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EDITORIAL.

At a private house in Harley Street, London, on the evening of November 3rd, 1907, there was a gathering of some twenty-five persons, either Buddhists, or interested in the study of Buddhism. The result of this meeting was that the persons then present formed themselves into the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland, and a Committee of five members was appointed. This Committee was charged with the duties of drawing up a provisional Prospectus, Constitution, and Rules, and the convening of another and larger meeting.

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The work of the Buddhist Society of Great Britain and Ireland has been considerably assisted by the visit of an English gentleman, who is an ordained Monk of the Buddhist Order, the Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya, founder and director of the Buddhadasana Samagama, and editor of the excellent quarterly review, *Buddhism*, published in Rangoon. He was accompanied by the principal officers of the Samagama. Their object in visiting this country was an experimental mission, to learn what reception Buddhism might be justly entitled to expect in this country. With the general results they have expressed themselves fully satisfied. The Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya left for Rangoon on October 2nd, leaving behind him golden opinions, and the friendship and respect of all who had the privilege of meeting him. It is hoped that, in about two and a half years' time, he may return to establish permanently a Buddhist community in this country to aid, and to continue, the work which this Society has begun. The Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya was well known to several members of this Society, and to others, before he proceeded to the Orient some years ago. With his resolution to join the Buddhist Order, and with his subsequent career in Ceylon and Burma, they were also acquainted, and he was welcomed cordially by them on the occasion of his arrival in London on April 23rd last. It is necessary to say this, since some attempts have been made to surround him with mystery. There is no

more mystery attending the Bhikkhu Ananda Metteyya than any other person. It should be always remembered that there is no mystery, as such—there is nothing “esoteric”—in true Buddhism. The Message of Buddhism, as the Bhikkhu himself made perfectly evident in the various lectures delivered by him in this country, is clear, straightforward, and, in its first principles, plainly to be understood by ordinary persons. As a philosophy which goes deep down into the meaning of things, solving the problems of life, which are truly mysterious, as nature herself is mysterious, it is difficult; but this difficulty differs in no wise from that presented to the student by any other body of learned doctrine. Chemistry, biology, all branches of natural science, are difficult in their advanced stages; and so, in its psychological teachings, Buddhism is difficult. It is here, in its profound solutions of the deep problems of human life and personality, the problems of the “soul,” of death and the hereafter, in its answers to the Why and Wherefore of things, that Buddhism is of extreme importance. Professor Rhys-Davids indicated this in his inaugural address at the Foundation Meeting of this Society. He drew an apt and luminous comparison between the effect of the revival of classical learning upon the thought of the Middle Ages, and the probable influence which the Buddhist (Páli) literature may be expected to produce upon the more advanced thought of to-day. In short, there is a body of learning, a philosophy—one might almost say a science—of incalculable value locked up in the Buddhist Scriptures, which it is one, and the most important, of the objects of this Society to lay before the Western World.

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