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# The Buddha Jayanti

THE YEAR 1956 coincides, according to the reckoning of the Theravada Buddhist tradition, with the two thousand five hundredth year since the passing away of Gautama the Buddha. To be more precise the year 2,500 in the Buddhist Era commemorates three distinct events in the life of the Buddha, namely his birth, his spiritual enlightenment and his Parinirvana or passing away. For the Buddhists believe that all these three events took place on the full moon day of Vesak in 563 B.C., 528 B.C. and 483 B.C. respectively. There are different traditions among Buddhists of many lands in regard to the exact chronology of these dates. Thus in the countries of the Far East the Buddha Day is celebrated on different dates. At the World Fellowship of Buddhists convened in 1950 it was decided that the Buddhists the world over shall accept the date traditionally upheld by the Buddhists of South East Asia in regard to the three most important events in the life of the Buddha, for purposes of international Buddhist activities.

The completion of 2,500 years of Buddhism constitutes an event of great significance in the religious and cultural history of mankind. To the Buddhists it has a specially sacred significance. Buddhist tradition records that according to the prediction of the Buddha himself the Dhamma in its purity will endure for full 5,000 years in the world. The Buddhists are therefore aware that this year not only marks the completion of 2,500 years of the Dhamma but that it also initiates and ushers in the second great era of its fullest unfoldment in the course of the development of human culture and civilization throughout the world. It is accordingly held by the Buddhists that during this new era that is just ushered in, the peoples of the world will cultivate the spirit of the Dhamma and thereby help in the establishment of righteousness and abiding peace on earth. The united endeavour of the Buddhists of the world will be

directed towards the achievement of this noble aim.

The primary purpose of the celebration of the Buddha Jayanti is to salute the memory of Gautama the Buddha whose life and work has inspired the Buddhist movement in history. The most edifying way in which we can salute the great Teacher is by conducting ourselves in accordance with the message which he had entrusted to us. The Buddha Jayanti is therefore also an occasion which should re-direct our attention to the Dhamma, especially from the point of view of its relevance to our time. The universality of the Buddha's teaching gaily transcends spatial and temporal boundaries and makes it refreshingly relevant to every clime and time. The need for the sanity and wisdom of the Buddha's way of life and thought was never more strongly felt than it is to-day. There can therefore be no more opportune occasion than the Buddha Jayanti itself for us to rediscover the message of the Supreme Sage so that we shall be strengthened with courage and resolve and inspired by truer aims and ideals in solving the problems that confront us to-day not only in our individual lives but also in all other matters pertaining to state and society.

What, then, is the Buddha's message to humanity? What is that philosophy of the Buddha which is essentially relevant to every succeeding age?

Buddhism is a way of living life untouched by the circumstances of life. It teaches a way of life and an attitude of mind that can be cultivated with profit. It emphasizes the need for ethical perfection as a necessary preliminary to the realization of ultimate truth. Its universal message is addressed to all men and women regardless of caste, creed and race. It is a timeless philosophy that compels the serious consideration of thoughtful people. The Dhamma is pervaded by an ethical earnestness that does not fail to strike all those who come in contact with it. It has no place for idle

speculation. The life of ethical endeavour is based on the awareness of the problems of existence. Life is governed by an ethical order. Human action is invested with ethical significance. Knowledge and virtue are inseparable. The path to purity is therefore both ethical and intellectual. Insight into truth and reality cannot be developed except through harmony of body and mind. This harmony can only be realized by the cultivation of healthy moral qualities. Morality is not a digest of laws or a set of obligations. Ethical life is not a formality. Ethics is fundamentally psychological. The practice of virtue is not mechanical conformation to commandments made imperative by divine sanction. Ethics is conceptual but it helps us to adjust ourselves to the conditions of life and thereby attain inward and outward harmony. Religious culture needs to be undertaken in the midst of life. Escape therefrom offers no short-cut to happiness or harmony. Life has to be faced squarely and fully and with confidence. The function of the striving mind is to understand the facts of life. One cannot solve life's problems by running away from them, or by ignoring them. Understanding calls for a detached mind. But there can be no question of detachment as long as we are inordinately attached to the vanities and follies of life. This fact underlines the need to cultivate the restraint of the wilder emotions. The nobler side of man can be developed only by the elimination of the baser inclinations of the mind. The taming of the mind is as difficult as it is important and necessary. Buddhism teaches us the systematic way to set about this task.

The Buddha teaches us that it is only by a spiritual re-awakening that man can begin the task of restraining his emotions for the purpose of developing his true human worth. The Buddha emphasizes the need for diligence. The urgency of the solution of

the problems of life does not admit of spiritual and ethical lethargy. Man must apply himself constantly to strenuous ethical striving. There can be no relaxation of effort in this regard for life does not relax while we do. If reason is to prevail over emotion we have to be constantly on our guard. Hatred and avarice have to be systematically destroyed: ignorance has to be progressively eliminated. This cannot be achieved by mere mental resolve. This calls for the cultivation of positive moral qualities. The sense of renunciation is fundamentally essential to culture of any sort. Renunciation does not mean the abandonment of life and society: it is an attitude of mind that can, and must be cultivated right in the midst of life. It is this quality that enables man to cultivate positive qualities such as generosity, liberality, hospitality, humility, friendship, kindness, tolerance, equanimity, compassion and respectfulness. The minds that are suffused with these qualities contribute greatly to the unity and harmony in the world.

The adoption of the Buddhist way of life calls for the highest intellectual courage and moral integrity. The way of life that the Buddha enunciates is open to all and sundry. Buddhism therefore is not so much a separate creed as a philosophy of living the good life. The Dhamma has eloquently made a case for the practice and the cultivation of the ethical life. Such a way of life is bound to appeal to all thinking men at all times and everywhere.

Into a demented world of psychological conflict and ideological warfare the Buddha's Dhamma brings a message of sanity and hope. The supreme question before man in this era is: to be active to-day or be radio-active to-morrow. The Buddha shows us how to be active to-day, that is, for the purpose of ensuring lasting peace and goodwill among men. Let this then be our own resolve on the occasion of the Buddha Jayanti!

# Buddhism on the March

By Professor G. P. Malalasekera,

M.A., PH.D., D.LIT. LONDON

*President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists*

NEWS RECEIVED from every part of the world speak of the unprecedented enthusiasm with which the Buddha Jayanti, the 2,500th Anniversary of the Buddhist Era, was celebrated everywhere. In all the five continents, in every country where Buddhists are to be found in groups large or small, the event was marked with deep, spiritual fervour. To my mind, the greatest significance is to be attached to the tremendous revival of Buddhism now taking place in India. After several centuries of neglect, India has once more awakened to the clarion-call of her noblest son, the Buddha Sakyamuni. I also view with great joy the close collaboration that has grown between the followers of the Theravada and the Mahayana. The 550 million Buddhists of the world now recognize themselves as the members of a single family who, in spite of many diversities of ritual and ceremonial, follow the same Way of Life as laid down by the Buddha.

In Europe and in the Americas and in Australia, too, interest in Buddhism has increased by leaps and bounds. All this is of the utmost importance to the world, to all humanity. For Buddhism is the religion, *par excellence* of peace and harmony and, above all, of tolerance and goodwill. It has no churchseeking domination over souls, no authority eager for extension of power. It teaches, further, that men and women can, if they so will it, obtain in this very world the highest happiness by their own efforts, irrespective of fear or favour from some power outside themselves. The Buddha Jayanti year has only just started. Let us strive with all our might and main to make it the beginning of a new era of peace in the world and happiness for all beings.

THE Buddha Jayanti Week in London was ushered in by the Inaugural Meeting held at the Ceylon Embassy on Wednesday, 23rd May, 1956.

His Excellency Sir Claude Corea, High Commissioner for Ceylon in the United Kingdom, First Patron of the Celebrations

## The Inauguration

Committee, occupied the chair. Accommodated with him on the platform were, Her Excellency Madam Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, High Commissioner for India; Mr. Christmas Humphreys, President London Buddhist Society; His Excellency Mr. Haruhiko Nishi, Ambassador for Japan; His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Ikramullah, High Commissioner for Pakistan; Miss I. B. Horner; H.S.H. Prince Wongsanuvatra Devakula, Ambassador for Thailand; His Excellency, U Kyin, Ambassador for Burma; and Mr. Huan Hsiang, Chargé d'Affaires, Peoples Republic of China.

Pansil was administered by the Venerable Mirisse Gunasiri who thereafter chanted Pirith in association with the Venerable Kamburugamuwe Mahanama.

In opening the meeting, Sir Claude Corea said: This is a great and historic occasion. We have gathered in large numbers to inaugurate the celebration of the 2,500th year after the passing away of the Buddha generally referred to as Buddha Jayanti. Not only Buddhists but also non-Buddhists are assembled here, for the occasion is one of the greatest interest to all men and women of good-will throughout the world. It is the privilege of non-Buddhists to join the Buddhists in celebrating the event. We remember the one who gave to the world a message and a doctrine which brought solace and comfort to millions amid the trials and tribulations of their daily lives and pointed the path to ultimate bliss.

To us from Ceylon this occasion has a double meaning. It is a religious occasion for Buddhists and a national occasion for the Sinhalese. For it was 2,500 years ago that the kingdom of Lanka was founded by the Sinhalese with the landing of Vijaya on the shores of Ceylon and on stones left

for us the culture and civilization which they had achieved.

Throughout earlier centuries the culture and civilization built by the Sinhalese was influenced by Buddhism. What is significant is that the religion which came after its founding spread soon throughout the country and permeated the very lives of all the people. Ancient Sinhalese Kings devoted their time to the support and maintenance of religion in the service of the Dhamma. The people on their part were devout followers of Buddhism. It is the pardonable pride of the people of Ceylon that the Dhamma was preserved in Ceylon in its pristine purity to be carried forth in later days to other parts of the world.

For me it is a great privilege to preside over this meeting. On behalf of the London Buddha Jayanti Organizing Committee I thank you Ladies and Gentlemen for being present to-day. May I also thank Their Excellencies representative of the whole of Asia. It is a great comfort and strength to us that they should be here to-day. This demonstrates not only a wide area where Buddhism prevails but is also an indication of the way the millions of Asia follow the teaching of the Buddha.

I would like to refer to three matters. Firstly it is a day of rejoicing, but of quiet rejoicing, and of sober recollection and meditation on the message of the Buddha. Secondly, we live at a time when there is so much fear dividing man and man and absence of co-operation, and it is quite appropriate that the message of the Buddha, namely, maitri and kindness should come echoing through the ages to the Buddha Jayanti day with the freshness of its original appeal. Thirdly, we have known Buddhism to be a religion of great tolerance. Throughout the period of celebration of the Jayanti year the message of tolerance could be practised and I trust this will influence men and women of every colour and race to tolerate each other in all-embracing brotherhood and love.

I have a very pleasant duty to perform. On behalf of the Lanka Bauddha Mandalaya, I have been asked to present to Their Excellencies and the representatives of the

participant organizations, translations of the Tripitaka to be sent to their own respective countries. This Tripitaka was translated by forty learned bhikkhus and eventually finalized by nine other learned bhikkhus. May I therefore hand over these copies to Their Excellencies and the representatives of the participant organizations.



## THE SPEECHES

By Christmas Humphreys

WE ARE MEETING to-night in London, but this meeting held at the Ceylon Embassy in London is not merely a meeting of Ceylonese Buddhists. We are gathered from many countries to celebrate the completion of two thousand five hundred years since the Parinirvana of the Buddha. Other speakers who addressed you earlier have told you about the significance of this occasion. I speak to you on behalf of the British Buddhists of this country where Buddhism is only fifty years old. We are to-night commemorating a date in history, and it will therefore be opportune for me to tell you of the interrelation between Buddhists in the principal Buddhist countries of the East and the Buddhists of England.

Seventy-seven years ago Sir Edwin Arnold published his *Light of Asia*, the inspiring poem that has led many in the West to seek the light of the Buddha's enlightenment. A year later, that is, in 1880, Madame H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel H. S. Olcott took Pansil in Ceylon and came to be counted among the first disciples of the Buddha in the West.

In 1881, Professor T. W. Rhys Davids founded the Pali Text Society in London which devoted itself to the publication of the Scriptures of Pali Buddhism both in the original text and in translations. Thanks to the dedicated labours of the band of scholars

led by Rhys Davids the people of the Western world have to-day the opportunity of learning the Dhamma direct from the Pali Canon which is fully edited and almost wholly translated. The work of editing new texts and translating others is to-day being ably continued by a band of devoted workers among whom must be mentioned Miss I. B. Horner, the indefatigable and dynamic Secretary of the Pali Text Society, who is herself giving the lead in the matter of editing and translating texts for the Society.

In 1902 the Venerable Ananda Metteyya became the first Buddhist monk of the West by taking the Robe in Rangoon. This example was followed by many others, among whom I would mention the celebrated Bhikku Silacara who did yeoman service to the cause of Western Buddhism by his speeches and writings.

In 1908 the Venerable Ananda Metteyya landed in Britain with the first Buddhist Mission, from Burma. In the previous year there was founded the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland, to receive him, and two years later there appeared the *Buddhist Review*, under the patronage of the King of Thailand, for the purpose of presenting the Buddha and his Dhamma to the people of the West. Among the early writers for this Journal were the Anagarika Dharmapala and Professor Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, followed by others like Sir D. B. Jayatilleke and Dr. W. A. de Silva.

In 1921 the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland was disbanded and its place was taken in 1924 by the present Buddhist Society. Among the people who helped in founding the new Society were Roy de Mel of Ceylon and U Kyaw Hla of Burma.

In 1925 the Anagarika Dharmapala came to England at the head of a Ceylonese Buddhist Mission. The Anagarika had two able and devoted workers in his nephews, Raja and Daya Hewavitarne.

In 1927 Japan makes an entry into Western Buddhism through her inspiring spokesman Dr. D. T. Suzuki, whose Essays in Zen Buddhism have continued ever since to appeal powerfully to the people of the West. The next year China made her entry into

Western Buddhism, when the most famous Chinese Buddhist Missionary of modern times, the Ven. Tai Hsü, visited England on his tour of the Western countries. His lectures did much to propagate the knowledge of the Dhamma in the West. In the same year three Bhikkhus from Ceylon visited England, led by the Venerable Paravahera Vajirañāna.

In 1932 two other Bhikkhus from Ceylon, the Venerable Ananda Kausalyana and the Venerable Rahula Sankrityayana came to England to promote the cause of Buddhism in the West.

Just before the second World War broke out, the Venerable U Thittila from Burma came to England and stayed here to continue the task of propagating the Dhamma. The War brought about a temporary lull in the activities of Buddhist Societies throughout the Western world, but in 1946, at the end of hostilities, I undertook a world tour to get international support from the leaders of Buddhist countries for the "Twelve Principles of Buddhism," which I had formulated for the purpose of uniting the Buddhists of the world in a common creed. In Japan I secured permission from Professor Suzuki to edit his complete works for the benefit of the English-speaking Buddhists of the world. In Burma I received a donation of £1,500 to carry on the work of publishing works on Buddhism, and as publisher to the Buddhist Society of London I have been able to bring out several volumes with the help of this generous donation. In 1948 Ceylon printed some of my talks under the title "*Thus have I heard*".

In 1949 Thailand presented us with a Shrine on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of our Society, which we celebrated at India House in London. 1951 is a special date, for in that year I was invited by the Penguin Books Limited to contribute to their Pelican series a book on *Buddhism*. Originally only 40,000 were printed, but to-day the sales have exceeded 140,000 copies. This fact speaks for itself.

The year 1954 marks another step forward in the march of Buddhism in the West. Two events took place during this year. A Buddhist Vihara was opened in London,

due largely to the enterprising zeal of Ceylonese Buddhists, and in this year the British Buddhist Mr. Purfurst obtained his ordination in Siam and returned to England as the Venerable Bhikkhu Kapilavaddho. Up to this time it has been customary for Western Buddhist monks to settle permanently in the East after obtaining their ordination there, but the Venerable Kapilavaddho returned to his native land to cultivate the Dhamma and propagate it among his own compatriots. He has great plans for the development of the Dhamma in the West, including the opening of a monastery as the centre of the Sangha in England and the training of other Western monks in Thailand so that they may return to England and other countries of Europe to spread the culture and knowledge of the Dhamma. Three such recruits are already undergoing training in Thailand, and according to the Venerable Kapilavaddho's plan now in operation more recruits will be sent to the East for the same purpose. It is now only a matter of few years before British Buddhism becomes an independent unit in the Buddhist commonwealth, with its own Chapter of the Sangha. When that happens it will no longer be necessary to depend on the East for ordination.

We have great plans for the future. We hope shortly to move into much larger premises where we can expand the work of our publishing department. We have published, as our contribution to Buddha Jayanti, a *Buddhist Students' Manual* which we hope will be of service to students throughout the world, while our journal, *The Middle Way*, is now the oldest and largest Buddhist publication in the West, and ranks with any such journal anywhere in the world.

In November I hope to lead a Delegation of British Buddhists to the fourth Congress of the World Fellowship of Buddhists in Katmandu, and thereafter, as a guest of the Government of India, to attend the Buddhist Symposium in New Delhi.

This, then, is a brief summary of the ways in which the Buddhists of East and West have served one another in the last fifty years. You have given us the greatest of all gifts, the Dhamma: in the years to come we hope to repay a little of that debt. •

By His Excellency  
Mr. Haruhiko Nishi,  
*Ambassador of Japan*

WE HAVE come together this evening to join in the opening celebrations of the Buddha Jayanti, an occasion of deep religious significance to all followers of the Buddha, who attained Enlightenment 2,500 years ago.

Through this noble religion, which is without the least strain of violence and which is based solely upon love and spiritual emancipation, Asian mankind has reached its highest ethical and philosophical peak, has accomplished much of its greatest art and has found a way to Enlightenment and Peace of Mind.

Through this religion strong bonds are formed between the older and the newer Oriental countries whose cultural roots spring from the soil of Buddhism, and I believe that this bond of religious kinship is a happy guarantee for peaceful relations and perpetual understanding among nations of the Orient.

I recall that some years ago I welcomed, on their arrival at the Port of Yokohama, the Ceylonese Buddhists Delegation for the Buddhist Congress in Japan. As a gift to our nation, they brought with them the remains of Buddha—this act gave great gratification and much happiness to my countrymen.

In the spring of last year I had the great privilege and pleasure of making a short pilgrimage to Ceylon, India and Pakistan. I undertook this trip in honour of my dead Father who was an ardent Buddhist, and whose deepest belief, I can never forget, was centred around unending gratitude for the beneficent mercies of Buddha. To him the pure embodiment of Love was exemplified in the Buddha and in the Bodhisattva, and for him it was sufficient guarantee of reaching the Pure Sacred Land to affirm faith in the Buddha. The formula, "Namu Amida Butsu," or "Glory to Amitabha Buddha" was an expression of an ever-thankful heart for the freely given grace and saving power of Buddha.

In Japan various sects of Buddhism developed from the time of its introduction about A.D. 550. Preserved in old chronicles are the messages sent by the Korean King of Paikche, who also sent sutras and an image of Buddha. His recommendation said, "this religion is the most excellent of all teachings, though hard to master and difficult to comprehend; it brings endless and immeasurable blessings and fruits, even the attainment of supreme enlightenment."

From Korea and China came Japan's first contacts with the outside world. With the introduction of Buddhism came a profound change in our way of life and national thought, in our culture and arts. As early as A.D. 604 a moral edict was proclaimed, known as the "constitution of seventeen Articles," to uphold the peace based on Buddhism, and on the Confucian concepts of loyalty and responsibility.

In the course of my pilgrimage to Ceylon, India and Pakistan, already mentioned, I was intensely interested at Lahore and Peshawar in the wonderful collection of Graeco-Buddhist sculptures excavated in the ancient Gandhara country. It struck me forcibly that these make an interesting connecting link between the East and the West, so plainly do the sculptures show the Hellenistic influence—in the grouping of figures and in the treatment of the flowing draperies worn by the figures—although the scenes depicted are those of Buddha's life, and wholly Indian in origin.

At Taxila, famous seat of ancient learning in India, archaeology has already ascertained that the second of the three cities built on this site was built by the Greeks. The Chinese pilgrim and scholar, Hiuen Tsang (Yuan Chuang), visited here and left records of directions and distances which have proved useful to modern archaeologists when excavating this historic region. Another link with Hiuen Tsang is found at Ajanta where can be seen the most beautiful and perfect Buddhist caves in India, 29 in number and dating from 274 B.C. Hiuen Tsang is believed to have carried out explorations here in about A.D. 640.

While on this pilgrimage I came to realize the truth of the legend describing the

distribution of Buddha's ashes among his disciples, as well as reaching a fuller understanding of all the historical links which unite the past with the present, the East with the East and with the West.

It became clearer to me also that modern humanity, like the warriors of old and the populace of Japan in olden times, can find shelter from the ravages of living, can seek and find a permanent rest, in life and death, through the teachings of the Buddha.

Buddhism's greatest influence lies in the principle of the unity of all beings, and this leads to the practice of love and equality. Its ideal of Supreme Enlightenment can be attained by all. It is no wonder that even in the West many are becoming increasingly aware of the value of Eastern philosophical thought in an effort to escape from the encroaching materialism on our spiritual life.

And now, I wish to express my deep gratitude to His Excellency the High Commissioner of Ceylon for kindly taking the initiative in sponsoring the celebrations of Jayanti here in London.\* In Ceylon, I am very happy to say that our country will be represented by Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Mikasa who will attend one of the most important celebrations which will be held at Kandy in the late summer.

