

# SUPPLEMENT TO THE THEOSOPHIST.\*

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## THE WORK OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETIES.

### THE PRESIDENT-FOUNDER AT CEYLON.

"GALLE, 27th, April.—Colonel Olcott and Professor Bruce landed last evening from the P. & O. steamer 'Khiva' which arrived from Bombay. The jetty was crowded with a large number of natives, and about *one hundred* school boys from the Theosophical school at Magalla. White cloth was spread from the jetty to the carriage. The Colonel and his companion were driven in a waggon to Magalla, where a house had been prepared for their reception. It is supposed that Professor Bruce has come to inspect the Theosophical schools."—*The Ceylon Observer*, April 28, 1881.

### *Extracts from the President's letters to the Bombay Head-quarters.*

GALLE, 28th April 1881.—....."Same cordial welcome as before. Landing-place crowded, white cloths laid down for us to walk upon, some three hundred boys† of our schools wearing rosettes, in a procession to meet us. Lodged most comfortably in the upper floor of Mr. Simon Perera, F.T.S.'s bungalow by the sea-shore, where last year the convention of the Buddhist priests, was held..... The very first thing I got by post was—a Christian tract! So that put the match to the train, and Mr. Bruce composed an anti-Christian tract.—"Why I am not a Christian.".....It is to be sold for a penny or two for the benefit of the education fund.

My general plan of work I have sketched out. I mean to raise as much for that fund as possible. I have called a council of a few of our best men to perfect all the details, and I shall then begin at the extreme south—Matara and Tangalle—and visit every district in the whole Island—probably in company of the Rev. Megattiwatte of Colombo, and Rev. Sumanatissa of Galle, and Mr. Bruce.

Yesterday we examined our school. It was most interesting. Mottoes of welcome on the walls; our double triangle, in red, everywhere; a verse of welcome in chalk on each of a half-dozen black boards; the boys all standing at attention; outside the building a great sign "The Theosophical Buddhist School" in English and Singhalese,—I tell you it warmed the very fibres of my heart to see these signs of our having done some real, substantial good to the "wretched heathen."

Thursday, May 12, Colombo:—"I lectured at the College last evening to an audience of about five hundred. All day the rain had descended in torrents, and the lightning and thunder had been terrific. I expected nobody, but the rain ceased at about 4, and when I began my speech at 6, the above number had assembled. I had in my hand a paper on which the High Priest, the Rev. Sumangala had entered all the lies about the Theosophical Society, I was to refute, and I went at it strong. I defied everybody, Christian or otherwise, that had anything to say either about the Theosophical Society or ourselves, to

come on the platform like men and say it to my face. I was standing there for the very purpose of answering charges, &c. But although I had received a warning and threatening letter from a Christian that day, *not a soul dared open his mouth.*".....

At Colombo as at Galle, some members of our Societies as Messrs. Andrew Perera, De Silva, Abrew and a half dozen more are indefatigable. Things are very encouraging. The journal of the Colombo Society supports itself and defends us and our common cause every week. There is a very comfortable head-quarter with a lecture-hall, reception-room, sleeping-rooms, kitchen, bath, etc. In short, the Society is alive and doing what it can, thanks to its devoted and energetic President—Mr. A. Perera."

These letters are corroborated by the following extracts from the *Ceylon Times* :—

POPULAR EDUCATION FOR THE NATIVES.—The presence once more in Ceylon of Colonel Olcott, this time accompanied by a Mr. Bruce, a Scotch Educationist, is explained by his intention to establish schools amongst the people of the country who by their religious feelings are prevented attending the schools of Missionary Societies. It is intended in short to work on ground hitherto unoccupied, and to impart instruction of an elementary yet thoroughly practical character. In order to provide the funds necessary for this purpose, Colonel Olcott proposes to deliver a course of lectures, admission to which shall be by tickets to be sold at an almost nominal price. The first of these will be given on Friday next at the Kelani Temple, the day of the annual festival, and another will be delivered at the College at Maligakande. In connection with this educational work a series of elementary school-books will be printed in the vernacular, and in English, and this alone, if carefully carried out, will prove a great boon to the people, especially if popular practical knowledge is dealt with in the series. Mr. Bruce who has just returned from a tour through China, Japan, and portions of India, intends to remain some time in Ceylon in order to be present at the initiation of the scheme, the funds towards which will be vested entirely in the hands of Singhalese Trustees, three in each province, and these Trustees will see to the proper distribution of the monies for the educational work of their own province."—*Times*, May 11.

