaṃ samanupassati*).

(iv) In *Attā* there is *rūpa* etc. (*attāni rūpaṃ samanupassati*).

It appears from a dialogue in the *Milindapañha* that among the five *khandha*, *viññāna* was more often identified with *attā* or *jīva* than the rest. But no such distinction is seen in the *Nikāyas*.

According to some, in Buddhism *attā* does not exist at all. It is only a word of common usage and does not correspond to any real entity, hence no question should arise as to its existence, not to speak of its identification with one or more of the *khandha*. Therefore Pāli texts refuse to admit the existence of anything in a being beside the five *khandha*. The *Milindapañha* raises the question whether *attā* is something different from the *khandha* and whether it is an active agent living within the body and acting through the organs of sense. This is however refuted by Nāgaseṇa with the argument that, as its activity ceases when the organs of the sense cease to work, so it cannot be said to have a separate and independent existence of its own. In his works Nāgārjuna also takes up the same position as indicated in the Pāli texts and proceeds in his own way, to show that *ātman* is not the same as one of the *skandha* nor has it a separate and independent existence of its own, apart from the *skandha*. All the controversies about *attā*, whether in the Pāli texts or in the works of Nāgārjuna, rest upon the fact that the constituents of a being if analysed, cannot be shown to have anything called soul, apart from the five *khandha*. It is possible for a Buddhist to take up two lines of argument, viz. that the soul should either be identical with one or more or all of the *khandha* or be wholly different from the *khandha*. The standard Pāli expression for this is—*yaṃ jīvaṃ taṃ sarīraṃ* and, *aññaṃ jīvaṃ aññaṃ sarīraṃ*. Pāli texts assert that both these propositions are wrong—or *micchādītthi*. Nāgārjuna also comes to the same conclusion that the two propositions of identity or difference are untenable.

If *ātman* be the same as the *skandha*, it would be subject to origin

and destruction; again, if it be different from the *skandha*, it would be without the characteristics appertaining to the *skandha*. Hence it is not possible to establish any relations of identity or of difference between the soul and the *skandha*."

Pre-Buddhist systems of thought attributed to *ātman* some characteristics which are different from those of the *skandha*, viz. that *ātman* is not an agent, but an enjoyer of fruits, attributeless and inactive, and that it was only when it took something of the world as support that its distinctions are known. The concept of *atta* or *ātman* has for its basis—a mere notion to which the non-Buddhists have attributed existence and qualities. It is a mere term in common parlance (*vyavahāra mattaṃ*) but the non-Buddhists entangled themselves in pure conjectures and being thus deluded they conceive of an *ātman* and attribute to it some characteristics. It is a fiction of the imagination. Hence it is said:—

"Just as on account of a mirror, an image which is not real, is seen, so also an account of the *skandha*, the notion of 'I'-ness which is unreal arises. As without a mirror an image is not seen, so without the conglomeration of *skandhas* the notion of 'I'-ness does not arise."

The same idea is put forward in *Milindapañha* in different words. "Just as a chariot is nothing but an aggregate of the wheels, the axle, and the body, so the self is nothing but a combination of the five aggregates of the body, feelings, perceptions, dispositions and self-consciousness. There is no external self behind the collection of the five elements." Personal identity is illusion. The impermanent series of mental and bodily processes is mistaken for the permanent self. Continuity produces an illusion of identity. It accounts for moral responsibility, reward and retribution and transmigration.

There is another point of view that is put forward by some students of Buddhist philosophy. To put it in Radhakrishnan's words: "Buddha clearly tells us what the self is

not, not what it is. It is however wrong to think that there is no self at all according to Buddha. He is never willing to admit that soul is only a combination of elements, but he refuses to speculate on what else it may be." This reminds one of an episode occurring in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* when once Buddha kept silent on the existence or non-existence of the self. The wandering ascetic Vacchagotta asked, "Is there the ego?" Buddha was silent. Again he asked, "Is there not the ego?" Still Buddha kept silent. When the ascetic had departed Buddha said to Ananda that the affirmative answer would have led to Eternalism (*sassatavāda*) and that the negative answer would have led to Annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*). If the self is not existent there can be no transmigration, and no reaping of the fruits of actions.

The truth lies in the middle of the two extreme views. The phenomenal or empirical self-exists. Buddha's object in its denial was to save men from falling into *sassatavāda* and *ucchedavāda*—which are definitely looked down upon as heretical views or *micchādittḥi*.

Vasubandhu seems to agree with this, for he says in his commentary on *Abhidhammakōśa*, "Whoever believes in the existence of an *ātman* in its transcendental sense exposes himself to the heresy of eternalism; and whoever does not believe in the existence of *ātman* in its conventional sense, runs the risk of destroying the seeds of his own *karma*, thus exposing himself to the heresy of nihilism." Therefore the eternal, transcendental, self is unreal while the impermanent empirical, phenomenal self is real.

This seems to me too, the only plausible and clear explanation of the concept of *anatta* in Buddhism. It supports the view that Buddha tried his best to avoid indulging in the various conflicting theories and dogmas which the Pre-Buddhists had developed into extreme forms. It is the characteristic approach of the Buddha to have followed a middle-path even in this respect; and we see that the concept of *attā* is made use of by him purely for the purpose of edification; for it helps the theory of *karma* and transmigration and also establishes moral responsibility, which are more fundamental to Buddhism than the theory of the soul. Apart from this and the part that it had played in destroying egoism in general, *anatta* has no fundamental and essential connection to the central philosophy of Buddhism.

