

A CONSPIRACY AGAINST BUDDHISM

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(Address given by Mr.L.H. Mettananda at the presentation of the Report of the Buddhist Commission to the Maha Sangha and the Buddhist Public at Ananda College on the 4th February 1956.)

It gives me great pleasure to have had the opportunity of addressing a few words to you on this memorable and historic occasion. We are indeed at a turning point in our history. The action that will be taken now will decide forever the future history of the Buddhist religion and of the Sinhalese people in this country.

In reading through the chapters of the Report of the Buddhist Commission you will see for yourselves how three foreign governments for over four and a half centuries did everything in their power to destroy Buddhism. But now that we are independent and ruled by our elected representatives, are we any better than before? Under English rule, it was the Church of England that held sway. In Independent Lanka, it is not Buddhism, the traditional religion of the majority of the people of this country that holds sway, but Roman Catholicism, a religion directed and controlled by a foreign Power, the Vatican!

A great noise is being made by our Government that much is being done for Buddhism. The Dalada Maligawa is to be provided with a new wing, Mahiyangana is to be restored, the Pattirippuwa and Magul Maduwa are to be given to the Buddhists. The Tripitaka is being translated into Sinhalese. A Buddhist Encyclopedia is being compiled. These are no doubt very good things, but I ask you "Will the restoration of old buildings help to revive the Buddhist Way of Life?" The translation of the Tripitaka and the compilation of a Buddhist Encyclopedia are good things, but will they alone help to revive the Buddhist Way of Life? The Buddhists are being given buildings and books; but what does the Government do for the Roman Catholics? To them a sacrifice is made of the Buddhist children. The Government subsidizes the Christian Organizations almost to the extent of fifty million rupees annually to pervert and denationalize our children in their Church schools. Our sick are being handed over to Roman Catholic Nursing Sisters who are pledged to propagate their faith and extend the dominion of the Pope. Colombo Hospital is under their control Recently the Government spent 7 1/2 lakhs for a home for the Roman Catholic Nursing Sisters at Bogambara Hill in Kandy. The cross that surmounts their chapel built by the Government is seen above the pinnacle that surmounts the Dalada Maligawa! Kandy Hospital is being handed over to them. Within the next few years other big hospitals will be handed over to them. Again large sums of money are being given by the Government to Christian Organizations for the care of orphans, the aged, the deaf, the dumb and the blind. The large majority of the inmates of these institutions are born Buddhists who are being converted to Christianity with the aid of the subsidy given by a people's Government!

It is a well-known fact that next to the Government the Roman Catholic Church is the richest organization in Ceylon. Its financial position is a mystery not only to the Government, but also to the Roman Catholics themselves. This immensely rich organization does not pay any taxes to the Government. It increases its ever accumulating wealth not only by fleecing the faithful in diverse ways, but also by indulging in commercial activities such as lending on interest, investing in stocks and shares and investing in housing property and real estates.

To make it wealthier, at the request of the Archbishop, large extents of lands are given to Roman Catholics in colonies. In all parts of the Island even where there is not a single Catholic, Crown land is being given for the construction of churches. Buddhists are naturally up in arms against these actions of the Government. The Roman Catholic Church with its vast resources is openly and blatantly exploiting the poverty, the ignorance and the helplessness of the Buddhist masses. The Buddhists have no way of ventilating their grievances and getting them redressed in this democratic land of ours. The Lake House Newspapers which support the Government and the Roman Catholic Church pay no heed to the grievances of the Buddhists. On the other hand these papers publish glowing tributes to the Catholic Clergy and Nuns and give prominence to Roman Catholic parades and processions. They also suppress any form of local news critical of or detrimental to the Roman Catholic Church. At the same time they advise the Buddhists to be tolerant. The Dinamina, the Silumina and the Janata fool the Bhikkhus and the Sinhalese reading public, while the Daily News and the Observer ridicule the Bhikkhus, the Sinhalese teachers and the Ayurvedic Physicians and the Sinhalese reading public in general. Government rejoices at all these; so does the Roman Catholic Church.

Our Government appears to give the kernel to the Catholics and the husk to the Buddhists. While aiding and abetting the rapid growth of the Vatican's power in this country at the expense of Buddhism, the Government tries to fool the good-natured Buddhists by delivering acts of appointments to Nayaka Theros, by participating in their funeral ceremonies, and by organising peraheras and other functions at which crowds gather in order to deceive the people that a great deal is being done to Buddhism.

