

The Light of Buddha

Monthly Magazine



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NUMBER 1.

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JOURNAL OF BURMA BUDDHIST SOCIETY, MANDALAY.

EDITORIAL.

The Real Treasure lies not in the material gain, or in the mundane wealth and possessions, but in the actual result of benevolent actions (Kusala Kamma) done in the past or present, or both. In this respect, we will do well to ponder the words of the Buddha in the following stanza.-

"The real treasure is that laid up through charity and pity, temperance and self-control. The Treasure thus hidden is secure and passes not away. Though he leaves the fleeting riches of the world, this a man carries with him a treasure that no wrong of others nor any thief can steal away."

Nidhikanda Sutta.

Yet, it seems clear that the truth of this wise saying may not be really appealing to those deeply steeped in greed, hatred and delusion which are the main hindrances towards Salvation. Christianity teaches Salvation by faith while Buddhism places its great reliance for the purpose of Self-purification on Charity, Morality and Meditation. So it is not strange that the methods of the two main creeds should be different when we consider the different meanings attached to the word 'Salvation' — the latter wishing to be saved from sin and hell and the former from evil Karma and rebirth.

It must, however, be understood that the cessation of rebirth and Karma, automatically brings forth the extirpation of all kinds of pain and suffering in the vast ocean of Samsara inclusive of sin and hell. The Buddha analyses man and things inanimate, and finds nothing that is permanent but only the concrete and perishable. All Karma is brought into function under the influence of greed after some desired object with hatred of that

which is not wanted, and of the infatuation or delusion of mind that causes one to believe that satisfaction will result when the object is attained.

What is the root of evil?

Craving, hatred and delusion are the root of evil. And what is the root of good?

To be free from craving, hatred and delusion is the root of good.
Majjhima Nikaya.

These verses in the form of catechism must be read with the following abhorism for further realization.

"Pleasure slays the fool if he seeks not

What is beyond.

With his craving for pleasure, the fool
Slays himself as his own enemy."

Dhammapada.

To make a brief survey, the message of Buddha teaches the way to perfect goodness and wisdom without a personal God, the highest knowledge without a "Revelation", a moral world order and just retribution carried out of necessity by reason of the Laws of Nature and of our own being. It further imparts the knowledge of continued existence without a separate "immoral soul", eternal bliss without a local heaven, the possibility of redemption without a vacarious redeemer, and a Salvation in which everyone is his own Saviour. On this point, the Buddha declared thus.-

There is, O Bhikkhus, an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed. Were there not unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the originated, the created and the formed.

Udana Vagga.

One does not need to wait for that Salvation which can also be obtained in this life (Sauppadisesa Nibbana) by the exercise of one's own faculties without prayers, sacrifices, penances or ceremonies, without ordained priests, without the mediation of the clergy and without Divine Grace. Undoubtedly, Buddhism is practical in every phase and it can withstand the tests and trials of all times.

"As he (Perfect One) speaks, so he acts. As he (Perfect One) acts, so he speaks. And because he speaks as he acts and acts as he speaks, therefore is he called the Perfect One (Tathagata).

Itivuttaka.

Who else in world's history has proclaimed these sublime doctrines not merely to a 'chosen people' but to all mankind for their general welfare?

The Buddhist ideal is, therefore, to knit mankind from pole to pole, into one single family by the bonds of love and liberation.

E G O L E S S N E S S

By

NYANATILOKA MAHATHERA

More and more the noble teaching of the Buddha seems to be on the way to conquer the world. More than ever before, the Buddhists are working for its propagation in nearly all the countries on earth. Especially in India, the birth place of Buddhism, whence it had disappeared for nearly thousand years, Buddhism has again made its entrance and gained a firm footing, and with rapid strides it is ever gaining more and more ground. One therefore should rather think it a good omen that India, having regained its independence, has adopted as its emblem the Buddhist Four-Lion symbol of Emperor Asoka, and that, at the proclamation of the Indian Republic, behind the presidential throne, crowned with this Buddhist emblem, there appeared the Buddha's statue.

Also all over Europe and America a mighty Buddhist wave is set in motion, which no longer can be kept back and suppressed and which, sooner or later, will flood the world with its beneficial influence. The world is no longer satisfied with dogmas based on blind belief. Everywhere in the world there is found to-day a striving for freedom and independence, externally and internally; and ever more the thinking man feels that the destinies of beings are not dependent on the omnipotence and infinite goodness of an imaginary creator but that they rest entirely on the beings themselves. It is in Buddhism that one may find the true answers to many of the problems that are troubling men, and which they wish to get solved. Everybody knows that Buddhism is *not* a revealed religion and *not* based, on blind belief, but that it is a doctrine to be realised by man's own understanding, a doctrine that makes man free and independent in his thinking, and assures him of happiness and peace.

But of one thing I wish to warn all those who are working for the propagation of Buddhism, namely: not to allow themselves to [become influenced or carried away by seemingly identical theosophical, Christian or, what is still worse, materialistic teachings. For all these are, in essence and substance, very often diametrically opposed to the Buddha's doctrines and prevent a real understanding and realization of the profound law discovered and proclaimed by the Buddha.

The most crucial point for most men seems to be the Buddha's fundamental teaching of Phenomenalism, Egolessness and Impersonality of existence, in Pali anatta. It is the middle way between two extremes, namely on the one hand the spiritualistic belief in an eternal ego-entity, or soul, outlasting death; on the other hand the materialistic belief in a temporary ego-entity becoming annihilated at death.

Therefore it is said: There are three teachers in the world. The first teacher teaches the existence of an eternal ego-entity outlasting death: that is the eternalist, as for example the Christian. The second teacher teaches a temporary ego-entity which becomes annihilated at death: that is the annihilationist, or materialist. The third teacher teaches neither an eternal, nor a temporary ego-entity: this is the Buddha. The Buddha teaches that, what we call ego, self, soul, personality etc., are merely conventional terms not referring to any real independent entity. And he teaches that there is only to be found this psycho-physical process of existence changing from moment to moment. Without understanding the egolessness of existence, it is not possible to gain a real understanding of the Buddha-word; and it is not possible without it, to realize that goal of emancipation and deliverance of mind proclaimed by the Buddha. This doctrine of egolessness of existence forms the essence of the Buddha's doctrine of emancipation. Thus with this doctrine of egolessness, or anatta, stands and falls the entire Buddhist structure. Indeed, for anyone who wishes to engage in the study of the Buddhist scriptures, the best thing would be, from the very start, to get himself acquainted with the two methods in which the Buddha taught the Dhamma to the world. The first method is the teaching in conventional language; the second method is the teaching in philosophical correct language. The first one relates to conventional truth, *vohara-sacca*, the second, to truth in the ultimate sense, *paramattha-sacca*.

Thus, whenever the Buddha uses such terms as I, person, living being, etc., this is to be understood as conventional speech (*vohara-vacana*), hence not correct in the highest sense (*paramattha-vacana*). It is just as speaking of the "rising" and "setting" of the sun, though we know thoroughly well that this does not correspond to reality. Thus the Buddha teaches that, in the ultimate sense, amongst all these psycho-physical phenomena of existence there cannot be found any eternal or even temporary ego-entity, and hence that all existence of whatever kind is something impersonal, or anatta.

In this connection, I would like to emphasise the fact that this fundamental doctrine of Egolessness and Emptiness is not, as some misinformed Western Buddhist assert, only taught in the southern school of Buddhism, but that even in the so called Mahayana-schools it forms a most essential part. Without this teaching of anatta, or Egolessness, there is no Buddhism; and without having realized the truth of egolessness no real progress is possible on the path to deliverance.

The Buddha is, in every respect, a teacher of the golden mean, ethically as well as philosophically. From the ethical standpoint, for example, the Buddha rejects two extremes: the way of sensual pleasures, and the way of self-torture. From the philosophical standpoint he rejects eternity, as well as temporariness of an ego-entity. Just so he rejects belief in an absolute identity and an absolute otherness of the various stages of the process of existence. He rejects the rigid determinism, as well as the belief

in chance. He rejects the belief in absolute existence and absolute non-existence; likewise in freedom of will, as well as in unfreedom of will.

All these things will become clear to one who understands the egolessness and conditioned nature of all phenomena of existence. On the understanding of these two truths depends the understanding of the entire doctrine of the Buddha. Hence the understanding and final penetration of egolessness and conditionedness of all phenomena of existence are the necessary foundation to the realization of the noble eightfold path leading to deliverance from all vanity and misery, namely; right understanding, right thought, right speech, right bodily action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration of mind. And only this golden middle path, based on these two kinds of right understanding, namely of "egolessness and conditionedness," can alleviate and destroy these vain illusions of "Self" and craving, which are the root-causes of all war and bloodshed in the world. But without these two kinds of understanding there is no realization of the holy and peaceful goal pointed out by the Buddha. There are, however, to be found various would-be Buddhists in the West who are attached to an imaginary Great Self, and who uphold that the Buddha did in no way reject the view of an "eternal Atma," or soul, believe that the Mahayana texts teach such a doctrine. Such assertions, however, do not in the least prove correct, for neither do the Pali texts, nor the later Mahayana texts proclaim an eternal self. Any reader who is unbiassed in mind and free from prejudices, can never from a study of the Buddhist scriptures come to the conclusion that the Buddha ever taught any such ego-entity within or outside the corporeal, mental and spiritual phenomena of existence. Nowhere in the world can there be found such an entity, as was clearly pointed out by the Buddha.

Regarding the questions whether the Holy One will continue after death, or not continue etc., the Buddha says that all such questions are wrongly put. And why? Because what is called the "Holy One" is here only a conventional term and refers to no real entity while in reality there is only to be found a process of corporeal, mental and spiritual phenomena. In another text, therefore, the Buddha asks a monk, whether he considered corporeality as the Holy one, or the feelings, or the perceptions, of the mental formations, or consciousness. Or, whether he believed the Holy One to exist within these five groups of phenomena, or outside thereof. Or whether all the phenomena heaped together were the Holy One. And denying all these questions, the Buddha further said that, even during life-time, the Holy One could not be discovered in reality, and that therefore it would be wrong to ask, whether the Holy One will continue or not continue after death, etc. Thus, no entities are existing in the world, but only ever-changing processes. The Buddha further says: Only because man does not understand corporeality, feeling and the other mental and spiritual phenomena as being impermanent, unsatisfactory and impersonal (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*). and does not understand their conditioned origin, their extinction, and the path leading to their extinction, therefore he will think that the Holy One does continue

or does not continue after death etc. This, therefore, is the reason that the Buddha did not answer such questions.