"VIEWS AND PLANS OF THE THEOSOPHISTS.—On the 11th instant, about 7 p. m., a lecture was delivered to a large audience, by Col. H. S. Olcott, at the Widdiyodaya College. The High Priest Sumangala presided. The object of the lecture was to notice and answer slanders circulated by the opponents of the Theosophical Society. He announced that he had come again to proceed with the work where it was dropped last time. But before touching upon that question, he said that it was necessary to answer a series of questions that his friends had drafted, in reference to various false rumours that had been set afloat by those who had not had the courage to come forward when he was last in Ceylon, but had used the safe cover of the local papers when he was hundreds of miles away. As Buddha says "There never was, there is not, nor will there ever be in this world a man of total repute or dis-

\* At the desire of many of our Fellows, we have of late begun to add a Supplement to each of our Numbers to keep our Branches and members informed monthly of our work and the progress of our Society. We take this opportunity to request all our Branch Societies (those who desire to remain unknown, being, of course, excluded) to send us occasionally such information regarding the work of their respective Branches as may be considered desirable for publication.

† We have about 600 boys, now in our Ceylon Schools.

\* And the Missionary organs, like the *Lockport Witness* and others, denounce us yet for our lack of sympathy for the *paupers* and Christian convicts! For six years we have to fight step by step, falsehoods, slanders and vilification invented with the sole object of making the public lose every confidence in the Theosophical Society. And all that in the name of the Bible, which commands—"Thou shalt not bear false witness," and in that of Christ, of Him who, represented as the meekest and the most forgiving of all men, is said to have died for humanity to save the world from sin! Verily more crimes are perpetrated, and *false* evidence daily given in the name of the "meek Nazarene" by his followers, than there ever was among those Jews and heathen he called—a "generation of vipers! Can TRUTH ever need such weapons?—ED. THEOS.

repute," and he, the speaker, was well aware that in undertaking such a task as this he would not escape abuse. With the motive of organising societies to promote the idea of Universal Brotherhood, and among other things to propagate Buddhism, he said he had left his native land, his relatives and friends, and had given up the practice of law which yielded him an income of £200 per mensem; and for this sacred cause of Universal Brotherhood he is ready to sacrifice all his power, and even his life in case that should be necessary. It was also asked whether the parent society is Buddhistic or not. The reply was yes and no. As the two founders of the society are Buddhists, and the pure motive of the society is to promote Universal Brotherhood, and among other things to promulgate Buddhism, the lecturer said that the parent society may be said to be Buddhist.\* But as it is also composed of Zoroastrians, Hindus, Jews, Mahomedans, Christians, Free-thinkers, Atheists &c., he said the Society is in that sense un-Buddhistic. Hence the object of enlisting Buddhists in the Society, was to organise purely as Buddhists, to promote the best interests of their own religion. He had been asked the reason why the money realised from initiation fees had not been left behind them in Ceylon last year when the Theosophical party returned to Bombay. Societies are supposed to be supported by their income, and income is derived from initiation fees, dues, &c. ? So far from any one making a profit out of the fees of the Buddhists or any other class of members, he, the speaker, and his good colleague Madame Blavatsky, had given out of their own private resources towards the Society's support, since 1st December, 1878, "no less than Rs. 20,000, besides all their time and labour." The speaker exhibited in proof the audited account of the Treasurer of the Theosophical Society. With regard to the symbol of the double triangle, he said the first triangle in a Buddhist sense represents Matter, Law, their products, the second Ignorance cleaving to existing objects, and merit and demerit—also the word "Om" is a sacred word among the Chaldeans, Hindus, Jains, that represented the formless principle in Nature. In Tibet, the sacred words are "Om mane Padme hum." O! the jewel in the lotus (*i. e.*, the self-creative force in the Kosmos). That is eternal Law resides in matter, and causes it to take on its various forms. But "Om" is really a word of the deepest mystical import, and its meaning is known only to those high proficient in "occult" science, called by the Buddhists, Arhats, and by others by other names. With many quotations from several Sutras, and examples drawn from Buddha's life, the lecturer dwelt largely upon caste prejudices, and showed to the Buddhists how antagonistic its exercise is to the teachings of Buddha, and also showed them that schools for educating Buddhist children are essentially required. If the Buddhists neglect this, this very College, and the Pansalas and Dharmasalas in Ceylon, would in process of time become places of Christian worship. He added that the Buddhist Branch of the Theosophical Society is going to raise funds for establishing Buddhist schools, and when the money is collected it will be deposited in Banks under the supervision of respectable trustees. The trustees already appointed for the Southern Province, he said, are Edmund Guneratna Mudliyar and Mr. Simon Perera. Speaking at length of the work done by the Society during the last year, and promising to speak before them again on this subject at Kelani on the full-moon day, and at Moratuwa on Sunday next, the lecture was brought to a close at 9 p. m. After a vote of thanks to the lecturer by the Rev. H. Devamitta, the large crowd dispersed."—*Ibid*, May 16.

