

Madame Blavatsky defends Buddhism in Ceylon



Contents and abstract of central ideas¹

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And points out that the root cause of the Kotahena riot in 1833 was the ungenerous and unlawful attitude of the Christian padris and bigots of Ceylon toward the Buddhist religion. 3

The spirit of the law is easily avoided, while its dead letter is as often made the weapon and pretext for the perpetration of the most iniquitous deeds. 5

Honour your own faith, and do not slander that of others.

Buddhism is the least aggressive of all religions, as Christianity the most aggressive of all and more so than Mohammedanism. 6

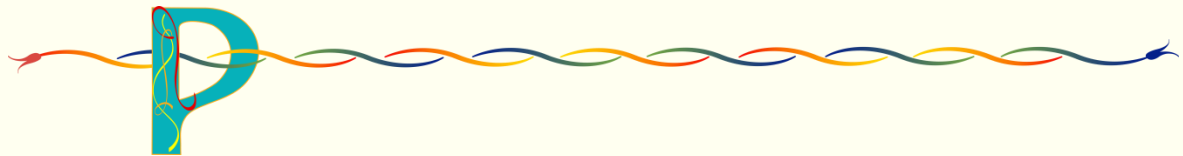
The devil who, to defeat God and thwart the ends of Justice and of Right, sows on earth the seeds of thousand and one conflicting religious sects; the seeds sprouting and growing into the strong weeds that will stifle mankind, unless destroyed and annihilated. 11

The intolerance, bigotry, and fanaticism of the Roman Catholic ruffianly mob, officially investigated and excoriated. 13

The truculent “Ceylon Observer” continues inflicting wanton cruelties upon the peaceful Singhalese Buddhists. 14

Suggested reading for students.

She being dead, yet speaketh. 15



¹ Frontispiece, by Priti Parikh. Young Monk on page 10, by Zaw Zaw Aung.

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Buddism should have been spelled Buddaïsm. To find out why, consult “Budhism is Inner Wisdom,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.

Some farsighted and promising correspondent, anxious to penetrate the mystery of the recent Kotahena riot between the Buddhists and the Roman Catholics to its very roots, makes a desperate attempt to connect it with “Colonel Olcott and Theosophy.” The correspondent belongs to the *Ceylon Observer*. *Tel maître, tel valet.*¹

A Heathen Emperor is said to have struck out from his life those days when he had failed to benefit one human being, at the least.² The Christian Editor of the *Ceylon Observer*, as we have but too well occasion to know, on that day when his paper will come out without containing several lies and at least one libel, will swallow his own tongue and thus die poisoned. Writes his correspondent:

It is argued [that] alarmed by the steady if slow progress that Christianity is making in the Island, and encouraged by the presence (?)³ of so-called Theosophists, the Buddhists have roused themselves from their torpor, and are inclined to be more aggressive than they have been for a long while, if ever. [And it is represented that] . . . a new and extraordinary vigour was added to the revival (of Buddhism by the priest Mohottiwatte) upon the arrival of Colonel Olcott [428] in Ceylon . . . A good deal of enthusiasm was aroused throughout the country, while a few educated men who suddenly remembered their faith in Buddhism, entered into the spirit of the movement.

Quite true, so far, with that exception only that the “revival of Buddhism among educated men” has nothing to do whatever with the riots. It is simply a dishonest insinuation. We propose to show the true causes of this unfortunate brawl; and none but a blind partisan or fanatic will deny the statement. It is evident that the correspondent either knows nothing of the “movement,” or that, bent upon mischief, he tries to throw suspicion upon a body of men quite innocent in the matter. More than that: had every man among the Buddhist and Christian rioters belonged to the Theosophical Society (while there were few if any Theosophists in the procession and none

¹ [i.e., like master, like servant; lithograph by Edme-Jean Pigal (1798–1794), reproduced overleaf.]

² *La Clemenza di Tito*, by Pietro T. Metastasio:
Perduto un giorno ei dice
Ove fatto no ha qualcun felice.

³ While Col. Olcott left Ceylon six months ago, Mme. Blavatsky has not visited it since August 1879.

mixed in the riot)¹ the [429] correspondent would not have had the opportunity of writing the above quoted words, since most likely no riot then could have taken place, for reasons that will be shown at the end of the present article.



¹ There was one nearly killed, though, by some *unknown* (?) Roman Catholic blackguards and thieves making of their religion a convenient screen for plunder. This is what the son of that Theosophist — than whom, there never breathed a more inoffensive, kind, honest gentleman — writes about the assault in the papers.

“CINNAMON GARDENS, March 26th, 1883.

I regret to inform you that Colombo is the scene of a great riot caused by the Roman Catholics and Buddhists.

Yesterday a “Pinkama” was taken from Borella to Revd. Gunnanande’s Temple, where a festival is taking place since February in commemoration of a new “Vihara.”