According to Buddhism, the whole of existence is comprised in the five groups of phenomena mentioned above, or still more briefly expressed in the three groups: corporeality, consciousness and mental factors. And within these three groups are comprised the only and ultimate things given, though also these again are more fleeting and evanescent phenomenal flashing up for a moment, in order to disappear immediately thereafter for ever. Thus whenever in the Buddhist scriptures mention is made of I, self, living being, etc., even of the Buddha, these expressions accordingly are used merely as conventional terms, without referring to any real entities. Therefore the Buddha has said: "It is impossible, it cannot be that a man with real understanding should ever consider anything as a real entity."

He who does not understand the egolessness of existence, and who is still attached to Ego-illusion, such as one cannot comprehend and understand the four Noble Truths of the Buddha in the true light.

These four truths are:

- (1) the truth of the impermanency, unsatisfactoriness and impersonality of existence.
- (2) the truth that repeated rebirth and misery are rooted in self-illusion and craving for existence.
- (3) the truth that through the extinction of all self-illusion, vanity and craving, deliverance from all rebirth will be attained.
- (4) the truth that the eightfold path based on right understanding, is the path leading to this goal.

He who has not penetrated the ego-illusion, and is still attached to self-vanity, he will believe that is he himself that suffers, will believe that it is he himself that performs the good and evil deeds leading to his rebirth, that it is he himself that will enter Nibbana, that it is he himself that will bring the eightfold path to perfection.

Whoso, however, has fully penetrated the egolessness of existence, knows that, in the highest sense, there is no individual that suffers, that commits the kammic deeds, that enters Nibbana, and that brings the Eightfold Path to perfection. In the Visuddhi Magga it is therefore said:

"Mere suffering exists, no sufferer is found.
The deeds are, but no doer of the deeds is there.
Nibbana is, but not the man that enters it.
The path is, but no traveller on it is seen."

Further:

"No doer of the deeds is found,
No being that may reap their fruits.
Empty phenomena roll on!
This is the only right view."

Therefore, wherever the doctrine of the egolessness of all existence is rejected, there the Buddha's word is rejected, But wherever, through penetration of the egolessness of all existence, the ego-vanity has reached ultimate extinction, there the goal of the Buddha's teaching has been realized, namely: freedom from all vanity and the highest peace of Nibbana.

THE EVILS AND DANGERS OF THE SOUL VIEW OR HERESY OF SELF

By

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Samanera U Pandita
Ye Ngone Kyaung, Yan Kin Taung.

Continued from December, 1957 Issue.

For the common worldling (who although, as a result of noble pure or high meritorious deeds done or acquired in previous lives) may be reborn in and enjoying the celestial estate or bliss of the highest heaven.

Yet due to the inherent tendency towards Egoism or the attachment or adherence to the delusive notion or concept of a permanent soul, ego or self firmly implanted in this mind and which he is unable to shed, eradicate or relinquish upon the breaking up or dissolution of the aggregates of life of his present state of existence either today or tomorrow he is liable to be reborn in the lowest hell or some degraded, depraved form of existence may be his next destination.

His future reinstatement or existence is uncertain, and inevitably bound up with perdition subject and doomed to the danger of hell fire destruction and perdition. So great are the evils and dangers consequent on or resulting from the adherence to the soul view or the delusion of self.

Today in this present life, he may be a most intelligent, wise and profoundly learned, erudite scholar, an adept, thoroughly proficient in great lore and learning and virtuous, or a paragon of virtue; tomorrow, when he departs from this life; he may be reborn an idiot, a fool, an ignoramus or as a clown, man, joker or lunatic. Such is the extent and degree or gross nature of the evils that can ensue from the firm belief and attachment to this false perverted view or heresy of a permanent soul, entity or an immortal ego principle supposed to be inherent in the life personality.

In this present life, although he may be a monk, recluse or hermit possessed of wonderful miraculous or great occult psychic powers or endowed with abnormal or supernormal faculties (as Abhinnya and Iddhis) capable of flying through the air or floating in levitation and walking or gliding over water, as if on dry land; or cleaving and passing through the solid earth; and through walls, mountains or gross solid physical objects, even though the bowels of this great earth, diving down and cleaving through its mighty cavernous depths; at will, and capable of soaring up above into space, as far as the realm of Brahma, and even handle, manipulate or wield the sun and the moon, with ease, or from being single he is capable of appearing in diverse or manifold forms.

But even though he may be a monk or recluse exercising such great and miraculous powers (due to the presence or inherence of the ego delusion or

the clinging to the belief or heresy of an immortal, permanent soul or self) he is subject liable after death to perdition or to the doom, danger and destruction of Hell fire. He is doomed and destined on his death to sink into some *depraved* retrogressive form of life or existence, he is liable to revert retrograde into the form and condition of a bug and gnat, or fly or into that of a louse; flea or insect or into some such mean base depraved form of life as a result of the Ego delusion persisting and inhering or deeply and *firmly* planted; rooted in his mind which he is as yet incapable of extirpating or uprooting.

As long as the benighted, deluded, blinded minds of worldlings or worldly beings creatures are not rid or freed from but are entangled within the clutches or grips of Egoism, such beings are (as the result of its influence) liable to commit the worst evils, sins and crimes the foulest, monstrous and blackest under the sun, and even to the extent of committing such wrongs and evils as the five great unpardonable capital sins or heinous offences. They are (1) Causing the blood of a Tathagata (Buddha) to flow or shedding *the* blood of a Buddha; (2) Slaying or causing the death of an Arahant or fully perfected pure passionless Saint; (3) Slaughter of one's mother or Matricide; (4) Slaughter of one's father or Patricide (5) Causing factions, dissensions and schisms in the order of the Sangha.

Of all sins, crimes and evils the destruction or slaughter of life whether for, or in war, game, sport or trade, is the *worst* evil and of this the slaying of an Arahant; true saint or of one's parents is the everest point or highest and grossest height or point *of evil*, that can ever be *committed* by man the consequences of which are endless suffering of the most horrible agonies and agonizing pains, woes and *tortures* in the *lowest* region of the infernal realms known as Maha Avicci.

The Ego delusion has a potentiality or power capable of pitching or hurling a man into *committing* such sins and consequently into such horrible states of suffering, woes and miseries as are only to be experienced in the lowest hell worlds; by its infernal inhabitants the denizens brutes, monsters and demons expiating there as a result of their gross misdeeds; during previous bygone lives; for endless aeons world cycles Kabas and Asankhikas a vast measure of time which makes the astronomer's light years seem insignificant and as nothing.

There is nothing so pernicious, delusive and absurd in the world as the acceptance of and adherence to false doctrines creeds untruths and half truths, as the belief in the soul view, the attachment *to* the creationist view or the concept of a personal God Creator as creating, and sustaining this Universe and the Universe and Soul as being the products *of a* special divine creation. According to Buddhism, there are three great permanent perversions or heresies false view known as the Niyata Miccha Ditthi. These are Natthika Ditthi, Ahetuka Ditthi and Akiriya Ditthi. These are the three principal perversions or types *of* views held by the

heretical sects and the leaders before and during the Buddha's life time.

Akiriya Ditthi is the view that denies the effects, fruits or results of deeds, good or bad favourable or unfavourable. It means that all deeds, whatever, done by conscious beings creatures good or evil right or wrong, pure or impure, noble or base, fair or foul, virtuous or vicious are fruitless and of no consequence i.e. null and void. Such was the view held by the leader Nayaka of the heretical sects Purana Kassapa, one of the great heretical leaders during Buddha's time.

Ahetuka Ditthi is the view which denies the existence of the Causes and facts of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, or Moral Right and Wrong. It means in effect that the state, form, nature and condition, wherein all beings creatures are born or placed, are causeless or without any proper assignable cause or reason to account for the facts of the diversity or variation of or difference in form, nature state temperament or intelligence and the varied states of fate and fortune, among living conscious beings, creatures but are just fortuitous haphazard; or a matter of blind chance or accident of just haphazard fortuitous events and that there is no such cause or reason as good or evil Kamma as accountable or assignable cause. This was the view expounded and held by Makkhali Gosala of the Cow-pen.

Natthika Ditthi is the complete denial of the consequences of good or evil Kamma and states the view that the world with all living creatures, beings, therein just arises and appears as a matter of chance which views the world and all events therein as the result of blind chance or accident or as haphazard mere fortuitous events, and that when the living beings creatures die or life ceases to function that is the final end of all. This view is rank materialism and purely Nihilistic; exactly what those who follow Marxism adopt so that according to this view they believe and hold that there is no benefit or good in alms giving, charity and virtue. It is a complete denial of Kamma, Rebirth and the after-life, as well as a total negation or denial of the moral native order and responsibility or consequences of deeds. This is the view held and expounded by the Leader of the Heretical Sect, Ajjitakesakambala and there is nothing new or novel about it.

Now according to Buddhism, the acceptance or belief in any one of these three principal perversions or false views, amount to the acceptance of all three, and as a consequence of cleaving to these heresies or perversions, a person or being who so accepts these false views is consigned or destined to the Lowest Hell in the infernal realms subject to the most horrible agonies woes and sufferings for endless countless aeons, world systems, world cycles, or vast immeasurable periods.

And even during the periodic world destruction or conflagration, there is no chance or hope of release therefrom but he has to suffer out

expiate the consequences of adherence to these views, in some other hell world in another universe or world system. Now so long as one is not free from the Ego delusion personality view or the heresy of Soul or permanent self, one is liable at any period of existence to fall under the sway or influence of the aforementioned three principal perversions or evil views; known as "Niyata Miccha Ditthi".

The Sassata Ditthi or the Eternalist view or error of those who say and believe that the world life principle and soul are eternal, immoral and continues beyond death.

The Ucheda Ditthi the Annihilationist view or those who fall under the Annihilationist error, and who believe and affirm that the world life principle (jiva) and the soul (atta) are not eternal and that they do not continue beyond death.

Both these heresies or false view result also from, and are rooted consequently in the basic, fundamental, or principal fallacy perversion or heresy of soul. But with the dawning of the Insight-knowledge or the perfect grasp and thorough comprehension of the law, chain, cycle or process of conditional dependent, causal origination clears, dispels and banishes all doubts, uncertainty and delusion, regarding the actual, true nature of the world, life and all phenomena.