THE WAY OF ENLIGHTENMENT

By SOMA THERA

Vajirarama

AFTER setting forth the principle of contingency, which belongs to the core of the Dhamma, the Law, the Blessed One said, "So has the Dhamma been, by me, made known rightly, uncovered, explained, and elucidated." Such a teaching cannot contain what is repugnant to reason or opposed to fact. The essence of the Dhamma is in the avoidance of evil, the entering into what is good, and one's cleansing of one's mind. The realisation of this essence depends on enlightenment. That is to say, on enlightened conduct free from hate, greed, and delusion. The principle qualities that have to be cultivated to reach enlightenment are: mindfulness (*sati*), inquiry into states (*dhammavicaya*), exertion (*viriya*), joy (*pīti*), calm (*passaddhi*), concentration (*samadhi*), wisdom (*pañña*).

Mindfulness is desirable at all times for efficient mental functioning. It is the refuge, shelter, protection, of the mind, which, without mindfulness has no real support, and cannot at the proper time be restrained, made active, exhilarated, or watched without interference. Mindfulness has been compared to the seasoning or tempering with salt required in preparing all curries, the minister appointed to do everything and so wanted in all the busi-

ness of a king, a waggoner who keeps his vehicle in good order, a helmsman, and a strong rope that can restrain a maddened elephant.

Consideration of everything without delusion, and the doing of actions after finding out that they are proper, useful, and agreeable for the spiritual progress of an aspirant to light, are the marks of mindfulness that comprehends things clearly.

One who is endowed with strong mindfulness, that is to say, mindfulness with clear comprehension, is not hasty, is not rash, and is circumspect, and prudent; he does not waste his energy in activities not conducive to inward strength.

Such a person carries out all that is necessary to be done without delay and efficiently, and is diligent in weeding out bad and implanting good habits in the field of his character. The cultivator of mindfulness as taught by the Blessed One avoids persons who are forgetful, and those who are confused and muddled as a crow that has hidden food and cannot find it; he also keeps the company of those who are endowed with mindfulness, and clear memories, the ability to grasp all objects in a way that promotes good and not evil, and are inclined to, bent upon, and turned

towards setting up mindfulness in all postures. Mindfulness, when it is practised according to the instructions of the Master makes for manners, contentment, peace, and for genuine culture of the spirit that manifests itself through a balanced character rich in the qualities of amity, sympathy, compassion, and equanimity, which are so essential for the happiness of self and society.

It was in connection with the last-mentioned aspect of mindfulness as an instrument for the happiness of the self and of society that the Buddha said, "With the thought, I shall protect myself" a man should practise the fourfold foundation of mindfulness; with the thought, "I shall protect another," a man should practise the fourfold foundation of mindfulness. A man protects another while protecting himself; a man protects himself while protecting another. How does he protect another while protecting himself? By the practice, development, and repeated doing of mindfulness. How does he protect himself while protecting another? By cultivating patience, harmlessness, and the thought of amity towards another, and by his being glad at another's good."

The Dhamma has been called the religion of reason correctly, as it avoids extremes of groundless scepticism, empty argumentation, vain surmises, useless speculation, groundless beliefs, dogmas, and all. The quality of inquiry into states belongs to the domain of wisdom (*paññā*), and is connected with knowledge, investigation, criticism, analysis, insight, comprehension, non-delusion, and right understanding. Inquiry into states reveals to the truth-seeker the nature of things as they are. Above all inquiry into states proves to the inquirer the reasonableness, and impartiality of outlook of the Buddha's exposition of the Law, which shines nowhere more brightly than in the famous instruction to the Kālāmas, the charter of mental freedom proclaimed for the comfort, welfare, improvement, and guidance of all intelligent living beings. The whole spirit of the Dhamma is to lead men to think clearly, free from all biases, all prejudices, and one-sided views, of those who carry scepticism or faith beyond reasonable bounds. There can be no advance of systematically formulated knowledge in an atmosphere of unwarranted doubt or belief. In the Buddha's teaching of Enlightenment, faith (*saddhā*) and wisdom (*paññā*) have been likened to the animals yoked to the car going to the final extinction of ill. That is the car of the life of purity, Brahmayāna, and is a figure of the noble path. It is only by the path endowed with both these qualities that progress in the conquest of happiness can really be made. The Buddha has said that all who have mere faith and mere affection (*saddhā-mattāṃ, pema-mattāṃ*) in him have heaven for their lot. On the other hand, it is because he encouraged inquiry, investigation, and search, that his followers long after he passed away ascribed the following to him, "Just as people test the purity of gold by burning it in fire, by cutting it, and by examining it on a touchstone, so should you take my words after critically testing them and not from respect for me."

Inquiry into states helps to weed out all entities useless for an adequate explanation of the world of the five aggregates, and it is developed by much attention on meritorious, demeritorious, blamable, blameless, excellent, and base states, and on dark and bright states together with their results.

