

C. W. Leadbeater's Work for the Buddhist Revival Movement in Sri Lanka 1886-1889

Compiled by Pedro Oliveira



FIG. 107
BUDDHIST GROUP IN CEYLON, 1889
left to right standing: —Dullewe, C. Wijayasinghe, —Sirisena, C. D. Bastian, —Wimalasuriya, W. F. Wijeyesekera, —Mahagedera,
—Cooray, —, C. W. Leadbeater, —, —Pieris, M. C. Perera, Sadris Silva, —, N. S. Fernando,
“Bob” (servant of Colonel Olcott), H. P. Fernando, James Perera.
Seated on chairs: 2 Japanese monks, Rev. H. Devamitta, Rt. Rev. H. Sumangala, Col. Olcott, Japanese monk,
Muhandiram A. P. Dharmagunawardana.
Seated on ground: H. Dharmapala, Weragama Banda, C. Don Carolis, William de Abrew, C. P. Gunawardana,
Robert de Silva, —Aliph (Malay).

From *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society* (1925)

Australia, November 2024 © Pedro Oliveira

Introduction

When C. W. Leadbeater (CWL) joined the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, in 1883, he could not imagine many of the events which lay ahead of him. That he would meet Madame Blavatsky in 1884, that he would write a letter to one of her Adept-Teachers, in March 1884, and receive a reply in October 1884, and the outcome of that correspondence saw him being accepted as a Chela (Disciple) of the Master he had written to, and who urged him to go to Adyar with Madame Blavatsky. To do that he needed to resign his position of Clergyman in the Church of England.

Neither did he imagine that in the Indian summer of 1885 he would be given meditation exercises by his Master, with the aim of developing the faculty of clairvoyance. He could not also possibly imagine that he would work for the Buddhist Revival Movement in Sri Lanka, from 1886 to 1889, under the guidance of Col. Olcott. This brief compilation seeks to show some of his work on that Island, under difficult circumstances.

Grateful acknowledgement is due to the late Radha Burnier, then President of the Theosophical Society, for encouraging me to visit Sri Lanka during my tenure as President of the Indo-Pacific Federation of the TS (2001-2006).

Gratitude is also extended to the late Mr S. M. Jayatilaka, former Director of Education of the Western Province of Sri Lanka and also former Presidential Representative of the TS in that country. It was thanks to his dedication, wide contacts and commitment to TS work that I was able to visit a number of schools founded by Col. Olcott, including the prestigious Ananda College in Colombo, of which Mr Leadbeater was the First Principal.

I am also grateful to the Adyar Archives for a number of photographs from that era and to the generosity of the Australian Section of the TS which made my visits to Sri Lanka possible. Last but not the least, I am truly grateful to Mr L. Paditharathna, Personal Assistant to the Principal of Ananda College, whom I met in 2007. He graciously shared with me his research on the work of Mr Leadbeater in Sri Lanka.

Pedro Oliveira
Australia, November 2024

Historical Background

(Extracts from the book *Buddhist Revival Movement in Sri Lanka 2529-1985* by Dr K. D. G. Wimalaratne, B.A. (Hons) Cey; S.A. (Distinction) University of Padua (Italy); Ph.D. (Hon) Umman, Philadelphia; and former Director of the National Archives in Colombo. Printed by Sunetra and Susil Moonesinghe at Printers & Publishers at Maharagama, Colombo, 1985.)

Accordingly, the visit of Henry Steel Olcott who was earnestly looking forward to come to Sri Lanka, advanced as a result of the Panadura religious controversy. Before the arrival of Olcott to Sri Lanka, the Buddhist revival movement had progressed very satisfactorily. While carefully observing the christian missioneries (sic), the Buddhist revivalists had given a new life to the pirivena education, established several Buddhist schools, started two printing presses and had launched a propagandist campaign through publications and were victorious after concluding five great religious debates against the Christian missionaries.

When Col. Olcott arrived in Colombo on 16th May 1880, he was received in the ship by

Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda thero who pioneered the Buddhist revival movement and carried a great struggle to defy the activities of the missionaries (sic) and John Robert Silva (1849 – 1927) who was the close assistant of the priest.

Olcott and his party reached Galle on 17th May 1880 and was given a warm welcome. His party included Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, Russian lady, a Theosophist & an English Theosophist, Edward Wimbidge, two Hindus & Persians. Out of them, Damodar K. Malavankar (sic) became a Buddhist. On 25th May 1880, Olcott and Blavatsky formally embraced Buddhism at the Vijayanandaramaya, Galle. Although he was a Theosophist, Olcott became a Buddhist. Owing to his Saddha or piety & the understanding of Buddhism. On the same day Olcott established the Galle Theosophical Society & appointed S P D B. de Silva & P. C. Wijeratne as President & Secretary respectively.

On the day Olcott established the Gallo Theosophical Society, he became the undisputed leader of the Buddhist revival movement. With Ven. Mohottiwatte Gunananda thero the first leader of the Buddhist revival movement, Olcott worked hand in hand rallying (sic) round the other pioneers of the Buddhist revival movement & devoted his whole life to safeguard & uplift Buddhism from the activities of the Christian missionaries (sic). Olcott united all the Bhikkus who were divided into various sects and strengthened the movement to win back the rights of the Buddhists.

The setting up of the Colombo Buddhist Theosophical Society on 17th June 1880 was another victory for Olcott. He united all the Buddhists in the Colombo area & directed them the way to carry on the revival movement. Olcott observed that Sinhalese are a set of an efficient community & with their help & assistance worked as an uncrowned king of the Buddhists in Sri Lanka for 27 years. When he assumed the leadership of the Buddhist revivalist movement, he could successfully harness not only the support of the Sinhala Buddhists belonging to all walks of life in society, but also attracted a non-Buddhist and a Burgher, A E Bultjens & foreigners such as C W Leadbeater, C F Powell, F. L. Woodward & Mary Museum Higgins. Olcott clearly emphasized the three important weapons needed to counter the missionary (sic) activities Viz. Buddhist education, Propaganda & sound organization to win back the lost rights of the Buddhists. He, while declaring that the “Christians are spending millions to destroy Buddhism, and we must spend to defend & propagate it”, rallied round him & retained in the Buddhist revival movement, the Buddhist Philanthropists (sic) such as, H. Don Carolis (Don Carolis Hewavitharana Wijayagunaratne), Andris Perera Dharmagunawardena, William de Abrew, Peter de Abrew, R A Mirando, Don David Hewavitharana (later Anagarika Dharmapala) W S Fernando, P Jeremias Dias, Thomas Amarasuriya, Jeremias (Celestina) Dias & Mallika Hewavitharana.

Establishment of Buddhist schools.

Realizing the importance of Buddhist education, Olcott & the members of the Colombo Buddhist Theosophical Society took immediate steps to establish Buddhist schools in the island. Following the tactic used by the missionaries (sic) to spread education through Sunday schools, Olcott and the Buddhist leaders established 9 Sunday Schools by the year 1881 in the Colombo region. Accordingly, the Sunday school started in Pettah was named Pettah Buddhist English School on 1st November 1886. Olcott appointed a foreigner (sic) C. W. Leadbeter (sic) as its first Principal. This school was named Ananda College on 17th August 1895 which became the watch tower of Buddhist education at the second half of the nineteenth century. The Buddhist leaders also established notable Buddhist

schools for the benefit of the Buddhist Children in the outstation areas. Viz; Dharmaraja College on 30th June 1887 & Mahinda College on 2nd February 1892.

Development of Buddhist schools during the nineteenth century

Year	No. of schools	No. of students
1880	04	246
1885	08	734
1890	18	1761
1895	54	6261
1900	142	18700

The Notable Leaders of the Buddhist Revival in Sri Lanka

During the second half of the nineteenth century there appeared through the Buddhist renaissance, Buddhist bikkhus & laymen who took a leading part in protecting & uplifting the Buddhists from their dire state. The notable leaders of this Buddhist revival were Ven: Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala (1824-1911), Ven. Weligama Sumangala (1875-1915), Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda (1823-1890), Ven. Bulathgama Dharmalankara Sri Sumanatissa, Ven. Walane Sri Siddhartha (1811- 1868), Ven. Battaramulle Sri Subuthi (1854-1915), Ven. Koggala Saddhatissa, Ven. Potuwila Indrajothi, Ven. Talhene Amaramoli, Ven. Dodanduwe Piyaratana Tissa (1826-1907), Ven. Mullerlyawe Guneratana, Don David Hewavitharana (Anagarika Dharmapala) (1864-1933), Walisinghe Harischandra (1871-1913), John Robert Silva (1844-1927), Don Carolis Hewavitharana (1835-1906), Willian de Abrew, Col. Henry Steele Olcott (1832-1907), Don David Abeyratne, J. P. Jayatilaka, B. Haramanis Cooray, Andris Perera Dharmagunewardena. (1848-1911), Charles A. de Silva, W. S. Fernando, Sedirs Silva, H. W. William Fernando, Peter de Abreu, R. A. Mirando (1884-1915), H A. Fernando (1821-1886), C. W. Leadbeater, J. Bowles Daly, A. E. Bultjens, F. L. Woodward (sic), Mary Museus Higgins (1855-1926). To these names, the name of Carolis Pujitha Gunewardena should be added for the service he rendered in the cause of Buddhist revival in this country.



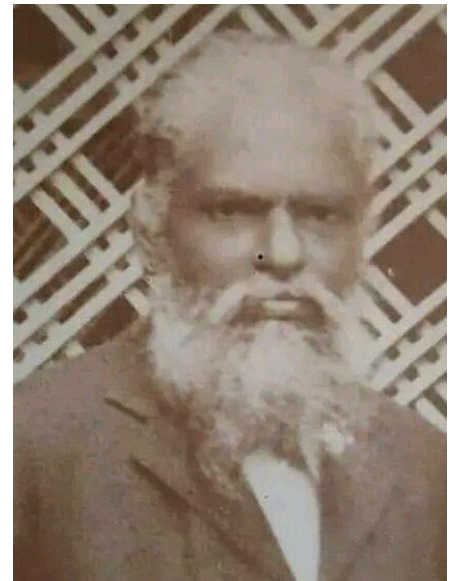
H. S. OLCOTT AND BUDDHIST PRIESTS AT MĀLIGĀKANDA TEMPLE, COLOMBO
+ THE HIGH PRIEST H. SUMANGALA



Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumangala



Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda



C P Gunewardena

Telephone :General :0112 695503
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Ananda College
Colombo.

20th December 2007

Pedro Olivera Esqr
The Theosophical Society Headquarters
Adyar, Chennai 600 020
South India

Dear Mr.Olivera

Information re: the Principalship of
Mr.C.W.Leadbeater in Ananda College,Colombo

Further to the discussion you had with me and the Principal with regard to the above matter, I am sending you a relevant account of the role played by Mr.Leadbeater in the promotion of Buddhist education in Sri Lanka and especially through Ananda College, being her first Principal.

The following documents are sent herewith:

1. Extract of the book titled (still in manuscript form) 'History of Ananda College- Re-awakening of the Sinhala Buddhists, and the Mission of Col.Henry Steel Olcott.'
(I have derived relevant information by going through half a dozen historical books, in this connection)
2. Extract from the book titled 'British Domination in Ceylon' 1796/194 by Dr.K.D.G.Wimalaratna (B.Sc, University of Peradeniya and was a lecturer in History in the Colombo University. In 1978 he was the Asst. Director in the National Archives Department He was promoted as the Director in 1990)

I presume that the documents contain information relevant to the Mission of Mr.Leadbeater in Ceylon and the date of his arrival in the country. However, I am of the opinion that the exact date of his arrival is still not properly established. Hence it needs further investigation by research. I will certainly continue to investigate further on this matter and pass any relevant information to you in due course.

I could not address this letter earlier as I did not possess the information required by you at that time.

Please do not hesitate to communicate if the need arises. I am on 060 2380112 (Sri Lanka) on my telephone. My private address is as follows

112/16 Raja Samaranayake Mawatha
Kurusa Junction
Alubomulla (Panadura)
SRI LANKA

Wish you good luck.

Sincerely yours,

L. Panditharathna
Personal Assistant to the Principal,
Ananda College, Colombo

Period of Mr. Leadbeater

A meeting was held on 23rd October 1886 under the chairmanship of Mr. C.W. Leadbeter to discuss the possibility of a 'Centre for Buddhist education'

The chief speakers were Ven. Hikkaduwa Chief priest of the Vidyodaya Pirivena Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda Thero and Mr. Leadbeter.

At this meeting the consensus of opinion was to establish an institution for the propagation of Buddhism and English education. Finally, a historical decision was taken to establish a 'Buddhist Academy' for education.

Hence, the Academy was inaugurated with 60 students at No. 61, Maliban street, Colombo(Pettah), on 1st November 1886. Mr.C.W Leadbeter was the first Principal.

An application for the registration of the Academy was submitted to the Director of Public Instruction.

With the passage of time, the number of students increased and the Manager had to provide better buildings at a more spacious locality. Hence the Academy had to be shifted to a new site No.19, Prince Street, Colombo(Pettah) in August 1889.

The registration was not permitted as the Academy had been shifted from the original location at Maliban Street, without the approval of the Director of Public Instruction. Further, an objection had been lodged by Father Collin of the ST. Mary's Roman Catholic School, on the grounds that the Academy was in close proximity to his school.

However an undertaking had been given by the Director of Public Instruction that the application for registration would be considered, if the Academy could be shifted to the original location at Maliban street.

The Manager shifted the school to the new site at Maradana and the Director of Public Instructions considered the application for registration, and it was approved and the school became eligible for the Government Grant.

Mr. Leadbeater resigned and left the country on 21st November 1889 Mr. Dharmapala Hewavitharane was appointed the manager of the school.