The procession was composed of men, women and children, and numbered over 10,000 (Buddhists). About a quarter of a mile from the Temple (in the Roman Catholic quarters) showers of stones, empty bottles, &c., were hurled at the procession by the Catholics, and the poor Buddhists who were unarmed were severely assaulted. My father who did not entertain the slightest suspicion of his being assaulted went forward with a few Police Inspectors to quiet both parties, but unfortunately he got the worst of it. He was dragged to the field adjoining the road and was most unmercifully beaten with clubs and other weapons and was plundered of all that he had on his person. He was brought home almost naked and senseless, when medical aid was procured and he is now under the treatment of Dr. Canberry. . . .

Yours, &c.

PETER D’ABREW.”

The spirit of the law is easily avoided, while its dead letter is as often made the weapon and pretext for the perpetration of the most iniquitous deeds.

No doubt it would have answered far more agreeably the purposes of the *Ceylon Observer*, were every Buddhist as every other “heathen” the world over to forget forever his forefather’s faith, whether in Buddhism or any other “ism,” and thus open himself to the far more philosophical and especially more comprehensible mysteries of Christianity. Unfortunately for the *Observer* the palmy days of heretic-roasting and thumb screws are over. Religious privileges are pretty evenly distributed among the British subjects of the Crown’s Colonies (at any rate thus saith the law), their respective creeds being left undisturbed, and every one being allowed the choice as the untrammelled exercise of his own religion. Christian Missionaries — if the said law and the proclamation of the Queen Empress in 1858 are not a farce — are not granted any more religious privileges and lights in the British Colonies as far as we know, than the priests (subjects to Great Britain) of any other alien creed. That fact — perfectly well known to all — that taking advantage of the bigotry of some isolated Europeans, they nevertheless do obtain concessions that the heathen clergy do not, and that carrying out their proselytism among Hindus and Buddhists on principles that are often more than unfair, they have succeeded in impressing a portion of the ignorant masses with the false idea that it *is the open wish of their rulers that they should be all converted*, does not affect at all the main question of their real rights and privileges, which remain as justly limited as before. To say here, as we have often heard it said, that “might is right” is unfair, since in this case it is simply priestly cunning that has the best of, and defeats the ends of impartial justice and law. Unfortunately, in every country under the sun the spirit of the law is easily avoided, while its dead letter is as often made the weapon and pretext for the perpetration of the most iniquitous deeds.

To be brief and to define our meaning clearly and at [430] once, we shall put to our opponents the following direct questions:

- 1 Does or does not the righteous British law protect equally all its subjects, whether Heathen or Christian?
- 2 While justly punishing a “heathen” whenever the latter insults the religious feelings of a Christian, shall or shall it not also inflict the same punishment upon a Christian, who grossly insults and ridicules the faith of any of his “so-called heathen” or “pagan” fellow subjects?
- 3 Do not Christian missionaries (these daily and in public thoroughfares), lay-bigots, and not only sectarian but even political daily papers in the British Colonies use constantly insulting and mocking words of Buddhist, Hindu, Mohammedan, and Parsi forms of faith, or do they never do so?
- 4 Are all the above named personages liable to be punished by law for it, or is that law enforced only with regard to the “heathen,” the teeming millions of India and Ceylon; and have the latter no protection or redress to hope for from that righteous impartial law?

Honour your own faith, and do not slander that of others.

Buddhism is the least aggressive of all religions, as Christianity the most aggressive of all and more so than Mohammedanism.

We vouchsafe to say that the answer to all those questions (though of course they will never be answered) would be clearly the following:

The law is one for all. It protects equally the Heathen and the Christian subjects, and gives no more right to the missionary or lay Christian to insult the religion of the Heathen, than to the latter to insult the creed of the former.

And now, we challenge the missionaries the world over, as the editors of most of the daily and weekly papers, whether conducted by bigoted or simply *nominal* Christian editors, to deny that this law is defied and broken daily and almost hourly. Of course such a denial would be impossible since taking as an instance this one Kotahena religious row in Colombo alone, we can quote from nearly every paper in Ceylon and India the most insulting language used when speaking of Buddhism.¹ And yet of all the great religions of the world, Buddhism *is the only one* which enforces upon its devotees respect for all the alien creeds.

Honour your own faith, and do not slander that of others,

is a Buddhist maxim, and the [431] edicts of King Aśoka are there to corroborate the assertion. For centuries, the Christians and their missionaries in Ceylon have daily insulted and reviled Buddhism in every street and corner. They did so with impunity, and taking advantage of the mild tolerance of the Singhalese, their lack of energy and determination, and because Buddhism is the least aggressive of all religions, as Christianity the most aggressive of all: more so than Mohammedanism now, since in this case “might is right,” and that the latter feel sure to come out second best in every affray with the Europeans. Yet we doubt whether the *padris* would have been allowed or even dared to revile the religion of the “prophet” as forcibly as they do Buddhism, were the Island populated by Mohammedans instead of being full of Buddhists. This detail alone, that the census of 1882 shows that there are in Ceylon but 267,477 Christians (Europeans, Burghers, and Tamil converts included) whereas the Singhalese Buddhists count 1,698,070 souls, ought to show, in view of the afore-said insults, a good deal in favour of the truly *Christlike* patience, fortitude, and forgiveness of all offence on the part of the Buddhists, disclosing at the same time the (as truly) unchristian, aggressive, bloodthirsty, fierce and persecuting spirit of the so-called Christians. Therefore, and without entering into the useless question whether it was the Buddhist or Christian mob that was the aggressor, we say fearlessly that the true cause of the riot is to be sought in the ungenerous and *unlawful* attitude of the Christian *padris* and bigots of Ceylon toward the Buddhist religion. Buddhists are made of flesh and blood, and their religion is as sacred to them as Christianity is to the Christians. Thus, it is the fanatical converts, who are the true *lawbreakers* in this case, and their recognized supporter in the Island is — *The Ceylon Observer*. We may as an illustration give here a few quotations from that sheet edited by the most bigoted Baptist, thus showing it a regular hotbed where are daily