The Paticca Samuppada is the only solution discovered and given taught by the Buddha, which can clear and wipe out the intricate tangle or thicket of false view concepts and theories mentioned above. So long as the mind is entangled in this net or web of Delusion and held in bondage under the baneful evil influence of these views, one is liable at any moment, consequently to fall into any kind of wrong misdeeds error and to commit any form of sin under the sun, no matter however great, gross, foul, black and wicked or heinous. There is no end to the amount of evil one is not capable of committing or to which one cannot fall a victim. Such are the evils and dangers of the Heresy or Delusion of Self.

A DECADE OF WORLD-WIDE BUDDHIST REVIVAL *

By

Dr. R. L. SONI,

Founder-Director-in-Chief, World Institute of Buddhist Culture,
Mandalay (Burma).

The unprecedented havoc brought about by the World War II awakened in many a sensible being the urge to do something positive and concrete for the promotion of peace in the human family. I happened to be one of those.

While attending to my duties as the Chief Medical Officer of the District of Mandalay, almost the front-line of the War in Burma, I witnessed, day in and day out, terrible human sufferings through injuries inflicted by bombs, bullets and shells from the skies, and the terror and cruelties inflicted by the Japanese Military Police on the land. And, the sufferings recorded acceleration and intensification as the War progressed into its second and the final years. This made me deeply reflect on the evils of a civilization that engendered greed, anger and hatred, and promoted terrible conflicts and horrible catastrophes. Buddhism having the longest record in human annals of a history unstained by even a single drop of blood, was decided upon as the antidote par excellence to these evils, and the resolution was made in consultation with friends and Buddhist leaders to use it as such, the moment the time was opportune. Consequently, with the return of the Rt. Ven'ble Lokanatha to Burma, a public meeting was arranged in Mandalay on the 31st October 1946, with ourselves in the chair, when the momentous decision was made for organising a world-wide Buddhist movement for promoting peace in the human family. The Buddhist Foreign Mission was duly organised on the 28th November, with U Kin Mg Dwe as its first President, U Ba Thin as the Vice-President, myself as the Secretary-General, U Kyaw Hla as Joint-Secretary, U Kyaw (Wadan) as Treasurer and U Ba Tin as Joint-Treasurer. In due course, I rose to be the First Patron and U Lu Pe Win succeeded as the next President. The enthusiastic endeavours of all concerned bore happy fruit when on the 8th of June 1947, Mandalay the cultural capital of Burma, witnessed the launching of the historic Mission to America, with Ven. Lokanatha as its first Dhamma-Ambassador to the world in a thousand years. He was given

* The opening speech at a Special Meeting of the World Institute of Buddhist Culture, Mandalay, on the 30th Nov '57, on the eve of the Institute going into Recess for 6 months, when its Distinguished Patron-in-Chief, Rt. Ven. Lokanatha, while eulogising Dr. R. L. Soni hailed him as Dullabha Dhamma-Mahasevaka, Sudhamma Susila Ratana, Susattha Maha-Dhammaduta, titles by which he is to be known henceforth.

a grand send-off in Rangoon, where under the very shadow of the glorious Shwedagon, on the historic hill of Singuttara, in the Cetiya-gana Hall, five leading Buddhist organisations met on the 2nd of July to do him honour. The Mission sailed out on July 13th.

When I look back through these ten years, I feel crowded with eventful happenings in the world: eventful because of the political emancipation achieved by many a nation from the imperialistic and colonial bondage, also eventful because of the cold war, because of the great scientific strides made, technological achievements bagged and peace attained through the terror of war. More important and more eventful, however, has been the Buddhist revival in this decade, which the future historians are bound to characterise as a safety-valve for contemporary human culture and civilization. May I add here, in all humility, that the launching of our historic Mission in 1947, was the beginning of an unprecedented activity in the heart of Buddhism the world over.

Preaching from place to place, the Venerable Missionary went round the world, returning to Sri Lanka early in 1950, with a full report on the state of Buddhism in different countries. In the meantime, India, Burma and Ceylon had become independent. A great awakening in favour of the values taught by the Buddha was to be found everywhere. Thereafter events followed events, adding glory to the Dhamma. The first in the list was the organisation of the World Fellowship of Buddhists under the leadership of the lion-hearted son of Sri Lanka, Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, who for the first time in world history succeeded in bringing together the Buddhist leaders of 30 nations in Ceylon in 1950. Thereafter, the sessions were held at two years intervals, in Japan, Burma and Nepal, the next one being due next year in Thailand. Our Scheme for the world-wide Dhammaduta Campaign is still the last word with the World Fellowship. Also was born the World Buddhist Flag, solidly uniting over 500 million Buddhists in some 40 countries. Besides, the Fortnightly, "Buddhist World" served a very useful purpose for five years. Many other new Buddhist papers also came into being to meet the increasing demand.

The Rt. Ven. Lokanatha received right royal welcome on his return from the World Buddhist Survey to Mandalay in March 1951. The World Institute of Buddhist Culture was already organised by me on my return from Ceylon in 1950. Soon after, the Union of Burma instituted the Buddha Sasana Council, under which the Sixth Buddhist Synod was held during 1954-56 in the special constructed Cave near the World Peace Pagoda in Rangoon. Under the leadership of Hon. U Nu, the Prime Minister of Burma, there has been a considerable Buddhist revival. He is particularly fortunate in having the co-operation of such enthusiasts and gentlemen of vision as Hon. Justice U Chan Htoon, Sir U Thwin, Hon. U Win, Justice U Thein Maung, Hon. U Ba Saw, among others.

The seeds of the Dhamma are sprouting all over the world today.

Japan is getting a new inspiration in the Theravada of Burma: Australia has awakened to the potentialities of the Teachings, and there is considerable activity in the U. S. A. and the various European countries. Fortunately, Buddhism is once again uniting Asia into cultural consolidation. The Dhamma has risen so much in importance in this decade that even the Communist countries, who otherwise do not much see eye to eye with the doctrines of the Buddha, consider it the better of wisdom to adore the cultural values of the Dhamma. And, the most fortunate thing is that the stage seems set for the return of Buddhism to its motherland, India. The Buddha Jayanti Celebrations, marking the 2500th year of the Great Passing Away of the Buddha, grandly celebrated all over the world during the year 1956/57, gave a culminating charm to this unique decade.

Evidently, while reviewing the eventful decade 1947-57 (B.E.2490/2500) we find ourselves crowded with events of far-reaching import in the history of Buddhism. The decade began with our launching of the Venerable Lokanatha's historic Mission to the world, and the decade ended with the mass conversions to Buddhism in India, under the leadership of my friend, Dr. Ambedkar, who initially influenced by Venerable Lokanatha in favour of Buddhism in 1934, planned with me for Buddhism in India in December 1954, during his stay in my house for a week.

We had the privilege of being associated with not only the great events at the beginning and the end of this eventful decade, but also with many an event of importance during these ten years. Incidentally, ours is the largest organisation in the world outside India, founded, managed and supported by an Indian and successfully engaged in a voluminous Buddhist work. Last year we presided over the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations in the Republic of Pakistan, and this year we addressed over half a million new converts at the Buddhist Convention at Nagpur. Also we have been intimately connected with the Maha Bodhi Society, the World Fellowship of Buddhists and several Buddhist organisations and groups the world over. I am also an Editor of the 'Light of Buddha'. We are happy that our Building has well served the cause of the Dhamma. It was here that the Buddhist Foreign Mission was conceived and worked up. It was from here that the World Buddhist Mission under Venerable Lokanatha started and returned to after encircling the globe with the Teachings of the Buddha. Here were also published some thirty-five thousand copies of Buddhist literature. Here were received and lodged several great Buddhist leaders of the world when there was no arrangement whatsoever in Mandalay to suitably entertain them. We had also several Conferences here, once with representatives of 15 nations. And, incidentally, this was the first place in Burma to hoist the World Buddhist Flag in March 1951. Here also was made the momentous decision for due return of the Dhamma to India, in a conference in December 1954, with Dr. Ambedkar in the Chair.

Though we have achieved considerable success, yet much remains to be done. It was our intention to continue this work for another five years, but an unfortunate event last year (2nd Oct '56) a murderous attempt on our life,

evidently engineered by the enemies of the Dhamma, has made us reconsider our decision. We now feel that our Buddhist work in Burma is mainly over. Reminded as if by Divine Powers of the Devas through an iron rod on our skull, we feel certain that the time is ripe for our attention to some other country, Burma being now fully safeguarded for the Dhamma by the Buddha Sasana Council and the Burma Buddhist Society. Therefore, we have decided to restrict our Buddhist activities in Burma, and to give more attention to the Dhamma in another country, where the call is immediate and urgent. That land is India, my motherland, the birthplace of the Buddha, certainly a great land hoary with the stupendous traditions of a very ancient civilization further enriched by the glorious values taught by the Buddha, fortunately now re-awakening to those very precious values after an unfortunate lapse of some thousand years. Without Buddhism, the heart of mother India can never be whole. She is, as a matter of fact, pining for it.

There is already considerable Buddhist activity in evidence in India under the admirable leadership of the Maha Bodhi Society and other groups in Calcutta, Ajmer, Madras, Bombay and numerous other places. The situation, however, has assumed great importance and urgency because of the recent mass conversions, which merit due attention.

Our recent tour of India has brought us the discovery that not only India needs Buddhism but Buddhism needs India all the more. Therefore, in the great task ahead, we need considerable support, moral as well as otherwise. We are assured of co-operation from the Maha Bodhi Society and other Buddhist organisations in India. Also we are confident that the people and Government of Buddhist Burma and of India, now the largest democracy on earth and already with Buddhist signs on the national standard and official seal, shall render due assistance. As a matter of fact, we can straightaway bank upon their moral support, and also support from the entire Buddhist world, whom we are planning to move next year in favour of Buddhism in India in the world Conference.

We personally feel that the iron rod of the assailant has done a magic job of turning our attention to India. It was certainly a stern and positive reminder from the Devas in the Celestial Abodes who are in charge of the Dhamma on earth for the duty we owed to the Dhamma in India, and therefore, far from being angry with the poor assailant and the people behind him, we flow our Metta (Loving kindness) to them all in deep gratitude of their being the blessed instruments of the Divine Powers to bring home to us our duty to India and humanity at large. We ardently wish that the assailant and his friends be spared of the awful sufferings which are theirs because of their deed, and that the evil fruits of their deed be liquidated from flowing into the future lives and that they all be happy and well in the future, ever endeavouring to do good and never trying to repeat such an evil again. May they also share the peace and happiness that shall be ours through the good that we shall be doing for the well-being of mankind!