L. Panditharatna
Personal Assistant to the Principal,
Ananda College, Colombo

Extract from the 'British Domination in Seylon' book by
Dr.K.D.G.Wimalaratna. (translation from the Sinhala text)

".... some are of the view that the 'Sunday Buddhist School' started by Col.Henry Steele Olcott on 13th February 1881 at No.54, Maliban Street Pettah (Colombo) has been transformed into 'Buddhist English School' of 01st November 1886. Then why is the year 1881 not been treated as the inaugural date of Ananda College ?

It has been indicated that the Organiser of the 'Sunday Buddhist School' in 1881 at No.54 was Mr.C.W.Leadbeater, but first he came to Ceylon on 17th December 1884. Col.Olcott brought Mr.Leadbeater for the purpose of going round the country to hold public meetings for the promotion of raising funds for the 'Buddhist Education Fund'

The School started on 01st November 1886 was not known as a 'Sunday School' but 'Pettah Buddhist English School'. That was a day school. Col.Olcott again arrived in Ceylon on 17th December 1884. He went round the country holding meetings and collected funds for the 'Buddhist Education Fund' with the assistance of Mr.Leadbeater. During this period Col.Olcott was infected with Malaria and Mr.Leadbeater had to continue the programme in holding meetings to collect funds.Col.Olcott who went to Madras on 26th April 1885 took action to appoint Mr.Leadbeater as his representative in Educational activities of the Country. Again Col.Olcott arrived in Ceylon on 27th Jan 86 and left for Madras On 26th April 1886. He arrived in the Island later On 22nd January 1887.During the absence of Col.Olcott in the Island, there wasn't anybody to provide education in English Language to the students.

Therefore Mr.Leadbeater took the initiative to have a discussion with Ven.Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thero and Ven.Mohottiwatte Gunananda Thero and published a notice dated 20th October 1886 which appeared in the daily 'Sarasavi Sandaresa'. The notice was as follows:

NOTICE

An Educational Institution will be started at No.61 Buddhist Hall at the Maliban street for English Education and other subjects on first of next month, under Mr.Leadbeater who is well versed in many European subjects; assisted by well trained students at Royal College.

A meeting will be held to debate with regard to the proposed Educational Institute on 23rd Saturday of this month at 9.00 p.m. Speeches with regard to this Institute - 'Lokagama' will be made by the Principal, Vidyodaya Pirivena, Ven.Hikkaduwe Chief Priest; Ven.Mohottiwatte Gunananda Thero; and Mr.Leadbeater. As this is the first occasion of initiating to establish an 'English Buddhist School' in Colombo, all Buddhists should attend this meeting. 'No donations will be accepted in this occasion'

By this it is evident that the 'Sunday School' started on 13th February 1881 and this school are two different schools. This school was established at No.61 Maliban street in Pettah (Colombo).

At the meeting held on 23rd October 1886, Ven.Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thero and Ven.Mohottiwatte Gunananda Thero explained the importance of establishing a 'Buddhist Education School'. By this it is clear that it was Ven.Hikkaduwa Sri Sumangala Thero, Ven.Mohottiwatte Gunananda Thero and Mr.C.W.Leadbeater who initiated the establishment of this school. The idea of starting this school was Mr.Leadbeater's, as he displayed a keenness to have English education all the more because of his competence in that subject.

On the advice of Ven.Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thero and Ven.Mohottiwatte Gunananda Thero the school was started by Mr.C.W.Leadbeater with 60 students and three teachers.*** "

L. Panthi Sathana
Personal Assistant to the Principal
Ananda College, Colombo

Testimony by C. Jinarajadasa

(From the Olcott Centenary Number, *The Theosophist*, August 1932, p. 552.)

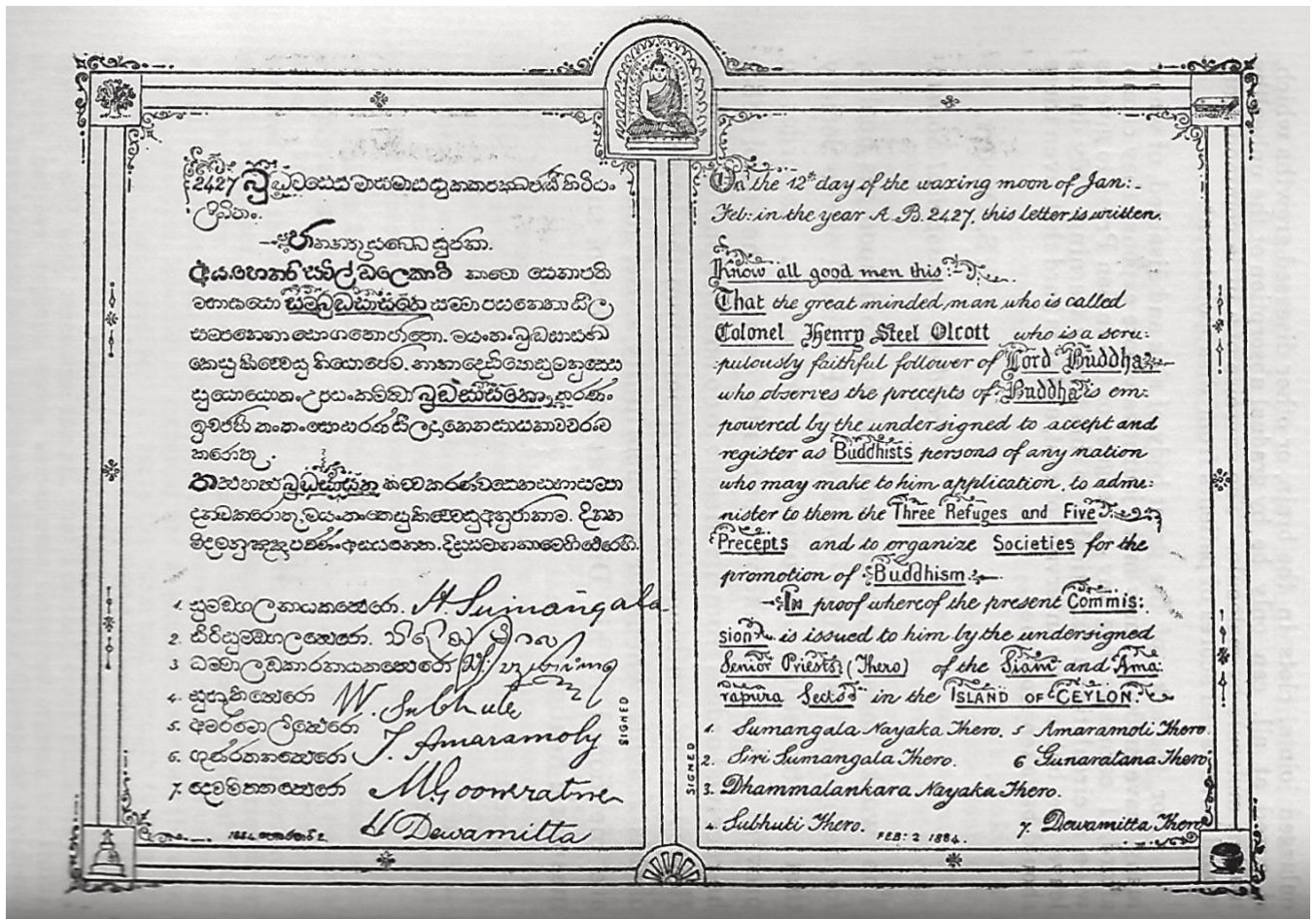
The role which Colonel Olcott played in the revival of Buddhism in Ceylon is so important that a large would need to be written to describe it adequately. On arrival of H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott in the Island, at Galle on May 17th, 1880, both of them immediately identified themselves with Buddhism by formally taking Pancha Sila, and openly avowing themselves as Buddhists. Colonel Olcott saw how Buddhism was waning in the Island; this was due to apathy of the Buddhists who allowed their children to be educated in Missionary schools, where naturally constant propaganda was being made against Buddhism. The first work, therefore, which Colonel Olcott did was to organize educational movement directed by Buddhists themselves, though of course with such Government grants as were given to all schools, under whatsoever denominational management.

This movement developed, by leaps and bounds, and in an utterly strange way this American gentleman gathered to himself and his work the leading Buddhist Priests of the Island. He had some mysterious magnetic quality which made the hearts of Buddhists open towards him. The movement which he initiated is a wonderfully powerful living memory in Ceylon today to him and to his workers. Among those who came to assist him are C. W. Leadbeater who started the Buddhist English High School, now the great Ananda College of Colombo; Charles F. Powell, Dr. J. Bowles Daly, F. L. Woodward, Mrs. Musaeus M. Higgins, and others. Many are those among the Sinhalese who rallied round the Colonel, but of these those who survive are Anagarika H. Dharmapala and Mr. Peter de Abrew, M.B.E., the son of his old friend William de Abrew.

In 1883 a savage attack was made by the Christians on a Buddhist procession in Colombo, and much rioting ensued. Col. Olcott was invited by the Buddhists to assist them in their difficulties, and he became practically their champion in the redress of their grievances. Fortunately the Governor of Ceylon at the time was Sir Arthur Gordon, later Lord Stanmore, whom Colonel Olcott found greatly sympathetic, partly due to the fact of his own broadmindedness, and partly because he knew Mr. Sinnett and all that happened at Simla in with the H. P. B. phenomena, and also because he was somewhat interested in Occultism and Comparative Religion. It was at an interview with the Governor on February 10, 1884, that Colonel Olcott obtained a promise from him that the Buddhists should have their sacred day, the birthday of the Lord Buddha, declared a public holiday. The significance of this can scarcely be realised today. In 1883, Christian Protestant missionaries completely dominated the Island. Only Christian holidays were recognised by the Government as public holidays. Several instances happened of Buddhist boys in Christian schools who absented school on certain Buddhist festivals who were punished by the headmasters for absence. This particularly happened to certain boys at the Wesak festival of 1883. When, therefore, Colonel Olcott, as a result of his work, obtained Buddhists a public holiday on their chief festival, the natural result was that later both the Hindus and the Muhammadans obtained the same right from the Government.

Colonel Olcott went as the representative of the Buddhists to interview the Colonial Secretary in London, and was able to put the Buddhist view of affairs before him. In a few words, the services which he rendered to Buddhism will certainly never be forgotten by the Buddhists of Ceylon, who revere his memory, though they are fast forgetting the other Theosophists who came to assist them in the name of Theosophy and the Masters.

One remarkable and statesmanlike piece of work achieved by Colonel Olcott is the bringing together on a common platform the Buddhists of what are known as the Northern and Southern Churches. The document which he persuaded the representative of both Churches to sign is here reprinted for historical purposes, and it appears in his *Buddhist Catechism*. His writing of this work, which was endorsed by the Priest Sumangala, was one of the most striking contributions to the resuscitation of Buddhism. The *Catechism* was first published in Sinhalese on July 24, 1881, and later in English and several other languages. As this *Catechism* was too advanced for some of the children, a simpler and more elementary one was prepared by C. W. Leadbeater. Colonel Olcott's *Catechism* has now gone through 44 English editions and probably more than that number in Sinhalese; and that of C. W. Leadbeater's in Sinhalese (up to 1914) through 21 editions of Part I, and 18 editions of Part II. A striking incident in his life was a long visit to Japan in 1889, where he did much to call out the vitality of various of the Buddhist sects in Japan. The visit is narrated in a separate article. A second article describes his brief visit of 1891, when he obtained the signatures of Japanese sects to his Buddhist Platform.—C. JINARAJADASA.



Authorization given to H. S. Olcott by the High Priests of Buddhism in Ceylon to admit converts to Buddhism. *Olcott Centenary Number*, The Theosophist, August 1932, p. 582.

From the book *A Short History of the Theosophical Society* by Josephine Ransom

(The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai, 1989)



Buddhist Flag - significance of its colours:
Blue (Neela): Loving kindness, peace and universal compassion; Yellow (Peetha): The Middle path - avoiding extremes, emptiness; Red (Lohitha): The blessings of practice - achievements, wisdom virtue, fortune and dignity; White (Odaatha): The purity of Dhamma - leading to liberation outside of time or space; Orange (Maanjesta): The Buddhist teachings – wisdom; The compound colours (Prabhaaswara): Essence of light. Source: *Sunday Observer*, Colombo, 23 May 2010.

On the 27th the President and Mr. Leadbeater sailed for Ceylon, where the former had promised to make a lecturing tour on behalf of the Buddhist Educational Fund. The Colombo Buddhists had consulted with the Colonel about having a Buddhist flag, one that could be adopted by all Buddhist nations. They hit upon the happy idea of blending in the flag the six colours alleged to have existed in the aura of the Lord Buddha. On Wesak Day, at full moon, 17 May, this flag was hoisted for the first time.

Col. Olcott, with Mr. Leadbeater, William de Abrew, H. Dharmapala, and the veteran servant “Bob,” started out in his travelling cart for Negombo, the first of the fourteen places they intended to visit. The Colonel fell ill of a fever, so Mr. Leadbeater took his place and “gave great satisfaction.” The Colonel recovered, took up his work, and from about 28 February until 8 April was busy travelling, often all night, lecturing, collecting funds and selling *Catechisms*.

When the Colonel returned to Madras he left Mr. Leadbeater as his representative in Ceylon to supervise the Buddhist secular work. (p. 232)

The President-Founder left Adyar, 21 January, for Ceylon, where he immediately went on tour. Finding the need very great among the Buddhists for more popular information regarding the merits of their own religion, he compiled an epitome of morals which he called *The Golden Rules of Buddhism*. He lectured not only to adults but to youths also, and visited schools. When in Colombo, the priest Megituwatte furiously attacked the Colombo Theosophical Society for not starting more schools “as promised.” He attacked the Colonel and almost persuaded the High Priest Sumangala against him. Regarding all this as in the nature of a trap, Col. Olcott slipped away to Bombay. He lectured at the Framji Cowasji Hall on “Can we talk with the Dead?” Then he went on to visit his old friend Harisinghi at Bhavanagar. Here E. T. Sturdy joined him and was initiated, as, though a member, he had not received the signs and passwords. After trip to Junaghad, the Colonel returned to Bhavanagar, whence he shipped handsome carved doors for the Adyar Library, presented by Prince Harisinghi.