*By His Excellency*  
**Mohamed Ikramullah,**  
*High Commissioner for Pakistan*

I CONSIDER it a great honour to take part in this celebration. I am the least qualified man to speak on this Buddha Jayanti. I consider Buddha to be one of the greatest men that ever lived. His teaching is similar to my own religion. Middle Path is the doctrine of Islam. In my country there are a great number of Buddhists.

We are beginning to realize what a heritage has been handed down to us through this civilization.

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity of speaking this evening and for listening to me.

By Miss I. B. Horner

IT GIVES me great pleasure to be here to-day to say a few words to this gathering of Buddhists and well-wishers on such a unique and memorable occasion. We are here to launch in London, and wish every success to, a number of interesting celebrations arranged in honour of the Birth, Enlightenment and *parinibbāna* of Gotama the Buddha, in fact in honour of his whole flawless life and the radiant, vivifying and practical Teaching, the *sāsana*, that 2,500 years ago he delivered over a period of 40 years to ardent listeners in N. India.

Owing to the tremendous impression his *sāsana* made on his immediate disciples, and then on their disciples, it has been preserved, and it has been handed down to us. In the Pali Canon, which to-day is the life-blood of the Buddhists in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, we have what purport to be the words of the Buddha himself and his early disciples. There are other venerable Canons too, other old Sūtras, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan versions, some of which are also translations from one of these tongues into another; and there is Zen, the form Buddhism took in Japan.

The point I am seeking to make is that the vitality, the variety but at the same time the homogeneity of the Teaching carried it far beyond India, its native home, and the "very mother of religions," to distant shores where, in one form or another, it has taken permanent root and been a great blessing to Asia. This is perhaps largely because it so consistently upholds India's age-old insistence on *ahimsā*, non-harming, non-injury with its corollary of Compassion. The widespreadness of Buddhism is reflected here to-day in the persons of these distinguished representatives from Buddhist lands.

The Buddha's Teaching is one of peace, inward and outward, and of toleration; stress is laid on the supreme importance of the mind, for it is this that is to be disciplined, controlled and developed—like a thoroughbred colt—until it can rise above the clamour of the senses and enjoy the calm bliss of

extra-sensory meditation, and enter by this means into the real and the excellent, *santa paṇīta*. The lure of material things then pales into insignificance, and they are seen as they really are: of the nature of pain and anguish, of impermanence and unrest, of insubstantiality and alien to man's true nature, foreign to the very stuff of his being.

The Buddha stands out in historic time not only as a master mind, but as a man of unshakable gentleness and humaneness. There is no better way of giving a succinct picture of his complex character than by quoting the words of one of his great modern compatriots, Sri Radhakrishnan: "In Gotama the Buddha," he says, "we have a master mind from the East, second to none so far as the influence on the thought and life of the human race is concerned, and sacred to all as the founder of a religious tradition whose hold is hardly less wide and deep than any other. He belongs to the history of the world's thought, to the general inheritance of all cultivated men; for, judged by intellectual integrity, moral earnestness, and spiritual insight, he is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in history."

So, in our own day, the profound admiration continues. Buddhism streams over the world, and Buddhist Societies and groups come into existence in non-Buddhist countries far away in South America, Finland and Australia, literally encircling the globe, as Ceylon's old prophecy said would happen 2,500 years after the *parinibbāna*.

Buddhist schools are being founded and maintained, and in this connexion we must think of Colonel Olcott, whose services in this field in Ceylon are recognized by an annual "Olcott Day." And the ancient idea of Buddhist Universities has been reviving in a number of Eastern countries. Again, Buddhist charities, if I may use this expression, are being formed, spurred on by the first Meeting of the World Fellowship of Buddhists; homes for the aged and disabled, baby-clinics, for example; and let us hope that more and more justice and kindness to animals—never far from the Buddha's thoughts, or from the great Emperor Asoka's—and more and more hospitals and surgeries for them will not fail to spring up.

Many books and pamphlets on Buddhism pour from the presses and appear to be eagerly read. Here, Burma is doing notable work, with the "purified" Pali canonical texts on which the Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyanā is lavishing such minute and scholarly care, and printing in its beautiful press. In addition to many MSS., five printed editions have been consulted to establish this authoritative edition of the Pali Canon; Burmese, Sinhalese, Siamese, Cambodian, and, I am proud to say, what is known in Burma as "the London text," admired there because of its completeness and the number of variant readings given in the footnotes.

This "London text" consists of the Pali canonical works published by the Pali Text Society in this country during the last 75 years. In my capacity as Hon. Secretary of this Society, in succession to Mrs. Rhys Davids, I was asked to tell you a little about it this evening. I have, however, taken up a good deal of your time, so must be brief.

The Pali Text Society was founded by T. W. Rhys Davids in 1881, after he had served in Ceylon, where he had become deeply impressed by the juridical code contained in the Vinaya-Piṭaka, and the Teachings in the Sutta-Piṭaka. He strongly felt that these works should be made more widely known, and gave the Society the main object of editing in roman script the works of the Pali Canon, the old Commentaries on these, other later Pali works and, as far as possible, translations into English. It was he who interested Max Muller in the undertaking and secured the services of many distinguished scholars. The Society now has to its credit well over 100 editions of Pali texts and over 50 volumes of translations, including those in the *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, a series under its management.

A later object was the publication of a Pali-English Dictionary, now twice reprinted, and still later Mrs. Rhys Davids conceived the idea of compiling a Concordance to the Pali scripture, eight Parts of which have so far appeared, 1952-1956; and there is now an English-Pali Dictionary, compiled by a Sinhalese bhikkhu, famed for his scholarship.

Scholars of international repute have always been on the Committee of the Society.

Since its inception it has been fortunate in receiving valuable financial support from Kings, Governments, Trusts and private individuals. It is non-profit making, and its income, derived from donations, membership fees and sales of publications, is devoted to publishing and reprinting. We estimate that about 80 per cent of its trade is an overseas one. In its activity and output, it is pleasant to reflect that Professor Rhys Davids' dreams and hopes that the Society would be a means of disseminating Pali Buddhism far and wide have come abundantly true. And his hopes are the hopes we all cherish to-day: may Buddhism prosper and bring Peace and Happiness to all beings.

By H.S.H.

Prince Wongsanuvatra Devakula

*Ambassador of Thailand*

I AM INDEED greatly honoured to be with you here for the celebration of the Buddha Jayanti inaugurated to-day by His Excellency the High Commissioner for Ceylon, Chairman of the Celebration, and may I express through him my grateful appreciation to the Ceylon Buddhist Council for their valuable gift of a souvenir copy of the Sacred Texts of the Tripitaka.

The commemoration of the 2,500th Anniversary of the Parinirvana will for ever be for all of us the most significant and memorable occasion. I am sure that in all corners of Asia to-day and, for that matter, wherever the Buddhist peoples live, this historic occasion will be one of great public rejoicing and in their hearts there will come a deep glow of happiness and spiritual peace, in spite of our present day uncertainties and fears.

On behalf of the Buddhists of Thailand, therefore, may I express our fervent wishes for the success of the celebration, so that with the ever-growing knowledge and understanding of the Dhamma, universal goodwill and peaceful progress may continue to spread among mankind.

## By *His Excellency U Kyin*

*Ambassador of Burma*

MAY I, in the first place, express my sincere thanks to you, Mr. Chairman, for the precious gift presented to me a few moments ago by you in the name of the Lanka Bauddha Mandalaya of Ceylon. Tripitakas, as you all know, form the core of Buddhism. It was through Tripitakas that Buddhism was brought into Burma and it was with Tripitakas that Buddhism was propagated throughout Burma. It was on Tripitakas that the Sixth Buddhist Council deliberated for the last two years successfully at Rangoon, concluding its monumental work on this auspicious day, thus giving a new life and a new era to Buddhism for its propagation throughout the world. Nothing can be more befitting for the Buddhists of Lanka than to make this token presentation of Tripitakas to a representative of the country where Buddhism is a part and parcel of the life of the people. I, therefore, thank you, Mr. Chairman, most sincerely and gratefully for this gift of Tripitakas, which will take both of us back to the ages when Buddhism crossed from your side of the Indian Ocean to Suvāṇṇabhūmi or the land of gold in Burma to give the people of my country a new faith to which they owe their allegiance to-day.

At this Celebration of the Buddha Jayanti, I should like to say a few words to tell you, Ladies and Gentlemen, why this day of all days should be celebrated by us all. This day, as you have been told by the previous speakers, marks the completion of 2,500 years since the demise of the Buddha. And even after these thousands of years we find the teaching of the Buddha as strong and alive as ever. This fact alone illustrates the significance of the day which we now celebrate.

The importance of the 2,500th Anniversary is undoubtedly derived from the greatness of the Buddha. To us the Buddha remains great forever because he had done so much for mankind. The Buddha preached the doctrine of the Middle Path avoiding all extremes but disciplining the mind in the

service of the highest purpose in life, the service of mankind with absolute selflessness. Endowed with deep wisdom commensurate with his boundless compassion the Buddha worked incessantly for the good and happiness of all with no personal motive whatsoever. From the wilderness of birth, from the wilderness of age, from the wilderness of sickness, of death, of all kinds of misfortunes, of the evil forms of existence, of the entire circulation of re-births, of false doctrines and of uncertainty—from all this the Buddha led all beings out of the whirlpool of existence or Saṃsara. This he did for 45 years until he passed away in his 80th year 2,500 years ago to-day.

The Buddha left behind no successor as such, but he exhorted his disciples to regard his doctrine and discipline as their teacher. His iron will, profound wisdom, universal love, boundless compassion, selfless service, great renunciation, perfect purity, unique way of his personal life, exemplary methods employed to propagate his teaching and his final success—all these factors have compelled mankind to hail the Buddha as the greatest moral teacher that ever lived on earth.

The ethical and philosophical system expounded by the Buddha is called "Dhamma," popularly known as Buddhism. Strictly speaking Buddhism is not a religion, as it is not a system of faith or worship owing allegiance to any supernatural God.

Here blind faith is dethroned and substituted by confidence based on knowledge. Although a Buddhist seeks refuge in Buddha as his incomparable moral guide and teacher, he makes no self-surrender. A Buddhist is not a slave to any book or individual. Without sacrificing his freedom of thought he exercises his own free will and develops his wisdom even to the extent of becoming a Buddha himself, as all of us are potential Buddhas.

Naturally, Buddhist followers quote the Buddha as their authority, but the Buddha himself discarded all authority. What he taught his disciples was the conscious elaboration of the experience he had gained in order that they may see and realize what he himself had seen and realized after strenuous efforts for several years.

Immediate self-realization is the sole criterion of the truth in Buddhism. Its keynote is rational understanding.

Though external forms of homage, such as offering of flowers and so forth are prevalent among Buddhists, the Buddha is not worshipped as a God. No doubt the Buddha was highly venerated in his own time, but he never arrogated to himself divinity. He was a man, an extraordinary man, a supremely enlightened and awakened man. Nevertheless it should be remembered that there was no moral teacher "ever so godless as the Buddha yet none so Godlike."

The Buddha expects of his disciples not so much of obeisance as of the actual observance of his teaching. "He honours me best who practises my teaching best" is his admonition. And his teaching is so simple for any one to observe, namely:

To abstain from evil;

To do good; and

To purify one's mind.

Your Excellencies, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, let us on this 2,500th Anniversary of his teaching honour the Buddha by practising his teaching in the best manner possible.

## By Huan Hsiang

*Chargé d'Affaires of the People's Republic of China*

WHEN THE VARIOUS Buddhist countries in Asia are warmly commemorating the 2,500th anniversary of the Parinirvana of the Buddha, we are also celebrating here this memorial day. This is indeed a very encouraging event. First of all please allow me to express my thanks to those friends who have organized this celebration, particularly my friend, the High Commissioner for Ceylon.

The Chinese Buddhists highly respect and admire the great enthusiasm shown by the Buddhists of the southern countries in connexion with this memorial day of the Buddha. They have however a somewhat different computation about the date of the Buddha's Parinirvana, but this is not an

important question. The Chinese Buddhist Association, besides making rubbings of the "slab scriptures"—being a set of Tripitaka inscribed on slabs in Fangshan country during the 6th up to the 11th centuries A.D.—printing a collection of the Buddha's images, casting some 300 statues of the Buddha and assisting the Buddhists of Ceylon by contributing the China Section to the Buddhist Encyclopedia, as tasks undertaken in commemoration of this memorial day of the Buddha, will also hold solemn ceremonies at the time when the Buddhists of other countries are conducting commemorative activities for the occasion. The Chinese Buddhist Association has also sent delegations to Burma and Ceylon to participate in the memorial ceremonies in these countries to express the respect and devotion of the Chinese Buddhists for this holy event.

The Chinese Buddhists and the Buddhists of the other countries in Asia have a long and deep relationship. Our Chinese Buddhists will never forget the great venerable Silabhadra of India who was the teacher of the venerable Hsuan-chuang; they will never forget the nineteen Ceylonese Bhikkhunis, headed by the Mahatheri Devasara, who came and established the Order of Bhikkhunis in China; they will never forget the venerable Bhikkhus Sanghabhadra and Paramartha who came to China from Cambodia and Thailand to translate Buddhist scriptures into Chinese; they will never forget the relationship between the Buddhists of China and Burma since the time of King Anoratha and King Hyansittha; they will never forget that China and Nepal as close neighbours have had close cultural and Buddhist ties for generations; and they will never forget their relationship with the Buddhists of Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Laos and other countries during the last one thousand and several hundred years. It is beneficial to remember these historical relationships, because they will inspire the Buddhists in various countries to live more harmoniously.

The Chinese Buddhists, with their long historical experiences, have proved a truth, i.e. the interests of Buddhism must be linked with those of mankind. Once the Buddha asked his disciples: "How can a drop of



water be eternally prevented from drying up?" None of them could answer. He then told them, "By casting it into the sea." That is to say, the life of a human being, his wisdom and his strength, is but a drop of water. Only when it is cast into the sea of mankind, will it never dry up. The deeds and teachings of the Buddha during his lifetime are beneficial to all living beings at all times and places. That is why the vast number of Buddhists in various countries are to-day universally conducting memorial activities for the 2,500th anniversary of the Buddha's Parinirvana. The Chinese Buddhist Association has called upon all Chinese Buddhists to follow the Buddha's noble examples and to practise his teachings in their daily life, as well as to develop the excellent traditions of the Chinese Buddhists. The Chinese Buddhists will practise the teachings taught by the Buddha to commemorate this occasion.

At the same time the Chinese Buddhists recognize the great significance of commemorating of the Buddha's Parinirvana. The Buddha's gospel of peace is urgently needed by mankind to-day, because mankind was never in such a pressing need of peace in history as it is so to-day. It is, therefore, necessary for all Buddhists in the world to show a mind of compassion towards the world and towards mankind at this time when they are commemorating the All-Compassionate Lord Buddha. The maintenance of world peace, the efforts for the promotion of international friendship and mutual assistance and the dissolution of all factors of war ought to be the most important duties of Buddhists at the present time. What is particularly important is that every Buddhist should exert all his efforts to appeal against the use of nuclear weapons. The prohibition of such weapons of mass destruction is the first step in dispelling the menace of war and protecting the safety of mankind.

The Chinese Buddhists firmly believe that only in a peaceful environment can Buddhism exist for a long time. The interests of Buddhism do not run contrary to those of mankind. History has proved that war does not only massacre human beings by great numbers, but it also brings serious

damages to Buddhism. For the sake of humanity and for the sake of Buddhism, every Buddhist should learn the example of the Buddha and work for the suppression of war, the defence of peace, the eradication of poverty and the lifting of the people's living standard.

I firmly believe that under the inspiration of this memorial day of the Buddha, Buddhists of all countries will further strengthen their relationship and join hands in their common effort for the promotion of friendship and peace among mankind. In this respect, I can assure you on behalf of all Chinese Buddhists that they will struggle forward hand in hand with Buddhists of all lands.

By Mr. Sirimevan Amerasinghe

*Honorary Organizing Secretary of the Jayanti*

WE SEEM to have launched our Buddha Jayanti Celebrations under the most favourable auspices. We have with us here this evening, their Excellencies the representatives of all the Asian Embassies in London, and also the Representatives of the premier Buddhist Societies of England. Our thanks go to them all for the encouragement they have given us. You will have seen from the notices that we have embarked on an ambitious programme of Celebrations and I can tell you now that it was only the guidance of the various Asian Embassies that made this possible.

While it is true that we functioned under the general aegis of the Organizing Committee, may I be permitted to make special mention of the Ceylon High Commission in this connexion. For in the practical execution of the programme decided on, it fell to the Ceylon High Commission, and I consider quite properly so, to work out the details involved. In this I must say how much we owe to His Excellency Sir Claude Corea who interested himself most zealously in the programme. Mention must also be made of Mr. Frederick Richter, of the Royal India, Pakistan and Ceylon Society, and Mr. Dodwell Cooray, Press Officer, Ceylon High Commission.

Finally, may I thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen, for your presence this evening. The full turn out this evening has been most heartening and I do sincerely hope that when our Celebrations culminate next Sunday with the Buddha Jayanti Address we will all have the satisfaction of feeling firstly that our efforts have measured up to the solemnity of a most historic occasion, and further that we ourselves have lived to see it.

By Mr. Rajah Hewavitarane

*A Trustee of the Vihara*

WE ARE highly gratified that it is possible for all of us to meet here in a Vihara on an occasion of deep significance to all of us. The Trustees are indeed happy that they have been able to supply what appears to have been an imperative need. I do not wish to take any more of your time. I now call upon His Excellency Sir Claude Corea to speak.

By His Excellency

Sir Claude Corea

WE LAUNCHED our Celebrations yesterday evening at Ceylon House, and this morning we are met once again in a sacred atmosphere. To-day, Poya Day, we spend in devotion and I am glad to see so many observing Ata Sil.

I now have very great pleasure in calling upon His Excellency U Kyin, the Ambassador of Burma, to hoist the Buddhist flag.

[H.E. the Ambassador of Burma, there-upon stepped across to the balcony of the Vihare accompanied by H.E. Sir Claude Corea and hoisted the flag].

By Mr. B. F. Perera

*Deputy High Commissioner for Ceylon*

EXACTLY ONE MONTH and one day to-day—I had the honour of representing my country along with representatives of 83 other Countries in a procession at an outstation—100 miles from London—to pay

homage to a great man on the occasion of his birth anniversary. To-day, and for a whole week, we along with the rest of the world are celebrating the 2,500th “death” anniversary of one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of men in the history of the world. If I may compare small things with great—there is a certain striking resemblance between the two personages—Shakespeare, whose birth anniversary was remembered recently at a ceremony at his birthplace—although born in England was “discovered” on the Continent about 200 years after his death. Buddha though born in India, was really “discovered” in Ceylon a few hundred years after his passing away, and several hundred years later in other countries of Asia, particularly Burma and Thailand. By the “discovery” of the Buddha, I mean that his doctrine which was communicated orally for a couple of hundred years after his demise was reduced for the first time to writing at the famous Convocation held at the Aluvihare Temple in Ceylon in the 2nd century B.C., and the doctrine really took a hold on the people of most Asian countries from that point of time onwards. One striking difference however between these two personages is that though Shakespeare is treated as one of the “immortals,” he is not an immortal in the real sense of the term because he had not conquered death, though he portrayed in his own inimitable way Life in all its aspects through the characters whom he immortalized in his works. The Buddha however solved the riddle of life, conquered Death, and showed to all mankind a way of deliverance from the fetters of life.

You are all familiar with the famous lines Shakespeare wrote about the transitory nature of life and the vanity of human wishes when he put these words into the mouth of one of his characters:

The wind-capped towers—the solemn temples, the gorgeous palaces, the great globe itself—yea all that it inherits shall dissolve—and like the insubstantial pageant faded—leave not a rock behind.

There is no doubt that he was inspired by Buddha's teaching even though he did not profess his religion because as you know, this

is one of the greatest truths preached to the world over 2,500 years ago, when he propounded his doctrine of Anicca and Arethan or Impermanence.

I said that Ceylon "discovered" the Buddha 200 years after he passed away, and I say so with pardonable pride because Ceylon to-day is regarded by the world along with Burma and Thailand and other countries that profess the Theravada form of Buddhism—as the country in which the religion of the Buddha has been preserved down the ages in its pristine purity.

Last evening you must have heard an Englishman who is a Buddhist by conviction, and a writer of no mean repute, in his remarks at the Inaugural Meeting, give a few dates which were significant in the history of Buddhism in England during the last 50 years. I will follow his example, though not in the same facile way of expression, and give you a few dates which are epoch-making in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon, over the last 22 centuries. Before I start with the second century B.C. I want to take you back to the days of the Buddha himself, and refer in passing to the three recorded visits of the Master to Ceylon. The first to Kelaniya—where a temple has been erected in memory of this visit, and in which is enshrined one of the important relics of the Buddha, the second to Sri Pada which contains his sacred foot-print on a mountain peak, which imprint is venerated by millions, and the third to Maiyangana which contains the oldest Buddhist shrine in our country. This is no legend but recorded history because reference is made to these visits in some of the later chronicles and I refer particularly to the Mahavansa or the Great Chronicle of early times.

