

STATEMENT RE BUDDHA JAYANTI
SAMITI, SARNATH

The Deputy Minister of Education (Dr. M. M. Das): With reference to the adjournment motion on 8th December, 1956 by Shri Ram Nagina Singh regarding the boycott of the Buddha Jayanti Samiti, Varanasi, by the Mahabodhi Society and the Speaker's directive, I have made further enquiries. The report received from the District Magistrate, Varanasi, has been placed on the Table of the House. [See Appendix V, annexure No. 104.] I may say, however, that briefly the position is that there is no committee known as Buddha Jayanti Samiti. The Departmental officers of the Uttar Pradesh Government no doubt meet almost every month under the chairmanship of the Commissioner of Varanasi Division to review the progress of work done during the period and also to watch the arrangements made for the facility of visitors coming to Sarnath. The Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society is also invited to this meeting and has been attending it almost regularly except one or two meetings of which the last meeting held on 4th December, 1956 at Sarnath was one. We have no knowledge of the Bhikkus or the Mahabodhi Society boycotting the meeting. We have so far not received any information from the Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society either orally or in writing that he was not attending the meeting on any particular issue.

The celebrations held on 17, 18 and 19th November, 1956 by the Mahabodhi Society were not sponsored by the Government nor did they form part of any official programme. Moreover the Mahabodhi Society never sought for any co-operation from the Uttar Pradesh Government in connection with their celebrations, but still the Uttar Pradesh Government officers attended the celebrations on all the three days and made such arrangements as were asked for by the Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society.

The Mahabodhi Society has recently installed a statue of Sri Anagarik

Dharmपाल in one of the two lawns before the Mulgandh Kuti Vihar. The installation of this statue at that particular place, is unsymmetrical and foils the beauty of that place and so it was suggested once informally to the Secretary Mahabodhi Society that the statue should be installed at some other suitable place to which the Secretary of the Mahabodhi Society raised no objection at that time. It was, however, never decided in the meeting of the Inter-Departmental officers to remove the statue against the wishes of the Society and the news that the Uttar Pradesh Government are raising objections and misbehaving with the Bhikkus in this connection is quite incorrect.

The allegation that the college building is being taken for holding the Buddhist Art Exhibition in it against the promises made is also incorrect.

Shri Kamath (Hoshangabad): Sir, as regards this matter, I may invite your attention to the record of the adjournment motion on the 8th December. You directed, definitely and categorically, that the Minister should make the statement in a week's time. I am anxious, no less than my hon. colleagues in the House, that your directives are faithfully implemented by the Treasury Benches as well as by the rest of the House. The Minister owes it to you, and to the House also to state why he took more than a week's time to lay this statement on the Table. Today is 20th—he has taken 12 days. You directed that he should make the statement in a week's time. I am sure you will agree that he owes an explanation to this House and to you also as to why this delay has taken place.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister wanted some more time and I granted

Shri Kamath: It must be on record also.