

Towards Integration and Universalization: The Sri Lankan Perspectives on Buddhism in the West

By Ananda W. P. Guruge

ABSTRACT

Buddhism has come to stay in the West and in some of the communities of Europe, America and Oceania. It is said to be the fastest growing religion. As Buddhism stabilizes its foothold in Western societies, questions are raised about the importance of reconciling Buddhist beliefs and practices with those already in such societies. Many are the questions raised and equally diverse are the answers and solutions to problems. In this paper, an attempt is made to trace whether the twenty-three centuries of unbroken Buddhist experience of Sri Lanka has a contribution to make to Western Buddhists. It is relevant especially because Sri Lanka since the middle of the nineteenth century has played a leading role as the home of a missionary moment which took Buddhism to every nook and corner of the modern world.

The study shows two factors in Sri Lankan experience which have a role to play in Western Buddhism. Sri Lanka achieved a significant success in integrating the two major traditions of Buddhism (Mahayana and Theravada) and evolving a new form of Buddhism which spread to south and southeast Asia as the "Sinhala Reform." Taking this form of Buddhism to the West, the Sri Lankan missionaries adopted an attitude of universalization that is characterized by building unity and cooperation among different schools and sects. The article concludes by recommending the usefulness of Integration and Universalization as measures most applicable to Buddhism in the West today.

Sri Lankan Contribution to Buddhism – Moving toward Integration

In the third century BCE – 336 after the demise of the Buddha – Buddhism was introduced to the Island of Sri Lanka by none other than the son and the daughter of the great Maurya Emperor Asoka the Righteous. The mission of Thera Mahinda, which was followed by that of Theri Sanghamitta, was one of nine missionary projects of the Sangha, motivated by Thera Mogalliputta Tissa, the President of the Third Buddhist Council. With these missions, Asoka, as a devoted patron of Buddhism, is credited with the transformation of the teachings of the Buddha from a regional religious movement to a World Religion.

The historicity of the nine missions is no longer in doubt. The Sri Lankan historical tradition has since been amply corroborated by the archaeological evidence of reliquaries enshrined in Sanchi and Sonari stupas in Madhya Pradesh, India and the Rajagala and Mihintale inscriptions of Sri Lanka. **The mission, that had the most durable impact on the preservation, promotion, and propagation of Buddhism, is the one sent to Sri Lanka. There were several reasons for it.**

There is evidence that, while the missionaries who went to some of the other places returned to India, Thera Mahinda and Theri Sanghamitta made Sri Lanka their home. They founded institutions, developed places of worship and undertook substantial literary and educational activities. Emperor Asoka, on his part, has gone into history in the Sri Lankan case as having supported the foundation of Buddhism in the Island by sending relics for veneration, a sapling of the sacred Bodhi Tree of

Buddha Gaya, technicians and artists for the construction of religious edifices, and members of the royal family to function as civil administrators of the Island.

All these were most opportune because, within fifty years of the death of Asoka, the Mauryan Empire disintegrated. Pusyamita, a Brahman who founded the Sunga Dynasty, is said to have initiated the persecution of Buddhists and the destruction of Buddhist institutions. Buddhism in India had to compete for survival with other religious movements, including the rise in popularity of Hinduism. The teachings of the Buddha underwent revision and re-interpretation, resulting in many schisms and the gradual transformation of Buddhism into a multiplicity of traditions. They came to be grouped under Theravada – the Tradition of the Elders, representing Early Buddhism, and Mahayana – the Greater Vehicle, reflecting the emphasis on Buddhahood as *the* goal of spiritual endeavor. Further evolution of Buddhism in India brought into existence the third tradition of Tantricism on which Vajrayana is based.

It was, therefore, fortunate that Early Buddhism, identified as the Theravada, had found a permanent home in Sri Lanka, which, as an Island, was more homogenous and hence less liable to be subjected to schisms and acrimonious doctrinal disputes. That by itself would have preserved the teachings of the Buddha as compiled and codified in the Tripitaka at the Third Buddhist Council. But Sri Lanka ventured on a series of significant activities such as

1. **the oral transmission of the Tripitaka through a system of specialized reciters or Bhanakas (Dighabhanaka, Majjhima-bhanaka, etc.);**
2. **the development of an extensive commentarial literature in the national language of Sri Lanka to elucidate the texts of the Tripitaka;**
3. **the establishment of the Mahavihara, the Great Monastery, as an institution of higher education with as many as five seats of learning in and near the capital Anuradhapura;**
4. **the establishment of extensive institutions for the study and the practice of Buddhism in various parts of the Island (e.g. Pungudutivu in the north and Situlpavva in the south);**
5. **the recruitment and the training of bhikkhus and bhikkhunis, guaranteeing perpetuity of the Sangha; and, more important than all these,**
6. **the unprecedented measure of preserving the teachings of the Buddha by writing down in books the Tripitaka and the Sinhala Commentaries around 80 BCE**

The promotion and the protection of Buddhism were considered an obligation of the state and kings took a personal interest in the affairs of the Sangha. Thousands of inscriptions dating from the second century BCE record the philanthropic activities of kings and the people, motivated by Buddhism.

Though Sri Lanka had the unique opportunity to preserve Early Buddhism of the Tradition of the Elders, it did not altogether insulate itself from developments in the mainland. Two of the monasteries set up in the first century BCE and third century CE not only rivaled with the Mahavihara but also opened themselves to waves of new Buddhist movements of India. As a result, Mahayana tradition, though openly opposed at times, did take root in Sri Lanka. The archaeological evidence (e.g. Buduruvagala,

Sasseruwa, Tiriyayi, Kuchchaveli, Kustarajagala in Weligama, Bronze Image of Tara of the British Museum, and Bodhisatvas of Dambegoda and Veheragala), literary records such as the Prajnaparamita inscribed on gold plates found near Jetavanarama, and rites and ritual in current practice prove the widespread impact of Mahayana Buddhism especially in the eastern half of Sri Lanka. Evidence also exists that Tantric Buddhism of later centuries, too, had entered the Buddhist scene in the Island.

The process of integration of Buddhist traditions had begun in Sri Lanka at least two thousand years ago. The main reason was that Sri Lanka had always looked outwards and had been involved in Buddhist activities outside its borders. It was thus that

- Buddhist delegations from not only North India but also Pallavabaggha (?Iran/Afghanistan) and Yona Alisanda (Greek Alexandria) are mentioned in the *Mahavamsa* as attending the inauguration of Ruvanvaliseya;
- Bhatika Tissa (Abhaya) sent an embassy to Rome and obtained coral to adorn the same stupa in the first century CE;
- Nagarjuna was succeeded as the abbot of Nalanda by the renowned scholar Aryadeva, who is reputed to be a Sri Lankan prince;
- Ajanta devoted an entire wall in Cave 17 for a painting of the arrival of Sinhala in Sri Lanka;
- A Sri Lankan monastery was established at Buddha Gaya for pilgrims during the reign of Samudragupta in the fourth century CE. Inscriptions of Mahanama and other pilgrims from second century BCE to seventh century CE and Chinese sources confirm frequent pilgrimages by Sri Lankans to Buddha Gaya;
- Monks banished from Sri Lanka to South India in the third century CE continued to propagate Mahayana teachings there and Sanghamitra – a Cola disciple of one of them - came to Sri Lanka to avenge Mahavihara;
- The tooth relic was brought from Kalinga to Sri Lanka when Buddhism was persecuted there in the fourth century CE;
- Fa-hian visited Sri Lanka in 410 CE and stayed two years at Abhayagiri monastery from which he took the Mahisasaka Vinaya to China;
- The missions of Sri Lankan Bhikkhunis under the leadership of Devasara, established the Bhikkhuni Sasana (Order of Nuns) in China in 439CE;
- A Sri Lankan Vinaya Commentary – more likely a precursor or a different version of Samantapasadika than the Pali Commentary as we now have it – was taken to China and translated as *Shan-jian-lu-piposha* in 489 CE;
- Buddhaghosa from Buddha Gaya arrived in Sri Lanka to seek permission from Mahavihara in the fifth century CE to translate the Sinhala Commentaries on the Tripitaka to Pali – a task in which several others from Kanchipuram and Uraiyur of South India collaborated with him;
- Hiuen Tsang waited on the shore of South India to visit Sri Lanka in search of Buddhist texts in the seventh century CE and pieced together in his last chapter of *Si-yu-ki* whatever information he could gather;