The question now arises: When Buddhist children, the poor, the sick, the helpless and the landless Buddhists are handed over to the Roman Catholic Church to be perverted by it, where are the Buddhists to worship at the shrines put up or renovated by the Government? Where are the Buddhists to read the Sinhalese Tripitaka and the Buddhist Encyclopedia prepared by it?

It is an irrevocable decree of the dictatorial Roman Catholic Church that no Catholic can participate in a Non-Catholic religious ceremony. They are even forbidden to participate in a service in a Protestant Christian Church. Yet we witness the spectacle of a Roman Catholic Divisional Revenue Officer carrying a Bana Book in procession to a Buddhist temple and delivering it to a Bhikkhu requesting him to translate it into Sinhalese. We see a Roman Catholic Government Agent organizing a function for the distribution of awards by the Prime Minister to the Bhikkhus who had translated the

Tripitaka into Sinhalese. We see a Roman Catholic lady of very high standing as the organizer of the Buddhist Pageant at the Agricultural Exhibition now going on. Has the Roman Catholic Church relaxed its rigid rules in the case of these worthy people? Or is it a deep laid conspiracy between the Church and the Government to extend the Church's influence on the one side and to bring Buddhism to ridicule on the other? Is not the Government aware that Roman Catholic officials belong to a secret movement called the Catholic Action, whose primary aim is to extend the dominion of the Pope and to sabotage and demobilize religions other than Roman Catholicism? It is a shame, a crying shame to entrust Buddhist work to those who are pledged to destroy Buddhism.

Incidentally is it a mere coincidence that the last Government Agent and the present Government Agent of Kandy are both devout Roman Catholics, Kandy, the city that is so sacred to Buddhists as the city of the Tooth Relic.

Our so-called democratic Government does not in the least mind hurting Buddhist sentiments, because it has the backing of the powerful Lake House Press. We know that Lake House Press is the Public Enemy No. 1 of Buddhism. Both Government and Lake House stand for the American Way of Life. The sobriety, the restraint, the simplicity advocated by the Buddha are anathema to them. They stand for libertinism, sensuality and self-indulgence which are the keynote of the life in the decadent West. Lake House glorifies bookies, drunkards, dope dealers and other anti-social rogues while it loses no opportunity to ridicule national heroes, champions of temperance and defenders and promoters of Buddhism, Lake House is truly anti-national and anti-Buddhist.

I must mention here one or two things that have resulted from the Roman Catholic domination of the Buddha Jayanthi celebrations. First, the Government has not yet given notice to the Roman Catholic Church and the Convent to quit the Sacred City of Anuradhapura. Second, the Home Ministry, on representations made by the Catholic Hierarchy is contemplating legislation to punish the Bhikkhus and others who criticize or attack the Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church will then be able to put out its pernicious propaganda without let or hindrance, once the legislation gets into our Statute Books!

There is no doubt whatever that the Government Party is exploiting the Buddha Jayanthi for political ends. We know that some organizers of the Buddha Jayanthi celebrations haunt cocktail parties, gambling dens and night clubs and at the same time appeal to the country to meditate. This is downright hypocrisy. It makes Buddhism the laughing stock of the world. For goodness sake, let us have an end to this tomfoolery and allow the Bhikkhus and sincere Buddhists to take charge of the Buddha Jayanthi celebrations.

The same sort of double-dealing we see in other activities of Government as well. The first Director of Education in Independent Lanka was Dr. Howes, a Roman Catholic. He did more harm to Buddhist education than any of the Colonial Directors. This enemy of Buddhism is once again appointed by Government to a responsible post in connection with the Six Year Plan.

Here is another case of double-dealing. Sessional Paper XXII of 1946 contains a resolution of a State Council Committee Report to this effect: From January 1, 1957 English shall cease to be the language of administration. It was signed by:-

J R Jayawardene (Chairman)
J H B Nihill
C W W Kannangara
T B Jayah
S Natesan
A Ratnayaka

This resolution was accepted by the State Council. Has Government taken any action to implement it? Since the crowning of our Prime Minister as Emperor of the Donkey-island of Delft during his famous visit to Jaffna, he has promised parity to both Sinhalese and Tamil. The country has opposed this announcement and demanded that Sinhalese only shall be the State Language of Ceylon. Government appears to agree. But it wants to hold a new election to implement it. Government apparently wants to fool the country. Government has no fear. The anti-national Lake House News papers support this move. We are told that the Government Party has entered into a secret pact with the Tamil M.P's whereby the Tamil M.P's will resign from the Party, fight the elections, and rejoin the Party in order to continue with English as the state language of Ceylon, The 1946 State Council decision to discontinue English as the official language from 1st January, 1957 will be thrown overboard. Government of course has no fear. It has the support of the anti-national Lake House Newspapers.