¹ [See how police tackled the religious riots in <https://www.sundaytimes.lk/970803/plus10.html>]

sown the seeds of every possible religious riot and sedition that may be expected in the future, not only between Buddhists and Christians, but even among the Protestants and the Roman Catholics. [432]

Ceylon Observer, April 2nd

. . . Government which recently united with that of Ceylon in glorifying the atheistic system of Buddhism by officially recognizing the importance of some *rubbishy*¹ remain of the begging bowl of the sage who taught “there is no Creator,” and existence is *per se* an evil, &c., . . . (follow vilifications of Government.)

Ceylon Observer, April 4th

As we are going to press we hear, *but we can scarcely credit*, the report that H.E. the Governor has written or ordered to be written an apologetic letter to the Buddhist Priest Mohottiwatte on account of his procession having been stopped! What next? The news comes to us from a gentleman who had seen the letter.

Here, “H.E. the Governor” is taken to task for acting as a gentleman, and remembering that law has to deal with equal impartiality in the case of a Buddhist as well as a Christian priest. Would *The Ceylon Observer* find fault with Government for offering its apologies to a Baptist clergyman?

Ceylon Observer, March 31st

. . . It was in consequence of this priest’s scurrilous and blasphemous attacks on Christianity and all that the Christian holds to be good and holy that the Roman Catholics of Balangoda gave him a drubbing on Sunday last. It is said² that this man is a disciple of the priest Mohottiwatte of Kotahena sent forth in fact by him to attack Christianity . . . Religious liberty is an inestimable boon, but if *men will deliberately turn liberty into license and act as this wretched priest is doing, then the liberty of such men must be curtailed “pro bono publico,” or an excitable people may be lashed into fury, &c. &c.*

Wise words these; especially, if we are shown that the sentence covers all the ground applying to Christian priests and missionaries as well.

The “wretched” priest, if guilty of the said accusation, merited his fate, though no one has the right to take the law into his own hands. [433]

But we beg permission to put some additional questions:

- Shall not similar “scurrilous attacks” upon Buddhism have to be considered as “blasphemous” when pronounced by a Christian in the eyes of law?
- And would not Buddhists be as *justified* (if there can be any justification for the “Law of Lynch”) were they to give “a drubbing” to a good Christian padri every

¹ “Rubbishy” because — Buddhist relics. We would stop to enquire whether the brave correspondent would ever think (or perhaps *dare*) to speak of Christian relics, such as bits of the “Holy cross” or even the bones of some of the Roman Catholic Saints — as “rubbishy” in Rome for instance?

² [is it proved? *Ed. H.P. Blavatsky*]

time they would catch him reviling their “Lord Buddha, and all *they* hold to be good and holy?”

- The Buddhist priest is accused of being “a disciple of the priest Mohottiwatte . . . sent forth by him to attack Christianity.” The priest is in his own, though conquered, country, defending his own creed that the just law of his rulers protects against any assault, and has probably done no more than this, were we but to hear the other side. Does not on the other hand, the horde of missionaries, who invade this country, to which they, at least (as most of them are Americans and foreigners), have no conqueror’s right, “attack” Buddhism and Hinduism openly?
- We are not told whether the Roman Catholic rowdies who gave the Buddhist priest “a drubbing” were punished for the assault or not. They certainly ought to; and if not, may not such an impunity incite the Buddhist mob to perhaps return the compliment?
- Who is the aggressor and who the first to break the law, ensuring to Buddhists the inviolability of their religious rights?

Surely not the Buddhists, but from the first the Missionaries who are ever fanning the latent spark of fanaticism in the breast of their ignorant converts. The Buddhists who have no right to assault or insult the devotees of any other faith, and who would never think of doing it, have, nevertheless, as good a right to preach and protect their own faith as the Christians have — aye and a better one in Ceylon, at any rate, if any of them only remembers or knows anything of the Proclamation of 1858, or that of 1815, March 2nd,¹ in which Article 5, distinctly states that: [434]

THE RELIGION OF BUDDHA, PROFESSED BY THE CHIEFS AND INHABITANTS OF THESE PROVINCES, IS DECLARED INVIOLEABLE, AND ITS RIGHTS, MINISTERS, AND PLACES OF WORSHIP, ARE TO BE MAINTAINED AND PROTECTED.

We have not heard that this pledge has ever been withdrawn or abolished. Thus, while admitting the profound justness of the correspondent’s words (the italics of which are ours), we permit ourselves to paraphrase the sentence and say that if missionaries and bigots “will deliberately turn liberty into license and go on doing daily as the wretched” (Buddhist) priest has done once (or perchance has *not* done it, at all) then the liberty of such men must be curtailed *pro bono publico* (i.e., of the majority of 1,698,070 Buddhists as against a minority of 267,477 Christians), or the masses of the people, were they as meek and humble as lambs, may be lashed into fury some day — and produce riots worse than the one under notice at Colombo.

