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Visakha

This is the day on which the world's great Sun
Of Light transcending every other light,
Rose on the darkness of a world foredone,
And broke the spell of black Avijjā's night.

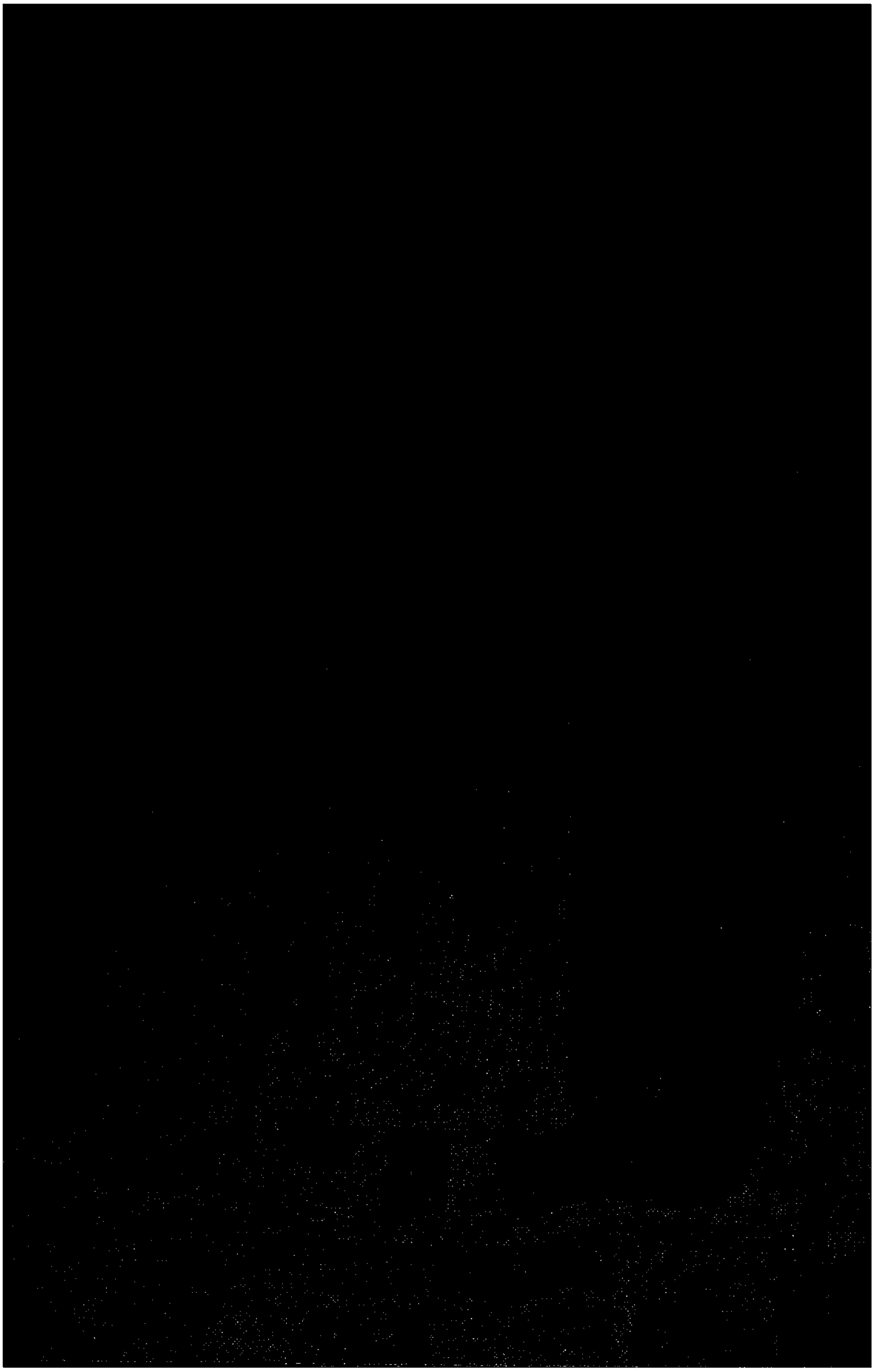
This is the day on which that Sun rose high
To the last heights of Insight, Wisdom, Love,
And from the zenith of pure Vijjā's sky
Poured his free rays on all that live and move.

This is the day when all his labour ended,
Sank to his rest our glorious Sun Yet lo!
Behind he leaves a radiance matchless, splendid,
Even his Law that in our skies does glow.

And still shall glow till dawns another Light,
The Buddha of a new world's opening day,
And raying Metta Kindness infinite,
Flings ope once more the new old ancient Way

To all the Buddhas of the times to come,
To all the Buddhas of the times before,
To Him, our Buddha, Teacher, Refuge, Home,
We bow our hearts this day and evermore.

Bhikkhu Silacara



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Buddha image at Avukana Ceylon

Height 40 foot

Dated between the fifth and eight century C. E.

THE POWER OF MINDFULNESS

An Inquiry into the Scope of Bare Attention and the Principal Sources of its Strength

Nyanaponika Thera

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THE POWER OF MINDFULNESS

IS mindfulness actually a power in its own right as claimed by the title of this essay? Seen from the view-point of the ordinary purposes of life it does not seem so. From that angle, mindfulness, or attention, has a rather modest place among many, and seemingly more important, mental faculties that serve the purposes of variegated wish-fulfilment. There, mindfulness means just "to watch one's steps" so that one may not stumble or miss a chance in the pursuit of one's aims. Only in the case of specific tasks and skills mindfulness is sometimes cultivated more deliberately, but here too it is still regarded as a subservient function, and its wider scope and possibilities are not recognised.

Even if one turns to the Buddha's doctrine, taking only a surface view of the various classifications and lists of mental factors in which mindfulness appears, one may be inclined to regard this faculity just "as one among many", and may get the impression that here too it has a rather subordinate place and is easily surpassed in significance by other faculties.

Mindfulness, in fact, has, if we may personify it, a rather unassuming character. Compared with it mental factors like devotion, energy, imagination or intelligence are certainly 'more colourful personalities', making an immediate and strong impact on people and situations. Their conquests are sometimes rapid and vast, though often insecure. Mindfulness, on the other hand, is of an unobtrusive nature. Its virtues shine inwardly, and In ordinary life most of its merits are passed on to other

mental faculities, which receive generally all the credit. One must know it well and cultivate its acquaintance before one can appreciate the value and the silent penetrative influence of mindfulness. Mindfulness walks slowly and deliberately, and its daily task is of a rather humdrum nature. Yet, where it places its feet it cannot easily be dislodged, and it acquires and bestows true mastery of the ground it covers.

Mental faculities of such a nature are, like actual personalities of a similar type, often overlooked or underrated. In the case of mindfulness it required a genius like the Buddha to discover the 'hidden talent' in the modest garb and to develop the vast inherent power of that potent seed. It is, indeed, the mark of a genius to perceive, and to harness, the power of the seemingly small. Here, truly, it happens that "what is little becomes much." A revaluation of values takes place. The standards of greatness and smallness change. Through the master mind of the Buddha, mindfulness is finally revealed as the archimedal point from where the vast revolving mass of world's suffering is levered out of its two-fold anchorage in Ignorance and Craving.

The Buddha spoke of the power of Mindfulness in a very emphatic way :

"Mindfulness, I declare, is all-helpful."

(Samy. Nik. 46, 55)

"All things can be mastered by Mindfulness."

(Anguit. Nik.. Atthaka Nip.. 83)

And further, that solemn and weighty utterance opening and concluding the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness:

"This is the only way, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of pain and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbāna, namely the four Foundations of Mindfulness."

Bare Attention

If, in ordinary life, mindfulness, or attention, is directed to any object, it is rarely sustained long enough for the purpose of factual observation. Generally it is followed immediately by emotional reaction, discriminative thought, reflection, purposeful action, etc. Also in life and thought governed by the Dhamma, mindfulness (*sati*) is mostly linked with Clear Comprehension (*sampajañña*) of the right purpose, of reality, etc. But for tapping the actual and potential *power* of mindfulness it is necessary to understand and deliberately cultivate it in its basic, unalloyed form, which we shall call *Bare Attention*.

By Bare Attention we understand the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens *to* us and *in* us, at the successive moments of perception. It is called "bare" because it attends to the bare facts of a perception without reacting to them by deed, speech, or mental comment. Ordinarily, that purely receptive state of mind is, as we have remarked, just a brief phase of the thought process of which one is often scarcely aware. But in the methodical development of mindfulness, aiming at the unfolding of its latent powers, Bare Attention is sustained for as long a time as one's strength of concentration permits. Bare Attention is the key to the meditative practice of Satipaṭṭhāna, opening the door to mind's mastery and final liberation.

Bare Attention is developed in two ways: (1) as a methodical meditative-practice with selected objects; (2) applied, as far as practicable, to the normal events of the day, together with a general attitude of Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension. The details of the practice have been described elsewhere, and need not be repeated here*.

The purpose of these pages is, in the first instance, to meet any doubts as to the efficacy of this method, *i. e.* as to the actual power of mindfulness. Particularly in an age like ours, with its supersititious worship of ceaseless external activity, there will be those who ask: "How can such a passive attitude of mind as that of Bare Attention possibly lead to the great results claimed for it?" In reply, one may be inclined to suggest to the questioner not to rely on the words of others, but to put those assertions of the Buddha to the test of personal experience. But those who do not yet know the Buddha's teaching well enough to accept it as a reliable guide, may hesitate to take up, without good reasons, a practice that, just on account of its radical simplicity, may appear strange to them. In fhe following, a number of such "good reasons" are therefore proffered for the reader's scrutiny. They are also meant as introduction into the general spirit of Satipaṭṭhāna and as pointers to its wide and significant perspectives. Furthermore it is hoped that he who has taken up the methodical training will recognise in the following observations certain features of his own practice and be stimulated in their deliberate cultivation.

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* See Nyanaponika, "The Heart of Buddhist Meditation" London 1962, Rider & Co.

Four Sources of Power in Bare Attention

We shall now deal with four aspects of Bare Attention, which are the mainsprings of the Power of Mindfulness. They are not the only sources of its strength but they are the principal ones to which the efficacy of this method of mental development is due. These four are:—

1. The functions of 'tidying-up' and 'naming', exercised by Bare Attention;
2. its non-violent, non-coercive procedure;
3. the capacity of stopping and slowing-down;
4. the directness of vision bestowed by Bare Attention.

I. The Functions of 'Tidying' and 'Naming'

Tidying-up the mental household.

If anyone whose mind is not harmonized and controlled through methodical meditative training, should take a close look at his own every-day thoughts and activities he will meet with a rather disconcerting sight. Apart from the few main channels of his purposeful thoughts and activities, he will everywhere be faced with a tangled mass of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, casual bodily movements, etc., showing a disorderliness and confusion which he would certainly not tolerate, *e. g.*, in his living-room. Yet this is the state of affairs that he takes for granted within a considerable portion of his waking life and normal mental activity. Let us now look at the details of that rather untidy picture.

First we meet a vast number of casual sense-impressions, sights, sounds, etc., that pass constantly through our mind. Most of them remain vague and fragmentary,

and some are even based on faulty perceptions, misjudgements, etc. Carrying these inherent weaknesses they often form the untested basis for judgements and decisions on a higher level of consciousness. True, all these casual impressions need not and cannot be objects of focussed attention. A stone on our road that happens to meet our glance, will have a claim on our attention only if it obstructs our progress or is of interest to us for any other reason. Yet, if we neglect too much these casual impressions, we may stumble over many an actual, or figurative, stone, and overlook many a gem lying on our road.

Next, there are those more significant and definite perceptions, thoughts, feelings, volitions, etc., which have a closer connection with our purposeful life. Here too we shall find that a very high proportion of them is in a state of utter confusion. Hundreds of cross currents flash through the mind, and everywhere there are 'bits and ends" of unfinished thoughts, stifled emotions, passing moods, etc. Many of them meet a premature death owing to their innate feeble nature, our lack concentration, or through being suppressed by new and stronger impressions. If we observe our own mind, we shall notice how easily diverted our thoughts are, and how often they behave like indisciplined disputants constantly interrupting each other and refusing to listen to the other side's arguments. Again, many lines of thought remain rudimentary or are left untranslated into will and action, because courage is lacking to accept the practical, moral or intellectual consequences of these thoughts. If we continue to examine closer the reliability of our average perceptions, thoughts or judgements we shall have to admit that many of them are just the products of habit, led by prejudices of intellect and

emotion, by our pet preferences or aversions, by laziness and selfishness, by faulty or superficial observations, and so on.

Such a look into long-neglected quarters of the mind will come as a wholesome shock to the observer. It will convince him of the urgent need for methodical mental culture extending not only to a thin surface-layer of the mind, but also to those vast twilight regions of consciousness to which we have paid now a brief visit. The observer will then become aware of the fact that a reliable standard of the inner strength and lucidity of consciousness in its totality cannot be derived from the relatively small sector of the mind that stands in the intense light of purposeful will and thought, nor can it be judged by a few optimal results of mental activity achieved in brief, intermittent periods. The decisive factor in determining the quality of individual consciousness is the circumstance whether that dim awareness characteristic of our every-day mind and the uncontrolled portion of every-day activity tend to increase or decrease.

It is the daily little negligence in thoughts, words and deeds going on for many years of our life (and as the Buddha teaches, for many existences), that is chiefly responsible for creating and tolerating that untidiness and confusion in our minds which we have described. The old Buddhist Teachers said: "Negligence produces a lot of dirt and dust, even a whole heap of refuse. It is as if in a house only a very little dirt collects in a day or two; but if this goes on for many years, it will grow into a vast heap of refuse."*

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* Comy. to Sutta-Nipāta v. 334.

It is the dark, untidy corners of the mind where our most dangerous enemies dwell. From there they attack us unawares, and much too often they succeed in defeating us. That twilight world peopled by frustrated desires and suppressed resentments, by vacillations and whims and many other shadowy figures, forms a background from which upsurging passions—greed and lust, hatred and anger—may derive powerful support. Besides, the obscure and obscuring nature of that twilight region is the very element and mother-soil of the third and strongest of the Roots of Evil *(akusala-mūla)*, *i. e.*, Ignorance or Delusion.

Attempts at eliminating mind's main defilements—greed, hate and delusion—must fail as long as these defilements find refuge and support in these uncontrolled dim regions of the mind; as long as the close and complex tissue of those half-articulate thoughts and emotions forms the basic texture of mind into which just a few golden strands of noble and lucid thought are woven. But how to deal with that unwieldy, tangled mass? Man usually tries to ignore it, and to rely on the counteracting energies of his surface mind. But the only safe remedy is just to face it—with mindfulness. Nothing more difficult is needed than to acquire the habit of noticing these rudimentary thoughts as often as possible, *i. e.* to direct Bare Attention to them. The working principle here is the simple fact that there cannot exist two thoughts at the same time: if the clear light of mindfulness is present, there is no room for mental twilight. When sustained mindfulness has secured a firm foothold, it will be a matter of, comparatively, secondary importance in which ways the mind will then deal with those rudimentary thoughts, moods and emotions. It may just dismiss them and replace them by

purposeful thoughts; or it may allow them, and even compel them, to complete what they have to say. In the latter case, they will often reveal how poor and weak they actually are; and it will then not be difficult to dispose of them, once they are forced into the open. This procedure of Bare Attention is very simple and effective; the difficulty here is only the persistence in applying it.

Observing a complex thing means identifying its component parts, singling out the separate strands forming that intricate tissue. If this is applied to the complex currents of mental and practical life, automatically a strong regulating influence will be noticeable. As if ashamed in the presence of the calmly observing eye, the course of thoughts will proceed in a less disorderly and wayward manner; it will not so easily be diverted and will resemble more and more a well-regulated river.

During decades of the present life and throughout millenniums of traversing the Round of Existence, there has been steadily growing within man a closely fitted system of instinctive and reflex actions (beneficial and harmful ones), of prejudices of intellect and emotions—in brief, of bodily and mental habits that are no longer questioned as to their rightful position and useful function in human life. Here again it is the application of Bare Attention that loosens the hard soil of these often very ancient layers of the human mind, preparing thus the ground for sowing the seed of methodical mental training. Bare attention identifies and pursues the single threads of that closely interwoven tissue of our habits. It sorts out carefully the subsequent justifications of passionate impulses and the pretended motives of our prejudices; it questions fearlessly old habits often grown

meaningless, and by uncovering their roots it helps in abolishing all that is seen to be harmful. In brief, Bare Attention lays open the minute crevices in the seemingly impenetrable structure of unquestioned mental processes. Then the sword of Wisdom wielded by the strong arm of constant meditative practice will be able to penetrate these crevices, and finally to break up that structure where it is required. If the inner connections between the single parts of a seemingly compact whole become intelligible, then it ceases to be inaccessible.

If the facts and details of its conditioned nature become known, there is a chance of effecting fundamental changes in it. In that way, not only those hitherto unquestioned habits of the mind, its twilight regions and its normal processes as well, but even those seemingly solid, indisputable facts of the world of matter—all of them will become "questionable" and lose much of their self-assurance. By that bland self-assurance of assumed "solid facts" many people are so impressed and intimidated that they are reluctant to take up any spiritual training, doubting that it can effect anything worthwhile at all. The results of applying Bare Attention to the task of tidying and regulating the mind will therefore greatly encourage those who are still hesitant to enter a spiritual path.

In conclusion, we wish to point out that the tidying or regulating function of Bare Attention is of fundamental importance for that "purification of beings", mentioned by the Buddha as the first aim of Satipaṭṭhāna. It refers of course to the purification of their minds, and here the very first step is to bring an initial order into the way of functioning of the mental processes. We have seen how this is done by Bare Attention. In that

sense, the Commentary to the Discourse on Mindfulness explains the words "for the purification of beings" as follows:

"It is said: 'Mental taints defile the beings; mental clarity *(citta-vodāna)* purifies them.' That mental clarity comes to be by this Way of Mindfulness *(satipaṭṭhāna-magga)*."

Naming

We have mentioned before that the tidying or regulating function of Bare Attention takes the form of sorting out and identifying the various confused strands of the mental process. That identifying function is, like any other mental activity, connected with a verbal formulation. In other words, "identifying" proceeds by way of expressly "naming" the respective mental processes.

There is an element of truth in the "word-magic" of primitive men. "Things that could be named had lost their secret power over man, the horror of the unknown. To know the name of a force, a being or an object was (to primitive man) identical with the mastery over it."* That ancient belief in the magical power of "knowing the name" appears also in many fairy tales and myths where the power of a demon is broken just by facing him courageously and pronouncing his name.

In the practice of Bare Attention, one will find a confirmation of that power of naming. Particularly, the "demons of the twilight region" of the mind cannot bear the simple, but clarifying question about their "names",

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* **Anagarika B. Govinda: "The Psychological Attitude of Early Buddhist Philosophy" (Rider & Co.)**

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much less the knowledge of these names, which alone is often sufficient to diminish their strength. They cannot bear the calmly observing glance of the Wanderer on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness. That glance, however, has not the effect of driving them back into their hiding places, but it has, on the contrary, the magical power to force these demons of our passionate impulses and obscure thoughts into the open, into the day light of consciousness. There they will feel embarrassed ond obliged to justify themselves, though, at this stage of Bare Attention, they have not yet even been subjected to any closer questioning except that about their "names", their identity. If forced into the open, while still in an incipient stage, they will be incapable of withstanding scrutiny, and will just dwindle away. Thus a first victory over them may be won, even at an early stage of the practice.

The appearance in the mind of undesirable and ignoble thoughts, even if they are very fleeting and only half-articulate, is an unpleasant experience to one's self-esteem. Therefore such thoughts are often shoved aside, unattended and unopposed. Often, also, they are camouflaged by more pleasing and respectable labels which hide their true nature. Thoughts disposed of in either of these two ways, will increase the accumulated power of ignoble tendencies in the subconscious. Furthermore, the procedure adopted will weaken one's will to resist the arising and the dominance of mental defilements, and it will strengthen the tendency to evade the issues. But by applying the simple method of clearly and honestly 'naming', that is registering, any undesirable thoughts, these two harmful devices, ignoring and camouflaging, are excluded, and their detrimental consequences on the structure of subconsciousness and on our conscious mental effort, are avoided.

Calling those ignoble thoughts, or one's shortcomings such as laziness, by their right names, will arouse in one's mind a growing inner resistance and even repugnance against them, which may well succeed in keeping them in check and finally eliminating them. Even if these undesirables are not fully brought under control by such means, they will carry with them the impact, that is the recollection, of a repeated resistance against them, and this will weaken them in cases of their reappearance. If we may continue to personify them, we may say that they will no longer feel to be unopposed masters of the scene, and this diffidence of theirs will make it considerably easier to deal with them. It is the power of moral shame (*hirī-bala*) that has been mustered here as an ally, and it is methodically strengthened by these simple, yet subtle psychological means.

The naming and registering extends of course also to noble thoughts and impulses which will be encouraged and strengthened by it. Without such deliberate attention to them, they may often pass unnoticed and remain barren, while a clear awareness of them will stimulate their growth.

It is one of the most beneficial features of Right Mindfulness, and in particular of Bare Attention, that it enables us to utilize for our progress all external events and all inner processes of mind. Even the unsalutary can be made a starting point for the salutary if, through the device of 'naming' or 'registering', it becomes an object of detached knowledge.

In several passages of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* the function of "naming" or "bare registering" seems to be indicated through formulating the respective statements by way of direct speech. There are not less than four such instances in the Discourse:

(1) "When experiencing a pleasant feeling, he knows, 'I experience a pleasant feeling' ", etc.;

(2) "He knows of a lustful (state of) mind, 'Mind is lustful' ", etc.;

(3) "If (the hindrance of) sense desire is present in him, he knows, 'Sense desire is present in me' ", etc.;

(4) "If the enlightenment factor Mindfulness is present in him, he knows, 'The enlightenment factor Mindfulness is present in me' ", etc.

In conclusion, it may briefly be pointed out that the *tidying-up* and the *naming* of mental processes is the indispensable preparation for fully understanding them in their true nature, which is the task of Insight (*vipassanā*). These functions, exercised by Bare Attention, will help in dispelling the illusion of compactness *(ghana-vinibbhoga)* of mental processes; they will also be helpful in tracing their specific nature or characteristics, and in noticing their momentary arising and disappearing.

2. The Non-coercive Procedure

BOTH the world surrounding us and the world of our own mind are full of unwanted experiences and frustrations, of hostile and conflicting forces. Man knows from his own bitter experience that he is not strong enough to meet and conquer in open combat, each one of these antagonistic forces around him and within him. He knows that, in the external world, he "cannot have everything as he wants it", and that, in the inner world of his mind, passions and impulses, whims and fancies, are often victorious over the voices of duty, reason and higher aspirations.

Man knows further that often an undesirable situation will even worsen if excessive pressure is used against it. Thus passionate desires may grow in intensity if one tries to silence them by sheer force of will. Disputes and quarrels will go on endlessly and grow fiercer, if they are fanned again and again by angry retorts or by vain attempts to crush the other man's position entirely. A disturbance during work, rest or meditation, will be felt more strongly and will have a longer-lasting impact if one reacts to it by resentment, anger, or by attempts to suppress it.

Again and again man will meet with situations in life where he cannot *force* issues. But there are ways of mastering some of the vicissitudes of life and many of the conflicts of mind, without an application of force, by non-violent means, which may often succeed where attempts of coercion, internal or external, have failed. Such a way of non-violent mastery of life and of mind is *Satipaṭṭhāna.*

By the methodical application of Bare Attention, being the basic practice in the development of Right Mindfulness, all the latent powers of a non-coercive approach will gradually unfold themselves, with their beneficial results and their wide and unexpected implications. Here, in this context, however, we are mainly concerned with benefits for the mastery of mind and for progress in meditation that may result from a non-coercive procedure. But we shall also throw occasional side glances to the repercussions on every-day life. It will not be difficult for a thoughtful reader to make more detailed application to his own problems.

The antagonistic forces that appear in meditation, and are liable to upset its smooth course, are of three kinds :—

1. external disturbances, as noise, etc.;

2. mental defilements (*kilesa*), including lust, anger, dissatisfaction, sloth, etc., which may arise at any time during meditation;

3. various incidental stray thoughts, surrender to day-dreaming, etc.

The occurrence of these distractions is the great stumbling block for a beginner in meditation who has not yet acquired sufficient dexterity to deal with them effectively. To give thought to those disturbing factors only when they actually arise at the very time of meditation, will be quite insufficient. If caught unprepared in one's defence, one will struggle with them in a more or less haphazard and ineffective way, and with a feeling of irritation which will form an additional impediment. If disturbances of any kind and an unskilful reaction to them occur several times

during one session, one will feel utterly frustrated and irritated, and may have to give up further attempts of meditating at least for the present occasion.

In fact, even meditators who are quite well informed, by books or teacher, about all details concerning the subject of meditation chosen, are often lacking in instruction how to deal skilfully with those varieties of disturbance mentioned above. The feeling of helplessness in face of them is the most formidable initial difficulty for a beginner in meditation. Many have accepted defeat at that point, abandoning prematurely any further effort in methodical meditation. As in worldly affairs so in meditation, one's way of dealing with the "initial difficulties" will often be decisive for success or failure.

When faced by inner and outer disturbances, the inexperienced or uninstructed beginner will generally react in two ways: he will first try to shove them away lightly, and if he fails in that, he will try to suppress them by sheer force of will. But these disturbances are like insolent flies: by whisking — first lightly and then with increasing vigour and anger—one may succeed (or not) in driving them away for a while, but mostly they will return with an exasperating constancy, and the effort and vexation of "whisking" will have produced only an additional disturbance of one's composure.

Satipaṭṭhāna, through its method of Bare Attention, offers a non-violent alternative to those futile and even harmful attempts at suppression by force.

