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A BUDDHIST PRIEST IN BRITAIN

"A. W. E." Sends an interesting note about the first Buddhist priest to set foot in this country, who has just arrived in the person of a Scotsman, Allan Bennett MacGregor. "His mission is not to learn, but to teach, and it will be interesting to observe how the Western mind will reconcile itself to the idea of the East teaching the West. Not only is he the first apostle to come West, but he is also one of the few Europeans who have become leaders in the faith of Buddha. Ananda Metteyya, and externally he presents a strange and picturesque appearance with his clean-shaven head and yellow robe. The only possessions with which he landed were:—A small filter, a rosary, a razor, a begging bowl, and an umbrella. There are 272 rules to which he must strictly adhere. One of them confines him to a single meal a day, and, of course, he is compelled to be a vegetarian. He must travel barefoot, and when lecturing to mixed audiences must keep his face concealed. Moreover, he must be drawn by no animal, and, strange as it must have appeared, his first conveyance in this country was a motor-car.

No Class Distinction in Burma

"Of his own immediate mission Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya has written at some length. For him Individualism is the great enemy. 'Buddhism', he writes, 'with its central tenets of non-individualisation, is capable of offering to the West, to England, an escape from this curse of Individualism, which is the deep-rooted cause of the vast bulk of the suffering of mankind in Western lands to-day. That it can do this—not merely should—we have sufficient evidence if we compare together, say, the population of London with that of Burma, both numbering some six million. In Buddhist Burma we find none of the ever-widening gulfs between class and class so terribly manifest in Western lands.' Finally, he contends that it is in Burma and not in Westminster that one learns to respect not wealth, but charity, and to revere not arrogance, but piety."