Mr. Sturdy went to Madras to join Mr. Leadbeater and both went to Ceylon to clear up troubles that had occurred, though Sturdy soon returned to Adyar. Mr. Leadbeater stayed on to labour in the educational field, starting what is now the Ananda College, and until 1889 spent most of his time in Ceylon. (p. 242)

Col. Olcott had been invited to go to Japan in the interests of Buddhism and before leaving he appointed to exercise all Executive functions on his behalf during his absence: Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunath Row, Dewan Bahadur P. Sreenavasa Row, and Mr. Richard Harte, who had been made Librarian, and was assisting with the editorship of *The Theosophist*, as Mr. Leadbeater had gone back to Ceylon. (p. 254)

C. W. Leadbeater was elected General Secretary of the TS in Ceylon in 1888. (p. 253)

Online Sources and References

Ananda College Old Boys' Association

<https://www.anandacollegeoba.org/ananda-college/history-new/>

“The arrival of American Theosophist, Col. Henry Steel Olcott and Madam Blavatsky in Galle on 17th May 1880 and the establishment of Buddhist Theosophical Society is synonymous with the Buddhist revival in the then-Ceylon. Having read a copy of “Panadura Vadaya” – a debate held in Ceylon between Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda Thero and French born Catholic Priest, Fr. Legg – Col. Olcott saw the plight of majority Buddhists due to suppression, in the hands of Christian Missionaries and the ruling colonial masters.

“The establishment of the Buddhist Theosophical Society was pioneered by patriots like Anagarika Dharmapala, Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera, Valisinghe Harischandra and Ven. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thera. Their primary task was to set up English schools for majority Buddhists who were not endowed with a good English education. The fruits of the hard work done by those fearless leaders were amply manifested when, on 1st November 1886 an English Buddhist School was opened at No. 54, Maliban Street, Pettah with only 37 students. Mr. C. W. Leadbeater was its Principal and the staff consisted of 7 teachers. The average attendance in the first 6 months was only 111, according to a report by Mr. W. Blair, Inspector of Schools.”

Curuppumullage Jinarajadasa

A mystic and a theosophist

Sunday Observer, September 15, 2024

By Dr. Punsara Amarasinghe

<https://www.sundayobserver.lk/2024/09/15/news-features/32801/a-mystic-and-a-theosophist/>

“Ananda College, Colombo, stands as a bastion of Sinhala Buddhist educational legacy and its roots have descended from a long-standing battle in the colonial past of the island. Its products have held the helm from the military to the cricket in this nation. It is not an exaggeration to state Ananda is known as a brand for preserving the Sinhalese Buddhist identity in the country.

“However, it is a surprising factor to reveal that the same school, which has been legendary for its intrinsic Sinhalese Buddhist ideology produced a very peculiar character as one of its very first students when the school was established in 1886 and the same student later became one of its Vice Principals.

“Curuppumullage Jinarajadasa was indeed a man for all seasons. The main reason his name becomes sui generis is the way he went beyond the conventional education that he received and went on to become an internationalist through his works on theosophy. He can be regarded as one of the first Ceylonese who travelled around the world to become a prominent academic in an era where people of brown skin were disdained. His legacy is still prevalent among the theosophists abroad as an internationalist though his memory is being forgotten in Sri Lanka including the school where he spent his boyhood.

“Curuppumullage Jinarajadasa was born to a Sinhalese family in Panadura in the late 19th century. The Buddhist religious revival movement was looming in Ceylon at the time as a result of the Panadura debate, which took place just two years before Jinarajadasa’s birth in 1875 and the wave of

Panadura debate finally reached the West, which brought Henry Steel Olcott, Helena Blavatsky and many more theosophists to the island in search of Wisdom of the East.

“Though the real motives of Olcott and Blavatsky have been subjected to much criticism today, the pivotal factor which we cannot forget is the hallmark legacy left by them in organising a local Buddhist education in English medium as a resistance to the Colonial education, which was in the climax of 19th century Ceylon. Jinarajadasa’s association with theosophy began at the age of 13 when C. W. Leadbeater was in Ananda College. Leadbeater was another Orient-loving Englishman who came to Ceylon after renouncing his own faith in Anglicanism as a result of his growing interest in occultism and theosophy. In Ceylon, he became the first principal at Ananda College then known as the English Buddhist School in Pettah founded by the Buddhist Theosophical Society.”

Ananda College Centenary 1886-1986

Stamps on the logo and college.

Ananda College is a Buddhist school for Sri Lankan boys, with classes from primary to secondary, on a campus of 10 acres in Maradana, Colombo. Following a meeting of Buddhists at Pettah, under the patronage of Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thera, an English-Buddhist school was inaugurated at 19 Prince Street on 1 November 1886 by the Buddhist Theosophical Society. The first session was attended by 37 students. In 1888, when about 130 boys were attending, it moved to 61 Maliban Street. C. W. Leadbeater was appointed the first principal of Ananda today.

<https://www.buddhiststamp.com/stamps/5fa8b2399222596efa64abb6>

The History of Dharma Schools and Their Development

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, the Chief High Priest Dodanduwe Piyaratana and the High Priest Koratota Sobita started seven Buddhist Schools. As a result of the spirit of Buddhist revival generated by the arrival of Colonel H. S. Olcott in Sri Lanka in 1880, the Buddhist Theosophical Society was set up and Buddhist schools were started. The first Dharma School was set up by Colonel Olcott himself at the Vijayananda Pirivena in Galle. The first Buddhist school was Ananda College. In 1886 Mr. C. W. Leadbeater was appointed as its first Principal. On November 1, 1886 he established the first Sunday school to teach Buddhism to school teachers. These Sunday schools were also used for the benefit of children.

<https://dhamma.ifbcnet.org/the-history-of-dhamma-schools-and-their-development/>

Role of Theosophists in Buddhist revival in Ceylon.

Posted on December 8th, 2021

By P.K. Balachandran/Daily Mirror Courtesy NewsIn.Asia

<https://www.lankaweb.com/news/items/2021/12/08/role-of-theosophists-in-buddhist-revival-in-ceylon/>

“Olcott and his colleague Helena Blavatsky arrived in the island in May 1880 with the intention to boost the prospects of Buddhism, which, to them, was the panacea for the troubled world. Theosophists, whose founders were Whites from Europe and America, had been pressing fellow

Whites to give attention to the Eastern peoples' religions and metaphysical speculations. The Theosophists' motto "Universal Brotherhood" was breaking national, ethnic and religious barriers.

"In Ceylon they were welcomed enthusiastically. Olcott and Blavatsky impressed all by becoming Buddhists soon after their arrival. The Buddhists found it very useful to have a White champion of Buddhism who had an understanding of Western ways and a conception as to how Buddhism could move towards modernity," Obeyesekere said of Olcott. The Theosophists roused the Buddhists to practical action," he added.

"The Theosophists were meant to open schools. Ananda College in Colombo was one among many they opened, and the well-known Theosophist C.W. Leadbeater was its first Principal. According to the Buddhist Theosophical Society, Col. Olcott attracted a large circle of able and enthusiastic workers. He indicated the steps that were necessary to transform the new found enthusiasm into practical action. He would not allow any obstacle to stand in his way. Antagonist propaganda only strengthened his resolve.

"He believed indigenous solutions to problems and believed in taking people along with him. When he worked on the Buddhist Catechism for school students, he consulted leading monks. He suggested having a Buddhist flag and assisted in selecting a design. He urged Buddhists to seek a public holiday for Vesak. Realizing the need for propaganda he established a newspaper, *Sarasavi Sandaresa*."

Pettah English School opens

November 1, 1886 was a red letter day for the Buddhists in Sri Lanka. The first Buddhist English School, Pettah was started on that day. Situated at No.61, Maliban Street, the school was started with 37 children with C. W. Leadbeater as Principal. The Buddhists were overjoyed with the event and showed a great deal of enthusiasm to make the school a success.



C .W. Leadbeater, Principal,
Pettah English School

A report published in the Sinhala newspaper, 'Sarsavi Sandaresa' mentioned that in addition to English, Sinhalese grammar and literature were also taught. In a few days the number of children increased to 60 and there were three teachers on the staff.

A contribution of Rs.5 made by one M. Magiris Fernando was highlighted by the newspaper mentioning that he was willing to help the school whenever there was a need for assistance. "The donation of Rs.5/-, though small, was worth a great deal because it was given at the right moment and with goodwill and was an example to all other Buddhists," the newspaper reported.

By the time Principal Leadbeater applied to the Director of Public Instruction for the registration of the school in January 1889, the average attendance was 120. The Inspector of Schools reported that "there was a large house with five rooms, that maps, books and benches of good quality and sufficient quantity were available and the time table was very carefully drawn up in accordance with the Code." There were seven teachers.

The students were of various castes and they were all Buddhists except eight. The school was gazetted for registration on March 1, 1889 and there being no objections, the Director ordered that the school be registered for a grant.

This was the school which later became Ananda College.

<https://www.sundaytimes.lk/061105/FunDay/heritage.html>

Spread of Buddhist Education in Sri Lanka; the role played by Col Olcott and Theosophists

By Dr D Chandraratna

“Following a meeting of Buddhists at, Pettah, under the patronage of Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thera, an English-Buddhist school was inaugurated at 19, Prince Street on 1 November, 1886, by the Buddhist Theosophical Society. Thirty -seven students attended the first session. In 1888, when about 130 boys were attending, it moved to 61 Maliban Street, C. W. Leadbeater was appointed the first Principal of Ananda. In March 1890, the school’s proximity to a Catholic school led to controversy—and a move to 54, Maliban Street, where further growth ensued, and student enrolments rose to 200 in 1892. In 1894 the school was relocated in the suburb of Maradana. On 17 August 1895, the former *English Buddhist School* was renamed to *Ananda College Colombo*. By 1961, the college had officially become a government school.”

<https://www.sinhalanet.net/spread-of-buddhist-education-in-sri-lanka-the-role-played-by-col-olcott-and-theosophists>

Colombo Buddhist Theosophical Society

“After the formation of Colombo Buddhist Theosophical Society on 17th June 1880 the premises No.54, Maliban Street, Colombo has been bought by the society in 1885. Col. Olcott continued his social activities until his last days in this premises.

The First English School also started in this premises and Mr. Lead Beater was the first principal. This school was shifted to Maradana where present day Ananda College which became one of the foremost colleges in Sri Lanka.

“The “Buddha Mandiraya”, the epic center was constructed and formally opened on 28th January 1929 by His Excellency Sir Herbert Stanley Governor of Ceylon. Up to now there have been 29 Presidents who have rendered yeoman services.”

A Cycle of National Progress

By W. A. de Silva

President of the B.T.S. (1940)

“The establishment of schools and the bringing together of Buddhist workers in a co – operative body without distinction of caste or position for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the Buddhists of Ceylon, were the primary objects aimed at by the new Society.

“Many gathered round the movement to devote their time in attaining its objects. A few came from Europe and rendered invaluable service in work. Of these special mention should be made of

C.W. Leadbeater and J. Bowles Daly. Leadbeater was Christian Minister before he came of Ceylon. His capacity for work was great He was a good organizer and an intelligent worker. During his short stay in Ceylon, he founded the Buddhist High School which eventually became Ananda College. He wrote to the press effectively meeting the criticisms levelled at the work of the Society. He founded the English supplement of the “Sarasavi Sandaresa” under name of “The Buddhist” Its weekly issued was extremely well edited and gained a great reputation.”

<http://www.bts.slt.lk/about.html>

Anagarika Dharmapala

“Olcott along with C. W. Leadbeater spent much of his time in Buddhist educational work in Sri Lanka. They started some 300 schools for Buddhist children. Dharmapala also had joined the Theosophist Society by then, as Theosophy was intertwined with Buddhist revivalism. There were contradictions however as the Theosophists were somehow promoting non-sectarian religion. Olcott and Blavatsky quickly realised this distinction and formed the Buddhist section of the Ceylon Theosophist Society. Young Dharmapala travelled with Olcott to Japan where they were given a rousing welcome by the Buddhists of Japan. It was the first time in a thousand years that the Theravada tradition of Buddhists found in countries like Sri Lanka (then sometimes referred to as 'southern Buddhism') had met with the Mahayana tradition found in Japan.”

http://www.anagarikadharmapala.org/benefactors_3_our-teachers.php

Ananda Buddhist Era

“It was during such a time in 1886 that the first Buddhist school names Ananda Vidyalaya was incepted in Pettah. Colonel Henry Steel Olcott with a few Sinhala Buddhist supporters were responsible for founding Ananda Vidyalaya. Only a few boys attended the school then. But the numbers began to increase rapidly. Buddhist parents in and around Colombo began to send their children to Ananda. Later the school came to be called Ananda College.

“Ananda College was fortunate from her inception in having Principals like C. W. Leadbeater, A. E. Bultjens and D. B. Jayatilake and dedicated teachers. This good fortune continued for a very long time. The College was managed by the Buddhist Theosophical Society. The managers too happened to be erudite noble men.”