- I-tsing mentions I-hiuen as coming to Sri Lanka to make a comparative study of Vinaya and Hwei-yen to venerate the tooth relic in the seventh century CE;
- Sri Lankan hydraulic engineers drained the valley of Sri Nagar in Kashmir for King Jayapida to construct his capital in the seventh century;
- The Kashmirian King Gunavarman stayed a while at Abhayagiri before proceeding to Sumatra to propagate Buddhism and later to China to be one of the celebrated translators;
- A branch monastery of Abhayagiri of "Sinhala bhikkhus" existed at Ratuboka in Indonesia;
- Vajrabodhi the exponent of Tantrayana and his disciple Amoghavajra (a native of Sri Lanka?) proceeded to China via Abhayagiri Monastery in the eighth century CE, taking a copy of *Prajnaparamita Sutra* to the Chinese Emperor;
- Inscriptions *in situ* and Tibetan literary records (e.g. by Taranatha and Dharmasvamin) confirm pilgrimages by Sri Lankans to Buddha Gaya right up to the thirteenth century;
- Dharmasvamin, the Tibetan monk to visit Buddha Gaya between 1234 and 1236 CE, mentions the presence of Sinhala bhikkhus in significant numbers who apparently dominated the affairs of the shrine – a fact confirmed by inscriptions; and
- The same Tibetan source records the presence of three hundred Sinhala monks at Nalanda after its devastation by Turko-Afghan invasion*.

What the integration of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions had thus achieved in Sri Lanka is characterized by not only peaceful co-existence, with only a very few instances of recorded discord, rivalry or conflict, but also cross-fertilization and mutual borrowings. Such a climate could have existed because the lay support (as recorded in respect of some kings) must have extended to all traditions without denominational or sectarian attachments. It is such a spirit of tolerance and collective patronage that could have provided the motivation and encouragement for the most important event in Sri Lankan Buddhist history in the twelfth century.

Integration of Fraternities: Moving towards Universalization

The Sri Lankan Chronicles record several instances when kings had taken the initiatives to reconcile or unify the three fraternities of Mahavihara, Abhayagiri and Jetavana. But the most far-reaching was that of Parakrama Bahu I, (1153-1186), a king whose achievements in diverse fields had earned for him the appellation "Parakrama Bahu the Great." The *Mahavamsa* in Chapter 78, verses 12-30 gives a detailed account of the steps he took to purge, purify and unify the Sangha of Sri Lanka in two stages.

First he had concentrated on the oldest monastery, the Mahavihara which at this time could have also been numerically the largest. The "corrupt and undisciplined bhikkhus" of this fraternity were purged from the Sangha. He is said to have thus purified the Mahavihara "with great pains."

Then the king proceeded to purify the other two monasteries: Abhayagiri which had formed a separate group since the reign of Vattagamini Abhaya (*Valagambahu* in Sinhala) and Jetavana whose inmates had separated themselves since the days of Mahasena.

The *Mahavamsa*, which records the event, is a product of the Mahavihara fraternity and could therefore display some prejudice against the other two fraternities. Their members are thus described as presenting as “the Buddha’s words” the “*Vetulla Pitaka*” – a generic term for Mahayana Sutras (apparently the Vaipulya Sutras) and the like, “which are not words of the Buddha.” The bhikkhus of the two monasteries are also criticized as having “turned away from religious duties” and being concerned with their material advantages.

The purge in both stages consisted of three distinct forms obviously based on the level of corruption as judged by an investigation. Some bhikkhus were dismissed; some others were given “lucrative positions” evidently as lay employees; and others were treated as Sramaneras, who therefore had to seek higher ordination from the Mahavihara. The outcome is described as “concord with inmates of the Mahavihara, who were rich in all virtues.”

Richard Gombrich’s interpretation of this account of the *Mahavamsa* is as follows:

“Though the chronicle says that he [Parakrama Bahu I] reunited the Sangha, this expression glosses over the fact that **what he did was to abolish the Abhayagiri and Jetavana Nikayas**. He laicized **many** monks from the Mahavihara Nikaya, and **all** the monks in the other two – and then allowed the better ones among the latter to become novices in the now “unified” Sangha, **into which they would have in due course to be reordained.**” (Gombrich 1988 p.159) (Emphasis mine)

Peter Harvey’s account underlines the long-term result of Parakrama Bahu’s initiative:

“King Parakrama Bahu I (1153-86) halted the decline and purified the Sangha, also **unifying it on the basis of the Mahavihara fraternity**. Around this period, Southern Buddhism entered its golden age in both Sri Lanka and South-east Asia, incorporating selected *Mahayana/Mantrayana* practices and aspirations into its existing framework of *Sutta* teachings, Theravada *Vinaya*, and Vibhajjavadin *Abhidhamma*.” (Harvey 1951 p.143) (Emphasis mine)

G. Coedes saw the long-term impact of what he calls the “**Sinhalese reform:**”

When Theravada Buddhism underwent the reform introduced by King Parakrama Bahu I (1153-86), after he had adopted the tenets of the Mahavihara sect, a number of monks from Indo-China [i.e. from Myanmar to Vietnam] **were drawn toward it and visited the island**. We have seen how the return of one of them, the Mon Chapata, led in 1190 to a schism in Burmese Buddhism, and **finally resulted in the adoption of the Sinhalese reform as the Orthodox form of Buddhism throughout the peninsula**. It passed from Burma to the T’ai countries and from there to Cambodia. From Cambodia it was introduced to Laos in 1353 the latest. **Sinhalese Buddhism was the last direct cultural contribution made by India to Indo-China and the one, which has had the deepest influence.** (Coedes 1966 pp 225-226) (Emphasis mine)

What actually were the results of the reform and unification of the Sangha of the three fraternities by Parakrama Bahu I? The statements of Gombrich, Harvey and Coedes present the situation as described in the Chronicle *Mahavamsa*, as well as the intended and unintended consequence of the royal initiative as gleanable from South and South-east Asian history. Taken together they lead us to the following conclusions:

1. When the Chronicle says that the king’s effort was to unite or bring into concord the inmates of Abhayagiri and Jetavana with those of

