

# Writings of an erudite monk

Reviewed by Tenyson Perera

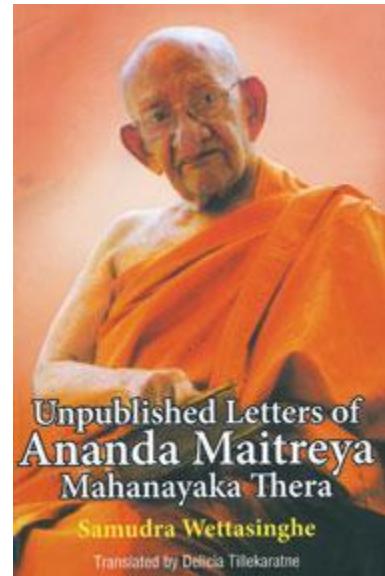
When we hear the name Ananda Maitreya two words delightedness (Ananda) and having loving kindness (Maitreya) come to our mind. The Ven. Thera promenaded for a long time on the soft clouds of our mind. We tried to draw in our minds a portrait of an unseen Buddha from him. It is with great wonder that the Maha Thera appeared in front of my mind's eye when I started turning the pages of the book, 'Unpublished letters of Ven. Ananda Maitreya. The pleasing way of writing this book is one. The other is the fact that this presentation comes from a young writer we know only too well.

Biographies of spiritual characters have been added to world literature for a long-time. There were many divine characters portrayed in the Upanishad stanzas. Buddhist literature enriched such divine or spiritual characters on a large-scale. 'Unpublished letters of Ven. Ananda Maitreya' stand out. To those who have read the great characters of the Buddhist clergy, this book sheds a new experience. In other words, Samudra Wettasingha's attempt no doubt creates a great interest and enthusiasm in readers who are tired of reading conventional biographies of religious figures. To those worthy people who are drowned in worldly fetters, religious literature would be a panacea for all ills. Even today Swami Vivekananda and Krishnamurti provide a divine inspiration to people.

The striking feature of this book is that it includes quotations and ideas of such eminent men to enrich the life of Ven. Ananda Maitreya. The author makes a concerted effort to protect the literary value of the book. Valuable information is given here on Krishnamurti and Adikaram. An account and a few photographs of Balavatsky, Anne Bessant and Ledbeater are also included in the book.

One may perhaps recollect the young author's going in search of the erudite Thera and drawing his attention, as an unusual happening. There is reference in the work such as 'Seeing that I loved reading dhamma books, the Maha Nayaka Thera presented me a large number of books. Even today those books are kept prominently in my library room. I saw two copies of 'Thoughts of Adikaram' in the Nayaka Thera's library. I felt reluctant to request it but later when I wrote to him, the Ven. Thera replied. You can take any book you need from my library. Accordingly I borrowed many books (Pgs 199-120)

Today it is difficult to borrow a book from another's library. To a person such as Ven. Thera there was nothing to hoard or protect. Samudra's love of books can be understood by books such as Tolstoy's and his contemporaries and Anton Chekhov's vision of life. A person who does not love books will never write a book of that nature. Considering the youth of today, who generally run after popular works will not write a book about a Maha Thera.



Unpublished letters of Ven.  
Ananda Maitreya Maha  
Nayaka Thera

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