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A BUDDHIST MISSIONARY TO ENGLAND.



BIKKHU ANANDA METTEYYA,
The Buddhist monk of Scottish descent who has inaugurated
the first Buddhist missionary movement known to England.

For the first time in history, so it is said, a Buddhist mission is to be begun in England. A priest who bears the name of Bikkhu Ananda Metteyya has lately arrived there with a considerable following and will employ the next six months in spreading Buddhistic tenets. This man, it is further stated, is not a native of India, but a Scotsman of the original name of Allan Bennett Macgregor, who started his career as a chemical assistant in London and then went to Ceylon, where he became fascinated with the creed of Buddha. His mission is supported by a wealthy Burmese lady holding a high social position in her native country. This Easternized Westerner, the Buddhist monk, expressing his views in the London *Daily Chronicle*, believes that his religion alone "can finally solve the terrible social problems which already are menacing the stability of the Western social structure." Individualism he regards as the bane of all the

modern civilization of the West, and none of our political panaceas invented for the solution of social problems "can possibly meet the question; for they aim at treating, not the cause of the disease, but the symptom of it." From this priest's words Western socialism may possibly find in Buddhism its naturally appointed religion. We read:

"There is but one power in the world which can really alter the conditions of large masses of men: its kingdom is in the realm of the mind, in those higher emotive faculties wherefrom all that is great and true and noble in humanity has had its birth; the world of Religion, in its highest sense. For no political system, however intellectually perfect, will men ever by a jot alter their ways of life; but for a religion, for a high ideal, men will renounce all that has formerly seemed dear to them—for religion alone. If, then, one could find a religion destructive of Individualism, if that religion could find acceptance among the masses of the Western peoples, the ever-growing problems born of Individualism might be solved.

"But with the sole exception of Buddhism, all the great religions of the world teach this very doctrine of Individualism—with a spiritual sanction. Buddhism, and Buddhism alone, denies the existence in man of an immortal ego, a Soul or Self separate from that of his fellow-creatures. Buddhism, and it alone, teaches that this doctrine of the Selfhood, this belief in the paramount importance of an interior individual being, is the deepest and direst of all the many illusions whereby our ignorance deceives us. Looking upon each being as but one passing, changing wave in the Ocean of Being, comprehending that in very truth all life is one, the Buddhist sees himself as but one of life's innumerable expressions; he understands that if he should strive with his fellows he is but passing the guerdon of his strife from one hand to another; sees that he can hurt none without harming the Life whereof himself is part; and so he lives in peace with all. He, too, like all mankind, finds life like a battlefield; but the field for him has shifted from the outer world of dreams to the inner world of reality; his enemies are the passions, follies, ignorances dwelling in his heart of hearts; his long-sought victory is conquest of the Self. 'When one has understood'—so runs the Buddhist scripture—'how *all* there is of us must pass away, must die, then for him all hatreds cease.'

"Such is the fundamental teaching of The Buddha: that there is within us naught that is permanent, in-itself-abiding; that we are, as it were, but waves upon Life's Ocean, which,

passing anon, fade from the superficial and spurious appearance of individualization to the vast depths of consciousness that, common to them all dwell motionless beneath these surging waves. . . .

"Buddhism, then, with its central tenet of non-individualization, is capable of offering to the West, to England, an escape from the 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 millions. In Buddhist Burma we find none of the ever-widening gulfs between class and class so terribly manifest in Western lands. The peasant speaks to all intents the same language as the wealthy man, has much the same degree of education, of gentility, of courtesy, of general knowledge as the dweller in the towns. Because of this, and because, most of all, peasant and ruler alike have all the deeper feelings of their hearts based on the Buddhist teaching of the worthlessness and transiency of the individuality, such differences between man and man and class and class as breed so much suffering in this country are unknown in Burma, where a man is not respected on account of his wealth but only by reason of his piety or charity."