EDUCATION FOR THE MILLION.—On Sunday, the 22nd instant, at 3 p.m., a lecture for raising funds for establishing Buddhist schools, was delivered by Col. Olcott at the Rev.

\* The Reporter must have misunderstood our President. The Parent Society cannot be said to be "Buddhist" since (a) it is more *unsectarian* than any of its branches, and (b) its numerous body being composed of members who professing the most widely separated creeds—many of them are liberal Christians, Mahomedans, Hindus, Parsees, &c.—while others and the greater number are materialists and spiritualists. The "Parent Society" is not composed only of the two Founders (now in India) and the Recording Secretary, these three alone being openly Buddhists, but of other original Founders who are scattered about America and Europe, and of members, half a dozen or so of whom also profess that faith and "take refuge in Buddha." But even the fact of the two Founders being Buddhists does not make them respect any the less for it the Vedas and especially the *Vedanta*. After as much study as we could give to it, we came to the firm conviction that Vedantism and Buddhism were two synonymous, nearly identical philosophies, in spirit, if not in practice and interpretation. The Vedanta system is but transcendental or so to say *spiritualised* Buddhism, while the latter is rational or even *radical* Vedantism. Between the two stands Sankya philosophy.

Subhuti's Temple at Wellawatta, and the Rev. M. Gnanananda presided on the occasion. The lecture was well interpreted by Mr. Proctor Goonesekera of Galle. (*Ceylon Times May, 24.*)

News coming from Australia, which are sure to please our Buddhist Brethren in Ceylon, speak also of the work of the Theosophists in that fair Island. In the *Harbinger of Light* edited at Melbourne, by our esteemed friend and Brother W. H. Terry, Esq., member of our General Council, and the representative of the Theosophical Society in the Australian Colonies, we find the following:—

"By the last Suez mail we are in receipt of a photograph of the Theosophical Society's Buddhist School at Point de Galle, where a reform in the right direction was initiated and is now in active operation, viz., the Redemption from blind Christianity to rational Buddhism of the Singhalese 'rising generation.' On account of European influence in Ceylon the religious teaching of the youth in the principal cities had, until recently, been almost monopolised by the Missionaries of the Catholic and Protestant Christian Churches, but since the revival of Buddhism, occasioned by the visit of the Theosophical embassy last year, three schools have been started in connexion with the Society's branches in Ceylon, the 'Galle' one alone numbering about 300 scholars.

"Buddhism is a pure Theism\* combined with the highest morality, a religion calculated to expand the higher faculties of the mind, and exempt from the soul-binding dogmas with which the Christian system is weighted.

"The picture contains portraits of about 250 of the scholars, of good physique and having fine intelligent faces, it may be seen at the office of this paper. Annexed is the letter from our friend and brother, D. K. Mavalankar, Esq., which accompanied it."

### THE HINDU SABHA.

INAUGURATED A.D. 1880.—KALI ERA 4882.

*Affiliated to*

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, BOMBAY.

The members of the Sabha will endeavour their best:—

1. To cite from the Vyasiyam or the teachings of Vyasa, authorities for any doctrine or practice, which they may uphold, or against any which they may oppose.
2. To give certificates of qualification and character to learned priests.
3. To encourage the marriage of girls after puberty and the re-marriage of child-widows.
4. To promote unity and good-will amongst the sects and castes of India.