- Mahavihara (*Mahaviharavasihi samaggavitum arabhi* – MV. 78, 23), the intended objective was not necessarily the abolition of Abhayagiri and Jetavana as institutions. The same king is recorded as having restored in Anuradhapura the two stupas of Abhayagiri and Jetavana to heights of 140 cubits and 160 cubits along with the two stupas of Mahavihara (MV 78, 97-99).
2. A serious examination of the scriptures, upheld by the fraternities, however, had been entrusted to scholar-monks well versed in the Tripitaka, led by the seniormost Thera of the time, Thera Mahakassapa of Dimbulagala, who later was appointed the Sangharaja or Patriarch of the unified Sangha. Well-known senior monks were especially brought to the capital from Anuradhapura, Ruhuna and Sapara (= Sabaragamuva). (MV 78, 7-11). Not all monks had welcomed this step for some are said to have left the country, left the Sangha or invited investigation *in camera*. (MV. 78, 12-14).
 3. The investigation had been to decide whether the scriptures of Abhayagiri and Jetavana, together designated the Vetallapitaka, were acceptable as the Buddha-word (*buddhavaca*). The conclusion reached was that they were not. (MV. 78, 22).
 4. The purge of undisciplined monks was not restricted to Abhayagiri and Jetavana. The purge began first in Mahavihara fraternity (MV. 78, 17-20).
 5. There had been very able and important monks in all three fraternities who were disqualified from being in the Sangha. But they could not be simply disrobed. In all three cases, the king had provided incentives to them by appointing them to high and lucrative positions (*datvana mahathanantarani* – MV. 78, 19 and *mahathanantare ada* – MV. 78, 26).
 6. If the disqualification to be in the Sangha was based on either doctrinal differences or practices disapproved by the unified Sangha, these disrobed monks in high positions of authority could have promoted their doctrine and practices among the public.
 7. It is apparently thus that elements of Mahayana and Mantrayana or Vajrayana not only became popular but came to be well-established in the reformed Buddhism of Sri Lanka. **The integration of doctrines and praxis of the three fraternities, which Harvey highlights as the characteristics of the Golden Age Southern Buddhism, did actually bring into existence an entirely new form of Buddhism.**
 8. Theravada ceased to exist in its original puritanical form. Mahayana beliefs and practices were absorbed with emphasis on devotional and ritualistic worship. Prominent lay scholars became interpreters of new Buddhism wherein the Bhakti or devotional elements predominated. (Cf. works of Gurulugomi, Vidyacakravarti as well as *Saddharmalankaraya* and *Pujavaliya*).
 9. Though Pali Tripitaka and its commentaries and sub-commentaries in Pali became the standard scriptures of the new reform, the use of Pali in literary activity decreased. The knowledge of Pali itself deteriorated requiring the aid of word-to-word translations (*Sannes*) and glossaries (*Gatapades*) in Sinhala for the study of Pali works. Correspondingly,

though Sanskrit Sutras disappeared from the scene altogether, Sanskrit as a language exerted an enormous impact on Sinhala. Interestingly, the textbooks for the study of reading and phonetic articulation in Buddhist education (even at present) were Sanskrit devotional poems such as Namastasataka, Buddhagadya, Buddhasataka, Anuruddhasataka and Bauddhasataka.

10. Direct from Mantrayana came rites of exorcism and protection, which preserve the Vajrayana and Mahayana vocabulary of Dharani, Yantra (= Mandala), Mantra, etc.
11. If the Theravada of the past stressed on deliverance of a disciple by attaining sainthood as an Arahant, and the Mahayana fraternities had underscored Buddhahood as the only form of deliverance to be aspired for, the new tradition reconciled the positions as illustrated by the current Sri Lankan wish for one to attain Buddhahood as an expression of gratitude (*mage puta budu veva, may my son become a Buddha*) or the benediction for one to attain the ultimate deliverance in any one of the three ways or vehicles – as a Buddha, a Paccekabuddha or an Arahant (*tuntara bodhiyen ektara bodhiyaka*).
12. The belief in and the worship of Bodhisattvas became prevalent (e. g. Natha, Saman) and the acclamation of the ideal of the Bodhisattva is illustrated by its application as the highest expression of appreciation and admiration of a pious or good person.

This remarkable integration of Buddhist traditions, which began with the initiative of Parakrama-Bahu I, thus resulted in a form of Universal Buddhism. Whether intended or not, the Sinhala Reform, as Coedes calls it, was a move in the direction of universalization of Buddhism. By universalization is meant the acquisition of a quality, which enabled and facilitated the acceptance of the new type of Buddhism by a whole population rather than by limited groups only. Through assimilation of hitherto competing rival teachings and practices, this new Buddhism developed elements, which appealed to everyone. The comprehensive literary heritage in Pali catered for the intellectual needs of the educated segment of the population in general. The needs of the masses in the social and emotional domains were similarly served as a result of the assimilation of popular elements of faith, including ritualistic and magical practices of Mahayana and Vajrayana

As Coedes observes, the Sinhala Reform provided a form of Buddhism, which appeared to be the most acceptable for the propagation of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia. Not only in Sri Lanka but also in Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, the form of Southern Buddhism developed by the Sinhala Reform replaced all three earlier traditions of Theravada, Mahayana and Tantrayana or Vajrayana.

This move towards universalization of Buddhism reflected the spirit of tolerance and inclusiveness, which the Buddha upheld in precept and example. It also paved the way for Buddhism to assimilate spiritual, religious and cultural traditions, indigenous to each country to which it spread. The emerging Universal Buddhism excluded nothing from within or outside its fold.

In Sri Lanka itself the revitalized Buddhist Sangha aimed at producing a new tradition combining the orthodoxy of Early Buddhism with attractive elements of the

Mahayana approach to popular appeal. Thus the illustrious poet Sri Rahula of Totagamuva had in his monastery a shrine dedicated to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva (known as Natha Deviyo in Sri Lanka) and also had faith in Vibhisana to whom Mahayana had assigned a place of importance as a Buddhist devotee (cf. Mahamayuri which calls him the titular god of Sri Lanka and Lankavatara and Mahayanadharmabhisamaya Sutras, which mention him as in direct contact with the Buddha). Maitreya of Vidagama adapted Suhrlekha of Mahayana origin as Lovadasangarava (Anthology for Worldly Welfare) - the indispensable introduction to Buddhist values in the Sinhala Buddhist education. The procession in honour of Natha Deviyo led the Kandy Perahera until, on the advice of the Siamese (Thai) monks after the 1753 renaissance of Buddhism, the procession of the Dalada Maligawa (Temple of the Tooth) was added to head it.

Southern Buddhism, by which I mean the all-inclusive religious system that evolved in South and Southeast Asia from what Coedes called the “Sinhala Reform,” developed to be universally applicable, relevant and acceptable as a pragmatic and practical amalgam of all three major traditions of Buddhism. It had a significant vitality to absorb and replace the diverse forms of Mahayana and Vajrayana (Tantrayana and Mantrayana) Buddhism, which existed in various degrees of strength in the region.

Sri Lanka’s missionary role in the region since the twelfth century achieved its high watermark of success because of this vitality. With the Pali language as the *lingua franca*, an international Buddhist community, sharing a common literature – canonical, commentarial, critical, scholarly and even secular- looked up to Sri Lanka as its religious and spiritual metropolis. Its strength lay in its ability to reinforce and backstop the Buddhist Sangha whenever it was threatened to extinction due to internal upheavals in a particular country. The Burmese revival through Sri Lankan intervention in the early fifteenth century and the restoration of higher ordination in Sri Lanka in 1753 are spectacular examples of this ability. **The collaborative effort of the whole region with its remarkable sharing of emphasis in the study of the Buddhist scriptures (Abhidhamma in Myanmar, Vinaya in Thailand and Sutta in Sri Lanka) is the ultimate result of the process which I have described above as the Sri Lankan contribution to the integration of Buddhist tradition and the universalization of Buddhism as an all-embracing and inclusive religious movement.**

Sri Lankan Initiatives to Spread Buddhism to the West

Missionaries, civil administrators and military officers of the British and the French Empires were among the pioneers to discover Buddhism in Asia and to initiate the serious study of its archaeological, epigraphical, linguistic and literary heritage. Missionaries whose task was to replace Buddhism with their own denomination of Christianity were surprised by their discovery of the serenity and depth of Buddhism and some of them became involuntary publicists for Buddhist wisdom and values.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, a significant interest had developed in Buddhism in Europe, with British, French, Danish, German and Russian savants taking the lead. Scholars in the USA soon were brought into the scene. Buddhist studies assumed a considerable degree of recognition in academic circles in the West. Instruction and research in Buddhism came to be well supported. Institutions and individual scholars produced critical editions and translations of sacred texts,

insightful treatises on underlying philosophy, ethics and praxis, scientific analysis of historical and archaeological data, and tools and apparatus for serious study such as grammars and dictionaries. Pali and Southern Buddhism predominated the scholarly scene.