<https://pub2014shakthi.weebly.com/ananda-buddhist-era.html>

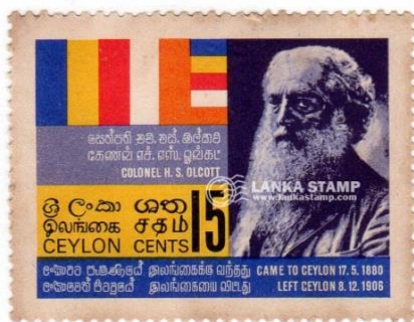
The Buddhist Magazine

“Publication of “The Buddhist” was no easy task. There was often conflict of opinion both from a secular angle and from the clergy. Obstacles and handicaps did spring up on the way. But men like A.E. Bultjens, C.W. Leadbeater, C. Jinarajadasa and D.B. Jayatilaka who was Editor did not cave in the face of difficulties. It was at the time the only journal on Buddhism in English. In those early issues there was much discussion of doctrinal matters. D.B. Jayatilaka was a profound student of the Buddha Dhamma and the journal had the benefit of his erudition and scholarship.”

Tributes to Col. Henry Steel Olcott

For His Work with Buddhist Education in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka)

“Every year on February 17, a group of Buddhist Sri Lankans make their way down Olcott Avenue and into the mad market hustle of the Pettah neighborhood of Colombo, the capital city of Sri Lanka. They march peacefully across the street to the railway station where they pay tribute, these Buddhists all dressed in white, to an American Civil War colonel. They lay a wreath around the golden statue of Henry Steel Olcott, make offerings, and give thanks. In temples across the country, Buddhist monks hold religious ceremonies in his honor. Schoolchildren make offerings in memory of an American who most Americans have never heard of.”



‘The Man from New Jersey’

Understanding Buddhism

By Stephanie Anne Golberg

www.thesmartset.com

03/12/2012

Commemorative stamp in honour of Col. Olcott issued by the Sri Lankan government in 1967

The American national Col Henry Steel Olcott (1832 - 1907) is a revered figure in the history of Buddhist revival and education in

Sri Lanka. He was initially trained in agriculture, and then excelling in both law and journalism, he had a distinguished career in the military and government before taking to full time spiritual advocacy and cross-cultural understanding. Working with like-minded Lankans, he was instrumental in starting leading Buddhist schools in Sri Lanka such as Ananda College in Colombo, Mahinda College in Galle and Dharmaraja College in Kandy.

‘Creators of Modern Education in Sri Lanka’

Nalaka Gunawardene & Vindana Ariyawansa

archives.dailynews.lk

“Having arrived in Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, Col Olcott was much moved by the unjust practices perpetrated on the benign majority by an unscrupulous minority who wielded administrative power.”

“He took to the cause of the Buddhists as his own ‘calling’ in life. Thus, with the patronage of the local patriots and philanthropist the Buddhist Theosophist Society (BTS) was formed to uplift the lot of the Buddhist in 1880.”

“The situation in Sri Lanka at the time could only be left to anybody’s imagination. The

Sinhalese and Buddhist values were looked down upon as ‘uncivilised’ in the eyes of the colonial masters and their local lackeys.”

“Having realised this glaring discriminatory practice in educational facilities and more importantly to lay the foundation for Sinhala Buddhist revival in Sri Lanka, Col. Olcott mobilised the local philanthropist in Galle to help the Buddhist school at Dodanduwa. It must be appreciated that initially Col. Olcott’s activities were centred around Galle since he was inspired by his teacher, Ven Migettuwatte Gunananda and Ven. Hikkaduwe Siri Sumangala. He was also ordained as a Buddhist at the Viyayananda Viharaya in Galle. The activities of Col. Olcott however, was not limited to opening up of schools for the commoners. He realized the importance of a literate society and to this end he initiated the first Sinhala newspaper called ‘Sarasavi Sandaresa’ in 1883. Col. Olcott died on the 17th of February 1907 in Madras.”

“The greatest homage we can pay to this extraordinary American personality, who meant so much to so many in this country, is to contemplate that his contribution to the Sri Lanka's liberation on enlightenment has been truly without a parallel. May he conquer the ‘truth’ that he always considered to be above all else.”

Olcott – the Searcher of Truth

by Palitha Senanayake, Lanka Daily News,

Feb 17, 2007

Tribute to Col. Olcott

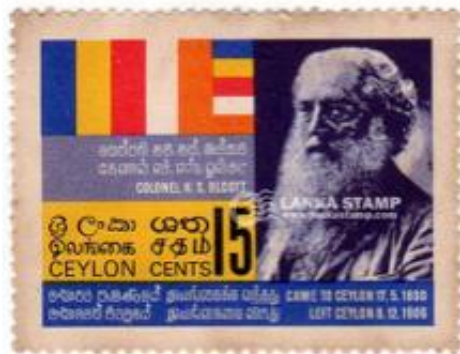
“Even after shedding the colonial title Ceylon in 1948 people of independent Sri Lanka continued to adore and venerate Col. Olcott the great American who played a leading role in uplifting the morale of the Buddhists from the utter chaos they were in.

“On February, 1967 commemorating the 60th anniversary of his death his statue was erected opposite the Fort Railway Station on the Olcott Mawatha named after him (formally Norris Road). Olcott Commemoration Volume was published in the same year and also issued a special postage stamp.

“Recently the people of Galle too erected his statue in the Galle town and renamed the road running opposite Mahinda College as Olcott Mawatha. Almost every school then run by the Buddhist Theosophical Society still carries his portrait to honour him. All the colleges founded by him still annually have an alms-giving in February to commemorate his death.”

‘Col. Henry Steel Olcott: Ushering in the Buddhist Revival in Ceylon’

by Justice P.H.K. Kulatilaka, Sunday Observer, 12 May 2013



Col. Olcott's Sri Lanka commemorative stamp



61 Maliban St., Pettah, Colombo



61 Maliban St., Colombo, 2007



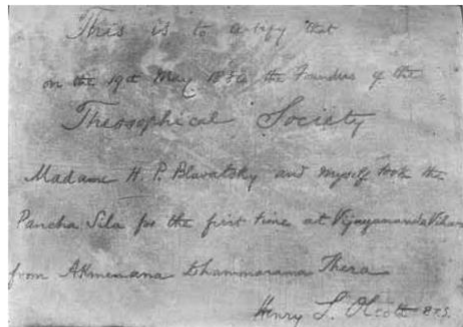
H. P. Blavatsky in Ceylon, 1880



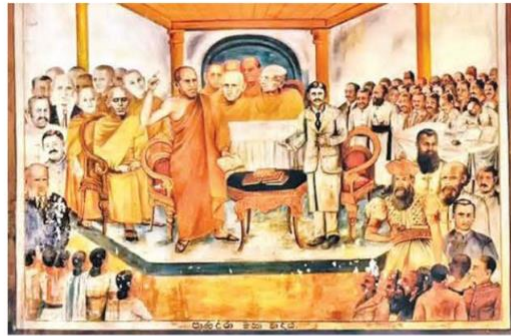
Charter of the Colombo Theosophical Society, signed by Col. Olcott and H. P. Blavatsky



Painting depicting the moment Olcott and Blavatsky took Panchasila and became Buddhists, in front of Buddhist elders



Col. Olcott's Certification that he and HPB took Panchasila on 19th May 1880



An early representation of the Panadura debate



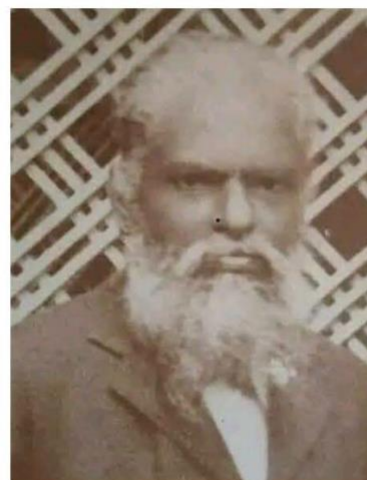
Vijayananda Pirivena, Galle, where the Founders took Panchasila



The Most Venerable Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thera



The Ven. Migettuwatte Gunananda Thera



C. P. Gunawardena



Col. Olcott and Ven Sumangala



Statue of Col. Olcott at Ananda College, Colombo



Headquarters of the TS in Colombo, 1889



Workers at TS Headquarters in Colombo, 1889

Archival sources: Adyar Archives, *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society*, photographs by Pedro Oliveira, Wikipedia, and the collection of a TS member from Java.



C. W. Leadbeater as a young Curate, England, circa 1883

Col. Olcott Recalls C. W. Leadbeater's Work for Buddhist Education in Ceylon

Col. Olcott, in his book *Old Diary Leaves* (The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Chennai, Six Series), mentions the work done by C. W. Leadbeater for Buddhism both in Ceylon and Burma:

“While the party were in Colombo [1884], *en route* for Madras, an interesting episode occurred. The Rev. Mr. Leadbeater, with H.P.B. and myself acting as sponsors, “took *Pansil*” from the High Priest Sumangala and Rev. Amaramoli, in the presence of a crowded audience. This was the first instance of a Christian clergyman having publicly declared himself a follower of the Lord Buddha, and the sensation caused by it may be easily imagined.” (Third Series, Chapter XIV)

In Colombo, 2,000 copies of Mr. Leadbeater's *Sisya Bodhya*, or elementary Catechism, were published (1885). (Chapter XXV)

“Towards the end of the year 1884, I received from the now-deposed King Theebaw an invitation to visit him at Mandalay to discuss Buddhism. The intermediary was his Italian physician, Dr. Barbieri de Introini, now the President of our revered Branch at Milano, Italy. On the chance of getting his Majesty to help the Sinhalese Buddhists, and to bring about more intimate relations between them and their Burmese co-religionists, I accepted, and in January, 1885, accompanied by Mr. Leadbeater, went to Rangoon. A week later I was telegraphed to return, as Mme. Blavatsky was apparently dying. Leaving Leadbeater there, I returned home, only to find that, by one of those almost miraculous changes which happened to her, she was convalescent, and after a week she let me go to Burma. I found that Mr. Leadbeater had worked up so great an interest that almost immediately I was able to organize three Branches.” (Fourth Series, Chapter XV)

Olcott recalls the vicissitudes he and Leadbeater had to undergo while traveling through Ceylon in March 1885:

“We entered the village of Madampe with a great procession that had come to meet us, and made noise enough with their barbaric tom-toms and horns to frighten away all the *pisâchas* [demons] within the circuit of five miles. Of course, our public lecture was attended by a huge crowd, who displayed so much enthusiasm. Leadbeater, who is now working in America, will doubtless be entertained by these notes of our associated tourings. I doubt, however, his recalling with pleasure the trip from Madampe to Mahavena, in a country cart without springs, over a fearfully rough road, on which we got, as Horace Greeley did over a Kansas railroad, more exercise to the mile than was good for the soul. Every bone in our bodies was shaken up so as to make us painfully conscious of its anatomical position, while, as for poor Leadbeater, he suffered agony with his weak back. However, we came out of the experience alive, and that was something.” (Third Series, Chapter XXV)

“During his 1896 visit to Colombo, Col. Olcott reported that after meeting the High Priest Sumangala at his college “I went to our Ananda College, now a prosperous and very successful educational institution, but which was founded by Mr. Leadbeater in 1885 [sic] as an English High School, when he was working with me in Ceylon.”” (Sixth Series, Chapter I)

Miss Mary K. Neff, a respected biographer of Madame Blavatsky, adds to the reminiscences of Mr Leadbeater's work in Ceylon. In an article in *The Theosophist* (August 1928, "When H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott Took Pañchasīlā"), Miss Neff, author of *Personal Memoirs of H. P. Blavatsky*, writes:

In conclusion I would like to call the reader's attention to the marble slab in front of the Vihāra, in the illustration. This was erected by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, in memory of the fact that the Founders took Pañchasīlā here. It was, indeed, Mr. Leadbeater who followed in the footsteps of Col. Olcott in work for Buddhist Ceylon. He travelled to the East in 1884, with H.P.B. and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley, arriving at Colombo on December 17th, where they were met by Colonel Olcott and Dr. Franz Hartmann. On that day on which he first set foot on Buddhist soil, Mr. Leadbeater took Pansil in the presence of this little party and the Colombo members of the Theosophical Society. In 1885 he acted as Recording Secretary of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, succeeding Damodar K. Mavalankar; but in 1886 he went to Ceylon to work among the Buddhists. Mr. Jinarajadasa tells how he tramped from village to village on Sundays, teaching at the Buddhist Sunday Schools which he had organized; how he aided his (C.J.'s) brother and later himself, "helping them in their school work and doing all that could be done by an elder friend to help a younger". It was he who founded the institution which is now Ānanda College, Galle; and it was while he labored there that he erected the slab at Vijayānanda Vihāra. During his years in Ceylon, he went as a delegate to the Conventions at Adyar and spent there the three months of vacation from school work laboring at Headquarters. In 1888 he arrived from Ceylon to become a permanent resident at Adyar, and took charge of THE THEOSOPHIST; on November 28th, 1889, he sailed for Europe, taking with him his brother of earlier years, his pupil later, and now his co-worker; thus accomplishing his last and perhaps greatest work for Buddhism in this incarnation, by giving the Theosophical Society its Buddhist Vice-President, Mr. C. Jinarajadasa.

'The Local and the Foreign Impact of the Pānadurā Vādaya'

H. N. S. Karuanatilake

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka

New Series, Vol. 49 (2004), pp. 67-86

Published by: [Royal Asiatic Society of Sri Lanka \(RASSL\)](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23732427>

"It was 1880 when this great American arrived in Lanka. Perhaps next to the visit of Arahat Mahinda this was the most eventful visit of a foreigner to our shores. Within a short time he was able to fathom the depths to which we had descended. He was a man of action. He was among those who inaugurated the Buddhist Theosophical Society and set about raising the people from their slumber. They awakened and they realised that the immediate way out of the morass was to organise Buddhist educational institutions.

"It was an ambitious programme, but they had in Col. Olcott a man of steel. His dynamic personality won the hearts of the people and the first Buddhist English High School was inaugurated at Maliban Street, Pettah, Colombo on 1st November 1886, States Justice S. R. Wijayatilake in an article titled "Buddhist National Renaissance - Ananda to the Fore" to the special issue of the magazine 'Anandaya' to mark the opening of the 5 storeyed science laboratory at Ananda College, Colombo on January 5, 1973.