A successful non-violent procedure in mind-control has to start with the right mental attitude. There must be first the full cognizance and sober acceptance of the fact that those three antagonistic forces or disturbing

factors are co-inhabitants of the world we live in, whether we like it or not. Our disapproval of them will not alter the fact. With some of them we shall have to come to terms, and concerning others—the mental defilements — we have to learn how to deal with them effectively until they are finally conquered.

1. Since we are not the sole inhabitants of this densely populated world, there are bound to be *external disturbances* of various kinds, as noise, interruption by visitors, etc. We cannot always live in 'splendid isolation', 'from noise of men and dogs untroubled', or on 'ivory towers' high above the crowd. Right meditation is not escapism; it is not meant for providing hiding places of temporary oblivion. Realistic meditation has the purpose of training man's mind to face, to understand and to conquer this very world in which we live and which also includes numerous obstacles to the life of meditation.

2. A Satipaṭṭhāna Master, the Venerable U Sobhana Mahāthera (Mahāsi Sayadaw) of Burma, said: In an unliberated worldling *mental defilements* are sure to arise again and again. He has to face that fact, and he should know these defilements well, in order to apply again and again the appropriate remedy of Satipaṭṭhāna. Then they will grow weaker, more short-lived, and will finally disappear. To know the occurrence and nature of defilements is therefore as important for a meditator as to know the occurrence of his noble thoughts.

By facing one's own defilements one will be stirred to increase the effort to eliminate them. On the other hand, by trying to avert one's glance when they arise, out of a false shame or pride, one will never truly join issue with them, and always evade the final and

decisive encounter; and by hitting blindly at them, one will only exhaust, or even hurt, onesalf. But by observing carefully their nature and behaviour when they arise in one's own mind, one will be able to meet them well prepared, to forestall them often, and finally to banish them fully. Therefore meet your defilements with a free and open glance! Be not ashamed, afraid or discouraged!

3. The third group of intruders disturbing the meditator's mind are the stray thoughts and day dreams which may consist of various memories and images of the recent or remote past, including those emerging from subconscious depths; thoughts of the future: planning, imagining, fearing, hoping; the casual sense-perceptions that may occur at the very time of meditation, often dragging after them a long trail of associated ideas. Whenever concentration and mindfulness slacken, stray thoughts or day dreams will appear and fill the vacuum. Though they seem insignificant in themselves, they are, through their frequent occurrence, a most formidable obstacle, not only for the beginner, but in all cases when the mind is restless or distracted. Like the mental defilements, they will be entirely excluded only when, at the stage of holiness (Arahatta), perfect mindfulness has been obtained, keeping unfailing watch at the door of the mind. But it can certainly be achieved that, even for long continuous periods of meditation, these invaders are kept at bay.

To all these facts about the three kinds of disturbing factors full weight must be given and the facts must be fully absorbed by our mind, if they are to shape our mental attitude. Then, in these three disturbing factors, the Truth of Suffering will manifest itself to the meditator very incisively through his own personal experience: "Not

to obtain what one wants, is suffering". Also the three other Noble Truths should be exemplified by reference to that very situation. In such a way, even when dealing with impediments, the meditator will be within the domain of Satipaṭṭhāna: he will be engaged in the mindful awareness of the four Noble Truths, being a part of the Contemplation of Mental Objects (dhammānupassanā).* It is a characteristic of Right Mindfulness, and one of its tasks, to relate the actual experiences of life to the truths of the Dhamma, and to use them as opportunities for its practical realisation. Already here, at this preliminary stage devoted to the shaping of a correct and helpful mental attitude, we have the first successful test of our peaceful weapons: by understanding our adversaries better, we have consolidated our position which was formerly weakened by an emotional approach; and by transforming these adversaries into teachers of the Four Noble Truths we have won the first advantage over them.

If mentally prepared by a realistic view of these three factors antagonistic to meditation, one will be less inclined to react at once by irritation when they actually arise. One will be emotionally in a better position to meet them with the non-violent weapons of which we shall now speak.

There are three devices of countering disturbances which should be applied in succession whenever the preceding device has failed to dispose of the disturbance. All three are applications of Bare Attention, differing

* See "The Way of Mindfulness" by Bhikkhu Soma (3rd. ed., Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy), p. 52, last para of the Section on Breathing.

in the degree or intensity of attention given to the disturbance. The guiding rule here is: to give no more mental emphasis to the respective disturbance than actually required by circumstances.

1. First one should notice the disturbance clearly, but lightly; that is, without emphasis and without attention to details. After that brief act of noticing, one should try to return to the original object of meditation, and one may well succeed in it if the disturbance is weak by nature, or one's preceding concentration of mind was fairly strong. If, at that stage, we are careful not to get involved in any "conversation" or argument with the intruders, we shall, on our part, not give them a reason to stay long; and, in a good number of cases, the disturbances will depart soon, like visitors who do not receive a very warm welcome. That curt dismissal of them may often enable us to return to our original meditation, without any serious disturbance to the composure of mind.

The non-violent device is here: to apply Bare Attention to the disturbance, but with a minimum of response to it, and with a mind bent on withdrawal. This is the very way in which the Buddha himself dealt with inopportune visitors, as described in the Mahā-suññatā-Sutta (*Majjh. 122*): ". . . with a mind bent on seclusion . . . and withdrawn, his conversation aiming at dismissing (those visitors)". Similar was Sāntideva's advice how to deal with fools: if one cannot avoid them one should treat them "with the indifferent politeness of a gentleman".

2. If, however, the disturbance persists, one should repeat the application of Bare Attention again and again

patiently and calmly; and it may well be that the disturbance will vanish when it has spent its force. Here the attitude is: to meet the repeated occurrence of a disturbance by a reiterated 'No', by a determined refusal to be deflected from one's course. It is the attitude of patience and firmness. The capacity of watchful observation has to be aided here by the capacity to wait and to hold one's ground.

These two devices will generally be succesful with incidental stray-thoughts, day-dreams, etc., wbich are feeble by nature, but also the other two types of disturbances, the external ones and defilements, may yield quite often.

3. But if, for some reason or other, they do *not* yield, one should now turn one'r full and deliberate attention to the respective disturbance, accept it as an object of knowledge, and transform it thus from a *disturbance* of meditation to a legitimate *object* of meditation. One may continue with that new object until the external or internal cause for attending to it has ceased, or one may even retain it for that session of meditation, if it proves satisfactory.

If there is, for instance, disturbance by persistent noise, we should give to it our undivided attention. But we should take care to distinguish it well from any reaction of ours concerning it, *e. g.* by resentment, which likewise should be clearly recognized in its own nature, whenever it arises. In doing so, we shall have undertaken the Contemplation of Mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā*), according to the following passage of the Discourse: "He knows the ear and sounds, and the fetter (*e. g.* resentment) arising through both". If the

noise is intermittent or of varying intensity, one will be easily able to discern the rise and fall (*udayabbaya*) in its process, and to add, in that way, to one's direct insight into impermanency (*aniccatā*).

The attitude towards recurrent mental defilements, as thoughts of lust, restlessness, etc., should be similar. One should face them squarely, but distinguish them from one's reaction to them, *e. g.* connivance, fear, resentment, irritation. In doing so, one is making use of the device of "naming", and one will reap its benefits which have been outlined before. In the recurrent waves of passion or restlessness one will likewise learn to distinguish gradually phases of "high" and "low", their "ups and downs", and may also gain other helpful knowledge about their behaviour. By that procedure, one again remains entirely within the range of Satipaṭṭhāna, by practising the Contemplation of the State of Mind (*cittānupassanā*) and of Mind-objects (*dhammānupassanā*; *i. e.* attention to the Hindrances).

This method of transforming disturbances of meditation into objects of meditation, as simple as as ingenious, may be regarded as the culmination of non-violent procedure. It is a device very characteristic of the spirit of Satipaṭṭhāna, by making use of all experiences as aids on the Patb. In that way, enemies are turned into friends, because all these disturbances and antagonistic forces have become our teachers; and teachers, whoever they may be, should be regarded es friends.

We cannot forgo to quote here from a noteworthy little book, which is a moving human document of fortitude and practical wisdom acquired by sufferlng: it is *The Little Locksmiih* by Katherine Butler Hathaway :—

"I am shocked by the ignorance and wastefulness with which persons who should know better throw away the things they do not like. They throw away experiences, people, marriages, situations, all sorts of things because they do not like them. If you throw away a thing, it is gone. Where you had something you have nothing. Your hands are empty, they have nothing to work on. Whereas, almost all those things which get thrown away are capable of being worked over by a little magic into just the opposite of what they were, . . . But most human beings never remember at all that in almost every bad situation there is the possibility of a transformation by which the undesirable may be changed into the desirable."

We have said before thct the occurrence of the three disturbing elements cannot always be prevented. They are parts of our world, and their coming and going follows its own laws irrespective of our approval or disapproval. But by applying Bare Attention we can well prevent our being swept away or dislodged by them. By taking a firm and calm stand on the secure ground of Mindfulness, we shall repeat in a modest degree, but in an essentially identical way, the historic situation under the Bodhi Tree when Māra* at the head of his army claimed in vain possession of the soil on which the seat of Enlightenment rested (as he will claim every inch of the world's surface). Trusting in the power of mindfulness, we may confidently repeat the Master's aspiration before his Enlightenment: *Mā maṁ ṭhānā acavayi !* "May he (Māra) not dislodge me from this place" (*Padhāna Sutta*).

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* The personification of the forces antagonistic to Enlightenment.

Let the intruders come and go, like any other members of that vast, unceasing procession of mental and physical events that passes along before our observant eyes, in the practice of Bare Attention.

Our advantage here is the quite obvious fact that two thought moments cannot be present at one and the same time. Attention refers, strictly spoken, not to the present but to the moment that has just passed away. Thus, as long as mindfulness holds sway, there will be no 'disturbance' or 'defiled thought'. This gives us the chance to hold on to that secure ground of an 'observer's post', to the potential 'throne of enlightenment'.

By the quietening and neutralizing influence of detached observation as applied in our three devices, the interruptions of meditation will increasingly lose the sting of irritation, and, thereby, their disturbing effect. This will prove to be an act of true *Virāga* ('dispassion') which literally means 'decolouring'. That is to say, these experiences will lose their emotional tinge that excites towards lust, aversion, etc., and they will appear as 'bare phenomena' *(suddha-dhammā)*.

The non-violent procedure of Bare Attention endows the meditator with a "light but sure touch" that is so essential for handling the sensitive, evasive and refractory nature of our mind, as well as for dealing with various difficult situations and obstacles in life. When speaking of the even quality of energy required for attaining to the meditative absorptions, the "Path of Purification" (*Visuddhi-magga*) illustrates it by describing a test which the ancient students of the art of surgery had to undergo as a proof of their skill. A lotus leaf was placed in a bowl of water, and the pupil

had to make an incision through the length of the leaf, without cutting it entirely or submerging it. He who applied an excess of force, either cut it into two or pressed it into the water, while the timid one did not even dare to scratch it. In fact, it is something like the gentle but firm hand of the surgeon that is required in mental training, and this skilful and well-balanced touch will be the natural outcome of the non-violent procedure in the practice of Bare Attention.

3. Stopping and Slowing Down

For a full and unobstructed unfoldment of the mind's capacities, the influence of two complimentary forces is needed: of *activating* and *restraining*. That two-fold need was recognized by the Buddha, the great knower of mind. He advised that the Faculties of Energy (*viriy'indriya*) and of tranquil Concentration (*samādh'indriya*) should be kept equally strong and well balanced.[1] Furthermore, He recommended three of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*bojjhaṅga*) as suitable for rousing the mind[2], and another three for calming it[3]. In both cases, among the Spiritual Faculties and

1. For the teaching on the Balance of the Spiritual Faculties see Anguttara-Nik. VI, 55; Visuddhi-Magga Ch. IV —Comy. to Satipatthāna Sutta (in "Way of Mindfulness", by Bhikkhu Soma p. 134).

2. These three are: the Enlightenment Factors of Truth-investigation, Energy and Rapture. See Samy.-Nik. 46, No. 53, quoted in Vis. Magga, Ch. IV.

3. These three are: the Enlightenment Factors of Tranquillity, Concentration and Equanimity. See Samy,-Nik, 46, No. 51.

the Enlightenment Factors, it is Mindfulness (*sati*) that not only watches over their equilibrium, but actively stimulates the growth of their activating as well as their restraining power.

Mindfulness, though seemingly of a passive nature, is in fact also an activating force. It makes the mind alert, and alertness is indipensable for all purposeful activity. In the present inquiry, however, we shall be mainly concerned with the *restraining* power of mindfulness. We shall examine how it makes for disentanglement and detachment, and how it positively helps in the development of the mental qualities required for the work of Deliverance.

In practising Bare Attention, we *keep still* at the mental and spatial place of observation, amidst the loud demands of the inner and outer world. There is in it the strength of tranquillity, the capacity of deferring action and applying the brake, of *stopping* rash interference, of suspending judgment while *pausing* for observation of facts and wise reflection on them. There is also a wholesome *slowing down* in the impetuosity of thought, speech und action. Keeping still and stopping, pausing and slowing down—these will be our key words when speaking now of the restraining effect of Bare Attention.

An ancient Chinese book says :—

> " In making things end, and in making things start, there is nothing more glorious than *keeping still.*''

In the light of the Buddha's teaching, the true "end of things" is Nibbāna which is called the ''*stilling* of formations" (*saṅkhārānaṁ vūpasamo*), that is their final

end or cessation. It is also called "the Stopping" (*nirodha*). The "things" or "formations" meant here, are the conditioned and impersonal phenomena rooted in their twofold cause, craving and ignorance. The end of formations comes to be by the end of "forming", *i. e.* by the end of world-creating kammic activities. It is the "end of the world" and of sufferlng, which, as proclaimed by the Buddha, cannot be reached by walking, by migrating or transmigrating, but is to be found only within ourselves. That "end of the world" is heralded by each deliberate act of *keeping still, stopping* or *pausing*. "Keeping still", in that highest sense, means: stopping the accumulation of Kamma. It means: refraining from perpetually adding to our entanglements in Saṁsāra, abstaining from our unceasing concern with evanescent things. By following the Way of Mindfulness, and training ourselves to keep still, or pause, in the attitude of Bare Attention, we refuse to take up the world's persistent challenge to our dispositions for greed or hatred. We protect ourselves against rash and delusive judgements; we refrain from blindly plunging into the labyrinths of interfering action with all its inherent dangers.

> "He who abstains from interfering, is everywhere in security."
>
> (*Sutta-nipāta, verse 953*)

> "He who keeps still (or: knows where to stop) will not meet danger."
>
> (*Tao-Te-King*, Chapter 44)

The Chinese saying quoted earlier, says in its second part that there is nothing more glorious in *making things start* than keeping still. Explained in the Buddhist sense, these things effectively started by keeping still, are "the

things (or qualities) making for decrease of kammic accumulation" (*apacayagāmino dhammā*), and, in dealing with them, we may follow the traditional division of mental training into Morality (or Conduct), Concentration (or Tranquillity) and Wisdom (or Insight). All three are decisively helped by the attitude of *keeping still*, as cultivated by Bare Attention.

1. *Conduct.* How can we improve our conduct, its moral quality and its skill in taking right decisions? If we earnestly desire such an improvement, it will generally be the wisest to choose the line of least resistance. We might suffer discouraging defeat if we turn too early against those short-comings which have deep roots in old habits or in powerful impulses. We shall be better advised to pay attention first to those blemishes of our actions or speech and to those errors of judgment which are caused by thoughtlessness and rashness, and there are many of them. There are numerous instances in the lives of most of us where one short moment of reflection may have prevented a false step, and thereby warded off a long chain of misery or moral guilt that started with a single moment of thoughtlessness. But how can we curb our rash reactions and replace them by moments of mindfulness and reflection? This will depend on our capacity to *stop and pause*, to apply the brakes at the right time, and that we can learn well by practising Bare Attention. In that practice we shall train ourselves "to look and wait", to suspend, or slow down, reactions. We shall learn it "in the easy way", in situations of our own choice, within the limited field of experiences met with during the periods of meditative practice. When facing again and again the incidental sense-impressions, feelings or stray thoughts

which interrupt our concentration; when curbing again and again our desire to respond to them in some way or other; when succeeding again and again in keeping still in face of them,—then we shall be well prepared for preserving that inner stillness also in the wider and unprotected field of everyday life. We shall have acquired a presence of mind that will enable us to pause and stop, even if we are taken by surprise, or are suddenly provoked or tempted.

Our present remarks refer to those blemishes of conduct which are liable to arise through thoughtlessness and rashness, but might more or less easily be checked through mindfulness. Dexterity in dealing with them will, however, also affect those more obstinate deviations from moral conduct which are rooted in strong passionate impulses or in deeply ingrained bad habits. The increased tranquillity of mind achieved in keeping still for Bare Attention, will restrain the impetuosity of passions, and the acquired habit of "pausing and stopping" will act as a brake to the unquestioned repetition of bad habits.

By being able to keep still for Bare Attention, or to pause for wise reflection, very often the first temptation to lust, the first wave of anger, the first mist of delusion will disappear without causing serious entanglement. At which point the current of unwholesome thought-processes is stopped, will depend on the quality of mindfulness. If mindfulness is keen, it will succeed in calling a stop at a very early point of a series of defiled thoughts or actions, before we are carried along by them too far. Consequently, the respective defilements will not grow beyond their initial strength, less effort will be required

to check them, and less kammic entanglemeuts, or none, wlll follow.

Let us take the example of a pleasant visual object which has aroused our liking. At first that liking might not be very active and insistent. If already here the mind is able to keep still for detached observation or reflection, it will be easily possible to divest the visual perception of its still very slight admixture of lust, and to register it as "just something seen that has caused a pleasant feeling"; or the effect of the attraction felt is sublimated into quiet aesthetic pleasure. If that earliest chance has been missed, the liking will grow into attachment and into desire to possess. If now a stop is called, the thought of desire may gradually lose its strength; it will not easily turn into an insistent craving, and no actual attempts to get possession of the object of desire will follow. But if the current of lust is still unchecked, the thought of desire (=*akusala-mano-kamma*," "unwholesome mental kamma") may express itself by speech (=*akusala-vacī-kamma*, "unwholesome verbal kamma"): one asks for the desired object, or even demands it with impetuous words. A refusal will cause the original current of lust to branch out into additional streams of mental defilements, either of sadness or of anger. But if even at that late stage one can stop for quiet reflection or Bare Attention and, accepting the refusal, renounce wish-fulfilment, further complications will be avoided. But if clamouring words are followed by action (=*akusala-kāya-kamma*, "unwholesome bodily kamma"): if, driven by craving, one tries to get possession of the object of one's desire by stealth or force, then the kammic entanglement is complete, and the full impact of its consequences will be experienced by

the doer. Still, if even after the completion of the evil act, the doer stops for reflection, *i. e.* if mindfulness takes the form of remorseful retrospection, it will not be in vain: it will preclude a hardening of character and may prevent a repetition of the same course of action.

The Exalted One said once to His son Rāhula:

" Whatever action you *intend* to perform, by body, speech or mind, you should consider that action . . If, in considering it, you realise: 'This action which I intend to perform will be harmful to myself, or harmful to others, or harmful to both; it will be an unwholesome action, producing suffering, resulting in suffering'—then you should certainly not perform that action.

" Also *while* you are performing an action, by body, speech or mind, you should consider that action . . If, in considering it, you realize : 'This action which I am performing, is harmful to myself, or harmful to others, or harmful to both; it is an unwholesome action, producing suffering, resulting in suffering'—then you should desist from such an action.

" Also *after* you have preformed an action, by body, speech or mind, you should consider that action . . If, in considering it, you realize : 'This action which I have performed, has been harmful to myself, or harmful to others, or harmful to both; it was an unwholesome action, producing suffering, resulting in suffering'—then you should in future refrain from it." (*Majjh. 61*)

2. *Tranquillity*— We shall now consider how the stopping for Bare Attention is also a helper in attaining or strengthening Tranquillity (*samatha*) in its double

sense: of peace of mind in general, and of meditative concentration and calm.

By growing a habit of pausing and stopping for Bare Attention, it will become increasingly easier to withdraw into one's own stillness when unable to escape bodily from the loud and insistent noises of the outer world; it will be easier to forego useless reaction to foolish speech or deeds of others. Also when the blows of fate are particularly hard and incessant, a mind trained in Bare Attention will find it easier to take refuge in the haven of apparent passivity, or watchful non-action, and to wait patiently until the storms have passed. There are situations in life when it is best to allow things to come to their natural end. He who is able to keep still and wait will often succeed where aggressiveness or busy activity is vanquished. Not only in critical situations, but also in the normal course of life, the experience won by observant Keeping Still will convince us that it is not at all necessary to make an active response to every impression received, or to regard every encounter with people or things as a challenge to our interfering activity.

By refraining from busying ourselves unnecessarily, external frictions and, thereby, internal tensions will be reduced. Greater harmony and peace will pervade the life of every-day, and the sometimes considerable contrast of normal life to the tranquillity of meditation will be reduced. Then there will be less of those disturbing inner reverberations of everyday restlessness which, in a coarse or subtle form, invade the hours of meditation and produce bodily and mental unrest. Consequently, the Hindrance of Agitation (*uddhacca-*

nīvaraṇa), which is a chief obstacle of concentration, will be less often evident, or it will be easier to overcome it.

By cultivating the attitude of Bare Attention as often as opportunity offers, the centrifugal forces of mind, making for mental distraction, will be reduced, and the centripetal tendency, turning the mind inward and making for concentration, will be strengthened. The craving for a variety of changing objects of thought, or objects of desire, will be effectively checked.

Furthermore, regular practice of sustained attention to a continuous series of events will prepare for sustained concentration on a *single* object or a limited number of objects in the strict practice of meditation. Firmness, or steadiness, of mind, being another important factor in concentration, will likewise be cultivated in that way.

Thus, by keeping still, pausing and stopping for Bare Attention, several salient components of meditative tranquillity are fostered: calmness, concentration, firmness, reduction of the multiplicity of objects. The average ievel of normal consciousness is raised and brought closer to the level of the meditative mind. This is an important point, because it happens often that too wide a gap between these two levels of mind will frustrate again and again attempts of mental concentration or the achieving of smooth continuity in meditative practice.

In the sequence of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment we find that the enlightenment-factor Tranquillity (*passadhi-sambojjhaṅga*) precedes that of Concentration (*samādhi-sambojjhaṅga*): and, expressing the same fact,

it was said; "If tranquillized within, the mind will become concentrated." Now, in the light of our previous remarks, we shall better understand these statements.

3. *Insight.*— It has been said by the Exalted One: "He whose mind is concentrated sees things as they really are." Therefore all those ways by which Bare Attention strengthens concentration of mind, will also be a supporting condition of the development of insight. But there is also a more direct and specific help which Insight receives from "Keeping still at Bare Attention".

Apart from (supposedly) disinterested scholarly or scientific rssearch, man is generally more concerned with "handling" and utilizing things, or defining their relations to himself, than with knowing them in their true nature. He is therefore mostly satisfied with registering the very first signal conveyed to him by an outer or inner perception. Through deeply ingrained habit, that first signal will evoke standard responses by way of judgments like good—bad, pleasant —unpleasant, useful—harmful, right—wrong; which again will lead to further reactions by word or deed in accordance with these judgments. It is very rare that attention will dwell any longer upon an object of a common, or habitual type, than for receiving that very first signal, or the first few. Thus, mostly only one single aspect of the object, or a selected few, will be perceived (and sometimes misconceived), and only the very first phase (or little more) of the object's life-span will come into the focus of attention. One may not even be consciously aware that the respective process has an extension in time (origination and end);

that it has many aspects and relations beyond those at first sight connected with the casual observer or the limited situation; that, in brief, it has a kind of evanescent individuality of its own. A world that has been perceived in that superficial way, will, to that extent, consist of rather shapeless little lumps of experiences marked by a few subjectively selected (and sometimes misapplied) signs or symbols which have significance mainly for the indidual's self-interest. Parts of that rather shadow-like world are not only things and persons of one's environment, but even a good part of one's own bodily and mental processes which are often conceived in a similar superficial way. When thus the seal of self-reference is stamped again and again upon the world of every-day experience, the basic misconception 'This belongs to me' (*attaniya*) will steadily continue to grow subtle, bul firm and wide-spread roots (comparable to the hair-roots of plants), which will scarcely be shaken by mere intellectual convictions about the non-existence of a self (*anattā*).

These grave consequences issue from that fundamental perceptual situation we have mentioned: on receiving a first signal from his perceptions, man rushes into hasty or habitual reactions which so often commit him to the four misapprehensions of reality: taking the impure for pure, the impermanent for lasting, the painful and pain-bringing for pleasant, and the impersonal for a self or something belonging to the self.

But if one musters the restraining forces of one's mind and pauses for Bare Attention, the material and mental processes that form the objcts of mind at the given moment will reveal themselves more fully and

more truly. If they are no longer dragged at once into the whirlpool of self-reference, but allowed to unfold themselves before the watchful eye of mindfulness, the diversity of their aspects and the wide net of their correlations and interconnections will appear: the narrow and often falsifying connection with self-interest will recede into the background and will be dwarfed by the wider view now gained. Birth and death, rise and fall of many of the observed processes will be clearly discerned, in their serial occurrence or in their component parts. Thereby the facts of Change and Impermanence will impress themselves on the mind with growing intensity. By the same discernment of rise and fall, many false conceptions of unity in the processes which had been created under the influence of the egocentric attitude will de dissolved. Self-reference uncritically overrides diversity, and lumps things together under the preconceptions of *being* a self *(attā)* or *belonging* to a self (*attaniya*). But Bare Attention reveals these sham unities as impersonal and conditioned phenomena. Facing thus again and again the evanescent, dependent and impersonal nature of life processes within and without, their monotony and unsatisfactory nature will become marked; in other words, the Truth of Suffering inherent in them will appear. In that way, all three Characteristics, or Signata, of Existence will open themselves to penetrative Insight *(Vipassanā)*, by the simple device of slowing down, pausing and keeping still for Bare Attention.