Apart from the sanctity associated with these visits, Ceylon possesses three most important objects of veneration to all Buddhists in the world. I refer to the sacred Tooth Relic which was brought to Ceylon in the third century A.D. and is treated as a national treasure housed in the famous Temple of the Tooth at Kandy. The other is the sacred Bo Tree at Anuradhapura—the ancient capital of Ceylon, which is a cutting of the Bo Tree at Buddhagaya,

seated at the foot of which, as you know, the Buddha attained Enlightenment. This cutting was brought to Ceylon in the second century B.C. by Sangamitta, the daughter of Emperor Asoka, a contemporary of one of our Kings, Devanampiya Tissa. The tree apart from its religious significance is to-day regarded as the oldest historical tree in existence anywhere in the world. The third is the sacred foot-print on a mountain which is popularly known as Adam's Peak.

In the short time left to me I will run through a few important land marks in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon. In the second century B.C. Mahinda a son of the Emperor Asoka came on a visit to Ceylon from Asoka's Court. This is the earliest recorded mission sent by India to another country and it was undertaken at the invitation of our King, whom I mentioned a little while ago. This is an important land mark in our history as it commemorates the founding of Buddhism in Ceylon, and its maintenance from that day to this as the stronghold of Theravada Buddhism. Sangamitta's visit which I referred to earlier followed soon thereafter. In the first century B.C. the memorized Canon was reduced to writing at Aluvihare. This also is an historical fact, and I have already referred to it. In the third century A.D. the Tooth Relic was brought to Ceylon, and although the Portuguese claim that this Relic was destroyed during the wars that were waged with the local inhabitants to oust Buddhism and introduce their own religion, history again records that it was only a substitute of the Relic that was destroyed, and the original is preserved intact to this day in Kandy. In the fifth century A.D. a very important event occurred in our history—namely, the visit to Ceylon of the first Buddhist Commentator, Buddhaghosa, a Brahmin by birth and a convert to Buddhism who came from India and lived in the Maha Vihare at Anuradhapura. He wrote the famous "Visuddhimagga" or "the Path of Purity" which is a Pali Commentary on Buddhism, the importance and value of which is that it "brings out the original arahant ideal and crystallizes the theravada view of the original message of the Buddha."

In the eleventh century the King of Ceylon at that time made an appeal to the King of Burma for Bhikkhus to strengthen the local priestly order. This was the beginning of the great Order of the Sargion in Ceylon, the Siam Nikhaya with its Headquarters at Malwatte and Asgiriya, the Amarapura Sect and Ramanna Sect all of which have their adherents in Ceylon. In the twelfth century there was a great revival of Buddhism under one of our well-known Kings—Parathra-tretahu the Great. Dr. le May, whom I had the pleasure of meeting only two days ago, in one of his books says:

“From that time onwards, namely, the twelfth century up to the sixteenth century, Ceylon was regarded by its brother countries, Thailand, Burma, Cambodia as the fountain-head of the pure theravada doctrine.”

In the fourteenth century the King of Thailand sent for a Theravada Bhikkhu from Ceylon. He founded an Order of Priests at the head of which was created a Sangaraja or supreme head. This Order survives to this day in that country and is the basis of the religious movement in Thailand. The King of Thailand like the Emperor Asoka entered the Order and gave his royal patronage to the religion. Then followed a “black-out period” for Buddhism. For five hundred years from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century Buddhism declined in Ceylon as a result of Tamil invasions from South India and the relentless march of the jungle on land hallowed by the worship of centuries. Numerous religious edifices venerated by millions up to that time disappeared and were eventually abandoned. Dissensions in the country among the nationals was also a signal for attacks and invasions, and the subsequent subjugation of Ceylon by the Portuguese first, then the Dutch and lastly by the British. The civilization which flourished with Buddhism also declined when the religion itself fell on evil days. Its revival at the dawn of the twentieth century began with the arrival of Colonel Olcott, who is regarded as the pioneer of modern Buddhist education. He was followed later by other Buddhist leaders such as Valininghe Harischandra, Anagarika Dharmapala and in more recent

times Sir Baron Jayatikaka, Dr. W. A. de Silva, and several other leaders too numerous to mention. Buddhist monks inspired by the famous Weliwita Sangaraja combined with lay leaders to stage a come-back for Buddhism—the wave of nationalism which spread over the country following the cry for independence, and later Independence itself gave it an added impetus. The culmination of this revival is seen in the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations started in Ceylon recently, where they will be continued for another year into May, 1957.

To us in Ceylon the Buddha Jayanti has a two-fold significance, as it coincides with another national event of the greatest importance to us. This year marks the 2,500th anniversary of the founding of the nation. Our national culture and our civilization dates back to the time of Prince Mahinda and the conversion of Ceylon into Buddhism 2,200 years ago. Everything in our life and history is so closely wedded to our religion that we cannot divorce one from the other. Our Art and Architecture, our Literature and even our script—in short our Heritage of which we are proud as a nation—owe their inspiration to the message of the Master, which was embraced by our people and has now become part of our very being. As I say, history was made for us on this day 2,500 years ago. During this period we have had many vicissitudes of fortune but thanks to our religious background of tolerance, goodwill and understanding, we have succeeded in welding the diverse races and communities which inhabit our Island into one United Nation. To-day we stand as a free country which has a record of achievements of which we can be justly proud, and with a stability in our political and economic life that is the envy of other Eastern nations. Though our country is small in size and we are few in numbers, as population goes, our spirit is great; and we are ready and willing to make our small contribution in the Councils of the World, both through the U.N.O. and other international assemblies. Ours will be the contribution of peace and goodwill to all mankind based on the teachings of the Great Master who preached the philosophy of

Ahimsa and Metta, compassion and loving kindness to all living creatures, epitomized in the famous passage from the Dhammapada:

“Hatred cannot be overcome by hatred,  
but by love alone”

This is our contribution to the world, and I think the world needs a message like this to-day, to save it from itself!

In conclusion, I can do no better than end this short and sketchy talk by quoting verbatim the words of one of the greatest philosophers of the modern age—Dr. Radhakrishnan, the Vice-President of the Republic of India and the only Easterner who had the privilege of being invited to deliver the Hibbert Series of Lectures at his old University of Oxford. This was quoted yesterday at a talk but I think it will bear repetition. This is what he says:

“In Gotama the Buddha, we have a master mind from the East, second to none so far as the influence on the thought and life of the human race is concerned, and sacred to all as the founder of a religious tradition whose hold is hardly less wide and deep than any other. He belongs to the history of the world's thought, to the general inheritance of all cultivated men: for, judged by intellectual integrity, moral earnestness, and spiritual insight, he is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in history.”

## By Karunaratne de Silva

*Ceylon Students' Association*

IT IS A GREAT honour and a privilege for me to address this august gathering on this great day of Jayanti. Yesterday we inaugurated the celebrations of the 2,500th anniversary of the passing away of the Prince of Peace. That started once again with great force the wheel of the Dhamma to roll and let us all hope that this wheel gathers more momentum in its progress, radiating the message of love and compassion to humanity.

Jayanti is primarily an occasion sacred to the Buddhists, but it has a wider significance to all people, Buddhist and non-Buddhist. In many parts of the world, people professing different faiths are participating enthusiastically in the celebrations connected

with the Jayanti. This assembly itself is an eloquent instance of international interest and enthusiasm for the great day of Jayanti.

In the context of the present international situation the Jayanti is specially significant. To a world that is tormented by all manner of ideological conflicts and incessant warfare the message of the Buddha has a refreshing relevance. More than ever before the world is in dire need of the sanity and moderation of Siddharta Gautama, the Teacher who taught us the path of the Golden mean, Majjhima Patipadā.

The Buddha showed the world that ethical and religious principles can be consistently and harmoniously applied to the cultivation of even political life. In our time Mahatma Gandhi vindicated this thesis of the Buddha in a manner that was disarmingly convincing. To-day India's foreign policy for instance is based squarely on Buddhist principles. Buddhist countries like Ceylon are now emulating the example of India which gave to the world Buddha and Buddhist Civilization. Buddhism in this connexion is a challenge to the rest of the world. It invites all thinking men and women throughout the world to discard violence of any sort and base their social and political philosophy on sound and valid ethical principles.

Buddha Jayanti is an occasion that provides opportunity for the West and East to come together in a spirit of mutual understanding. The Buddha's teaching is universalistic for it can be cultivated with profit by men and women throughout the world. It recognizes the brotherhood of man and upholds the principles of human liberty and freedom in all spheres. It has exalted human dignity and labour to the highest position such as no other philosophy has been able to do. It is relevant to every time and clime.

The world is now marching towards a universal scientific temper. Buddhism is based on a respect for science. It invites all men to see and think for themselves and discourages the herd mentality. It preaches an individualism of a rare character. It has therefore begun to appeal powerfully to all thinking men both in the East and the West. The voice of the Buddha has begun to compel attention in all international counsels.

If we are to pause for one moment and think of the present international situation we realize the significance of Jayanti to this war-torn, suspicious, fearing world. Over our heads hangs the nuclear weapon that can destroy and reduce the world to ashes. This cool, refreshing wind, this Jayanti that started to blow from the East yesterday, may it cool and put out that fire that is burning in the heart of the world and may it destroy all forms of hatred, greed and desire. Prepare this soil to deposit the seed of love and compassion. The tree that will grow from this seed of love and compassion will bear that which we all desire—eternal happiness.

On this occasion let us pledge ourselves to follow in the footsteps of the Buddha. It is specially necessary to speak of the responsibility that evolves on us students who hail from the Buddhist land of Ceylon. Out here in the West each one of us is an Ambassador of the Buddha, with a specific responsibility to exemplify the Buddhist way of life. Buddhism is not a theory but a way of life. Man should be judged by his actions not by his theory. To show that the Buddhist way of life deserves to be cultivated by all and sundry is part of our special responsibility. It should be our pleasure as well as our sacred duty to the Buddha to show all men and women wherever we happen to be that the Buddha's path to purity and perfection can be cultivated with profit. Let us on this day of inspiration take courage and strength that we shall be able to discharge our Buddhist duties to our fellow men and ourselves.

### By Thai Students' Association Representative

**T**O ALL BUDDHISTS, the Buddha Jayanti Celebration is, indeed, an auspicious and memorable occasion, for it marks an uninterrupted progress of the Dhamma of our Blessed One for 2,500 years.

As representative of the Thai Students' Association in this country, I am very proud of the honour extended to us by the Organizing Committee to participate in the celebration. For us, Buddhists of Thailand, there is

constantly enshrined in our hearts a Threefold Gem, symbolizing the Lord Buddha himself; His Teaching—the Dhamma; and His Disciple—the Sangha. Thus to the Thai people this sacred Triple Gem is of living importance. It is to us a sparkling font from which is drawn all blessing and to which we turn for solace in our daily lives. Therefore by the Protecting Grace of the Triple Gem, I beg to express to you our warmest wishes for the success of the celebration on behalf of Thai Students' Association. May the ever increasing light of the Dhamma continue to preserve and guide mankind in the path of goodwill and peaceful progress.



## The Sermon

### By The Venerable Pandit Mirisse Gunasiri Mahathero

*“Ekapuggalo Bhikkhave, loke uppajjamāno uppajjati, bahu janahitāya, bahu janasukhaya, atthāya, hitāya, sukhāya, devamanussānam. Katamo ekapuggalo? Tathāgato Araham Sammāsambuddho.”*

Anguttara-Nikaya.

*“There is born in this world, O Monks, a unique and peerless being, for the welfare of many, for the happiness of many, through compassion towards the world, for the gain, benefit and happiness of many. Who is that unique and peerless individual? The Tathagata—Exalted One, Araham—the Sanctified One, Sammasambuddha—the Fully Self-Enlightened One.”*

**T**HE BUDDHA GAUTAMA, the Sakyan Sage, attained final liberation—Paranirvana—2,500 years ago. This Great Teacher was born to a royal family in India in 623 B.C. Though meant for the paternal throne and brought up amidst highest

pleasures, this prince was destined to become a Buddha—an Enlightened One. He renounced the world when he was only 29 and after a strenuous search for six long years, full Enlightenment dawned in Him. After a successful ministry of 45 years, He passed away in 543 B.C. whence Buddhist era started. To-day on May 24th, Vesak full moon day this year, the whole Buddhist world comprising nearly a quarter of the earth's population, will celebrate this most significant event on a very grand scale. He was a unique being who came to the world for the common good of all as the above-quoted passage shows.

The world was experiencing a tremendous awakening in ethical and religious aspects during the period between the fifth and seventh centuries before the Christian era; consequently new systems of ethics and philosophies were propagated in the West as well as the East.

The greatest contribution to this spiritual awakening came from the Buddha Gautama whose teaching was a way of Life rather than a religion, for He deviated from the traditional path taken by others and supplemented all other systems with something new.

His teaching was not a revelation but a discovery of Truth. It was only an ethico-philosophical system based on rational understanding. He scrutinized the accepted views of the day and admitted only those that stood the test, and also gave new values to those which seemed to be rationally unsound. Four Noble Truths, namely—the world is veritable suffering, craving and clinging is the cause of suffering, cessation of craving results in elimination of suffering, and the ethical way to this cessation is the Eightfold Noble Path which is the quintessence of the Buddha's principal teaching.

The teaching of the Buddha, popularly known as Buddhism in the West, has its own marked characteristic feature. Without claiming any allegiance with divinity and thereby vesting whole spiritual responsibility on man, He made man stand on his feet giving him full freedom of thought and freedom of choice.

One of His marvellous discoveries was the Law of Cause and Effect which explains

everything within the causal chain. This revolutionized the traditional way of thinking and superseded all other theories that tended to hold man in eternal intellectual slavery.

Karma and Re-birth which were pre-Buddhistic, together with their various implications, were explained in the light of this Law of Cause and Effect and were given their highest scientific significance. The riddle of the universe when solved in the strength of this Universal Law stands firm even in the crucible of modern scientific thought.

The Buddha Gautama stood vehemently against the social injustices of His day and condemned the so-called spiritual monopoly of the priest-class and brought religion and philosophy to the door of every man irrespective of class, caste and creed. He openly said that He was only an instructor and each of the followers had to work out his "salvation" by his own efforts.

Religious tolerance was another precept of the Buddha. He was a friend of all and enemy of none. This tolerance was adopted by His followers so that not a drop of blood has been shed in His name or in the name of His teaching during the 25 centuries of its existence.

The Buddha advocated equality of man and man. According to Him birth could not distinguish man from man and no man is born a sinner. "Not by birth but by deed," said the Buddha, "man becomes an aristocrat or an out-caste."

Domestic and social ethics were meant for all those who had the moral courage to observe them and rise in society. He came into the world for the good of all.

Women, whose activities were limited by the prevailing social systems, were given their full place in human society. They were admitted into the Order of the Sangha and were given ranks according to their personal virtues.

This Prince of Peace, whose ideal was universal happiness and world-peace, was an embodiment of all the virtues that He preached. Absolute purity and perfect holiness were never blended together in one as in this benefactor of mankind.

He passed away at the ripe age of 80 leaving His Dhamma as the legacy to all

those who would volunteer to learn and practice. In spite of the verbal embellishments, misinterpretations and additions by over-pious writers, the real spirit of His teaching remains unsullied and uninterrupted for those who wish to imbibe it with pious confidence. It will remain so for another 25 centuries to come. May all beings be happy.



# Festival of Wesak

## THE ADDRESSES

By Mr. Christmas Humphreys

*President of the London Buddhist Society*

**T**wo thousand five hundred years is a long time in history; a short time in the long line of Buddhas who, according to the esoteric tradition, come forth at regular intervals to assist mankind; and no time at all for those few who have found for themselves the Light of Buddhahood within. For the heart of Buddhism is the Buddha's Enlightenment, and without that tremendous, cosmic experience the Indian prince called Gautama Siddhartha would not have become the All-Awakened One, and Buddhism would never have been born.

Yet the light is within, and we remain in darkness because we are self-clouded from that Light. To see it we must drop the veils we have ourselves erected; they are many and we are loath to let them go. One is the clinging to religion in all its forms, and the belief that any Power, on heaven or earth, can provide, for reward or otherwise, salvation from our sins. Another is authority, of the written or the spoken word, for every concept is one remove from that direct experience by which alone we may know reality. And we must drop the urge to

speculation about matters on which the intellect can never know the truth. How shall the mind, in the sense of a thinking process know, immediately, either a First Cause, if there is one, or a final Effect?

The need to drop these veils is urgent. The house of self, said the Buddha, is on fire, burning with lust, hate and illusion, with the false distinctions of class and caste and colour and race, of sex and age and worldly honour, all of which feed the supreme illusion of "self," that the "I" which claims these differences is itself any different from any other, or has any permanent life of its own.

We are seekers of the Light. Where shall we find it? "Look within," says the oldest of all Buddhist Scriptures, the *Voice of the Silence*, "thou art Buddha." "The Essence of Mind," said the Patriarch, Hui Neng, "is intrinsically pure." And in the words of the Egyptian Hierophants of old, "The Light is within thee; let the light shine."

We must find the Light in our own minds, not in another's. The age-long process is threefold and the first step is to analyse this mind. What is it, and how does it work? We must become objective to the very instrument by which we seek Enlightenment, take it apart in the laboratory of thought and examine the manifold contents each of which so glibly claims to be "I." We must cleanse it by harnessing a powerful will to the process of applied morality. Finally, we must expand it, or the analysis will be useless for morality and goodness alone will not produce Enlightenment. The expansion is a process of understanding, of understanding our own minds, our neighbours', all men's, all forms of life, even to the last or latest on the furthest star. As the triple process is applied the result is the diminution of self; a dying out of the worst of us, and growth of the best of us, where there is now for the first time room to grow. For as self grows less the Light grows more. The "I" of self only rants and raves in the darkness; in the Light of the Void there is never a cry of self, for the woe-producing thought that life is many dies on the Way.

For Buddhism is a Way, a Middle Way between all extremes; it leads from desire to peace, from the darkness of illusion to—to

what? Some call it Nirvana, others Moksha, and many in this room were told of it as the Kingdom of Heaven. But Jesus, you will remember, said again and again that the Kingdom of Heaven is within.

How shall we know a brother man who treads that Way? Not by his own pretensions, or by honours accorded by his fellow men. You will know him by his broad and deep understanding, by the profound serenity of his essential mind, however he may yet react at times to the importunities of circumstance, above all by the deep and swift compassion in his heart for the least trace of suffering, however caused. For, "Compassion is no attribute. It is the law of laws, eternal harmony," and he who knows it not has not yet entered on the Path which leads to the end of suffering.

The Path to the Light within is a long Path, and on the way we shall use and discard a host of "devices" or "means to an end." We shall use words, the written and the spoken word, and "authorities" which will seem for a time to give us support upon the Way. We shall travel in groups and call them religions and societies; we shall seek for outside Saviours, even mis-naming the Buddha as such, but in the end we shall drop them all. In the end we shall gird our loins for the lonely and final battle, wherein the whole man flings himself at the gates of illusion, naked of all assistance, savage in his relentless will to attain. So shall he attain—what? The knowledge that there is nothing to attain and nought that wins it—only a Light which now illumines the Path as it lies within.

Those who learn teach, by the symbols of words, and by example. Thus did the Buddha instruct his disciples to proclaim the Doctrine glorious, and we who follow in the Way must do no less, even as we must carefully refrain from attempting to do more. For Buddhism is utterly tolerant. No man can be forced into the Way; at best he can be given a reasonable belief which he alone can transmute into certainty.

Two thousand five hundred years . . . It is a long time, but during that time it seems that man has progressed a little. There is a new spirit abroad in the councils of men, a

willingness to fight together against the common foes of selfishness and hate and illusion, instead of against each other. For Buddhists are warriors, as the Buddha described them, fighting against evil, fighting for the virtues which lead to Enlightenment. And who shall lead them in that fight? The few, as always, the few who have risen above the changing forms of life to the life or Light which uses them, the few who, now self-freed, can act as guides to the many and examples to all. These are the true Buddhists. for they serve the Lord Buddha, the All-Awakened One who forged no fetters about man's thinking, nor bound his heart with faith. He pointed a Way and walked it; he is walking it still, with each of us, now.

Yet to-night we look back, to the work for the Dhamma wrought by all men in their lives on earth from that far off event in India until to-night. We look forward, to that day which some of us may live to see, when the Dhamma is firmly established in the West and widely taught again and practised in the East. Then may enough men have attained enough awareness of the Light to guide their fellows in the selfless ways of peace instead of in the futile ways of war. But mostly to-night we look within, where the wisdom and the compassion of the Light are both in evidence, and all that we have as duty is to open our eyes and see.

We are met in love and humility, to do honour to a man, to offer allegiance to a Way, as a means to the end of suffering, and to offer ourselves, to the last beloved possession, to reduce "that sea of suffering formed of the tears of men."

We shall not walk alone. The Buddha was not, and he will not be. That which is Buddha, is. As the flame of the Light within it knows no time and has no place. It is not coming-to-be. The Light of the All-Enlightened One, the All-Compassionate One is here, with us, to-night.

By Bhikkhu Kapilavaddho

Two thousand five hundred years to our minds seems a long time. We are rather remote from a happening and that remoteness puts a veil between the

coming to be of something we know as Buddhism. To-day I feel that many millions of Buddhists look back and celebrate something that someone else did; something which was done by this man who is our teacher, appears in the minds of people to-day as something unattainable. The homage to Gotama who became Buddha Enlightened is very essential but there is a tendency for that homage to put his accomplishment beyond our accomplishment—the great thing to celebrate is that a man born as all men are born, by his own insight found his way to Enlightenment from his basic Ignorance and, for the first time in history, proved the capacity of man to do likewise. That is what I think we should celebrate. To-day it has become the custom to celebrate things that other people do. Looking over the modern world to-day we become watchers instead of doers.

