

**I**N the name of the Buddha.....  
In the name of the Buddha," repeated the

newly elected Principal of Ananda College, Colombo, on 2nd November, twenty three years ago, with the aim of attracting the attention of a batch of students, who were demanding that their former Principal be reinstated.

But, his voice was drowned by students on strike. They smashed window panes, destroyed furniture and left a sad pile of vandalism. A few days earlier

# METTANANDA

the school buildings were set on fire and valuable books of the library destroyed. All seemed lost.

But, the new Principal's persistent appeal was answered. The pupils returned to their classrooms.

Who was this man, who by appeals to the boys' good sense, brought back order among erring students? He was the tall, gaunt and ascetic-like P. H. Mettananda, who till November 1945 had been head of Dharmaraja College, Kandy. But, he was no stranger to Ananda, for from 1932 to 1936, he had been

acting head of the institution.

Principal Mettananda had his secondary education at Richmond College, Galle, where he saw the Rev. W. J. T. Small instilling the Public School spirit to his pupils. Both pupils, S. K. P. de Silva (later P. de S Kularatne) and Mettananda had been pupils of educationist Small.

The former had carried away every conceivable prize offered to students of Mathematics, while the latter was a keen student of Western Classics. Both joined the teaching profession and Kularatne was a teacher of Mathematics and head of Ananda.

Mettananda succeeded Kularatne as head of Ananda and taught Latin.

do in his task of re-organising the school.

His task now was to build a greater Ananda and this he did by putting up a modern Science Laboratory. He himself supervised the work and when the present Prime Minister declared open this building he said that he was surprised that at so low a cost such a massive structure was set up. It was the hard work of Principal Mettananda and the co-operation of a Muslim contractor that made it possible.

## Builder

Encouraged by this success, Mettananda concentrated on erecting buildings to accommo-

## -the builder

### ● G. D. Weerasinghe

"As a teacher, Mettananda was always correctly dressed and not only was he an officer of a military volunteer unit, but he was a reputed tennis player. He had as his colleagues men like T. B. Jayah and Suntheralingam. After a course of training in a Teachers' Training College, Mettananda proceeded to England and qualified further as a teacher.

When Ananda College was divided and some of the students formed Nalanda Vidyalaya, Mettananda was that school's first head. In November 1945, Mettananda was called on to be head of Ananda College, which had been partially destroyed by striking students.

## Appeals

To students who were keen to have their wishes granted, Principal Mettananda's appeals to the nobler sentiments of justice and fair-play had its success. Slowly, but steadily the students of the College were beginning to support Mettananda

date the large numbers that sought admission to the College from out stations. With donations from benevolent lay Buddhists, the large and spacious hostel building of Ananda College was erected.

Now classrooms were needed to accommodate the thousands that came to receive a Buddhist education under a Principal, who as time passed was becoming more and more ascetic. He was respected, and his appeals for donation never went unanswered. His mode of receiving cheques as donations was like that of a monk receiving alms.

Foundations for an Olcott Memorial Building and a Leadbeater Memorial Building were soon laid, and before Mettananda laid down his reins of office these buildings were almost complete and almost ready for occupation. After ten years' service as head of Ananda, Mettananda left such a mark on the place that he is known as "Mettananda, the builder".

These buildings put up by

Mettananda with the assistance of his teachers and their pupils will remain as memorials of his good work.

## Retirement

After Mettananda's retirement, he started a movement named — the Bauddha Jatika Balavegaya. His aim was to restore the lost rights of the Sinhalese Buddhists. He devoted his full time to contributions to the Press on apparent discriminations against Buddhists.

Among the attacks there were writings on 'Catholic Action'.

Mettananda's attacks were bitter and he often referred to a 'Thuppahi' culture of 'Themparadu' Buddhists. Mettananda was always a critic of Marxists. He always pointed out that it was a menace. His letters to the Press were eagerly sought and read avidly.

## Education

By far, Mettananda's contributions to the cause of education are greater than other aspects of his varied activities. Although as a young teacher he believed in corporal punishment, as head of Ananda he never used the cane. But, without corporal punishment, Principal Mettananda got the best from his pupils and he was always an understanding teacher who studied the difficulties that came in the way to their progress.

When the Government appointed the S. Sabhassa Medium of Instruction Committee, he was a first choice. To see how India achieved success in the education in the mother tongue, he went there and received first hand information on the teaching of children in the mother tongue.

He was also a member of the National Education Commission and he was largely responsible for the appointment of a Buddhist Commission to uplift the Sangha. Mettananda's services to this land will be remembered and in this it has to be pointed out that he was an example to this country on how success could be achieved by great devotion to duty.

May he attain Nibbana.