Spontaneity

An acquired or strengthened habit of pausing mindfully before acting will not exclude or paralyze spontaneity of response where it is beneficial. On

the contrary, the pausing, the stopping and the keeping still for Bare Attention will, through training, become quite spontaneous themselves. They will grow into a "selective mechanism" of the mind that, with an increasing reliability and swiftness of response, will prevent the upsurge of evil or unwise impulses which may have been intellectually realised by us as unwholesome, but, by their own powerful spontaneity, still continue to defeat our better knowledge and nobler intention. The practice of mindful pausing serves, therefore, to replace unwholesome spontaneity or habits, by wholesome ones.

Just as certain reflex moments are an automatically operating protection of the body, similarly a spontaneously working spiritual and moral self-protection will be a vital function of the mind. A person of average moral standard will instinctively shrink from theft or murder, without any long reflection. With the help of the method of Bare Attention, the range of such spontaneously functioning moral brakes can be greatly extended and ethical sensitivity heightened. Also false thought-habits can be broken in the same way and replaced by correct ones.

In an untrained mind, noble tendencies or right thoughts often succumb to the spontaneous outbreak of passions or prejudites, or they can assert themselves only with difficulty, after a struggle of motives. But if the spontaneity of the Unwholesome is checked or greatly reduced, as described above, our good impulses and wise reflections will have greater scope and they will be able to express themselves freely and spontaneously. Their spontaneous flow will give greater confidence in the power of the good within

us and will carry more conviction for others. That spontaneity of the good will not be of an erratic nature, but will have deep and firm roots in previous methodical training. Here appears a way by which the "premeditated good" (*sasaṅkhārika-kusala*) may be transformed into "spontaneously arising good thought" (*asaṅkhārika-kusala-citta*) which, if combined with knowledge, takes the first place in the scale of ethical values, according to the psychology of the Abhidhamma. Hereby we shall get practical understanding of a saying in *The Secret of the Golden Flower*:* 'If one attains intentionally to an unintentional state one has comprehension'. This saying just invites a paraphrase in Pāli terms: *Sasaṅkhārena asaṅkhārikaṁ pattabbaṁ*. 'By premeditated intentional effort spontaneity can be won.'

If the numerous aids to mental growth and liberation, found in the Buddha's teachings, are wisely utilized, there is actually nothing that can finally withstand the Satipaṭṭhāna Method; and this method starts with the simple but in its effects far-reaching practice of learning to pause and stop for Bare Attention.

Slowing-down

Against the impetuosity, rashness and heedlessness of the untrained mind, practice of Pausing and Stopping sets a deliberate slowing-down. The demands of modern life, however, make it impracticable to introduce such a slow-down of functions into the routine of the average working-day. But as an antidote against the harmful consequences of the hectic speed of

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* A treatise of Chinese Mahāyāna, strongly influenced by Taoism.

modern life, it is all the more important to cultivate that practice in one's leisure hours and especially in periods of strict Satipaṭṭhāna practice. It will also give the worldly benefits of greater calm, efficiency and skill in one's daily round of work.

For the purposes of meditative development, Slowing down serves as an effective training in heedfulness, sense-control and concentration. But apart from that, it has also more specific significance for meditative practice. In the commentary to the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, for instance, it is told how the slowing-down of movements may help in *regaining lost concentration* on a chosen object. A monk, so we read, had bent his arm quickly without remembering his subject of meditation, as his rule of practice demanded. On becoming aware of that omission, he took his arm back to its previous position and repeated the movement mindfully. The subject of meditation referred to was probably 'clearly comprehending action' *(sampajāna kāra)*, and especially the one mentioned in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta as follows: 'In bending and stretching he acts with clear comprehension' *(Sammiñjite pasārite sampajānakāri hoti)*.

The slowing-down of certain bodily movements during strict meditative training is also of great help in gaining *Insight-knowledge (Vipassanā-ñāṇa)* by one's own experience, and especially the direct awareness of change *(anicca)* and impersonality *(anattā)*. It is, to a great extent, the rapidity of movement that strengthens the illusion of unity, identity and substantiality of what is actually a complex and evanescent process. Therefore, in the strict practice of Satipaṭṭhāna, the slowing down of walking or bending and stretching

and thereby discerning the several phases of each movement, is an exercise very helpful for direct insight into the three characteristics of all phenomena. It will make an impression of increasing force and significance on the meditator, to notice clearly how each partial phase of the process observed arises and ceases by itself, and nothing of it "goes over" or "transmigrates" to the next phase.

Also the average rhythm of our every-day actions, speech and thoughts will become more quiet and peaceful under the influence of that practice. Slowing-down the hurried rhythm of life means that thoughts, feelings and perceptions will be able to complete the entire length of their natural life-time. Full awareness will extend up to their end-phase: to their last gentle vibrations and reverberations. Too often that end-phase is cut off by an impatient grasping at new impressions, or by hurrying on to the next stage of a line of thought before the earlier one has been clearly comprehended. This is one of the main reasons for the disorderly state of average consciousness which is burdened by a vast amount of indistinct or fragmentary perceptions, of stunned emotions and unfinished or undigested ideas. Slowing-down will prove an effective device of recovering the fulness and clarity of consciousness. A fitting simile, and at the same time an actual example of it, is the procedure in the practice of Mindfulness on Breathing *(ānāpānasati)* where mindfulness has likewise to cover the whole extent of the breath, its beginning, middle and end. This is what is meant by the passage of the Discourse, saying "Experiencing the *whole* (breath-) body, I shall breathe in and out". Similarly, the entire "breath", or rhythm of our life will become deeper and fuller,

if, through slowing-down, we get used to sustained attention.

The habit of prematurely cutting off processes of thought, or slurring over them, has assumed serious proportions in the man of modern city civilization. His restlessness clamours for ever new stimuli, in an ever increasing speed of succession, having its counter-part in the increasing speed of our means of locomotion. This rapid bombardment of impressions will gradually blunt man's sensitivity, and consequently the new stimuli will have to be still more loud, coarse and variegated—a process which, if not checked, can only end in disaster. This state of affairs also explains the decrease of finer aesthetic susceptibility and the growing incapacity of genuine natural joy. The place of both is taken by a hectic, short-breathed excitement which does not leave any true aesthetic or emotional satisfaction. "Shallow mental breath" is to a great extent responsible for the growing superficiality and coarseness of "civilised man" and for the frightening spread of nervous disorders in the West. It may well become the start of a general deterioration of human consciousness in its qualitative level, its range and its strength. This danger threatens all those, in the East as well as in the West, whom the impact of technical civilization finds without an adequate spiritual protection. Satipaṭṭhāna can make an important contribution to remedying that situation, in the way we have indicated here briefly. Thus, also from the worldly point ot view, the method will prove beneficial.

Here, however, we are chiefly concerned with the psychological aspects and their significance for meditative development. Sustained attentiou, being helped by Slowing-down, will affect the quality of consciousness

mainly in three ways: (a) the intensity of consciousness, (b) the clarity of the object's characteristic features, and (c) it will reveal the object's "relatedness".

(*a*) An object of *sustained* attention will exert a particularly strong and long-lasting impact on the mind, not only throughout the thought-series immediately following the respective perception, but its influence may also extend far into the future. It is that causal efficacy which is the measure of the ***intensity of consciousness.***

(*b*) The first impression conveyed by any new sense-object or idea will be what is most striking in it, subjectively or objectively, and it will dominate the mind up to the culminating point of the impact. But there are sure to be other aspects, characteristics or functions of the respective object which may not be obvious or are less interesting to the cognizing subject but which are no less, or even more, important. There will also be cases where the first impression is entirely deceptive. Only if attention is sustained beyond that first impact, will the respective object reveal itself more fully. It is only at the downward course of the first perceptual wave (its end-phase), when the prejudicing force of the first impact lessens, that the object will yield a wider selection of detail, an all-round picture of itself. It is therefore, only by sustained attention that a greater *clarity of an object's characteristic features* can be obtained.

(*c*) Among the characteristic features of a physical or mental object there is one class which is often overlooked by hasty or superficial attention, and therefore we list it here separately: it is the ***relatedness*** of the

object, extending to its past (origin, causes, reasons, logical precedents, etc.), and its present manifestation (environment, "background", presently active influences, etc.). An event cannot be said to be fully understood, if it is viewed in artificial isolation. It must be seen as a part of a wider pattern, in its conditioned and conditioning nature; and this can be done only with the help of sustained attention.

The influence of slowing-down and sustained attention on subsconsciousness, memory and intuition

It need hardly be pointed out how important all these three aforementioned points are for "seeing things according to reality", in other words, for the development of Insight *(vipassanā)*. Their *direct* influence is obvious, but there is also an *indirect one* which is no less powerful and important. Those three results of sustained attention, achieved with the help of Slowing-down, are also instrumental in influencing the quality and nature of *subsconsciousness*, *memory* and *intuition* which, on their part, will again be aiding, nourishing and consolidating the progress of liberating Insight. Insight aided by them will be like the mountain lake (of the canonical simile) that is fed not only from without, by the rains, but also by springs welling up within its own depth. Similarly Insight will be nourished not only through external experience but also from the "subterraneous", *i. e.* subliminal resources of the mind: by memories, other subconscious material, and by the strengthened faculty of intuition. Meditative results of an Insight that has such deep roots will not be lost easily, even with unliberated worldings *(puthujjana)* who are subject to relapse.

1. If perceptions or thoughts which have been objects of sustained attention, sink into *subconsciousness*, they will occupy there a special position by reason of their stronger impact on the mind and the greater distinctness of their characteristic features. As to the first reason: it will certainly not remain without any effect upon the structure of subconsciousness, if the end-phase of a moment of consciousness or of a cognitive series, being immediately followed by subconsciousness, is not weak but of a strength equal to that of the preceding phases. As for the second reason: if an impression or idea, marked by numerous and distinct characteristics, sinks into subconsciousness, it will not so easily be absorbed into the vagueness of other subconscious contents or dragged into false subconscious associations with superficial similarities of passionate biases. And also the last of the aforementioned three facts—the correct comprehension of the object's "relatedness"—will have similar effects: there will be a greater resistance against a merging with inadequate subconscious material. If perceptions or thoughts of that level of intensity and clarity sink into subconsciousness, they will be more "articulate" and more "accessible" than contents of subconsciousness originating from hazy or "stunned" impressions; they will be more easily "convertible" into full consciousness, and less unaccountable in their hidden effects upon it. If, through an improvement in the quality and range of mindfulness, the number of such "matured" impressions increases in the mind, it seems quite possible that a subtle change in the structure of subconsciousness can be achieved in that way.

2. It will be evident from our earlier remarks that those impressions which we have called "matured" or

"more easily accessible and convertible", will lend themselves more easily and more correctly to recollection. More easily: because of their greater intensity; more correctly: because of their clearly marked features which will give them a fair degree of protection against being distorted by false associative images or ideas. If, in addition, they are remembered in their "context" and "relatednees", it will work both ways, for easier and more correct recollection. In that way, *Sati* in its meaning and function of Mindfulness, will help to strengthen *Sati* in its meaning and function of *Memory*.

3. From that very influence on subconsciousness and memory also a deepening and strengthening of the faculty of intuition will naturally follow, and particularly of intuitive insight which concerns us here chiefly. Intuition is not "a gift from the unknown", but, as any other mental faculity, it arises out of specific conditions which, in this case, are primarily the latent memories of perceptions and thoughts "stored" in the subconscious. It is obvious that memories which have the aforementioned qualities of greater intensity, clarity and richness of distinctive marks, and thereby of greater accessibility, will provide the most fertile soil for the growth of intuition. Here too the preserved "relatedness" of the respective impressions will contribute much. Recollections of that type will have a more organic character than memories of bare or vague, isolated facts, and they will easier fall into new patterns of meanings and significance. These more "articulate" memory-images will be a strong stimulation and aid for the intuitive faculty. Silently and in the hidden depths of the subliminal mental processes, the work of collecting and organizing the subconscious material of experience and knowledge goes on until it is ripe to emerge as, what we call an *intuition*. The breaking-

through of that intuition is sometimes occasioned by quite ordinary happenings which, however, may have a strong evocative power, if, in previous occurrence they had been made objects of sustained attention. Slowing-down and pausing for Bare Attention will discover the depth-dimension of the simple things of evcry day, and will thus provide potential stimuli for the intuitive faculty. This applies also to the intuitive penetration (*paṭivedha*) of the four Noble Truths that culminates in Holiness (*arahatta*). Many instances are recorded of monks where the flash of intuitive penetration did not strike them when they were engaged in the meditative practice of insight proper, but on quite different occasions: when stumbling, when seeing a forest fire, a fata-morgana, a lump of froth in a river, etc.

We have met here another confirmation of that seemingly paradoxical saying thet 'intentionally' an unintentional state may be won, or at least aided, by deliberately turning the full light of mindfulness even on the smallest events and actions of every-day life.

Sustained attention not only provides the nourishing soil for the *growth* of intuition, it also makes possible the fuller utilization and even repetition of the intuitive moment. Men of inspiration in various fields of creative activity have often related and deplored their common experience that the flash of intuition strikes so suddenly and vanishes so quickly that frequently the slow response of the mind scarcely catches the last glimpse of it. But if the mind has been trained in observant Pausing, in Slowing-down and sustained attention, and if — as indicated above—also the subconsciousness has been influenced by it, then the intuitive moment, too,

might gain that fuller, slower and stronger rhythm. This being the case, its impact will be strong and clear enough for making full use of that flash of intuitive insight. It might even be possible to lead its fading vibrations upward again to a new culmination, similar to the rhythmic repetition of a melody rising again, in harmonious development, out of the last notes of its first appearance.

The full utilization of a single moment of intuitive insight might be of decisive importance for one's progress toward full realization. If one's mental grip is too weak and those elusive moments of intuitive insight are allowed to slip away without being utilized fully for the work of liberation, then it might well happen that they will not recur before many years have passed, or perhaps not at all during the present life. Skill in sustained attention, however, will allow the full use of opportunities, and slowing-down and pausing during meditative practice, is an important aid in acquiring that skill.

Through our now concluded treatment of Pausing, Stopping and Slowing-down, one of the traditional definitions of Mindfulness found in the Pāli Scriptures will have become more intelligible in its far-reaching implications: that is its function of *anapilāpanatā*, meaning literally, 'not floating (or slipping) away',–'like pumpkin-pots on the surface of water', add the commentators; and they continue: 'Mindfulness enters deeply into its object', instead of hurrying over its surface only. Therefore "non-superficiality" will be an appropriate rendering of the above Pāli term, and a befitting characterization of Mindfulness.

4. Directness of Vision

"I wish I could disaccustom myself from everything, so that I might see anew, hear anew, feel anew. Habit spoils our philosophy."

G. Chr. Lichtenberg (1742-1799)

In an earlier section; we spoke about the impulsive spontaneity of the Unwholesome (*akusala*). We have seen how the stopping for bare and sustained attention is able to counter, or reduce, the occurrence of rash impulsive reactions, thus allowing us to face any situation with a fresh mind, with *a directness of vision*, unprejudiced by those first spontaneous responses.

By *directness of vision* we understand a direct view of reality, without any colouring or distorting lenses, without the intrusion of emotional or habitual prejudication and intellectual biases. It means: coming face to face with the bare facts of actuality, seeing them as vivid and fresh as if they had occurred for the first time.

The Force of Habit

Spontaneous reactions which so often stand in the way of dircct vision, do not derive only from passionate impulses, but are very frequently the product of *habit*; and, in that form, they generally have an even stronger and more tenacious hold on man, which may work out either for the good and useful or for the bad and harmful. The influence for the *good*, exercised by habits is seen in the "power of repeated

practice" by which man's achievements and skills, of a manual or mental, worldly or spiritual kind, are protected against loss or forgetfulness, and are con-converted from a casual short-lived and imperfect acquisition into the more secure possession of a quality thoroughly mastered. The *detrimental* effect of habitual, spontaneous reactions is manifest in what is called, in a derogative sense, the "force of habit": its deaden-ing, stultifying and narrowing influence, productive of compulsive behaviour of various kinds. In our pre-sent context, we shall be concerned only with that negative aspect of habit as impeding and obscuring the directness of vision.

As remarked earlier, the influence of habitual re-actions is generally stronger than that of impulsive ones. Passionate impulses may disappear as suddenly as they have arisen. Though their consequences may well be very grave and extend far into the future, it is mostly the influence of habit which is longer lasting and deeper reaching. Habit spreads its vast and closely meshed net over wide areas of our life and thought, trying to drag in more and more of it. Passionate impulses too, might be caught into that net of habit and thus be transformed from passing out-bursts into traits of character. A momentary impulse, an occasional indulgence, a passing whim may by repetition become a habit difficult to uproot, a desire hard to control, and finally an automatic function that is no longer questioned. By repeated gratification of a desire, habit is formed, and habit grows into a compulsion.

It may well be the case that some activity, be-haviour or mental attitude to which one has become

accustomed is, considered by itself, quite unimportant to the individual concerned, and also morally quite indifferent or inconsequential. At the start it might have been quite easy to abandon it or even to exchange it for its very opposite, since neither one's emotions nor reason had any strong bias towards either side of a possible choice. But by rapetition, the continuance of the chosen way of acting, behaving or thinking will gradually become equivalent with "pleasant", "desirable", "correct" or even "righteous"; and it will be finally identified, more or less consciously, with one's so-called character or personality. Consequently, any change in it—a break in that routine—will be felt as "unpleasant" or as "wrong", and any interference with it from outside will be greatly resented and even regarded as hostile towards "one's vital interests and principles". In fact, primitive minds, at all times, be they "civilised" or not, have looked at a stranger with his "strange customs" as an enemy, and have felt his mere unaggressive existence as a challenge or threat to themselves.

In the cases aforementioned, when the specific habit was originally not of great importance to the individual, the attachment which is gradually formed is not so much to the object proper, as to the pleasantness of undisturbed routine. The strength of that attachment to routine derives partly from the force of physical and mental inertia which is so powerful in man. About another cause of it we shall speak presently. By force of habit, the respective concern (any material object, activity, behaviour or way of thinking) is invested with such an increase of emotional emphasis that the attachment to quite unimportant or

banal things may become as tenacious as that to the fundamental passions in man. Thus, even the smallest habits, if, by lack of conscious control, they become uncontested masters of their respective realms, may dangerously contribute to the rigidity and self-limitation of character, narrowing its "freedom of movement" (environmental, intellectual and spiritual). Thus, often quite unnecessarily, new fetters are forged for the individual, and nourishing soil is provided for the growth of new attachments and aversions, prejudices and predilections, that is to say, for new suffering, Therefore. when considering the following words of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, we should also think of the important part played by habit in the formation of fetters:

> ". . .and what fetter arises dependent on both (*i.e.* the sense-organs and sense-objects), that he knows well. In what manner the arising of the not arisen fetter comes to be, that he knows well."

In Buddhist parlance, it is pre-eminently the Hindrance of Sloth and Torpor (*thīna-middha-nīvaraṇa*) which is strengthed by the "force of habit", and mental faculties like agility and pliancy of mind (*kāya-* and *citta- lahutā, mudutā*, etc.)* are weakened.

The danger for spiritual development, involved in the dominating influence of habit, is all the more serious since its tendency towards expansion is parti-

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* About these important 'qualitative constituents' of good, wholesome (*kusala*) consciousness, see the author's "Abhidhamma Studies", p. 51f.

cularly noticeable in our present age of increasing specialisation and standardization in various spheres of life and thought.

The roots of that tendency of habits to extend their range, are anchored in the very nature of consciousness. Certain active types of consciousness, if possessing a fair degree of intensity, tend to repeat themselves, though that tendency is never quite undisputed, *e.g.*, by new cognitions claiming man-attention. This tendency towards repetition stems not only from the aforementioned passive force of inertia, but in many cases from an active "will to dominate and to conquer". Even in quite peripheral or subordinate types of consciousness, there seems to exist an urge to gain ascendancy, to become by themselves ever so small centres around which other, weaker mental and physical states revolve, adapting themselves to that centre and becoming subservient to it. This is a striking parallel to the self-assertion and the domineering tendency of an egocentric individual in his contact with society. Among biological analogies, we may mention the tendency towards expansion by cancer and other pathological growths; and for the tendency towards repetition, we may think of the freak mutations which loom as a grave danger at the horizon of our atomic age.

Out of that "will to dominate", inherent in many types of consciousness, a passing whim may grow into a relatively constant trait of character, and, if still not satisfied with its position, it may tend to break away entirely from the present combination of life forces till, finally, in the process of rebirths, it becomes the very centre of a new so-called personality.

There are within us countless seeds for new lives, for innumerable potential "beings", all of which we should vow to liberate from the wheel of Saṁsāra, as the Sixth Zen Patriarch expressed it.*

Detrimental physical or mental habits may grow strong, not only if fostered deliberately, but also if left unnoticed or unopposed. From minute seeds planted in a long-forgotten past, has grown much of what has now strong roots in our nature (see the Simile of the creeper in Majjhima-Nik. 45). This growth of morally bad or otherwise detrimental habits can he effectively checked by gradually developing another habit that will counter them: that of attending to them mindfully. Doing deliberately what had become a mechanical performance, and, perhaps, previous to it, pausing for a while for bare attention and reflection—this will give a chance for scrutinizing the habit in the light of Clear Comprehension of Purpose, and of Suitability *(sātthaka-*, and *sappāya-sampajañña)*. It will allow a fresh assessment of the situation, a *direct vision* of it, unobscured by the mental haze surrounding a habitual activity, which conveys the feeling: "It is right because it was done before." Even if a detrimental habit cannot be broken at once, or soon, in that way; it will then lose a good deal of its unquestioned spontaneity of occurrence; it will carry the stamp of repeated scrutiny and resistence, and at its reoccurrence it will be weaker and prove more amenable to our attemps to change or abolish it.

* This may well be a somewhat ironical reference by that great sage to the fact that the well-known Mahāyānic Bodhisattva Vow of liberating all beings of the universe, is often taken much too light-heartedly by many of his fellow Mahāyānists.

It needs hardly to be mentioned: habit (which was rightly called "the wet-nurse of man") cannot and should not disappear from our life. Let us only remember what a relief it is particularly in the crowded day and complex life of a city-dweller, that he can do a great number of things fairly mechanically, with, as it were, only "half-powered attention". It means a considerable simplification of his life. It would be an unbearable strain, if all that had to be done with deliberate effort and close attention. In fact, many products of manual labour, much of the *technique* in art, and even standard procedure in complex intellectual work, will generally bring better and more even results through skilled routine performance. Yet, also that evenness of habitual performance will reach its dead point where it declines. It will show symptoms of fatigue, if it is not enlivened by the creation of new interest in It.

There is, of course, no question of our advocating here the abolishment of all our little habits as far as they are innocuous or even useful. But we should regularly convince ourselves whether we have still control over them, that is, whether we can give them up, or alter them, whenever wanted. We can make sure of it, firstly, by attending to them mindfully for a certain period of time, and secondly, by actually giving them up temporarily in cases where this will not have any harmful or disturbing effects upon ourselves or others. If we turn on them the light of *direct vision*, looking at them or peforming them, as if seen or done for the first time, these little routine activities, and the habitual sights around us, will assume a new glow of interest and stimulation.

This holds good also for our professional occupation and its environment, and for our close human relationships if they should have become stale by habit. The relations to one's marriage partner, to friends, colleagues, etc., may thus receive a great rejuvenation. A fresh and direct vision will also discover that one can react to people, or do things, in a different and more beneficial way, than done before habitually.

An acquired capacity to give up *little* habits will prove its worth in the fight against more dangerous proclivites, and also at times when we are faced with serious changes in our life which by force deprive us of very fundamental habits. Loosening the hardened soil of our routine behaviour and thoughts, will have an enlivening effect on our vital energy, our mental vigour, our power of imagination, and, what is most important, into that loosened soil we shall be able to plant the seeds of vigorous spiritual progress.

Associative Thought

Mental habituation to standard reactions, to seqences of activity, to judgments of people or things, etc., proceeds by way of associative thinking. From things or ideas, situations or people that we encounter, we select certain of their distinctive characteristics or marks, and associate, *i.e.* connect these marks with our own response to them. If these encounters recur. they are associated first with those marks selected earlier, and then with our original, or strongest, response. So these marks became a signal for releasing a standard reaction which may consist of quite a long sequence of connected acts or thoughts, well mastered or known through

repeated practice of experience. That way of functioning relieves man of the necessity to apply ever-renewed effort and painstaking scrutiny to each single step of such sequences of thought and action. This certainly means a great simplification of life and a release of energy for other tasks. In fact,in the evolution of the human mind, associative thinking has been a progressive step of decisive importance. It was indispensable for acquiring the capacity to learn from experience, and led up to the discovery and application of causal laws.

Yet, it is easy to see that, close to these benefits of associative thinking, there lurk as many and grave dangers in this, now basic, procedure of mental activity, if it is faultily applied or not carefully watched. Let us draw up a list of these danger points (though not an exhaustive one):

1. Initial faulty or incomplete observations, errors of judgment, emotional prejudices (love, hate, pride), etc., may be easily perpetuated and strengthened by the mechanism of associative thinking, through being carried over to re-occurrences of similar situations.

2. Incomplete observations and restricted view-points in judgments, etc., which may have been sufficient for meeting a particular situation, may, if mechanically applied to changed circumstances, prove quite inadequate and may entail grave consequences.