For further corroboration we invite the attention of whom this may concern, to the issue of January 26th, 1883, of the *Moslem Friend*. We ask but to compare the utterances of its Mussulman editor with those of the Christian editor of the *Ceylon Observer*. We quote from it a sentence or two.

¹ Proclamation read by H.E. Lieut. Genl. Brownrigg, Governor in the Isle of Ceylon, acting in the name and on behalf of his Majesty George III at the palace in the city of Kandy.

Last month when we were in company with some of our friends at Matara, we happened to read in the *Ceylon Observer* an editorial condemning our Lord the Prophet, ridiculing our religion and insulting His Majesty the Sultan. One of the hearers grew so indignant as to give expression to severe invectives against the editor of the *Observer*, and we had to pacify him by addressing the company as follows:

Dear friends, Mr. Ferguson is undoubtedly a gentleman (?) of considerable learning and research . . . but on the subject of religion he is nothing but a fanatic and his utterances are not entitled to any serious consideration . . . His remarks on our religion, of which he is ignorant, are therefore not worthy of any notice. . . .

We ask any unprejudiced reader whether “Mr. Ferguson” had not merited a “drubbing” from the Mussulmans as well as the hypothetical Buddhist priest from the Roman Catholics? All honour to the infidel non-Christian editor who gives such a lesson of tolerance to the Baptist fanatic!

We conclude with the following letter from “another correspondent,” giving the true version of the Kotahena [435] riot. Since it is published in the *Ceylon Observer* and left uncontradicted, we have every reason to believe the account correct. Apparently the editor, notwithstanding his desire, *could not* invalidate the statements therein contained.

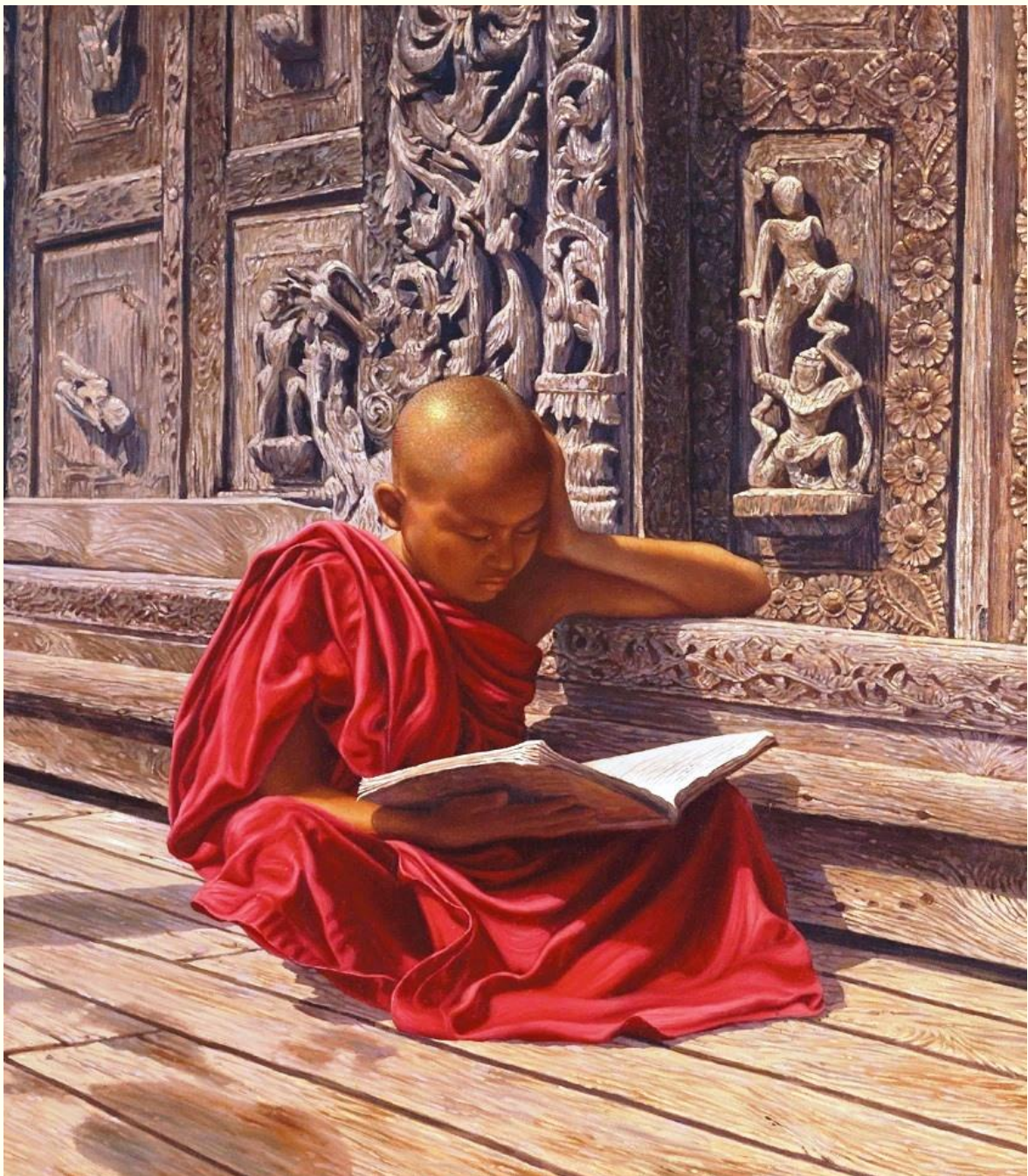
Your account of the riot at Kotahena is correct as far as it goes, but it is made to appear from that, that the Buddhists were the aggressors: a little more truth which has been suppressed will show that the Roman Catholics were the aggressors. At between 1½ and 2 o’clock on Sunday the tocsin¹ was sounded in three Roman Catholic churches and, within fifteen minutes of that, three Buddhist priests were severely assaulted with clubs: George Silva Mudaliyar of Green Lodge will testify to this, for he gave refuge to the priests. Afterwards nearly 100 men or more with clubs attacked every one they met in Green Lodge Street: hence 20 were taken to hospital. These Roman Catholic scoundrels, fishermen from Mutival, got into premises and struck people. Konay Saram, son of the late Maha Mudaliyar, was severely assaulted with clubs in his own garden; Lawrence, brother of the head clerk, Colonial Office, was assaulted in his own verandah, the tavern was robbed of money; other people, innocent of everything, were chipped. All this took place long long before the pinkama came, and when the pinkama came, the procession and police were attacked. *With regard to the image of Jesus it is a barefaced untruth:* Major Tranchell and the Inspectors will testify to this. Could you believe for a moment that these gentlemen would have escorted a procession with these effigies?²