We feel that this reminder was necessary. The skull was broken and our life was endangered. We hovered between life and death for some time, and then the illumination came when in deep meditation more or less continuously for six months, and with the dawn of illumination happened the miracle of recovery without a complicated operation otherwise considered absolutely necessary. Well, what else there can be in all this except the hand of the Devas! We could have easily died, but we did not. Rather, we lived through the ordeal and are more living today than ever before, more ardently devoted to the Dhamma, more eager to serve the cause of Buddhism and determined to continue our humble service till the end of our days, not only in this life but till all the lives are spent up and we reach the very heart of Nibbana.

We have closed one chapter of a decade of Buddhist aspirations, efforts and achievements. Another is being unlocked with hopes brighter and optimism high. Our birth shall be in vain if we do not use all the energy at our disposal for the well-being of mankind through leveraging humanity up with the Dhamma. We are fortunate that we are born in an epoch when we can be so useful.

At this juncture in world history when artificial moons are not only complicating the physical heavens but also inspiring new and terrible ventures in Lobha, Dosa and Moha (greed, hate and delusion) in the mental cosmology, we Buddhists who constitute at least one fourth of the human race owe a duty to mankind, and it is a sacred duty to be discharged through the practice of the values taught by the Great Buddha. Only Buddhism can tame the evil trends rotting the contemporary psychology. Taming these destructive trends, Buddhism helps channelling new knowledge into the courses of wisdom and safety. It has done so successfully in the past, and there is no reason why it should fail in the present. We close with hope and optimism!

May all be well and happy!!

BUDDHISM IN THAILAND

By

Dr. Luang Suriyabongs. M.D.

HISTORY:

The primitive religious belief of the Thai since ancient history more than 3,000 years ago when the Thai lived in Yunnan, and still later on when they moved into the present Thailand was Animism and Ancestor-Worship. Later on came Buddhism and the Thai adopted it as their national religion. Unlike Burma, Thailand inherited through the influence of the Cambodians a fair proportion of Hinduism. To-day our population is predominantly Buddhist, But many Brahmin rites and remnants of animistic beliefs have come to stay in the popular customs of our people. Especially Brahmanism or Hinduism is still quite a force among the rich minority because of its pompous ritual value.

Buddhism was first introduced into Thailand as THERAVADA BUDDHISM to Nakorn Phatom (the ancient town of Svarnabhumi) in B.E. 303 (B.E. 329) by missionaries sent out by King Asoka of India, namely, by Sona Thera and Uttara Thera.

For the second time, Buddhism came as MAHAYANA BUDDHISM under King Sri Vichai from Palambang (Sumatra) in B.E. 1300 (A.D. 700).

The third influx was Theravada Buddhism from the North-West in B.E. 1600 (A.D. 1900) being re-introduced under the influence of King Anurat of Pagan.

For the fourth time, in B.E. 1800 (A.D.1253) Buddhism was revived in Thailand by Thai Buddhist monks who went to Ceylon and brought back with them the Holy Pali Scriptures. They also invited Ceylonese monks to come to stay at Nakorn Sridhammaraj.

King Ram Kamhaeng, the third King of Siam, invited some of the Ceylonese monks to come and stay at his Capital of Sukhothai. Since then, all Kings of Siam have been Theravada Buddhists and this system has become our National Religion. And from this springs the close connection between the Royal House and the Holy Sangha.

SECTS:

We have in Thailand two sects of Theravada Budddhism:

I. The Dhammayuktika Nikaya to which at present only 12,462

monks and novices belong, residing in 798 Dhammayuktika Wats.

II. The Mahanikaya sect to which more than 200,000 monks and novices belong, occupying about 20,000 Mahanikaya Wats.

The Dhammayuktika Sect was established by King Makut (1851-1868), in order to establish stricter discipline in the Holy Brotherhood. Today, both sects adhere equally strictly to the 227 Vinaya Rules as laid down by the Buddha, and there are only very slight differences in their daily practice. For instance, the Dhammayuktika monks give their robes a twist to the left, the Mahanikaya monks twist their yellow robes to the right. The Dhammayuktika make a confession when they feel themselves guilty of an offence against the 227 Vinaya Rules; the Mahanikaya monks confess twice a day, before sunrise and before retiring to sleep. The Patimokkha (Disciplinary Code of offences against the sacred 227 Vinaya Rules), is recited twice a month by both sects. But the Dhammayuktika monks recite the Patimokkha publicly whereas the Mahanikaya monks recite them behind closed doors to be rid of interruptions and no layman is allowed anywhere near the inner circle of the temple (Vihara).

The Present Administration of Sangha.

Since 1954, the Sangha has a similar administration to the State. It can be called "A State within a State". The Supreme Patriarch of Sangha Raja is the Spiritual Head, the Highest Dignitary of the Kingdom. He appoints a Council of Ecclesiastical Ministers headed by the Sangha Nayaka (equivalent to the Premier of the State). Under him are four Boards, namely the Board of Administration, of Education, of Propaganda, and the Board of Public Works. Each Board is headed by an ecclesiastical Minister. At present the ecclesiastical Ministerial Council consists of ten members. There is further a Consultative Assembly (corresponding to Parliament) which consists of 45 members and acts as an Advisory Body.

FACTS AND FIGURES:

Statistics

According to the latest statistics available (1956) there were 20,619 Monasteries throughout the country with more than 154,910 monks and 86,208 novices (Samaneras) as inmates.

In the same year there were 1289 Pali students (monks and novices only), at the Maha Monkut Ecclesiastical University in Bangkok; and 19,150 lay-students of Buddhist Religion participating in the various examinations of the various grades, held by the Government throughout the country.

Stipends and Official Grants for Monks:

The total amount of stipends for monks of all ranks allocated in the

Annual Budget in 1955 amounted to Tcs. 8,652,500 of which a sum of Tcs. 3,522.00 was set aside for the support of monks all over the country.

Annual grants are also given for the upkeep of two great Institutes of Higher Learning amounting to over Tcs. 80,000 each, namely the Maha Monkut Ecclesiastical University and the Maha Shulalongkorn Academy for Monks.

Medical Care of Monks and Novices:

Some years ago a Hospital exclusively for the Sangha was built by private subscription and Government subsidies, costing four million Ticals. General Hospitals in Bangkok and in the provinces keep special wards for ailing monks and novices.

The State Railways grant free passes for monks travelling all over the country in the performance of religious duties, and special compartments are reserved for monks on nearly all trains.

Participation of the Holy Sangha in Official and Private Functions.

The Thai of which the great majority are Buddhists, take their religion soberly and seriously. It is vital to them and forms an actual part of their every day life. There are no festivities, either official, public or private without the participation of Bhikkhus who are invited to chant passages from the Holy Scriptures, to hold sermons on Buddhist ethics or Buddhist doctrine, to give their blessings after some meritorious deeds have been performed and to perform other rites for each special occasion. The Thai people are said to spend 3-4% of their yearly income on merit-making for the benefit of the Sangha and for their own spiritual well-being.

The Buddhist Association of Thailand under Royal Patronage.

Its objects are to spread the Dhamma at home and abroad; to encourage and foster the study of Buddhism and religious training by weekly lectures and discussions on Dhamma for monks and laymen alike; by assisting in the education of monks, supplying medical care of ailing monks and arranging final rites for those who die without relatives. Its further aims are to promote, and through its members, to assist in social welfare and the observance of religious practices; to publish pamphlets, periodicals in Thai and in English, and to extend help to visiting foreign scholars to this country. The Buddhist Association of Thailand has more than 2500 members and many new Branches have been opened all over the country.

Buddhist Education of the Laity of Thailand.

Being well aware that modern civilization with its great progress

made in science and technology has led to extreme materialism all over the world, and is a serious threat to our century-old Culture based upon Buddhism, if not counterbalanced by a more serious study of our religion, it is generally agreed upon by educators in this country, that the only way to steer clear away from the many dangers of our present day life, is to blend Western scientific knowledge (which is only perceptive knowledge) with that intrinsic knowledge and wisdom derived from the study of the Buddha's Teaching.

Working towards this aim, the people and the Government are doing their best to teach our younger generations the 'Right Way of Living' as propagated by the Buddha, and following developments in this direction have taken place in recent years:

(1) Sermons by eminent Bhikkhus by radio are being held on every Uposot day and broadcast all over the country all the year round and on Buddhist Holy days. Sermons are also held in Wats, schools and in Government Offices.

(2) Elementary lessons of some essential Buddhist Teachings are provided for in the curriculum of Government and private schools, and monks are frequently invited to hold sermons in factories, schools and in Government offices.

(3) For adults of both sexes, there exist many centers of Higher Education in Bangkok and all Provincial Towns which impart Higher Learning. Regular classes are held in these centers by monks and by qualified laymen to give opportunity to young and old to learn the essential teaching of Dhamma, of Buddhist philosophy and ethics. There are at these centers also special classes for the practice of Meditation. In some places, for instance at the Buddhist Association of Thailand classes teaching Abhidhamma have also been started in recent years and are attended to by several hundred pupils. Adult education in Buddhism has become quite popular.

(4) For the very young many, Buddhist Sunday Schools have been inaugurated in Bangkok and elsewhere, but are not as yet widespread as in other countries. In this particular field there is still much to be done and much could be achieved if more private and Government support were coming forth.

In Thailand the family ties are very strong, and it is the moral duty of the children to support their parents and elder relations. The Buddhist monastery is the social gathering place of the village people. In sickness, in distress, and in joyful family events people will come to the temple to offer food to the Holy Brotherhood and to consult them. The respect to the Holy Monk Order is such that people will disdain any monk who does not live up to the Holy Life or indulges in politics. A Bhikkhu may give practical advice in illness and as regards personal conduct to the people for the common

good of them. A monk may promote and organise social welfare and any community service. But he must not criticise any social order, such as Communism; he can but point out the advantages of a pure Buddhist life; he cannot take sides in politics. He can give his blessing for the personal welfare of those going to war; but he cannot preach war nor take part in any warlike display.

Buddhism has a firm grip upon our people; it is vital in their daily life and will always be so in spite of Western civilisatory influence and in spite of the evil influence of Communism, because of the truths the Buddha taught which every one may experience by himself and because of their indelible love of personal freedom taught and preached by the Buddha.

