## 04

## 

## 

¢










[^0]













































































 ตอวอతิ.

1981.03.27

# The Responsibility of the Community of Sangha of Sri Lanka <br> Dr.Ven. Paravahera Pañnãnanda Thero 

Ithink that today is a very special day that would go into the annals of history. The reason is, today the University confers honorary degrees to two very great elder monks who traditionally come from the Theravada community of Bhikkhus and that the convocation address too is delivered by a respected member of the Sangha. On this historic occasion, I wish to offer my grateful thanks and blessings to the Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, the Deans of the Faculties, Professors and Lecturers and the learned members of the Council and the Senate for conferring me with an honorary degree by appreciating and evaluating the services rendered by me to the country, the people and the religion. I consider this award not merely as a personal honour to me but also as a great honour to the whole Maha Sangha of this country. This would no doubt serve as a great encouragement and an example to the younger generation of Bhikkhus in the country.

During the days of the ancient Sinhala Kings, the erudite and scholarly monks who were well-versed in Dhamma Vinaya (Doctrine and Discipline) were honoured with such titles as "Rajaguru" (Royal Teacher) and "Rajakreeta" (Royal Crown). The Sinhaladveepa (the island of the Sinhalas) is a land offered many a times to the Triple Gem by Royalty. Further the island of Sri Lanka has been offered to the Swarnamali Maha Chyaitya, to the Sri Maha Bodhi and exponents of the Doctrine by the ancient Sinhala Kings, on various occasions. Just as a vihara is entrusted to a trustee the community of monks handed back the island to the king, on the understanding that it will be ruled and safeguarded on the advice of monks. According to this, the whole island of the Sinhalas including the Northern and Eastern Provinces belongs to the Buddha Sasana. The Sinhala are the permanent trustees and the Bhumi putras (sons of the soil) of the Sinhala' Land (the Sinhala Desa). The Government elected by them should rule the country righteously under the guidance of the Maha Sangha. If not the rulers will face unfavourable consequences. The Government and the people should take this into serious consideration. Defeating the schemes and strategies of the enemies, it is the Community of Maha Sangha that continued to protect and develop the Sam Buddha Sasana, and the Languages, Literatures, Arts and Sciences of the Sinhala Desa.

I think it is appropriate for me to refer to the system of Buddhist Education that has been prevalent in this country since the introduction of Buddhism. Buddhist system of Education consists of two aspects - Pirivena Education and Daham Pasal Education. Comparatively speaking, Buddhist system of Education is a well balanced and a wholesome system. The Sinhala race became a law-abiding and disciplined nation, with supreme creative genius in the world as a consequence of the ideal system of Buddhist Education imparted by the great community of Maha Sangha for over two thousand years.

Since the country's foreign domination for over 400 years both the great community of Maha Sangha and the Sinhala race lost their vigour, vitality and rights. For the last four centuries no Government in Sri Lanka has constructed or built a single Vihara or Arama and no government gave the Buddhist System of Education its due place and recognition. If any renaissance in Buddhist Education occurred, if any temple or monastery was constructed, if any development in Sinhala arts and crafts, and the revival of the language and literature took place during the last four centuries all that was done under the patronage of the great community of Maha Sangha with the help and support of the generous Buddhist public. Instead of supporting and assisting, what all Governments actually did was to bring all the revenues of all Buddhist temples and monasteries under the public trustee. This policy yet continues as regards the Buddhist temples but the Government has not extended its controls on the revenues of non-Buddhist institutions. For more than two thousand five hundred years Buddhist monk has incessantly worked for the good and welfare of the suffering humanity by showing them the path to Deliverance and, quite strangely, in spite of this the monk has himself been subjected to criticism and ridicule for rendering such selfless service. Though confronted with indescribable difficulties, obstacles and hardships he leads a very simple life, practicing what he preaches with his mind conditioned by the fourfold Brahma Viharas. Being free from the Four States of Woe (the satara Agati) namely (1) Greed (Chanda) 2) Hatred (Dõsã) 3) Bhaya (Fear) and 4) Ignorance (Mõha) he endeavours to uplift the downtrodden from the state of suffering that they are plunged in.