Among other things helpful to the development of inquiry into states are interrogation, discussion, imparting evenness to the five spiritual faculties of faith, exertion, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom by making them all strong, and equally active, for helping each other to function efficiently, association with the wise, avoiding foolish folk, and the constant bent to progress in the investigation of things that have to be understood for extinguishing ill. The aspirant for extinction it is said will also find support for success in producing the enlightenment factor of inquiry into states, by giving attention to personal cleanliness and to cleanliness of the place in which he lives.

When he who inquires into states grasps the fact of the arising and passing away of things he gains gladness and zest. Such contemplation is almost the deathless itself for those who understand it. It is through this factor that penetration of the three characteristics of impermanence, subjection to ill, and not-self, is reached, finally, and that it becomes possible for the consummate one to say, "Birth has been exhausted; the life of celibacy has been fulfilled; what ought to be done has been done; there is nothing more to come from this state."

Only those who are capable of comprehending being as a process of nutrition, which continues so long as the mind and body are fed by the fuel of clinging, become efficient in the production of this factor of enlightenment.

In fact, the Noble Eightfold Path can well be called the Path of Exertion, since the Buddha said, "By exertion a man overcomes ill," and "the Dhamma is for the energetic," and "Exertion in Dhamma rightly made known produces happiness." Exertion has been commended also by non-Buddhist teachers whose philosophies have points of contact with the Dhamma. The development of exertion is essentially the strengthening of the will, the pivot of action. Exertion together with mindfulness is known in the Dhamma as diligence (*appamāda*).

The path to deathlessness is diligence,

And what to death leads on is negligence.

Those who are diligent do not die. The negligent ones are dead.

"Increase thy vigour scorning sloth," says the Buddhist poet. Sloth is a Mara all have to overcome. With increase of exertion, evil arisen in the heart is abandoned, evil yet unarisen there kept out, the good not arisen yet in the heart is produced, and good that has already arisen there is maintained. Where right exertion has been produced there enlightenment has begun. Contemplation on the life of the Buddha from the time he as a Bodhisatta went forth to the time of his passing away finally in the element of complete extinction of ill cannot but produce the element of exertion in all its phases in the aspirant for developing this enlightenment factor. Among other things conducive to the development of exertion are reviewing the fearfulness of the states of regress (*apāya*), association with the energetic, keeping clear of the idle, and perseverance in the development of exertion during the waking state.

The journey to enlightenment will be for one not interested in the Dhamma a burden. But if the value of the Dhamma is rightly appreciated he will become pleased with it and practise it with zest. Joy is produced by contemplation on the qualities of the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Sangha, virtue, liberality, and such other objects productive of wholesome joy. It is also produced by association with refined persons possessed of nobility of character, reviewing of suttas that set forth the qualities of the Three Jewels, and through perseverance in the development of joy.

Without joy, no good work can be done, and in those who have not faith in the good, and right understanding, it will not arise even if they meet the consummate ones. Certain people find joy in the study and practice of the Dhamma, as it were, instinctively. Such joy is due to their past good actions, actions connected with reverence for, and understanding of, the Noble Ones and their teachings. Actions of the kind done by him in the past influenced Anāthapiṇḍika the chief supporter of the Buddha, to visit him. So great was the joy aroused in Anāthapiṇḍika by the mere mention of the word, Buddha, that he could not rest until he saw him.

In all who are untrained in speech and behaviour there is a tendency to be restless, agitated, and excited. Such a tendency is a great hindrance to one who wishes to possess the

quiet mind so necessary for the attainment of highest truth. The sign of the mature person is the placidity that he possesses at all times: nothing can upset him. Such a person will be unshaken by loss of property, relatives, health, or honour, that is to say, he will be unmoved in adversity, just as he cannot be by prosperity. Elation and depression do not overwhelm the calmed one.

People who moan and lament do not understand the Dhamma, and the way of mindfulness, in it, which can overcome all sorrow and misery. Who is mindful of the nature of existence will be calm and free from anxiety and restlessness. The Buddha says, Seeing the fragility of form, which is comparable to an earthen vessel, a man should make his mind strong as a fortress, fight Mara with the weapon of wisdom, watch the newly won insight, and stay not in the mundane attainment, but developing that young insight, reach the supramundane path.

It is with the quiet mind that a man reaches the powers necessary for mature insight and full detachment. People who possess the quiet mind are a source of strength to their neighbours. While those who are subject to agitation lose their tempers even when they are addressed politely and gently, the man of composed mind is not irritated even when abused. What disturbs a man is not events but his judgement on events, says Epictetus, as the Dhamma also proclaims, in other words. One of the first benefits of keeping the five precepts of virtue with understanding is the acquirement of a mind free from anxiety through absence of remorse and of a sense of guilt. Among the things conducive to the production of calm is the avoiding of persons who are of violent behaviour, association with those who are non-violent of behaviour and calm, and persevering in the development of calm.

The man with the quiet mind cannot be provoked. His natural tendency is not to kindle the fire of anger. He is inclined towards the peace of complete extinction of ill, nibbāna, where the coolness of perfect dispassion reigns supreme. It is in the quiet mind that there are the most favourable conditions for final mastery of the self.

“When all is done and said,
In the end thus shall you find:
He must of all doth bathe in
bliss
That hath a quiet mind.”