3. Not infrequent are cases where, by misdirected associative thinking, a strong instinctive dislike is felt for things, places or persons which, in some way, are merely reminiscent of unpleasant experiences.

These but briefly stated instances show how vital it is to scrutinize from time to time these mental grooves of our associative thoughts, and the various habits and stereotype reactions deriving from them. In other words, we must step out of the ruts for a while, regain a direct vision of things and make a fresh appraisal of them in the light of that vision.

If we look once again over the list of potential dangers deriving from uncontrolled associative thinking, we shall better understand the Buddha's insistence of getting to the bedrock of experience. For instance, in these profound and terse stanzas called "The Cave", included in the Sutta Nipāta, He says that the "full penetration of *sense-impression (phassa)* will make one free from greed" and that, "by understanding *perception (saññā)* one will be able to cross the flood of Saṁsāra" (Stanza 778f).* By placing mindfulness, as a guard, at the very first gate through which experience enters, we shall be able to control the incomers much more easily, and shut out unwanted intruders. Thus the purity of "luminous consciousness" can be maintained against "adventitious defilements" (see Aṅguttara-Nik., I).

The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta provides a systematic training for inducing direct, fresh and undistorted vision, covering the entire personality in its physical and mental aspects, and including the entire world of experience. The methodical application of the several exercises to oneself (*ajjhatta*), to others (*bahiddhā*) and alternatingly to both, will be very helpful in discovering false

* Compare also the passage on the significance of sense impression (or contact; *phassa*) in the concluding sections of Brahmajāla Sutta (Digha Nikāya, Sutta, 1).

conceptions due to misdirected associative thinking or misapplied analogies.

The principal types of false associative thinking are covered, in the terminology of the Dhamma, by the four kinds of *misapprehensions* or *perverted views (vipallāsa)* which wrongly take (1) what is impermanent, for permanent, (2) what is painful, or conducive to it, for happiness, (3) what is not-self and unsubstantial, for a self or an abiding substance, (4) what is impure, for beautiful. These perverted views of reality arise through a one-sided and incomplete selection, or entirely false apprehension, of the characteristic marks of things or ideas, and through "associating" them closely with one's passions and false theories. By gradually "dissociating" our perceptions and impressions from these misapprehensions, with the help of Bare Attention, we shall make steady progress in the *direct vision* of "bare processes" (*suddha-dhammā*).

The Sense of Urgency (saṁvega)

He who is being stirred *(saṁvijja)* to a sense of urgency (*saṁvega*) by things which are deeply moving to one of clear and direct vision, will experience a release of energy and courage that is able to break through his timid hesitations and his rigid routine of life and thought. If that sense of urgency is kept alive, it will bestow the earnestness and persistence (*appamāda*) required for the work of liberation.

Thus said the teachers of old:

> "This very world here is our field of action.
> It harbours the unfoldment of the Holy Path,
> And many things to break complacency.

Be stirred by things which may well move the heart.

And being stirred strive wisely and fight on!"

Ayaṁ kammabhūmi, idha maggabhāvanā,
ṭhānāni saṁvejaniyā bahu idha,
Saṁvega saṁvejaniyesu vatthūsu,
*saṁvegajāto'va payuñja yoniso.**

Our nearest neighbourhood is full of stirring things, but generally we do not perceive them as such, because habit has made our vision dull and our heart insensitive. Even the Buddha's teaching which, when we first encountered it consciously, was a powerful intellectual and emotional stimulation, will gradually lose for us its original freshness and impelling force, unless we constantly renew it by turning to the fullness of life around us which illustrates the Four Noble Truths in ever new variations. A direct vision will impart new life-blood even to the commonest experiences of everyday, so that their true nature appears through the dim haze of habit, and speaks to us with a fresh voice. It may well be just the long-accustomed sight of the beggar at the street-corner, or a weeping child or the illness of a friend, which startles us afresh,makes us think, and stirs our sense of urgency in treading resolutely the Path that leads to the Cessation of Suffering.

We know the beautiful old account of Prince Siddhattha's coming face to face with old-age, illness and death, when he drove in his chariot through the

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* Quoted in the *Commentary* to the Saṁyutta Nikāya, Salāyatana-Saṁyutta, Devadaha-vaggo catuttho Sutta No. 2.

paternal city, after a long time of isolation in a make-believe world. This ancient story may well be historical fact, because we know that in the lives of many great ones often events occur which gain a symbolic significance or have great consequences far beyond their ordinary appearances. Great minds find significance in the seemingly common and invest with a far-reaching efficacy the fleeting moment. But, without conflicting with the inner truth of that old story, it may well have happened that the young prince had actually seen before, with his fleshly eye, old and sick people and those who had succumbed to death. But, on all these earlier occasions, it may not have touched him very deeply—as it is the case with most of us, most of the time. That earlier lack of sensivity may have been due to the carefully protected, artificial seclusion of his petty (though princely) happiness into which his father—the hereditary routine of his life—had placed him. Only when he broke through that golden cage of easy-going habits, the facts of suffering struck him as forcibly as if he had seen them for the first time. Then only was he stirred by them to a sense of urgency that led him out of the home life and set his feet firmly on the road to Enlightenment.

The more *clearly* and *deeply* our minds and hearts respond to the Truth of Suffering as appearing in the very common facts of our existence, the less often we shall need a repetition of the lesson learned, the shorter will be our migration through Saṁsāra.* The *clarity* of perception

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* Saṁsāra: 'Round of Rebirth' lit. 'perpetual wandering', is a name for the sea of life ever restlessly heaving up down, the symbol of this continuous process of ever again and again being born, growing eld, suffering and dying. More precisely put: Saṁsāra is the unbroken chain of the five-fold Khandha-combinations, which, constantly changing from moment to moment, follow continuously one upon the other through inconceivable periods of

evoking our response, will come from an undeflected directness of vision, bestowed by Bare Attention (*sati*); and the *depth* of experience will come from wise reflection or Clear Comprehension (*sampajaññña*).

The Road to Insight.

Directness of Vision is also a chief characteristic of the methodical practice of insight-meditation *(vipassanā-bhāvanā)*. There it is identified with the direct or experiential knowledge *(paccakkha-ñāṇa)* bestowed by meditation, as distinguished from the inferential knowledge (*anumāna-ñāṇa*) obtained by study and reflection. In the meditative development of insight, one's own physical and mental processes are directly viewed, without the interference of abstract concepts or the filtering screens of emotional evaluation, which, in this context, will only obscure, or camouflage, the naked facts, and detract from the immediate strong impact of reality. Conceptual generalisations from experience (though very useful elsewhere), if they interrupt the meditative practice of Bare Attention, tend to "shove aside", or dispose of, the respective particular fact, by saying, as it were: "It is nothing else but . . ". Generalizing thought inclines to become impatient with a recurrent type, and finds it soon boring after having it classified. Bare Attention, however, being the key instrument of methodical insight, keeps to the particular. It follows keenly the rise and fall of successive physical and mental processes, and, though all phenomena of a given

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time. Of this Saṁsāra, a single lifetime constitutes only a tiny fraction; hence to be able to comprehend the first Noble Truth of universal suffering, one must let one's gaze rest upon the Saṁsāra, upon this frightful chain of rebirths, and not merely upon one single lifetime, which, of course, may be sometimes less painful.

"*Buddhist Dictionary*" *Nyanatiloka*

series may be "true to type" (*e.g.* inhalations and exhalations), Bare Attention regards each of them as a distinct "individual", and conscientiously registers, as it were, its separate birth and death. If mindfulness remains alert, these repetitions of type will, by their multiplication, exert not a reduced but an intensified impact on the mind. The three signata or characteristics (change, misery and voidness), inherent in the process observed, will stand out more and more clearly, appearing in the light shed by the phenomena themselves, and not in a *borrowed* light (borrowed not even from the Buddha, though He is the peerless and indispensable guide to these experiences). These physical and mental phenomena, in their "self-luminosity", will then convey a growing sense of urgency to the meditator: revulsion, dissatisfaction, awareness of danger will arise concerning them, followed by detachment —though, certainly, joy, happiness and calm, too, will not be absent throughout the practice. Then, if all other conditions of inner maturity are fulfilled, the first direct vision of final liberation will dawn, with the Stream-winner's (*sotāpanna*) indubitable knowledge: 'Whatever has the nature of arising, has the nature of vanishing.'

Thus, in the unfoldment of the four-fold power of mindfulness, Satipaṭṭhāna will prove itself as the true embodiment of the Dhamma of which it was said:

> "Well proclaimed is the Dhamma by the Blessed One, visible here end now, not delayed, inviting of inspection, onward-leading, and directly experiensable by the wise."

For further reading on

Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation

The Way af Mindfulness. The Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and Commentary. Transl. with Intro., by Soma Thera. 3rd edition. 152 pages. (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy)

The Foundations of Mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta). Transl., with Intro. & Notes, by Nyanasatta Thera (The Wheel No. 19)

The Satipṭṭhāna Sutta and its Application to Modern Life. V. F. Gunaratna. (The Wheel No. 60)

Protection Through Satipaṭṭhāna. Nyanaponika Thera. (Bodhi Leaves No B. 34)

The Progress of Insight through the Stages of Purification. Mahasi Sayadaw. Pali text, with Engl. transl. and Notes, by Nyanaponika Thera. (The Forest Hermitage, Kandy).

The Heart of Buddhist Meditation. A Handbook of Mental Training based on the Buddha's Way of Mindfulness. Nyanaponika Thera. (Rider & Co., London)

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

I am happy to be able te speak to you this evening on a subject which forms the very heart and core of Buddhism. It is the realisation of the eternal verities of life which the Buddha had gained by attainment to Enlightenment beneath the spreading branches of the Bodhi tree in Gaya, that he proclaimed over 2500 years ago to a suffering world, in just four formulae or enunciations, which he himself called the Four Noble Truths. These Truths were made known by him in his very first sermon[1] delivered seven weeks after his Enlightenment, and they constitute the essence of the Dhamma pervading every aspect and every part of it.

There is first the Noble Truth of Dukkha (suffering.) Secondly there is the Noble Truth of the cause of Dukkha. Thirdly there is the Noble Truth of the cessation of Dukkha, and fourthly there is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of Dukkha.

In this lecture I propose first to dwell on the general nature of these Four Noble Truths as distinguished from their specific contents, and thereafter to proceed to consider their contents and their significance.

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1 Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta, S. V. 420

GENERAL NATURE OF THE TRUTHS

At the outset, one may be tempted to ask why these Truths are called Noble (The Pāli word is Ariya), and why they are only four in number, not less, not more. The well-known commentator the Ven. Buddhaghosa in his Visuddhi Magga has answered both these questions. They are called "Noble" Truths for three reasons – because they have been discovered by the Noble One – the Buddha, because they can be fully realized only by the Noble Ones such as the Buddhas, the Pacceka Buddhas and the Arahants, and also because they are real and not unreal; they deal with Reality.

As regards the reason why there are only Four Truths, not less, not more, the explanation is that no other Truth can harmoniously exist side by side with these Four Truths, and not one of these Truths can be eliminated without loss of meaning. If one of these Truths is eliminated, the sequence suffers, the chain of reasoning breaks and the meaning in its fullness is lost. If one more Truth is added, that Truth is bound to be of a different significance and different type covering a different field, and will not fit in with the existing Truths. Hence it is not possible to conceive of either supplementing them or reducing their number. Dukkha - Dukkha's cause - Dukkha's cessation – and the path leading to this cessation - so constitute a certain totality, a definite unity of logical considerations, that they must remain at four, not less, not more.

Not only do these Four Truths form the heart and core of Buddhism, these Truths are also so far-

reaching - touching life at every point, so encompassing- taking in every aspect of life, that no amount of thinking on them can ever be deemed sufficient or complete until such thinking reaches the level of a definite spiritual experience, as distinguished from a mere theoretical understanding of them. One has only to glance through the pages of the 12th part of the Saṁyutta Nikāya known as the Sacca Saṁyutta or Kindred Sayings about the Truths, to realize the importance of repeatedly pondering on these Truths. Here, these Four Noble Truths are regarded as the topic of all topics, the one topic which appertains to Reality and leads to the awakening of the Highest Wisdom, the one topic for the complete realization of which "householders in the past have rightly gone forth from home to the homeless life".[1] This is the one line of thought worth cultivating, worth meditating on. "All other thoughts", says the Buddha, "are not concerned with real profit, they are not the rudiments of the Holy life, they conduce not to revulsion, to cessation, to tranquility, to full understanding, to perfect wisdom. They conduce not to Nibbāna".[2]

How very vital these Four Truths are to man's spiritual development can be gauged from this significant remark of the Buddha appearing in the Sacca Samyutta.—

"O monks, if there are any for whom you have any fellow feeling, if there are any who may deem you worth listening to, your friends and colleagues, your kinsmen and blood - relations, it is your duty

1. Kindred Sayings V. p 352 2. Ibid p. 354, p. 355, p. 378

to rouse them, admonish them, and establish them in the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths".[1] Hence, every occasion for hearing these Truths should be regarded as an additional aid, a further approach, to the process of realizing the wisdom of these inestimable Truths.

Those who have intently contemplated these Truths will tell you that a wonderful feature about these Truths is, that each time you ponder deeply on them, some new aspect of these Truths, some new feature, some new point of view will present itself before you. In short you will know that you have learnt something new. This is so, because it takes time to comprehend fully these Truths; they are so vast, so wide, so full and so profound, while man's ability to comprehend them and realize them is so weak and so poor.

It is said that nothing is more interesting to man than the study of man. Viewed in this light a study of the Four Noble Truths should be of the deepest interest to us since they are all about us, they concern us, and are dependent on us. These Truths involve a consideration, of not so much the external world, as the internal world of mind. Actually, the external is a reflection of the internal. There is no external world to be viewed, if there is no internal world which can view it. The physical is always a manifestation of the mental. Hence it is that the Buddha in the Rohitassa Sutta said : "In this one fathom long body along with its perceptions and thoughts do I proclaim the world, the origin of the

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1. Ibid p. 368

world, the cessation of the world and the path leading to the cessation of the world.[1] The word "world" here means the world of Dukkha (suffering) and Dukkha is an experience of the internal world of self. It should therefore be our aim, meditating on these Truths, to be able to see in ourselves, in the every-day affairs of our lives in every event and circumstance connected with ourselves, an exemplification of these Four Noble Truths until they become a definite living experience - a spiritual experience which is quite different from a theoretical understanding of these Truths.

Another feature about these Truths, which those who contemplate them intently will tell you, is that when the First Noble Truth is comprehended by any one, the Second Noble Truth suggests itself to him, and when the Second Noble Truth is comprehended, the Third Noble Truth suggests itself, and similarly the Fourth. The Buddha is reported to have mentioned this, as stated by the Monk Gavampati in the Sacca Samyutta.[2] These Truths thus constitute a progressive series, each Truth leading up to the next and each throwing light on the next.

It is the failure to understand these Truths that is responsible for the distresing position in which man finds himself, tossed about as he is in a state of conflicting emotions, passions and desires. In the Kotigama Vagga of the Saṁyutta Nikāya the Buddha has said: "O Monks, it is through not understanding,

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1. Kindred Sayings I. p. 86 2. Kindred Sayings V. p. 369

not penetrating these Four Noble Truths that we have run on, wandered on, this long, long road, both you and I".[1]

One feature about these Truths, which needs special mention and which for practical purposes is perhaps the most important, is the urgency of understanding and realizing them. Many are the illustrations employed by the Buddha to emphasize this urgency. I shall content myself with mentioning just one. It is recorded in the Sacca Saṁyutta that the Buddha on one occasion asked this question : "O Monks, when one's turban is ablaze or one's head is ablaze what should be done?" The monks answered "Lord, when one's turban is ablaze or head is ablaze, for the extinguishing thereof, one must put forth extra desire, extra effort, extra endeavour, extra impulse, extra mindfulness, extra attention." "Monks,' rejoined the Buddha, "It is just such an extra desire, effort, endeavour, impulse, mindfulness and attention that one should put forth for the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths."[2] Can the urgency of realizing these Truths be brought home more forcefully and more vividly?

THE FIRST NOBLE TRUTH

Now that we have considered from several angles the Nature of the Four Noble Truths, let us proceed to consider the contents of these Truths and their significance.

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1. Ibid 5 p. 365
2. Kindred Sayings V. p. 372

The first Noble Truth deals with the indisputable fact of Dukkha, that ever present feature of existence, and rightly therefore, the starting point of the Dhamma. I say it is rightly the starting point, because the one aim of the Dhamma of the Buddha is to show a way of escape from Dukkha. Hence has he said:-

"Dukkham c'eva paññapemi
Dukkhassaca nirodham"[1]

"One thing only do I teach
Sorrow and its end to reach."

Let us understand this Truth in the way enunciated by the Buddha. "This, O Monks," said the Buddha, "is the Noble Truth of Dukkha. Birth is Dukkha. Decay is Dukkha. Death is Dukkha. Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair are Dukkha. Association with the unloved, separation from the loved, that is also Dukkha. Not to get what one desires, that is also Dukkha. In a word, this five-fold mass which is based on grasping - that is Dukkha."[2] Except the last example just mentioned, to which reference will be made later, the others are examples of the obvious manifestations of Dukkha.

Now what exactly is Dukkha? The word "Dukkha" is made up of two words "Du" and "Kha", "Du" is a prefix meaning bad, low, mean, base or vulgar. "Kha" means empty or hollow. The two words taken together therefore refer to that which is bad because it is empty, unsubstantial, unsatisfactory or illusory. It refers to a state of unsatisfactoriness if one may

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1. M. N. 1 No. 22 2. S. V. 421

use the expression. The popular rendering of Dukkha as "suffering" is not quite satisfactory since the word "suffering" is likely to convey the idea of pain only and does not introduce the idea of unsubstantiality or illusoriness. The word "Dukkha" must awaken in our minds not only thoughts of pain and distress, but also all those thoughts about the unsatisfactory and illusory nature of the things of this world, their unsubstantiality, their failure to satisfy completely, and their inevitable ending in disappointment, sorrow and disharmony. Dukkha consists of that state of unbalance, that continued agitation and disturbance to which all beiugs are subject by reason of the absence of stability and permanence in this world by reason of the never ending rise and fall of things leading to a universal "unsatisfactoriness" or disharmony. Perhaps the word "Disharmony" can be regarded as the closest equivalent of Dukkha. If however we prefer to use the word "suffering", we still may do so, giving it however a wider connotation, so as to include the other shades of meaning to which I have just referred.

However obvious the fact of universal Dukkha may be, there are many among us who refuse to believe that this world is a world of disharmony and suffering, and are quick to condemn Buddhism as a doctrine of pessimism. Nor is this to be wondered at. The Buddha himself hesitated to preach these Truths to an ignorant and doubting world, for he knew that they cannot be easily grasped. There is present in the human mind, a tendency to resent the intrusion of a thought or idea which is likely to upset its own comforting view of things to which it has been long

accustomed. It is for a similar reason that one might refuse to test one's temperature with a thermometer, or refuse to be medically checked up, for there is an aversion to the discovery that something is wrong within oneself. One likes to continue in the fond thought that all is well. Thus, it so happens that many refuse to accept the Truth of Dukkha, because they resent the idea that they are suffering from the universal malady of Dukkha. They close their eyes to these views which are disturbing and distressing, and are quick to placate themselves with the seemingly comforting thought that all is well, or else that all will somehow end well. Where ignorance is bliss, they prefer not to be wise. When, however, subsequent events and circumstances compel them to realize, with what ease friends can turn enemies, with what ease health can turn into sickness, with what ease secure possessions can turn insecure, with what ease youth inclines in one direction only - the direction of old age, with what ease old age inclines in one direction only - the direction of decay and death, are they not then thoroughly disillusioned? Can they then be heard to say "This earth-life really satisfies us?" Then and then only, through sheer bitterness of experience, do they develop a sane approach to the understanding of the Truth of Dukkha, and, if they steadily persist in this line of thinking and pursue it, they will find little difficulty in some day appreciating the fact that all things of this earth-life are involved in Dukkha, wedded to Dukkha and are productive of Dukkha, and that this earth-life itself, in the last resort, is empty, illusory, and unsubstantial.

We have only to look around us with observant eyes and thoughtful mind to be convinced of the Truth

of Dukkha. Which is the man whose course of life from birth to death has run undisturbed, like the unruffled waters of a placid stream, without even a single upheaval of worry, fear or grief to disturb that gentle drift? Which is the home that has not mourned the loss of a near and dear relative? Where in this world are the lips from which the cry of pain has never been heard? Where is the heart that has not heaved a sigh, and has not felt within itself the agony of sorrow at some time or other? Just at this moment, even as I am speaking and you are listening, can you visualize how many hundred thousands – nay how many millions- of sick men in this wide world are tossing about on beds of pain, in homes and in hospitals? How many millions of patients are, even at this precise moment, lying stretched on tables in operating theatres of hospitals, hovering perilously between life and death? How many millions, having arrived at the end of life's fitful journey, are this very moment gasping for the breath that is deserting them, gasping their last gasp? And how many millions of bereaved parents and bereaved children are weeping, pining for them that will not, and cannot, ever return? Not to see is not to know, except for the thoughtful. Then, consider the extent of poverty and unemployment in this world, and the terrible suffering they cause. Are not these ūnmistakable indications of universal Dukkha? As Jacob Boehme once remarked — "If all the mountains were books and if all the lakes were ink and if all the trees were pens, still they would not suffice to depict all the misery in this wor'd."

But the critic will now interpose a question :-

"What Dukkha is there to the man blessed with health and wealth and the other good things of life?" Yes, he too is a victim of Dukkha. He is no favoured exception to the rule of Dukkha. The man blessed with health and wealth and the other good things of life, so long as he lives in this world, is part of this world, and as such, he will have to live and move with the rest of the world, for man is a gregarious animal. This means that he will have to associate with those who do not possess these good things of life. This invariably leads to situations of unpleasantness, to situations of jealousy and enmity, to situations of conflict - conflict between the haves and the have nots, to the innumerable conflicts between the interests of labour and capital. Are not all these Dukkha to the man who is said to be enjoying the good things of life?

Then what of the endless care and anxiety necessary to maintain oneself in health, to preserve unimpaired one's wealth and the other good things of life? Is not this an agony? - the agony of maintenance? and is not this agony another form of Dukkha? Then what of the agony of apprehension? - the apprehension that all his good things of life may not stay long? "What safeguards shall I adopt to protect my properties from the onslaughts of robbers and enemies, and also to protect them from the inroads of decay? How long shall I be fortunate enough to enjoy my possessions?" These are the headaches, not of the "have nots" but of the "haves." Are not all these indicative of Dukkha? And when the protective methods adopted fail to answer their purpose, what of the agony of disappointment and the agony of loss? Where does not Dukkha reign supreme?

I am now gradually leading you, from cases of obvious Dukkha known as Dukkha dukkhatā, to cases of Dukkha not so obvious, which occur as a result of the operation of the law of change. These latter are called "Viparināma Dukkhatā." "Viparināma" means change. The Buddha once used an expression of just four words which meant very much:- "Yadaniccaṁ taṁ dukkhaṁ"! "Where there is change, there is Dukkha" Just consider, when everything is changing and nothing is stable, what is the logical outcome but disharmony? The very incidence of change bespeaks Dukkha or heralds the approach of Dukkha. Therefore change itself is Dukkha because there is the potentiality of disharmony and sufferlng. Is there any one who has given us a guarantee that fortune will not turn into misfortune, that satisfactory conditions will continue to be satisfactory? There will always remain the possibility and potentiality of change. As long as this bare possibility exists, so long will there be fear and anxiety about the continuance of satisfactory conditions. This is one aspect of Viparināma Dukkhatā. The very insecurity of the good things of life has from the earliest dawn of human history bespoken Dukkha. The monarch fears for the security of his kingdom. Despite all his Royal splendour he has his painful problems. We have heard it said "Uneasy lies the head that wears a Crown." The subject fears for the security of his life. The capitalist fears for the security of his wealth. The labourer fears for the security of his employment. If everything is changing and nothing is at rest, there can be no peace, no security in this world. If there is no peace, no security in this world, what will there be in their stead? There will be fear and insecurity. This again is Dukkha. The fear of economic upheavals,

the fear of unemployment, the fear of epidemics, the fear of wars, the fear of revolutions and the fear of many a world crisis bespeak Dukkha. Most of them result from world conditions of insecurity. Is not Dukkha then a necessary evil in this world? - a cosmological necessity? In this sense Dukkha may be said to have an existence apart from man's awareness of it. Can we forget that two of the three great characteristics of all world-phenomena as declared by the Buddha are Anicca (impermanence) and Dukkha (disharmony)?

We can now appreciate the extent to which this element of change or Viparināma can undermine all worldly happiness. When conditions change, as change they must, the very sweetness of the pleasure of sense-gratification turns into the bitterness of Dukkha. It is the same with every other form of worldly happiness. The joys of family life may be comforting, the joys of friendship may be exhilarating but, conditions changing, the break up of the ties of family life, the tearing asunder of the bonds of friendship, through so many possible causes as misunderstanding, ill-feeling, acts of third parties and lastly through death, are bound to produce as great a sorrow as was the original joy. In short, great as was the joy of attachment, so great will be the sorrow of loss or even greater. The greater the height from which you fall, the greater is the pain you will experience. The axe of impermanence is always there to fell the tree of joy. It hangs over all worldly joys like Damocles' sword. Mark you–it is not for nothing that the all-knowing Buddha has proclaimed – "Nandipi dukkha". "Joy itself is sorrow."