Subscription by Members to the monthly Journal and Vyasiyam, per annum, Rs. 5.

Subscribers of Rs. 7 or more who are not Members will be called PATRONS.

Hindu Subscribers who endeavour to promote the objects of the Sabha are Members, and those who simply take some interest in it are Patrons.

The Vyasiyam will be issued as a Supplement and separately paged.—*Journal of the Hindu Sabha.*

The President of the *Hindu Sabha*, our worthy and active Brother M R Ry. A. Sankariah, B.A., Member of our General Council has the following appeal in his journal:—"The Hindu Sabha is an Association of educated Hindus co-operating for certain specified objects, and the Journal and Vyasiyam are issued only to Members and Patrons in order to secure a common understanding. The quality of this medium of communication can be improved at present by their contributing articles and funds..... The Members and Patrons should always remember that their subscriptions are given in furtherance of the objects of the Association and not of a literary speculation."

\* Our esteemed friend is mistaken. Buddhism is no "Theism" since Buddhists do not believe in a "personal god," and reject altogether *Revelation*. They "take refuge in Buddha" and call him "Saviour" not because they regard him as a *god* but, on account of the "Enlightened Teacher" having saved humanity from the great darkness of superstition, from blind faith in the teachings of fallible men and belief in their authority. Siddhartha Buddha is a saviour indeed, for, taking us by the hand he was the first to show us the way to true *salvation*—deliverance from the miseries of human life; future everlasting misery and eternal bliss depending but upon our own personal merits. We are our own Saviours.—ED. THEOS.

Further he says :—

“Whether Orthodox or educated, the Hindus have been a nation of Theosophists believing in Soul, God, Yog, Vedantism, Incantations and ceremonies, and seeking wisdom in the ways of the spirit. The Theosophical Society to which the Hindu Sabha is affiliated exists to study and support the cause of Hindu philosophy, religion and science, and bring them home to all other creeds and races. What is there “ominous” in the alliance? A member of our Sabha is not pledged to any secrecy as such. But in the *Om* stage neither a Hindu Yogee nor the Theosophical Society will admit a person to Fellowship except under oaths and tests for the following reason which obtains also with a kindred sect called Masonic lodges :—that experiments and trials in respect of the Highest knowledge or true Religion are often of tremendous efficacy for good or evil and that the practising initiate and even adept should be protected from being disturbed by the vulgar and the civil authorities. When the Knowledge is spread and recognised, and the men of *Intrinsic* power become also the officers of Human Law, then all veil will be thrown aside. Let us hasten the advent of the day of the ascendancy of man's genuine worth and god's glorious reign—or more strictly speaking of the *recognition* of that ascendancy which always is and must be. Valmiki Rishi says that Indrajit was killed after he had been prevented from completing the *Nikumbala yogam* a species of samadhi yog. And our Hindu readers will call to mind other accounts to support the necessity for pledges and secrecy in the pursuit of the Transcendental Vyasiyam or Theosophy.....

It is fearful to contemplate the hypocrisy or inconsistency of many a Hindu who performing the Tonsure, the sraddha, the Marriage and Funeral ceremonies &c. &c., yet do not care to know why and on what authority they perform them! We have told them that Tonsure is equivalent to swearing allegiance to the nation; that the sraddha is swearing allegiance to the Rishis or adept theosophists of the nation whose works whether the Vedas, the Mimamsa, the Smritis, the Puranas or Itihisas may be called the Vyasiyam in honor of Sri Veda Vyasa; that ceremonies and prayers *esoterically* observed invoke the various powers in the universe; that our definition of Hindu is one who respects the Rishis of India and loves the nation devoted to them; that open defiance of the Vyasiyam is forfeiture of caste or separation from the national communion; and that every educated Hindu should acquire as much proficiency as is possible for him in the Vyasiyam and assist or seek assistance from others. Yet still after the publication of eight numbers of the Journal we have to confront the anomaly of *Hindus* wishing to know what is the Vyasiyam and who is a Hindu. We request every one who has received a copy of the Journal to read it or lend it to as many Hindus as possible and set those questions at rest for ever, for we shall not notice them hereafter in the pages of the Journal but treat them as the axioms and postulates of the Hindu nation.”