The contribution of these activities was not limited to their region. Traditionally Buddhist countries of Asia benefited from them directly. The Western-educated intelligentsia of these countries was introduced to their own Buddhist heritage by the scholarly contributions of Western scholarship. It was a pleasant surprise to many, who around this time were more familiar with Western culture than their own due to the impact of colonial education. The recognition and appreciation of their ancient culture by the West became a source of pride and self-esteem. That alone assured the renaissance of Buddhist study and practice, which took place in Asia in the nineteenth century, especially with the involvement of influential members of the laity. Without this phase of the direct contribution of the Western scholarship, to which reference is made as "Orientalism," the modern developments in Buddhism, especially in Sri Lanka, would not have taken place at the time they did. Here, again, the experience of Sri Lanka is worthy of our special attention.

Sri Lankan movement to bring Buddhism to the attention of the Western seekers of alternative spiritual paths to Christianity (as opposed to intellectuals and scholars) began with the debates to which the Buddhist Sangha challenged the Christian missionaries. This happened from about the first quarter of the nineteenth century mostly in the form of tracts and pamphlets. With the Baddegama Controversy in 1865, the debates took the form of public confrontations between the Buddhist monks and Christian missionaries. The one at 1873 at Panadure had the most far-reaching impact that its report was read in the USA by Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. They claim that their acceptance of Buddhism as their personal religion dated back to 1875 – the same year they founded the Theosophical Society as a syncretic movement avowedly to study other religious traditions of the world as a counterpoint to Christianity. Even if we postdate their official acceptance of Buddhism to May 1880, when they were administered the Triple Refuge and Five Precepts at Vijayananda Vihara in Galle, they would still be the first among Buddhist practitioners of the West. C. J Strauss of New York and Mrs. Mary Foster Robinson of Honolulu were immediately after them.

Olcott's ultimate decision to come to Sri Lanka was based on the close association he developed through frequent communication with the leading stars of the Buddhist renaissance movement, namely, Hikkaduwe Sri Sumnagala Nayaka Thera, Dodanduwe Piyaratana Tissa Nayaka thera and Migettuwatte (Mohottiwatte) Gunananda Thera. The services to Buddhism of the "White Buddhist," as he was affectionately called, were many and varied. The revival of Buddhism involving lay participation and leadership, which he ushered in Sri Lanka, of course, was the most significant. His negotiation of the Vesak holiday with the British authorities in London and his contribution to the design of six-coloured Buddhist flag made him a national hero. He laid the foundation for the evolution of an educated Buddhist elite to take an active role in national affairs of the country and also became an inspiring mentor to Anagarika Dharmapala, the Buddhist activist, and Sir Don Baron Jayatilaka, the scholar-statesman.

Olcott's most significant contributions to the propagation of Buddhism in the world are (1) *Buddhist Catechism* (1881), which in numerous translations into Western languages and many reprints, served as the most popular introduction of the religion to interested readerships and (2) the internationally approved Fourteen-point Platform on which all Buddhists can agree. (1891). Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, (1879) and Olcott's *Buddhist Catechism*, carrying a certificate of authenticity from the foremost scholar-monk of Sri Lanka, served the Western world as the most widely circulated popularizers of the Buddha's teachings. The effort to have a broad consensus on his Fourteen-point Common Platform was in the direction of ecumenical agreement within the different traditions as were current in various parts of Asia.

Vicariously, Olcott also shares the credit for the magnificent record of service of Anagarika Dharmapala, whose international involvement began with the founding of the Maha Bodhi Society in 1891 with the objectives of restituting Buddha Gaya and other sacred Buddhist sites in India to Buddhists, re-introduction of Buddhism in the land of its birth and worldwide propagation of Buddhism. As regards the last objective, he started in 1892 the Maha Bodhi Journal which received the attention of the organizers of the Parliament of World's Religions in Chicago. Invited to serve in the organizing committee, Anagarika Dharmapala delivered an excellent address on the theme of the world's debt to the Buddha in September 1893. Never before has a massive audience of many thousands brought to learn the fundamentals of Buddhism, presented succinctly, eloquently and with feeling.

The significance of this address was that it incorporated what Sri Lanka had achieved over at least seven hundred years in what I have presented above as a deliberate and far-reaching process of integration and universalization. Working closely with Olcott as well as the international office-bearers and representatives of many Western countries of the Maha Bodhi Society, he had a deep understanding of the spiritual needs of the humankind. So, he spoke of Buddhism not as a splintered system of traditions, denominations and sects, but a living message, which had relevance to humanity of every time and clime. He did receive a ready response, which encouraged him enormously. To him goes the credit of the modern missionary movement to spread Buddhism in the West. The oneness and the openness of Buddhism that Olcott and Anagarika Dharmapala accentuated in their writings and speeches had an impact on the growing popularity of Zen in practice in the West through the impressive literary output of D. T. Suzuki.

Just as in Buddhist scholarship, in the first wave of Buddhist missionary activities (catering to Western populations as opposed to ministerial services to ethnic Buddhist migrants), too, Southern Buddhism was the first to exert significant influence and the Sri Lankan stamp on it was widely recognized. The first ever Englishman to become a Buddhist monk in 1899 was Bhikkhu Asoka (Gordon Douglas), who received his ordination in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The next was Ananda Metteyya (C. H. A. Bennet), ordained in Myanmar, whose role in the promotion of Buddhism in Britain since 1907 is recorded in the annals of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland (later Buddhist Society of England). Anagarika Dharmapala's effort in establishing the Buddhist Vihara of London in 1925 coincided with the founding of Buddha House in Berlin by Paul Dahlke and the Lodge of Three Jewels in Munich by Grimm. The German initiative of Nyanatiloka Thera through the Island Hermitage of Dodanduwa, Sri Lanka, where many Westerners became monks

and contributed to scholarship and Buddhist practice, is another landmark in Sri Lankan involvement in the spread of Buddhism in the West.

Well nigh a century of Buddhist studies and half a century of missionary activity, dominated by Southern Buddhism, prepared the West for the new phenomenon of the mid-twentieth century when the West came more and more into direct contact with the diversity of Asian Buddhism. A Buddhist diaspora from Asia, caused by political and economic upheavals, led to substantial influxes of Asian populations with their diverse literary and cultural heritage, belief systems and rituals. Buddhism in the West today has challenges to meet as well as opportunities for growth and expansion of influence. In responding to them, what can we learn from the experience of Sri Lanka?

Buddhism in the West in the Twenty-first Century: Challenges and Opportunities

Four times over the last two decades I have reviewed the position of Buddhism in Europe and, on each occasion, found it necessary to deal with the situation in the cognate cultures of America, Australia and New Zealand:

1. In 1984 speaking at the Third Congress of the European Buddhist Union in Turin, Italy, on the subject: "*Moving Towards Universal Buddhism: An Emerging Role for European Buddhists at Home and Abroad*", I traced the historical evidence of the earliest reference to Buddhism in Europe to the statement of St. Clement of Alexandria (third century CE) who defined Buddhists as "Indians that obey the precepts of Boutta whom, through exaggeration of his dignity, they honor as God". But Buddhism could have been known in Europe earlier. Asoka had recorded that his missions of Dharmavijaya (Conquest by Righteousness) Campaign had gone as far as Syria, Egypt and Macedonia in the third century BCE. While the impact of Buddhist views on Greek Philosophy could be traced, there had been no specific reference to Buddha or Buddhism at that time. The literary record of the dialogues between the Greek king Menander and the Buddhist monk, Nagasena (second century BCE) and the gold coin of Kanishka (first century CE) with the image of the standing Buddha and the word BODDO in Greek script evince an era when Buddhism was prevalent among the Greek and other foreign nations to the west of the Indian Subcontinent. No evidence, however, is available for the continuing or even intermittent presence of Buddhism in the West until the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

In tracing the development of Buddhism in Europe for nearly two centuries, I concluded then that the European Buddhists would pursue two new and urgent tasks:

- (1) fostering solidarity with immigrant Buddhists; and
- (2) sharing the experience in establishing Buddhist unity.