Not only are the things enjoyed constantly changing, but what is more–the person enjoying them is also

constantly changing. He too is subject to the inexorable law of change. We thus witness the amusing spectacle of a changing being pursuing a changing object. This brings us to the third aspect of Dukkha known as Sankhara Dukkhata. [1]We have already dealt with Dukkha Dukkhata the obvious aspect of Dukkha. Then we dealt with Viparinama Dukkha that aspect of Dukkha which results from change or the possibility of change. Now we shall deal with the Sankhara aspect of change. Sankhara, a word which has many secondary meanings, in its original sense refers to that which is formed by many things joining together, a composition, a group or aggregate or mass. In the present context it refers to the human being regarded not as an entity but as a mass or Collection of Five Groups or Aggregates. These constitute the being called man. Of these Five Groups or Aggregates ("Panchakkhanda" is the Pali word) which constitute the composite man, one is the physical factor of Rūpa - the body, and the other four are the mental factors of Vedanā - the sensations, Saññā - the perceptions, Sankhāra - the volitions and Viññāna - the states of consciousness. They are called Groups or Aggregates because each is again a combination of several other factors. None of these Aggregates or component factors is self - existing. They arise out of a cause. They are conditioned. That is to say, their existence depends on certain conditions and when these conditions and causes cease to exist, they too cease to exist. Thus the human body is constantly undergoing a kind of metabolic change. Old cells are continually taking their place. Physiology concedes this. Often owing to the imperceptibly slow pace of this change, it is not per-

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1. For this three fold classification of Dukkha vide D III. I, 217

ceived as change but nevertheless there is change. Hence the human body is not an entity but a process. Infancy, boyhood, youth, old age, are but stakes in this process. The human mind - Nāma - is also not an entity. It is also constantly changing. It is just a flow or succession of never ending sensations, perceptions, volitions and states of conciousness all of which mental factors are collectively called Nāma or Mind. In this flow of mental factors, each follows the other with such a rapidity of succession, that what is in reality a plurality assumes the semblance of an entity or unity, even as the fire in a lighted stick, made to turn round and round, assumes the semblance of a circle or ring of fire, whereas in reality there was only a succession of positions taken up by the fire of the lighted stick. So there only *seems* ta be a static thing called, mind whereas, what exists ls just a process or flow of mental factors. The mind is correctly said to be "Nadi soto viya" i. e. like the flow of a river, and is never the same for two consecutive moments. The river one crosses in the morning is not the river he recrosses in the evening. Each time, each moment, it is a different set of waters that flow. Similarly where the mind is concerned, each time it is a different sensation or perception or volition or consciousness that exists, only to pass away giving rise to another. Psychology concedes this. So we arrive at the all-important conception that the Nama-Rupa or Mind-Body combination which constitutes the composite being called man, is not a permanent self-existing unity but a process. It is a conditioned process, i. e. it comes into existence on account of certain causes and conditions. When these causes and conditions cease to exist, the process also ceases to exist. As

has been aptly said in the Samyutta Nikaya,[1] "hetu paticca sambhūtan" - by reason of a cause they came to be, "hetu bhangā nirujjhati" - by rupture of a cause they die away. Being a process, it is something that is changing and is not permanent. For that very reason, it is Dukkha. So we see that Dukkha is inherent in the very formation of the human being. This is Sankhārā Dukkhatā. This is that last example of Dukkha that was referred to by the Buddha when in his enunciation of the First Noble Truth he said "This five-fold mass which is based on grasping - that is Dukkha" It is in the very nature of this mass of Groups or Aggregates to suffer Dukkha. The being itself is Dukkha. In its very formation it is Dukkha. In this sense, one may say that Dukkha is a biological and psychological necessity.

THE SECOND NOBLE TRUTH

Now that we have understood the First Noble Truth and its significance, let us proceed to the Second Noble Truth which points out the cause of Dukkha. The First Noble Truth is like the diagnosis of a disease by a physician. The Second Noble Truth is like physician's discovery of the cause of the disease. The Third Noble Truth is like the assurance of the physician that there does exist a cure for the disease, and the Fourth Noble Truth is like the physician's prescription for the cure of the disease.

Let us understand this Second Truth in the way it has been enunciated by the Buddhu-"What now O, Monks, is the Noble Truth of the cause of suffering? It is this

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Tanha or Craving which leads from birth to birth, which accompanied by pleasure and greed, finds ever fresh delight now here, now there."[1] Craving is here shown as the great motivating factor back and behind all actions of deluded man, driving him now in one direction, now in another.

All Dukkha is rooted in this selfish craving for the things of the world, in this inordinate attachment, this passionate clinging which is known as Tanha. The word "Tanha" is often inadequately rendered as "desire," but the word "desire" hardly conveys all that is connoted by the Pali word "Tanha." The word "desire" can sometimes refer to some very laudable human inclination such as the yearning to be good or to serve mankind. But in the Pali word "Tanha" (Sanskrit Trushna) there is always present the element of selfishness. The word "Craving", therefore, is the best rendering of "Tanha".

It is this element of selfishness in "Tanha" that creates all the havoc for man. Craving can never be completely satisfied. Craving gratified begets further craving, even as the attempt to quench one's thirst with salt water only re-doubles the thirst. Craving is a powerful urge. It is a dangerous urge. It is responsible for nearly all the ills of this world. The political upheavals of the various countries of this world, their social and economic problems can almost all be traced to the nefarious influence of this powerful Tanha. This selfish craving is the mainspring of almost all human activity - the prime causative factor of nearly all the struggles and efforts of deluded man. What

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1. S. V. 421

is it that makes the murderer raise his hands against his victim? What is it that makes the thief remove another's goods? What is it that makes one man jealous of another's success? Clearly it is selfish craving - one's love of self, manifesting itself in some form or other, and looking at things only from the point of view of self and not from the point of view of others. Sometimes the manifestation of selfishness is obvious, sometimes it is subtle.

Now the love of a lover to his beloved is often a good example of selfiishness manifesting itself in a subtle form. A lover's love is seldom a selfless love. It is a love which craves for recognition and claims a return. In short, it emanates from a love of self. In the generality of cases, a man loves another because he loves himself better, and craves to give himself the pleasure of loving and being loved. Intrinsically therefore, he is out to please himself, and his love for another is but self-love disguised. Otherwise, love cannot so easily and suddenly turn into hatred as it sometimes does when the love offered is rejected. Have we not heard of instances where the lover is the murderer of his beloved? These incidents can happen only when love springs from selfishness. When it was reported to the Buddha that Queen Mallika wife of King Pasenadi of Kosala had in answer to the King said that she loves herself more than any one else, in the world and that King Pasenadi also being similarly questioned by the Queen had said that he loves himself more than any one else in the world, the Buddha was not surprised. He replied as follows:— "You may traverse the whole wide world in all directions with your thought but you will nowhere find any

one more dear to man than his own self."[1] So man's craving or Tanha in whatever way you may look at it, and in whatever form it appears, is man's attempt to gratify himself.

Now - one may be tempted to ask - "Why does this Tanha or craving bring Dukkha in its wake"? It is because Tanha is a hankering after that which is itself changing, a hankering after the unreal. When man pursues a goal which is elusive, a goal which continually recedes and retreats as often as he attempts to approach it, what else can he expect but the disharmony of Dukkha?

It may now he asked - "Why do we hanker gfter the unreal?" Our ignorance (Avijjā) makes us mistake the unreal for the real, the shadow for the substance, and makes us pursue the shadow. The Dhammapada says :—

> "In the unreal they see the real. In the real they see the unreal. Those who abide in the pasture-ground of wrong thoughts never arrive at the real."[2]

As long as we fail to develop that intuitive Highest Wisdom (Panna) which is latent in us and which if developed would enable us to see things as they really are and in their correct perspective, so long shall we continue to mistake the unreal for the real. Thus do we pursue the gratification of the senses, little knowing that we are pursuing a phantom and hoping that this will give a lasting satisfaction. Our eyes crave for pleasant sights. Our ears crave for pleasant sounds. Our tongues crave for pleasant tastes. Our noses crave for pleasant

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1. S. I., Udana V. 1. 75 2. Dhammapada Verse 11

smells. Our bodies crave for pleasant contacts. Our minds crave for pleasant thought - impressions. But these various objects of sense are constantly changing, and to cling to that which is changing is as foolish and painful as to cling to a perpetually moving wheel. Thus craving misleads us. Craving confuses. Craving misrepresents. Craving also consumes us as if it were a fire. "Natthi rāga samo aggi"[1], said the Buddha once. This means - "There is no fire like lust." It is so consuming.

Self-evident facts are often apt to be overlooked. Hence the Buddha employed so many different similies to portray the transitoriness, the illusiveness, the unworthiness and the dangers of craving. It is not only to a consuming fire that craving has been compared by the Buddha. He has compared it to a net that ensnares and clings to one,[2] to the onrushing current of a river which carries away everything that comes before it[3] ond to a seamstress who brings two ends together and binds them.[4] Each one of these similies reveals some particular aspect of Tanha.

So far we have considered the reaction of man's craving on himself. Let us now consider the reaction of craving on others - on the outside world. Nowhere has this been so vividly described by the Buddha as in the Majjhima Nikaya. "Verily, O Monks." said the Buddha, "due to sensuous craving, kings fight with kings, princes with princes, priests with priests, citizens with citizens; the mother quarrels with the son, the son quarrels with the mother; father quarrels with the son, the son quarrels with the father, brother with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend."[5]

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1. Dhammapada Verse 251
2. Gradual Sayings II p. 225
3. Itivuttaka 114
4. Gradual Sayings III p. 286
5. Middle Length Sayings I p. 114

Craving thus is a malignant growth. It spreads its roots far and deep. Its career is "to have and to hold"- as the notarial expression goes. Hear then the voice of the Buddha who cried halt to this mad careering when he exciaimed "Tanhaya mulam kanatha".[6] Dig up the very roots of Tanha"- not otherwise are we safe.

One may venture to say that it was the Buddha, who for the first time in the history of religious thought, expounded the cause of Dukkha without reference to any external or supernatural agency. My sufferings are due to **my** actions, and **my** actions are due to **my** craving or Tanha. In the Second Truth are therefore involved two doctrines - the doctrine of Kamma and the doctrine of Rebirth. The former deals with the law of action and reaction. The latter deals with the law of reproductive thought.

THE THIRD NOBLE TRUTH

We will now proceed to dwell on the Third Noble Truth, which declares that with the cessation of Tanha or Craving, Dukkha ceases to exist. You can see for yourself that the Third Noble Truth is a corollary to the Second Noble Truth. If Craving is the cause of Dukkha, then surely the cessation of craving must mean the cessation of Dukkha. Kill the germ and the disease is killed. Remove the cause and the effect is removed. This is the import of the Third Noble Truth. If there was no Third Noble Truth, well might Buddhism have been called a doctrine of pessimism and gloom but with the Third Noble Truth followed by the Fourth, it is a doctrine radiating with hope and joy.

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1. **Dhammapada Verse 337**

Let us understand the Third Noble Truth in the way it has been enunciated by the Buddha. "What now O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering? "Yo tassa yewa tanhaya asesa viraga nirodho"- it is the Cessation of Craving without a trace of it left behind, cāgo - the abandonment of it, patinissaggo - the renunciation of it, mutti - the liberation from it, anālayo - the detachment from it. "Idan vuccati Bhikkhave Dukkha Nirodhan Ariya Saccan". This, O Monks, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering."[1]

As a result of this string of words employed in this enunciation to emphasize more or less the same idea from different aspects, a few conclusions emerge. The first is that the renunciation of craving can be complete. The next is that, judging from the words used - cessation, abandonment, renunciation, liberation, detachment - what is contemplated is not a forcible control or suppression of craving but a voluntary abandon, a letting go. The thought also emerges that craving is a dangerous burden to carry with us in the journey of life, a hurtful appendage which must be abandoned and dropped without the slightest delay in order to ensure a comfortable journey. It is this Third Truth which affirms that Craving is not an inseparable appendage but that it can be abandoned and dropped. The very expression "Dukkha Nirodha" - cessation of suffering - implies this.

Let us consider the effects on the mind of this complete abandon of Craving, this complete renunciation. A person who has completely ceased to crave is none other than an Arahant and therefore in considering the

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1. S. V. 421

effects on the mind of the cessation of craving, we are considering the nature of the Arahant - mind. It is a psychological marvel.

The Arahant cannot create Kamma, i. e. moral or immoral actions which produce a reaction, in as much as with the complete cessation of craving there is no "cetana" or worldly intention which could motivate his actions. The mind is completely freed from all that is temporal, earthly or gross. Of him it is said:- "Pāpanca punnanca ubho sangam upaccagā."[1] That is to say - he has transcended the attachments of both good and evil. It is not only evil that has th be transcended but even good. Further reference to this view will be made later.

Another result of the complete cessation of craving is the beautiful and perfect tranquility of mind that the Arahant enjoys. Says the Dhammapada:-[2]

"Calm is the mind, calm is the speech, calm is the deed of him who, rightly understanding and perfectly placid, has gained liberation."

Complete freedom from grief and fear is another result of the cessation of craving. Grief and fear are states of mind which can arise only when there is craving. Says the Dhammapada:-[3]

"From craving springs grief. From craving springs fear. For him who is freed from craving, there is no grief. Whence fear?"

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1 Dhammapada Veresc 412 2. Verse 96 3. Verse 216

The Arahant is also supremely happy. An expression used to describe them is "pīti bhakkā" i. e. feeders on joy, How the Arahants refer to their own happiness is expressed in the Dhammapada:-[1]

> "Ah! Happily do we live without craving among those who crave. Among the men who crave we live without craving."

The Arahant's freedom from craving and his consequent domination of his senses is so complete, that he can look at all beings, all things, all conditions unaffected and unmoved. He is not attached by anything. He is not repelled by anything. Perfect equanimity reigns supreme in his mind.

Not only is he unmoved by all contacts and sensations, he has also within him - paradoxical though it may seem - the ability to consider pleasant sensations as unpleasant, and unpleasant sensations as pleasant, or view them all with complete indifference. This is because he has transcended the sense-level. In the Samyutta Nikaya the Buddha makes pointed reference to this two-fold ability by using the following two expressions:-

> "Appatikule patikula sanne" seeing the pleasant in the unpleasant and "Patikule appatikula sanne" seeing the unpleasant in the pleasant.[2]

This ability to control the sense — data comes only to those who have completely renounced craving.

When the Buddha meditating under the Bodhi tree at Gaya in the last watch of that memorable night reached this glorious and blessed state of the cessation

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1Verse 199 2. D. 111, 112

of all Craving, and realized that it was Craving that motivated Life, in triumphant joy he uttered a beautiful stanza containing a very exquisite and vivid allegory. It is one of the best allegories in all the world's literature. It is in the form of an imaginary address to craving whom he regards as a house - builder, - the builder of the House of Existence.

"Anekajati sansāram, sandhāvisam anibbisam
Through many a birth in Sansara have I, without success, wandered
Gahakārakan gavesanto
Searching for the builder of this House.
Dukkhā jati punappunam
Painful indeed is repeated birth.
Gahakaraka ditthosi
Now, O House builder, thou art discovered.
Punageham nakāhasī
Never shalt thou build again for me.
Sabbāte phāsukā bhaggā
broken are all thy rafters.
Gahakūtan visankhitan
Thy ridge pole is shattered,
Visankhāra gatam cittan
My mind has attained to the unconditioned.
Tanhānam khayamajjhagā
Achieved is the cessation of craving."[1]

How exactly the cessation of craving brings about the cessation of Dukkha, and how exactly existence can come to an end, can only be understood by a close study of the doctrine of Dependent Origination known as the Paticca Samuppada. Suffice it for the present to

1. Dhammapada Verses 153, 154

follow a simile used by the Buddha in the Majjhima Nikāya[2] - "Suppose, ye monks, the light of an oil lamp is burning, generated by oil and wick, but no one from time to time pours oil or attends to the wick, then, ye monks, according as the fuel is used up and no new fuel is added, the lamp for want of nourishment will become extinct. Even so, ye monks, in him who contemplates the transitoriness of existence, Craving ceases. Through the cessation of Craving, Grasping ceases. Through the cessation of Grasping, Becoming ceases. Through the cessation of Becoming, Rebirth ceases. Through the cessation of Rebirth, Old age, Sickness, Death, Pain, Lamentation, Suffering, Sorrow and Despair cease. Such is the cessation of the whole chain of Dukkha.

We can appreciate this phenomenon if we picture the sight of a creeper that is entwined round a tree, a creeper that is just uprooted. The creeper has been spreading from branch to branch. The tender tendrils of this creeper will no more reach out to contact any further branch so as to cling to it and grasp it and help it to continue its existence. The process of clinging and grasping having ceased, the creeper will just cease to grow, will gradually wither away and perish never to regain life any more. The roots of the creeper have dried up because they now lack the nutriment of the soil, which is necessary to sustain the creeper.

So it is with human life, which is also a process of living by clinging and grasping and willing to live. A thought tends to reproduce itself. It is by reason of this reproductive power of thought, that the will to live makes man re-live, or as Dalhke put it "we live eternally through

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1. M III No. 140 Dhatuvibhange Sutta

our lust to live". Clinging to life makes life cling to us. The Pali word to express this clinging and grasping is "Upādāna". Like the physical creeper, the creeper of human life needs nutriment to sustain it. Craving is this nutriment. Craving is that which causes Upadana or Grasping and thus helps to maintain the onward movement of the creeper of human life. By Grasping is meant not grasping by the hand only. The Pali word "Upadana" refers to six kinds of Grasping which correspond to the six senses. Thus there is Grasping by the eye of sights, there is Grasping by the ear of sounds, there is Grasping by the nose of smells, there is Grasping by the tongue of tastes. There is Grasping by the body of tangible things. In Buddhist psychology there are six senses, not five. Therefore, sixthly, there is Grasping by the mind of thought-impressions and ideas. These acts of grasping are mental energies or forces set in motion. Energy is indestructible. No energy therefore is ever lost. So the mental energies released by these graspings combined with the residual Kammic energy at the moment of death, make for the continuity of life in any appropriate sphere or plane, when it ends here Along with the parental sperm and ovum they condition the foundations for the arising of another life. Contact of seed with soil is not sufficient to engender plant life. There must be a third element — the outside element of light and air. Similarly, the outside element where the engendering of human life is concerned are these energies released by craving, and distance is no bar to the operation of these energies. In the degree therefore in which you reduce Craving, fewer and fewer things will be grasped by you, fewer and fewer sense objects will attract you. As craving continues to decrease, Grasping becomes weaker and weaker and like the tendrils of the uprooted creeper, will

gradually lose their strength and power to grasp, until finally the whole creeper fades away. When craving completely ceases, the power to grasp also completely ceases; the creeper of human existence then will lie dried up at its root. Indeed, at the moment of death, it is only such a one as Arahant, who has completely shed every trace of craving and grasping, who can triumphantly exclaim:,

Oh Life! to thee I no more cling
"Oh Death! where is thy sting?"

The question is always asked "What happens after death to the Arahant who has destroyed all craving? Does he exist or does he not exist? If he does exist, where does he exist? If he does not exist, how can you speak of the bliss of Nibbana which he is said to be enjoying after death?" All these questions appertain to the nature and condition of Nibbana. In the questioner's question lies an assumption that he is capable of understanding Nibbana. But, Nibbana is said to be "atakkā vacara" which means "cannot be reached by logic and reason". Reason is not the highest faculty of man. Reason has its limitations. Nibbana and like matters are realized not through a higher faculty called Panna lying dormant in us but which we all can arouse and develop by means of meditation. With the arising of this intuitive or supernormal or supramundane knowledge, this highest wisdom, one is able to sense the Truth as naturally and easily as one would sense cold or heat. It is so different from that arduous process of reasoning at the end of which also, one is still in doubt whether one has realized the whole Truth or not. Where this higher faculty is concerned, there is no effort to comprehend. The understanding just dawns on one. Some prefer to call it revelation, others call it intution yet others call it a latent sixth sense, but whatever name is given to

it, whatever label is appended to it, it is a source of understanding that works independently of the senses and the reasoning faculty. It is a transcendental faculty lying dormant in us. The finite can never grasp the Infinite, but by meditation we can transcend the finite. Nibbana is Reality itself. It is the Infinite. It is the Absolute, and the Absolute cannot be explained in terms of the relative. As some one has aptly remarked, reason cannot be more reasonable than ceasing to reason on things beyond reason.

This very question as to what happens to an Arahant after his death was put to the Buddha by one Upasiva as mentioned in the Sutta Nipata[1] and the Buddha's answer was as follows:-

"Of one who's passed away there is no measure
Of him, there is naught, whereby one may say aught.
When once all things have wholly been removed,
All ways of saying too have been removed."

And elswhere he has said, "Akāseva sakuntanan padan tassa durannayan'[2] The path of the Arahant after death cannot be traced, it is like the path of birds in air."

All that which the limited faculty of reason can suggest, is that the existence of Nibbana appears to be logically sound and that it appears to be a cosmic necessity. Everything is seen to exist in pairs of opposites. If there is hot, there is cold. If there is small, there is large. Hence if there is the finite, there must be the infinite. If there is the relative, there must be the absolute. If there is that which is born, that

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1. SN V. VI. 8 No. 1076 2. Dhammapada verse 93

which is become, that which is made, that which is compounded, there must also be the opposite of it. And it is to this opposite that the Buddha referred when speaking of Nibbana. In the Udana he has said :-

"There is, O Monks, a not - born,
A not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded."[1]

Beyond such considerations, logic and reason cannot carry us any further in our attempt to understand Nibbana, precisely because it is something beyond the scope of logic and reason. It must be left to the intutitive or supramundane faculty of Panna to help us to understand Nibbana. This faculty is latent in us but it has to be aroused and developed by meditation. We can then understand Nibbana not as a theoretical exposition but with the flavour of immediate experience.

As Radakrishnan has said.

"Then great truths of philosophy are not proved but seen..... In moving from intellect to intuition, we are not moving in the direction of unreason but are getting into the deepest rationality of which human nature is capable. In it ..... we see more truly and not simply measure things by the fragmentary standards of intellect."[2]

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1. Verses of plift p 93
2. "An idealist view of life" by Radakrishnan p 120

THE FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH

We now come to the Fourth and last Truth, the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the cessation of Dukkha. This is the prescription of the All - knowing Buddha for the ills of life. By this Truth the Buddha prescribes a way of life which is calculated to bring about a complete cessation of that powerful urge of Tanha ever present in man. This way of life is the Noble Eightfold Path.

It is only if we are thoroughly convinced that all life is ill, that all life is Dukkha, that we will welcome any suggestion of a way of escape from Dukkha -not otherwise. Hence it is that to some the noble Eight-fold Path has no attraction at all, to some the attraction is mild, often only of an academic nature, while to just a handful it is something absorbingly vital, something wonderfully energizing and uplifting, something very dear and personal. To this handful the treading of the Path even in its initial stages brings with it inspiration and joy which later lead to a profound spiritual experience.

At the outset of this aspect of the subject, it is important to appreciate why this remedy for Dukkha is referred to as a Path (in Pali, Magga). It might have been called the Eight-fold Remedy or the Eight-fold Cure, but why Eight-fold Path? A remedy or a cure may or may not have been used by any one before it is offered to us. There is nothing in the word "Remedy" or in the word "cure" to suggest that it has been tried and tested earlier, but not so when the word "Path" is used. A path must have been treaded by some one before it can be called a Path. There is inherent in the connotation of the word "Path" or "Magga" the idea that some one had treaded

it before. A Path cannot come into existence all of a sudden. Some one must have first cut through a jungle, cleared a way and walked along it. Similarly the Noble Eight-fold Path has been treaded before by many a Buddha in the past. It has also been treaded before by many a Pacceka Buddha and many an Arahant. The Buddha only discovered the Path but did not create it, since it existed from the ancient past. Indeed it is an Ancient Path (Purana Magga) as was described by the Buddha himself in the Samyutta Nikaya. Here he has said:- "Just as if, O Monks, a man faring through the forest sees an ancient Path, an ancient road traversed by men of former days and he were to go along it and going along it should see an ancient city ....., even so I, O Monks, have seen an ancient Path, an ancient road traversed by the rightly Enlightened Ones of former times. And what, O Monks, is that ancient Path, that ancient road traversed by the rightly Enlightened ones of former times? It is just this Noble Eight-fold Path ..... I have gone along that Path, and going along that Path, I fully came to know Activities, the uprising of Activities, the cessation of Activitices and the way leading to the cessation of Activities."[1] You will thus appreciate the psychological importance of using the world "Path" which is calculated to inspire the highest confidence (Saddhā) in the remedy that has been prescribed.

This Path is also called the Middle Path (Majjhima Patipada) because it steers clear of two extremes. It avoids on the one hand, the debasing indulgence of the sensualist and the laxity of the pleasure - seeking Epicurean, and on the other hand, it avoids the absurd austerities and

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1. Kindred Sayings II p 74

meaningless self-mortification of religious fanatics. The Middle Path proclaimed by the Buddha, however, is a Path of reason and prudence.

This Fourth Noble Truth is not a mere enunciation of a fact. It is a Path and so it must be trodden. It is something essentially practical. To know this Truth properly one must tread the Path. This Truth contains a careful and wise collection of all the important ingredients necessary for the spiritual development of man These ingredients are well known to every Buddhist, viz. Sammā Diṭṭhi - Right understanding. Sammā Sankappa - Right Thought, Sammā Vācā - Right Speech, Sammā Kammanta - Right Action, Sammā Ājīva - Right Livelihood, Sammā Vayāma - Right Effort, Sammā Sati - Right Mindfulness and Sammā Samādhi - Right Concentration.

These eight factors constitute the very essence of the ideal Buddhist life. It is a carefully considered programme of purification of thought. word and deed ultimately resulting in the complete cessation of Craving and the consequent dawning of the Highest Wisdom.