Thailand is a land where Buddhism has moulded the character of its people into a peace-loving folk contented with whatsoever they earn. The people smile; they are happy. Never had there been any famine, never any programme they have always been able to preserve their national freedom throughout their history, and all because of their religion and because of their indelible love of freedom. The Buddhist Way of Life is suitable for all times. May the teachings of the Buddha always find a ready response in our hearts, and may we live further in peace with ourselves and with the World at large.

BUDDHISM IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA

By

U Tha Myat,
Director, Cultural Institute,
Jubilee Hall,
RANGOON.

The story of Buddhism in South-East Asia lies interwoven with the total story of Indian commercial and cultural expansion in the islands and peninsular countries of the region where the Indian and the Pacific oceans throw their waves on each other, and hence can be understood better only in that context and against that background.

To the ancient Indians, this region was somewhat vaguely known as Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa. the land and island of gold respectively, the former standing for practically the whole of the Indo-Chinese peninsula comprising Burma, Malaya, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, and the latter for the entire group of the Indonesian islands commonly known as the East Indies. Lured by wealth and driven by a spirit of adventure, and borne on the shoulders of sreshthis and sarthavahas to begin with, and then, also on those of princes and persons of the ruling class, priests, monks, scholars, artists and craftsmen, India projected herself into these areas, by land and sea, more by the latter, along diverse channels of life-political, economic, social, religious and cultural. Eventually Indianism came to stay, and slowly and steadily it impressed, in varying degrees of depth and extension in various parts, its own culture and civilization, arts and religious, economic and socio political pattern on the lands and peoples of these backward and primitive areas.

One-way Traffic.

Buddhism and Buddhist way of life happened to be important items in this one-way traffic in cultural commerce. The process must have started, if tradition has to be given any credence, several centuries before the Christian era, but more positively from the beginning of that era since when we have dependable evidence of these areas coming more within the orbit of Indian religions and cultures. The process continued, in successive waves, till about the end of the twelfth century, but the two Theravada Buddhist countries of Burma and Thailand went on having a very intimate and direct contact with Ceylon and hence indirectly with India to an extent at any rate.

Similarities.

The story of the introduction of Buddhism into the Indo-Chinese peninsula is linked up with the well-known Sinhalese tradition of the

Buddhist mission led by Maha Theras Sona and Uttara and sent by the Great Mauryan monarch Asoka to Suvaranabhumi. The historicity of the tradition has not yet been fully established though there is nothing antecedently improbable in it. An inscription of the Ikshavaku dynasty of the Andhra region, of about the third century A.D. refers to the conversion of the Kiratas to Buddhism and this in such a manner as to suggest and equation of the Kiratas with the Tibeto-Burma peoples of Burma. Early Chinese texts of about the same date speak of a "Kingdom of Liu-Yand" where all the people worshipped the Buddha and where there were several thousand sramanas. The Kingdom of Liu-Yang has often been identified with a region somewhere in Central Burma. Burmese and Siamese chronicles preserve a tradition, insistent even today, that the celebrated Buddhist scholar and divine, Buddhaghosha who is usually ascribed to about the fifth century A.D., visited these countries and taught Buddhism to their peoples, place names in Burma and Thailand frequently hark back to similar names well known in Buddhist history, tradition, myths and legends of India.

But more positive evidence of the introduction of Buddhism in Burma, Malaya and Thailand is provided by archaeological records epigraphic, sculptural and monumental that can be ascribed to the fifth sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era, and unceasingly from this period onwards. A fifth century inscribed tablet recovered from Kedah in Malaya refers to a Buddhist maha-navika Buddhaghipta, resident of Raktamrittika, presumably a lay disciple connected with the Buddhist monastery of the same name in Karnasuvarna (Murshidabad, West Bengal), referred to by the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang, who crossed the seas and went to Kedah in pursuit of trade.

A series of epigraphic records in Pali, Sanskrit, Pyu and Mon datable in the sixth and seventh centuries, some of them quoting important passages from Pali canonical texts, and inscribed in a script that originated in the Andhra area of India, has been recovered from Central and Lower Burma, mainly from Old Prome (Hmawza) and Rangoon. The same sites have yielded a deluge of terracotta seals inscribed with a well known Buddhist formula in Pali or Sanskrit and referable to the ninth and tenth centuries. Old Prome still nurses in her bosom the ruins of more than half-a-dozen modest Buddhist structures-stupas and temples-excavations at this site have yielded a countless number of ruined stupas, sculptures, terracotta tablets and seals, etc., all affiliated to Buddhism and ranging from about the fifth and sixth centuries to about the ninth and tenth.

Cultural Revolution.

This Buddhism seems to have been introduced both from South India and Eastern India and was of Theravada and Sarvastivada affiliation. But in the middle of the eleventh century, in 1057 to be exact, there took place what may be called a religious and cultural revolution under the aegis of a dynasty that had its centre in Pagan in Central Burma. This revolution went

to make Theravada Buddhism the religion as much of the kings and nobles as of the peoples of Burma and decided once for all the religious and cultural destiny of the country. From the eleventh to about the close of the thirteenth century the kings and queens of the Pagan dynasty were seized by an intense religious fervour that expressed itself in the building of a countless number of stupas and temples in the capital city of Pagan and decorating with sculptures and paintings, the intense literary and scholastic activities and in covering up the whole country with monastic establishments as centres of the religion radiating light and knowledge, culture and civilization and transforming rude and primitive communities into civilized societies with a mission and a purpose. The impetus given by the Pagan dynasty has not lost its force even today, and has been responsible through the centuries for the maintenance of the pristine glory of a faith which is one of the purest mankind has ever known. It has given to Theravada Buddhism a huge bulk of creative and commercial literature in Pali Mon and Burmese, a rich art and architectural heritage one of the richest in South-East Asia; two great Buddhist Councils of which the last concluded in May, 1956, after a continuous session of full two years, and what is very important a continuous succession of achariya parampara that had been very largely responsible for keeping the message of the master alive and active to this day.

What has been said of Burma is almost equally true of Thailand where Buddhism seems to have been introduced at least as early as the sixth and seventh centuries of the Christian era. This is amply testified by the archaeological remains of Dvaravati and the local school of Buddhism was affiliated to, but seventh Chinese evidence asserts that the Buddhism of Dvaravati was of the Mulasarvastivada nikaya. But not long after Theravada seems to have got the upper hand and gradually became the official religion of the State as well as of the people, and made itself responsible for the creation of the two great schools of art of Ayuthia and Sukhotaya, a huge mass of Buddhist literature in Pali, Mon and Siamese and a rationalist movement within the Sangha in the nineteenth century. For both Burma and Thailand, Ceylon happened to be the main source of inspiration through the centuries, and the three countries co-operated in religious matters in a manner that has not many parallels in history.

Colony in Malaya.

Malaya received Indian influences at about the same time, that is, by about the fifth or sixth century A.D. and since then waves after waves seem to have reached this region mainly around the Bay of Bandon. The most important settlement that was definitely Buddhist seems to have been Nakhom Sri Dhammarat which has been identified with Ligor. It was a Buddhist colony which presumably built the great stupa of Nakhom Sri Dhammarat and the large number of temples that surrounded it. There was another Buddhist colony at a somewhat later date at Caiya; but Buddhism seems to have lost its influence in Malay from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries onwards and is no longer a force in the peninsula.

Chinese Translations.

Fu-nau or Cambodia and Champa or Annam seem to have been brought into contact with India not long after the beginning of the Christian era, but the first waves of Indian influences were Brahmanical in inspiration and affiliation. Chinese evidence seems, however, to suggest that Buddhism was one of the religions of Cambodia from about the fifth century, and a century later, the country was in a position to send two Buddhist monks to China for translation of Buddhist texts. In the seventh century when the Chinese army invaded Champa, they sacked the capital city Champapuri and carried off an immense booty which included among other things, 1,350 volumes of Buddhist texts. But Buddhism seems to have received State-patronage and became a dominant religion in Cambodia in the ninth and tenth centuries. Indeed, the religion was responsible for the building of the well known temples at Banteai Kedei and Ta Prom and the execution of a series of very interesting epigraphic records of definite Mahayana Buddhist inspiration. One of these records affords a very interesting definition of Buddhism. "Let the Buddha give you the bodhi, by whom has been taught the philosophy denying the existence of the individual soul and teaching the cult of the universal soul and teaching the cult of the universal soul though (the two teachings seem to be) contradictory".

Indeed, the ninth and tenth centuries witnessed a flourishing Buddhism in Cambodia and an intense art and architectural activity inspired by the religion. But more interesting is the fact that during this period there was a great flow of Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhist texts into Cambodia, presumably from Eastern India. The same thing must have happened in Burma too before Theravada came to replace other forms of the religion towards the third quarter of the eleventh century. In the twelfth century, Mahayana and Vajrayana in Cambodia too, seem to have had a contender in Theravada Buddhism which had been introduced in the meanwhile from Siam. A Chinese author of the later thirteenth century, Cheou Ta-kouan bears witness to the fact that in his time, Theravada Buddhism was the most dominant religion in Cambodia, and since that time it has ever been so, always maintaining a very close relationship with Thailand and deriving inspiration from the Siyama Sangha. But before Theravada came to assert itself, Mahayana seems to have had a very large sway and was responsible for such temples as that of Angkor Thom and for very large number of Mahayana images that have been recovered from various sites. Mahayana also developed such electric cults as that of Lokeshvara-Siva or Siva-Buddha. This form of Buddhism was presumably introduced from Sri-Vijaya (Palembang in Sumatra) in the eighth or ninth century, which along with Cambodia seemed to have contributed a great deal to worry the iconography of the Mahayana, Vajrayana and Tantrayana Buddhist pantheons.

The first waves of Indianism in the East Indies comprising Java,.