The Government Party's decision to hold an election just one month before Buddha Jayanthi exposes their duplicity and hypocrisy more than anything else. They are concerned not with Buddha Jayanthi or with the Buddhist Way of Life, but with the elections. They know very well that an election necessarily splits up the people and creates great confusion among them, the more so this time owing to the state language issue. In such an atmosphere Buddha Jayanthi celebrations will get disorganized and the great religious awakening we looked forward to will be deferred till doomsday. Possibly the Christian strongholds anticipated this and having approached their mahadenamutta got him to time the election so as to sabotage the whole of the Jayanthi celebrations.

Thus we see that under a democratic Government, a political party can exploit Buddhism and advance the Roman Catholic Church at the same time. It is for this reason that we want the State to sever connections with Buddhism and allow the Maha Sangha and the Buddhist laymen to look after the Buddha Sasana.

We are asking that youth of the country be freed from missionary control. Today it is not only the education of the young that is endangered. The adults receive their education largely through the Press. We have no grievance against the Times, which is a Catholic-controlled paper. But we

have every right to expect the Lake House Newspapers - the Daily News, the Observer, the Dinamina, the Janata and the Silumina to be run as national newspapers. They were started by a great patriot of this country, the late Mr D R Wijewardene, at the request of another patriot, the late Sir D B Jayatilake. It was the late Mr Wijewardene who left by will two lakhs of rupees for the construction of the university Sangharama. The Lakehouse Newspapers are now run by his son-in-law, Mr Esmond Wickremasinghe, who happens to be a member of a Christian family. He has filled the editorial staff and other key posts of Lake House with Christians, especially Roman Catholics. His general policy is to decry the Sinhalese language and Buddhism and to extol the virtues of Christianity and English. He runs his papers as the official organs of vested interests and foreign interests. There is scarcely anything national in his English newspapers. But as his income comes chiefly from the Sinhalese reading public, he gives his Sinhalese newspapers a local look which however rapidly undergoes a change when it suits him. His inconsistency can be seen from the fact that his English newspapers support English as the State language and ridicule the Sinhalese medium child as a monkey-faced idiot, and Dutugemunu as a pot-bellied drunkard, while his Sinhalese newspapers appear to support Sinhalese as the state language and appear to ridicule the denationalized section of our society.

In the forthcoming election, will the Christian son-in-law of an eminent Buddhist leader, surrounded by a host of Roman Catholics ever support the Buddhist cause which his father-in-law would have done, had he lived today? Certainly not, if we judge him by his past record.

In the forthcoming elections, I am afraid the Times and Lake House Newspapers will educate the Buddhist voter to vote for the Party which maintains and supports Christianity and which is deceiving the Buddhists day in and day out. They are the institutions of Mara. Do not be deceived by them. Mara is now controlling the country. The Buddhists must prepare for a great struggle. Let the Maha Sanga give us the lead.

DASA PANATHA

1. To recognize the principle of Ahimsa in all activities.
2. To oppose the forces of Mara (evil) in whatever guise they may appear.
3. To implement the recommendations of the Buddhist Commission.
4. Immediately to provide by law that Sinhalese should be made the official language of the country, and to take all steps necessary to implement this decision.
5. To see that democracy is safeguarded and promoted, and to take all

steps necessary to prevent the growth of fascist or communist dictatorship, to repeal all anti-democratic measures and to reverse all anti-democratic actions committed by the U.N.P. Government.

6. To promote the revival of our arts and crafts, Ayurveda and all other aspects of our national heritage and a return to a simpler way of life.
7. While guaranteeing the fullest freedom of conscience and of worship to all and equality of treatment irrespective of religion, to accord to Buddhism the special position guaranteed by the Kandyan Convention of 1815 and The Declaration of British Sovereignty of 1818, as the religion of the majority of the people of this country.
8. To ensure a satisfactory standard of life to all our people.
9. To plan towards a more equitable distribution of wealth.
10. To see that no government assistance is given to any institution that tends to emphasise or promote communal differences or create communal disharmony or inequalities and thereby prevent the growth of a national consciousness.