

## **BUDDHISTS WAKE UP!**

**By L. H. Mettananda**

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The Ceylon Daily News editorial of June 16th on the subject of “Whited Sepulchres” is a veritable example of *suppressio veri et suggestio falsi*. The editor imagines “among the pilgrim’s hands which were folded devoutly in meditation at Mihintale ... which, at some future time will be stained by blood, under the creed of non-violence and compassion” which he follows. It is pertinent to ask the editor whether he has visualised the same phenomenon among the pilgrims of Madu or elsewhere under the “mind-deadening effect of repetitive ritual”.

The comparative figures of delinquency according to religion are known and Buddhism, which encourages education, self-examination and self-restraint, has certainly a better record than Catholicism, whose authoritarianism co-exists with illiteracy and crime.

The incidence of crime in Ceylon is certainly high. The majority of the population being Buddhists, it is natural for the majority of criminals to be Buddhists. But the incidence of crime is due to various causes unconnected with Buddhism. It is easy for one to shut one’s eyes to the psychological, sociological, economic and political factors which have conditioned the lives of our people, and using figures just as the ventriloquist uses his Dummy, for the purpose of belittling the spiritual emotion which Mihintale awakens in the heart of every Buddhist.

Who dares to suggest that the Buddhists of Ceylon, by virtue of such spiritual emotion, can become “Whited Sepulchres”? However we do not deny that there are “Whited sepulchres” in our midst. A regenerate Lanka can and shall ignore them and leave them to their own fates, but unfortunately today they wield power among our people.

It is well known that Buddhism has enabled our people to survive the shambles erected for their massacre by Catholic Portugal, the inhuman persecution imposed on them by wicked Hollanders, and the dictatorship of their minds held by crafty England. To be sure, Buddhism has enabled our people to survive their over powering sense of inferiority, frustration and despair that stemmed from the ridicule and contempt, direct or indirect, poured by the arrogant foreigner upon them, upon their habits, customs, institutions, manners, music, art, dress, history, religion, language, literature and medicine.

It may be said that we find the same sort of thing even at the present day in the pages of a section of the local Press, the effect being often accentuated by means of cartoons, caricatures or crocodile tears. Indeed, Buddhism has enabled our people to survive the mission of the white man’s burden to serve “the lesser breed without the law” and “new-caught sullen peoples, half-devil and half-child”. In short, Buddhism has enabled our people to

escape the extinction from the face of the earth that fell to the lot of the indigenous inhabitants of America, Australia, and Africa.

Yes, Buddhists have survived!

Just when our people were emerging from their centuries-old sense of inferiority, frustration and despair, those who were intent on the control of their minds have adopted a subtle technique in strategy with foreign agents and foreign funds to uproot our people from their moorings, to fire every move to give due recognition to their language, to wean children from the faith of their fathers, from their homes and hearths, dangling before their eyes the New Paganism of the West, particularly the American Brand. This underhand activity has wrecked our families, made converts of many Buddhists and what is worse, turned many more into bad Buddhists. All this has produced an atmosphere of irreligion, which stresses comfortable living by hook or by crook.

On the top of all this, our mushroom leaders, intoxicated with newfound power and privilege, not caring two hoots for what happens to the country, have fallen easy victims to the New Paganism. As a result Zou Zou debauchery, robbery that defies Auditors' scrutiny, frauds that baffle official investigation, orgies of vice gangs in night clubs, cocktail parties, horse-racing and bravado jointly and severally constitute the route to the Exalted Circle of our Society.

At times the leaders climb down from the Ivory Tower to hob nob with the people in tamashas, to observe ata sil with whisky bottles in their kit-bags, to carry Dhatu Karanduwa on their heads reeling in front of a religious procession, to offer flowers in the temple one day and to kneel at prayer in church the next day. This rank hypocrisy on the part of those from whom the country expects the example of "Self-discipline" is known to everybody.

Such large-scale hypocrisy in high places constantly before the public eye and wielding tremendous influence, the common topic of everybody's conversation everywhere, must necessarily lower the moral level of the entire nation, and seriously impair the inner life of the ordinary man.

The place of honour goes to the criminal. The fashion is to exalt the selfish, unscrupulous person and to decry the public-spirited, cultured person. All this boils down to crime, more crime and still more crime. The first requisite, therefore, to check the existing wave of crime is a change of heart in the upper levels of our society. In these circumstances, let us hope that centuries-old tyranny under foreign domination, depravities and rifts brought into being by fifth columnists in our midst with the connivance of our real "Whited Sepulchres", and insults often hurled at us by our sly calumniators, will serve as a means of purification to make us fit for the great future heralded by Buddha Jayanti. Buddhists wake up!