Sumatra, Borneo and Bali, seems to have been borne on the shoulders of Brahmanical Hinduism in about the end of the fourth and beginning of the fifth century A.D., and the earliest Indianized kingdoms were those of Sri-Vijaya in Sumatra, of Cho-po and Ho-lo-tan in Java and of Asvavarman and Mulavarman in Borneo. But by about the seventh century a great wave of Buddhism, presumably from Eastern India, seems to have swept all over the Indonesian islands. This Buddhism was perhaps of the Mulasarvastivada nikaya as I-tsing would have us believe. The same Chinese monk-scholar tells us that Buddhism was the most dominant religion in Sri-Vijaya and Bali. Another Chinese source tells us that the island of Bali in the sixth century was the seat of a rich and civilized kingdom ruled by a dynasty of kings professing Buddhism. So was the dynasty of kings that ruled over Sri-Vijaya and who gradually extended their supremacy over Malaya (modern Jambi) and the islands of Bauka and Java, among other places. By about the eighth century, the Buddhist Sri-Vijaya dynasty was the most dominant political authority in the East Indies and was responsible for an intense art and architectural activity as illustrated by such elegant Buddhist shrines as those of the Dieng Plateau (Java) and such stupendous and dignified structure as the stupa of Borobudur (Java).

Direct Contact.

In the meanwhile, fresh waves of Mahayana Buddhism from East India seems to have reached the island of Java, thus helping to establish a direct and continuous contact of the East Indies with Eastern India. This contact was responsible among other things for the rearing up of a school of art of bronzes in Java directly inspired by the Nalanda school of art, and of a large monastery in the Nalanda mahavihara by the Sri-Vijaya king Balaputradeva during the reign of the Pala King Devapaladeva of Bengal and Bihar. A number of Buddhist sculptures belonging to about the seventh and eighth centuries, have also been discovered at Konbeng in Borneo; these sculptures representing the Mahayanist Buddhist images seem to have belonged to one or more temples higher up in the valley of the Mahakam river. But towards the end of the thirteen century both Buddhism and Brahmanism seems to be on the wane until islam swept them off altogether except in the island of Bali where Brahmanism survives to this day.

All over South-East Asia Buddhism seems to have acted as a great civilizing factor and an equally great fertilizing agent. Pre-Buddhist Suvarnabhumi and Suvarnadvipa were inhabited by rude and primitive peoples subsisting at a rudimentary level of culture and civilization and governed by simple tribal laws and customs in which animalism played a great part. Buddhism through the structure of its monastic organization gave to these peoples a social and political organization that brought order and discipline into what was loose and chaotic. It gave them a set of morals and a social norm besides setting up a higher ideal and purpose of life which finds eloquent expression in many an epigraphic record of Burma, Thailand,

Java and Cambodia. Through its languages, Pali and Sanskrit, it helped their lisping tongues articulate themselves in deep and subtle ethical and psychological ideas and attitudes of purity and charity, of love and compassion, of brotherhood and social service-ideas and attitudes that were eventually responsible for establishment of such social institutions as hospitals and educational institutions, all centering round the monasteries of the Sangha that studied the respective realms. The monks also gave them an organized art of healing as much of the body as of the mind. All these were great and effective instruments of civilization.

But the religion also proved itself to be a great fertilizing agent. It generated creative force and released them in various channels of activities, but most effectively in literature and art. For instance, the Burmese, the Siamese and Kambuja have added a huge bulk of literature to the Buddhist library of the world, each in their own respective languages as well as in Pali. They have also helped in preserving a continuous tradition and much of what has been lost in the birth-land of Buddhism. Indeed, the literary and scholastic activities in the monasteries of South-East Asia are characterized by an intensity and seriousness that could not but have a deep ennobling influence on the minds and sensibilities of the peoples of South-East Asia.

Effective Means.

But creativity expressed itself most in the field of art and architecture which was found to be very effective instrument for propagation of the religion. Wherever people were touched by the magic wand of Buddhism, they seem to have responded in terms of sculpture and painting, of bronzes, terracottas and architecture. And what a range of each one of these, in Burma, Thailand, Java and Cambodia.

While Thailand contributes three important schools of bronzes and stone sculptures-those of Dvaravati, Ayuthia and Sukhotaya-that form a distinct chapter of Oriental art echoing forms and styles of several periods and schools of Indian art and yet forming characteristic national styles and idioms of their own, Cambodia establishes altogether distinctive forms and types of Buddhist art and iconography and gives a new interpretation to both. Equally characteristic is the temple and stupa architecture of both these regions reflecting influences from India on the one hand and China on the other. The Mahabodhi temple at Chieng-mai in Northern Thailand and the temple of the same name at Pagan are faithful echoes of the Mahabodhi temple at Bodhgaya and reminders of the ties that bound these regions in a spiritual bond with India.

But Burma and Java excel all other regions in their contribution to Buddhist art and architecture. The city of Pagan (C. 1050-c-1300 A.D.)

which today is a huge forest of temples, stupas and monasteries of every conceivable form and type, their walls, niches and corridors all decorated with murals, bronzes and stone sculptures, all in various stages of decay and preservation, is probably a dream city that Buddhism had inspired and built in the very heart of Burma over a period of about three hundred years. Later too, through the centuries, the devout Burmese royalty and laity engaged themselves in an unceasing building activity so that today every old city and every hill-top are covered up with monuments of the faith. Java too, with her small and elegant temples of the Dieng Plateau with their exquisite stone sculptures and her great Borobudur with its miles of gallery walls laying bare the entire text of the Gaudavyuha in refined and elegant sculptural forms and its majestic and dignified figures of the Lord Buddha, contributes an undying chapter not only to the history of Buddhist art and iconography but to the total story of Oriental Art.

THE SUPREMACY OF THE HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

By

U Tha Kyaw

Barrister-at-Law (*Middle Temple*)
Former Fellow of the University of Rangoon.

Continued from September issue 1957.

It goes without saying that the most difficult task for a "spiritual" novice is how to prevent his mind from wandering in order to fix it permanently on a subject. It is the intrinsic nature of our mind that it must be roaming. This is, because it seeks delight here and there. The cravings which are inherent in the mind naturally seek a sense of satisfaction, and so the mind moves along. But, however, when it gets what is being sought for the mind will rest on the subject. It is important, first of all, that a beginner should try to understand his own temperament. That is, what sort of mental-set-up he himself develops? It is not easy to find this aspect of the mind even when there is an attempt to do so. It must take time to find it out.

The practice of purification of conduct has its end. The end is to achieve desire-less-ness. It has the aim of preventing the mind, eventually, from seeking delight here and there. After this task is accomplished the apprentice is fit to begin the Yogi-exercises. That is to say, he will have to learn the science of yoking the lower human nature to the higher nature in such manner as to allow the higher to direct the lower. The Yogic practice is performed, essentially, with the object of bringing the mind under indomitable control. In other words, it is a highly developed system of applied psychology. Its level of development far exceeds that which is known to Western Science. In the case in question the field of the mind remains unperturbed. All thought-forms and thought-processes such as are derived from the thinking mind stops. It has been observed that the human consciousness is rooted in greed, hate, and delusion. In all kinds of consciousness whether accompanied by hate or greed or otherwise, ignorance is the primary root. The angry mood or the greedy mood is the product of this delusion. Delusion is a state of mental obscuration. This mental obscuration is brought into being by the thought-forms and the thought-processes. It is not to be imagined that these conditions can be liquidated without the accompaniment of a great and persistent personal effort. Here it may be noted that the so called ego-world is the result of this discriminating thinking. As such it is apparently a problem that must be tackled with all-out effort.

The mind of an ordinary person may be likened to a crystal vase filled with muddied water, for it is dark due to nescience arising from heresies and false knowledge. Yoga is a scientific method of removing the earthly

particles from the water. The mind must be as transparent as the face of a mirror uncovered with any particle of dust, and then the Reality can be seen. 'The Right Knowledge' cannot be had without the application of the yogic method of training of the mind. Sometimes this Right Knowledge is dubbed the Clear Light. It can be rightly interpreted by the devotee of Yoga. For all mankind it is said that this Clear Light dawns at the moment of death and afterwards in the Intermediate State before the re-embodiment after death. This, however, does not imply that they can win it in those stages. To be able to win it he must have in the innumerable lives practised yogic method with success and he in the present life must have seen the Clear Light when practising this method with success. Such a qualification must pre-exist.

The condition of consciousness, which is not a normal type, but of higher consciousness cannot be imagined. In the present life the activities of the mind relate to thought-forms and thought-processes, and they arise as a result of a system of relations which operates in the field concerned. Eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, etc., etc. and all their respective mental concomitants, so on, come to existence as such in obedience to the law of conditionality. Their originations are entirely dependent on various objects, which operate to give rise to this phenomena. There are, ear, nose, eye, body, tongue, etc., and the contacts of the objects with these organs produce the results, namely, eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, etc., etc. The nature of these organs is the sensitivity. When the contacts take place the resistance is offered, and it is by means of such resistant the phenomena occur. A man who is dying loses these sensitive properties gradually and so the contacts with the objects produce no result. Hence there is no more seeing, hearing, etc., for the dying man. The sensitive properties that belong to the heart-basis, break up last with him and so the mind-consciousness can function till the last moment of life. That is a very brief explanation, which is given here, relating to the way as to how the origination of these phenomena take place in the ego-world.

As long as five-fold sense-activity occurs in the field of the mind together with its defilements the chances to attain to the height of the super-normal consciousness are out of the question. The defilements are greed, hate, delusion, conceit, speculative views, mental torpor, restlessness, sceptical doubts, shamelessness, and unconscientiousness. Such impurities of thoughts are common to all ordinary people. So, 'Purity of virtue' should be developed by special system of moral training. The kind of training consists in sense-restraint, moderation in eating, reduction of sleep, and mindfulness in all the actions. Now-a-days almost all men are delighted with pleasure, enchanted with the modern way of living, and so it is extremely doubtful that they would like to train themselves in this way. Few men know that the existence itself is suffering. Many believe that the very living is pleasurable. They remember easily the agreeable feelings which are experienced physically and mentally. They do not remember the disagreeable feelings, both physical and mental, which are equally experienced as easily as they remember the