It was my view that, in the process, the West would foster a form of Universal Buddhism, which would bring under one umbrella the rich diversity of Buddhist schools, sects and traditions. As I wrote in April 1990, "**To achieve this, they needed to present Buddhism not as a disunited array of schools and traditions but as the quintessence of the loftiest thoughts developed in**

Asia through the guidance and inspiration of the Buddha". The advantage which the West has in this connection is that all such diverse forms of Buddhism coexist in the same location and interact with one another in a way unimaginable in the traditionally Buddhist countries of Asia. I have seen this development in operation and am satisfied that it would continue far into the current century.

2. Again on the 23rd of November 1988, in the keynote address delivered at the General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists at Hsi Lai Temple, Hacienda Heights, California, USA, I dealt briefly with what the West would contribute to Buddhism. The juxtaposition of diverse Buddhist traditions in geographically circumscribed areas in the West was noted to bring about two courses of action:
 - (i) *Internally*, the adherents to each tradition are anxious to discover their points of agreement, their claim to oneness, and common areas for cooperation and interaction. They are mindful that they all have common areas for cooperation and interaction. They are mindful that they all have a common allegiance to the historical Buddha, the Sakyamuni Gotama, on whose fundamental teachings each system is admittedly founded.
 - (ii) *Externally*, the Buddhists in new environments see a need to coalesce and establish a common identity vis-à-vis the non-Buddhist majority. They are convinced that their splintered existence would only weaken them and deprive them of whatever benefits they could collectively obtain from their hosts.

These views were very much in common with those who spoke at the Fourth Congress of the European Buddhist Union at UNESCO, Paris, France in October 1988 where the main theme was "**Sharing the Common Space.**" **Intra-faith cooperation among Buddhist traditions and interfaith understanding and coexistence with members of other religions were the main concerns at that time.**

3. In January 1990, in the Seminar on Buddhism into the Year 2000, held in Bangkok, Thailand by the Dharmakaya Foundation, I had the opportunity to make three principal presentations, i.e., *The keynote address on Buddhism into the year 2000*; *The Buddhist Contribution to Inter-religious Dialogue*; and *Buddhism in Europe*. In the course of the third presentation, I addressed five questions, namely:

--Will Buddhism last in Europe?

--What form will Buddhism take?

--What new challenges will Buddhism face in Europe?

--Will Buddhism have the vigour and flexibility and the European Buddhist Community the commitment and the resources to face these challenges?

--What are the immediate tasks to be addressed by the international Buddhist Community?

4. I followed it up with an article in April 1990 on *Buddhist Unity and World Peace* to the World Fellowship of Buddhists Souvenir to mark its fortieth anniversary.

In both these, I reached the following conclusions:

- (1) **Buddhism has come to stay in the West. It is no longer viewed as exotic or strange. It has viable institutions and organizations and has no dearth of the requisite human resources.**
- (2) **The need to evolve a form of Universal Buddhism has been demonstrated more by socio-political imperatives of life in the West than by doctrinal or religious considerations.**
- (3) **A challenge of the immediate future is to find ways and means of demonstrating convincingly the relevance and applicability of Buddhism to Western life and society.**
- (4) **Another challenge is to take the best possible advantage of the influx to the West of Asian Buddhists with their invaluable cultural heritage, institutions, human resources and organizational capacity.**
- (5) **Buddhist communities in the West just as their counterparts in Asia have nothing more than their devotion, dedication and determination as their vital resources. Their material resources are meager and nothing appears to be more effective than self-reliance.**
- (6) **The first in a series of steps to be taken is to strengthen the national and international Buddhist organizations and institutions and the next is to eliminate the overlapping and the duplication of currently implemented activities with the objective of stretching the Buddhist dollar to the utmost.**
- (7) **Equally important is to make the best use of hitherto unutilized or underutilized human, material, institutional and cultural resources brought to the West by the immigrant or ethnic Buddhists.**
- (8) **Last but not the least, the European Buddhist community must begin to play a more active role in international Buddhist forums.**

By way of emphasizing the importance of Buddhism to the West, my presentation in Bangkok ended with the following statement:

Humanity needs the wisdom, the sobriety, the serenity, the tolerance and the purposeful determination, which Buddhism is known to generate in no mean measure. As humankind will pursue its search into the current century for freedom from dogma and fundamentalism, from straight-jacketed thinking and intellectual restraint and from greed, hatred and ignorance, the noble teachings of the Buddha will be hailed as beacons of enlightenment and a source of spiritual inspiration and support. This search has visibly begun in the West and, as an interested and closely involved observer of the Buddhist scene of Europe, it is my fervent hope that Buddhism will emerge here as a foremost fashioner of the conscience of humanity.

Peep into the Future

For the fifth time now, I gaze into the proverbial crystal ball to assess how Buddhism would fare in the West in this century. The *fin de siecle* (end of the century) enthusiasm touched the Buddhist circles too and their activities had in recent times developed at a far quicker pace than could be anticipated on the mere linear extension of a futurological curve. Even if this pace slackens, the progress, which Buddhism is currently making in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand, is bound to be maintained for decades to come. Here are my observations:

1. **Buddhism is here to stay and grow.** In every country in the West, including Australia and New Zealand, Buddhism is statistically the fastest growing religion. It is not entirely due to the continuing intensity of the Buddhist diaspora from Buddhist countries in turmoil to industrialized countries of the West. It is true that, in spite of efforts to check immigration into some countries, the overall influx of Buddhist immigrants to the West shows signs of growing. **But a steady increase of Westerners choosing Buddhism as their personal religion has also subscribed substantially to the numerical growth. At the same time, the numbers of people who resort to Buddhist practices for their self-improvement – especially Buddhist meditation and chanting – have risen appreciably. Admirers and friends of Buddhism are another category where significantly visible increases have taken place.** In Eastern Europe, generally, and in the former Soviet Union, in particular, a noticeable reawakening of Buddhism has taken place due to the relaxation of the Communist policy on religion. Significant Buddhist activities with a corresponding increase in participants are noticed in East Germany (specially on account of reunification), Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia.
2. **Organizations and Institutions are being developed to meet the demand.** The numerical increase of Buddhists as well as those who seek participation in Buddhist practices is being provided with matching facilities. **New temples, meditation centers, institutions and the like are being established in central locations not only by immigrants from traditionally Buddhist countries (i.e., Bangladesh, Cambodia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam) but also by new Buddhists themselves.** In USA alone, the tourist guide to what is called “Buddhist America” refers to nearly 2000 institutions. Similar directories with hundreds of entries are to be found in Britain. The proliferation of Tibetan Buddhist institutions has been a spectacular phenomenon. Particularly significant are the arrangements made for interfaith understanding and cooperation. Among them, the Parliament of World’s Religions, which after its first and second sessions in 1893 and 1993 adopted a policy of intensive activity and more frequent meetings, has two landmark achievements to its credit: namely, The Gethsemani Encounter and the 1999 session in Cape Town, South Africa. The Gethsemani Encounter in which His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama played a major role (delivering as many as five speeches) was a dialogue on the spiritual life by Buddhist and Christian

monastics. The publication resulting from it is a substantial volume edited by Donald W. Mitchell and James Wiseman O.S.B. (Continuum, New York 1999). **It opens the way for future dialogues and cooperative action as a vital necessity of the coming century. A great degree of interest is being generated in the next parliament of world's religions to be held in Barcelona, Spain in July, 2004.**

3. **Is Buddhism an Escape for a Few or a System of Values affecting Society?**

If Buddhism was once viewed as an escape for those who were either disenchanted with the societal values and spiritual objectives of the West or who are interested in the discovery of alternative ways of living, the current trend is that the influence of Buddhism is more widely felt.