“Bhikkhus, there is the sign of serenity” says the Buddha “and there is the sign of the undisturbed. Much practice of intelligent attention in regard to these is the nutriment for the arising of the unarisen enlightenment factor of concentration, and for the increase, expansion, development, and completion, of the arisen enlightenment factor of concentration”. A person who is concentrated is serene. He withdraws himself from distractions of the senses and devotes himself to the thought of enlightenment. Such a person is dignified, controlled, unwavering of purpose, courteous, prepared for right action, noble, happy in solitude, and established in peace. The bhikkhu who has become serene sees things as they are, says the Buddha. Seeing things as they are is the first step in the development of insight on the mundane Noble Eightfold Path. This seeing of things as they are (*yathābhūta ñāṇa*) is the early, immature, tender state of insight, which can be developed only by one who has become serene through the development of at least the first meditation (*paṭhamajjhāna*) of the form plane, according to the definition of right concentration by the Buddha. Without right concentration (*sammā samādhi*) of the mundane kind, there can also be no real insight of the mundane kind even in its immature form. Seeing things as they are even in its mundane, tender state is a kind of vision of reality that bestows great happiness. All other forms of mundane happiness pale into insignificance for the aspirant for light before the awareness of reality of mundane insight, the insight that emerges in the mind of him who has become serene through mundane right concentration. Among the things that bring a man to the enlightenment factor of concentration are the balance of spiritual faculties, skill in developing the *jhāna*-producing sign, skill in exerting, restraining, exhilarating, and watching the mind without interfering with its smooth working, at the proper time, avoiding people who have not become serene through the practice of concentration, consorting with those who have become serene through the practice of concentration, reviewing the meditation and the

emancipations, and persevering in the development of concentration.

Not only for the attainment of Nibbāna, but for worldly happiness and improvement too, concentration is indispensable. The student, the scientist, and the philosopher, all these, excel only with developed concentration. The troubles that afflict society, generally, are due to distraction, the greatest disease of mankind always. The distracted mind is particularly subject to greed and its family of evils. But the rightly concentrated mind, at least temporarily, overcomes greed, the source of distraction. The search for mental health is a feature of thoughtful minds. Concentration is one of the most important conditions for the gaining of that health.

With the enlightenment factor of equanimity completed, the aspirant for Nibbāna reaches fullest mental neutrality. He cannot be moved by greed, hate, or delusion. The quality of equanimity is developed by all who cherish spiritual stability, the salient characteristic of the wise: it is because of this quality that they are not affected by the vicissitudes of life. In Epictetus there is this story. A great stoic, when he was informed that his trial was going on in the Senate, said, “Good luck to it,” and went and took exercise and bathed, as it was then the hour at which he used to exercise and have a cold bathe. Later, when he was informed that he had been condemned, he asked, “Exile or death?” and was told that he had to go into exile. Then he found out that his property was not confiscated and said, “Let us go to Aricia and dine”. Epictetus extols this man and says that his attitude was due to training. Further Epictetus wants a man to die as if he were returning what did not belong to him. Many of the sayings of this kind found in Epictetus are in the spirit of ariyan practice taught by the Buddha, if we leave out the theory behind them. “Give up what is not yours” says the Buddha “the giving up of what is not yours will be for your good and happiness. The body is not yours. Give it up: the giving up of that will conduce to your good and happiness.”

Neutrality in regard to living beings, and to formations (insensate things), keeping clear of persons who have attachment to living beings and formations, associating

with those who have no such attachment, and perseverance in the development of equanimity, are among the things conducive to the acquirement of the enlightenment factor of equanimity.

Once a thera bhikkhu was walking along a bund by the side of a rice-field in South Ceylon. A drunk came from the opposite direction along the bund, abused the bhikkhu, and pushed him into the field, which was muddy. Then another man

who was near that place saw the incident, helped the bhikkhu to get out of the field, washed his robe, and did whatever else was necessary for making it possible for the bhikkhu to continue his journey comfortably. The bhikkhu arranged his robes and departed. Then the man who had helped him said to the bhikkhu: Reverend sir, the other man abused you, and pushed you into the muddy field. I helped you. Why did you not speak even a word to me? Friend, replied the

bhikkhu, his action belongs to him; your action to you. What part or lot have I in your actions. My action belongs to me.—Reverend sir, very good! He had understood.

When the factors of enlightenment are perfected, the sway of Māra ends, Compassion, the product of wisdom, is established in the mind, and the highest happiness of Nibbāna is attained.

THE EIGHT VICISSITUDES OF LIFE

By T. H. PERERA

THERE are eight phases in the life of a person which, willy nilly, he has to face in this existence. These eight phases are found in pairs, and each member of the pair is the exact opposite of the other. They are gain and loss; associates who rally in prosperity and associates who desert in adversity; blame and praise; joy and sorrow. They may, also, be called the ups and downs of life. The ancients knew of their existence, for these phases are as old as the world.

These phases of life make themselves felt on a person regardless of his status; be he rich or poor, strong or weak, high or low, educated or ignorant, cultured or debased. They are an inevitable sequence of natural events over which man has no control. They act and re-act on the material plane in cyclic order.

Material benefits obtained by diverse means are gain, and their disappearance is loss; associates in prosperity are all those who gather round a person, like bees swarming round a rich bee-hive, and associates in adversity are those who desert him as bees abandon an empty bee-hive; a much maligned person, at another time, is a paragon of virtue, vice-versa a blameless person becomes the target of scorn and spite; joy sprung out of the blessings of the earth, it so happens, turn into grief when the spring runs dry.