Fault is found because yesterday people from Koratola came armed. Why did they do so? Not to attack, but to defend themselves, for their priests were assaulted, their friends murdered, their procession tumbled into fields, their carts

¹ [sound of an alarm a bell]

² A false report was spread by the Roman Catholics, that the Buddhist procession carried on a stick the image of a crucified monkey.

burnt the day before, and therefore they came prepared to defend themselves. Was it right, after permission was given by the authorities, and scores of pounds spent on the pinkama, and miles upon miles walked by the poor women and children, to stop the procession? Why not have taken charge of the arms and other weapons and safely escorted them to the Wihara? Has the Roman Catholic only privileges? The defence of Irish horrors and the ring of the tocsin are the same. Why did not the Roman Catholic priests step out amongst the crowd and quell their people's disturbance? Can the Roman Catholic priest go forth now into the country without the risk of being assaulted, and who knows whether Protestant missionaries may not be similarly handled?



The devil who, to defeat God and thwart the ends of Justice and of Right, sows on earth the seeds of thousand and one conflicting religious sects; the seeds sprouting and growing into the strong weeds that will stifle mankind, unless destroyed and annihilated.

This settles the matter and we can leave it to rest. The sworn evidence of Major Tranchell, Acting Inspector General of Police, shows also that it is not the Buddhists who [436] were the aggressors,¹ and now what is the moral to be deduced from, and the conclusions to come to, after reading the dishonest hints thrown out by the *Ceylon Observer*, who would incriminate Theosophy in the matter? Simply this. What has happened and threatens to happen any day [437] is due to the aggressive policy, intolerance and bigotry of the Christian converts and the absence of every effort on the part of their priests to control their turbulent spirit. It is again and once more the old but suggestive fable about the “Evil one” repeated; the devil who to defeat God and thwart the ends of Justice and of Right sows on earth the seeds of the thousand and one conflicting religious sects; the seeds sprouting and growing into the strong

¹ In support of our assertion, we give the following extracts from Major Tranchell’s evidence, as published in the *Bombay Gazette* of 7th April:

“I am acting Inspector General of Police. I verbally authorised the procession to come to Kotahena to the Buddhist Temple . . . Having heard that on a previous occasion offence was taken by the Catholics at images in a Buddhist procession, I sent Superintendent Holland to inspect the procession were it started. . . . Close to the turning up of St. Lucia’s Street, I saw a very large and excited mob armed with bludgeons and sword of the sword fish . . . Seeing all the mob excited and all armed, I apprehended violence. Most of the men in the crowd had a white cross painted on their forehead or waist. I believed them to be Roman Catholics . . . As we neared, a number of men [R. Catholics] approached towards us determined to resist us, with yells, bludgeons and all kinds of things . . . and we were met with a shower of brickbats and stones from the opposing party . . . Meantime the Buddhists forced three double bullock carts with paraphernalia on . . . There were no missiles in them. As the carts neared the Catholics, a body of the latter ran down, seized the bullocks, belaboured and killed five of them, and the carts were drawn up in a heap and set on fire. Meantime showers of brickbats and stones were thrown . . . Adjutant of the R.D.F. rode up a little in advance of the troops when the Catholics seeing that Military assistance was at hand, gradually dispersed . . . When I passed the Buddhist procession they had no offensive weapons in their hands. There was a very large number of women, several hundreds, in the procession. It was a perfectly orderly procession, going in quite a proper manner.”