*Editor's Note.*—Our esteemed Brother seems to wonder that “after the publication of eight numbers of the journal” he, the Editor, has “to confront the anomaly of Hindus wishing to know what is the Vyasiyam and who is a Hindu.” His surprise may cool, perhaps, when we have told him, that after *six years* of the Theosophical Society's existence, and after the publication of *twenty-one* numbers of the THEOSOPHIST journal, full of the objects and aims of its Society, we encounter nearly daily the “anomaly” of its *Members* and *Fellows* wishing to know “what is Theosophy” and “who or what is a Theosophist!” Some of them, we find, laboured under the extraordinary impression that no sooner were they *initiated* than they would find themselves able to cross the Himalayas astride on a cloud, converse with the “UNKNOWNABLE” face to face, or—secure at once an appointment for High Court Judgeship!...

## COLOMBO THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

### Items for June.

CEYLON NATIONAL FUND FOR THE PROMOTION OF EDUCATION.—“On the 5th June, Rev. Megittuwatte and Colonel Olcott, accompanied by a delegation from the Colombo Theosophical Society, lectured at Negombo on the subject of promoting education among the Buddhists, which, it is now seen, is indispensable if we are to uphold Buddhism and restore it to its ancient lustre. The lectures had a signal effect on the Buddhists of this town. Their

enthusiasm and patriotic feelings were so aroused that they at once subscribed Rs. 2,000, and a portion of this amount was collected on the spot. To meet with such liberality in Negombo which has long been a stronghold of Catholicism, is a plain indication of the success for the noble movement in question.

MR. SIMON DE SILVA SENAVIRATNE, VICE-PRESIDENT OF the Colombo Theosophical Society, was on the 9th June, invested by Government with the titular rank of “Mohandiram,” in recognition of his literary qualifications, and able services rendered in the capacity of Interpreter in the Colombo Municipal Court.

His fellow members, in company with Colonel Olcott, paid a visit to his house on the occasion, and presented him a silver watch and a gold chain. An address, in acknowledging his unselfish co-operation in the interest of the Society, was delivered.

ON THE 12TH JUNE A COMMITTEE OF THE COLOMBO Theosophical party, numbering about thirty members, went with Colonel Olcott to Kotte for a lecture about the National Fund. They were cordially received and hospitably entertained by Mr. S. F. Perera, Vice-President of the Society. The lecture was delivered by Colonel Olcott at the Kotte Buddhist Temple, situated within about half a mile from the Kotte Mission House. The collection amounted to Rs. 350, and the vernacular school there which had been established by Mr. Perera, six months ago at his own expense, was given in charge to the Society. It is indeed gratifying to say that he has taken great interest in the cause, and we cannot but express our warmest thanks for his liberality and generous feelings for the well-being of his countrymen. The school contains eighty boy pupils; all formerly attendants at the Mission School, where they are being perverted from Buddhism by Christian teaching.”

W. F. WIJESEKARA,

*Secretary, Colombo Theosophical Society.*

## KANDY THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

The Kandy Branch has leased a beautifully situated plot of ground in the town, from the Natha Dewalé with the intention of erecting a suitable hall thereupon for the Society's use when the necessary funds shall be collected. Seventeen new members have joined the Society since the last report.

## GALLE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

The High School, established last year by the Gallo Branch, flourishes as usual, and at the expense of the Mission Schools. An offer of the appointment of Principal has been made to Mr. Bruce, but that gentleman has declined for the present, as he has engagements that detain him at Colombo.

## THE OCCULT WORLD.

MR. Messrs. Trübner announce for publication a book, with the title of “The Occult World,” or Indian Theosophy, by Mr. A. P. Sinnett—(Vice-President of the Theos. Society). This is a record of personal experiences among the professors of “the occult science” in Eastern countries. The author seeks to show that the powers of these men, though apparently miraculous, rest upon a strictly natural basis, “being founded upon a higher plane of knowledge concerning the laws of nature than that which European science has yet reached.”

After the above was in type we find the book is already out, and, in about a fortnight will be available at our office.

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR,

Manager, THEOSOPHIST Office.