The Dhamma is the Key, the method by which Gotama established his Enlightenment. The Key is still alive to-day. It is not something peculiar to the East. It is something positively human. This teaching is to bring man from his Ignorance which is self-born to the seeing of that Ignorance and seeing that Ignorance as being only a partial view instead of the complete thing; each one of us has his own world. Gotama said that is Samsara. Gotama found that his partiality was the basis for his own frustration. This man had lived life to the full and it is a known fact that he was well versed in all the arts. He realized that in his life there was something wrong and he found what this was. Having done so, he laid down no dogmas but said “come and see.” “Here is a way for each man to tread.” To-day we find two thousand five hundred years have removed us from this man and the simplicity of his teaching, so there is a tendency to become scholastic. Imagine one supreme man and a few like minds searching. One says: “Gotama, what have you found?” “I have found by watching my actions and my mind that I have great understanding.” “What have I to do so that I can be likewise? Give me a subject for meditation.” Gotama then gave a subject and the man would go away.

I would ask you to shorten those two thousand five hundred years. Bring to mind the picture of a jungle glade where men are earnest to solve the problem. That happened then, and I would say to-night if that teaching was true then, it is true now. If it is not true now, why should we waste our time? I am convinced that this is something positively alive and dynamic in its possibilities; something which in the West is becoming recognized because of its scientific content. This will satisfy our particular partiality of view. It can be applied in the home. We of scientific thought are overjoyed at finding that Buddha laid down in his teaching a matrix which to-day encompasses and goes beyond the vast reaches of science. We can equate the Quantum Theory and Einstein's Relativity with the teaching. It contains the essence of what is stated by present-day scientists. There is something beyond Cause and even then there is something beyond, something upon which we all paint the scene of our particular world. This teaching can lead to individual celebration. You can awaken each day with a zest. This is a way of adventure, giving man a confidence to face what he has sown in his future. Above all, the Way is the Way to Freedom and the key is to be found in the Dhammapada. Prepare to celebrate your own freedom by understanding your mind creations.

By H.R.H.

Prince Chula Charrabongse

IT IS A GREAT honour and privilege for me to be asked to speak on this great occasion, and to speak to many men and women who are more learned in Buddhism than I, although I am a Buddhist by birth, if that could be considered possible. As I am a mere layman, I took the opportunity, while in Thailand recently, to consult the Supreme Patriarch and the Deputy Patriarch, both of whom asked me to convey to you all their blessings.

We of the Buddhist faith have our own form of Trinity, namely, the blessed Triple \*Gem, the Buddha or Enlightened One, the

Dhamma or Doctrine, the Sangha or Order. So impressed are we by the Dhamma, that we are inclined to pay more attention to that Second Part of the Triple Gem than to ponder over the wonderful life of Siddhartha Gautama, leading to his supreme effort of Enlightenment, which gave us knowledge of the Dhamma. For although we know that the Dhamma is a reality which has always existed we, of the human race, would still have been in ignorance of it, had the Exalted One not revealed it to us, because of the compassion which he had for mankind.

Thus at the Wesak Festival, on the day nearest to full moon of May, of triple blessing to us Buddhists, we can think most reverently of him, our Master, for this is indeed his day. It was on the full moon of May 2,579 years ago that he was born, 2,544 years ago that he attained Enlightenment, and 2,499 years ago that he passed away from earthly life. If one of these events could be considered the most important, then surely it must be the Enlightenment. The Buddha's human frame was born and perished like those of any other mortals, but the results of that great Enlightenment have survived to be of immeasurable benefit to us all. To-night let us especially concentrate our thoughts on him and his attainment of supreme knowledge. Yet I submit we cannot do so without remembering the great Renunciation. What a sacrifice that was in its breath-taking magnitude and splendour. There he was, a handsome young man in the fine flush of youth, possessed of all earthly joys; a beautiful wife, a healthy and lively son, a King for a father, gay companions for the different sports of the time at which he was most proficient, the finest horses that any man could wish for, and all the riches of the world. Yet this young man of twenty-nine gave it all up to take on the lonely roving life of a mendicant. Why? Because he could not continue to accept the ever revolving and sorrowful Wheel of Birth, Sickness, Old Age, and Death. He left all to go out and seek the truth. I can still remember, as if it were yesterday, the excitement and thrill which passed through me, when, as a small boy, I heard it for the first time, well over forty years ago.

We know that the way to Enlightenment was not easy for him. During those six heart-searching years what forms of an ascetic life did he not endure? He starved himself almost to death, and there was hardly a method of self-torture or humiliation for the body that he did not inflict on himself. How lonely he sometimes must have felt, until it was by discovering the Middle Path that he saw the pure Light. It was full moon in May, and he was thirty-five. Did he keep the knowledge to himself? It is said that he hesitated, fearing that he would not be believed, and that the God Brahma himself came down to beseech him to reveal his knowledge to the world. I prefer to think of that as a legend, and I fervently believe that it was his own all-embracing love and compassion for mankind which led him to spend the rest of his life teaching the Doctrine. That love for mankind had grown in that Bodhisattva soul during its journey through countless previous lives of self-improvement.

Thus must we be grateful to and always look up to the Buddha, especially for his infinite knowledge, his perfect purity, and his overwhelming compassion. Most of us here to-night are familiar with his Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path, and the Pancha Sila or Five Precepts which the Venerable Bhikkhu has read earlier on. We also know that in the very centre of Buddhism is found the three principles. 1. Not to do any evil whatsoever. 2. To do good as much as possible. 3. To keep our hearts pure and free from greed, envy, anger, and delusion. It has been said that Buddhism is negative because we have no creator, but indeed we have a creator, only our creator is within ourselves—the Karma—or our own doing. Some of our friends present here to-night, who are as yet unfamiliar with these ideas and who would like to know more, can take steps to find out more; and once they dip into it they will find the Buddhist doctrine a crystal clear pool of infinite depth.

It has also been said that ours is too sad a religion for those who are not yet ready, nor do they wish to escape from the Wheel of Life, and that there is no advice for them, for

the layman. I submit that it is not so, and as a layman I have myself been most impressed by the advice which the Enlightened One had for laymen and for women. He had answers for them all, be they millionaires or beggars, and all were treated with the usual patience and good manners so characteristic of the Man. May I be permitted briefly to quote a few of these, such as the five duties of children for parents: Supported by them I will support them in my turn. I will do my duty by them. I will maintain the family honour. I will well manage my inheritance. I will keep up the offerings due to relatives deceased.

Then there are the five duties of parents to children: Teach them to avoid evil. Show them the right way. See that they get the best education within their means. Help and advise them to get proper husbands or wives. Finally provide them with suitable inheritance.

The duties of a husband to his wife are also five: Showing her respect. Showing her compliance. Not committing adultery. Giving her full charge of household affairs. Supplying her with finery.

Then the wife also has her five duties to her husband: By doing her duties thoroughly. By being a good housewife. By not committing adultery. By safeguarding what he earns. By skill and zeal in all she has to do.

Then lastly and to me the most remarkable and modern of all, the five duties of an employer to his employees or servants: Give them only the work suitable to their ability and strength. Provide them with good food and fair wages. Nurse them when they are sick. Give them a share in any extra dainty which may come in the way of food. Give them reasonable time off from their work.

These sayings of the Buddha are over 2,500 years old. They could have been written yesterday for our present-day use.

The more one knows of his teaching the more surprised and excited one becomes.

That is why to-night we are gathered here to render to him, in deep reverence, our humble thanks for what he has given to mankind following his own great Enlightenment on a full-moon night of May a long, long time ago.

May the belief of those here present, confidently placed in the truth of the Triple Gem—the Lord Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha—fill their hearts with pure, unsullied, and happy thoughts, and may they be blessed with the four good fortunes of: Long Life, Good Looks, Happiness, and Good Health.

## By *The Venerable Pandit* Mirisse Gunasiri Mahathero

THANKS to the Buddhist Society at whose request we are gathered together here, we, members of various nationalities, sinking down all our petty differences to celebrate the great historical event of the Buddha's Parinibbana-Final Liberation. Vesak Full Moon is the most sacred day in the Buddhist calendar for it is on such a day the Buddha, the Sakyan Sage, Teacher of one quarter of the population of the world, was born, was enlightened and finally passed away into Parinibbana. On that holy spot of Kusinara, a genuine survival of India's past glory, under the cool shade of the blossoming Sala trees, the greatest benefactor of mankind passed away, never to return to the world, leaving His kingdom of righteousness to be the light of the world and the common legacy of all mankind. Twenty-five centuries passed since then and for the 2,500th time the Buddhists the world over, show their sincere gratitude and homage to their Teacher to-day.

It is universally accepted that Gotama the Buddha is one of the greatest, if not the greatest figure in human history. His unique contribution to the world culture and philosophy is His noble Dhamma which has become the common property of the world, the common light of the world, the unifying force of the whole mankind. Human thought attained its consummation, and culture its summit, by this ethico-philosophical Way of Life.

Among the great factors of His life that made Him so revered universally were His penetrating wisdom, iron will-power, all-pervading compassion (Mahakaruna), selfless

service to all alike, marvellous power of renunciation (Nekkhamma), unsullied purity in word, deed and thought, spotless exemplary life which was but an embodiment of the virtues He taught, His tolerance, ethical-religious and philosophical, the harmless and blameless methods employed by Him to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace. His universal doctrine of loving kindness (Metta) and non-violence (Avihimsa).

He was not an Indian God nor had He any alliance to divinity. Though godless most godlike as He was, He attained all these supernormal heights by His own efforts quite independent of the traditional way of the time.

In His own words He was a man, a superman, who attained perfection independently. Without any monopoly or any dictatorial tone the Buddha gave to every man freedom of thought, the right to think by himself. He thereby roused man's intellect and reason and set him on his own feet to work out his own salvation by himself. His teaching was not a revelation and His injunctions not commandments but precepts for the willing to volunteer to observe for his own edification.

According to Him everything comes from within man for the world is mind-made. Consequently man should start thinking in the right way. Hence rational understanding is the master-key to all doors of reality. It is through this understanding rational and analytical, that the Master discovered the ultimate truth underlying all phenomena of the world.

Among His marvellous discoveries is the Law of Dependent Origination—*Paticcasamuppāda*, which explains everything in its most scientific aspect. This Buddhist Law of Relativity revolutionized the traditional way of thinking and superseded all the so-called Gospels of Truth of the day. There were not less than sixty and two philosophical views seeking an imaginary haven of happiness. The Buddha criticized the validity and utility of these petty views as an end to universal suffering.

The Buddha's analysis of the being went deep; that mind and matter the chief constituents of a being went down to *Anatman*

or *Śūnyatā*—non-substantiality and void the inevitable result being the denial of the popular belief that the origin of things should be attributed to an ultimate cause beyond human conception, beyond human investigation, scientific, logical and empirical. Thereby the Buddha freed man from *avijjā*—ignorance that kept him in intellectual slavery so far.

The philosophical theories as *Kamma* and *Re-birth*, *Nibbana* and *Samsara* (Ethical law of action and re-action, continued existence, cessation of existence and continuity of life), the germs of which were buried in the earlier Indian thought and were on the way to final solution, when explained in terms of this Doctrine of Causal Chain, attained their consummate significance.

The brilliant success achieved by the Buddha in the particular field of psycho-analysis delving deep even to the mind of animals is, by far the greatest. Long before Hume who analysed the mind to see that consciousness is only a fleeting mental process, and Schopenhauer arrived at the conclusion that the world is nothing but idea and will, the Buddha while meditating analysed the being into five aggregates and consciousness, one among them, in its various aspects. He established fifty-five mental complexes as against the few so far dealt with in modern psychology. *Abhidhamma*, Buddhist metaphysics, covers such a vast field that it demands a long time to do research work on this particular subject.

His tolerance guided by compassion, the most remarkable virtue of His personal life, is reflected throughout His noble teaching. This principle was so well adopted by His followers that not a single drop of blood was shed in His name or His *Dhamma* during the last twenty-five and a half centuries of Buddhist history. Religious persecutions, maimings and crusades are quite strange to the history of this Middle Way.

He launched His world campaign at Sarnath in modern India, with that famous and historical sermon called *Dhammacakkappavattana-Sutta* which literally means "Setting in motion the wheel of *Dhamma*" and this wheel went on rolling to one fourth

of the earth's surface crushing none but illuminating and levelling its path for all those who wished to tread along it. It went beyond the confines of its cradle across the Himalayas and across the oceans—to Tibet, China, Mongolia, Manchuria, Korea, Japan, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Indo-China, Indonesia and down to Ceylon. It penetrated to many countries in the West and contributed much to the thought there.

There is a tremendous awakening in the West with regard to the teaching of the Tathagata for it is no more a mystic faith or pessimism or mere atheism though it was misinterpreted a few decades ago. The Dhamma is gradually gaining grounds in this part of the world more than ever before.

A few decades ago, a follower or a sympathizer of Buddhism was not taken seriously. Being quite a new thing it was considered to be a mixture of mysticism and superstition, perhaps because Buddhism was not defined and interpreted in its true light and Buddhist terms not correctly explained in the famous lexicons and encyclopedias. Though the Buddha was the first to send out missionaries for the good of all they were not "missionaries" in the modern sense of the term. It is correct when I say that so far no such missionary activities have been organized in the West. No one thought that this teaching was destined to play such a prominent part in the Western world as it actually does to-day.

Thanks to the great scholars of recent times who took pains to interpret Buddha's Teaching to the Western countries and the selfless efforts of the various Buddhist institutes here, such as this society, one of the leading organizations with its long history of thirty-four years with its able president, Mr. Christmas Humphreys, this noble Path of the Buddha is gradually gaining its due place. It is a very happy sign that hundreds are starting to think of Buddhism daily. I am afraid I will have to have hours and hours to mention the names of those wise ones here who have so far paid glowing tributes, oral and written as well, to this Great Teacher and His sublime teaching.

In one sense the whole world has honoured the Buddha. Such was His deep compassion

and profound wisdom. Time and again they have conferred on Him highest possible honours. Hindus gave Him a prominent place among the ten incarnations of Vishnu. The Catholic Church canonized Him as St. Josaphat. Muslims regard Him as a great spiritual Teacher. The rationalists could not help accepting Him as the greatest Free-Thinker. The Buddha Gotama leads the list of seven great men of the world given by H. G. Wells, a non-partial and non-Buddhist thinker of the recent times. What is there to wonder if a consummate historian of the calibre of Arnold Toynbee were to say that Buddhism only would survive the present apathy of man towards religion.

During His life-time and during the last twenty-five centuries the world has looked up to the teaching of this Exalted One for inspiration and guidance. Numerous generations of various nations came under the benign influence of Buddha-Dhamma. The contribution Buddhism has so far made to the spiritual and cultural advancement of humanity in general is indeed very significant and the promise it holds for the future still more encouraging.

This Buddha-Jayanti gives us an opportunity to turn to the past and to think of ways and means for the future for the propagation of this common legacy to mankind. Let us therefore draw inspiration from this historical event and reap the real benefit from it by utilizing it to propagate universal peace and harmony to our troubled and perplexed world.

You all would agree with me, I suppose, when I say that the best way that we can show our gratitude to this Noble One is by imbibing the virtues which He tried to inculcate in us and living the rest of lives according to the Dhamma. Let all of us clasp our hands over our heads in honour of the Buddha and aspire to the ideals of a Buddhist life. So: let us be generous and helpful: pure and virtuous: not selfish or self-possessive but selfless and self-sacrificing: be wise and give the benefit of our knowledge to others: be energetic, strenuous and persevering; patient and able to bear and forebear the wrongs of others: honest and truthful "always and everywhere: firm and resolute

in our good work: kind, compassionate and friendly towards all and let us be humble, calm, quiet, unruffled and serene.



# The Teaching of Buddha

By W. S. Karunaratne

*Lecturer at the University of Ceylon*

**O**THER SPEAKERS who addressed you during the course of the Jayanti week have had occasion to tell you all about the significance of completing 2,500 years of Buddhism. I do not propose to add anything of my own to the eulogy of the Buddha. On the other hand I should like to take this opportunity to remind you and myself of the value of the Buddha's teaching in so far as it can be helpful to us in bettering our lives. To many people "Buddhism" is still a body of formal doctrines. Most Buddhists like to adhere to it more or less dogmatically. In this respect it resembles a tin of assorted biscuits containing a few of each variety, all assorted and neatly arranged within compartments and the whole securely packed in a way that no fresh air can get in, for exposure make them go bad. Thus whenever we inquire from the average Buddhist as to his understanding of the Dhamma we are invariably presented with an assortment of religious and philosophical views on such varied themes as Nirvāṇa, Karma, Saṃsāra, Duḥkha and Mārga. I like to protest strongly against this attitude to Buddhism. Our attitude to the Dharma is profoundly and basically influenced by our attitude to the Buddha. There are two ways, among many others, in which we can look at the Buddha. One way is to regard him as the founder of a world religion, the

leader of humanity, the teacher of men and gods alike. Judged in this way, the Buddha is one who commands our loyalty and allegiance. In the gradual unfoldment of Buddhism as a religion in history this attitude resulted in the development of the concept of the Buddha as the saviour of the world, the god of gods, the beginning and the end of the universe. The other way, which it seems to me is the correct way, is to look at the Buddha as an individual who obtained spiritual illumination through hard, very human, striving and who, like many others both before and after him, upheld the supremacy of the human mind by perfecting himself ethically and spiritually through unaided singular effort. For this reason he is worthy of being emulated in many of his ways. If this is the way we like to understand the Buddha then our approach to his Dharma will be based not on faith and allegiance but on critical and scientific understanding. This can be certainly very helpful to us.

Belief, whether it be Buddhist or otherwise, always tends to be dogmatic. But Buddhism appears in history originally an intellectual movement announcing itself as a protest against the formalism of the life and thought of the Buddha's day in India. Anything that is formal and dogmatic in Buddhism therefore cannot be part of the message of the Sakyan sage. I should like to define Buddhism as form of activity which is the expression of a distinct attitude of mind. The Dharma cannot be arbitrarily divided into a theory and practice. The latter is the structure of the Dharma while the former is only a superstructure. In essence the Dharma is a form of activity throughout life.

Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy are two distinct things altogether. We have to admit that Buddhist philosophy is wholly academic to-day. The Buddha denies the competence of reason and language to grasp reality. But logic and language are the fundamental and necessary equipment of the philosopher. At best therefore Buddhist philosophy can give us only an intellectual apprehension of the Dharma. The vision of the truth of the Dharma through spiritual

insight lies outside the self-imposed boundaries of the philosopher's realm of logic and language.

For science as it is understood to-day the method of verification is largely objective experimentation. For Buddhism the method of verification is primarily and ultimately inward experience. The difference between the experimental and the experiential therefore adequately and accurately expresses the difference between science and Buddhism. Both science and Buddhism ultimately reduce themselves to distinct techniques. But the difference between the two techniques is by no means fundamental. The two methods are not mutually exclusive. Buddhism wholly accepts experimentation but only as being valid in the realm of physics. In the realm of the spirit and the mind it denies the competence of external and objective verification. In human psychology introspection alone yields us the true state of affairs. Feelings have of necessity to be felt. This cannot be done by proxy. According to the Buddha therefore the behaviouristic approach to the study of psychological phenomena cannot yield the total truth. Buddhism and science agree in the common demand for verification. According to the scientist of the present day, the adjective "scientific" can be applied only to the experimental method of verification. According to the Buddha the adjective can be equally validly applied also to the experiential method. This shows us that the true difference between science and Buddhism is that the method of the former in the matter of verification is arbitrarily limited while the method of the latter is not. The dogmatism of science therefore consists only in the consistent and insistent demand to adhere solely to the experimental method to the exclusion of the experiential. Buddhism therefore offers a corrective to the lop-sided tendency of science in this regard by showing that the wider scientific method can be adequately and successfully applied even to the phenomena of religious and spiritual life.

If Buddhism is regarded as an attitude of mind then it follows that it lends itself readily to application in any and every sphere of life and activity. It is not at all

necessary to have a separate sphere of activity called "religious activity" or even "Buddhist activity." Life is one continuous stream even though it appears as being many-sided. Buddhism is a function that can exercise a formative influence on the total life of an individual. All aspects of one's life have to be co-ordinated by the consistent application of the technique which Buddha has so beautifully expounded and embodied in his own life. Let our own lives be living embodiments of the application of the Dharma.



## Closing Meeting

### THE SPEECHES

By H.E. Sir Claude Corea

WE HAVE now come to the close of Buddha Jayanti Week and with it we hope that the spirit of a new era of Buddhism has been awakened in the West. It now gives me great pleasure to introduce the Chairman of this evening's meeting. His Excellency the Ambassador of Nepal, Sri Rama Prasad Manandhar. His Excellency comes from a country closely associated with Buddhism through the ages. He has a deep and profound knowledge of Buddhism and has exemplified the doctrine in his life. The London Buddha Jayanti Committee very much appreciates his presence here to-day.

May I also take the opportunity to welcome the Venerable Rahula Thera who has come from Paris solely for this meeting.

I attach such great importance to this Buddha Jayanti Address that I have myself interrupted official business in Amsterdam and come over here specially to be present at this occasion.

By *His Excellency*  
**Sri Rama Prasad Manandhar**  
*Ambassador of Nepal*

IT IS A GREAT privilege that I have been asked to introduce the Venerable Rahula. The Buddha Jayanti Week was a great success, although the celebrations were not of the sensational but peaceful kind.