Man, on beholding the bright side of these phases, is highly elated, and his balance of judgement is lost. Intoxicated with power and pelf, he brings ruin upon himself, as well

as upon others. He is supercilious. The superiority complex mentality takes hold of him, and he looks down with scorn and contempt on his less fortunate brethren. On the other hand, when the dark side of these phases appear, he is depressed, remorse and regret overcomes him, and he acts with malice and hatred towards his enemies.

The wise man faces either situation with a composed mind:

*Selo yathā ekagghano
Vātena na samirati
Evaṃ nindā paṣaṃsāsu
Na samijjhanti paṇḍitā.*

(Dhammapada—Paṇḍita
vagga—6)

As a solid rock is not shaken by the wind, the wise stay unshakable in the face of blame or praise. (This fact applies to the other three pairs as well.)

The All-Compassionate Buddha, while accepting these eight vicissitudes of life, analysed them in their true bearing. Here are His words:

*Lābho alābho ayaso yasoca
Nindā paṣaṃsā ca sukhanca
dukkhaṃ*

*Ēte aniccā manujesu dhammā
Asassatā viparināma dhammā.*

(Aṅguttara Nikāya, Aṭṭhaka
Nipāta—Mettā vagga)

Like all other phenomena, He says, that these phases of life are transitory (aniccā), are not lasting (asassatā), and are subject to change (viparināma).

How refreshingly true! The genuine Buddhist, therefore, looks at them with perfect equanimity, noolaham.org | aavanaham.org

and, is neither elated at their ebb, nor depressed at their fall.

The Buddha has enunciated four propositions which bear a close resemblance to these phases of life. They are: 1. The loss resulting from goodness, and the gain resulting from evil; of those two—the loss resulting from goodness is nobler than the gain resulting from evil. 2. The fame born of nit-wits, and the ill-fame born of the wise; of these two—the ill-fame born of the wise is nobler than the fame born of nit-wits. 3. The adulation of the foolish, and the strictures of the wise: of these two—the strictures of the wise are nobler than the adulation of the foolish. 4. The pleasure resulting from lust, and the pain resulting from renunciation; of these two—the pain resulting from renunciation is nobler than the pleasure resulting from lust. It is well to reflect on these four in our day to day life.

In the Mangala Sutta, the Blessed One says:

*Phutth'assa lokadhammehi—
cittaṃ yassa na kampathī
Assokaṃ virajaṃ khemaṃ—
etaṃ mangala muttamaṃ.*

A mind which under the impact worldly contingencies quakes not, is free from sorrow, free from taint (of passions), free from fear—this is the Highest Blessing.

The Buddha, here, refers to the noble disciple, who by practising morality (sīla), by developing concentration (samādhi), and by realising insight (paññā)—the three aggregates of the Noble Eightfold Path—has reached the perfect state of Holiness (Arahat).

May you, also, without being unduly elated or disturbed by these Vicissitudes of Life, endeavour, with mindfulness (sati) as your beacon light, to reach this same great height which is possible "by human strength, by human energy, and by human striving." (Sāmy.—ii—29)!

It is with this end in view that the Buddha says :

"Give ear then, for the Immortal is found. I reveal, I set forth the Truth. As I reveal it to you so act ! And that supreme goal of the Holy Life, for the

sake of which sons of good families rightly go forth from the home to the homeless state ; this you will in no long time, in this very life, make known to yourself, realise, and make your own."

(*Majjhima Nikāya* 26.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BUDDHISM AND WORSHIP

I AM often asked : "Do Buddhists pray ?" "What do they do when they go to the temple ?" "What is the Buddhist attitude to prayer ?"

I shall attempt to answer these questions. Now, the word prayer means many things. In theistic religions, *i.e.*, in religions which believe in an omnipotent, all-powerful, omniscient, all-knowing god, who is the creator of all creatures, prayer means, among other things, supplication to him, petitioning him, humbly asking him for guidance and protection, for his favour, asking him to bestow upon the supplicator health and happiness, prosperity and the provision of various needs, even the needs of daily life and asking him for forgiveness for sins committed.

It should be stated at the outset that, in as much as the Buddhists do not believe in such a god, they have no prayer in that sense. The Buddhists, on the other hand, believe in the doctrine of Karma which declares that happiness and unhappiness are alike the results of action ; that prosperity and adversity are produced for each individual by his own deeds, words and thoughts ; that the law is impersonal, that it has no agent behind, directing it or administering it. Being impersonal, it can show no mercy, nor give forgiveness for trespasses. Evil can only be redeemed by doing good, which will overcome the effects of the evil deed. Sin, in the Buddhist sense, is not the transgression or disobedience of laws arbitrarily laid down by a god to be followed by human beings, but the performance of wrong acts of body, speech and mind which soil the character and impede the growth of one's personality.

There is thus in Buddhism no "prayer" in the commonly accepted sense of the word. Human beings are responsible only to themselves for their good and evil, happiness and misery, and to no other. The world does not depend upon its progress or prosperity on any external agency ; it is not constructed by anyone outside it.