In his cross-examination, the following facts were disclosed:

“There were girls and women of all ages. I went right through the procession from beginning to end. I looked as well at everything as I could, and I saw nothing objectionable . . . Buddhists have had, I am informed, a general permit for a procession in the month of March, but in my mind there was a doubt whether they should have it on Good Friday and Saturday, and I saw some leading Buddhists, and they agreed not to have any on those days, to avoid annoying the Catholics. They then pressed for one for Easter Sunday . . . I consulted the R.C. Bishop, who said there would not be the slightest objection to the procession on Easter Sunday. *He seemed pleased that the Buddhists had deferred to them in respect of the Friday and Saturday, and seemed anxious, if anything that they should have it on the Sunday.*”

All this clearly proves that:

- 1 The alleged image of a “monkey on the crucifix” was a false pretext to attack the Buddhists;
- 2 The Buddhists had not the remotest idea that they would be assaulted, as they would not in that case have brought their women of whom there were “several hundreds” in the procession, and would not have come armless and defenceless but would have asked the protection of the Authorities;
- 3 The majority (the Buddhists) gave deference to the feelings of a comparatively very small minority (the Catholics) as acknowledged by the R.C. Bishop himself but were the first victims of their good nature;
- 4 It was left to the Buddhists, the Godless Heathens, to set an example to the Christians by adhering to the alleged teaching of Christ, viz., “Love thy neighbour as thyself”;
- 5 The bloodthirstiness of the Catholics is exemplified in their killing the poor bullocks who certainly had no responsible share in the procession;
- 6 The Roman Catholic Bishop, although apparently satisfied for the *tolerant spirit* of the Buddhists, did not take care to control the *intolerant* enthusiasm of his “converts,” by sending some priests or going immediately to the spot of the riot and ordering them to desist from such disgraceful acts;
- 7 Neither the Catholic priests, if any, were near the scene of action, nor the laity, some of whom were there and who were “begged” by Major Tranchell to “use their influence with the Catholics,” would do it. These facts speak for themselves and no further comment is necessary.

weeds that must stifle finally mankind, unless speedily destroyed and annihilated. To accuse the Theosophical Society of the Colombo riot is as wise as to throw upon it the blame of the proposed dynamite horrors in London under the laudable pretext that there are Irish gentlemen among its members. The Society *has no creed*, and respects and teaches every member to respect all creeds, while honouring and protecting his own above all others. It has Christians [438] as well as Hindus and Freethinkers among its members in Ceylon, though the great majority are certainly Buddhists. Christian Fellows having the right to protect and defend their faith, the Buddhists have the same right as also that of aiming at “the revival of Buddhism.” So strict are our rules, that a member is threatened with immediate expulsion, if being a *Theosophist*, he opposes or breaks the law of the country he inhabits,¹ or preaches his own sectarian views to the detriment of those of his fellow brothers.² We invite the *Ceylon Observer* to search among the thousands of Theosophists to find any lawbreaker, criminal or even one avowedly immoral man among them — no one being able, of course, to answer for the hypocrites.

We conclude by pointing out once more to the deadly results of sectarian fanaticism. And, we assert, without fear of being contradicted, that were all to become Theosophists, there would be neither in India nor in Ceylon religious or any other riots. Its members *may and will defend themselves and their respective religions*. They will never be found the aggressors in any such disgraceful disturbances.



¹ Article XIV. Any fellow convicted of an offence against the Penal Code of the country he inhabits, shall be expelled from the Society. — (*Rules of the T.S.*)

² Article VI. No officer of the Society, in his capacity of an officer, nor any member, has the right to preach his own sectarian views and beliefs, or deprecate the religion or religions of other members to other Fellows assembled, except *when the meeting consists solely of his co-religionists*. — (*Rules of the T.S.*)

The underlined sentence [here italicised] shows that in preaching Buddhism in Ceylon, Col. Olcott only exercises his right, since he preaches it to a meeting intended to consist solely of his co-religionists. No Christians are invited nor need they come. No one can accuse the President of preaching Buddhism to Hindus, or anything but ethics when there is a mixed assembly of Theosophists of different faiths. — *Ed. H.P. Blavatsky*

The intolerance, bigotry, and fanaticism of the Roman Catholic ruffianly mob, officially investigated and excoriated.

First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, No. 12 (48), September 1883, pp. 325-26. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE FINAL RESULT OF THE SAVAGE ATTACK OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS ON THE BUDDHISTS AT COLOMBO) V pp. 286-87.