"Col. Olcott came to Dharmopakari Society, Maradana, Colombo on September 8, 1884. C. W. Leadbeater came to this country on May 1885 reports the "Sarasavi Sandaresa" newspaper. On October 22, 1886 "Sarasavi Sandaresa" reports about "A Buddhist English Academy". On October 23

a meeting of the Buddhist public was held headed by Ven. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thera in Pettah, Colombo.

It was the Buddhist English Academy that was founded at No. 61 Maliban Street, Pettah that was named Ananda College in due course.

“The first principal of this institution was C. W. Leadbeater. At the beginning the number of students on the roll was 37. On January 16, 1889 the first prize giving was held with Col. Olcott in the chair.”

117th anniversary of the founding of Ananda College, Colombo Olcott set in motion the wheel of Buddhist education

by Chandra Edirisuriya

(<http://archives.dailynews.lk/2003/10/31/fea03.html>)

The founding fathers of Ananda College

G. S. Arunashantha de Silva

It was the end of the 18th Century. Buddhism was losing ground in Sri Lanka. Even a Buddhist monk was not safe on the streets of Colombo. Missionary education and the Christian doctrine were propagated by the British rulers and Government jobs were limited only to Christians. Basically it was an era where Buddhists of Sri Lanka were abused and discriminated openly by the then rulers.

A group of ardent Buddhist monks of that era headed by Migettuwatte Sri Gunananda and Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Theras fought bravely and courageously against such abuses and segregations by organising sermons and debates all over the Island.

The famous Panadura Debate was held on August 26, 1872. The whole debate was translated into English by Mr. John Cooper the Editor of Ceylon Times and was and circulated in the west.

Col. Henry Steele Olcott, an American theosophist had an opportunity of reading the excerpts of the historic Panadura debate. Having realised the value of Buddhist philosophy Col. Olcott came to Sri Lanka and embraced Buddhism on May 17, 1880.

Significant outcome

One of the most significant outcome of the arrival of Col. Henry Steele Olcott is the establishment of Ananda College Colombo in 1886 at No. 61, Maliban Street, Pettah with 31 students.

In the Columns "Sarasavi Sandaresa," a contemporary Sinhala Journal published by the Colombo Theosophical Society on October 22, 1886, is found an announcement that a Buddhist English School would be started on November 1, 1886.

The Same notice informed the public that on Saturday the October 23, a meeting would be held in the Buddhist Hall 61, Maliban Street at which Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala, Migettuwatte Sri Gunananda and C. W. Leadbeater would give information to the public about the new school.

The 'Sarasavi Sandaresa' published in the early part of November, 1886 has recorded the occasion of the opening of the school thus;

Last Monday an English school for Buddhist children was opened in Pettah. Many well-known Buddhists pledged their support to the school if and when the need arose. They promised to send their children to it in due course.

The schoolteachers not only English, but Sinhala language and grammar too are taught. The staff comprises three teachers. Objective in establishing it is to discourage the practice of Buddhist parents sending their children to non-Buddhist schools.

First principal

It seems pertinent to mention here that C. W. Leadbeater an Irish national (sic) and the first principal of Ananda played a crucial role in establishing Ananda College along with Col. Olcott, Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala and Migettuwatte Sri Gunananda Theras and other Buddhist leaders of that era.

The background of naming the new Buddhist School seems interesting.

At a meeting summon to find a suitable name to the newly formed school, Col. Olcott is said to have proposed that the new school be named as Gunananda College.

Gunananda Thera politely disagreeing with the proposal had suggested thus "If you want to remain my name there, you may emit the prefix "Guna" and retain the term "Ananda", so that we are greatly honouring the Chief attendant of Lord Buddha, Arhat Ananda Maha Thera. Gunananda Thera had also contended Col. Olcott who proposed his name by pointing out that his name is also embodied in the name "Ananda".

Founding fathers

When writing about founding fathers of Ananda, the name of Gate Mudaliyar Tudor Rajapakse of Kappina Walawwa, Balapitiya shall not be ignored. Mudliyar Rajapakse not only donated 3 1/2 acres of land in Maradana to re-establish Ananda but also nursed the infant Ananda by lavish donations.

He had donated Rs. 1,000 in 1895 to construct the first permanent building of Ananda (May the readers decide the value of Rs. 1,000 at that time) The first permanent building of Ananda College, a hall of 1800 x 34 feet, had been ceremonially declared open by Gate Mudaliyar Tudor Rajapakse on August 13, 1895.

Revival of Buddhism

Founding of Ananda College led to the revival of Buddhism which gave an impetus to the establishment of other Buddhist schools in the island.

At the same time Ananda received the guidance of several great principals from the very beginning. Among them we recall the Englishman C. W. Leadbeater who was the first principal, Welshman J. T. Davis, the Irishman M. U. Moore and the American Fritz Kunz. The first Sri Lankan to be the principal was A. E. Bulltjens. He was a burgher gentleman.

In this galaxy of eminent principals were also Sir D. B. Jayatilaka, P. de. S. Kularathne, Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, L. H. Meththananda, S. A. Wijayatileke, M. W. Karunananda, Col E. A. Perusinghe, Col. G. W. Rajapakse and others who are gratefully remembered today. Let us remember all those who contributed in numerous ways and numerous means to establish the Ananda College Century and two decades ago, which is one of the finest schools in South East Asia today.

May the founding fathers of mother Ananda attain the Supreme bliss of Nirwana.

<http://archives.dailynews.lk/2007/01/18/fea11.asp>

CWL, the Mahatma and God

Compiled by Pedro Oliveira

The Mahatmas on God

Perhaps no other letter from the Mahatmas, Madame Blavatsky's Teachers, presents their views on God, the churches and the clergy more directly and strongly than the famous Letter 10, now Letter 88 in the chronological edition, published in 1993. The text of this letter was copied by A. P. Sinnett from an original in September 1882.

In this letter, like in any other, Mahatma K.H. refutes, both metaphysically as well as from a Theosophical point of view, and in absolute terms, the notion of God. When Hugh Shearman, a respected Theosophist from Northern Ireland, tried to point out in the early 1960s (1) that there are letter from other Adepts the invoke the name of God in their instructions to Col. Olcott during the early days of the Theosophical Society in New York, he was intellectually savaged. Among the students of HPB's writings and of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, Letter 10 represents the final and absolute word on the subject.

Here are some of the passages of that famous letter that informed the thought and the practice of several generations of Theosophists:



The facsimile of the envelope of Master K.H.'s letter to CWL, October 1884

Neither our philosophy nor ourselves believe in a God, least of all in one whose pronoun necessitates a capital H. Our philosophy falls under the definition of Hobbes. It is preeminently the science of effects by their causes, and of causes by their effects, and since it is also the science of things deduced from first principle, as Bacon defines it, before we admit any such principle we must know it, and have no right to admit even its possibility. Your whole explanation is based upon one solitary admission made simply for argument's sake in October last. You were told that our knowledge was limited to this our solar system: ergo as philosophers who desired to remain worthy of the name we could not either deny or affirm the existence of what you termed a supreme, omnipotent, intelligent being of some sort *beyond* the limits of that solar system. But if such an existence is not absolutely impossible, yet unless the uniformity of Nature's law breaks at those limits we maintain that it is highly improbable. Nevertheless we deny most emphatically the position of agnosticism in this direction, and as regards the solar system. Our doctrine knows no compromises. It either affirms or denies, for it never teaches but that which it knows to be the truth. Therefore, we deny God both as philosophers and as Buddhists. We know there are planetary and other spiritual lives, and we know there is in our system no such thing as God, either personal or impersonal. Parabrahm

is not a God, but absolute immutable law, and Iswar is the effect of Avidya and Maya, ignorance based upon the great delusion. The word God was invented to designate the unknown cause of those effects which man has either admired or dreaded without understanding them, and since we claim and that we are able to prove what we claim — *i.e.* the knowledge of that cause and causes we are in a position to maintain there is no God or Gods behind them.

The idea of God is not an innate but an acquired notion, and we have but one thing in common with theologies — we reveal the infinite. But while we assign to all the phenomena that proceed from the infinite and limitless Space, Duration and motion, *material, natural, sensible* and *known* (to us at least) causes, the theists assign them *spiritual, super-natural* and *unintelligible* an unknown causes. The God of the Theologians is simply and imaginary power, *un loup garou* [a werewolf] as d'Holbach expressed it — a power which has never yet manifested itself. Our chief aim is to deliver humanity of this nightmare, to teach man virtue for its own sake, and to walk in life relying on himself instead of leaning on a theological crutch, that for countless ages was the direct cause of nearly all human misery. Pantheistic we may be called — agnostic never. If people are willing to accept and to regard as God our one life immutable and unconscious in its eternity they may do so and thus keep to one more gigantic misnomer.

The words of the Mahatma are very clear: there is no room for God in their Esoteric Philosophy, the idea of God is just an acquired notion and has no basis in fact. In another passage of that same letter the Mahatma's statement is reminiscent of a recent interview with Stephen Fry in a television programme in London:

How can intelligence proceed or emanate from non-intelligence — you kept asking last year. How could a highly intelligent humanity, man the crown of reason, be evolved out of blind unintelligent law or force! But once we reason on that line, I may ask in my turn, how could congenital idiots, non-reasoning animals, and the rest of "creation" have been created by or evolved from, absolute Wisdom, if the latter is a thinking intelligent being, the author and ruler of the Universe? How? says Dr. Clarke in his examination of the proof of the existence of the Divinity. "God who hath made the eye, shall he not see? God who hath made the ear shall he not hear?" But according to this mode of reasoning they would have to admit that in creating an idiot God is an idiot; that he who made so many irrational beings, so many physical and moral monsters, must be an irrational being. . . .

In his intellectual and relentless demolition of the concept of God the Mahatma points out the contradictions in the very existence of the Church:

According to logic “nothing” is that of which everything can truly be denied and nothing can truly be affirmed. The idea therefore either of a finite or infinite nothing is a contradiction in terms. And yet according to theologians “God, the self existent being, is a most simple, unchangeable, incorruptible being; without parts, figure, motion, divisibility, or any other such properties as we find in matter. For all such things do plainly and necessarily imply finiteness in their very notion and are utterly inconsistent with complete infinity.” Therefore the God here offered to the adoration of the XIXth century lacks every quality upon which man’s mind is capable of fixing any judgment. What is this in fact but a being of whom they can affirm *nothing* that is not instantly contradicted. Their own Bible their Revelation destroys all the moral perceptions they heap upon him, unless indeed they call those qualities perfections that every other man’s reason and common sense call imperfections, odious vices and brutal wickedness. Nay more he who reads our Buddhist scriptures written for the superstitious masses will fail to find in them a *demon* so vindictive, unjust, so cruel and so stupid as the celestial tyrant upon whom the Christians prodigally lavish their servile worship and on whom their theologians heap those perfections that are contradicted on every page of their bible. Truly and veritably your theology has created her God but to destroy him piecemeal. Your church is the fabulous Saturn, who begets children but to devour them.

The Mahatmas on Religion, the Priesthood and the Churches

Having philosophically dismantled the notion of God, the Mahatma then proceeds to expose religion as the cause of two-thirds of evil in the world. His analysis is not less fierce and dismantling in its consequences:

And now, after making due allowance for evils that are natural and cannot be avoided, — and so few are they that I challenge the whole host of Western metaphysicians to call them evils or to trace them directly to an independent cause — I will point out the greatest, the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity — ever since that cause became a power. It is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation. It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. Ignorance created gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity. Look at India and look at Christendom and Islam, at Judaism and Fetichism. It is priestly imposture that rendered these gods so terrible to man; it is religion that makes of him the selfish bigot, the fanatic that hates all mankind out of his own sect without rendering him any better or more moral for it. It is belief in God and gods that makes two-thirds of humanity the slaves of a handful of those who deceive them under the false pretence of saving them. Is not man ever ready to commit any kind of evil if told that his god or gods demand the crime?, voluntary victim of an illusionary god, the abject slave of his crafty ministers. The Irish, Italian and Slavonian peasant will starve himself and see his family starving and naked to feed and clothe his padre and pope. For two thousand years India groaned under the weight of caste, Brahmins alone feeding on the fat of the land, and today the followers of Christ and those of Mahomet are cutting each other’s throats in the names of and for the greater glory of their respective myths. Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods.

Although most of the religious traditions are strongly chastised in the above-mentioned quote, it is the Christian tradition that cops a direct hit: ‘It is the sacerdotal caste, the priesthood and the churches; it is in those illusions that man looks upon as sacred, that he has to search out the source of that multitude of evils which is the great curse of humanity and that almost overwhelms mankind. ... The Irish, Italian and Slavonian peasant will starve himself and see his family starving and naked to feed and clothe his padre and pope.’ The passage concludes with a call to ‘the better portion of humanity’ to ‘destroy in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods’.

The Mahachohan's and Madame Blavatsky's Views on God

The above-mentioned point of view about God – and religion – does not seem to be absolute among the members of the Brotherhood of Adepts. The Mahachohan, the Mahatmas' Master, in his famous communication sent to Mr Sinnet in 1881 through Mahatma K.H., presents another and perhaps more inclusive view:

For as everyone knows, total emancipation from authority of the one all-pervading power or law called God by the priests—Buddha, Divine Wisdom and enlightenment or Theosophy, by the philosophers of all ages—means also the emancipation from that of human law. Once unfettered and delivered from their dead weight of dogmatic interpretations, personal names, anthropomorphic conceptions and salaried priests, the fundamental doctrines of all religions will be proved identical in their esoteric meaning. Osiris, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, will be shown as different names for one and the same royal highway to final bliss, Nirvana.