Anyone who received the traditional System of Pirivena Education is capable of solving any human problem. If the Government really is sincere in its professed objective of establishing a righteous society (a Dharmista Samãjaya) then the Government should take the monks and laity into confidence and restore their due place and rights. The educated erudite, virtuous, disciplined community of Mäha Sangha are not consulted on matters concerning Buddha Sasana, education and culture. The object of establishing a righteous society (a Dharmista Samajaya), should not be limited to words.

The all knowing Omniscient Buddha has taught that the Bhikkhus who work compassionately with loving kindness for the welfare of others are worthy of receiving a "Ratta pinda" - a wage or a salary. Both the Sutta Pitaka and the code of Vinaya says that the Bhikkhus are worthy of receiving "Achariya Bhãga" or fourfold requisites. For example, the Mihintale rock edict of King Mahinda IV states that the ancient kings paid emoluments to Bhikkhus in accordance with the services rendered by them. I wish to state without any hesitation that it is the bounden duty of both the State and the educational institutions to pay adequate wages to the Bhikkhus who engage themselves in educational services and public services that are not in contradiction with the principles of the Sasana. The ancient Sinhala kings were philanthrophic enough to donate lands to the Mãha Sangha who wrote books on language, literature, culture, arts and crafts. As this country is the property of the Noble Triple Gem it is the right and privilege of the Bhikkhus to erect vihãras and build temples and monasteries and reside wherever they want and guide the laity on the Right Pãth. That right and privilege should not be taken away from them.

The highest institute of education in a country is the University and the conduct of research is one of its primary functions. It should just not be a factory producing graduates but an institution producing
scholars and experts on various fields of studies. Therefore all our Universities should be developed according to the highest traditions befitting supreme seats of learning Both the National System of Education and the System of University Education should be free and emancipated from the shackles of the bureaucracy.

There is a question that the people should raise. The future of the country rests not only on the economic development of the country but also on the spiritual upliftment of its people. Its the responsibility of the Government to create the infrastructure and the necessary environment for people to develop themselves. The temple plays a vital role in the moral and spiritual development of the people by showing them the righteous path. The Government creates economic opportunities. Therefore, the close relationship between the temple and the State should continue without a break, because it is this relationship that has safeguarded and protected the national culture. As a result development takes place, and development means not only the production of wealth but also its equitable distribution among the people. The Buddha explained these matters to contemporary millionaires like Anatha Pindika and Visakha.

The Government has to spend a vast amount of money for development. The capitalists and philanthropists should also participate in the developmental effort by voluntary contributions. Even in Sri Lanka, we get rich among the Sinhala, the Tamils and the Muslims etc. The Government alone cannot support the entire system of Education both in the fields of General Education and Higher Education. For that the active support and participation of the philanthropists are absolutely essential. Therefore in order to make higher education successful, the donations of the capitalists should be received by both the State and Higher Educational Institutions like Universities. The Government should at least temporarily suspend begging missions to foreign lands and instead utilize the resources locally available for developmental activities. Sri Jayewardenepura is the Capital of Sri Lanka May the philanthropists of this country endeavour to make its University the greatest Educational Institution in the world by voluntarily contributing towards its progress.

Whatever I have said in this address to the convocation of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura is without any reference to persons or parties, and without malice or prejudice to any individual or community, but with one objective and hope in mind that of seeing this Sinhala Desa reemerging as a haven of peace and prosperity with Buddhism and its culture flourishing once again, surpassing even its pristine glory. I conclude by wishing; May the Sri Jayewardenepura University become well known all over the world, may it gain honour and universal respect, may its Chancellor,Vice-Chancellor, Professors and Lecturers, and members of the Senate and the Council live long and happily for the welfare and progress of all.

## May Peace, Harmony and Prosperity be with you all!

1981.03.27


[^0]:    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    
    