An important feature to be noted in regard to this Path is that these eight factors are interrelated and interdependent. Hence they are not to be cultivated one by one in the order in which they are listed, as if they were a series of successive steps that have to be taken one after another. They are not mutually exclusive. They are mutually support ng factors. Development of one factor therefore helps in the development of other factors and what is more, the perfection of one factor coincides with the perfection of all the other factors. Thus, ultimately, at the highest level all these factors will be seen to function simultaneously. Hence one is free to

develop these factors in whatever degree he likes. It is useful to keep in mind the Ven. Bhikkhu Silacara's most instructive comparison[1] of these eight factors to eight different strands that are closely intertwined in one rope which a man is attempting to climb. Each time the climber grasps the rope, his fingers will come into closer contact with one particular strand than with any other. At the next moment the contact will be with another strand. Yet all the while he is climbing. Similarly in the treading of the Eightfold Path, sometimes one may concentrate on one factor, at other times on another, with however no loss of progress at any time.

Another feature in regard to these eight factors is that they fall into three different groups or categories of Sīla, Samādhi and Paññā i. e. virtue, Concentration and Wisdom. This is known as the threefold division of the Eightfold Path. This three-fold division is very important for practical purposes. It represents the three stages of spiritual progress. In the Majjhima Nikāya[2] it is said that the three divisions are not arranged in accordance with the Eightfold Path but that the Eightfold Path is arranged according to the three divisions.

Sīla (virtue) refers to normal discipline or purity of conduct and under this category appear three of the eight factors, viz. Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. Sīla is the sine qua non for spiritual development. It is the first step. It is the foundation for further progress along the Path. Right Speech is essential for Sila. Man possesses the power of speech, unlike animals. This is man's channel of

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1. The Noble Eightfold Path by Bhikkhu Silacara p. 21
2. MN No. 44

expression of thought and he should not abuse it but use it in a manner so as to cause good thoughts to arise in others and not bad thoughts. He should speak in a manner so as not to cause harm or hurt or loss to others. The factor of Right Speech thus conduces to Sila or purity of conduct by ensuring abstention from falsehood, tale - bearing, harsh speech and idle gossip. Similarly man's ability to act should not be abused. He can act in so many more and more effective ways than could animals. He should not make use of this ability to cause harm or hurt or loss to others. So the factor of Right Action conduces to purity of conduct by ensuring abstention from killing, from stealing and from wrongful sex indulgence. The factor of Right Livelihood is also important. Man's struggle for existence, his pressing necessity to procure the material needs of life to maintain himself and his family, compel him to regard the business of earning a livelihood as his most important task in life and therefore there is the great urge to go to any length in order to achive this end. Considerations of fairplay and justice are all thrown to the winds, and considerations of resultant loss or harm to others are apt to be lightly overlooked. This is a temptation to be guarded against if purity of conduct is to be maintained at all costs. Hence the factor of Right Livelihood conduces to purity of conduct by ensuring abstention from trading in arms, from trading in animals for slaughter, from trading in human beings, from trading in intoxicating drinks and from trading in poisons. There is a popular belief that these are the only forms of wrong livelihood. It is not so. In the Majjhima Nikāya,[1] practising "trickery, cajolery, insinuation, dissembling, rapacity for gain

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1 Middle Length Sayings III 118

upon gain" are considered as wrong livelihood. In general terms, as mentioned in the Digha Nikāya,[2] Right livelihood means the avoidance of a wrong way of living and the obtaining of a livelihood by a right way of living- Micchājīvena pahāya sammā jīvitam kappeti. Thus by the development of these three factors of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood, purity of conduct (Sīla) is ensured. One knows of no other religion where there is a code of ethical conduct so comprehensive in its details, and so exacting in its requirements. All this is necessary in order to ensure perfect purity of conduct.

But in Buddhism purity of conduct is not an end in itself. It is a means to an end. Perfect conduct divorced from a purpose, not directed to a desirable end, has but little meaning from the Buddhist point of view–a very lofty point of view, not easy to comprehend. Not only evil but also good must be transcended. They are both of this world (lokiya) and do not appertain to things that transcend this world (lokuttara). Even the Dhamma has to be transcended. The Buddha has compared Dhamma to a raft to be used by us nissaranatthāya i. e. for the purpose of crossing over in safety, and— nagahanatthāya - i e. not for the purpose of retention. Once we have reached the other shore, we do not have to carry the raft with us. It has to be put aside.[3] So, the next two categories after Sīla, namely Samādhi and Paññā, show the direction in which lies the purpose of Sīla. The purpose of Sīla then is to help in the development of mental concentration and the realization of the Highest Wisdom. The purer one's conduct is, the purer is one's mind, and the purer one's mind is, the

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1 DN 1 1 312 2 Middle Length Savings I p. 175

greater is his ability to concentrate. Then purity of conduct and purity of mind help in the realization of Wisdom. An impure mind can never be a fitting receptacle for the highest Truths of life.

Into the second category of Samādhi fall three factors namely Right Effort (Sammā Vāyama), Right Mindfulness (Sammā Sati) and Right Concentration (Sammā Samādhi).

Right Effort here has a very special meaning, since it is concerned with the development of the mind. Right Effort then is the effort to prevent the arising of evil states of mind that have not arisen, the effort to overcome evil states of mind that have already arisen, the effort to produce good states of mind that have not arisen, and the effort to develop further the good states of mind that have already arisen. This classification will show you how vast, how penetrating and how stupendous is the mental effort that is needed for progress in Samādhi. Can there be any doubt then, that this will some day lead to mind-mastery and wisdom?

The next factor in this category of Samādhi is Sammā Sati or Right Mindfulness. Right Mindfulness is the quality of awareness. It ensures complete awareness of all the activities of the body as they occur (Kāyānupassanā), complete awareness of all sensations and feelings as they occur (Vedanānupassanā), complete awareness of all activities of the mind as they occur (Cittānupassanā) and complete awareness of all mental objects when the appropriate situations arise (Dhammānupassanā). This attitude of complete awareness brings about powerful results. It sharpens to the finest degree

man's powers of observation, induces the deepest calm and ensures that nothing is said or done or thought unguardedly or hastily. mechanically or without deliberation. He who develops this factor is able to take count of every single and minute activity of the mind. even such activities as are generally considered to occur when the mind is passive and receptive; so penetrating and powerful is his sense of awareness.

The last factor in this category of Samādhi is Right Concentration which ensure one-pointedness of mind (ekaggatā). It is the ability to focus steadily one's mind on any one object and one only, to the exclusion of all others. There are many exercises in mind-concentration which space does not permit me to mention, much less to describe. Long continued practice of mental concentration makes the mind highly penetrative. It becomes like a high-powered light which can thoroughly illuminate any object on which it is focussed. Hence any object of thought which presents itself to such a mind is thoroughly penetrated and comprehended through and through. Now this concentration of the mind, like Sīla, is not an end in itself. The purpose of developing this Samādhi or Concentration is to make use of its penetrative power to understand existence and thereby to realize the Highest Wisdom (Paññā.)

We now come to the third category namely, Paññā or Wisdom. When this highly concentrated mind, abiding in Samādhi, is made to focus its attention on the three great characteristics of existence namely Anicca (impermanence). Dukkha (Disharmony) and Anattā (Egolessness or Soullessness,) the mind is able to see things as they actually are (Yathabhūtañana). The result is the dawning

of that Highest Understanding - Sammā Diṭṭhi. One sees Reality. This coincides with the cessation of Craving and the attainment of Nibbāna. So Sammā Diṭṭhi is one of the factors in the category of Paññā. This is Sammā Diṭṭhi at its highest level. Sammā Diṭṭhi at its lower levels is a general understanding of the nature of existence and the understanding of Right and Wrong. This modicum of Sammā Diṭṭhi is helpful at the start to begin the practice of Sila. Without this modicum of Sammā Diṭṭhi there will be no proper incentive to the practice of Sīla. It will thus be seen that Right Understanding becomes the beginning as well as the end of the Eightfold Path.

The other factor that falls within the category of Paññā is Sammā Sankappa or Right Thought. Thoughts are all important. Words and deeds are nothing but expressions of thought. Thought rules the world. The power to think is greatest in man - not so in the lower animals. It should therefore be man's endeavour to make the best use of this power of thought which he is privileged to possess and to think none but the best of thoughts From the point of view of Buddhism the best of thoughts are threefold, - thoughts of renunciation (i. e. thoughts free from craving), thoughts of benevolence, and thoughts of compassion. The practice of Sammā Sankappa therefore ensures freedom from lust, freedom from hatred and freedom from cruelty or harm. Even this factor is developed for a purpose to make it possible for the mind when purified to see Reality, to gain the Highest Wisdom.

The description of the Eightfold Path is now over. It will be seen that this is a Path of progressive

self-culture leading from purity of conduct to concentration of mind and from concentration of mind to wisdom. But it does not mean that complete Sīla must first be achieved before Samādhi is begun or that Samādhi must be completed before Paññā is begun. There are different levels of these qualities and the practice of one helps the other and the level of each rises. This is what was meant when it was earlier stated that these factors are inter-dependent and mutually supporting. This view is of great practical importance and cannot be over emphasized. The Buddha has expressed this view forcefully and vividly in regard to the inter dependence of Sīla and Paññā. In the Sonadanda Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya[1] He has said "As one might wash hand with hand and foot with foot, even so, wisdom is purified by virtuous conduct and virtuous conduct is purified by wisdom. (Stlan paridhoto paññā paridhoto sīlan). Further, the Buddha continues:-

"Yattha sīlan, tattha paññā.
Yattha paññā tattha sīlan"[2]

"Where virtue is, there Wisdom lies
Where Wisdom is, there virtue lies."

CONCLUSION

I have reached the end of my discourse. I have endeavoured to give some understanding of the Four Noble Truths, not to satisfy any intellectual curiosity, not to provoke argument but with the sole purpose of giving an incentive to the treading of the Path. Once you do so, you can then see for yourselves the result, as

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1. D 1 No. 4 2. Ibid

you proceed. Idle speculation and hair-splitting arguments are to no purpose. The Buddha has strongly condemned the study of the Dhamma for the sake of criticism or vain talk.[1] What is needed is not talking about the Path, but walking it. "Ehi passiko" is an epithet of the Dhamma. It means:- "Come and see for yourselves." The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it, not in any learned chemical analysis of its component parts.

Some may fear that the mental training involved in the treading of the Path is too severe and is doomed to failure. But, it must be remembered that the more the mind is exercised the more it gains in strength and the more it becomes controllable. The Buddha has said in the Anguttara Nikāya[2] – "Monks, I know not of any other single thing so tractable as the cultivated mind." Hence it is that the number of brain cells that can arise in a man is unlimited.

Finally, I would wish to say that if all the wisdom of the Four Noble Truths can for practical purposes boil down to one single instruction, to one single admonition, to one single dictate, that instruction, admonition and dictate is contained in the words once uttered by the Buddha viz. "Taṇhāya mūlaṁ khanatha" – dig up the very roots of Taṇhā. Without the elimination of this pernicious element craving no true happiness can ever come to man. It has been amply shown how potently this law of change is operating at all times, in all places, in all ways, in this world and how everything in this world without a single exception is subject to its inexorable rule. It is this phenomenon of change that strikes

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1. M., No. 22. 2. AN. I. 4.

at the root of all worldly happiness. Viewed against this background of shifting situations and shifting scenes, worldly happiness is just a passing show. The entire world is in a state of perpetual change and unrest, and so is its inhabitant-man. It is tension everywhere. Hence man's search for worldly happiness is nothing but an empty race, a futile rush, a maddening thirst that is never quenched.

Man's search for happiness has gone on from age to age but it can never be found in the way it is sought - in merely adjusting the conditions of the external world, ignoring the internal world of mind. The history of the world proves this. Social reforms, economic reforms, legal reforms, and political reforms, however well-intentioned and well-calculated they may have been, never brought complete and genuine happiness to man. Why? When one set of unsatisfactory conditions that have appeared have been eliminated, another rears its head, and when that is eliminated yet another appears. This appearance and re-appearance, this rise and fall is of the essence of all mundane things and conditions. There can never be any mass production of true happiness. It is something personal and individual. It comes from within and not without. It is not so much the external world that one has to explore in the search for happiness as the internal world of mind.

The modern scientific age with its brilliant scientists and its wonderful inventions, has no doubt economized labour, shattered distance and captured time. But, I ask you, has science invented one single machine, one single instrument or other contrivance to shatter Dukkha? The modern scientific age is transplating hearts and trans-

porting or attempting to transport men to the moon. But, I ask you, is not the moon but another earth subject to the same infirmities, the same limitations and the same lamentations as are prevailing on earth? What is the great gain to man, I ask you, by adding one or more of these revolving planets to man's possession of this Dukkha--laden earth? Why should he saddle himself with the problems of the moon, when he has not as yet, solved the problems of this earth. What is needed is not an extension or furtherance of the sphere of human existence but a deliverance from existence itself. And as for the change of heart, I ask you is not the best change of heart the change that results. not from the surgical removal of the physical heart, but the psychic removal of Taṇhā or Craving.? The change of heart that thereby results is a glorious achievement. We are our own surgeons to effect that change of heart. In those surgical removals, the operation will succeed but the patient may succumb. In these psychic removals, if the operation succeeds there is greater success and glory to the patient.

Sisters and brothers, I thank you for the attention you have given me. May you – one and all - some happy day in your lives get the urge to contemplate seriously these Four Noble Truths and may that contemplation bring you pure joy ending finally in the attainment to that Reality, that Highest Wisdnm, that Ever-lasting Peace and Security and Happiness which is called Nibbāna.

To that Nibbāna may you all attain.

Abbreviations

(References are to the Pāli Text Society Editions)

S. Saṁyutta Nikāya.
M. Majjhima Nikāya.
D. Dīgha Nikāya.
SN. Sutta Nipāta.
AN. Anguttara Nikāya.

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For further reading

Three Cardinal Discourscs of the Buddha,
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The Four Noble Truths. Francis Story
(The Wheel No. 34/35)

The Buddha's First Discourses, Pali text and translation.
(Bodhi Leaves B. 1)

The Word of the Buddha. Nyanatiloka Mahathera.

BUDDHISM IN SOUTH INDIA

Pandit Hisselle Dhammaratana Mahathera

with an Appendix

Extracts from the Manimekhalai

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The Introduction of Buddhism to South India

It is not generally known that Buddhism flourished in South India in ancient times. The ancient chronicles of Ceylon such as the Dīpavamsa and Mahāvamsa are silent on the subject.

While studying Tamil literature I became interested in this subject, which is one on which we should not be ignorant. Therefore in order to acquaint myself with it I had to peruse books on the history of South India and Ceylon, the Pāli texts and commentaries, in addition to studies in Tamil literature. The Tamil book entitled *Baudhamum Tamilum* ("Buddhism and Tamil literature") by Seeni Vengadasamy of Madras was particularly helpful to me.

In this work I propose to deal with the arrival of Buddhism in South India, its spread and its decay. I shall also touch on famous Buddhist cities, the impact of Buddhism on the local Hindu religion, and on Buddhist teachers and their literary work. There is division of opinion regarding the period in which Buddhism was introduced to South India. However on perusal of Tamil literary works a solution to this problem can be found.

The earliest literary work in which Buddhism is traceable is a book called *Puranānūru*. No trace of Buddhist influence can be found in books written prior to this. In the *Puranānūru* there is reference to the Sivi Jātaka. The full impact of Buddhism in South India is unmistakably shown in *Silappadhikāram* and

Maṇimekhalai, which are two epic works of the 3rd Sangam period* in Tamil literature (2nd century C. E.) Of these, Maṇimekhalai is a purely Buddhist work, which, in addition to the narrative, contains also expositions of Buddhist doctrine.** Extracts from other poems written by the author of Maṇimekhalai, Sīthalai Sāttanār, are found in other Tamil literary works. Quotations from Ilambodhiyār, the Buddhist poet, are found in the *Natrinai* (p. 72). Thus we are able to arrive at the conclusion that Buddhism came to South India before the 3rd Sangam period of Tamil Literature (2nd century C. E.).

Tamil literary works provide a clue to finding the time of the advent of Buddhism. Apart from this, the inscriptions of king Asoka also shed much light on the subject. Two inscriptions of King Asoka found at Girinar in Surashtra are particularly helpful.

> "The merciful Emperor endowed with favours from the gods, has arranged for medical facilities to be provided to men and beasts, in Chola, Chera, Pandya, Ceylon, and in the kingdom of the Creek king Antiochus."

From this it is clear that the Emperor Asoka provided medical facilites in the kingdoms of South India. Nothing is mentioned here of the spread of Buddhism. Yet in Edict number XIII found near Peshawar, there is reference to the Buddhist missions of Asoka. Among the countries referred to are Chola, Pandya, and Ceylon. This inscription was written in B. C. 258 and is direct evidence of the Buddhist missions of Asoka to South

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* The *Sangam* was a convocation of Tamil poets and literary critics to whom poetic works were submitted for their approval or otherwise.

** See Appendix.

India and Ceylon. As Buddhist missions to Ceylon had to come by way of South India, the spread of Buddhism in Ceylon and South India should be considered contemporary events.

At the third Buddhist Council convened under the patronage of King Asoka missionaries were selected to be sent to various countries round about India. The Emperor Asoka's son Mahinda Mahā Thera was selected to propagate Buddhism in Ceylon. In the 3rd century B. C. the Venerable Mahinda arrived in Ceylon with his Buddhist mission. He ordained many disciples and started missionary activities on a big scale. His chief disciple was the Venerable Ariṭṭha who assisted his teacher in his missionary endeavours.

It is unfortunate that Ceylon's ancient chronicles, which have taken pains to give details of the life and missionary activities of King Asoka, should have omitted to record the introduction of Buddhism to South India. The historian Vincent Smith has advanced the view that as South Indian Tamils constantly harassed the Sinhalese with invasions, the Buddhist monks who wrote the chronicles were prejudiced against them and did not wish to give them a place in their books.

Despite this omission it is now accepted by all scholars that Buddhism was introduced to South India by the Venerable Mahinda himself. The aforementioned facts are alone sufficient to establish this assumption. Although our chronicles say that the Ven: Mahinda arrived in Ceylon through his supernormal powers scholars are of opinion that he travelled by sea, and called at Kāveripattinam in South India. He sojourned there in a monastery called Indra Vihāra, which was one

of the several monasteries constructed in this part of the country by the Emperor Asoka.

The celebrated Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang arrived at Kāṇchipura in South India in A. C. 640 during the course of his travels. He mentions a stupa 100 feet in height which existed there. With regard to the Buddhist monuments in the Pandya country Hiuen Tsang writes as follows :

"Near the city of Madura there is a monastery built by Mahinda Thera, the brother of King Asoka. To the east of this there is a stupa built by King Asoka"

The monastery and stupa were in a dilapidated condition at the time. Tamil literature does not mention anything about these two shrines.

The commentator Dhammapala Thera mentions in his works that he resided in a monastery which was built by King Asoka in a place called Bhadaratirtha.

Several Sinhalese princes including Mahā Ariṭṭha were ordained by Venerable Mahinda in Ceylon. All of them assisted the Mahā Thera in his missionary activities. Further there is evidence that they assisted the Mahā Thera in propagating the Dhamma in South India.

Early in the history of Buddhism in Ceylon rock caves were made habitable and offered to the Sangha. Such caves are still to be seen at Vessagiri, Chetiyagiri, and Tonigala. Similar caves are to be seen in the Madura district of the Pandya country. Beds cut in the rocks for monks to rest upon are seen in these caves, inscriptions are also found indicating the names of the donors. The Brahmi script used by King Asoka in his inscriptions has been utilised in some writings. One such cave in the Pandya country is situated in a place called Arittapattī. This name is derived from Venerable

Ariṭṭha who resided in this particular cave conducting his missionary activities.

From the aforementioned facts it may be concluded that Buddhism was introduced to South India by King Asoka and his son the Venerable Mahinda, about the same time as the introduction of Buddhism to Ceylon.

The Rise, Spread, and Decay of Buddhism in South India

It is well known that the three Buddhist Councils held in India contributed much to the spread of Buddhism throughout India and in other countries. In particular the third council convened by King Asoka delegated various Arahants with the task of leading missions to selected lands. Both in the time of the Buddha and in subsequent times Buddhist monks went about from village to village spreading the word of the Master. Those who went to South India had to take up the challenge from Jain and Hindu opponents and engage themselves in debate with them, apart from struggling against other difficulties and obstacles. The monks thus endeavouring to spread the Dhamma met with encouragement and support from kings, wealthy merchants and noblemen. As a result of this they went out to each and every village and city of South India and propagated the Buddha-Dhamma, building monasteries and erecting centres of Buddhist learning. Some of the monks residing in the monsateries became skilled medical practitioners. They provided free free medical services and free education in the monastic schools, thus rendering invaluable service. They got the people to assemble at the monastery premises, and

preached Jātaka tales, the life of the Buddha, read Suttas from the Buddhist scriptures, and thus increased knowledge of the Dhamma by explaining and clarifying what the people could not understand. With the help of kings and rich men they maintained alms-halls for the benefit of the blind, deaf and maimed. Thus on account of their social services and devoted work in the propagation of the Dhamma, Buddhism spread rapidly in South India.

Another point in their favour was that these monks ignored caste differences, and this was a great relief to the masses of depressed classes who suffered acutely on account of caste - discrimination. The oppressed classes found their emancipation in Buddhism. Opposition to the rigid and inhuman caste system was one of the major reasons for the popularity of Buddhism.

One can gain a good idea of the popularity of Buddhism in South India by reading the Silappadhikāram ("The Book of the Anklet") by the Jain poet Ilango Aḍigal*, the Manimekhalai by the Buddhist poet Sāttanār, the Thevāram hymns of the Hindu saints such as Appar, Sundarar, and Tirugnānasambandhar. All these poets lived in the 2nd to 7th century C. E. Further the works of the Vaishnavaite saints of the 8th and 9th century, extrolling the virtues of their god, and the periyapurāṇam by the 12th century poet Sekillār, and the Nīlakesi written by the Jains against Buddhism, give a clear picture of the popular place Buddhism held for several centuries in South India.

Buddhism which flourished in South India from the 3rd century C. E., began to decline gradually from about the 7th century for several reasons.

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* Translated by Ramachandra Dikshitar. Oxford Union Press 1939.

The Vedic religion of North India, Jainism, and the Ājīvaka faith had preceded Buddhism in South India. These religions had turned South India into a debating ground. It is not clear what was the indigenous religion before the arrival of these faiths from the North. The religions contending for popularity vied with each other to win over kings and influential men. At the start it was Buddhism that emerged triumphant from this struggle for popularity.

The Ājīvaka religion was left behind in this struggle. Only the Buddhist, Jain, and the Vedic religions were left to contend. Now Buddhism had to contest with two rival faiths which were envious of its popularity and planned to destroy it. The Buddhist position was undermined by the combined efforts of these two rival faiths. Buddhism itself split into several sects. The Nīlakesi mentions three rival Buddhist sects, Mahāyāna, Srāvakayāna, and Mantrayāna. The Hindu saint Tirugnānasambandhar mentions in his Thevāram that during his time Buddhism was divided into six sects. This disunity itself contributed to the decline of Buddhism.

Further the Buddhist monks gave up the social and welfare work which had brought them popularity. They became self-centred and deteriorated from their high principles. Hence they lost the support of the kings and influential men. Thus a weakened Sangha found itself unable to withstand the combined onslaught of the two rival faiths. With the decline of Buddhism in the 5th and 6th centuries Jainism gained ascendancy. At this time the Vedic religion was not influential in South India. With the upsurge of Jainism the Jains concentrated their attack on Buddhism. The Buddhist monks found

themselves not equal to the task of defending Buddhism. It is mentioned in a Jain work that the Jain teacher Akalankar defeated Buddhist monks in controversy and chased them off to Ceylon. But in spite of these set-backs Buddhism was by no means eradicated. For several centuries Buddhism still survived, though in a state of decline.

The Vedic religion of the Brahmins which had hitherto been in a weak position began to make head-way and gain the support of the kings and men in high positions. Thereupon Brahmanism got the upper hand over Jainism. It was at this stage that Buddhism disappeared from South India. This Brahmanism had been unpopular for several centuries on account of its animal sacrifices and observance of the caste system. The depressed classes detested this religion as it forbade them to study the Vedas. After the 5th century Brahmanism began to change its emphasis on these unpopular doctrines. It also incorporated popular South Indian gods such as Kāli, Skanda, Ganapati, and Vishnu into its pantheon. This new phase of the Hindu religion adopted hymns overflowing with faith as a means of gaining popularity. Just as the Jains when they gained power directed their attacks on Buddhism, Hinduism with its new orientation directed its onslaught on Buddhism as well as Jainism.

Hindu saints such as Tirugnānasambandhar, Appar, Sundarar, Tirumangaiyālvār, Peyālvār, and so forth, appeared in the 7th and 8th century C. E. and were responsible for the renaissance of Hinduism. They successfully engaged Buddhist and Jain teachers in controversy. Hinduism at that time was not broken up into sects such as the Shaivaites and Vaishnavaites. Hence Buddhists, divided among themselves, were

unequal to the attack of the united Hindus.

The Thevāram psalms of Tirugnānasambandhar mention that he engaged Buddhists in controversy and converted them to his faith. Tiruvāsagam written by Mānikkavāsagar of Sidambaram mentions that he defeated Buddhist teachers in controversy and made them flee to Ceylon.

Tirumanga-yālvār mentions in his works that he stole a golden image of the Buddha from a monastery in in Nāgapaṭṭaṇam and offered it to build up the Tiruvarangai Hindu temple. Though Buddhism suffered such hazards and became weakened it was not until the 14th century that it disappeared from South India.