Mystical Christianity, that is to say that Christianity which teaches self-redemption through our own seventh principle—this liberated Para-Atma (Augeoides) called by some Christ, by others Buddha, and equivalent to regeneration or rebirth in spirit—will be found just the same truth as the Nirvana of Buddhism. All of us have to get rid of our own Ego, the illusory apparent *self*, to recognize our true self in a transcendental divine life. But if we would not be selfish, we must strive to make other people see that truth, to recognize the reality of that transcendental self, the Buddha, the Christ or God of every preacher. This is why even exoteric Buddhism is the surest path to lead men towards the one esoteric truth.

(Quotes from *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, Letter #1)

In Madame Blavatsky's writings one also finds evidence of a broader view of God. In certain passages she can be extremely fierce and denounce the notion of God as a quasi aberration. In other passages, like in the one below from *The Key to Theosophy* (Section 5, 1889), she addresses what could be termed the esoteric significance of the concept of God:

ENQ. To whom, then, do you *pray* when you do so?

THEO. To "our Father in heaven" — in its esoteric meaning.

ENQ. Is that different from the one given to it in theology?

THEO. Entirely so. An Occultist or a Theosophist addresses his prayer to *his Father which is in secret* (read, and try to understand, *Matthew* vi, 6), not an extra-cosmic and therefore finite God; and that "Father" is in man himself.

ENQ. Then you make of man a God?

THEO. Please say "God" and not a God. In our sense, the inner man is the only God we can have cognizance of. And how can this be otherwise? Grant us our postulate that God is a universally diffused, infinite principle, and how can man alone escape from being soaked through *by*, and *in*, the Deity? We call our "Father in heaven" that deific essence of which we are cognizant within us, in our heart and spiritual consciousness, and which has nothing to do with the anthropomorphic conception we may form of it in our physical brain or its fancy: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of [the absolute] God dwelleth in you?" Yet, let no man anthropomorphize that essence in us. Let no Theosophist, if he would hold to divine, not human truth, say that this "God in secret" listens to, or is distinct from, either finite man or the infinite essence—for all are one.

As we shall see later, it is interesting to note that in their campaign to discredit him, the critics of C. W. Leadbeater emphasize only Mahatma K.H.'s views on God but not the Mahachohan's nor Madame Blavatsky's.

CWL and the Church of England

C. W. Leadbeater was ordained a priest in the Church of England on 21 December 1879 and took residence in the village of Liphook with his mother Emma. At Church he organised several activities for young people. He was also very interested in psychic phenomena and conducted his own investigations in the Scottish Highlands.



However, before his ordination, he had to sign the following declaration before Edward Harold, Bishop of Winchester, on 22 December 1878:

I, Charles Webster Leadbeater, do solemnly make the following Declaration: I assent to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. I believe the doctrine of the Church of England, as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments I will use the Form in the said book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful authority.

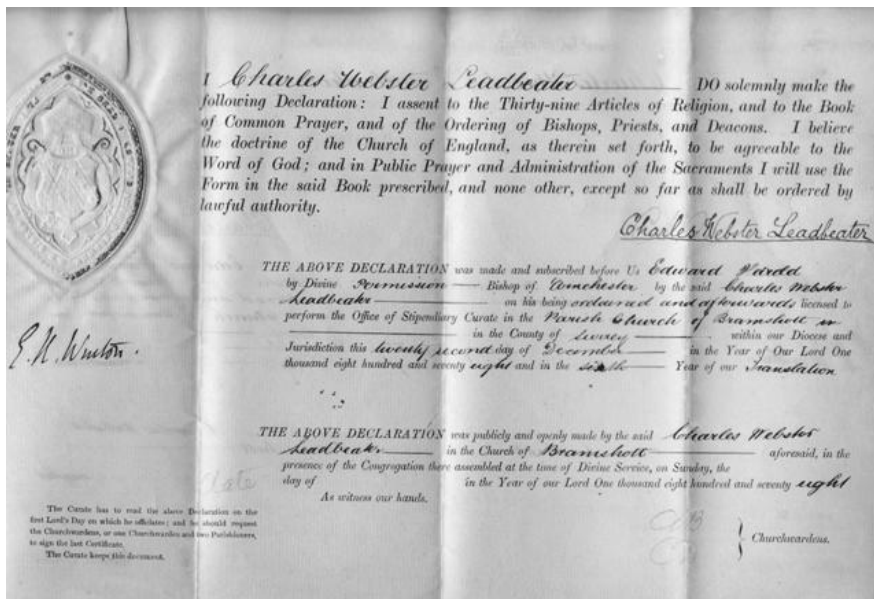
The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, as presented in the Church of England website, are as follows:

1. Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.
2. Of Christ the Son of God.
3. Of his going down into Hell.
4. Of his Resurrection.
5. Of the Holy Ghost.
6. Of the Sufficiency of the Scriptures.
7. Of the Old Testament.
8. Of the Three Creeds.
9. Of Original or Birth-sin.
10. Of Free-Will.
11. Of Justification.
12. Of Good Works.
13. Of Works before Justification.
14. Of Works of Supererogation.
15. Of Christ alone without Sin.
16. Of Sin after Baptism.
17. Of Predestination and Election.
18. Of obtaining Salvation by Christ.
19. Of the Church.
20. Of the Authority of the Church.
21. Of the Authority of General Councils.
22. Of Purgatory.
23. Of Ministering in the Congregation.
24. Of speaking in the Congregation.
25. Of the Sacraments.
26. Of the Unworthiness of Ministers.
27. Of Baptism.
28. Of the Lord's Supper.
29. Of the Wicked which eat not the Body of Christ.
30. Of both kinds.
31. Of Christ's one Oblation.
32. Of the Marriage of Priests.
33. Of Excommunicate Persons.

34. Of the Traditions of the Church.
35. Of the Homilies.
36. Of Consecrating of Ministers.
37. Of Civil Magistrates.
38. Of Christian men's Goods.
39. Of a Christian man's Oath. The Ratification.

It is not difficult to see how subscribing to the above Articles puts one completely outside the views – and practices – expressed by Mahatma K.H. in what is known as the famous Letter 10 (Letter 88 in the chronological edition). However, these were the Articles to which CWL, as a Candidate to Holy Orders, assented to in 1878.

Letter from the Mahatma



C. W. Leadbeater's Declaration to the Church of England

CWL joined the Theosophical Society in November 1883 after reading A. P. Sinnett's *The Occult World*. In March 1884 he wrote a letter to Master K.H. and sent it to him through the agency of a well-known medium in England, William Eglinton. In his letter he said that 'ever since I had first heard of Theosophy my one desire had been to place myself under Him [Master K.H.] as a pupil'. He did not receive a reply until October of the same year. This was the Master's reply:

Last spring – March the 3rd – you wrote a letter to me and entrusted it to “Ernest”. Tho’ the paper itself never reached me – nor was it ever likely to, considering the nature of the messenger – its contents have. I did not answer it at the time, but sent you a warning through Upasika. In that message of yours it was said that, since reading Esot. Bud: and Isis your “one great wish has been to place yourself under me as a chela, that you may learn more of the truth.” “I understand from Mr. S.” you went on “that it would be almost impossible to become a chela without going out to India”. You hoped to be able to do that in a few years, tho’ for the present ties of gratitude bind you to remain in this country. Etc.

I now answer the above and your other questions.

[1] It is not necessary that one should be in India during the seven years of probation. A chela can pass them anywhere.

[2] To accept any man as a chela does not depend on my personal will. It can only be the result of one's personal merit and exertions in that direction. Force any one of the “Masters” you may happen to choose; do good works in his name and for the love of mankind; be pure and resolute in the path of righteousness [as laid out in our rules]; be honest and unselfish; forget your Self but to remember the good of other people – and you will have forced that “Master” to accept you.

So much for candidates during the periods of the undisturbed progress of your Society. There is something more to be done, however, when theosophy, the Cause of Truth, is, as at the present

moment on its stand for life or death before the tribunal of public opinion – that most flippantly cruel, prejudiced and unjust of all tribunals. There is also the collective karma of the caste you belong to – to be considered. It is undeniable that the cause you have at heart is now suffering owing to the dark intrigues, the base conspiracy of the Christian clergy and missionaries against the Society. They will stop before nothing to ruin the reputation of the Founders. Are you willing to atone for their sins? Then go to Adyar for a few months. “The ties of gratitude” will not be severed, nor even become weakened for an absence of a few months if the step be explained plausibly to your relative. He who would shorten the years of probation has to make sacrifices for theosophy. Pushed by malevolent hands to the very edge of a precipice, the Society needs every man and woman strong in the cause of truth. It is by doing noble actions and not by only determining that they shall be done that the fruits of the meritorious actions are reaped. Like the “true man” of Carlyle who is not to be seduced by ease – “difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death are the allurements that act” during the hours of trial on the heart of a true chela.



A. P. Sinnett

‘You ask me – “what rules I must observe during this time of probation, and how soon I might venture to hope that it could begin”. I answer: you have the making of your own future, in your own hands as shown above, and every day you may be weaving its woof. If I were to demand that you should do one thing or the other, instead of simply advising, I would be responsible for every effect that might flow from the step and you acquire but a secondary merit. Think, and you will see that this is true. So cast the lot yourself into the lap of Justice, never fearing but that its response will be absolutely true. Chelaship is an educational as well as probationary stage and the chela alone can determine whether it shall end in adeptship or failure. Chelas from a mistaken idea of our system too often watch and wait for orders, wasting precious time which should be taken up with personal effort. Our cause needs missionaries, devotees, agents, even martyrs perhaps. But it cannot demand of any man to make himself either. So now choose and grasp your own destiny, and may our Lord’s the Tathagata’s memory aid you to decide for the best.

K.H.

(Source: *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, Edited by C. Jinarajadasa, letter #7)



Headquarters building, Adyar, Madras, circa 1882

Among the many interesting passages of this remarkable letter is the statement ‘There is also the collective karma of the caste you belong to – to be considered.’ At that time Christian missionaries in Madras were actively conspiring with the Coulobms, them residing at Adyar, in order to launch a concerted attack against Madame Blavatsky. This process culminated in both parties providing false evidence against HPB to Richard Hodgson, an investigator sent by the Society for Psychical research from London to investigate phenomena at the TS Headquarters at Adyar. The passage of the Mahatma’s letter mentioned in the last paragraph clearly indicated that although CWL was a priest in the Church of England, he did come for consideration of Master K.H. in what

concerned Chelaship or Discipleship. It is therefore important to review how the Mahatmas view such a concept. (Quotations are from Letter #30, the online edition of *The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett* (Theosophical University Press, <http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/mahatma/ml-30.htm>.)

Probation and Chelaship

PROBATION; something every chela who does not want to remain simply ornamental, has *nolens volens* to undergo for a more or less prolonged period;

A chela under probation is allowed to think and do whatever he likes. He is warned and told beforehand: you will be tempted and deceived by appearances; two paths will be open before you, both leading to the goal you are trying to attain; one easy, and that will lead you more rapidly to the fulfilment of orders you may receive; the other — more arduous, more long; a path full of stones and thorns that will make you stumble more than once on your way; and, at the end of which you may, perhaps, find failure after all and be unable to carry out the orders given for some particular small work, — but, whereas the latter will cause the hardships you have undergone on it to be all carried to the side of your credit in the long run, the former, the easy path, can offer you but a momentary gratification, an easy fulfilment of the task.

...we — leave it to our menials — the *dugpas* at our service, by giving them *carte blanche* for the time being, and with the sole object of drawing out the whole *inner* nature of the chela, most of the nooks and corners of which, would remain dark and concealed for ever, were not an opportunity afforded to test each of these corners in turn. Whether the chela wins or loses the prize — depends solely of himself.

This seems to be the process that CWL was submitted to for, after receiving Master K.H.'s letter through the mail on 31 October 1884, which was reproduced above, he was to receive on the night of that same day, phenomenically, through the agency of HPB, a second letter from the Master which indicated a new and life-altering development in his life:

Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it was my desire you should go to Adyar immediately — I may say more. The sooner you go the better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th if possible. Join Upasika at Alexandria. Let no one know you are going and may the blessing of our Lord, and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life.

Greeting to you my new chela.

K. H.

Show my notes to no one.

(Source: *Letters of the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, letter #8)

The Clergyman Becomes A Chela

The evidence produced above shows that when The Rev. Charles Webster Leadbeater was accepted as a Chela or Disciple by Mahatma K.H. in 1884 he was still a Priest of the Church of England, having solemnly accepted the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and being the Curate in the Parish of Bramshott, Hampshire, England.

How is one to interpret such a development in the Theosophical Society? Does it contradict the statement in Letter 10 (88 in the chronological edition) regarding God, the priesthood, and the Churches? Or does it show that in spite of that association CWL was found by the Master to be inwardly worthy of such a pivotal step in his spiritual life? Was this the same reason why HPB encouraged and supported him during the seven years of her association with him? Could this be also the reason why T. Subba Row included CWL in the private group in Madras to which he was imparting esoteric instruction?

No one in the long history of the TS, not even Madame Blavatsky, was subjected to such a concerted campaign of fierce and sometimes vitriolic opposition as CWL. He actually inaugurated, within the TS, the

‘trial by the press’. And yet, he never stopped working, writing books, articles, travelling, writing hundreds of letters, encouraging many in many countries to study and practice Theosophy.

In his second letter to him Master K.H. may have offered a possible glimpse for such a determined endeavour till the end, against all odds, almost constantly under fire from friend and foe, even now:

... may the blessing of our Lord, and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life.