Buddhism always stresses quietness and calmness. Buddha reminded us not to attach importance to rituals and outer ceremonies but that each one of us should become a person like him by leading temperate lives, by being engaged in meditation. Nowadays many people try to attain the final stage of meditation without purifying their lives first. The first four steps of the Eight-fold Path teach us how we should lead a good life. According to Buddhism everything begins with the mind.

We have been following the spirit of Goodness which the Buddha preached. It is necessary to purify one's heart in order to achieve any measure of success in meditation. The five precepts are directed towards this.

Buddhism goes to the roots of all action. If we have not purified the roots, namely, body and mind, no matter how much we meditate we would not see the inner truth.

The Venerable Rahula will now give his address. After obtaining a degree at the London University he went to Calcutta and there he was associated with scholars like Barua. He obtained a Doctorate of Philosophy from the University of Ceylon and in 1950 he left for Paris on a scholarship. He is at the moment engaged in research there.

By Dr. W. Rāhula

THERE is a strong belief among many millions of Buddhists according to an old tradition that this year, 2,500th year after the *Parinirvāṇa* (passing away) of the Buddha, will usher in a period when the *Dhamma*, the Buddha's message, will spread throughout the world, when governments will gradually turn towards righteousness,

when happiness and prosperity will increase in the world.

The term *Dhamma* or the Buddha's message represents such noble values as truth, love, compassion, non-violence, tolerance, wisdom, understanding, peace and harmony, freedom from selfishness, hatred and violence, purity of thought, word and deed. These are universal values and they have no sectarian labels. When the Buddhists believe that this year will usher in a period when the *Dhamma* will spread throughout the world, they mean in fact that these noble ideas, these noble qualities will spread in the world.

If we look round the world to-day with a searching eye, we can see some signs which, perhaps, indicate that this old Buddhist tradition may not be a mere pious wish. There is of late a tendency among nations, particularly among big nations, towards understanding one another and finding a way to live together in peace.

The world seems to be tired of living in constant fear, suspicion and tension. Science has produced weapons which are capable of unimaginable destruction. Brandishing these new weapons in their hands, the great powers have been threatening and challenging each other, boasting that one could cause more destruction and misery in the world than the other, vying with each other in selfishness, falsehood, cruelty, hatred and violence, in a manner without dignity or shame, almost pitiable like the condition of a depraved, drunken, mad fool.

They have gone along this path of madness, this path of evil, this path of death to such a point that, now, if they take one more step forward in that direction, the result will be nothing but plunging into the bottomless abyss of the total destruction of humanity. Now they are frightened of the situation they have themselves created. They want to find a way out, they want to find a solution. As Pandit Nehru, Prime Minister of India, has recently declared, the world has to choose to-day between the hydrogen bomb and the message of the Buddha. There is nothing in between to choose from.

It augurs well for the future of the world that many countries in Asia inspired by the

message of the Buddha are already trying to follow a path of peace and non-violence, thus setting an example to other nations, and it is encouraging to see that this "middle path" is being more and more appreciated.

Buddhism has a most important message for the modern world. It is not a faith in an imaginary god or some divinity to whose will you surrender all human responsibility. It is a faith in man. Buddhism gives full responsibility and dignity to man. It makes man his own master, and according to Buddhism there is no higher being that sits in judgment over his destiny. That is to say, the world is what you and I want to make out of it, and not what some other unknown being wants to.

Buddhism is purely human. We are celebrating to-day a great human achievement. Among the great religious teachers, the Buddha, who lived in India in the 6th century B.C., was the only one who did not claim to be anything other than a human being. He did not claim even to be an inspired messenger. He attributes all his realization, attainments and achievements to human effort and human intelligence. The Buddha admonished his disciples "to be a refuge to themselves," and never to seek refuge or help from anywhere else. He taught, stimulated and encouraged each person to fully develop himself and work out his own emancipation, because man has the power to liberate himself from all bondage through his own intelligence and effort. The Buddha says: "You should do your work, for the Tathāgatas only teach the way."

It is on this principle of individual responsibility that he allows freedom to his disciples. He advised his followers not to accept anything just because religion says so or because it is taught by an authority or a teacher, but to accept and practise a thing only if they understood it and were convinced by it for themselves. He was of firm conviction that man's mind should never be held in bondage, and that the realization of truth could never come through some mechanical disciplinary rules or beliefs or dogmas.

The freedom of thought and tolerance allowed by the Buddha are unheard of elsewhere in the history of religions. Once a

prominent and wealthy man called Upāli, who was a well-known lay disciple of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta (Jaina Mahāvira), expressed his desire to become a lay disciple of the Buddha. But the Buddha asked him to reconsider it and not to be in a hurry. When Upāli expressed his desire again, the Master agreed to accept him as a lay disciple, but requested him to continue to respect and support his old religious teachers as he used to do before.

In the third century B.C. the great Buddhist Emperor Asoka of India, following this noble example of tolerance and understanding honoured and supported all other religions within his vast empire. In one of his Edicts, carved on rock, the Emperor declares: "There should not be honour of one's own religion and condemnation of others' religions. On the other hand, the religions of others should be honoured for this reason or that. Thus doing one helps one's own religion to grow and benefits the religions of others too. Whosoever honours his own religion and condemns the religions of others purely from devotion to his own religion, injures more gravely his own religion on the contrary. Hence concord is commendable in this sense that all should listen and be willing to listen to the doctrines professed by others." Here I wish to add that this Buddhist spirit of sympathetic understanding should be applied to-day not only to religious doctrines, but also to national, political, social and economic doctrines as well.

This spirit of tolerance and understanding has been from the very beginning to the present day one of the most cherished ideals of Buddhist culture and civilization. That is why there is not a single example of persecution or shedding of a single drop of blood in the name of Buddhism during its long history of 25 centuries, although it spread peacefully all over the continent of Asia, having more than 500 million adherents to-day.

Instead of talking about vague generalities of Buddhism, it would be most appropriate for an important occasion like the Buddha Jayanti, when we are commemorating 2,500th year of the Master's *Parinirvāṇa*, if we could discuss some of his essential

teachings which are unanimously accepted by hundreds of millions of his followers throughout the world. First of all we should remember that the Buddha's teaching is a way of life to be experimented with and experienced, to be followed and practised in our daily life, in our social and political life, here and now. It is a vast and complete system of ethico-philosophical and psychological teachings based on a highly scientific and analytical method, going deep into all aspects of human life. It is a path that leads man gradually, through his own moral, intellectual and spiritual discipline and development, to the highest realization, the realization of the Absolute Truth, the realization of Nirvāṇa.

It is difficult to give an idea of this enormous system in a few words. But if we take the Four Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*), namely, *Dukkha*; *Samudaya*, the arising or origin of the *Dukkha*; *Nirodha*, the cessation of the *Dukkha*; and *Magga*, the Path leading to the cessation of the *Dukkha*; we may discuss in brief all the fundamental teachings of Buddhism.

Now, the first Truth, *Dukkha-ariyasacca*, is generally translated by almost all scholars as "The Noble Truth of Suffering," and it is interpreted to mean that life according to Buddhism is nothing but suffering and pain. This translation and interpretation are both highly unsatisfactory and misleading. It is because of this narrow translation and incorrect interpretation that many people have been misguided to regard Buddhism as pessimistic. First of all, Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor optimistic. It takes a realistic view of life and of the world. It looks at things objectively. It does not falsely lull you to live in a fool's paradise, nor does it frighten and agonize you with all kinds of imaginary fears and sins. It tells you exactly and objectively (*yathābhūtaṃ*) what you are and what the world is, and shows you the right way to perfect freedom, peace, tranquillity and happiness.

One physician may gravely exaggerate an illness and give up hopes altogether. Another physician may ignorantly declare that there is no illness and that no treatment is necessary, thus deceiving the patient into

a false consolation. Call the first one pessimistic and the second optimistic, if you please. Both are equally dangerous. But a third physician diagnoses the symptoms correctly, understands the cause and nature of the illness, sees clearly that it can be cured and courageously administers a course of treatment that saves his patient. The Buddha is like the last physician. He is the wise and scientific doctor for the ills of the world.

It is true that the Pāli word *dukkha* (or Sanskrit *duḥkha*) in ordinary usage means "suffering," "pain" or "misery" as opposed to the word *sukha* meaning "happiness," "comfort" or "ease." But the term *dukkha* as the first Noble Truth has a philosophical meaning and connotes an enormously wider sense. It is admitted that the term *dukkha* in the first Noble Truth contains the ordinary meaning of "suffering," but in addition to that it also includes deeper ideas such as "imperfection," "impermanence," "emptiness," "unsubstantiality" and "conflict." It is difficult therefore to find one word to embrace the whole conception of the term *dukkha* as first Noble Truth, and so it is better to leave it untranslated than to give an incomplete and wrong idea by conveniently translating it as "suffering" or "pain."

Buddhism does not deny happiness in life. On the contrary it admits different forms of happiness, both material and spiritual, for laymen as well as for monks. But all that is included in the *dukkha*. Even the very pure spiritual states of *dhyāna* (recueillement or trance) attained by the practice of higher meditation, which are free even from a shadow of suffering in the accepted sense of the word and which may be described as unmixed happiness, and also the state of *dhyāna* which is free from sensations both pleasant (*sukha*) and unpleasant (*dukkha*) and which is only pure equanimity and awareness—even these very high spiritual states are included in the *dukkha*. Not because they are suffering or pain, but because they too are *saṃkhāra*, conditioned, subject to change, impermanent and are unsubstantial.

The conception of the *dukkha* may be viewed from three aspects: the *dukkha* as

ordinary suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*); *dukkha* as change (*vipariṇāma-dukkha*); and *dukkha* as conditioned states (*saṃkhāra-dukkha*).<sup>1</sup>

All kinds of suffering in life like birth, old age, sickness, death, union with unpleasant conditions, separation from beloved ones and pleasant conditions, not getting what one desires, grief, lamentation, distress—all such forms of physical and mental suffering, which are universally accepted as suffering or pain, are included in the *dukkha* as ordinary suffering (*dukkha-dukkha*).

A happy feeling, a happy condition in our life is not permanent, not everlasting. It changes sooner or later. When it changes it produces an unhappy feeling, an unhappy condition. This vicissitude is included in the *dukkha* as change (*vipariṇāma-dukkha*).

Now, the third form of the *dukkha* as conditioned states (*saṃkhāra-dukkha*) is the most important philosophical aspect of the first Noble Truth, and it requires a little bit of an analytical explanation of what we consider as “being,” as “individual” or as “I.” According to Buddhist philosophy what we call a “being” “individual” or “I” is only a combination of ever-changing physical and mental energies which may be divided into five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*). The Buddha says: “In short these five aggregates of attachment are *dukkha*.” (*saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*). Here it should be clearly understood that the *dukkha* and the five aggregates are not two different things; the five aggregates themselves are the *dukkha*. We will understand this point better when we get an idea about the five aggregates. Now, what are these five aggregates which constitute the so-called being?

The first is the Aggregate of Matter (*rūpakkkhandha*). In this term the “Aggregate of Matter” are included the traditional Four Great Elements (*cattāri mahābhūtāni*), namely, the elements of solidity, fluidity, energy and motion, and also their derivatives (*upādāya rūpa*). In the term the “Derivatives of Four Great Elements” are included our five material sense organs, i.e. the faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body

and their corresponding objects in the external world, i.e. visible form, sound, odour, taste and tangible things and also some thoughts or ideas which are objects of mind. Thus the whole sphere of matter both internal and external is included in the Aggregate of Matter.

The second is the Aggregate of Sensations (*vedanākkhandha*). In this group are included all our sensations, pleasant or unpleasant or neither pleasant nor unpleasant, experienced through the contact of our sense organs with the external world. That is to say, the sensations experienced through the contact of the eye with visible forms, ear with sounds, nose with odour, tongue with taste, body with tangible objects, and mind (which is the sixth faculty in Buddhist philosophy) with mind objects or thoughts or ideas. All our physical and mental sensations are included in this group.

The third is the Aggregate of Perceptions (*saññākkhandha*). Like the sensations, perceptions also are produced through the contact of our faculties with the external world.

The fourth is the Aggregate of Mental Formations (*saṅkhārakkhandha*). In this group are included all volitional mental activities both good and bad, which produce karmic effects, such as attention (*manasikāra*), will (*chanda*), determination (*adhimokkha*), confidence (*saddhā*), concentration (*samādhi*), intelligence or wisdom (*paññā*), energy (*virīya*), desire (*rāga*), repugnance or hate (*paṭigha*), ignorance (*avijjā*), conceit (*māna*), idea of self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*) etc. There are 52 such mental activities which constitute the Aggregate of Mental Formations.

The fifth is the Aggregate of Consciousness (*viññāṇakkhandha*). Consciousness is a reaction or response which has one of the six faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind) as its basis and an external phenomenon as its object. E.g., the visual consciousness has the eye as its basis and a visible form as its object. So is the consciousness connected with other faculties.

Very briefly these are the five aggregates. What we call a “being” or “individual” or “I” is only a name or a label given to the combination of these five groups. They

<sup>1</sup> Visuddhimagga (PTS) p. 499; Abhidharma-samuccaya, pp. 36, 38 (ed. Pradhan, Santiniketan, 1950).

are all impermanent. They are in a flux of momentary arising and disappearing. One thing disappears conditioning the appearance of the next in a series of cause and effect. There is no substantiality in them. There is nothing behind them that can be called a permanent self (*ātma*), individuality or anything that can be called "I." Every one will agree that neither matter, nor sensation, nor perception, nor any one of those mental activities, nor consciousness can really be called "I." But when these five physical and mental aggregates which are interdependent are working together in combination as a physio-psychological machine we get the idea of "I." But this is only a false mental idea which is nothing but one of those 52 mental formations of the fourth aggregate which we have just discussed. Namely, it is the idea of self (*sakkāya-diṭṭhi*). These five aggregates together, which we popularly call a being, are the dukkha itself (*saṃkhāra-dukkha*). There is no other being or "I" standing behind these five aggregates who experiences the dukkha. There is no unmoving mover behind the movement. It is only movement. In other words, there is no thinker behind the thought. Thought itself is the thinker. If you remove the thought there is no thinker. Here one cannot fail to notice how this Buddhist view is diametrically opposed to the conception of Cartesian cogito.

This is the Noble Truth of Dukkha. This does not at all make the life of a Buddhist melancholy or sorrowful, as some people wrongly imagine. On the contrary, a true Buddhist is the happiest in the world. He has no fears or anxieties. He is always calm and serene and cannot be upset or dismayed by changes or calamities, because he sees and takes things as they are. The Buddha was never melancholy or gloomy. He was described by his contemporaries as "ever-smiling" (*mihitapubbaṅgama*). In Buddhist paintings and sculptures the Buddha is always represented with a face happy, contented and serene. Never a trace of suffering or agony is to be seen. There are two ancient Buddhist texts called the *Theragāthā* and the *Therīgāthā* which are

full of happy and joyful utterances by the Buddha's disciples both male and female who found peace and happiness in his teaching. The king of Kosala once told the Buddha that unlike many a disciple of other religious systems who looked haggard, coarse, pale, emaciated and unprepossessing, the disciples of the Buddha were "joyful and elated" (*haṭṭhapahaṭṭha*), jubilant and exultant (*udaggudagga*), enjoying the religious life (*abhiratarūpa*), with senses pleased (*pīṇitindriya*), free from anxiety (*appossukka*), serene (*pannaloma*), peaceful (*paradavutta*) and living with a gazelle's mind (*migabhūtena cetasā*)" i.e. light-hearted. The king added that he believed that this healthy disposition was due to the fact that "these venerable ones had certainly realized the great and full significance of the Blessed One's teaching."<sup>2</sup> Buddhism is quite opposed to melancholic, sorrowful and gloomy attitude of mind which is considered a hindrance to the realization of Truth. On the other hand, it is interesting to remember that joy (*pīti*) is one of the seven *bojjhaṅgas* or the essential qualities to be cultivated for the realization of Nibbāna.

The second Noble Truth is the arising or origin of the dukkha (*Dukkha-samudaya-ariyasacca*). It is craving, greed, thirst—thirst for sense pleasures (*kāmatanḥā*), thirst for existence and continuity (*bhavatanḥā*) and even for annihilation (*vibhavatanḥā*). This craving, this thirst which has the false idea of self as its centre, is a tremendous force which drives the whole existence. Every one will agree that it is this selfish craving that creates all the evils in the world from little personal troubles to great world wars. But it is not so easy to realize that the whole existence and continuity of being is caused by this craving based on the false belief of self.

The third Noble Truth is that there is a cessation of the dukkha (*Dukkhanirodha-ariyasacca*), which is generally known as Nibbāna (Sanskrit Nirvāṇa). To eliminate the dukkha completely one has to eliminate the root of the dukkha, which is craving (*tanḥā*); therefore Nibbāna is also known by the term *Taṇhakkhaya* "Extinction of

<sup>2</sup> Majjhima-nikāya II (PTS) p. 121.

Craving.” Sometimes Nibbāna is called the Ultimate Truth or Ultimate Reality. The Buddha says: “O bhikkhu, Nibbāna which is reality is the ultimate noble truth.”<sup>3</sup> In another place he says: “O bhikkhus, I will teach you the Truth and the Path leading to the Truth.”<sup>4</sup> Here Truth means Nibbāna.

Now you will ask: What is Nibbāna? The only reasonable answer to this quite natural and simple question is that it can never be answered in words correctly and satisfactorily, because human language is too poor to express the real nature of the absolute truth or the ultimate reality which is Nibbāna. A language is created by a mass of human beings to express things and ideas experienced by their sense organs and their mind. A supra-mundane experience like that of the Absolute Truth is not of that category. Therefore there cannot be words to express that experience. Words are symbols representing things and ideas, and these symbols do not and cannot convey the true nature of even ordinary things. Language is considered deceptive and misleading in the matter of the understanding of the Truth. Therefore the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* says that the ignorant people get stuck in words like an elephant in the mud.<sup>5</sup> That is why so many paradoxes and queer and shocking statements are found among certain Buddhist sects like the Zen, the aim being to snatch you away from your attachment to the word.

Nevertheless we cannot do without language. But if Nibbāna is expressed and explained in positive terms, we immediately grasp an idea associated with those terms, which may be quite the contrary. Therefore it is generally expressed in negative terms, which may be a less dangerous way. So it is often referred to by such negative terms as *Taṇhakkhaya* “Extinction of Craving,” *Virāga* “Absence of desire,” *Nirodha* “Cessation,” *Nibbāna* “Blowing out” or “Extinction.” It is also expressed as “Extinction of desire, hatred and ignorance.”<sup>6</sup>

Referring to this state the Buddha says: “O bhikkhus, there is a state unborn, ungrown, unconditioned and uncompound. Were there no such a state which is unborn, ungrown, unconditioned and uncompound,

there would be no escape for the born, the grown, the conditioned and the compound. Since there is such a state as unborn, ungrown, unconditioned and uncompound, so there is escape for the born, the grown, the conditioned and the compound.”<sup>7</sup>

“Here the four elements of solidity, fluidity, energy and motion have no place; the notions of length and breadth, the subtle and the gross, good and evil, name and form are altogether destroyed; neither this world nor the other, nor coming, going or standing, neither death nor birth, nor sense-objects are to be found.”<sup>8</sup>

Because Nibbāna is thus expressed in negative terms, there are many who have got a wrong notion that it is negative and annihilation. A negative word must not necessarily indicate a negative state. Sometimes negative words represent highest positive values and conceptions. For example, the word “Immortal” (*Amata*), which also is a synonym for Nibbāna, is negative, but it represents a positive state. Pāli or Sanskrit word for health is *ārogya*, a negative term, which literally means “absence of illness.” But certainly *ārogya* “health” does not denote a negative state. The negation of negative values does not indicate a negative state. On the contrary, it may indicate a pure positive state which cannot be expressed so well in positive terms, as in the case of the two words “immortal” and “*ārogya*.” So are the negative terms used to indicate the state of ultimate reality which is Nibbāna. One of the well-known synonyms for Nibbāna is “Freedom” (*Mutti*, Skt. *Mukti*). Nobody would say that freedom is negative. But even freedom has a negative side: freedom is always a liberation from something which is obstructive, which is evil, which is negative. But freedom is not negative. So is Nibbāna, *Vimutti*, the Absolute Freedom—freedom from all evil, freedom from craving, hatred and ignorance, freedom from all terms of relativity, time and space.

Nibbāna is beyond logic and reasoning (*atakkāvacara*). However much we may

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, III, p. 245.

<sup>4</sup> *Samyuttanikāya* IV (PTS) p. 369.

<sup>5</sup> *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (ed. Nanjio, Kyoto 1923) p. 113.

<sup>6</sup> *Samyutta-nikāya* IV (PTS) p. 359.

<sup>7</sup> *Udāna*, p. 129, (Colombo 1929).

<sup>8</sup> *Dīgha-n I*, p. 172 (Colombo 1929; *Udāna*, p. 129 (Colombo 1929).

engage, often as a vain intellectual pastime, in highly speculative discussions regarding Nibbāna or the Ultimate Truth or Reality, we will never understand it that way. A child in a primary class should not quarrel about the theory of Relativity. But instead, if he follows his studies patiently and diligently, he may one day understand it. Nibbāna is "to be realized by the wise within themselves" (*paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi*). If we follow the Path diligently, train and purify ourselves earnestly, and attain the necessary spiritual development, we may one day realize it within ourselves—without puzzling and high-sounding words.