What we said about the recent religious riots at Ceylon, in the May *Theosophist*, has been fully verified now by the Report of the Commission appointed to investigate into its causes. The blame is fully due to the intolerance, bigotry, and fanaticism of the Roman Catholic ruffianly mob, of the so-called converts (mostly Malabarians); a fanaticism stirred now, in the XIXth century, in as masterly a way by those whose dark aims it serves the best, as it used to be during the dark ignorance of the Middle Ages. The Report speaks volumes; and we leave it to the unprejudiced reader to judge whether — as many an inimical journal insisted upon at that time — the inoffensive, quiet, orderly Buddhists who claim but their legitimate recognized rights of free worship in their own native island, were the instigators of the brutal scenes, or those who would willingly wipe out of this globe the very remembrance of every other religion but their own. We reprint the Report from the *Indian Mirror*, the complete copy furnished to Col. Olcott by H.E. the Governor of Ceylon not yet having reached our hands. [287]

[Here follow excerpts from the *Report* of the Commission appointed to inquire into the causes which led to the riots in Colombo, on Easter Day, March 29th, 1883, when a Buddhist procession, marching to the Buddhist temple at Kotahena, under a license granted by the Police, was attacked by a large body of Roman Catholics, and many persons were seriously injured, and one mortally wounded. See the article entitled “Theosophy and Religious Riots”¹ for particulars.

The individuals responsible for the riot were never brought to justice. This occasioned considerable tension between the various religious factions in Ceylon. At the end of 1883, Colonel Henry S. Olcott was delegated by the Buddhist Defence Committee, organized at Colombo, to go to London as the Chief Agent of that Committee, in order to lay before the Colonial Office the grievances in question and to ask for redress. Col. Olcott left for Europe on February 20th, 1884, accompanied by H.P. Blavatsky, Mohini M. Chatterji, and others. His Buddhist Mission proved to be very successful. Various reforms resulted from it. Among other things, the birthday of the Lord Buddha — the Full Moon day of Vaisākha (May) — was proclaimed a full holiday for the Buddhists of Ceylon.²

— Boris de Zirkoff.

Compiler and Editor of *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*]



¹ *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, May 1883, pp. 197-200 [excerpted above, pp. 3-12]

² See Col. H.S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. III, pp. 71-73, 112-38, for a detailed account.

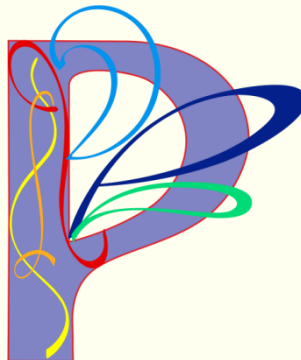
The truculent “Ceylon Observer” continues inflicting wanton cruelties upon the peaceful Singhalese Buddhists.

First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, No. 1 (49), *Supplement* to October 1883, p.5. Republished in *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (THE BUDDHISTS AND GOVERNMENT) V p. 328.

The statement is circulating through the Indian Press, that

. . . considerable indignation is felt in Ceylon at the attempts which the Buddhists are making to pose before the world as the favourites of Government.

This false and malicious rumour is based upon the fact that in one of the temples the simple-minded priests, anxious to show their loyalty, have emblazoned the Royal Arms upon the wall! The simple fact that the fiction was started by that truculent sheet — the *Ceylon Observer* — is quite sufficient to satisfy any one who knows anything of Ceylon affairs not only of its groundlessness, and also its malicious intent. The Editor never loses an opportunity to inflict pain and harm upon the peaceable Buddhists of that island. He is a sectarian Protestant with a nature as bitter as gall, and is seldom without a libel suit to defend. The poor Singhalese Buddhists are so far from even dreaming that they could “pose before the world as the favourites of Government,” that they are now appealing to the Home Authorities for simple justice — denied them after the murder and maiming of their people by the Roman Catholic mob in the late riots. We are sorry to see our respectable contemporary, the *Christian College Magazine*, misled by so transparent a humbug as the *Observer’s* paragraph in question. Whenever the Editor may wish trustworthy data about Ceylon Buddhism or Buddhists, he should apply to some other quarter.



Suggested reading for students.



She being dead, yet speaketh.

- BLAVATSKY ABOUT TO UNVEIL ISIS
- BLAVATSKY AGAINST ECCLESIASTICAL CHRISTIANITY
- BLAVATSKY AGAINST SPIRITUALISM
- BLAVATSKY CUTS DOWN TO SIZE A CARPING CRITIC OF HETERODOXY
- BLAVATSKY CUTS DOWN TO SIZE THE VENERABLE SWAMI OF ALMORA
- BLAVATSKY DEFENDS ISIS UNVEILED
- BLAVATSKY ENLIGHTENS HER READERS
- BLAVATSKY ENLIGHTENS THE SCEPTICS OF HER MOTHERLAND
- BLAVATSKY EXPELS A FRIEND OF COMMUNISTS
- BLAVATSKY HATED BALLS
- BLAVATSKY ON A CASE OF OBSESSION
- BLAVATSKY ON A HEAVY CURSE
- BLAVATSKY ON ANIMAL SOULS
- BLAVATSKY ON BULGARIAN SUN WORSHIP
- BLAVATSKY ON CHRISTMAS AND THE CHRISTMAS TREE
- BLAVATSKY ON ELEMENTALS AND ELEMENTARIES
- BLAVATSKY ON FOETICIDE BEING A CRIME AGAINST NATURE
- BLAVATSKY ON HINDU WIDOW-BURNING
- BLAVATSKY ON IRISH TALISMANS
- BLAVATSKY ON JESUITRY IN MASONRY
- BLAVATSKY ON MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND CELIBACY
- BLAVATSKY ON NEBO OF BIRS-NIMRUD
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT ALPHABETS AND NUMERALS
- BLAVATSKY ON OCCULT VIBRATIONS