The academic interest in Buddhist Studies has more or less quadrupled over the last decade in the West. The increases are in every aspect: the number of institutions, depth and variety of courses, the number, variety and ramifications of specializations, professors in service and students enrolled. Even more poignantly, progress is indicated by the volume and the quality of textbooks and manuals, research publications and information on Internet. In USA, where the International Association of Buddhist Studies has its headquarters, well over five hundred professors of Buddhist Studies conduct courses in Colleges and Universities. Ample opportunity to study Buddhism exists in every State. The trend in Europe and Oceania is equally encouraging.

If the Academia at first concentrated on critical editions and translations of texts and linguistic tools to facilitate the study of related languages, a significant departure is now in evidence. It may be that these needs are already met. **But the more important reason is to lay stress on the doctrinal and philosophical aspects of Buddhist traditions, on the one hand, and on the practice of Buddhist ethics, meditation, rites and ritual, on the other. Buddhism will continue to be studied but the scope of such studies will be wider and all-embracing. The plethora of publications during the last decade clearly indicates the widening horizons of Buddhist Studies and the resulting intellectual challenges.**

The Buddhists as well as friends of Buddhism of the West are no longer content with "sharing the common space" with other spiritual fraternities. Instead, they explore ways and means to ensure that Buddhism extends its beneficial influence on public opinion. The Buddhist Society of London is in the process of evaluating its services to Britain in the sphere of developing "**a climate for public opinion**". UNESCO is engaged in a project to elicit from all world religions a system of Universal Ethics and the Buddhist contribution is expected to be substantial.

Reference to Buddhism for a point of view on current issues is also evident in ever-increasing tendency in the Western press – both printed and electronic – to obtain representative views of Buddhists on abortion to road rage. It has been the general appraisal of

journalists that the Buddhist opinions on these matters are unusually refreshing, as it is not restricted by dogma or the dictates of a church. There is no doubt that an increasing weight would be assigned to Buddhist opinion in regard to Universal Ethics.

4. **Buddhism has a Contribution to make to Universal Ethics.** When we approach the problem of universal ethics from a global point of view at this crucial moment of beginning a new millennium, the limitations of our overall religious experience become very clear. In a less complex society both the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" and the self-imposed discipline "I take upon myself the discipline of not depriving any sentient being of its life" has a straight-forward connotation. In today's society the implications of the act of killing involves significant ethical considerations when applied to genocide, terrorism, ethnic cleansing, germ and chemical warfare, hate crimes, euthanasia or mercy killing, suicide and animal rights. If stealing was once conceived as manifested by theft, burglary and robbery, the concern today extends from white-collar fraud, industrial spying, violation of intellectual property rights to stealing one's identity and even one's sperms, ova, genes and organs. As regards sexual misconduct and family values, the emerging mores have complicated the moral issues to such an extent that "Anything goes" has become a confusing attitude and its deleterious effect on the stability of society and the future of the humankind is frightening. As regards falsehood, "What is the truth?" has become an expression of cynicism. In "truth in advertisement," libel and character assassination through subtle and clever insinuation by mass media, and double standards in public affairs, the truth is more often than not the victim. Other forms of verbal harm have similarly proliferated. Equally complicated are the ethical issues pertaining to intoxicants and drugs. From a problem, which was once approached from the angle of the harm that addiction did to the victim and his family, the ramifications of impact have extended to the very fabric of the health and well-being of humanity.

On still another plane, moral issues connected with biotechnological operations such as cloning, organ growing, genetic engineering call for satisfactory solutions. The list can be prolonged to show how in each sphere the complexity of ethical issues had proliferated exponentially. Bioethics and medical ethics in the West have called for inputs from Buddhism and the discussion will gain in momentum in the new century.

It is this complexity that demands urgent action. What is desirable is collective action by all those who hold religion as an efficacious solver of ethical questions. But should action be postponed until then? That would be like blaming the darkness without lighting the match in ones' hand. This is the reason for the decision made by the European Buddhist Union to concentrate on these issues from the Buddhist point of view in the Symposium held in November 2000 in UNESCO to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of its foundation. **Buddhism has an enormous contribution to make in the development of a system**

of universal ethics. It is a religion, which has had the longest experience in adjusting itself to the needs of different peoples at different times in history.

5. **Unity in Diversity.** As Henry Steel Olcott's Fourteen Points in 1891 and Christmas Humphrey's Twelve Principles in 1945 showed, the Western Buddhist has demonstrated a keenness to establish the unity of doctrine and value system, which belies the diversity of practices and beliefs of different traditions of Buddhism. That this task is yet to be accomplished to the fullest satisfaction has been shown by the recent efforts of the American Buddhist Congress and the Southern California Sangha Council. After nearly a decade of consultations, these organizations have issued in 1997 a Ten-point Convention on Buddhism across Cultures, drafted by Havanpola Ratanasara Thera, Ananda W. P. Guruge, Karuna Dharma, Henry Shinn and Jack Bath. (See Appendix for these three declarations)

Support for this Convention is being canvassed worldwide and the indications are that this would further strengthen the ecumenical trend in present-day Buddhism. **An intensified search for a common core of teachings and values underlying different traditions of Buddhism will be a primary preoccupation of the international Buddhist community in the twenty-first century.**

6. **Convergence in Objectives:** Another noticeable tendency, which would grow in intensity in the new millennium, is the effort in Buddhist circles to ensure the convergence in objectives. Can all Buddhists in the world unite in identifying and pursuing a set of aims, goals and objectives, which override traditional differences? The concept of Humanistic Buddhism as enunciated and interpreted by Venerable Grand Master Hsing Yun of Fo Guang Shan Monastic Order of Taiwan seeks to achieve such a convergence of objectives. He has established a number of magnificent Buddhist Temples and viable organizations in USA, Argentina, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Paraguay, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom. His lay Buddhist organization, BLIA (Buddha Light International Association), has, over ten years, expanded to a membership of over a million all over the world. Just as the temples, the branches of BLIA are predominantly in the Western Hemisphere and their collective impact is exceedingly beneficial to the enhancement of the promotion of Buddhism.