Let us therefore now turn to the Path which leads to the realization of Nibbāna.

It is the fourth Noble Truth, the Method leading to the Cessation of the dukkha (*Dukkhanirodhagāmiṇi paṭipadā-ariyasacca*). This is also known as the "Middle Path" (*Majjhima paṭipadā*), because it avoids two extremes: one extreme being the search of happiness through the devotion and attachment to the pleasures of the senses, which is low, common, unprofitable and the way of the ordinary people; the other extreme being the devotion to self-mortification in different forms of asceticism which is painful, unworthy and unprofitable. Avoiding these two extremes the Buddha discovered the Middle Path "which gives vision, which gives knowledge, which leads to Calm, Insight, Enlightenment, Nibbāna." This Middle Path is generally referred to as the "Eightfold Noble Path" (*Ariya-Aṭṭhaṅgikamagga*), because it is composed of eight factors: namely, Right Understanding (*sammādiṭṭhi*); Right Thought (*sammāsaṅkappa*); Right Speech (*sammāvācā*); Right Action (*sammā-kammanta*); Right Livelihood (*sammā-ajīva*); Right Effort (*sammāvāyāma*); Right Mindfulness (*sammāsatī*); and Right Concentration (*sammāsamādhi*).

Instead of just defining these eight factors one after the other, it will be more helpful for the correct understanding of this Path if we explain them according to the three fundamental ideas of Buddhist training and discipline (*tisikkhā*). They are: Ethical conduct (*sīla*); Mental discipline; (*samādhi*); and Wisdom (*paññā*).

Underlying the idea of Ethical Conduct is the vast conception of love and compassion for all living beings, on which the Buddha's teaching is based. It is regrettable and a harmful mistake that many scholars forget this great ideal of Buddha's teaching, and discuss only dry philosophy and metaphysics when they talk and write about Buddhism. The Buddha gave his teaching "for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world" (*bahujana-hitāya bahujanasukhāya lokānukampāya*).

According to Buddhism for a man to be perfect he should develop two qualities equally: compassion (*karuṇā*) on one side and wisdom (*paññā*) on the other. Here compassion represents love, kindness, tolerance and such noble qualities on the emotional side or qualities of the heart, while wisdom represents the intellectual side or the qualities of the brain. If one develops only the emotional side neglecting the intellectual side, one may become a good-hearted fool; while the one who develops only the intellectual side neglecting the emotional side may become a hard-hearted intellect without feeling for others. Therefore to be perfect one has to develop both these sides equally well. That is the aim of Buddhist way of life. That is why a good Buddhist, while intelligently and wisely understanding things as they are, is full of love and compassion for all living beings, not only for human beings, but for all beings. In fact compassion and wisdom are linked together in Buddhist way of life.

Now in the idea of Ethical Conduct (*sīla*), which is based on love and compassion as it was just mentioned, are included three factors of the Eightfold Noble Path; namely, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood.

Right Speech means that one should speak only the truth and never tell lies; should speak words that will bring about love, friendship, unity and harmony among individuals or groups of people, and never say things that may bring about hatred, enmity, disunity and disharmony among them; should speak pleasant, polite and agreeable words, and never the words that are harsh, rude, impolite and insulting that may give pain to others;

and should speak only useful, profitable and meaningful words and not waste time in idle and foolish babble.

Right Action means that while abstaining from destroying life, from stealing and unlawful sexual intercourse, one should help others to lead a happy life in the right way.

Right Livelihood means that one should abstain from making one's living through a profession that brings harm to others such as trading in arms, intoxicating drinks, poison, killing animals, cheating, etc., and should live by a profession which is blameless and harmless. Here one can clearly see that Buddhism is definitely against war when it lays down that trade in arms is an evil and unjust means of livelihood.

These three factors (Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood) of the Eightfold Path constitute Ethical Conduct, without which no development in higher spiritual life is possible. It should be realized that Buddhist moral conduct is a happy and harmonious life both individual and social.

Next comes Mental Discipline in which are included three other factors of the Eightfold Path: namely, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness (or Attentiveness) and Right Concentration.

Right Effort is the energetic will to avoid the evil and unwholesome things not yet present; and to get rid of the evil and unwholesome things already present; and also to cause to arise good things not yet present; and to develop, to increase, to complete the good things already present.

Right Mindfulness (or Attentiveness) is to be diligently aware, mindful and attentive with regard to body (*kāya*); sensations (*vedanā*); mind (*citta*); and ideas and things (*dhamma*).

Practice of attentiveness on breathing (*ānāpānasati*) is one of the well-known exercises connected with the body for mental development. There are several other ways of developing attentiveness in relation to the body.

With regard to sensations, one should be clearly aware of all forms of feelings that arise and disappear within oneself.

Concerning mind, one should be aware whether one's mind is lustful or not, hateful

or not, deluded or not, distracted or concentrated, etc. In this way one should be aware of all movements of mind, how they arise and disappear.

As regards ideas and things, one should know their nature, how they appear and disappear, how they are developed, how they are suppressed and destroyed and so on.

These four forms of meditation are treated in detail in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*.

The third and last factor of mental discipline is the Right Concentration leading to the four *dhyānas* (recueillements). In the first stage of the *dhyāna*, passionate desires and impure thoughts are discarded, and the feelings of joy and happiness are preserved along with certain mental activities. In the second *dhyāna*, all intellectual activities are suppressed, tranquillity and one-pointedness of mind developed, and the feelings of joy and happiness are still retained. In the third one, the feeling of joy also disappears while the disposition of happiness still remains in addition to mindful equanimity. In the fourth *dhyāna*, all sensations of happiness and unhappiness, of joy and sorrow are suppressed, only pure equanimity and mindfulness remaining.

Thus the mind is trained and disciplined through Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration.

Now we have discussed six factors of the Eightfold Path contained in Ethical Conduct and Mental Discipline. The remaining two factors, namely Right Thought and Right Understanding go to constitute Wisdom (*paññā*).

By Right Thought (*sammāsankappa*) are meant the thoughts of selfless renunciation or detachment, thoughts of love for all beings and thoughts of compassion for all beings. It is very interesting and important to note here that thoughts of selfless detachment, love and compassion are grouped on the side of wisdom, which shows that the true wisdom according to Buddhism is endowed with these noble qualities, and that all thoughts of selfish attachment, ill-will, hatred and cruelty come out of a lack of wisdom—in all spheres of life whether individual, social or political.

Right Understanding is the understanding of things as they are, and it is the Four

Noble Truths that explain things as they really are; therefore Right Understanding is ultimately reduced to the understanding of the Four Noble Truths. This understanding is the highest wisdom which sees the Ultimate Reality. According to Buddhism there are two sorts of understanding: what we generally call understanding is a knowledge, an accumulated memory, an intellectual grasping of a subject according to certain given data. This is called *anubodha* "knowing accordingly." It is not very deep. The real deep understanding is *paṭivedha* "penetration." This penetration is possible only when the mind is free from all impurities and fully developed through meditation.

This very briefly is the essence of the fundamentals of Buddhist philosophy and way of life, the basis of a great universal culture.

On this historic occasion when we are celebrating in Europe the 2,500th year of the Parinirvana of the Buddha, our minds naturally turn towards the future of Buddhism in the West. There is no doubt that the message of the Buddha is gradually spreading in the West, and that there is a growing interest to know more about Buddhism. There are Buddhist groups in many countries in Europe. The future of Buddhism in the West mainly depends on the Westerners themselves. You cannot expect Buddhist countries in Asia to establish Vihāras and to send their bhikkhus here for ever. Most certainly their guidance is essential, and they will always be with you and will be ready to offer you their spiritual and other forms of support whenever required. But you should take Buddhism as your own, and not as something alien, and you should take the responsibility for its establishment and its spread in your countries.

At this moment there comes to my mind Mahinda's reply to Devānampiya-Tissa regarding the question of the establishment of Buddhism in Ceylon. You all know that it was Asoka's son Mahinda who established Buddhism in Ceylon in the third century B.C. The then king of Ceylon Devānampiya-Tissa and his ministers and most other responsible people accepted Buddhism within a very short time. The king offered one of

his great parks with buildings near the city as permanent residence for Mahinda and other bhikkhus from India. Everything indicated that Buddhism's future in Ceylon was quite safe. A few weeks later, the king asked Mahinda whether Buddhism was now established in the Island. The great arahant therā answered that the *Sāsana* (Buddhism) was established, but its roots were not yet gone deep. "When would the roots go deep?" Mahinda's reply is most remarkable: "When a son born in Ceylon, of Ceylonese parents, becomes a monk in Ceylon, studies the *Vinaya* in Ceylon and recites it in Ceylon, then the roots of the *Sāsana* are deep set."

I think this should be taken as a reply to the question of establishing Buddhism in any country, whether in the East or in the West.

If and when Buddhism is established in the West, and if and when the roots of the *Sāsana* are deep set in the Western soil, Buddhist countries in the East should not expect the Western countries to follow all the external Buddhist customs, ceremonies and observances without any change as they are practised in Eastern countries. I mention this because there is such a narrow, rigid orthodox view among some very pious Buddhists in our countries. There may be certain modifications necessary with regard to external practices and observances according to climatic and social conditions and national cultures of individual countries. That has been the case already in different countries in the East where Buddhism spread. These are only external things. But the Dhamma which is essential is same everywhere, and it will not and cannot change wherever it may travel. External ceremonies and observances are like art, architecture and sculpture. Buddhist monuments, paintings and sculptures are different in different Buddhist countries in accordance with their individual national cultures and civilizations and many other factors. They are the external symbols of the influence of the Dhamma as expressed by artists, architects and sculptors. So are customs, ceremonies and observances only external symbols, external expressions of an inner

spirit. These external appearances may differ according to different social conditions and national cultures and civilizations. But the Dhamma is the same everywhere.

## By Mr. Christmas Humphreys

THE LINKS between the Buddhists of England and Ceylon have ever been close. To-night they have been made closer still. The links between Les Amis du Bouddhisme in Paris and the Buddhist Society in London are also close, for among those present at the founding meeting of the former in, I think, January, 1929, were my wife and myself. Now to-night a famous Sinhalese Thera flies specially from Paris to London to speak in Ceylon House under the chairmanship of Nepal. These are signs indeed of Buddhist solidarity.

And what a talk! This truly magnificent address was like a cool refreshing wind blowing into a stuffy room. How lovely to hear a Sinhalese Buddhist of distinction say, and in Ceylon House, what I have been preaching, as I thought in vain, for nearly thirty-five years. Of course there is only one Dhamma, though its forms are many and will in the years to come be many more. For all forms perish, even Buddhist *yanas*, and the Dhamma will create new forms for itself as they are needed in all four corners of the world. After 2,500 years we close one chapter of Buddhism and open another. Let us, then, forget the tedious and childish rivalry of schools. The Dhamma is not affected by the disapproval of a different sect of Buddhism, and its grandeur is untouched by any act of man. As in the schools of doctrine, so in the Sangha. This week is perhaps the birthday of an English Sangha, and I for one look forward, first, to a European Sangha, with an annual convention at which the samaneras ready will receive the full *upasampada* ordination, and then to an English Sangha where the same will be possible for English Buddhists alone. And why not? No nation has the monopoly of the Dhamma and in the light of Enlightenment we are humans first, Buddhists second, and of any one nation nowhere at all. We

are deeply grateful for a talk which to me was the opening of a door on a new understanding of the Dhamma and its proclamation to mankind.

May I also thank the Chairman for his opening observations, and draw attention to the appropriateness that he should be the final chairman of the week. For in November there will be held the fourth and the most important congress of the World Fellowship of Buddhists under the leadership of its founder, Dr. G. P. Malalasekera. It will be held in Nepal, in the land of Lumbini where the Lord Buddha as a child was born. I hope myself to be allowed to lead the British delegation to the Congress, for there the whole Buddhist world will be represented, to do honour to the greatest of the sons of men, the All-Awakened One, the All-Compassionate One, who showed us the Way to Enlightenment, for ourselves and all mankind.



## The Anniversary

By GEORGES CÆDÈS

*In introducing M. Georges Cædès, Dr. REGINALD le MAY, a Vice-President of the Royal India Pakistan and Ceylon Society, said:*

*Je le considère une grande honneur d'être invité par M. Jourdan de présider ce soir, évidemment il n'est pas nécessaire que je vous introduis le fameux savant, M. Georges Cædès, "mais, parce que c'est une occasion spéciale, si vous permettez, je voudrais bien vous dire quelques mots sur son carrière et sur mes rapports personnelles avec lui.*

*Il y a déjà quarante ans depuis que je rencontre M. Cædès pour la première fois dès son arrivée à Bangkok pour remplacer un Allemand comme Secrétaire-Général de l'Institut Royale du Siam. Il est resté à Bangkok jusqu'à 1929 quand il a été nommé Directeur de L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient comme successeur de ce savant bien-aimé, M. Louis Finot. Pendant ces 13-14*

ans il a aidé son Ministre, le Prince Damrong, à fonder un musée qui est peut-être unique au monde. En 1926 le Roi Prajadhipok a présenté l'Ancien Palais du 'soi-disant' second Roi qui était vide mais dont la construction date de la fondation de Bangkok comme capitale en 1782. Il y a là dedans une chapelle avec des fresques originales et plusieurs grandes salles qui forment un ensemble incomparable pour un Musée Nationale.

Pendant la plupart de son séjour à Bangkok M. Cédès et moi, nous étions membres du conseil de la Siam Société, Lui même Président dans ses dernières années, et je l'ai toujours regardé comme 'guide, conseiller et ami' (comme on dit en anglais) dans mes recherches des choses Siamois naturellement amateurs quand on les compare aux celles de M. Cédès vous savez sans doute que parmi les savants il y a deux espèces distinctes, l'une qui fixe sa conclusion d'abord et ensuite cherche seulement, l'évidence qui peut soutenir cette conclusion, et l'autre qui, comme un chien de chasse, suit l'évidence n'importe où il le conduit et base ses conclusions sur l'évidence qu'il trouve. Grâce, peut-être, à mon sang Français, 'du temps jadis', je me suis attaché à cette seconde école qui représente la méthode Française pour moi le but est la vérité et non pas la preuve de ma génie originale.

Heureusement pour moi je me suis trouvé presque toujours d'accord avec les jugements de M. Cédès, et s'il y a un petit nuage qui se lève à ce moment entre nous sur une question de chronologie des Buddhas Siamois, je suis sûr que cette problème s'arrangera éventuellement à notre satisfaction mutuelle.

In his own particular sphere or realm of philology I cannot hope to follow him. This is a region where the atmosphere is rare and which I can only compare to the upper half of the great Buddhist Stupa at Borubodur in Java which is completely unadorned and which is intended to symbolize the realm of the mind as opposed to that of the senses seen in the lower half. But I hope you will support me when in the name of all of us present here this evening, I salute him as one of the great philologists of the world. M. Cédès:

THE FULL MOON in May is the occasion of the greatest festival of the year in the Buddhist world, it being the triple anniversary of the birth of Śākyamuni, of his ascent to the omniscience of a Buddha, and of his final extinction in Parinirvāṇa. Ceylon and the countries of southeast Asia, which adopted the Sinhalese Buddhism in the thirteenth century—Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos—are monsoon lands where the month of May coincides with the beginnings of the

rains, thus signalling great rejoicing exemplified by offerings to the monks, recitals of prayers, and nocturnal circumambulations of the temples by the faithful torchbearers.

This year the festival is being celebrated with unusual solemnity in Ceylon and Burma, and even in India, for the full moon of 1956 coincides with the twenty-five-hundredth anniversary of Parinirvāṇa, fixed by tradition as the 544th year before the Christian Era, and marking the beginning of the Buddhist Era. The Thai, the Cambodians, and the Laotians, who calculate not by the current but by the elapsed year, have now entered upon their 2,499th year and do not celebrate the anniversary until next year. But for European Orientalists this is a matter of relative indifference, inasmuch as the traditional date, 554 B.C., is clearly inaccurate, and is perhaps the result of confusion between Parinirvāṇa and the Nativity of Śākyamuni. The calculations of specialists postdate Parinirvāṇa by about sixty-five years and place it at about 477 B.C. We are dealing, however, with very old traditions, and can readily grant that all Buddhists, depending on their method of figuring dates, are currently celebrating the twenty-five-hundredth anniversary of Parinirvāṇa within the margin of perhaps a year.

I have made inquiries regarding the exceptional importance and solemnity which are attached this year to the celebration. The answers I received tended to be vague, asserting that this period marks a date after which the Buddhist religion would enter upon an era of great prosperity, bringing about the adoption by the entire world of a mode of life conforming to the Buddhist ideal and universal peace. A religious Sinhalese, however, has written to me in more precise terms:

"According to an old tradition," he says, "there is a firm belief in Buddhist countries that there will be a great renaissance of the religion and a great expansion of the Law in the world twenty-five-hundred years after the Parinirvāṇa. The decline of the Law will take place much later, after a long period of renaissance. The twenty-five-hundredth year of the Buddhist Era marks the beginning of this renewal."

What my correspondent does not mention is that it also marks the middle of the period of 5,000 years, at the end of which, according to tradition, the doctrine will fall into oblivion. There is in fact an old prophecy with which all Buddhists are familiar, even though they may choose not to speak of it, according to which Śākyamuni announced that the doctrine which he preached would disappear at the end of a period which is generally fixed at 5,000 years.

But, it may be said, how could the Buddha fix an end to the observance of his doctrine? On what does this tradition rest? In what measure has the tradition exercised an influence on the history of Buddhism? How can one reconcile belief in a limited duration of the religion with the perspective, in a far-distant future, of the appearance of a Buddha who will be called Maitreya? Does not this Messianic hope imply belief in the permanence of the religion over countless millenniums?

In reality, in the realm of Buddhist philosophy it is a heresy to speak of permanence; the great law preached by Śākyamuni is the law of impermanence. Man is subject to transmigration in a cycle of innumerable rebirths. The cosmos is subject to destruction and periodic re-creation. The only eternal truth is that of Nirvāṇa, which is stability without place or shape. The religion itself, like everything else, is subject to decline and disappearance, only to be reborn in another period of the universe, through the preaching of a new Buddha.

Accordingly, the tradition of an ending which Śākyamuni himself implied in his doctrine is in full harmony with this conception, and one can give some credence to the passage in the Scriptures which attributes this statement to him. The passage is part of the most ancient expression of the tradition. It was accepted by all the Schools, and therefore antedates the first schism, which took place in the middle of the fourth century B.C. and is to be found in the first of the three Canons relating to the rules of monastic discipline. At the beginning of his career, the Buddha did not accept women in his community. But as the result of the repeated remonstrances of his cousin and

faithful disciple, Ānanda, he decided, against his own instincts, to admit them, though he imposed on them absolute submission to their male colleagues. But he could not refrain from remarking, with a sigh: "If, Ānanda, women had not been authorized to leave their homes in order to adopt a life without protection under the aegis of the Doctrine and the discipline of the One who knows the truth, then, Ānanda, the pure religion would have endured for a long time; the good Law would have lasted a thousand years. But inasmuch as women have now received this permission, the result will be, Ānanda, that the pure religion will not last so long; the good Law will not last more than 500 years."<sup>1</sup>

This saying is well in keeping with the misogyny of Śākyamuni and I am inclined to believe that the text I have quoted relates to a definite event. Besides, when after his end on earth, the principal disciples met in council to establish the forms of his teaching, the traditions of most of the sects are at one in depicting Ānanda as being accused by his colleagues of various mistakes, among which is regularly quoted that of having persuaded his master to admit women into the community.<sup>2</sup>

In the second of the three Canons, that of the Discourses of the Buddha, the idea of the impermanence of the good Law is formulated in various places. This impermanence is attributed in part to the various imperfections of the faithful, such as negligence, laziness, arrogance, discontent, inattention, lack of intelligence, bad company, evil practices and lack of good practices, in part to misrepresentation of the doctrine in futile actions, and lack of consideration for the Master, for his Law, for his community, and to neglect of study and meditation.<sup>3</sup>

At the time of the compilation of his discourses, about the first century B.C., there was still no question of a definite period when the good Law would disappear, nor of the stages of its progressive decline. These notions appear for the first time in

<sup>1</sup> *Vinaya*, H. Oldenberg, ed., II, p. 256; Eng. trans., Warren, *Buddhism in Translations*, pp. 441 ff.

<sup>2</sup> A. Bareau, *Les premiers Conciles bouddhiques*, Paris, 1955, pp. 7-15.

<sup>3</sup> *Anguttaranikāya*, I, pp. 17-18; *Samyuttanikaya*, II, p. 224.

the famous conversations of the Indo-Greek King Menander (*ca.* 160–150 B.C.) with the Buddhist sage Nāgasena, which are usually attributed to the first century A.D. King Menander points out the contradiction between two statements of the Buddha, who, on the one hand, says that the good Law will last only 500 years, and, on the other hand, that if the monks lead a life without reproach, the world will never lack saints to reach the stage of emancipation, this second affirmation appearing to imply an indefinite duration of the Law. To this the sage Nāgasena replied, with some subtlety, that the two affirmations referred to two different things, the first speaking of the duration of the Law, and the second relating to religious practice, and that the King confused the limitation of the thing with its definition. Thereupon, the King replied, “Venerable Nāgasena, when you speak of the disappearance of the good Law, what do you mean by ‘disappearance’?” Nāgasena answered: “Oh King, there are three modes of disappearance of the Doctrine. You ask what are these three modes. They are, the disappearance of the acquisition of the degrees of sanctity, disappearance of the observance of the precepts and disappearance of the outward signs of the Doctrine.”<sup>4</sup>

Some centuries after these conversations of King Menander, certain commentaries of canonic texts, composed by Buddhaghosa in the first half of the fifth century, still mention three stages in the disappearance of the good Law, substituting for that of the outward sign that of knowledge of the sacred writings,<sup>5</sup> and it was this third item which was accepted in China, where they divide the time of the existence of the Law into three epochs: that of the true Law, that of the counterfeit Law, and that of the last Law. The durations of these epochs vary according to the schools of thought.