G. P. MALALASEKERA.

Dr. Malalasekera deals with the subject more fully in the Buddhist Publication Society's *Bodhi Leaves Tract*, No. 8. on Buddhism and Worship.—*Ed.*

THE RELIGIONS OF MAN

THE other day I was invited to address the George Williams College here in Chicago on Buddhism. Fortunately for the students they were also to hear Rev.

Kubose of the Chicago Buddhist Church two days later ! The person in charge of the course gave me "The Religions of Man" by Huston Smith. I found the book fascinating. Dr. Smith has essayed the most difficult of tasks, sympathetically to interpret the major religions of the world. In this age of Religious renaissance books on the religions of mankind are coming out in embarrassing abundance and many of them are mere "echoes", but this book is different.

Dr. Smith does not try to discover some underlying unity behind the religious story, nor, on the other hand, is he concerned to plug some other religion at the expense of the others. To the contrary, he seeks imaginatively to speak from "within" each faith. Now clearly, unless one is a religious chameleon, such a process is not truly possible, yet such is the strength of his own purpose that he almost succeeds. It is from this near-attainment that we might all learn. For one of the important tasks of people engaged in the pursuit of truth is the readiness to enter into the religious heritages of other peoples, without necessarily surrendering the basic tenets of one's own faith or belief.

I found many aspects of his treatment of Buddhism significant. He heightens the meaning of the Enlightenment in terms of the title "The Man who woke up". "Are you a god ?" they asked. "No" "An Angel ?" "No." "A saint ?" "No." "Then what are you ?" Buddha answered "I am awake." "It is impossible to read the accounts of Buddha's life without emerging with the impression that one is in touch with one of the greatest personalities of all time."

He summarises the Buddha's approach to religion in the following categories. It was empirical. It was scientific. It was pragmatic. It was therapeutic. It was psychological, it was democratic. It was directed to individuals. The sub-titles might well serve to help those anxious to expound the faith in contemporary terms. At one point he raises an issue of serious significance for inter-faith conversations. He asks "Is Nirvana God ?" One accepted meaning of God is that of a personal being who created the universe by a deliberate act of will. Defined in this way Nirvana is not God. On the other hand, the Buddha does say, "There is monks, an unborn, neither become nor created nor formed . . . were there not there would be no deliverance from the born, the made, the compounded." Dr. Smith follows Conze who suggests that these ideas are similar to the ideas common to all mystical religious traditions in which the idea of personality is absent from the concept of Godhead.

"Nirvana is permanent, stable, the secure refuge . . . the real truth and the supreme reality . . . Dr. Smith concludes "Nirvana is not God defined as personal creator but stands sufficiently close to the concept of God as Godhead to warrant the name in this sense." A fine book for discussion groups to use.

BRYAN DE KRETZER.

5718, Kenwood, Chicago.

(We hope you will continue to send us news from your part of the world. Thank you for what you have sent us. Thank you in advance for what you will send us !—*Editor, The Buddhist.*)

HOW have so many customs and habits foreign to Buddhism, and sometimes diametrically opposed to the teachings of the Buddha, crept into the lives of Buddhists ? It is not only prayers that cause havoc ; take the case of those who are slaves to astrology.

A doctor was telling me the other day how a woman in pain was pathetically appealing to him to deliver the baby at a particular hour, down to the very minute, as earlier or later, according to the stars would mean a girl instead of a boy for whom she had prayed to God. She almost died, the doctors told me, when the baby began to see the light of day far ahead of her schedule. But it was a boy, and a bonny boy too ! The stars lied ; God answered ! !

KANAKAWATHIE SILVA.

Borella.

RELIGIOUS SERVICE IN PEKING

THE giant bell in Peking's Kwangchi Monastery tolled in welcome of Panchen Erdeni when he arrived for a religious service this morning.

Panchen Erdeni was presented with hatta (ceremonial scarves) by the Venerable Shiron Jaltso, President of the Chinese Buddhist Association, and Vice-Presidents Chao Pu-chu and Chou Shuchia, at the gate. Ho Cheng-hsiang, Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs of the State Council, was also on hand to greet Panchen Erdeni.

Monks and nuns, in yellow and wine-red robes, in Peking lined the Kwangchi Monastery's spacious courtyard to welcome His Holiness.

After worshipping the holy tooth-relic of Buddha, Panchen Erdeni went to the shrine hall, where he recited sutras to monks, nuns and laymen and women. His Holiness gave them scarlet strips of silk. He also blessed many lamas from Inner Mongolia and North-East China at another service held at the premises of the Panchen Erdeni's office in Peking.—*Cor.*

CATHOLICS AND FAMILY PLANNING

A CATHOLIC priest, one of the vehement opponents of Family Planning, advised both Catholics and Non-Catholics, in a talk to medical students, to abstain from the use of contraceptives. He maintains that his reasons are not for the Catholics to multiply in large numbers, and the others to restrict them. He visualises, if that be so, the Catholics would be in a majority in a few years. That point of view was furthest from his mind when he started the campaign against Family Planning; for not only he but the Church would not advocate such undemocratic views. The point of fact is that the Father knows only the Catholics would abide by his advice while the others would continue to practise contraception. This would lead to a Catholic majority in a few years and a Catholic Government.

The Reverend Father adds a little comedy to justify his stand. He says that he was the ninth in a family of 13 and had his father practised contraception he would not have been existent today. We leave it to posterity to decide whether his father had done wisely.