University of the West (formerly Hsi Lai University) in Los Angeles County, California, USA has already distinguished itself as a forward-looking centre of higher learning, which provides the richest and the most comprehensive course offerings in Buddhism from a Bachelor's degree to a Doctorate in Buddhist Studies and a Doctorate of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Religious Studies. Its International Academy of Buddhism utilizes the mechanics of an annual international conference and an annual journal, called the Hsi Lai Journal of Humanistic Buddhism, to

provide the academic underpinnings to a worldwide movement based on Grand Master Hsing Yun's vision. **Approached from diverse angles, Humanistic Buddhism caters for most of the needs that Buddhists in the West would face in the current century, especially on account of its convergence with the objectives of "Socially Engaged Buddhism."**

7. **Leadership with Charisma and Innovative Approach.** Judging from recent experience in the West, the Buddhists have relied heavily on the charismatic and innovative leadership which has come from outside. Venerable Grand Master Hsing Yun with his extensive infrastructural facilities, and dedicated human resources has been particularly effective. His organizational strengths ensure that his leadership will continue to be exercised for many decades to come through his institutions and organizations. On the other hand, the Nobel Prize Laureate, His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, has, through his personal charm and spiritual qualities, attracted multitudes of disciples, admirers and friends. His leadership is exemplified by not only the success of his own Geluk school but also that of other schools of Tibetan Buddhism in the Western world. A very different kind of leadership is exercised by Dr. S. N. Goenka, the devoted disciple and spiritual successor of the Burmese lay devotee U Ba King, the promulgator of the movement to popularize Vipassana Bhavana among the laity. Dr. Goenka's vast organization of Vipassana Meditation Centres with the cohesive network of Assistant Teachers has provided a rallying point for the serious practitioner of Meditation as set out in Early Buddhism. **These forms of leadership will continue to be needed in the West to supplement what has been developed with Western ingenuity such as in the Zen Movement, and Friends of Western Buddhism of Venerable Sangharakshita.**
8. **Proliferation of Buddhist Publications:** The number of publishing houses in the West has increased rapidly over the last few years and their viability is no longer in doubt. The variety of books, too, has been impressive. The little known Tibetan Buddhist works – mainly those whose Sanskrit originals are no longer extant – have been translated by competent scholars and interpreted by learned monastics including His Holiness Dalai Lama. Publications in English are produced specially in Japan and Taiwan for worldwide consumption. The Japanese organization Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai has commenced translating the major scriptures of the Taisho edition of the Chinese Tripitaka and the works so far published evince the highest quality. **All these publishing activities are scheduled for decades to come and the momentum created by them is bound to last and expand. There will be no dearth of books to read.**
9. **Buddhism in Virtual Sphere or Cyberspace:** A similar proliferation of electronically available information on Buddhism is another phenomenon, which would grow exponentially in the coming millennium. **The Internet is an ever-expanding source of a wide variety of data as well as an effective means of discussion of views**

- | | | |
|---------------|------|---|
| Harvey, Peter | 1990 | <i>An Introduction to Buddhism – Teachings, History and Practices</i> , Cambridge University Press, Cambridge |
| Coedes, G. | 1966 | <i>The Making of south East Asia</i> , Routedge and Kegan Paul, London |

APPENDIX

Three Attempts to Unravel Universal Buddhism

Three attempts have been made in 1891, 1945 and 1997 by two eminent Buddhist scholars of the West and two inter-sectarian organizations (i.e., Henry Steel Olcott of U.S.A and Christmas Humphreys of U.K., and the American Buddhist Congress and Southern California Sangha Council of USA) to get a consensus of different Buddhist schools on the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism. The fourteen points of Olcott, the twelve principles of Humphreys and the ten points of the Buddhist Sangha Council Convention on Buddhism Across Cultures serve as a convenient as well as authentic means of summarizing the teachings of Buddhism as are current today. They, above all, emphasize the doctrinal unity of Buddhism which defies the diversity in rites and ritual, modes of meditation and worship, and scriptures. These have been approved by representative or individual Buddhist leaders and dignitaries of practically all Buddhist countries though not in a formal or institutional setting.

- a) *Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs -- A common platform upon which all Buddhists can agree (Olcott, 1891):*
- (i) Buddhists are taught to show the same tolerance, forbearance and brotherly love to all men, without distinction; and an unswerving kindness towards the members of the animal kingdom.
 - (ii) The universe was evolved, not created; and it functions according to law, not according to the caprice of any god.
 - (iii) The truths upon which Buddhism is founded are natural. They have, we believe, been taught in successive kalpas, or world-periods, by certain illuminated beings called BUDDHAS: the name BUDDHA meaning 'enlightened'.
 - (iv) The fourth teacher in the present Kalpa was Sakya Muni or GAUTAMA BUDDHA who was born in a royal family of India about 2,000 years ago. He is a historical personage and his name was Siddhartha Gautama.
 - (v) Sakya Muni taught that ignorance produces desire, unsatisfied desire is the cause of rebirth, and rebirth the cause of sorrow. To get rid of sorrow, therefore, it is necessary to escape rebirth; to escape rebirth, it is necessary to extinguish desire; and to extinguish desire, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.
 - (vi) Ignorance fosters the belief that rebirth is a necessary thing. When ignorance is destroyed, the worthlessness of every such rebirth, considered as an end in itself, is perceived, as well as the paramount need of adopting a course of life by which the necessity for such repeated rebirths can be abolished. Ignorance also begets the illusive and illogical idea that there is only one existence for man, and the other illusion that this one life is followed by states of unchangeable pleasure or torment.
 - (vii) The dispersion of all this ignorance can be attained by the persevering practice of an all-embracing altruism in conduct, development of intelligence, wisdom in thought, and destruction of desire for the lower personal pleasures.

- (viii) The desire to live being the cause of rebirth, when that is extinguished, rebirths cease, and the perfected individual attains by meditation that highest state of peace called Nirvana.
 - (ix) Sakya Muni taught that ignorance can be dispelled and sorrow removed by the knowledge of the four Noble Truths, viz.
 - 1. The miseries of existence;
 - 2. The cause productive of misery, which is the desire, ever renewed, of satisfying oneself without ever being able to secure that end;
 - 3. The destruction of that desire or the estranging of oneself from it;
 - 4. The means of obtaining this destruction of desire. The means which he pointed out is called the Noble Eightfold Path; viz., Right Belief; Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Exertion, Right Remembrance, Right Meditation.
 - (x) Right Meditation leads to spiritual enlightenment, or the development of that Buddha-like faculty which is latent in every man.
 - (xi) The essence of Buddhism, as summed up by the Tathagata (Buddha) himself, is;
 - "To cease from all sin,
To get virtue."
 - (xii) The universe is subject to a natural causation known as 'Karma'. The merits and demerits of a being in past existences determine his condition in the present one. Each man, therefore, has prepared the causes of the effects which he now experiences.
 - (xiii) The obstacles to the attainment of good Karma may be removed by the observance of the following precepts, which are embraced in the moral code of Buddhism; viz., (1) Kill not; (2) Steal not; (3) Indulge in no forbidden sexual pleasure; (4) Lie not; (5) Take no intoxicating or stupefying drug or liquor. Five other precepts which need not be here enumerated should be observed by bhikkhus and all those who would attain, more quickly than the average layman, the release from misery and rebirth.
 - (xiv) Buddhism discourages superstitious credulity. GAUTAMA BUDDHA taught it to be the duty of a parent to have his child educated in science and literature. He also taught that no one should believe what is spoken by any sage, written in any book or affirmed by tradition, unless it accords with reason.
- b) *Twelve Principles of Buddhism* (Christmas Humphreys, 1945)**
- 1. Self-salvation is for any man the immediate task. If a man lay wounded by a poisoned arrow he would not delay extraction by demanding details of the man who shot it, or the length and make of the arrow. There will be time for ever-increasing understanding of the Teaching during treading of the Way. Meanwhile, begin now by seeing life as it is, learning always by direct and personal experience.
 - 2. The first fact of existence is the law of change or impermanence. All that exists, from a mole to a mountain, from a thought to an empire, passes through the same cycle of existence i.e., birth, growth, decay and death. Life alone is continuous, ever seeking self-expression in new form. 'Life is

a bridge; therefore, build no house on it.' Life is a process of flow, and he who clings to any form, however splendid, will suffer by resisting the flow.