Another commentary of Buddhaghosa, however, describes the decline and disappearance of the doctrine in five stages: disappearance of the acquisition of the degrees of sanctity, disappearance of the observance of the precepts, disappearance of the knowledge of the Scriptures, disappearance of the outward signs, and, lastly,

disappearance of the relics of the Buddha.<sup>6</sup> One thousand years after Nirvāṇa, the faithful will become incapable of acquiring the various degrees of sanctity. The death of the last of the faithful who had entered upon the course leading to deliverance will mark this first disappearance. The second, that of the observance of the precepts, will begin when the minor prohibitions are ignored. The third stage, brought about by the impiety of the kings and their subjects, will cause droughts and famine, and thereby the death of the monks and disciples. It will be marked by the disappearance of the last text of the third Canon and end with the disappearance of the first text of the first Canon, just as if the progressive disappearance of the Bible began with the New Testament and ended with the Book of Genesis.

The fourth disappearance, that of the outward signs of the religion, is the occasion of a very interesting development. In the course of time, there will be great negligence in the wearing of the monastic robe and the manner in which the begging bowl is carried. In imitation of the heretics, the monks will substitute gourds for begging bowls and end up for convenience’ sake by carrying them at the end of poles. As for their robes, they will no longer dye them, and in the end will keep only a small piece which they will bind around the wrist, the throat, or the hair. They will have wives and children and work for them. Finally they will remark: “What is the use of the piece of saffron cloth?” They will take it off and toss it among the nettles.

Lastly, the disappearance of the relics of the Buddha,<sup>7</sup> which marks the end of the religion, is to undergo a long development, the details of which I will quote in full, as they have inspired numerous writings.

“At first, the relics of the Buddha, when they have been deprived of honour and adoration, will repair to such place where they

<sup>4</sup> *Milindapāṇha*, V. Trenckner, ed., pp. 130–134.

<sup>5</sup> *Sammohavinodanī*, pp. 431–433; *Sāratthapakāsinī*, Bangkok ed., II, p. 254.

<sup>6</sup> *Manorathapūraṇī*, I, pp. 87–91.

<sup>7</sup> This disappearance is given in another commentary of the same epoch as achieving the Parinirvāṇa of Sākyamuni—his complete annihilation—beginning under the Tree of Knowledge, with the destruction of his passions and continuing to his death, through the destruction of the various constituents of his body, but which will not be complete until the last corporeal relics are destroyed by fire.

may still receive honour and adoration. In due course, they will not receive honour or adoration in any place. At the time fixed for the end of the religion, the relics will reassemble, first in the Island of Ceylon, at the Mahācetiya (which refers to the great stūpa of Anuradhapura, the ruins of which are known under the name of 'Ruanweli Dagoba'), then at the Nāgadīpacetiya (another monument in the northwest of the Island), and from there to Bodhipallaṅka which is Bodh Gaya in India. The relics will leave the world of the Nāgas, of the gods of Brahma and find a final resting-place in Bodhipallaṅka. None of the relics, even though they be the size of a grain of mustard seed, will be lost on the way. All the relics, having reassembled on the throne where the Illumination took place, will take the shape of the Buddha and will reconstitute his body seated on the throne. The thirty-two characteristic signs of the great man and the eighty accessory signs will be visible as a unity and will produce an aureole of fire around the Buddha. Then they will reproduce the double miracle (of emitting at the same time rays of light and springs of water). At that place there will be not a single creature in human form. But all the gods of the Ten Thousand Worlds will utter lamentations and say, 'To-day He who possessed the ten intellectual powers has been extinguished; from now on there will be darkness.'

"There will follow a great fire issuing from the body made of relics. It will destroy them, and the flame rising from the body made of the relics will rise up to the sky of Brahma. The flame will consume all, even the smallest relics, though it be only the size of a grain of mustard seed. In this way, the relics will illustrate their great power and then disappear. And the assembly of the gods, as on the day of Parinirvāṇa, will render homage with scents, garlands of flowers, and music and will take three turns round the place, turning their right side to it. And having rendered

this homage, they will say, 'May we live to see the Buddha who is to come.' And everyone will return whence he came. In this way the disappearance of the relics will take place."

This apocalyptic vision of the end of the Buddhist Era has a certain grandeur and has inspired all the works that deal with the future of the religion. At the same time, the final wish expressed by the gods opens horizons of hope to which I will refer later. Moreover, the disappearance of the doctrine is postponed in this text to a far later date than that of five hundred years traditionally fixed by Śākyamuni, mentioned in the conversations of King Menander, and already passed when Buddhaghosa wrote his commentaries about nine hundred years after the Parinirvāṇa. According to this author, it is not until the end of a thousand years, that is to say, a little after the time when he lived, that the first disappearance would take place. I refer to that of the acquisition of degrees of sanctity, of which no further examples could very likely have taken place during his time. And if one is to assume that the five disappearances are equally spaced out in time, one arrives at a duration of 5,000 years. That is also the conclusion of a work of uncertain date, the *Anāgatavaṃsa*,<sup>8</sup> or *History of the Times to Come*, which, inspired by the commentaries of Buddhaghosa and drawn from the same source, says textually that the end of the religion will take place 5,000 years after Parinirvāṇa. And Buddhaghosa himself, in one of his commentaries of the *Abhidhamma*, says clearly that the result of the final council held shortly after the demise of the Buddha was to secure to the Doctrine the duration of 5,000 years.<sup>9</sup>

These five disappearances spaced a thousand years apart henceforth figure in all the writings dealing with the future of the religion. They are to be found, though in a slightly different sequence, in a treatise written in Ceylon in the reign of Bhuvane-kabāhu (1277 to 1288) by Siddhatthathera, the *Sāratthasangaha*,<sup>10</sup> as well as in another work dating from the first half of the fifteenth century, the *Saddhammaratnākara*, of which Spence Hardy makes considerable use in his classic works on Buddhism.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, ed. Minayeff, 1886, pp. 84-86.

<sup>9</sup> Maung Tin and Rhys Davids, *The Expositor*, I, 35.

<sup>10</sup> Singhalese edition, xxii, 30.

<sup>11</sup> *Eastern Monachism*, London, 1850, pp. 427-430; *A Manual of Buddhism*, London, 1860.

In the Indochinese Peninsula, one finds them in an inscription of one of the first Kings of Thailand in 1357<sup>12</sup> and in a work on the history of the religion written in Chieng Mai at the beginning of the sixteenth century.<sup>13</sup> As for the term of 5,000 years, that is a notion so widespread that there exists hardly a dedication of a statute or final sentence of a manuscript which does not refer to it and express the hope that the work of the faithful, in dedicating a statute or writing a treatise, will contribute to the prosperity of the religion and its duration for 5,000 years.

It appears therefore that the ideas about the progressive decline of the Buddhist doctrine of five stages, spaced a thousand years apart, go back to an epoch between the conversations of King Menander, composed at the beginning of the Christian Era and which fix the duration of the good Law at five hundred years<sup>14</sup> with three stages for its decadence, and the composition of the commentaries by Buddhaghosa during the fifth century, giving the good Law a duration of 5,000 years and envisaging five stages in its decline.

These views were clearly influenced by the decline of Buddhism in India. Eugene Burnouf has made this point with his customary perspicacity.<sup>15</sup> He wrote, "It is easy to see that this division in the duration of the law of Śākya into periods which differ from each other in their degree has a genuine foundation in the history of Buddhism in India. It represents, in a general form, the tradition of the establishment of Buddhism, its duration, and the persecutions which led to its being driven out of India." Burnouf interprets the tradition "in this sense that the Buddhists, after having been driven from India, retained remembrance of the epoch when their belief flourished, and that for them this epoch was naturally divided into periods, more or less numerous, which, commencing with the death of the founder of the doctrine, extended until the time of its decline and came to an end when they were expelled from their native country."

In fact, it was about the time of the fifth century A.D., between the nine-hundredth and one-thousandth year of the Buddhist

Era, that the doctrine of Śākyamuni began to show in India clear signs of decline. Thus one may ask if the threats, which at the approach of the one-thousandth year began to weigh down on Buddhism, did not exercise a decisive role in the revival of sacred writings during the fourth and fifth centuries. These dangers may have stimulated on the one hand the great commentators Asaṅga and Vasubandhu in the north, Buddhadatta, Buddhaghosa, and Dhammapāla in the south, and, also on the other hand the establishment during the first half of the fifth century of the celebrated monastery of Nālandā, which was destined to exercise such a great influence on Buddhism outside India. It is certain that in China during the sixth century it was believed that the third and last stage of the decline, that of the last Law, had come. As a result, a sect known as the Sect of the Third Degree was formed and played a great part in China and the countries of Chinese culture between the sixth and eighth centuries.<sup>16</sup>

Already in the second half of the first century B.C., the approach of the expiration at the end of five hundred years, traditionally fixed by the Buddha himself, had, according to the Sinhalese Chronicles, brought about a Council in Ceylon under King Vaṭṭa-gāmani. Here for the first time were written down the texts of the Canons "so that the religion may remain a long time" (as the oldest chronicles, *Mahāvamsa* and *Dīpavamsa*, expressly say)<sup>17</sup> and "so that the religion may last five thousand years" (as is stated in later works,<sup>18</sup> which, while basing themselves on these chronicles, add that the end of the religion foreseen in the commentaries of Buddhaghosa would take place after five thousand years).

However that may be, after the disappearance of Buddhism in India, the thoughts of the Buddhists of Ceylon and other countries turned to the five successive phases of the

<sup>12</sup> See below, note 18.

<sup>13</sup> *Mūla sāsana*, Bangkok edition, 1939, p. 263 ff.

<sup>14</sup> This perhaps constitutes an argument tending to prove that the work had been composed prior to that period, i.e., before the beginning of the Christian Era rather than after.

<sup>15</sup> *Lotus de la Bonne Loi*, I, pp. 366-367.

<sup>16</sup> A. Waley, review of Yabuki Keiki's work on that sect in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, v, 1928, pp. 162-69.

<sup>17</sup> *Mahāvamsa*, xxxiii, 100-101; *Dīpavamsa*, xx, 20-21.

<sup>18</sup> *Saddhammasangaha*, *Journal of the Pali Text Society*, 1890, p. 49; *Sangitivamsa*, Bangkok, 1789; Siamese ed., 1923, p. 96.

decline of the doctrine which were to take place at the end of each period of one thousand years. This is the thesis laid down with precision and with supporting dates by King Lüt'ai who reigned at Sukhodaya, the first capital of independent Thailand, during the middle of the fourteenth century, in an inscription commemorating the installing of a relic, and the planting of a shoot of the sacred fig tree from Ceylon.<sup>19</sup> This foundation, it should be noted, dated from A.D. 1357, that is to say in the nineteenth-hundredth year of the Buddhist Era and one hundred years before the beginning of the second phase in the decline of the religion. The king, who was a fervent Buddhist and a well-read person, very knowledgeable in the Scriptures and author of a treaty on cosmology,<sup>20</sup> which was regarded as an authority in Cambodia and Thailand before the introduction of western science, does not speak of the ending in the year 1000, i.e. A.D. 457, which had passed long ago and which marked the end of the acquisition of the degrees of saintliness. On the other hand, he foresees the coming disappearance of knowledge of the Scriptures.<sup>21</sup>

As the disappearance of the Holy Scriptures was to occur only one hundred years after King Lüt'ai, he was no further interested in this subject. What seemed to him to be of far greater concern was the observance of moral precepts, the disappearance of which was not to take place until one thousand years later: *Sic grande mortali aevi spatium!* Not, apparently, that he considered it possible to delay this extinction, which was ineluctable, or to postpone the decline of the religion. But in a short admonitory phrase following his prediction, he exhorts his subjects to profit by their good fortune of having been born at a period when the doctrine still existed.

"From to-day onwards," he preached to his subjects, "it is essential that all people of good character should hasten to accomplish works regarded as meritorious in the Buddhist religion during the period in which the religion still exists. Our generation, at the present time, enjoys great benefits because it came into the world while the Buddhist religion is still in existence. Every one should

hasten to pay homage at the stūpas, at the cetiyas and at the Tree of Enlightenment, for such veneration is equivalent to paying homage to the Master in person. Whoever formulates a wish believing in this equivalence, even if he only once formulates the wish to be reborn in heaven, to wait until Srī Ārya Maitreya descends to become Buddha, and then to be reborn on earth, he will certainly have his wish granted."

This little homily reveals the perspectives offered to adepts, in spite of the threat of the disappearance of the doctrine at the end of five thousand years of existence, and how this pessimistic view of the future could be reconciled with the hope that they would be able to obtain salvation during the course of their future rebirths. If the doctrine, like everything else, is subject to the law of impermanence, and thereby threatened with decline and annihilation, there is also a promise that it will be renewed and revived in the course of time. In the Buddhist cosmology and in Indian cosmology in general, time is divided into long cycles. The great years, called "yuga" and "kalpa" "are eternally renewed in great cycles which

<sup>19</sup> G. Cœdès, *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam*, I, pp. 83-87.

<sup>20</sup> *Traibhūmikathā*, Bangkok, 1913.

<sup>21</sup> If someone asks, he says, "how much time will elapse before the doctrine of our Master will disappear, this is what one must reply: it will be 3099 years after the year when this great relic was installed."

As its foundation dates from A.D. 1357 it would be in A.D. 4456, that is, in the 5,000th year of the Buddhist Era, that this disappearance of Buddhism should take place, in accordance with the tradition established in the fifth century, by the *Commentaries of Buddhaghosa*.

"On the other hand," the inscription continues, "in ninety-nine years after the foundation of this great relic, in the year of the Hog (A.D. 1456 or 2000 in the Buddhist Era), the three collections of the Scriptures will disappear." The details of that disappearance follow:

"After another one thousand years (A.D. 2456 or the 3,000th year of the Buddhist Era) there will still be some monks who will observe the four great precepts, but they will not observe more.

"After another one thousand years (A.D. 3456 or the 4,000th year of the Buddhist Era) there will no longer be any monks wearing the monastic robe, but there will still be a tiny piece of yellow cloth, just enough to fill the cavity of the ear, and it is by that sign that one will be able to recognize unmistakably the adepts in the doctrine of the Master.

"One thousand years later (A.D. 4456 or the 5,000th year of the Buddhist Era) no one will any longer be able to recognize the monastic robe or to know what a monk is. The relics of the Master, whether it be the one installed here, or those installed elsewhere, will still be in existence. In the last year, when the doctrine of the Buddha, our Master, definitely disappears, in the Year of the Rat, during the full moon of the sixth month, on a Saturday, in the lunar house of Vaisākha, all the saintly relics, including not only the relics on the earth, but also the relics in the world of the gods, or in the world of the Nāgas, will rise in the middle of the firmament, reassemble in the Island of Ceylon, and enter the great stūpa Ratanamālīka. Then they will be wafted up and enter the sacred Tree of Enlightenment underneath which the Master attained the omniscience of a Buddha. Thereupon, fire will devour all the saintly relics and the flame will rise up to the world of Brahma. On that day the doctrine of the Buddha will disappear. From that time no man will know of works which generate merit. Man will commit bad actions and will assuredly be reborn in hell."

include groups of smaller cycles.”<sup>22</sup> The largest cycle is divided into four incalculable periods, which are subdivided into twenty intermediary periods, each of which embraces eight ages of the world: Kali where human life spends normally a minimum of ten years; Dvāpara, Treta, Kṛita where human life acquires incalculable duration; then again, but in reverse order, Kṛita, Treta, Dvāpara, and Kali (the age in which we live at present). In these stages life diminishes progressively, to return to ten-years periods.

The incalculable periods constituting the great period consist of successive involution and evolution. They are separated by intermediary periods of stability in the states of involution or evolution. During the period of involution, beings cease to be born and, being emptied of living creatures, the world destroys itself in stages by fire, water, and wind. During the period of evolution, there is re-creation, or rather a return of the world and beings to a differentiated and organized state.

The Buddha Śākyamuni who died 2,500 years ago, was not, according to this outlook, the first sage to be conscious of the principles constituting the essence of the doctrine. According to the teachings of the schools, he was preceded by six or by twenty-four Buddhas whose careers had been similar to his own, differing only “according to their lineage, the tree under which they attained Enlightenment, the number of their listeners and the conditions of life during the ages in which they appeared.”<sup>23</sup> Each one has pursued, during the course of successive births, a long career as a Bodhisattva, before becoming a Buddha. They have been destined to become Buddhas owing to a resolution, which they took at the beginning of their career, based on an enormous accumulation of suitable natural tendencies. Each was the recipient of a prediction from one of his predecessors, indicating the necessity to be born during one of his existences at a period when the earth would benefit by the presence and teaching of a Buddha.

Our historic Buddha Śākyamuni was neither the first nor the last Buddha. Humanity is assured of the coming of Maitreya, the

Consoler, who at present lives, awaiting his hour, in the same heaven in which resided the one who 2,580 years ago was reborn as Śākyamuni. Maitreya will be reborn in the world, in a period of evolution, when human life is to last for eighty thousand years. His career will be similar to that of the Buddha Śākyamuni, but the doctrine that Maitreya will preach will last much longer than that of Śākyamuni—one hundred and eighty thousand years instead of five thousand years.

Now the question arises: since the Law of Impermanence is inescapable, since the Doctrine is inexorably submissive to it, what is the advantage of efforts made by man to prevent or retard the fatal collapse after the five-thousand-year period?

Referring to the sermon of King Lüt'ai, and having regard to the correct and clear manner in which he expounds the orthodox Buddhist point of view of his time, one realizes that there was no question for him of contradicting the Law of Impermanence. His exhortations were intended to persuade his subjects to profit as much as possible by their good fortune in coming to this earth at a time when the Buddhist Doctrine was still known and practised here. He considered that knowledge of the Sacred Writings would disappear soon after him: ninety-nine years after his establishment of a reliquary and the planting of a sacred fig tree. But the observance of the precepts and moral virtues still had a thousand years of life before the process of the deterioration of the external signs began to take place. Thus, during a period of a little more than a thousand years, humanity still had the opportunity and possibility of practicing those virtues, the observance of which entitled the faithful to be reborn during the epoch of Maitreya the Consoler, which was a necessary preliminary to entering upon the Path of Nirvāṇa.

The renaissance of the Doctrine which will attain its culmination in the awakening of Maitreya to omniscience, will be prepared and favoured by the discovery which humanity

<sup>22</sup> L. Renou and J. Filliozat, *L'Inde classique*, II, p. 528.

<sup>23</sup> L. Renou and J. Filliozat, *op. cit.*, p. 538.

will make during the period of the evolution of the traces left by the epoch of his predecessor Śākyamuni. It must be understood that here reference is not made to bodily relics, as these would be completely destroyed by fire in the five-thousandth year of the Buddhist Era, but to images, and notably to votive tablets representing a famous statue, as well as to the Great Miracle by which Śākyamuni confounded the heretics who contradicted him and converted a vast assembly to his Doctrine.

In the course of my study of these tablets, of which thousands have been discovered hidden in the interior of stūpas or piled up in grottoes, I asked myself if those responsible for these depots "had not a long-term propaganda in view, the effect of which would be felt only after many thousand years." And since the majority<sup>24</sup> of these tablets have a formula inscribed upon them, often referred to as "The Buddhist Credo," the recital of which had brought about the conversion of the two great disciples, Śāriputra and Mahāmaudgalyāyana, I added "when, the allotted time having passed, the religion will fall into oblivion, the sacred stamps carrying the image of the Master, and with a short formula summing up his Doctrine, would without doubt in the minds of pious persons serve to edify those who discover these tablets in the caves or the ruins of the stūpas, thereby contributing to the resurrection of the Doctrine."

So far I have said little about the 2,500th anniversary which is now being celebrated by the Buddhist world. The reason is that I have been unable to find any ancient text attributing importance to this date. Up to the end of the eighteenth century, at any rate, only the successive decline of the religion from millennium to millennium and its definite disappearance at the end of five thousand years were mentioned. The *Pathamasambodhi*, which is the classic life of the Buddha in Thailand and Cambodia, and the date of which is uncertain, as well as the *Saṅgītiyaṃsa*, which is a history of the councils, written in Bangkok at the end of the eighteenth century,<sup>25</sup> repeat what has been observed before. In 1833, Sangermano, in his book on Burma,<sup>26</sup> quoted the view of a

celebrated "talapoin," the tutor of King Hsin-byu-shin, who mentioned the prophecy of the Buddha, fixing the duration of his Doctrine on earth at five thousand years.

It seems that it was only at the end of the last century or the commencement of the present one that people began to pay some attention to the decadence after 2,500 years, and to speculate upon this subject. Indeed, it is a remarkable date, since it marks exactly the middle of the period of five thousand years, traditionally assigned by the Buddha as the duration of his teaching.