Excerpts from *The Buddhist Curate*

C. W. Leadbeater’s Contribution to Buddhist Education in Sri Lanka

(Originally posted in CWL World, www.cwlworld.info)

Ceylon – *The Theosophist*, August 1886

Having attended the Wesak Festival, several prominent members of the Colombo Theosophical Society drove down on the following day to Talwatte, where Mr. Leadbeater had engaged to deliver an address. The rain, however, still descended in torrents, and much of the surrounding country was found to be under water. The number of persons present at the preaching-hall was consequently very small, and as the inundation appeared to be rapidly spreading, it was decided after consultation with the priests of the village that the address should be postponed until the dry season, when all the leading men of the neighbourhood could be readily assembled. The Theosophical party readied the Headquarters at 8 P. M., but had to start again immediately for Bambalapitiya, where they were due at nine o’clock. A very good *Dharma-sala* has been erected there they the exertions of some brothers of the Theosophical Society, and we are happy to be able to report that, like the Hall at the Headquarters, it is used by priests of all sects without distinction. No priest, however, being present on this occasion, Mr. Leadbeater gave *Pansil* (which appeared to please the assembled Buddhists greatly) and then spoke for about an hour and half. The audience was large and enthusiastic, and cheered the Theosophists heartily as they drove away. The party eventually reached the Headquarters about 2 A. M., drenched to the skin and fatigued.

(...)

On the 14th Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, in company with the well-known and energetic old Priest Megittuwatte, started by the 7.30 train for Anuradhapura, to address the pilgrims at the full moon festival there. Matale was reached at noon, where the party was met by Mr. Louis Wijisingha Mudaliyar (the learned translator of the Mahawanso) and other leading men, and arrangements were made for a speech there on the return journey. The remaining seventy-two miles to Anuradhapura had to be done in horse and bullock-coaches, so that the party reached its destination only at 6.30 on the following morning. The morning was spent in interviewing the priests and leading men of the place, and in the afternoon an address was delivered to a most enthusiastic audience of between five and six thousand people. The next morning a special meeting of the local magnates was held at eight o’clock, and a committee of influential men was formed to carry on the work in that district, and correspond with the Headquarters on the subject. The north Central Province has thus been opened up as a field for Theosophical work, and there is reason to expect very good results from this auspicious commencement. On their way back to Matale the party visited Mihintale, and also made a hurried inspection of the marvellous rock temples at Dambulla. At Matale an address was delivered near the Court-house, and there was a very good attendance in spite of the usual unpropitious

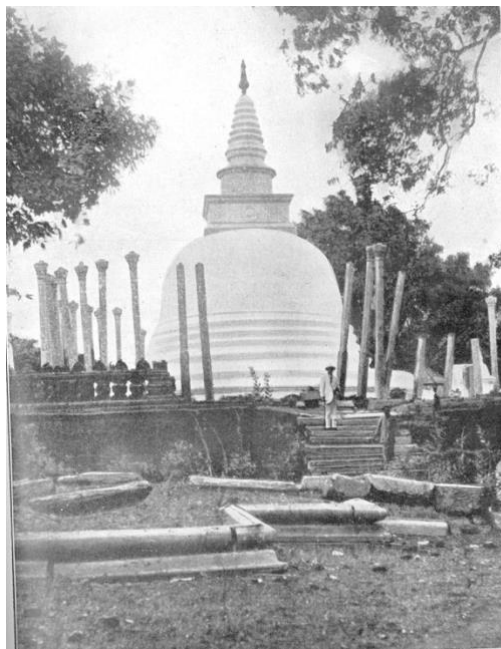
weather. Some idea of the feeling manifested at Anuradhapura and Matale may be formed from the fact that at these two places alone 530 copies of the Introductory Catechism and 282 of the larger one were sold.

Full text at: http://www.cwlworld.info/CWL_in_Ceylon.pdf

ANURADHAPURA AND MIHINTALE

C. W. Leadbeater

(Originally published in *The Theosophist*, August 1886. CWL helped Col. Henry S. Olcott in his work for the revival of Buddhist education in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, between 1886 and 1889. This article presents his impressions of his visit to ancient Buddhist sacred sites in that country. Pictures included in this article are from the February 1929 issue of *The Australian Theosophist*.)



Thuparama Dagoba, Anuradhapura

VERY little is known by the great majority of people about the early history of the island of Ceylon; and even of those who have read something of its ancient splendour, there are probably few who at all realize to what a height that splendour must have reached. When, one considers the small size of the island itself, and the fact that its kings (with the exception of temporary conquests of small districts in Southern India) never ruled over any country outside its borders, it is somewhat startling to hear of one chief city covering over seventy square miles of ground—of a defensive wall, erected round another chief city, which included an area of over three hundred and fifty square miles—and of a road, one hundred and sixty miles in length, along which a man could walk upon the roofs of the houses from end to end; and yet all this does not rest upon mere tradition—the ruins are there to this day to testify to these and many other evidences of the enormous wealth and the extraordinary command of labour possessed by the ancient Sinhalese kings. Much as the slight and partial excavations already made have revealed, there must still remain much more to reward a further and more systematic search; for many miles of country, apparently as fertile as any in the world, and sheaving

unequivocal signs of having once possessed a dense population, are now entirely overrun by jungle. Surely here is a good opening for the eager capitalist the land is to be purchased at a low rate, and when cleared would, undoubtedly, produce first rate crops, while in the process of clearing who knows what interesting and valuable relics of a bye-gone age might not be discovered? If these considerations, together with the fact that the climate is probably the pleasantest and most equable in the world (average mean temperature 80°, rainfall 51 inches) were made generally known, settlers would assuredly be forthcoming.

In view, then, of the fact that one hears so little of these ruined cities of Ceylon, I have thought that a short account of a flying visit recently paid to some of them might not be uninteresting to the readers of our Magazine. The earlier part of the journey from Colombo is performed by railway, and for the first fifty miles there is nothing specially worthy of note, except the marvellous luxuriance of the vegetation and the occasional lovely glimpses of flowery glades that relieve at intervals the monotony of the dense jungle growth. After passing Rambukkana Station, however, the scenery suddenly changes, becoming picturesque, varied, and even romantic. In the course of the next thirteen miles the line rises two thousand feet, and is consequently composed principally of sharp curves and steep gradients. Sometimes it is a mere groove cut out of the face of the cliff, and in one place it runs for some distance along a ledge only just wide enough for the rails, with a perpendicular wall of rock on one side, and on the other a sheer precipice of three or four hundred feet in depth, down which two little mountain streams fall in graceful cascades into the valley below. It is a sort of tropical complement to the railway up the Righi, and it is quite possible that some persons, when making the descent, might share Mark Twain's feeling of nervousness at finding himself "sliding down the banisters in a railway train," as he expresses it. At Kandy it is necessary to change trains, and take the branch line to Matale—the most northerly point to which the railway at present extends. Thus the first ninety miles of the journey are performed in comparative ease, though only at a very slow pace; but the remaining distance of seventy-two miles is far more formidable. If the enterprising traveller leaves Colombo, as our party did, by the 7.30 A.M. train, he will reach Matale at noon, and will have to leave again almost immediately by a sort of curtailed waggonette drawn by two skeleton horses, which is dignified with the title of a mail-coach. This will take him twenty-eight miles on his way, to the village of Dambulla, but there he will have to abandon it for a still more horrible contrivance called a "bullock-coach," which carries him over the remaining forty-four miles at a slow jog-trot of about four miles an hour, depositing him at Anuradhapura at about 6.30 on the following morning. It is possible, with some contrivance, for three persons to make some approximation to comfort in this vehicle; but when, as in our case, a cargo of eight unfortunates has to spend the whole night sitting bolt upright, with no room for the knees, and with iron supports bruising the back at every jolt of the crazy machine, this stage of the journey is simply unalloyed misery. I would also advise the traveller to possess himself quietly of the guard's bugle at the commencement of the evening, and keep it carefully hidden until morning, as otherwise his torture will be enhanced by a frequent and excruciating performance upon it. However, when the ancient capital is at last reached, all the fatigue and trouble of the journey will be speedily forgotten.

The ruins stand in the midst of a vast plain; and except that the surrounding land is unusually fertile, it is difficult to imagine why the Sinhalese dynasty established its capital here in those warlike days for the position has no strategic advantages of mountain, river, or forest, and all its riches must have lain very much at the mercy of the Malabar invaders when once they had obtained a footing on the island: indeed, history seems to show that more than once they found it a comparatively easy prey.

The first thing that attracted our attention on descending from the coach was a collection of sixteen hundred square granite pillars, arranged in rows of forty, and standing about six feet apart, so as to cover an area of about two hundred and forty feet each way. Though they stand some twelve feet out of the ground, each pillar is one solid block of stone, rough and undressed, apparently standing now just in the condition in which it was brought from the quarry two thousand years ago I am told that it is considered probable that these pillars were originally sheathed in copper, and there can be no doubt that they must have been covered in some way; for a nation capable of executing the neat and refined working in stone which we see all around us here, would certainly never have left a prominent part of one of its great edifices thus unfinished. These

sixteen hundred pillars, it seems, originally supported the floor of an enormous monastery called "The Great Brazen Place," built by King Dutugemunu in the year 161 B.C. This building, we read, was nine stories in height, each story being less in size than the one below it; it contained a thousand dormitories for priests, besides various other apartments, including a great hall supported on golden pillars resting on lions, in the centre of which stood a magnificent ivory throne: and as the whole vast fabric was roofed with tiles of burnished brass (whence its name), it must have presented a truly imposing appearance in those brave days of old.

Only a short distance from the Great Brazen Place is the celebrated Bo-tree – the oldest historical tree in the world. All students of Oriental history will remember how the Princess Sanghamitta, daughter of the great Asoka, king of Magadha, and sister to Prince Mahinda, the apostle of Ceylon, brought with her from India a branch of the sacred tree under which the Great Teacher sat when he attained the Buddhahood. It was planted here with much ceremony in the year 245 B.C.; and the story of its life has since been handed down in a continuous series of authentic records. It is now a wide spreading tree, and in spite of its 2131 years of life, it still looks hale and vigorous. It is surrounded by three tiers of terraces, which are raised in the centre of a small grove of palms and Bo-trees. At the foot of the steps leading up into the grove lies a curious and beautifully-carved semi-circular stone—a specimen of what students of Buddhist architecture have agreed to call the "moonstone," though beyond the resemblance in apparent outline it has no connection whatever with the moon. Several of these stones are to be found among the ruins, and all are alike in general design, though it seems that no two exactly in

So, at least, says
Assistant
the district, in his
Cities of Ceylon."
these places should
we found it a most
telling us just what
find it, and giving
which we must
through many
description of these



CARVED PILLARS AT ANURADHAPURA

resemble one another
arrangement of details.
Mr. S. M. Burrows, the
Government Agent of
little book "The Buried
No traveller visiting
be without, this work;
invaluable hand-book,
to look for and. where to
us facts and figures for
otherwise have searched
volumes. I quote his
moon stones: "As a

general rule, the outer border of the stone presents a procession of the elephant, the horse, the lion, and the Brahman bull; the next two or three circles skew designs taken from the stem and leaf of the lotus plant; then comes a procession of the hanza, or sacred goose; and the innermost circles represent the other stages of the lotus growth—the flower, and the round bud." Ascending the steps and entering the grove we find lying on the ground some fine granite pillars and several images, all more or less defaced by time. Passing up a flight of steep stone steps and under a heavy arched doorway, we at last attain the highest platform, and stand before the iron railing which guards the Sacred Tree from the touch of the profane. This is the spot where the enthusiasm of the devotees culminates; and I have seen few sights more striking than the enormous crowd of pilgrims which came steadily pouring along what is called "The Sacred Road" and up those steps to lay their flowers and perfumes and incense at the foot of that venerable tree. Through the whole night that crowd streamed steadily in, as it had done through the whole of the previous day, and as it did up to the moment of our departure on the following day; through the whole night the High Priest of Anuradhapura stood patiently at the head of those steps, answering questions, directing the surging mass, and averting by judicious exercise of authority what might otherwise have sometimes been a very ugly crush indeed. A suggestive scene, truly; suggestive to see the expression of rapt devotion on the faces of the pilgrims; suggestive to note how each band of weary and travel-stained men, when from a distance of half-a mile or more, they first caught sight of the sacred enclosure, raised a great shout of gladness and pressed on their way with renewed vigour, many even weeping with joy, like the Jews of old at the sight of Jerusalem: most suggestive of all to remember that

just such a huge procession as this – nay, one which must often have been any times as large—has poured along that road and up those Steps on every greater festival for more than two thousand years.

Not far from the Bo-tree is a mound surrounded by a circle of fine pillars (monolithic as usual) with beautifully carved capital — all that now remains of the “Peacock Palace” described in the ancient chronicles, but time failed us to examine half the objects of interest that presented themselves even close to the high-road; every few yards we came across fallen columns or fragments of stone carving. All I can do, therefore, is to give any outline description of some of the more prominent buildings, referring those whose interest is excited, and who wish for fuller particulars, to Mr. Burrows’ book above-mentioned.

The next place we visited was the Ruanweli or Gold-dust Dagoba, also built by King Dutugemunu, to commemorate his victory over the Tamil usurper Elala—for whom, by the way, (having killed him with his own hand) he built a magnificent tomb, the remains of which, I believe, are still to be seen, though we had not time to visit them. It is said that the precise spot where the dagoba is erected was selected, because a stone of early date was discovered there, bearing engraved upon it a prophecy that a great and victorious king should raise in this place a most sacred monument. The stone is still to be seen—a huge pillar of granite—but the inscription is now illegible. The present height of the Ruanweli dagoba must be rather less than two hundred feet, but no doubt it was originally much higher. The upper portion presents the appearance of a very steep mound, covered with grass and creepers, but the lower part has been restored to its original size by the exertions of the priest in charge, under whose directions the work is rapidly progressing. Strictly speaking, members of the Lord Buddha’s order are forbidden to collect money for any purpose whatever; yet one can hardly help admiring a man who, in this half-hearted nineteenth century, has the courage to undertake single-handed so stupendous a task as the restoration of one of these royal dagobas. He told us that to build a course of only one foot in height required sixty four thousand bricks, and that a sum not far short of £20,000 had already been spent in the work. He has been severely censured by many for attempting this restoration, and all kinds of insinuations have been levelled at him in consequence: I can only say that we found him straightforward, manly, and kind-hearted. He willingly showed us all that there was to see in the grounds under his jurisdiction, and even accompanied me in a break-neck scramble to the summit of the dagoba in order to point out the various objects of interest which so thickly stud the surrounding country. At parting he presented me with a relic of the Arahāt Sivali in a beautiful golden case, and also a pretty little silver-gilt figure of the Lord Buddha.