3. The law of change applies equally to 'soul'. There is no principle in an individual, which is immortal and unchanging. Only the 'Namelessness', the ultimate Reality, is beyond change, and all forms of life, including man, are manifestations of this Reality. No one owns the life which flows in him any more than the electric light bulb owns the current which gives it light.
4. The universe is the expression of law. All effects have causes and man's soul or character is the sum total of his previous thought and acts. Karma, meaning action-reaction, governs all existence, and man is the sole creator of his circumstances and his reaction to them, his future condition, and his final destiny. By right thought and action he can gradually purify his inner nature and so by self-realization attain in time liberation from rebirth. The process covers great periods of time, involving life after life on earth, but ultimately every form of life will reach Enlightenment.
5. Life is one and indivisible, though its ever changing forms are innumerable and perishable. There is, in truth, no death, though every form must die. From an understanding of life's unity arises compassion, sense of identity with the life in other forms. Compassion is described as 'the law of law -- eternal harmony,' and he who breaks this harmony of life will suffer accordingly and delay his own Enlightenment.
6. Life being one, the interests of the part should be those of the whole. In his ignorance man thinks he can successfully strive for his own interests, and this wrongly directed energy to selfishness produces suffering. He learns from his suffering to reduce and finally eliminate its cause. The Buddha taught four Noble Truths: (a) the omnipresence of suffering; (b) its cause, wrongly directed desire; (c) its cure, the removal of the causes; and (d) the Noble Eightfold Path of self-development which leads to the end of suffering.
7. The Eightfold Path consists in Right (or Perfect) Views or preliminary understanding, Right Aims or Motives, Right Speech, Right Acts, Right Livelihood, Right Efforts, Right Concentration or mind-development, and, finally, Right *Samadhi*, leading to full Enlightenment. As Buddhism is a way of living, not merely a theory of life, the treading of this Path is essential to self-deliverance. 'Cease to do evil, learn to do good, cleanse your own heart; this is the teaching of the Buddhas.' [*Note: Sammasati is now translated by most scholars as Right Mindfulness and Sammasamadhi as Right Concentration. The other elements of the Noble Eightfold Path are also translated differently by scholars. But the need for fixed terminology has yet to be recognized. – Ananda Guruge*]
8. Reality is indescribable, and a God with attributes is not the final Reality. But the Buddha, a human being, became the All-Enlightened One, and all other forms of life contain the potentiality of Enlightenment, and the purpose of the life is the attainment of Enlightenment. This State of Consciousness, Nirvana, the extinction of the limitations of self-hood, is attainable on earth. All men and all other forms of life contain the potentiality of Enlightenment and the process, therefore, consists in becoming what you are. 'Look within; thou art Buddha.'
9. From potential to actual Enlightenment there lies the Middle Way, the Eightfold Path 'from desire to peace', a process of self-development between the 'opposites' avoiding all extremes. The Buddha trod this way to

the end, and the only faith required in Buddhism is the reasonable belief that where a Guide has trodden it is worth our while to tread. The way must be trodden by the whole man, not merely the best of him, and heart and mind must be developed equally. The Buddha was the All-Compassionate as well as the All-Enlightened One.

10. Buddhism lays great stress on the need of inward concentration and meditation, which leads in time to the development of the inner spiritual faculties. The subjective life is as important as the daily round, and periods of quietude for inner activity are essential for a balanced life. The Buddhist should at all times be 'mindful and self-possessed,' refraining from mental and emotional attachment to 'the passing show.' This increasingly watchful attitude to circumstances, which he knows to be his own creation, helps him to keep his reaction to it always under control.
11. The Buddha said; 'Work out your own salvation with diligence.' Buddhism knows no authority for truth save the intuition of the individual, and that is authority for himself alone. Each man suffers the consequences of his own acts, and learns thereby while helping his fellow men to the same deliverance; nor will prayer to the Buddha or to any God prevent an effect from following its cause. Buddhist monks are teachers and exemplars, and in no sense intermediates between Reality and the individual. The utmost tolerance is practiced towards all other religions and philosophies, for no man has the right to interfere in his neighbour's journey to the Goal.
12. Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor 'escapist', nor does it deny the existence of god nor soul, though it places its own meaning on these terms. It is, on the contrary, a system of thought, a religion, a spiritual science and a way of life, which is reasonable, practical and all-embracing. For over two thousand years it has satisfied the spiritual needs of nearly one-third of mankind. It appeals to the West because it has no dogmas, satisfies the reason and the heart alike, insists on self-reliance coupled with tolerance for other points of view, embraces science, religion, philosophy, psychology, ethics and art, and points to man alone as the creator of his present life and sole designer of his destiny. [*Note: Christmas Humphreys apparently did not see any contradiction between this and his other statements in paras 3, 4 and 8 – Ananda Guruge*]

c) ***Ten-point Convention on Buddhism Across Cultures*** (Havanpola Ratanasara, Ananda W.P. Guruge, Karuna Dharma, Henry Shinn and Jack Bath, 1997)

- 1 We recognize Sakyamuni Gautama Buddha as the historical source for the transmission of Buddha Dharma of our time and venerate him for his compassionate service to humanity.
- 2 We recognize the multiplicity of the Buddhas of the past, the present and the future, as well as Pacceka (pratyeka) Buddhas, Arahants and Bodhisattvas.
- 3 We take refuge in the Triple Gem consisting of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.
- 4 We aspire to the fruits of enlightenment and liberation from *dukkha* (suffering) for ourselves and others in a spirit of compassion to all beings.
- 5 We hold, as central to the spirit and goals of Buddhism:

- a. The Four Noble Truths: Suffering (*dukkha*), cause of suffering (*samudaya*), cessation of Suffering (*nirodha*) and the Path to the cessation of suffering (*dukkhanirodhagamini patipada*)
 - b. The three signata: impermenence (*anicca* or *anitya*); suffering or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha* or *dukkha*); and non-self or insubstantiality (*anatta* or *anatman*);
 - c. The Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Atthangika Magga*) consisting of Right Thought, Right Motive, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration;
 - d. Twelve Links of Dependent Origination (*Patīccasamuppāda* or *pratiyasamutpada*);
 - e. The three stages of Buddhist development: ethical conduct (*sīla* or *shīla*), one-pointed mental concentration (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*pañña* or *prajna*); and
 - f. The four sublime or immeasurable states: loving kindness (*metta* or *maitri*), compassion (*karuna*), sympathetic joy (*mudita*) and equanimity (*upekkha* or *upeksa*);
- 6 We accept our moral responsibility for the results of what we think, say or do, and subscribe to the principles of *karma* and its outcome (*vipaka*).
- 7 We share a commitment to make every effort to conform to the ethical ideals of Buddhism of avoiding all unwholesome action, doing wholesome actions and keeping the mind pure by:
- a. Abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, harsh speech, idle talk, slander, stupefying intoxicants, covetousness, anger and malice, and deluded thoughts;
 - b. Practising caring with loving kindness, generosity, contentment, truthfulness, kind speech, meaningful talk, harmonious speech, temperance, and generous, compassionate and clear thoughts;
 - c. Eradicating the root causes of unskillful action: greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa* or *dvesa*), and delusion (*moha*).
- 8 We recognize the potentiality of every being to attain enlightenment from the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*) in *Nibbana* (*Nirvana*) and we accept the validity and effectiveness of different paths leading to final emancipation.
- 9 We realize that the conventional expressions of truth and reality are manifold; and, in the light of Sakyamuni Buddha's own guidelines for an openminded and tolerant quest for the Ultimate Truth, recognize the importance of deferring to inter-traditional differences and practice of the Buddha Dharma.
- 10 We uphold our commitment to tolerance, compassion and mutual understanding within and among our diverse traditions, as well as between us and the religious and secular communities outside our traditions and, in order to foster a collective effort towards global, harmonious spiritual development, undertake
- a. To study and appreciate one another's teachings, religious and social practices and cultural heritage;
 - b. To avoid imposing our beliefs through coercion, manipulation or force, and
 - c. To utilize every opportunity for dialogue and cooperation.