But, on the one hand, it was easy to prove that if the disappearance of the degrees of saintliness was an established fact for a long time, the disappearance of the canonic Scriptures did not take place in the year 1456 of our era, as King Lüt'ai had predicted and that the observance of the precepts was in no way in danger. On the other hand, the penetration of western thought in the world did not tend, in the minds of educated people, to make it admissible that the relics should be reassembled by air transport for their final conflagration. This objection applied both in religious and lay circles. Lastly, so far from being present at the decline of their religion, Buddhists could, on the contrary, note its penetration among various backward minorities as well as the upsurge of Buddhist studies and the diffusion of their Scriptures in Europe and America. At the same time, while importance was attached to the 2,500th anniversary of Parinirvāṇa, as marking the middle of the duration of the religion according to very old traditions, yet there arose a certain scepticism regarding the value of these traditions. This attitude of mind is reflected in a typical manner by the decision taken at the beginning of the present century by the King of Thailand. Formerly, it was the custom of the Thai priests to begin their sermons with a reference to the exact number of years, months, and days that had passed since Parinirvāṇa and to the number of years, months, and days still to run before the predicted ending of the five thousand years.

<sup>24</sup> "Tablettes votives bouddhiques du Siam," *Etudes asiatiques de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient*, 1925, I, pp. 150-51.

<sup>25</sup> *Supra*, note 17.

<sup>26</sup> *Description of the Burmese Empire*, p. 80.

King Chulalongkorn, considering that this continual reference to the danger that menaced religion was irksome, and after having consulted the Supreme Head of the clergy, who was himself critical of this announcement of the disappearance of the Doctrine, simply suppressed any reference to the years to come, retaining only a mention of the time that had passed since Parinirvāṇa.<sup>27</sup>

If educated Buddhists no longer believe in the progressive decline of their religion and its final disappearance at a predetermined date, they have nevertheless inherited, from the time when this belief was current, the idea that this anniversary marks the exact middle of the traditional five thousand years and ascribe a certain importance to it. Impermanence is an idea planted so deeply in the mind of Buddhists that its disappearance at some future date is not unacceptable to them. As I said earlier, one of my Ceylonese informers did not deny that at some future date the religion will disappear.

In view of the pace at which the world moves now, who can predict what will happen in 2,500 years' time? That is, after all, a short time compared with the incalculable periods of the Hindu cosmology, with our geological periods, and with the light years of astronomy. And yet, to take two dates from our own history, what great changes have taken place in the 2,500 years since Parinirvāṇa, or, I if may refer to events more familiar to us, the capture of Babylon by Cyrus and the Age of Pisistratus!

Turning to the present, the 2,500th anniversary practically coincides with the achievement of political independence by countries that had formerly been colonies and whose national religion is Buddhism. These are grounds for exceptional celebration.

India, the birthplace of Buddhism, and yet a country where the religion has lost its hold on the masses, nevertheless pays tribute to the spiritual value of its doctrine which springs from her own beliefs and is so much in harmony with her ideal of non-violence, this year celebrates the Buddhajayantī on a national scale. On February 5, Prime Minister Nehru handed over to the Mahabodhi Society of India, in the presence of the

heads of diplomatic missions from Nepal, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, China, and Japan, the relic of the disciples of the Buddha which had been discovered at Sanchi in 1851 and placed in the British Museum in 1887. They are in three little caskets which are copies of the original ones in the British Museum and were given by the Museum authorities to Mrs. Pandit, High-Commissioner for India in the United Kingdom.

It was on May 23 that the foundation stone was laid in New Delhi of a national commemorative building of which the subject and plan have been thrown open to international competition. According to the directive, the building must be simple, austere, noble, inspiring, impregnated with the spirit of modern India, and conforming to the dignity of the Buddha. In addition, the Government of India has planned the publication of various works such as *Two Thousand Five Hundred Years of the Buddha; Buddhist Scripture*; a popular edition of the *Edicts of the Emperor Asoka*, in Hindi and in English, as well as the publication of *Canonic Texts* in the Devanāgarī script.

In Ceylon, the preparation for celebrating this anniversary began on October 12, 1952, with a meeting of the Lanka Bauddha Mandalaya Council, whose task it is to make the necessary arrangements. These include an *International Encyclopedia of Buddhism* with contributions from Buddhists throughout the world.

In Burma, on November 1, 1951, Parliament passed a unanimous resolution presented by the Minister of Home and Religious Affairs of which the text is as follows:

"Not finding satisfaction in the measures so far taken by the peoples and governments of the world, for the solution of the problems that confront humanity, a solution consisting in furthering the material well-being of man in his present existence by the improvement of his conditions and standard of life, and moreover fully conscious of the fact that such measures would bring only a partial solution to these problems, this Parliament records its firm conviction that it is necessary to make provision for, and to bring into being, measures for the spiritual and moral well

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth E. Wells, *Thai Buddhism*, Bangkok, 1939, pp. 50-51.

being of mankind, in a manner to eliminate these problems and to help man to overcome desire, hatred, and folly, which are the root-causes of the violence, the destruction, and the conflagrations which are ruining the world."

In order to implement this resolution a council was convoked at Rangoon to revise the texts of the *Tripitaka* with the aid of religious and lay scholars from Ceylon, Cambodia, Thailand, and even India, Pakistan, and Nepal. This council, which began its labours during the full moon in May, 1954, was expected to have completed these labours on May 24, 1956. Their programme included an edition of the Pali texts in the Burmese language, in Devanāgarī, and in Latin, not to mention the translations into Burmese, Hindi, and English.

And so once again, as was the case on the eve of the five-hundredth anniversary, when for the first time the doctrines were written down in Pāli, and on the eve of the one-thousandth anniversary, when the great Commentaries were written, so also the celebration of the 2,500th anniversary of Parinirvāṇa is again marked by great scholarly activities.

But on this occasion, it is no longer a question of preventing a premature disappearance of knowledge of the Scriptures. For, thanks to the art of printing and the other means of diffusion which man to-day has at his command, the preservation of the Canon is assured all over the globe for a period far longer than ancient man could have thought possible, unless of course humanity is destroyed by thermonuclear suicide. If I have insisted in recalling somewhat in detail their pessimistic views about the future of their beliefs, it has been with the purpose of throwing light on the flourishing condition of Buddhism in the world after 2,500 years of its existence. It is true that Buddhism has practically disappeared from its country of origin, India, where it is scarcely represented except by the archaeological remains of its ancient prosperity. On the other hand, Buddhism has

made conquests or fundamentally influenced large areas of east and southeast Asia. Moreover, it has commanded attention in Europe as well as in America as one of the great universal religions whose dynamism it would be wrong to underestimate. And India itself, after having rejected the teaching of Śākyamuni, begins to recognize the part it played in Indian thought.

Translated by F. Richter.



## Devotional Meeting

THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY in London held a private devotional meeting at their Headquarters in Gordon Square on Thursday, May 24th to celebrate the 2,500th Anniversary of the Buddha's Enlightenment.

Mr. Christmas Humphreys, the President of the Society, was in the Chair. The Venerable Bhikkhu Kāpilavaddho, Dr. Edward Conze, and Mrs. Robins, the Editor of *The Middle Way* were also present.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Humphreys who asked the Venerable Bhikkhu to lead Pansil. Mr. Humphreys then gave a talk on the significance of the occasion, and read a passage from *The Light of Asia*.

Mrs. Robins and Dr. Conze read from the Scriptures, and the Venerable Bhikkhu gave an address on the need to take no substitute for the Dhamma which was clearly taught by the Enlightened One. The meeting closed with a long session for meditation.



#### AN HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH

A photograph taken on the terrace of Ceylon House in London, on 23rd May, 1956, before the inaugural public meeting of Patrons and the Organizing Committee of the Buddha Jayanti in London.

*Seated from left to right:* Mr. S. Amerasinghe (Hon. Secretary), H.E. Mr. Nguyen Khac Ve (Minister for Viet Nam), H.E. Sri Ramaprasad Manandhar (Ambassador of Nepal), Miss I. B. Horner (Hon. Secretary, Pali Text Society) Mr. Huan Hsiang (Chargé d'Affaires of the People's Republic of China), H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ikramullah (High Commissioner for Pakistan), H.E. Madame Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (High Commissioner for India), H.E. Sir Claude Corea (High Commissioner for Ceylon), H.S.H. Prince Wongsanuvatra Devakula (Ambassador of Thailand), H.E. U Kyin (Ambassador of Burma), H.E. Mr. Haruhiko Nishi (Ambassador of Japan), H.R.H. Prince Piao Khampan (Ambassador of Laos), Mons. M. Au Chheun (Ambassador of Cambodia), Mr. Christmas Humphreys (President of the Buddhist Society), Mr. B. F. Perera (Deputy High Commissioner for Ceylon).

*Standing from left to right:* Mr. Dodwell Cooray, Mr. Rajakaruna, Dr. Mowlak, Mr. Barnett, Mrs. Indumati Karunaratne, Mr. D. P. Welikala, Mr. Karunaratne de Silva, Mr. Lionel Fernando, U Tin Maung Gyi, Mr. Sala Siwaraksa.

# The Exhibition

OPENING THE EXHIBITION of Buddhist Art on May 25th at the French Institute, London, Mrs. Pandit, High Commissioner for India in the United Kingdom, expressed the view that Buddhist Art has been a common denominator of Asian culture. The Exhibition was organized by the Royal India Pakistan and Ceylon Society in conjunction with the French Institute as part of the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations. Among those present were the French Ambassador M. Jean Chauvel and the President of the Society, Lord Inchcape.

Among those present were Baroness Ravensdale (Vice-Chairman of the Society), Dr. Reginald le May, M. Georges Coedès, Dr. Quaritch Wales, Mr. B. F. Perera (Deputy High Commissioner for Ceylon), M. Jourdan, (Director of the French Institute), Mr. Christmas Humphreys (President of the London Buddhist Society), Captain Raymond Johnes, Mr. Amerasinghe (Secretary of the Buddha Jayanti Festival Committee) and Mr. F. Richter (Honorary Secretary of the India Pakistan and Ceylon Society).

There were some fifty exhibits loaned by private collectors and, in addition to paintings of the Buddha, there were statues in bronze, ivory, stone, and terracotta.

Mrs. Pandit added : " As I have travelled through the countries of Asia, I have been struck by the unifying quality of Buddhist art. In addition, its two most outstanding elements are *Ahimsa* and compassion. The frescoes of Ajanta Caves stand out even to-day with remarkable clarity and force, and are a vivid reminder of the glory of Buddhist Art. One is struck by their vitality. The teachings the Buddha gave two thousand five hundred years ago are very much alive to-day. They provide the alternative between continued and peaceful existence and swift disintegration."

In conclusion, the High Commissioner said, " I think it is proper that all of us to-day, whether we are from the East or the West, should concentrate on these values and through the various teachings of the Buddha

find that middle path for which all of us are working. It gives me great pleasure to declare this Exhibition open."

The Earl of Inchcape, President of the Society, said " It is very kind of Her Excellency, Mrs. Pandit, who is undoubtedly one of the busiest diplomats in London, to spare the time to honour this occasion with her presence. The words she has spoken have very aptly described the great importance of the occasion which has been celebrated on a great scale in India. It is therefore quite natural that the Envoy of India, in this country should have performed the opening ceremony.

" It is also a great distinction for the Royal India Pakistan and Ceylon Society to have her with us to-day. Mrs. Pandit is no stranger to our Society. She has been host to our members and has opened exhibitions held under our auspices for Indian artists on more than one occasion, the last being only a week ago."

Lord Inchcape added: " We are likewise greatly honoured by the presence of His Excellency, Monsieur Chauvel, the French Ambassador. Our Society has over the years worked in close collaboration with French scholars whose fame is so pre-eminent. We owe a special debt of gratitude to the private lenders who have so willingly come forward with their treasures.

" Buddhism can look back on a history of 2,500 years, and in recent times has shown an increased vitality. In the more recent study of Buddhist Art, our Society can claim to have been a pioneer in having published in 1916, with the Oxford University Press, Lady Herringham's *Ajanta Frescoes*. We have also published Dr. Edward Conze's notable book on Buddhist texts. In the present year, the Society had been honoured by being officially associated with the Buddha Jayanti Festival Committee, and our Hon. Secretary has been a member of its Executive. We look forward to continuing our contribution to Buddhism in increasing measure in the coming years."

Monsieur Jourdan, Director of the French Institute, then spoke as follows: " Your Excellencies Lord Inchcape, Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope you will forgive me for

expressing some of my thoughts which have been inspired by these celebrations. Your Excellency Mrs. Pandit, your presence here to-day among us is more than a great honour, it is a symbol of great significance. It is only necessary to imagine what such a meeting would have been like two centuries ago, if, indeed such a gathering would then have been possible. What did Buddhism mean to the peoples of the West in the eighteenth century, even to the most cultured among them? Such an occasion would have been regarded merely as something foreign, or a source of exotic surprises or an excuse for speeches in which hidden references would have been made to the debates of the century, the scandals of the day, the manner in which Western monarchies abused their power or to religious intolerance.

"It is thanks to the learned men, the philologists, and the philosophers of the nineteenth century that East and West understand each other ever more deeply and more definitely. Despite the vicissitudes, the struggles, the tragic misunderstandings which have so frequently upset our traditions, there has been one positive gain of immense scope, namely the increasing importance which the West attaches to the message of the wisdom of the East. False prophets cannot hinder this growing comprehension, any more than the East, in future, can ignore the scientific and historical methods of the West.

"Yes, there is no doubt that such a reunion would have been impossible two hundred or even one hundred years ago. For this reason, I am most gratified that my old friend, Mr. Richter suggested that this joint celebration should be held in this Institute, which prides itself on opening its doors to all worthy manifestations of thought and of art, and that you Madam have been willing to associate yourself with it. The Exhibition demonstrates the part which our country has played in the progressive discovery of the wisdom and the beauty of the East.

"Let us reflect to-day on this encouraging and symbolic meeting which can furnish us with reasons for hoping and for believing that some day the message of the Buddha, that message of tolerance and goodness, will triumph."

In the absence of Sir Claude Corea, Mr. B. F. Perera, the Deputy High Commissioner for Ceylon, expressed the thanks of the Buddha Jayanti Festival Committee to the Society and to the French Institute for the notable contributions they had made towards the success of the Anniversary. He also wished particularly to thank their Excellencies Madame Pandit and Monsieur Chauvel for their distinguished patronage in being present on the occasion. He said:

"On behalf of the Chairman of the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations Committee who is at the moment away on official business on the Continent, it gives me very great pleasure to say how much we appreciate the co-operation and assistance given by the Royal India Pakistan and Ceylon Society to the organizers to make the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations in London the success which I feel they have been. Mr. Richter, the Honorary Secretary of the Society which sponsored this wonderful display of Buddhist Art here to-day proved to be a very energetic and enterprising liaison officer between the Society and the Organizing Committee in all the arrangements made and I thank him most sincerely on behalf of the Committee for his assistance in our work. I must also express our gratitude to the Director and other officials of the French Institute who so very kindly offered to lend us these excellent premises so centrally situated as they are for the Exhibition which was declared open a little while ago, and also for lending us one of the rooms in the Institute for the illustrated talk given last night by Professor Cœdès, a scholar with an international reputation on "The Significance of the 2,500th Anniversary of the Parinirvana of the Buddha" which was very well appreciated. This talk too, I must mention was sponsored by the Royal India Pakistan and Ceylon Society for which our generous thanks are due again to Mr. Richter. I must on this occasion not fail to mention the very great encouragement which Mrs. Pandit gave to the organizers of the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations by so graciously consenting to open this Exhibition a few minutes ago and by giving us a very stimulating talk on the significance of the Buddha Jayanti at the

Inaugural Meeting held at the Ceylon High Commission yesterday. India regards The Buddha as her greatest son. The world has acclaimed him as one of the greatest if not the greatest figure in human history. It is therefore in the fitness of things that the local representative of that great country should honour us with her presence on this occasion and take a prominent part in the local celebrations. In conclusion I should like to express our warmest thanks and gratitude to the Honorary Secretary of the Organizing Committee Mr. S. Amerasinghe who, as you know, is a barrister from Ceylon engaged in Privy Council work in this country. He gave of his best in making the necessary arrangements which we appreciate very much."

Dr. Sudhin N. Ghose gave a most enlightening and erudite lecture, illustrated with remarkable slides, on the evolution of the Buddha Image from earliest times to the statues and paintings which have become so familiar.

Monsieur G. Cœdès, the distinguished French Orientalist, took the chair. He introduced the speaker, Sudhin Ghose, in the following terms: "Until a short while ago I have not had the opportunity of meeting the speaker of this afternoon, Sudhin Ghose. I have never even heard his name before, and do not know anything about him. I am told he has written a book bearing the title of *And Gazelles Leaping*. It is said to have sold well. Maybe, some of you have read it, and are therefore in a better position than your chairman to judge Sudhin Ghose's capacities. I shall now call upon Sudhin Ghose to address the meeting. I hope he will have something interesting to show us.

Dr. Sudhin Ghose thanked the Chairman for taking the trouble of presiding the meeting; he also offered his apologies for being completely unknown to the world of savants and particularly to the Chairman: "who," the speaker continued, "is far better qualified than myself to speak on Buddhist Art. In fact, had I known that Monsieur Cœdès would be attending this meeting I would have declined the privilege of addressing you: the task would have been left to him. Now,

however, it is too late for me to back out, especially as Monsieur Cœdès does not know the order in which my slides of Buddhist Art has been arranged."

Until recently, the speaker held, Buddhist Art was virtually a sealed book to the western world. It failed to draw the attention it deserved from the general public simply because the majority of the museums in the western world exhibited specimens of "primitive" Buddhist Art. These, though extremely interesting from the historical and iconographical points of view, lacked the elements of universal appeal. In a way these could be compared with the works of early Christian Art—fascinating to the initiated, but too exotic to the uninitiated: too stylized, too archaic. In fact, the early Buddhists—those belonging to the Hinayana School—sedulously avoided the representational (based on nature) and opted for the symbolical (derived from texts and traditions). Instead of showing in their iconography Gautama Buddha (as they conceived him to be—for no contemporary portrait ever existed), they preferred to represent him with such symbols as the tree of knowledge (Bodhi tree), the wheel of law (*dharma-chakra*), the *stupa* (a mound in the shape of a reversed hand-bell), the traditional alms-bowl, or the nimbus (the pillar of fire). The case was in no way different from early Christian iconography where one would find Jesus represented by a fish, or a lamb, or an ark, or some such symbols. These were meaningful, as has been said, to the initiated, but not to the world at large.

However, with the rise of the Mahayana School things changed. The Mahayanists had an entirely different concept of the importance of iconography, just as their literature—primarily in Sanskrit—was different from the Hinayanist literature in Pali. The heyday of the Mahayana School in India did not last long. It was of no greater duration than the great age of Athens. Athens gave to the world all that she had to give in art between the first Persian invasion and the rise of Macedonia. Similarly, the Mahayana School flourished between say the middle of the fifth century A.D. and the first Mohammedan invasion of India. It

became virtually extinct in India proper with the advent of the Mohammedan conquerors. It was a brief period—brief, nevertheless miraculous: for it gave India and the world something that had never existed before. It endowed iconography with a glory unparalleled in history. Its rise and extinction might be compared with a meteor's:

So have I seen an unfixed star  
 Outshine the rest of all the numerous  
 train,  
 As bright as that which guides the mariner,  
 Dart swiftly from its darkened sphere  
 And ne'er shall sight the world again.

Any attempt to explain a miracle of this kind in rationalistic terms would be meaningless and absurd. One might, however, examine some of the finer specimens of Mahayana Art and scrutinize their characteristics: these would be grace and majesty, enshrined in beautiful forms and poses. The impetus to produce such works came, no doubt, from non-Indian sources. But the Mahayana, to use the words of a Hellenist—Arnold J. Toynbee, “seized upon the mediocre version of Hellenic Art and drew from this unpromising source the inspiration for one of the most sublime and creative schools of art that have been produced by the co-operation of the religious with the aesthetic faculty of Human Spirit.” The inspiration was essentially religious: the Mahayana offered the religious experience of an intimate personal relationship between the worshipper and his god—a relation of mutual love in which the worshipper's devotion (*bhakti*) was a response of the god's loving kindness towards his devotee. The artist of the Mahayana was not concerned with the production of works of art as such; his main concern was to produce images embodying love and adoration.

“In an era like the present, which is marked by a singular lack of the spirit of worship,” the speaker held, “the masterpieces of Buddhist Art—whether of Indian or of non-Indian origin—should be found appealing for their beauty, that form of beauty which one calls sublime, which knows no barriers—neither of time nor of clime, beauty whose appeal is universal.”

# The Exhibits

Lent by Dr. Reginald le May  
 MASK OF THE BUDDHA IN STUCCO. Môn  
 from Thailand, Circa A.D. 700

Lent by the New Atlantis Foundation  
 CHINESE SCROLL  
 TIBETAN PRAYER ALTAR  
 TIBETAN BANNER  
 JAPANESE STATUE IN BRONZE

Lent by Mrs. Auden  
 A PICTURE OF THE BUDDHA

Lent by Captain Spink  
 SEATED WOODEN FIGURE OF THE BUDDHA.  
 Sung Dynasty, 11th Century A.D.

Lent by Mr. F. H. Baines  
 PICTURE OF THE BUDDHA

Lent by Lord Inchcape  
 PICTURE OF THE BUDDHA



THE SEVENTH WEEK  
 Carving in elm wood by Tissa Ranasinghe