The learned father advocates rhythm control for married couples as a form of birth control. The object of this is to prevent fertilization. This is achieved by the fact that the ovum is dead and the one sperm which is necessary to fertilize the ovum is lost; after a fruitless search for a live ovum. By some illogical reasoning this is supposed to be morally correct.

The learned Father shows his lack of wisdom when he speaks of destruction of life of the sperms. Little does he know that out of a million sperms in each ejaculation, only one is required for the fertilization of the ovum. All the others perish. If a million necessarily perish why not let the single other sperm perish too.

What surprises me most is that Catholics do not use contraceptives in their marital life, because it is not morally right; but use them freely in their extramarital activities. Is this use morally justified?

“ ROTCOD.”

UNBUDDHISTIC PRACTICES

I HAVE read with keen interest the analytical and provocative letters that have begun to appear lately in your esteemed journal. All of them tend to draw pointed attention to the growing decay of Buddhists in this country.

If I may venture a point of view, I may say that the root cause of the deterioration is the unbuddhistic practices that have crept into our lives.

Except for the hours of birth and death nearly all Buddhists want auspicious moments—even for religious observances and festivities. With a regularity, unseen in other activities, Buddhists rush to meet the god in Kataragama or Alutnuwara or their men or women representatives in other places.

At weddings even with village brides a veil is a *sine qua non*. Buddhist leaders and genuine Buddhists jump to their feet at the opening bars of Mendelssohn's March while they sit deeply rooted to their seats when *Jayamangala Gatha* are sung.

At funerals the coffin is taken thrice round the pyre or grave, doing honour to a pile of wood or to a mound of earth removed from the hole dug, while the correct way of doing honour to the dead—the daskshina idea—is for the mourners to go round the coffin in a clockwise movement. If it is a burial our Buddhists shove a handful of earth, committing the body “earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust”.

We had a longer list some years ago but the constant hammering of the Anagarika Dharmapala weaned our people away from a great many of the queer customs we had begun to observe. The great man—the only *Father of Our Nation*—did not spare even his own family in his onslaught. But, alas, today even in these very circles little or no attention is paid to what the Anagarika preached.

The *Buddhist Chronicle* took up the same cause in its short lived career and during its time at least parents desisted from giving their offspring horrible foreign names. This again has been forgotten.

THUSITA DISSANAYAKE

Kegalle.

B...Y BUDDHISTS

HAVE you heard of this undignified outburst of a Naval high-up, drawing State pay, while sipping duty-free liquor? He wants all the B. B.'s to be dumped in Adam's Peak. Fine, Captain, fine you are having a glorious time in Independent Lanka. If you said half that much during the British days, where will you be today?

Colombo.

D. DE MEL.

BUDDHIST UNIVERSITIES

WHO was the unholy angel behind Education Minister Dahlanayake's enthusiasm to grant university status to Vidyodaya and Vidyalandara universities? It is well worth doing research into this question and then you will find the same arch enemy of Buddhism who bamboozled Prime Minister Stephen Senanayake to interpolate Section 29D in the Draft Constitution.

If the Senanayake and the Kotalawala Governments mortgaged Buddhism to the Christians, the Governments that followed have signed a conditional transfer in their favour.

Our politicians only want Buddhism in times of Elections. Once elected they prove either by direct action or by their docility to be traitors to Buddhism. When their gross stupidity and downright treachery are pointed out, they advise the Buddhists to practise maitreya and the Church joins the chorus.

The Buddhists never wanted, do not want, and never will want injustice to others. The Buddhists want justice done to them. After 200 years of foreign domination during which they were persecuted and ill-treated, Buddhists were inclined to hail independence hoping to obtain at least a semblance of justice from their own men.

“Save religion from Marxism”, cried some hypocrites some years ago and they pasted the walls of cities and towns, and the trees of villages with posters showing viharas in flames. What downright Dignity by Which the Buddhists now want a seat of power at the helm, who will effec-

tively put their foot down on the nefarious activities of those representatives of foreign agencies who flood the country with the wherewithal for anti-Buddhist work.

Buddhist activities in foreign land only seek to educate those who are in search of a way of escape. They do not aim at plotting and planning against the countries in which they work.

PETER DAHANAYAKE.

Nugegoda.

I WAS very interested to learn that a committee had been set up in Ceylon to help the newly initiated Indian Buddhists, and that you are the president.

As you very likely know, during the last three years, I have myself been in quite extensive contact with these people, and in fact every winter I spend about three months among them delivering lectures, performing conversion ceremonies etc. The main centre of my activities in the plains is Nagpur, where the original conversion ceremony was performed, and where there are about one lakh of new Buddhists.

Early this year I acquired a plot of land to the West of Nagpur and plan to construct there a small vihara as the centre for my work among these people, Kalimpong being rather too far away. The collection of funds for the purpose has already begun with a donation of Rs. 5,000/- from an English Buddhist and the Sangha Nayaka of Thailand presented me in Buddha Gaya with an image specially made for the new Vihara at a cost of Rs. 4,000/-. Perhaps you of Ceylon would like to co-operate with us in this work. The Indian Buddhists, as you know, are very poor, and we cannot expect much from them; in fact, seeing their very unhappy economic condition, I would prefer not to raise funds from among them at all. Rather we should show them that the Buddhists of the world are ready to help them.