The continuation of the Mahāvamsa mentions that in the 13th century King Parakramabahu of Dambadeniya got down Buddhist monks and scriptures from Chola to revive Buddhism in Ceylon. During this period there was a great deal of cultural intercourse between South India and Ceylon. The chief of the monks who were brought from South India was Venerable Dhammakitti. He wrote the continuation of the Mahāvamsa from the time of King Sirimevan up to his time He is also considered to be the author of the Pāli poem Dāthavamsa, though there is division of opinion about this. The Venerable Dīpankara of Chola, known as Buddhappiya, also came to Ceylon for his studies in Buddhism. The Pāli poem "*Pajjamadhu*" (Nectar of Verses) was written in adoration of the Buddha by him. He is also the author of "Rūpasiddhi", a Pāli grammar.

The Venerable Buddhamitta and Mahā Kassapa were also two Cholian bhikkhus who came to Ceylon. They studied the Dhamma here and rendered great service in the cause of the religion. From these facts it

will be seen that up to the 13th century Buddhism was still strong in South India. Up to the 14th century there were Buddhists, monasteries, and centres of Buddhist learning in some parts of South Iudia. After that Buddhism disappeared, leaving only traces of its heyday in the many ruins, and the iufluence it brought to bear on Hinduism.

Buddhist Monuments in South India

In order to find out where Buddhism flourished, and in what condition it existed prior to the 14th century it it is necessary to study the ruins of Buddhist buildings In the chief kingdom of South India, namely the Chola country.

The capital of Chola was Kāveripaṭṭinam. It was so called because it was situated on the mouth of the river Kāveri. From the very start this city was a centre of Buddhist activities. The Jātaka book mentions this city as the home of the sage Akitti who gave away his wealth to the poor, became a hermit and lived in a wood close to the city. As large numbers of people flocked to pay him homage he found no leisure there. Therefore he left the place and went to Kāraitīvū island off the North coast of Ceylon.

The Venerable Mahā Mahinda while leading the Buddhist mission to Ceylon sojourned in this city. I have previously mentioned a monastery here. The Tamil poems Silappadhikāram and Maṇimekhala refer to this monastery as the Indra Vihāra. It is derived from the elder's name Mahā Indra (Mahendra) in its Sanskritised form. In the 2nd century a bhikkhu called

Aravaṇa Aḍigal occupied this monastery. It is mentioned in the poem Maṇimekhalai that there was a small Buddhist shrine in a park called 'Upavana', and a replica of the Buddha's footprint was worship ped there. In the same poem it is said that King Killivalavan, who reigned in the 2nd century, became a Buddhist and converted the prison to a preaching hall at the request of the nun Maṇimekhalāi. Later he built a Buddhist monastery there.

Rasavāhinī, a Pāli book of Buddhist stories written in the 13th century in Ceylon, mentions that a king of the Chola country crected a temple to the god Siva, but being converted by Buddhist monks, he made the temple a Buddhist Vihāra. The Venerable Buddhadatta, a commentator of great fame, mentions in his books that he resided in a monestery at Rāveripaṭṭinam. He was supported by the king of the time. Among the Tamil commentators and Buddhist teachers he stands out preeminent.

In the introduction to the Pāli Abhidhammāvatāra Venerable Buddhadatta says that he lived in a monastery at Kāveripaṭṭinam constructed by a minister named Krishnadāsa. He describes in verse this flourishing city with its wide streets filled with busy people. Again in the "Madhurattha Vilāsini", his commentary to the Buddhavaṁsa, he mentions that he wrote this book while residing in the same monastery.

Among the famous Buddhist centres of ancient Chola was the city of Bhūtamangala. Here too Venerable Buddhadatta resided in a monastery built by one Vishnudāsa. The Pāli work Vinaya Vinicchaya was written by him there. He describes the city of Bhūta-mangala in the same strain as he wrote of the Cholian

capital, Kāveripaṭṭinam. Bodhimangai was another city where Buddhism found a foothold. It was here that the Buddhist teachers Buddhanandi and Sāriputra lived. The Periyapurāṇam mentions a debate between Tirugñāṇa-sambandhar and these two teachers. The very name Bodhimangai is suggestive of its Buddhist associations.

Ponpaṭṭri of the Tañjai district was another Buddhist stronghold. Here the Buddhist teacher Buddhamitra lived in the 11th century. The Tamil grammar Veera-solium was written by him. The book was so named in in honour of the Cholian King Vīrājendra.

Nāgapattanam

This city, situated near a port of the Chola country, was an important Buddhist centre from ancient times. Here a monastery called BadarotIrtha Vihāra was built by King Asoka. In the 8th century B. C. Venerable Dhammapāla resided here and wrote the Nettippakaraṇa commentary. In the year 720 A. C. a vihāra was constructed with the assistance of king Narasinhapotha-varman for the use of Chinese mariners who called over here for purposes of trade. This was known as the Chinese monastery. Marco Polo, travelling from China to Venice, mentions this monastery.

In the 8th century the Vaishnavaite teacher Tiru-mangai yālvār stole a golden Buddha image from a Buddhist Vihāra in Nāgapaṭṭanam and used the gold for renovating a Hindu temple. This fact is mentioned in the Guruparamparai Parbhāram, a Tamil work of the period. During the reign of the powerful Chola king Rājarāja (A. C. 985 - 1014), a monastery called Siri Sailendra Cūḍāmaṇi Vihāra was built here. The King of Sri Vijaya in Sumatra had helped the Cholian king to

put up this shrine. A copper plate on which was engraved the lands endowed by this king to the monastery was removed to Leiden museum where it is preserved.

In the 14th century, too, Chinese merchants called at this port for merchandise. They engraved an inscription at the vihāra. Chinese records also make reference to this inscription.

In the 15th century eleven Burmese bhikkhus and one envoy despatched to Ceylon by the Burmese king Rāmpatirāja were shipwrecked while returning to their native land. Fortunately they reached Nāgapaṭṭanam and resided in the Chinese Vihāra. This is confirmed by the Kalyāṇi Sīma rock inscription in Burma.

Sir Walter Elliot mentions that to the north of Nāgapaṭṭaṇam a large gopuram (temple tower) existed by the sea in 1836. It served as a lighthouse for mariners. In 1867 the government of India permitted Christian missionaries to demolish this Buddhist structure, and erect one of their buildings. While the large tree by the Gopuram was being uprooted, five Buddha statues were found. Four of them were of metal and one was of porcelain. One depicted the Buddha in the posture of expounding the Dhamma. When Lord Napier the British Governor visited the place, the missionaries presented him with these antiquities. In the pedestal of the Buddha-rūpa an inscription in 12th century Tamil was found. It read, "May it be auspicious! The Teacher to whom Agama Paṇḍitar went for refuge for emancipation from Saṁsāra".

There is at present a Brahmin village in Nāgapaṭṭaṇam called Puttaṁkoṭṭam. Mr. S. Krishnaswamy Iyengar mentions that this village was constructed after

demolishing a Buddhist monastery there. In Madras museum are to be found several types of Buddha images and Buddhist carvings. From these facts one can conclude that Nāgapaṭṭanam was a stronghold of Buddhism. It was the pride of Indian Buddhists for several centuries. The great commentator Buddhaghosa embarked for Ceylon from this port. . The village Buddhakuḍi, as the name implies, was the abode of Buddhists. After the 15th century, particularly with the arrival of Europeans, Buddhist remains are lost.

Of the ancient Cholian cities, Uraiyūr, called Uragapura in Sanskrit, was the home of the celebrated commentator Buddhadatta. This city too was a Buddhist centre from the time of the arrival of Buddhism in the South.

So far we have discussed only the celebrated centres of Buddhist learning in the Chola country. Apart from these there were also a large number of minor towns where Buddhism was active. Of these Buddhamangalam, Sanghamangalam, Kumbakonam, Mayūrapaṭṭaṇam, Ālamkuḍipaṭṭi and so on are also important centres of Buddhist culture. Towns having names including the words Buddha,Sangha,Ālam (i. e. Bodhi tree), unmistakably reveal their Buddhistic past. In some of the Hindu temples of these cities Buddha statues are seen with Hindu variations.

The Thoṇḍaimaṇḍala region of South India was also an area inhabited by Buddhists, but unlike the Chola country it had no great centres of Buddhist activity. Only a few Buddhist cities such as Kūvam, Sanghamangi, Tiruppāḍirippuliyūr, and Kañcipuram existed there. Of these Kūvam was a Buddhist stronghold from the early days. A large Buddha statue which was found here is to

be seen at the Madras museum. Even today Sangha-mangai is considered a Buddhist village. The very name indicates its connection with the Buddhist Sangha. This is the birthplace of Sākiya Nāyakar, a Buddhist teacher who is said to have embraced Shaivaism at a later stage. Tiruppādirippuliyūr was a centre of Buddhist learning. A Buddhist University is said to have existed there.

Kāñchipuram.

The chief city of the Tondaimaṇḍala region, Kāñchi-puram occupies an important place in South Indian Buddhist history. From early times it was a meeting place for the four chief religions which contended for supremancy in this region. By far most of its population was Buddhist. Hiuen Tsang, who visited it in the 7th century, mentions that king Asoka had erected a stūpa there. In the Tamil classic Maṇimekhalai it is mentioned thatKing Killivalavan built a cetiya in the city in honour of the Buddha. It is further mentioned in the same work that the king offered a park named 'Tarumadavana' to the Buddhist order. A shrine containing an imprint of the Buddha's feet was erected in the park. The Buddhist teacher Aravaṇa Aḍigal is reported to have migrated from Kāveripaṭṭaṇam to the city.

Maṇimekhalāi, having become a Buddhist nun, lived in this city to the end of her days. Even today there is a Hindu temple called Maṇimekalāi Amman Kovil in this city. This is a Buddhist temple converted into a Hindu shrine. Ācārya Dharmapāla, rector of the Nālandā University, and Anuruddha Thera, author of Abhi-dhammattha Sangaha, were natives of this city. The well known commentator of the early 5th century Ācārya Buddhaghosa mentions in the concluding stanzas to his

commentary on the Anguttara Nikāya (Manorathapūraṇī) that at the time of compiling the work he lived at Kañcipura with his friend Bhikkhu Jotipāla. Again in the 'Papañcasūdanī', the commentary to the Majjhima Nikāya, he mentions that the book was written when he was residing at Mayūrapaṭṭanam with a bhikkhu named Buddhamitta. In the Samantapāsādikā the Elder states that when residing at Kāncipura he saw the Telugu commentary known as the Andhaṭṭhakathā.

Hiuen Tsang, who arrived at Kānchi in A. C. 640, mentions that about 100 Buddhist monasteries were there at the time with about a thousand monks in them. He also mentions that the Buddhist teacher Ācārya Dīgnaga was a native of Sinhavaktra (modern Sìyamangala) near Kāñci. Mahendravarman the Pallava king wrote his Sanskrit work "Mattavilāsa-Prahāsana" in the 8th century. In this he refers to the existence of many Buddhist vihāras at Kānci, the chief of which was Rāja vihāra.

Of the Pallava kings who reigned at Kānchipura Buddhavarma was a Buddhist. He erected Buddhist monasteries and supported them. It is mentioned that King Himasītala of the 8th century was a supporter of the Buddhists. The Jain named Akalanka defeated the Buddhist monks in a debate in the presence of the king. He converted the king and made the Buddhist monks flee to Ceylon.

At present there is a shrine called Kāmākriyamman. kovil in Kānchi. This was originally a shrine of the Mahāyāna Buddhists dedicated to the goddess Tārā. Indian archeologists are of opinion that it was later converted to a Hindu place of worship. In fact even today there are Buddha statues in the kovil. There is a standing image there called "Sāttan", a word derived

from the Pāli word *satthā*, teacher, namely the Buddha. According to the Hindu story this Sāttan was the son of their goddess Kāmākriyamman. The present Kacchīsvara kovil, Ekāmbaresvara kovil, and Kurukāṇil Amarandāl kovil, are converted Buddhist shrines. In these are found Buddha images done up as Hindu gods. The Buddhist temple at Kaccikkunāyanār kovil has been so demolished that nothing of it remains. There are inscriptions which mention land endowments to this Buddhist Vihāra.

An eminent poet of Java writing in the 14th century mentions the existence of thirteen Buddhist monasteries in Kāñchi. He mentions that at this time Buddhism and Vaishnavism had got so mixed up that it was difficult to distinguish one from the other. The conversion of Buddhist vihāras to Hindu kovils, the parading of Buddha statues in the guise of Hindu gods, and the transferring of the Buddhist history of these shrines to Hindu ones, is a source of grief to the Buddhist who sees them. Apart from the many statues found broken up, the use of numerous Buddhist images for building walls, foundations, and other building work is also a source of grief to the Buddhist. Apart from the loss sustained by Buddhism, Buddhist art in Asia has been deprived of valuable treasures.

From these facts it is seen that Kānchipuram was a great centre of Buddhism even as Anurādhapura was in Ceylon. Renowned Buddhist teachers such as Aravana Adigal, Manimekhalāi, Dinnāga, Bodhidharama, Commentator Āchārya Dharmapāla, Anuruddha and Buddhāditya lived in this city. The present Tirumāliruñcolai Vaishnavaite shrine was formerly a Buddhist centre. Here too are found a large number of rock

caves. Asoka characters (of the Brahmi script) are found in them. Mr. V. R. Ramachandra is of opinion that these were occupied by Buddhist and Jain monks.

Similarly Buddhist towns and villages existed in the Pandya country. This region was the birthplace of Ācārya Dharmapāla, Vajirabodhi, and other Buddhist scholars. There are many rock caves here which were once inhabited by Buddhist monks.

Finally we have to consider the Chera kingdom and its Buddhist centres. This region is also called Kerala, or the Malayālam country. King Elāra who conquered and ruled Ceylon (220 B. C.) was a native of Kerala.

City of Vañchi

This was the capital of the Chera country. *Sillappadhikāram*, the Tamil poem, describes the capitals of the chief kingdoms of South India, Chola, Chera, and Pandya. It is mentioned in the Maṇimekhalai that the great grandfather of Kovalan, hero of the Sillappadhikāram, built a Buddhist shrine (stūpa) at Vañchi. He was won over to Buddhism by a bhikkhu living in a place called Pādapanka jamalaya. He spent all his wealth on Buddhist causes. In the 2nd century this chetiya and several others existed at Vañchi. It is mentioned in the poem Maṇimekhalai that Kovalan's father, Maṇimekhalai, and the bhikkhu Aravaṇa Aḍigal went to Vañchi and worshipped its many Buddhist shrines.

Several Hindu temples bearing such names as Sāttan Kāvu and Aiyappan kovil, exist today in the Malayāla country. All these were former Buddhist shrines. Sāttan as mentioned before is a name for Buddha. Kāvu is a garden or monastery. Hence Sāttankāvu means the Monastery of the Buddha.

Madhurā

Another region where Buddhist cities and villages existed is found in the Pāṇḍya country. Its capital Madhurā was a centre of Buddhist activity. "Madhuraikkāñchi", a work written in the last Sangam period of Tamil literature, mentions the existence of Buddhist monasteries and Buddhists in this city. In the poem Maṇimekhalā the existence of a shrine dedicated to Cintādevi is referred to. Historians are of the view that this is a shrine dedicated to the Mahāyāna goddess Tārā. This view is confirmed by the fact that Tārā was also known by the name Cintādevi. Hieun Tsang, who arrived here in the 7th century, mentions that he saw the ruins of a monastery built by king Asoka. He also saw the ruins of a vihāra constructed by Mahinda Thera close to to this. No reference to these monasteries is found in Tamil literature. Whoever built these vihāras, the fact that Buddhist monasteries existed in Madhurā is established. Reference has already been made to Ariṭṭapaṭṭi which derived its name from the rock cave used by the Buddhist teacher Ariṭṭha from Ceylon. Inscriptions in Brahmi characters have been found in the rock caves that were occupied by Buddhist monks.

Podiyakanda, mentioned in Tamil literature, also became a centre of Buddhist activity. The Mahāyānist teacher Vajrabodhi (661-730) was born here. He went out to China and Japan to propagate Dhyāna (Zen) Buddhism. The present Tanjore district was known in ancient times as Tanchai. Ācārya Dhammapāla, who wrote commentaries to thirteen books of the Khuddaka Nikāya (Sutta Piṭaka), was a native of this province. There is evidence of this region being inhabited by Buddhists.

It was the custom from the Buddha's time to erect monasteries in parks and gardens. This practice prevailed both in India and Ceylon. Further, Manavūr and Tuḍitapura were Buddhist cities with numerous shrines. In a paraphrase written to the Tamil poem "Yakka yāgapparani" there is reference to a city called Buddha-pura (Buddhist city). This has so far not been identified.

From the foregoing one can get a glimpse into the flourishing state of Buddhism in Chola, Pandya, Chera (Kerala) and the Thondaimandala regions which comprise South India. From the available literature and the ruins we get the impression, that Buddhism was prevalent all over South India. Sekkilār, the author of the Periyapūrānam, a Hindu religious work, mentions that in the 7th century the Shaivaite religion was moribund, Buddhism was triumphant and victorious. He says that the Shaivaites prayed to Shiva to destroy Buddhism and build up Hinduism. By Shiva's divine providence Tirugnānasabandhar was born to redeem Shiva's faith. Sekkilār cannot be incorrect with regard to the flourishing state of Buddhism that he refers to.

The Impact of Buddhism on Hinduism

When Buddhism made its exit, it left behind indelible impressions of its impact on the life and religious thought of South India. Buddhist ideas were incorporated into the Hindu religion. Modern Hinduism is imbued with Buddhist as well as Jain ideas. Not only this, the Hindus made an attempt to absorb the Islamic faith. During the time of King Akbar a new Upanishad named 'Allāh-Upanishad' was composed.

Let us now consider the Buddhist ideas that have been introduced into Hinduism. Many South Indian Hindus even do not know that some of their ideas have come to them from the impact of Buddhism when it flourished in their land. Although Buddhism was wiped out the fact remains that the Hindus worship the Buddha as the 9th Avatār, or incarnation of their God, Vishnu. That became necessary because worship of the Buddha was popular among the masses, hence the necessity to incorporate him into the Hindu pantheon. One cannot say with precision during which period this occurred. In Amarasinha's Sanskrit dictionary of the 8th century it is mentioned that the Buddha was the son of King Suddhodana and Queen Maya. In the book on Vishnu's nine Incarnations (Dasāvataralarita) written in the 11th century it is mentioned that the Buddha is the 9th incarnation of Vishnu. Therefore we may conclude that this incorporation of the Buddha into the Hindu pantheon occurred between the compilation of these two works.

While one branch of Hinduism, the Vaishnavaites, made the Buddha an incarnation of their god, the other branch, the Shaivaites, not to be outdone by them, also made the Buddha one of their gods, calling him Sāstā Aiyanār, and Dharmarājan. Again the Buddha was called Vināyaka and was equated to the elephant-faced god Ganesh. Vināyaka was a name used by the Buddhists for the Buddha. The Hindus call Ganesh, "Vināyaka". The Dharmarāja Vihāra and Vināyaka Vihāra were converted into Dharmarāja kovil and Vināyaka kovil.

The Buddha categorically denounced animal sacrifices which the Vedic Brahmins taught were highly

meritorious. On account of the Buddhist influence some Hindus renounced the slaughter of animals, and adopted the first Buddhist precept. Thus with the help of Buddhist teachings the Hindus managed to reform their religion which was losing ground and became moribund.

The Bodhi tree is a sacred object to Buddhists because the Buddha attained Enlightenment under one such tree. Tamil Buddhist poets writing in adoration of the Master referred to him in such terms as, "the Noble One who attained Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree," and "the mine of mercy who sat under the Bodhi tree." The Shaivaite teachers Apper, Sundarar, Tirugñāṇa-sambandhar, in their Thevāram hymns refer to Buddhists as "bodhiyar" or worshippers of Bodhi-trees. One of the Buddhists poets of the Sangam period was called Ilambodhiyār. In the anti - Buddhist poem Nīlakesi written by the Jains, reference is made to the worship of Bodhi trees by Buddhists. This Buddhist practice is retained up to date by the Hindus of South India. They do not even know that this practice of theirs is a legacy from their Buddhist ancestors.

Buddhist monks erected monasteries in villages, resided there and taught the Dhamma. This practice was adopted by the Hindus who opened "madams" (resting places) for similar purposes. It is also a well-known fact that the Advaita-vāda of Sankarāchārya which also goes by the name of Māyā-vāda, Ekātma-vāda and Smārtavāda was influenced by Mahāyana philosophy. Having studied the Buddhist philosophies of Sūnya-vāda and Vijñāṇa-vāda he adopted these systems to his teachings. The Hindu teacher Rāmānuja called Sankara's Advaitavāda "hidden Buddhism". Mādhavāchārya, an exponent of Dvaita-vāda, refuted Sankara's

philosophy, saying it was Buddhism in a different garb. The Padmapurāṇa too calls this teaching "hidden Buddhism". Thus from the very mouth of Hindu teachers we have evidence of the strong influence exercised by Buddhism on Sankara. Further, popular gods and goddesses of the Mahāyāna Buddhists were given Hindu names such as Kāli, Pidári and Draupadi and were worshipped in the original shrines. The shrine of the Buddhist goddess Maṇimekālāi at Kānchi became Kāmākriyamman Ālayam". The shrine of the Mahāyāna goddess Tārā became Draupadiyamman Kovil. These are two more of the many Hindu kovils in South India which were originally Buddhist shrines.

These are some of the legacies which Hinduism derived from Buddhism. The erection of 'madams', Sankara's Advaita-vāda, the conversion of Buddhist deities to Hindu gods, Buddha being made an incarnation of Vishnu, the reduction of animal sacrifices, are the six items where the influence of Buddhism is seen to advantage. These practices and teachings are carefully adhered to even today. Though Buddhism was expelled from South India, yet many vestiges of it have remained. Buddhism lost in South India. Yet the Buddha's teachings and philosophy did not fail to win over the minds of men.

Tamil Literary Works by South Indian Buddhist Authors

South India produced many Buddhist teachers who made valuable contributions to Tamil, Pāli, and Sanskrit literature. They composed numerous works on a variety

of subjects such as religion, philosophy, history, grammar, etymology, astronomy, and medicine. Reference to their works is found in Tamil literature and other historical records.

It is most unfortuanate that of the large number of books written from the 3rd to the 14th century only very few are available today. One literary work and a book on grammar are all that remain to us. The names of some other books are available. The large number of books that were destroyed are lost to posterity.

The Jains and Buddhists propagated their faith in the local languages. The Buddhist monks who came to South India studied the local language, preached, and wrote books for the edification of the native population. Though their literary works were destroyed by enemies they have left enduring marks of their influence.

In the 4th century the celebrated commentator Ācharya Buddhadatta lived in Buddhist cities such as Uragapura (Uraiyūr), Kāveripaṭṭanam, and Bhūtamangalam, and wrote several commentaries in Pāli. Rhys Davids mentions that he took materials for his commentaries from the Buddhist literature available to him in Tamil. In the paraphrase of the 'Nīlakesi' and Vīrasoliyam there are extracts from Tamil Buddhist poems which existed at the time. Today it is not possible to say from which books the extracts were taken. There is no doubt that many Buddhist works in Tamil existed during the heyday of Buddhism.

It is possible that books were destroyed during religious controversies. This happened several times in Ceylon, too. The Jains and Shaivaites opposed Buddhism tooth and nail. It is likely that these adversaries destroyed Buddhist books. After the decline of Buddhism

the tussel for supremacy was between the Jains and Hindus. In this the Hindus came out triumphant, while Jainism began to decline. The Jains, who were scattered all over, took sufficient precautions to preserve their Tamil literature. The Buddhists were not able to do even this, and all Buddhist books except two were lost. Although the Tamil books were destroyed, the Pāli books written by Tamil Buddhist scholars are preserved in Ceylon, Burma and Siam, even today. As Tamil Buddhist books were not used outside India these books perished with Buddhism in South India. In the 14th century Venerable Toṭagamuve Rahula, Buddhist scholar in Ceylon, made use of a Tamil glossary to the Jātaka when he wrote the 'Pañcikāpradīpa'. Even this book has been lost. The loss of Tamil Buddhist literature was a death blow to Buddhism in South India.

The Poem Manimekhalai.

The five Epics in Tamil literature are Silappadhikāram, Maṇimekhalai, Valaiyāpathy, Kuṇḍalakesi, and Jīvaka Cintāmani. It is a strange fact that not one of these was written by Hindu Tamils. Maṇimekhalāi Valaiyāpathy and Kuṇḍalakesi are the works of Tamil Buddhist poets. The remaining two are Jain works. Although the epics of the Jains are preserved intact, of the Buddhist works only Maṇimekhalai remains to tell the grandeur and glory of Buddhism in a land where it is no more. The story of Maṇimekhalā is unknown in Pāli, Sanskrit and Sinhala literature. It is a treasure house of Buddhist doctrinal expositions, and a narrative of unusual charm. It is a monument of the glorious days of Buddhism in South India.

The beautiful Hindu maiden Maṇimekhalai studied the six systems of philosophy in Hinduism, and other

prevalent religions of the time. She compared them to the teachings of the Buddha, and became impressed with the latter. Later on hearing doctrinal expositions from the Buddhist teacher bhikkhu Aravaṇa Aḍigal she became a Buddhist nun and devoted her time to the propagation of Buddhism in South India. These are the highlights of the story. There is doctrinal exposition in the poem dealing with the Four Noble Truths, Paṭicca Samuppāda (Dependent Origination), Citta and Cetasikas (Abhidhamma) and Buddhist practices like sīla and non-violence (ahiṁsa) are well explained.