agreeable feelings, which are experienced. The enjoyment of pleasures of life has reference to the agreeable sensations, which are experienced. What happens in this connection is that there is the Sensual Craving, the Craving for Eternal Existence, the Craving for Temporal Happiness. It is necessary to know the source of arising and taking root of this craving. The source is the delightful and pleasurable object. Contacting this with nose or ear or eye or tongue or body or mind craving arises and takes root. Besides, these organs are delightful and pleasurable, and so craving arises and takes root. In the second place consciousness, sense contact, the feeling born of sense contact, perception, will, craving, thinking, and reflecting are delightful and pleasurable, and so the craving arises and takes root. When the object is pleasant there is attraction and when it is unpleasant there is a repulsion. Thus there is approval and disapproval. If approval there is cherishing and so clinging. Lust springs up in the end. The lust is for feelings. This means clinging to existence. This is the real picture of what is happening with this existence. Of the two outstanding parts, namely, the body and the mind in the matter of the ego-world, it is obvious that the part such as the mind is the crucial phenomenon. It is this agency which directs the body-frame and make the appearance of the existence as such. The function of the religion is to investigate the various aspects of the mind-frame and its mental-content. In the course of the investigation certain discoveries are made, broadly speaking, and it is ascertained that the mind-level in its present form is capable of giving rise to sufferings which can be removed without hurting the life itself. It is also known apart from the existence of the normal consciousness itself there are other grades of consciousness of higher quality of super-normal pattern, and that these can be unearthed through the system of mind-development. But this cannot be done if the mind is not refined and brought to the condition of clearness in respect to its intrinsic nature. The yogic method of mental training cleanses the mind. Here is the bare outline for the practice of the mind-control. There must be 'the mark for preparation', that is, a selection of an object to be meditated upon. The mind is fixed on it until the object is portrayed to the imagination, the image must tally with the object selected for meditation in all respects, and it must be represented to the mind as a vivid reality. The idea is that the vivid reality must appear in the imagination as if it were seen by eye. At this stage of the progress of the meditation the image is termed 'the mark for unholding'. It will be seen here that the first stage refers to percept, and the second idea refers to image which presents itself to the mind. Both classes in question is termed 'preliminary concentration'. The definition of concentration is as has been seen power of individualizing developed by practice. The Kasina-object, after giving to it full, undivided attention in concentration of mind, and after a great effort, produces image of its kind or its mental reflex. The image in question must be present in the practice in the way of something external. It should be mentioned here that to obtain this image the degree of applied concentration must be higher, and that it should not be thought about it as simple business. It is idle to say that it is one of the most difficult tasks for all

of us to be able to control thoughts. After winning the 'mark for upholding' in the matter of concentration the preliminary concentration proceeds to the next point of higher degree of concentration. It is termed 'mark-equivalent'. Here the image is divested of its reality and its faults. This image is conceptualised. It is no longer concrete individual but still individual. It may be noted that concentration referred to is associated with Right Concentration in contradistinction to Wrong concentration.

There are three grades of intensity in concentration. What abides at the beginning of mental exercise is called 'Preparatory Concentration'. In this grade of intensity of concentration the said 'mark for preparation', and 'mark for upholding', i.e., parikamma-nimitta, and Uggaha-nimitta (Pali-words), form the objects of meditation, and by concentrating mind on these objects intensively Preparatory Concentration is attained. In the words of Pali language that is spoken of as Parikamma-Samadhi. Then the next grade of intensity of concentration is Neighbourhood Concentration or Intermediate Concentration, that is, Upacara-samadhi in the words of Pali language, that is to say, concentration 'approaching', but not yet attaining the first trance. That is marked in certain mental exercises by the appearance of the so-called Counter-Image or After-Image, or Mark-Equivalent, that is to say, Patibhaga-Nimitta in the words of the Pali language. The nature of this individual has been described. There are five kinds of Hindrances to the progress of the spiritual concentration, namely, Sensuous Lust, Ill-will, Torpor and Languor, Restlessness and Worry, Sceptical Doubts. In the Intermediate Concentration these qualities are inhibited. By the presence of these qualities mind remains polluted. Just as water of a pond is befouled by the presence of extraneous matters so mind is befouled by the presence of these qualities. Just as one cannot see his own image in the befouled water so the mind filled with these qualities cannot be seen in its true perspective. By attaining the Intermediate Concentration heart is rid of lust, ill-will. The subject cherishes love and compassion towards all living beings. By casting away Torpor and Languor he cleanses his mind from Torpor and Languor, and restlessness and worry by casting away restlessness and worry, and so on. By putting aside these 5 Hindrances he has come to know that the mind is no longer paralysed by defilements. Then he enters into the first trance. He is now far from sensuous impressions, and unwholesome things. Thus it is important to cast away the five Hindrances from the mind. In other words these qualities are inherent in the mind of ordinary persons, and they cannot be cleared temporarily by no other method than the method of meditation. It is understandable that these qualities abide in the mind. Invariably they are instrumental in giving rise to immoral deeds, and thoughts. This act of overcoming the five Hindrances is of temporary nature. As soon as this mental concentration is withdrawn these Hindrances re-appear again in the mind. But they are removed forever on entering the four supramundane paths.

The said marks denote the different degrees of intensity of concentration which are attained respectively. By means of these data we are in a position

to realise the failure or success of practice of meditation. The process aims at suppressing the five hindrances at least for a time. These hindrances are held back on the realisation of 'mark-equivalent'. Whereupon the preliminary concentration develops into Intermediate Concentration.

According to Buddhism in respect of intelligent beings 12 classes are made, eight of which belong to elect class, and four belong to the average ordinary class. Before turning to the original trend of ideas it is important to know about this classification so that the process of higher consciousness which shall be described hereafter could be followed better. There are human beings on this earth of ours who are born blind and deformed. This condition is said to be attributable to the fact that at the time of the process of rebirth their consciousness is not attended with none of three good motives, that is to say, disinterestedness, love and reason. Such persons are believed to be those who lived woeful lives in the existences prior to rebirth in the human-world. There are besides this type of men persons who are better than these. That is to say, persons with good conditions. This means disinterestedness, and love attend their consciousness at birth. The best of the classes is person whose 'consciousness-at-rebirth' is attended by three conditions such as disinterestedness, love and reason. This type of man is said to have been either man or devas, or brahmas in his immediate previous birth. In addition to these four classes beings there are another four classes, who are, however, elect beings. That is to say, beings such as have attained to different 'stations' of supramundane consciousness. Having referred just now to classes of beings, incidentally, in order to pave the way for understanding the subject of concentration soon to be followed hereafter I shall now return to my subject.

When the height of the neighbourhood-concentration is attained to the stream of being begins to vibrate for two moments as usual. It should be stated here that this stream of being is composed of one or other of the four 'thrice-conditioned' vital continua. When the life-stream is arrested by representative cognition in ordinary circumstance four moments of apperception occur. Now there is a transition from normal consciousness to supernormal consciousness. The first of these four moments of apperception is the preliminary moment, namely, of preparation of the mind for the state of trance. The second moment which is concerned in the matter is access-moment. For example, it is the time when the normal thought approximates to the supernormal. Immediately thereafter the moment" occurs when the mind equips itself for the state of trance. Finally the normal consciousness is cut off by the supernormal. In other words the subject cuts off sensuality-consciousness, and develops exalted consciousness. Immediately before the normal consciousness is cut off by the supernormal consciousness there is the intermediate consciousness, and it is called the moment of "adoption" or else Gotrabhu, the word belonging to Pali Language in sense. In this consciousness the trend of the consciousness is of the moral type apart from the inoperative consciousness belonging to an elect, when He enters

into these states, for there can be enlightened one belonging to the type, namely, "dry-visioned". The concentration in question is called access-concentration as distinguished from another described as ecstatic concentration. This Path bristles with difficulties for attainment. The process involved in this path is the subject experiences ecstasy for one thought-moment and thereupon consciousness subsides into the subconscious stream of being. There are five constituent parts in the nature of this first Intermediate Concentration. The first part concerns directing concomitant mental properties towards the 'equivalent mark' whereby sloth-and-torpor is inhibited. The second is related to the continuing of the exercise of thought on the said equivalent mark through which doubt is inhibited. The third is associated with the creation of interest in the equivalent mark whereby aversion is inhibited. In the beginning there is a slight sense of interest. Then there is development along the line of keener interest increasingly in respect of the mark ending up with an intense interest amounting to thrilling emotion and then eventually amounting to rapture. Such rapture is followed by pleasurable feeling. In this way distraction and worry is inhibited. Therefore, all in all, these five factors of the first jhanic thought correspond to the inhibition of the Five Hindrances respectively. In the context of the Pali language, the sensations felt in the practice of concentration are variously termed Piti and Sukha. These two are not identical at all. In fact Piti is the precursor of Sukha. When a man sees a dazzling gold in a mine from a distance what his feeling would be like.

To be Continued.

BUDDHIST POEMS

By

Luang Suriyabongs M.D.

MY FAITH.

WHEN I lay my head on my pillow
and try to chase my cares away
I face with a smile my sorrow
And say: to-morrow is another day.

To-day, there have been clouds and rain;
To-morrow the sun may shine at last.
So why, my friend, should I complain
That times are bad and changing fast?

Whatever I have sacrificed, I find
That nothing matters in the end.
It is the strength to keep one's peace of mind
Which counts, and faith in some true friend.

THE "SELF".

WHAT is the SELF to which we cling
With such tenacity?

Is it, indeed, the very thing;

Man's true identity?

My body is the instrument;

My 'self' the melody

I play according to my temperament;

It surely is not me.

What it is then that blindly speeds

From birth to death and back to life again

And brings new blood to bones and flesh and brain?

It is the KARMA of my deeds

Enacted in the past and presence;

MY own experience is my ESSENCE.

REBIRTH.

REMEMBER, we shall soon be dust;

Yet life is not a single show,

And our thoughts will still live on

In other 'Forms and Minds'; the lust

And love of life will ever grow.

We live; and dying are reborn.

Life shall but end when our goal is reached,

Which is, to be no more reborn;

When the veil of Ignorance is torn

And our minds are no more bound

To the world of senses, this Merry-go-round;
When we have learned the TRUTH, the Buddha preached.

THAT HAPPY STATE OF MIND.

THERE is a yearning in every breast
For something better than the present state
And our wishful mind will never rest;
Because such cannot be attained through fate.
We have to strive and pray and strive again
Until we reach that happy state of mind
Where we do things without a thought of gain

MERIT AND DEMERIT.

The hours fly,
The days go by;
And so do our years,
And our laughs and tears.
And when this earthly crust
Crumbles into dust
Nothing remains;
No soul; no spirit;
Only merit and demerit.

COMPASSION.

LET us feel compassion
To all who are in need.
Let us give up passion,
Hate and selfish greed.
And Happiness shall come
In this very life,
However hard may be the strife
And life most cumbersome.

LONESOME AND ALONE.

LONESOME and alone is the human soul
And lonesome it must stay;
And ere we reach the goal
There is a long, long way.
The gods, the stars and Mother Earth
Each take their lonesome course;
And every being from its birth
Is subject to Karma's driving force.
Whatsoever we are or shall be
No one else can change but we.
T'is our Karma, our own,
By which we rise or fall alone.
Lonesome and alone, that is our fate
Be this truth your guiding light.
Stand by yourself, before it is too late.
Rely upon yourself, and fight.....