Various objects of interest will be found upon the platform surrounding this dagoba—among others a small stone dagoba, which is said to have been the model on which the larger one was constructed. There is a circular bathing-pool, some sixty feet in diameter, and about twenty-five in depth, carefully lined with blocks of granite; also several statues and stone altars, more or less broken, and the remains of some very curious grotesque figures in alto-relievo. Outside the enclosure is a large hollowed stone, perhaps, seven feet by two and a half, which is called “King Dutugemunu’s bath,” but is more probably some sort of sarcophagus and also a raised slab of granite, surrounded by small pillars, upon which tradition says that the King had himself laid down when his death drew near, so that his last glance might fall upon the sacred shrine which he had reared. The present appearance of this and the other ruined dagobas gives but little idea of what they must have been in the time of their glory, for not only were they then considerably larger than they are now, but they were also coated with some sort of plaster which was susceptible of a very high polish, so that they seemed as though built of white marble.

A smaller dagoba erected by the same King bears the name Miriswetiya (curry and chillies)—the story told to account for the name being that this pious monarch always made it a practice to offer part of every dish he ate in charity, but having for some reason once forgotten to do so, he built this dagoba to atone for the omission and gave it its present title so that every one might ask for and hear the reason of its erection—this being apparently part of the expiation. It is as yet only very partially excavated, but on the wall of a sort of chapel or shrine on one side of it is quite the finest carving in high relief that I have seen in Ceylon. The visitor should particularly notice a most life-like row of elephants’ heads, and a form of decoration which at a

little distance, gives exactly the effect of the well-known, “dog-tooth ornament,” and is quite probably its prototype. Not far off stand some sixty huge granite pillars, supposed to mark the site of a monastery.

One of the largest dagobas in Anuradhapura is the Abhayagiri – “The Mountain of Safety,” or, as the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian calls it, “The Mountain without Fear.” He tells us that at the time of his visit (413 A.D.) there were five thousand priests attached to this establishment, and he describes a beautiful image of blue jasper, twenty feet in height, which stood in the principal hall of its monastery. Even now this huge mound – 325 feet in diameter and 230 in height—is completely encircled with ruins, which show how

important a place it must once have been. There are still some fine specimens of stone carving specially mentioned three huge of gigantic dimensions. This Walagambahu in the year 89 materials used in its construction Ipswich or Coventry, or would foot thick reaching from London



SEVEN-HEADED COBRA

have been. There are still some visible, among which may be cobras—one a seven-headed one building was erected by King B.C. Tennant says of it that the would build a town the size of form a wall ten feet high and one to Edinburgh.

most venerated of the dagobas is only sixty-three feet in height—was built by the celebrated King B.C. 307, for the purpose of the Lord Buddha. The Dalada, or

The oldest and one of the a comparatively small one—called the Thuparama, which Dewanampia Tissa in the year enshrining the collar-bone of

“Sacred Tooth,” was also kept here for some centuries before its removal, first to Pollanarua and afterwards to Kandy. This dagoba is surrounded by one hundred and thirty pillars, arranged in three rows. Close by is a huge block of granite hollowed out so as to form a kind of bath or cistern ten feet five feet broad, and two and a half feet deep. This is said to have been filled with food for the use of the pilgrims on the Wesak festival only a few years ago.

Other interesting shrines at Anuradhapura are the Jetawanarama (a companion in point of size to the Abhayagiri), the Lankarama, and the Isurumuniya, this last being carved out of the solid rock; but these we unfortunately were unable to visit. I cannot pretend in these few pages to give a thorough account even of the little that we could find time to examine in the intervals of business; the place must be seen to be appreciated, and to do it justice many days’ study would be required. The same may be said of Mihintale, which we visited on the following day. This much venerated spot is about eight miles from Anuradhapura, but some distance from the coach-road, so that it has to be reached by the one conveyance of the country, the bullock-cart. Arriving at the foot of the hill the traveller has to follow a pretty jungle-path for some time, and then finds before him a gigantic staircase of 1,840 broad granite steps. The ascent, though of course fatiguing, is most interesting, as ruins of some sort mark every few steps. Everything, however, is now overgrown with a dense though beautiful jungle, in which troops of the grey Wanderoo monkey are frequently to be seen. Numerous sidepaths branch off from the main flight of steps, each leading to some spot worthy of long and careful study, but the only one we could spare time to follow was that which passes the Naga Pokuna, or snake-bathing-place. This is an irregular hollow in the rock, about one hundred and thirty feet in length and perhaps five and twenty in breadth, filled with clear, cold water, in which we found some priests bathing. On the wall of rock which rises behind the pool is sculptured a large five-headed cobra, the hood—some seven feet in diameter—and two or three feet of the body being all that is visible above the water, as the creature seems to rise out of it. The little path leading to this pool struck us as specially beautiful; indeed the most lovely bits of jungle scenery which I have yet observed in Ceylon are on that hill of Mihintale. There is said to be a well preserved portion of a fine stone aqueduct not far from the Naga Pokuna; but time compelled us to press on to the summit without staying to search for it. At the top of the last flight of steps is a small building said to be a guard-house, through which one passes on to the platform of the Ambustala dagoba—one of the holiest in Ceylon, since under it lie the ashes of the great apostle Prince Mahinilo and it also marks the spot on which he first met King Dewenampia

Tissa as the latter was returning from a hunting expedition. It is built of stone, and is only of very moderate height; but it is surrounded by a circle of octagonal stone pillars with beautifully carved capitals. The pansala, or residence of the priests, is upon this platform; and surely a pleasanter situation it would be hard to find. Another flight of slippery rock-cut steps leads to the Mahaseya dagoba, which occupies the summit of this peak of the hill. The twin summit – the higher of the two – is also crowned by some ruins, but these we were unable to explore. This Mahaseya dagoba, like the great Shway Daigon at Rangoon, is said to enshrine a hair of the Lord Buddha. It is built of brick in perpendicular stages, and its summit would be quite inaccessible were it not that a breach made by the Malabars in search of treasure has transformed one side of it into a very steep inclined plane up which it is possible, though certainly dangerous, to climb. The view from the top, however, is so fine as to render it well worth while to make the effort.

Another path from the Ambustala platform leads through a rocky ravine in which grow the most lovely ferns to what is perhaps the most interesting spot of all—Mahinda's cave. Certainly the great Missionary Prince chose his locality well, for it would probably hard to find anywhere in the world a scene of more romantic beauty than this. To give any real idea of it would require a painting by one of our great landscape artists; mere words can never do it justice. As I have said, the traveller follows a steep path through a ravine apparently in the heart of the group of hills and, towards the end of it at least, progress becomes so difficult over the sharp-pointed rocks and the huge slippery boulders that he is too fully occupied to get any hint of the surprise in store for him. Finally he scrambles into the cave itself, and with a suddenness that takes his breath away, finds a prospect of fifty miles of country stretched very literally at his feet, for he stands less than three yards from the edge of a precipice, and at an elevation of some eight or nine hundred feet from the jungle-covered plain below. The cave is formed at the extreme point of a spur of the hill; its floor is a smooth slab of rock, perhaps nine feet in length and about six in breadth, and its roof is an enormously strong natural arch of granite, rather over six feet from the floor at the higher end, and about two at the lower. Thus both sides of the cave are open, and as the Royal Priest lay there to take his noonday rest, he had on his left the beautiful rocky glen before referred to, in which huge grey boulders peep out at frequent intervals through an indescribable luxuriance of vegetation, and on his right, far, far below, an unbroken sea of verdure extending to the horizon, dotted at intervals by a few smaller hills. But no; that statement is incorrect; that is what the enraptured visitor sees *now*, but in Mahinda's time that desolate plain was no doubt covered with populous villages and highly cultivated gardens, and that lonely glen-filled with the residences of his priestly pupils. Then or now, no situation could be more striking; and no one who has had the good fortune to see it will ever forget Prince Mahinda's cave.

On the journey back to Kandy we found ourselves with an hour to spare at Dambulla, and so hurried off to visit the famous rock-temples there. We saw only enough to make us wish for time to see more, but even that little is well worth describing. The ascent to the temples from the road is a steep one, partly up slippery rocks and partly up a very picturesque old staircase. The view from the gate-house of the temple platform is said to be one of the finest in Ceylon, but on that point I am unable to speak from personal experience, as when we were there everything was hidden by torrents of rain. The five temples are simply caverns in the side of a huge mass of gneiss rock, and it is said that King Walagambahu (B.C. 104) had frequently used them as a refuge during the unsuccessful years of his long war with the Malabars, and so, when he was finally victorious, he celebrated his triumph by turning his asylum into a magnificent shrine. A narrow outer gallery has been built under the overhanging rock in front of the entrances: thereby much spoiling the external effect. In the first temple is a gigantic recumbent figure of the Lord Buddha, cut out of the solid rock, and about fifty feet in length; around it are several smaller figures, one being a wooden statue of Vishnu, from which this cave is called the Mahadeva Dewale. The next temple is called the Maha Vihare, and is about one hundred and seventy feet long by fifty or sixty broad, the roof being twenty feet high in front, but sloping down gradually to the floor. In this gloomy cavern is a semicircle of huge sitting figures of the Lord Buddha which presents a very striking effect as one enters from the glare of daylight outside. There are some smaller statues also, but I should say that fifty at least are above life-size. A small dagoba stands at one side, and parts of the roof and walls are covered with very curious paintings—utterly innocent, most of them, of any idea of

perspective—representing historical events, such as the landing of Wijeya, the preaching of Mahinda, and the planting of the Bo-tree. In one place water drops from a fissure in the roof, and is caught in a stone vessel and reserved for sacred purposes.

The third temple is about eighty feet in length, and varies breadth from some sixty feet to perhaps about twenty-five. In its centre sits under a stone canopy a large image of the Lord Buddha, and at one end is a recumbent brick figure of him thirty feet in length. There are at least fifty statues in this chamber. The fourth and fifth temples we had not time to visit, but we were told that they were both smaller than those we saw; one is said to contain some fine specimens of wood carving, and another, gigantic reclining statue of our Lordⁱ.

H. P. B. ON C. W. LEADBEATER IN 1886

THE illustration below is an exact reproduction of a page of *The Theosophist*, p. 686, August 1886, in which appears an article by C. W. Leadbeater, "Anuradhapura and Mihintale". H. P. B.'s copy of this volume of the journal is here at Adyar, and she has marked in blue pencil the last two paragraphs, as reproduced below.

The fourth and fifth temples we had not time to visit, but we were told that they were both smaller than those we saw; one is said to contain some fine specimens of wood carving, and another gigantic reclining statue of our Lord. X

This account of the little that we ourselves were enabled to see cannot, of course, be considered as giving more than a mere hint of what would reward the researches of a traveller with more time at his disposal. Surely therefore when our Indian neighbours require rest and relaxation, they might do worse than pay a visit to what Mr. Burrows describes as "an artistic and archaeological treat, which is perhaps unique in the East." They will at the same time be enabled to form something like a just estimate of the past history of a very interesting nation—a nation which, as the same author remarks, "could build a city of gigantic monoliths, carve a mountain into a graceful shrine, and decorate its pious monuments with delicate pillars that would have done credit to a Grecian artist."

X C. W. LEADBEATER.

A brave heart!
HMB

This account of the little that we ourselves were enabled to see cannot, of course, be considered as giving more than a mere hint of what would reward the researches of a traveller with more time at his disposal. Surely therefore when our Indian neighbours require rest and relaxation, they might do worse than pay a visit to what Mr. Burrows describes as "an artistic and archaeological treat, which is perhaps unique in the East." They will at the same time be enabled to form something like a just estimate of the past history of a very interesting nation—a nation which, as the same author remarks, "could build a city of gigantic monoliths, carve a mountain into a graceful shrine, and decorate its pious monuments with delicate artist."

Note: When Madame Blavatsky read this article, and particularly this passage in which CWL refers to Lord

Buddha as 'our Lord', she wrote in her copy of the magazine (*The Theosophist*): 'A brave heart!'

We reproduce above page 100 of C. Jinarajadasa's book *The "K.H." Letters to C. W. Leadbeater* (1980 edition).



The Leadbeater Building in Ananda College, Colombo.
Photo by Pedro Oliveira, 2007.



OFFICIAL NOTICE.

As Mr. C. W. Leadbeater's presence in London is required in the interest of the Theosophical Society, I hereby give notice that his connection with the Ceylon Section will cease from and after the date of his sailing from Colombo, and that Mr. Charles F. Powell is appointed temporarily in his place as General Secretary of the Ceylon Section of the T. S. and my official representative in the Island. Upon my return to Colombo in January next, I shall make permanent arrangements for the superintendence of the Society's work in Ceylon.

I take this occasion to publicly thank Mr. Leadbeater for his unselfish attempts during the past five years to promote, both in India and Ceylon, the welfare of the theosophical movement, and for his loyal friendship for Madame Blavatsky and myself.

H. S. OLCOTT, P. T. S.
By the President Founder,
H. P. BLAVATSKY,
Corresponding Secretary, T. S.

LONDON, November, 1889.

Top: Commemorative plaque at Vijayananda Vihara, Galle, in memory of H.P.B. and H.S.O. taking the Panchasila, set up by CWL. Photo by Pedro Oliveira (2004). Bottom: Colonel Olcott's and Madame Blavatsky's tribute to CWL, published in *The Theosophist*.