

THE  
GREAT DEBATE  
**BUDDHISM**  
and  
**Christianity**

FACE to FACE



WITH

Introduction and Annotations

by

J. M. PEEBLES M. D., M. A., Ph. D.

# **BUDDHISM**

AND

# **CHRISTIANITY**

BEING AN ORAL DEBATE HELD AT PANADURA

between

**The Rev. MIGETTUWATTE GUNANANDA**

*a Buddhist Priest*

&

**The Rev. DAVID DE SILVA**

*a Wesleyan Clergyman.*

INTRODUCTION AND ANNOTATIONS

**By J. M. PEEBLES, M. D., M. A., Ph. D.**

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BOOK-SELLER & PUBLISHER  
520, MARADANA ROAD, COLOMBO.

## PREFACE.

With an admiration of the calmness that characterises the Oriental mind, and a deep interest in the symbolisms that underlie the Eastern religions, I had long desired to see these religions, especially Buddhism, brought into the arena of discussion face to face with the Christian religion, that each system might be subjected to the test of controversy. This was partially done awhile since at Pantura, Ceylon, where a Buddhist priest met, in an oral debate, the Rev. Mr. Silva, a Wesleyan minister.

The discussion continued two days, before an almost breathless audience, numbering at times from five to seven thousand in attendance. Each of the parties had their sympathising friends, and both, as usual, claimed the victory. So far as I heard expressions from what seemed to be impartial minds, they were to the end that the Buddhist priest, being the most graceful speaker, and adapting himself to the popular mind, carried the multitude with him. It is certain that some of the Christians did not feel satisfied with the result.

The debate was reported, and a few copies published by John Capper, Esq., Editor of the *Ceylon Times*. "The report," so he says, "has been revised by the respective disputants, so that it may be taken as a correct account of what passed. The Pali extracts were revised by Rev. C. Alwis and a portion by Mr. L. de Zoysa, the Government interpreter."