THE WAY OF LIFE.

THE past is gone, left far behind.
The future still unveiled is but ideal;
A subtle fabric of the restless mind
Which from the past experience tries to find
A happy ending to its deep anxiety.
And yet, t'is but the present which is real;
And else is dark ambiguity.
To plan for ever for to-morrow.
Brings but further pain and sorrow.
Seize-hold the moment; then let go.
Relax and taste its pleasure to the full—
T'is life most beautiful—
And with an open conscious mind
Absorb its pleasure and its pain.
The pain will cease and life shall not be vain.
In this AWARENESS peace we find.
Yet peace of mind is but a stepping stone
To greater happiness on earth.
To live the Buddha-Path alone
Will break the CIRCLE OF REBIRTH.

LIFE.

We all have had some dreams of love
And thought that all was gold.
Alas, the stars that reign above
Have brought but pain untold
And from those glorious days of youth
Remains but just a silent sigh;
The knowledge of the naked truth:
A ray of hope—a tear—a cry
However hard we strive and fight,
Things will ne'er remain the same,
They pass just as they came.
That is the only truth of life.
Enjoy one moment; then let go;
Try not to hold what once was dear.
Remember it; t'is better so
And shed in loneliness a tear.....

WRONG NOTIONS

WHEN heart and mind are blurred
By very strong emotions.
We seem to take Wrong notions
For reasons quite absurd.

A WARING

LET hatred not nor jealousy nor fear

Find to your heart an easy entrance
 And with your dealings interfere
 Or else your mind might lose its balance.

PICKLED

With pepper and salt
 And acid and malt,
 Life seasoned my mind
 And softened my heart.
 Thus pickled, I find
 Quite easy the art
 Of keeping in peace with my mind.

THE WORLD

THE world we see and listen to
 Is not the least detestable
 If we would do some thinking too,
 And made it more delectable.

FRIENDS

IT is not life itself that matters much,
 It is the way we live, the gentle touch
 Of friendly hands which help us get along.
 Their faithfulness it is which keeps us strong.
 Had we no tender love, no friends to care
 We might, perhaps, perfect some super brain;
 But life would be impossible to bear
 For we could never, never be humane.

THE HOURS OF LEISURE

IN hours of leisure
 Some seek pleasure
 While others seek themselves
 In books on their shelves;
 But simples like me
 Just wait and see.

LIEE'S A B C

WHEN we do wrong, the pain is long;
 When we do right, life will be bright.
 That is the TRUTH, life's A B C
 Which we must learn by heart.
 It is the art
 Of living happily and free.....

N E W S

Dr. SONI HONOURED AT MANDALAY FOR HIS SERVICES TO THE DHAMMA.

"We are highly pleased with your meritorious work for the Dhamma, and, it gives us the greatest satisfaction to publicly appreciate and recognise your great services in the cause of human well-being through the proper application of the 'Buddhist principles', said the Most Ven'ble U Lokanatha in his capacity as the Patron-in-Chief of the World Institute of Buddhist Culture, to Dr. R.L. Soni, the Founder Director-in-Chief of the Institute, in a Panegyric awarding High Distinctions to Dr. Soni, at a Special Meeting in the Hall of the Institute at Mandalay, on Saturday, the 30th November, in the presence of a distinguished and representative gathering, mostly of Buddhist leaders and monks. Among those present were Ven'ble Mahathera U Thu Wanna of Sagaing Hills; Ven'ble U Dhamma Rasa, Lecturer Pali University; Ven'ble Monk in charge The Bengal Buddhist Temple; U San Hla Baw, President Burma Buddhist Society; U Ba Thaw, District & Sessions Judge (Rtd), Chairman Editorial Board "Light of Buddha"; the 82years old Sithu U Maung Maung Kyaw, D.F.O., I.F.S. (Rtd), Chairman Governing Body University College; Rtn. President U San Hla; U Ba Thin of Buddhist Foreign Mission, the Mahamangala-sutta Leader; U Ka, Deputy Commissioner (Rtd), U Kyaw Thong, Director Immigration Upper Burma; Daw Tin Hla, Officer in Charge Government Museum and Library; U Ba Kin, Principal National High School; and, also U Kin Maung, Mrs and Mr. Michael. Shri K.L.S. Pandit, the Indian Consul and Shri Mehta of the Indian Consulate in Mandalay were present by special invitation.



"Dr. Soni, an eminent Indian in Burma, has served the Dhamma for 25 years. The Buddhist world recognises him as a highly competent Dhammaduta, and we are more than convinced that he is a living jewel in the service of the Dhamma. The greatest thing, however, is that nothing pleases him more than to be hailed as a dependable servant of the Dhamma. A good servant as him is indeed a rarity," eulogised the Patron-in-Chief.

"All these epithets, which Dr. Soni has deservedly won, in Pali, the official language of Buddhism, read Susattha Maha-Dhammaduta, Sudhamma Susila-Ratana and Dullabha Dhamma-Mahasevaka. We today formally confer on him these distinctions and hail him as Susattha Maha-Dhammaduta Dr. R. L. Soni, Sudhamma Susila-Ratana, Dullabha Dhamma-Mahasevaka," proclaimed the Most Venerable U Lokanatha.

Dr. Soni, visibly moved, briefly expressed his gratitude.

Earlier in the proceedings, there was a profound Sermon by the Venerable Chief on the Rahulavada Sutta, which was very well received with 'Sadhu, Sadhu, Sadhu' from all present. Also, there was an opening speech by Dr. R.L. Soni, comprehensively reviewing the Buddhist activities in the world during the decade just past, with special reference to Burma and his Institute. Referring to India, he dwelt at length on the excellent work being done by various Buddhist organisations, particularly the Maha Bodhi Society; and, while making a moving reference to the mass conversions in contemporary India, he observed that his recent tour of India and his attendance at the Buddhist Convention at Nagpur, which attracted over half a million newly converted Buddhists, led him to the profound discovery that not only India needed Buddhism to effectively solve many of its difficulties, but also, more than that, Buddhism needed India to make itself whole, historically and otherwise.

The proceedings began with Tisarana and Panca sila from the Most Venerable U Lokanatha, and ended with the announcement that the Institute had decided to direct more attention to the revival and promotion of Buddhism in India, which was highly appreciated. A comprehensive scheme for the purpose is in the making with the Institute, and Dr. Soni fervently appealed to the peoples and governments in the world, interested in the return of the Dhamma to India, to kindly lend their support, moral as well as material. Dr. Soni expressed great appreciation at the acceptance of the Buddhist Saka Era as the National Era of India by the Government of India and said that though it fell a little short of his efforts for the acceptance of the Buddha's Era, nevertheless the good decision has appreciably brought the land of the Buddha nearer to Buddhist Burma, Ceylon, Thailand and some other countries.

The function was on the eve of the Institute going into Recess for six months, which meant concentration on the work in hand and non-acceptance of fresh commitments. The Institute has already functioned for seven years and is known the world over for its publications in English, German, Esperanto, Burmese and Indian languages, and also for its Dhammaduta activities.

Before the Meeting terminated, the Most Ven'ble U Lokanatha called for two minutes silence for peace in the world, and besides gave Blessings to all present and also Blessings for speedy recovery to health to U Kin Maung Dwe, the First President of the Buddhist Foreign Mission, who on account of illness very much regretted his absence.

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AN APPEAL

For the Buddhists all over the world, the utmost grandeur and significance of the Sixth Buddhist Synod held in Burma amidst numerous foreign representatives and millions of devotees, is universally a spiritual renaissance of the first magnitude in this era. Equally, its successful completion within two years must be taken as a mighty attribute unrivalled in any world's religious history.

All these sublime qualities have elevated our 'Land of Pagodas' to a most ostentatious position as the seat of Buddhist culture and learning. Any foreign visitor to Burma can hardly fail to gain a strong impression that the way of Burmese life, either cultural or spiritual, social or political, is teemed with the Buddhistic principles, ideas and conceptions which manifest themselves as soothing influence and hopeful progress. In fact, they embodied national sentiments of the Burmese Buddhists forming the majority of the entire populace.

Not only in Burma, Ceylon and Siam, there has been a tremendous awakening in the West also with regard to the teaching of Buddha, for it is no more a mystic faith, or pessimism or mere atheism though it was so misinterpreted a few decades ago. The fact that the Dhamma is gradually gaining ground in several non-buddhist countries more than ever before is indeed an encouraging feature. This religious upheaval is entirely in contrast to antagonistic feeling prevailing in some foreign countries where a follower or sympathiser of Buddhism was not taken seriously in any walk of life. To them Buddhism being a new creed, and its way of self-purity and self-perfection being so peaceful and plain, it was wrongly considered to be a mixture of mysticism and superstition. In remote parts of the West, we are told, a Buddhist monk never seen before, was often jokingly addressed by some young men on the street as "Hail Julius Caesar." There are many others who still believe that Buddha is a mythical personage unsupported by historical facts.

Such being the position, the need of Buddhist code of ethical conduct and mental training as spiritual nourishment is most urgent and essential for peace, progress and happiness for all in this life and hereafter. With this aim in view, the Buddhists as a whole should undertake to impart the Buddhist knowledge which is assuredly the only way towards cessation of human sufferings and woes and the attainment of final Salvation.

In this connection, the general consensus of opinion further holds that this stupendous task can successfully be accomplished by publishing religious journals through the medium of English as universal language. We also feel that Buddhism has yet to play a supremely beneficial role in the world's spiritual field, and as such, the wider the circulation of these religious organs, the easier it would be to pave the way for missionary work (Dhamma-duta) and its progress in boundless measure. In addition, the proper and correct answers to the challenge by diabolical materialism must also be forthcoming. For further expansion much has yet to be done in this direction as funds permit.

The alternative view that the teachings of Buddha should be mostly in national language for the achievement of desired object will not be far-reaching when marched with the times. In order to implement of the above scheme, all forms of help in the shape of funds, donations, subscriptions, contributions, etc, from well-wishers are solicited. Their response will be most grateful and welcome to reap the golden opportunity for the propagation of Buddha's creed, the most ingenious learning on "mental science" fit for the new scientific world.

This is our appeal to all!

Burma Buddhist Society, Mandalay.

Edited by U Ba Thaw, B.A., Chairman, Editorial Board.

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