- BLAVATSKY ON OLD AGE
- BLAVATSKY ON OLD DOCTRINES VINDICATED BY NEW PROPHETS
- BLAVATSKY ON PLATO'S TIMÆUS
- BLAVATSKY ON PROGRESS AND CULTURE
- BLAVATSKY ON RELIGIOUS DEFORMITIES
- BLAVATSKY ON RITUALISM IN CHURCH AND MASONRY
- BLAVATSKY ON SHAMBHALA, THE HAPPY LAND
- BLAVATSKY ON SPINOZA AND WESTERN PHILOSOPHERS
- BLAVATSKY ON SUNDAY DEVOTION TO PLEASURE
- BLAVATSKY ON TEACHINGS OF ELIPHAS LEVI
- BLAVATSKY ON THE BOOGEYMEN OF SCIENCE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE BOOK OF ENOCH
- BLAVATSKY ON THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES IN INDIA
- BLAVATSKY ON THE DOOMED DESTINY OF THE ROMANOVs
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ELUCIDATION OF LONG-STANDING ENIGMAS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HARMONICS OF SMELL
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HIDDEN ESOTERICISM OF THE BIBLE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE HISTORY AND TRIBULATIONS OF THE ZOHAR
- BLAVATSKY ON THE INTROVERSION OF MENTAL VISION
- BLAVATSKY ON THE KEY TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE KNIGHTED OXFORD SANSKRITIST WHO COULD SPEAK NO SANSKRIT
- BLAVATSKY ON THE LETTERS OF LAVATER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE LUMINOUS CIRCLE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE MODERN NEGATORS OF ANCIENT SCIENCE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE MONSOON
- BLAVATSKY ON THE NEW YEAR AND FALSE NOSES
- BLAVATSKY ON THE NEW YEAR'S MORROW
- BLAVATSKY ON THE QABBALAH BY ISAAC MYER
- BLAVATSKY ON THE QUENCHLESS LAMPS OF ALCHEMY
- BLAVATSKY ON THE RATIONALE OF FASTS
- BLAVATSKY ON THE ROOTS OF ZOROASTRIANISM

- BLAVATSKY ON THE SECRET DOCTRINE
- BLAVATSKY ON THE TEACHINGS OF ELIPHAS LEVI
- BLAVATSKY ON THE VISHISHTADVAITA PHILOSOPHY
- BLAVATSKY ON THEOSOPHY AND ASCETICISM
- BLAVATSKY ON WHETHER THE RISHIS EXIST TODAY
- BLAVATSKY REBUTS UNSPIRITUAL CONCEPTIONS ABOUT GOD
- BLAVATSKY UNMASKS THE TRINITY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS
- BLAVATSKY'S LAST WORDS
- BLAVATSKY'S OPEN LETTER TO HER CORRESPONDENTS
- GEMS FROM THE EAST
- INDUCTIVE REASONING LEADS TO FAKE DEDUCTIONS
- MADAME BLAVATSKY ENLIGHTENS THE SCEPTICS OF HER MOTHERLAND
- MADAME BLAVATSKY ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL MIND OF THE CHINESE
- OBITUARY TO MIKHAIL NIKIFOROVICH KATKOV
- OBITUARY TO PUNDIT DAYANAND SARASWATI
- OCCULT PHILOSOPHY IS ANCIENT SPIRITUALISM
- OPEN LETTER TO THE AMERICAN SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
- OPEN LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY
- OPEN LETTERS TO THE AMERICAN CONVENTION
- PAGES FROM ISIS UNVEILED
- PAGES FROM THE CAVES AND JUNGLES OF HINDOSTAN
- PAGES FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE 1 - ABRIDGED
- PAGES FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE 2 - FULL TEXT
- PANTHEISTIC THEOSOPHY IS IRRECONCILABLE WITH ROMAN CATHOLICISM
- ROSICRUCIANISM WAS AN OFFSHOOT OF ORIENTAL OCCULTISM
- ROSICRUCIANS EMERGED AS AN ANTIDOTE TO THE MATERIAL SIDE OF ALCHEMY
- THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IS FAR MORE DREADED BY THE DEVIL THAN BY GOD HIMSELF
- THE HERMETIC FIRE OF THE MIND IS THE KEY TO THE OCCULT SCIENCES
- THE REAL MEANING OF THE FIRST LINE OF GENESIS
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1888) VOL. 1 OF 2 ON COSMOGENESIS
- THE SECRET DOCTRINE (1888) VOL. 2 OF 2 ON ANTHROPOGENESIS

BLAVATSKY SPEAKS SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- THOTH IS THE EQUIVALENT OF HERMES AND MOSES
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON CRITICISM AND AUTHORITIES
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON THE EIGHTH WONDER
- UNPOPULAR PHILOSOPHER ON THE MORNING STAR
- WE ARE MORE OFTEN VICTIMS OF WORDS RATHER THAN OF FACTS
- WITHOUT THE REVIVAL OF ARYAN PHILOSOPHY, THE WEST WILL FALL TO EVEN GROSSER MATERIALISM