Nagpur is an ideal place for a vihara. The city is centrally situated, in the heart of those areas where the number of new Buddhists is largest, and is directly connected, by rail, road and air, with Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi and Madras.

The proposed new Vihara will be named Chandramani Vihara, after my revered upajjhacariya, who performed the first conversion ceremony. It will not be connected with any society or organization—it will be an independent Vihara like the Triyana Vardhana Vihara, Kalimpong.

If you would like to have any further information about my work among the newly initiated Buddhists, or about the proposed vihara, I shall be very glad to furnish you with the same.

BHIKSHU SANGHARAKSHITA.
Triyana Vardhana Vihara,
Kalimpong,
West Bengal.

SASANA REPORT

THE Sasana Report, which condemns the bhikkhus who hold temple land, does not seem to view in the same light those who draw salaries for services rendered even to Pirivena universities, not to speak of those engaged in other regular employment. There are a few bhikkhus in the Government Clerical Service. Is it not so?

A. SIRIWARDENA.

Kollupitiya.

NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS

D. B. Jayasinghe, Webada—Your letter seems to be mainly intended to boost your favourites, Krishnamurti, Gurdjieff, and Subud. If these men's teachings "have more than a passing resemblance to Buddhism," as you say, they have not by their borrowing from it done any service to it, since their teachings tend to cloud the Dhamma of the Blessed One, and adulterate, weaken, and spoil it. As we have still the clear teaching of the Blessed One, we would rather see it directly than through the eyes of unenlightened men, whoever they be.—Editor.

J. Samarajeeva, No. 231, Cotta Road, Borella—If you send a fact-supported criticism of your own of the Ven. Buddhaghosa's "atheravādic" views, duly acknowledging your debt to others by name, when you quote from their works, we shall gladly publish it. You write, "avathuka (asymbolic)," and again "appatima (cannot be represented by images)". Please quote, from the Pali text or commentaries, passages that support the meanings you give to these words. Avathuka means rootless, groundless, without material base, and appatima means incomparable, matchless. Uddesikam (cetiya) is explained in the commentary, thus, avathukam manamat-takena hoti.—Editor.

N. Y. Wickramasinghe, Paiyagala—Thank you very much. We published one last month, even though he was not a member of our association at the time of his death. We did so as a special tribute to one whose loss to the country is very great indeed.

NEWS AND NOTES

THE publication of Buddhist literature in the form of booklets and tracts, especially in English had been for many years a crying need. The Buddhist Publication Society of Kandy has now supplied this need. In the two years of its existence the Society has published two series of booklets and tracts, the Wheel and the Bodhi Leaves respectively which have been distributed in 55 countries where there is a growing demand for Buddhist literature.

In the report for 1958 occurs this sentence: "The stocks of several booklets and tracts are now exhausted or greatly reduced, and reprints which are urgently required, will be undertaken to the extent of funds available."

We commend this appeal to our readers.

We congratulate the Buddhist Publication Society on the good work it is doing

ESPERANTO

CEYLON Esperantists met recently at the Diyatalawa Survey Camp, to commemorate the centenary of the birth of Dr. L. L. Zamenhoff, the author of Esperanto.

The Venerable Nyanasatta Thera referred to Zamenhoff's birth on December 15, 1859, at Byalestock in Poland and also to his death on April 14, 1917, at Warsaw, the cradle of Esperanto. He said that had it not been for Esperanto he might never have come to Ceylon. It was through Esperanto that he had come to study Buddhism. Through this International Language, the cause of Buddhism could be furthered in the West. He appealed for a helper to assist him in his work.

THE SANGHARAJA OF CAMBODIA

THE Sangharaja of Cambodia, Sri Bodhiwanse Huot Tath Thero arrived in Ceylon in December as a guest of the Vidyodaya University. He visited the Vidyalankara University where he read the Sinhalese alphabet for the first time. The main purpose of his visit was to study Buddhist higher educational facilities in Ceylon, with a view to developing their own in Cambodia. He was greatly impressed by the Buddhist Literature available in the two Buddhist Universities. He visited Anuradhapura and other places of religious interest.

COLOMBO Y. M. B. A. NEWS

FORT BUILDING FUND

THE following contributions are acknowledged:—

Mr. D. J. Dangalle Rs. 5; Mr. G. W. David de Silva 10; Messrs. Wijesiri Stores 12.74; Mr. P. Yapa 10; Mr. J. P. Fernando 10.

NEW MEMBERS

7.12.59 : B. Karunaratne, 91, Mayfield Lane, Colombo 13.

15.12.59 : Mr. B. Amarasuriya (Life).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ARTIBUS Asiae (Institute of Five Arts, New York University), Vol. XXI, 3/4, containing an illustrated contribution from Mr. D. T. Devendra, on the symbol of the Sinhalese guardstone.

Yana, magazine of Early Buddhism and Religious Culture, published by the Old Buddhist Community, Veting/a/A., Germany ("Buddhist House, George Grimm.")

The Case for Rebirth (The Wheel Publications No. 12/13) by Francis Story (The Anagarika Sugatananda)—Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy.

Dhamma Chukka (Issue 11), official organ of the Pali Section of the Singapore Buddhist Association.

Visakha Puja B. E. 2502—A very interesting publication by the Buddhist Association of Thailand, containing several thoughtful articles.

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