The aim of the author was to compare Buddhism favourably with the other prevailing religions. He takes the occasion to critisize Jainism, the chief opponent of Buddhism at the time. While exposing the weaknesses of the contemporary religions he enthrones the Buddha. Dhamma as the perfect religion. His intention was thereby to propagate Buddhism. The poem contains 30 cantos and its story is a continuation of the Silappadhikāram This poem is invaluable to the student of South India's Buddhist history. Maṇimekalai is a mine of information on the history of South India, Buddhism and its place during that period, contemporary arts and culture, and the customs of the times. Its author was Sīthalai Sāttanār, bard of the Buddha in Tamil literature.

Kundalakesi

This is one of the five great classic epics in the Tamil Language. It is now lost, but quotations from it are found in books by authors who had access to this classic. The poem was written for the purpose of showing to advantage Buddhist philosophy by comparative evaluation with Vedic and Jain philosophies. The Jains wrote

'Nīlakesi' as a reply to this book, and this is still preserved intact. That Kuṇḍalakesi is a Buddhist work needs no further proof. The biography of the bhikkhuni Kuṇḍalakesi is found in the commentary to the Therigāthā, Dhammapada-commentary, and in the Anguttara Nikāya. The story of Kuṇḍalakesi in the Tamil work is the identical biography with a few differences. The commentary to the work Nīlakesi also touches on the story of Kuṇḍalakesi. The story was taken from the Kuṇḍalakesi in order to present the Jain reply to Buddhist criticism. Kuṇḍalakesi was originally a Jain nun who went about India expounding Jainism and challenging anybody to refute her views. Venerable Sāriputta, a disciple of the Buddha, took up the challenge one day and in the ensuing debabte Kuṇḍalakesi was defeated. She renounced Jainism and became a Buddhist nun. The author of the poem depicts the Buddhist nun Kuṇḍlakesi championing the Buddhist doctrines and refuting Jainism. This drew the Jain reply 'Nīlakesi' which alone is now available. Kuṇḍalakesi was written prior to the 5th century. It is said the author was a Buddhist named Nāgaguttanār.The Vinaya sub-commentary named 'Vimativinodanī' refers to the Kuṇḍalakesi, as a work by a Tamil Buddhist teacher written to refute heretical views. The Pali text is as follows:-

"Pubbe kīra imasmiṁ Damila-raṭṭhe Koci bhinnaladdhiko Nāgaseno nāma Thero Kuṇḍalakesi vatthuṁ paravāda-mathanañāya dassanatthaṁ Damila-kabbarūpena karonto . . . . ."

"Formerly in this Tamil country an elder named Nāgasena compiled a work in Tamil containing the story of Kuṇḍalakesi, for refuting heretical doctrines,

adducing arguments for demolishing the views advanced by non-Buddhists."

The Pali name Nāgasena may have been Tamilised to Nāgaguttanār. The destruction of 'Kuṇḍalakesi' was a severe blow to Buddhism. A splendid source of Buddhist history, the record of the culture and other details of the times was lost with that work.

Valaiyapathy

This work too is now lost, and no details can be given. It is not even certain whether this is a Buddhist or Jain work. Some scholars are of opinion that it was a Buddhist book. They base their evidence on quotations from the Valaiyāpathy found in other literary works. As the author of Valaiyāpathy has quoted the Tirukural, it is possible that the author drew his inspiration from the latter.

Vīrasoliyam

This is a Tamil grammatical work written on the lines of the Sanskrit works on the subject. The author was Buddhamitra, a Mahayanist bhikkhu. A commentary to this was written by his pupil Perum Devanār. The work was so called in honour of the king of the time who was a patron of the author. This book is now in disuse. Being the work of a Buddhist author who used examples from lines describing the virtues of the Buddha, it became distasteful to Hindu scholars. It was compiled in the 11th century. With the help of Vīrasoliyam and its glossary one can get a glimpse into Buddhism in South India at the time. Some of the historical facts mentioned in this work about Cholian kings are confirmed by inscriptions engraved on rocks.

Moreover in the glossary one comes across the names of several works in Tamil literature. Even in examples given for the purpose of elucidating rhetorical devices there is always mention of the Buddha and his virtues. This work enables us to get a general knowledge of Tamil literature and its history. Like all other Buddhist works it was on the verge of extinction when it was rescued by a Ceylonese Tamil scholar, C. Y. Thāmotharam Pillai. Even now this book is not available in South India.

Siddhāntattokai

This too is a Buddhist work which has now been lost. From the name it appears to have been a work on the Abhidhamma. It is not certain whether it is the work of one author or several authors. In a paraphrase to the Shaivaite religious book named "Sivagñāṇa-Siddhiyār" its author Gñāṇaprakāsar, Shaivaite scholar, makes reference to some quotations from this poem. In a paraphrase of the Jain work 'Nīlakesi' there is reference to Sidhāntattokai. From these facts it can be concluded that it was a Buddhist work. Apart from this there is no other source of information about it.

Tiruppadigam

From the title it can be inferred that this was a panegyric on the Buddha. Gñāṇaprakāsar, who wrote a paraphrase to the Hindu work 'Sivagnāna Siddhiyār' quotes a verse and says 'this is taken from the Tiruppadigam'. The author of the paraphrase to the Nīlakesi quotes two verses from this work, but does not mention from where he got the quotation. But as he has quoted one of the verses which Gñāñaprakāsar has acknowledged

while quoting, it can be assumed that he was quoting the Buddhist work mentioned above. These two verses are hymns in praise of the Buddha, referring to his dāna, and sīla pāramitā. Hence this was probably a Tamil book of Buddha-hymns, which is now lost. No details of its author, its length or when it was written, are available.

Bimbisāra kadai

That such a book existed can be seen from a reference to it in the paraphrase to the Nīlakesi. There, four verses are quoted, and the remark is made, "this quotation is from the 'Bimbisāra kadai' a Buddhist work".

The Hindu scholar Gṅāṇaprakāsar too quotes verses from this Buddhist work and acknowledges the source. Details regarding this book too are not available, as it has been lost and is now forgotten. The theme of the book must have been the life of king Bimbisāra who was a devoted follower of the Buddha. From the available quotations one gets the impression that like the Maṇimekhalāi this was written in the Āsiriyappā metre in Tamil poetry.

Eminent Buddhist Teachers who Lived in South India

The fact that Buddhism flourished in South India is amply proved by Buddhist ruins, the present day customs, manners and ideas of Buddhistic origin, and the books written by Buddhist authors of South India. In addition there is evidence of many South-Indian Buddhist

teachers both lay and monastic who graced the land of their birth. We shall here include brief references to them.

1. Ilambodhiyār

The last Sangham of Tamil literature was held in the 1st or 2nd century A. D. Ilambodhiyār, the Buddhist poet, lived during this period. Several of his verses are found in the 72nd verse of a work called Naṭṭṛinai, composed during the last Sangham period. His very name indicates that he was a Buddhist.

2. Aravana Adigal

Information about this Buddhist teacher is found in the Maṇimekhalāi. He lived for a long time at Kāveri-paṭṭanam. During his youth he travelled north up to the river Ganges and South to Sripāda in Ceylon. The author of Maṇimekalai portrays him as a versatile exponent of the Dhamma who engaged himself in Buddhist missionary work. He was the head of the Buddhist monastery at Kāveripaṭṭanam. It was to him the bereaved Mādhavi, mother of Maṇimekhalai, went for consolation after the murder of her husband Kovalan. There both mother and daughter were instructed in the Dhamma and undertook to observe the Buddhist precepts. Later when Maṇimekhalai was imprisoned by the Queen of the Chola country, it was the intervention of this Buddhist teacher at the palace which obtained her release. From the story it is evident that even the royal family held him in reverence. When Kāveripaṭṭanam was ravaged by a tidal wave, he left for Vanchi. After living there for a short time he finally settled down at Kānchipūra. He lived during the latter part of the 1st century, or in the early part of the 2nd century.

3. Bhikkhuni Manimokhalai

She is the heroine of the Tamil classical poem Maṇimekhalai by Sīthalai Sāttanā. In Kāveripaṭṭaṇam there lived a wealthy man named Kovalan. He had a mistress named Mādhavi who was a dancer by profession. Their daughter was Maṇimekalai. She grew up amidst riches and became a skilful musician and dancer. Attracted by her beauty and talents, the king of Chola's son, Prince Udaya, fell in love with her. In order to get rid of her father, he had him charged on a false accusation when he went to Madhurā. On this charge Kovalan was executed. When his wife came to hear of this horrible crime, she was deeply moved and became disgusted with the world. She went with her daughter Maṇimekhalai to the Bhikku Aravaṇa Aḍigal who consoled her in her grief by preaching the Dhamma, and both mother and daughter became Buddhists. Maṇimekhalai's grandmother tried to persuade both of them to continue their profession as dancers, and Prince Udaya, too, made advances to Maṇimekhalai. But this was of no avail. Sensual pleasures had no appeal for her, and her mind being firmly set upon the religious life, she became a Buddhist nun. The prince visited her several times and tried to persuade her to revert to the lay life. On a pilgrimage to Ceylon, Maṇimekhalai worshipped at the Nāgadīpa shrine on an island off the northern coast of Ceylon. There she worshipped the Buddha's footprint, and while at the shrine saw a vision of her previous birth wherein the prince had been her husband. A deity at the shrine gave her a miraculous bowl from which she could feed any amount of people without the supply of food becoming exhausted. When she returned to Kāveripaṭṭaṇam she gave alms daily to the poor in a public hall. The king of Chola was pleased with her good work, and gave her permission to

ask for a boon. She asked that the royal prison be converted to an alms-hall, and this was done.

A woman named Kāyacaṇḍikā left her husband and came to Kāveripaṭṭiṇam where she lived on alms along with other beggars fed by Maṇimekhalāi. She was beautiful and resembled Maṇimekhalāi in some ways. Her husband too arrived at Kāveripaṭṭaṇam in search of her. He saw the Prince Udaya speaking to Maṇimekhalāi in the alms-hall. During this conversation Maṇimekhalāi spoke of the transient and worthless nature of the human body, and urged the prince to renounce his passion for her,

Kāyacaṇḍikā's husband mistook Maṇimekhalāi for his wife. He thought a young man was paying amorous attention to his wife. He hid in the alms-hall and when a suitable occasion came he attacked the prince and struck him with a sword, killing him on the spot, not knowing his true identity. This incident became known to the public and religious men residing at the alms hall reported it to the king. The king ascertained the facts and saw to it that Maṇimekhalāi was given protection from men who might try to avenge the death of the Prince on her. The queen managed to get Maṇimekhalāi imprisoned on a false charge. Later when the true facts of the case were known, the Queen relented; she freed Maṇimekhalāi and begged her pardon.

Maṇimekhalāi, finding that she was not safe in the city, went on a pilgrimage to Jāvā. Returning from there she arrived at Vanchi, where she studied various religions under several teachers. Finally she returned to Kānchi where the Buddhist teacher Aravaṇa Adigal lived. She pursued further studies in Buddhism and lived the holy life of a Buddhist nun to the end of her days. She lived in the 2nd century A. C.

4. Sītlai haSāttanār

He was the author of the Tamil epic *Maṇimekhalai*. A Buddhist poet of the Sangam period, he was a master in the exposition of the Dhamma. The three Sangams were convocations held under royal patronage of the Tamil kings of Chola, Chera, and Pāṇḍiya. These convocations were organised on the lines of the Buddhist Councils. Sāttanār is called a Sangam poet because he took part in one of those convocations. The full name of the author of "Maṇimekhalai" was *Madhurai Kūlavāṇikan Sīthalai Sāttanār. Madhurai* refers to his native city, Madhura. *Kūlavāṇikan* indicates his profession as that of a grain merchant. *Sīthalai* means "from whose (fore) head pus flowed". It is told that when he found mistakes in the works of contemporary poets scrutinized by him, he used to strike his forehead with his iron style, and this caused frequent wounds which suppurated. *Sāttanār* was his personal name, often abbreviated to Sāttan. He was not only a first class poet and an eminent literary critic, but also an able exponent of Buddhist doctrine.

Well versed in religion, logic and philosophy, he showed the superiority of Buddhism, evaluating it against the background of contemporary religious thought. He was held in honour by Ilango Aḍigal the distinguished author of the Tamil classic Silappadhikaram. His classic Maṇimekhalāi is a lasting monument to his scholarship, encylopaedic knowledge, and excellence as a Tamil poet. From chapter 27 of the Maṇimekhalāi one can see his proficiency in the six systems of Hindu philosophy. There were several other poems by him, verses from which are found in poems such as Nattriṇai, Kurunthokai Puranānūru and Ahanānūru. The aim of writing

the Maṇimekhalāi was the propagation of the Buddha Dharma. It is seen that Maṇimekhalāi was written after the Tirukkural was composed, because there are two verses from the Tirukkural quoted in Maṇimekhalāi. Therefore it can be assumed that Jhattanār lived in the latter half of the 2nd century.

5. The Cholian bhikkhu Sanghamitta.

Well known to all students of Ceylon history, he was a Mahāyānist bhikkhu who caused a great upheaval there in the 3rd century He was a Tamil who hailed from Chola. King Gotabhaya (A. C. 253-266) expelled 60 bhikkhus from Ceylon for being incorrigible heretics. They went to South India and lived in the Chola country. Sanghamitta met them and made up his mind to avenge his brethren of the Mahāyāna sect. He came to Ceylon and started to propagate the Mahāyāna faith. The bhikkhus of the Mahāvihāra, the sect of orthodox Theravāda reported him to the king. The king asked them to debate with Sanghamitta in his presence and promised to support the victorious party. The Māhāvihāra bhikkhus were led by the Elder Sanghapāla, an uncle of the king. Sanghamitta triumphed in this debate and the king kept his promise. The king entrusted the teaching of his two sons to this teacher, who found the younger and more able prince receptive to his influence. The elder prince disliked his teacher.

When the elder prince Jeṭṭhatissa became king, Sanghamitta left the island as he felt that he was not safe. Ten years later when the king died and his younger brother ascended the throne, Sanghamitta returned and he himself crowned Mahāsena as king of Ceylon.

Now Sanghamitta planned to destroy the Mahāvihāra, the seat of Theravāda Buddhism. He told the king that the Mahāvihāra monks were not following the true teachings of the Buddha, and got the king to forbid his subjects to support them. The monks of the Mahāvihāra finding that the people did not support them with their daily necessities of life, left the capital, Anurādhapura, and went to the southern part of Ceylon. Sanghamitta now pointed out that property without an owner belonged to the state and the king handed over the monastery to Sanghamitta. He had the great monastery demolished, and made use of all the articles that were in it to build up the Abhayagiri Vihāra, the centre of the Mahāyānist teachings.

The queen was grieved to see the ancient religion of Ceylon, the pristine doctrines of the Buddha, ruined by this monk from South India. She had him and his collaborator, the minister Sona, assassinated. Thus ended Sanghamitta's scheme to convert Ceylon to the Mahāyāna. There is no report that he had written any book.

6. Nāgaguttanār

He was the author of the Buddhist poem 'Kuṇḍalakesi'. We know him as the author of it, because in the commentary to Nīlakesi, a verse is quoted from the Kuṇḍalakesi, and it is followed with the remark, "this is a verse from "Nāgagattanār" Yet according to the Pāli commentary called 'Vimativinddani', the author of Kuṇḍalakesi is called Nāgasena. It is possible that this name was converted into Nāgaguttanār by Tamil writers. No further details about this poet are available. As the Nīlakesi was written early in the 10th century, we

have to conclude that Kuṇḍalakesi was written prior to this.

7. Commentator Ācārya Buddhadatta

Ācarya Buddhadatta, held in profound veneration by Buddhists as a commentator of the Buddha-word, was a Tamil from South India. He lived in the famous South Indian Buddhist cities Kāveripaṭṭaṇam, Uragapura, Bhūtamangalam, Kānchi, and also at the Mahā Vihār monastery, Anurādhapūra, Ceylon. The commentary called "Madhurattha Vilāsinī" was written when he resided in a monastery built by a Buddhist minister named Krishnadāsa, at Kāveripaṭṭaṇam. 'Madhurattha Vilāsinī is a Pāli commentary to the Buddhavaṁsa of the Sutta Piṭaka. He wrote the renowned treatise on Abhidhamma, 'Abhidhammāvatāra' at the invitation of a bhikkhu named Sumati. He is also the author of the Pāli work on the Vinaya called 'Vinaya Vinicchaya.' It is mentioned in the book that this was written in the reign of the Cholian king Acyutavikrama. While residing in Anurādhapūra, Ceylon, he wrote the Uttara Vinicchaya. The Pāli poem of adoration to the Buddha 'Jinālankāra Kāvya' is another of his excellent literary works.

In this work he describes his native Chola country and its cities such as Kāveripaṭṭaṇam and Bhūtamangalam in mellifluous verses. He was a senior contemporary of the great commentator Buddhaghosa, who has paid a glowing tribute to him in one of his works. "After his (Buddhadatta's) demise even men like me are considered scholars" says Ācārya Buddhāghosa. Ācārya Buddhadatta is cecond only to the great Buddhaghosa in erudition, scholarship, and ability as a commentator to the Buddha-word. He lived in the 5th century.

8. The Mahā Thera Buddhamitra

He lived in South India in the 5th century. He should not be confused with the bhikkhu Buddhamitra, the author of Vīrasoliyam, the Tamil grammar. This Mahā Thera resided at Mayūrapaṭṭaṇam (the present Māyavaram). At that time the celebrated commentator Buddhaghosa was his guest. 'Papañcasūdanī', the commentary to the Majjhima Nikāya, was written at his invitation. In the conclusion to the 'Papañcasūdani' Ācārya Buddhaghosa says :-

> Āyācito sumatinā Therena Bhadanta Budhamittena
> Pubbe mayūra-rūpa paṭṭanamhi saddhim vasante

"When I was formerly living at Mayūrapaṭṭaṇan, with the Thera Buddhamitta, I was invited to write this".

9. Bodhidharma

He was formerly a prince hailing from a royal South Indian family. A Mahāyānist Buddhist teacher named Pragñottara won him over to the Mahāyāna faith, and ordained him as a monk. During his youth he worked for the propagation of his faith, in South India. Towards the latter part of his life he left for China as a Buddhist missionary. At Canton he met the Emperor Wu-ti, but failed to impress him. Thereupon he went to the North of China and founded the Dhyāna school of Buddhism (Chinese; Ch'an; Jap.; Zen). He lived there till he passed away. He deprecated the making of offerings to the Buddha, it was purity of the mind and enlightenment that he stressed.

10. Ācārya Dignāga

Hiuen Tsang in his 'Records of the Western World' gives an account of this teacher. He was a native of

Sīyamangalam which is situated to the south of Kānchi. He studied comparative religion and philosophy and became a monk of Vātsīputrīya Nikāya. Later he went to North India and became a Mahāyānist under the influence of Vasubandhu. At Nālandā he defeated non-Buddhists in a debate, and won the admiration of the monks of the universivy. A philosopher and a debator of great repute, he toured India, lecturing and debating. Finally he settled down at Kānchi. He is the founder of the 'Viññāṇavāda' school of Buddhist philosophy. Among his pupils was the vice-chancellor of the Nālandā university, Dharmapāla Mahā Thera. His numerous works include the 'Nyāyapravesa' ("Introduction to Logic") and Nyāya Samucchaya ("Compendium of Logic") two Sanskrit books. There is no mention of any books in Tamil by him. He lived between A.C. 345 - 425.

II. Vice-Chancellor Dharmapāla of Nālandā

He should be differentiated from the commentator Dharmapāla, who lived at Badaratīrtha and was a master of the Theravāda. The Thera Dharmapāla of Nālandā on the other hand was a distinguished exponent of the Mahāyāna doctrines. He was the third son of a Tamil king who ruled at Kānchi. Although his father arranged to have him married, he secretly went to a Buddhist teacher and entered the Order. He travelled in India and abroad and acquired a great store of knowledge. He excelled in all arts and sciences.

Whilst on a lecture tour he arrived at Kosambi. There Buddhists were locked in a great controversy with their opponents and were faring badly. Coming to the rescue of the Buddhists he displayed his brilliant oratory and encyclopaedic knowledge, tearing to shreds the arguments of his Hindu opponents. By this victory he

won over the king, who was on the spot with a large number of distinguished visitors. The Elder's fame spread far and wide and he was offered the vice-chancellorship of Nālandā University, a position reserved for India's foremost Buddhist scholar.

His pupil was Sīlabhadra, himself a versatile scholar under whom Hiuen Tsang studied Sanskrit when he was at Nālanda. Sīlabhadra succeeded his teacher.

The vice chancellor died young at the age of 32. It is a great mistake that some scholars have made trying to identify Aravaṇa Aḍigal, mentioned in Maṇimekhalā, with the vice chancellor Dharmapāla.

12. Badaratirtha Dhammapāla

He is the Ācārya Dharmapāla mentioned in Pāli literature as a great commentator. A native of South India, he lived in the city of Tañjā where the river Tāmraparni flows. This is identified with Tanjore of the Chola country. Other scholars are of opinion that Ācārya Dharmapāla was a native of a town by the name of Tañjāvūr in the Pāṇḍyan country. It is also evident from the Nettippakaraṇa commentary compiled by him that he also lived at Badaratīrtha Vihāra at Nāga-paṭṭaṇam. He went to Ceylon and resided at the Mahā Vihāra, Anurādhapura. During this time the commentaries on the Thera - and Therigāthās, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Peta Vatthu, Vimāna Vatthu, Carigā piṭaka and the Nettippakaraṇa were written. All these commentaries are named Paramattha Dīpanī' He also wrote a voluminous sub - commentary to the Visuddhi Magga, called "Paramattha Mañjusā". He lived somewhere about A. C. 796. In the 'Nettipakarana' commentary he says :-

"Saddhammotaraṇaṭṭhāne
Paṭṭane nāga savhaya
Dhammāsoka Mahārājā
Vihāre vasatā mayā."

"(I wrote this commentary) while I was residing at the monstery built by King Asoka at Nāgapaṭṭaṇan, which is like unto a port for embarking on the ocean of the Dharma".

The Sāsanavaṁsa refers to him as follows :-

"Ācārya Dharmapāla, who compiled a number of commentaries such as the one on the Itivuttaka, was a resident of the Badaratittha Vihāra in the Tamil country. Hence he may be considered as a Ceylonese bhikkhu. Further he is the author of the subcommentaries on the Visuddhi Magga, Dīgha Nikāya, Majjhima Nikāya and the Saṁyutta Nikāya".

13. The Theras Buddhanandi and Sāriputra

These two Elders are reported to have lived at Bodhimangai in the Chola country. We have an account of them in the 'Periyapurāṇam' a Shaivaite work which records a debate between Buddhists and Shaivaites. During this time the Shaivaite teacher Tirugñāṇa-sambandhar went round the city which was a stronghold of Buddhism. He rode in procession raising triumphal cries, blowing conch shells and trumpets. The Buddhists of Bodhimangai told him, "You cannot thus go in triumphal procession through our city. Come let us debate on religion". Tirugñāṇasambandhar accepted the challenge. The Buddhists retained the Elder Buddhanandi as their spokesman. Tirugñāṇasambandhar's assistant, by excercising his magical powers through a mantram, caused a thunderbolt from heaven to strike down the Elder. The

Buddhists persisted saying, "Do not come to display magical powers, come to debate on doctrinal matters".

Tirugnānasambandhar is said to have defeated Buddhanandi Thera. No further details of these two Elders are available. Tirugñāṇasambandhar lived in the 7th century A. C.

14. Vajrabodhi

He was a native of Podiyakanda in the Pāṇdya country. His father was a royal chaplain. He went to Nālandā in North India for his studies, and returned when he was 26 years old. At that time his country was in the grip of a severe drought, and the king Narasinhapothavarman appealed to Vajrabodhi for help. He was able to cause rain to fall by the exercise of his occult powers. Vajrabodhi was a Mahāyānist bhikkhu adhering to the Vajrayāna faction. He visited Ceylon and resided there for six months, at the Abhayagiri Vihāra. During this time he attempted to spread Mahāyānism in Ceylon, but returned soon to his native land. From there he went to China with his pupil Amoghavajra and did missionary work there. He passed away in the year 730 A. C. In accordance with his wishes his pupil returned to Ceylon and India to propagate the Vajrayāna doctrines. He is said to have been received with honour by Silāmegha, King of Ceylon.

15. Buddhamitra

Apart from his name the concluding verses to his Tamil grammar "Vīrasoliyam" reveal his deep faith in Buddhism. He was the local ruler in a province of South India. His book was named after Vīracola, alias Vīrarājendra, the Chola king who invited him to write this work. This king ruled from 1063 to 1070. The

inscriptions of the time eulogise him very highly. So does Buddhamitra who calls him "the ruler who subdued the whole earth." Both Buddhamitra and his royal patron lived in the 11th century. Buddhamitra was a Mahāyānist bhikkhu. He should not be confused with another Theravāda bhikkhu of the same name, with whom Āchārya Buddhaghosa resided when he wrote the 'Papañcasūdanī'. The paraphrase to Buddhamitra's Vīrasoliyam was written by his pupil Perumdevanār. He too was a devoted Buddhist.

16. Dipankara Buddhappiya Thera

In Ceylon he is known as the Cholian Buddhappiya Thera, or Cholian Dīpaṇkara. He is the author of the Pāli Grammar 'Rūpasiddhi', used in monastic colleges even today. This is a very popular book written on the lines of Kaccāyana's grammar. His book of the Pāli verses in praise of the Buddha is called 'Pajjamadhu' (Nectar of Verses). It is a standing monument to his excellence as a poet and his deep love for the Buddha. In Ceylon he studied Buddhist scriptures under the Venerable Ānanda Vanaratana. He returned to Chola and lived as the abbot of the Baladitya monastery.

In the concluding stanzas to his "Rūpasiddhi" he mentions that he was born in Chola and resided for some time in Ceylon. He was a master of Pāli literature and grammar While he sojourned in the island "he was like unto a banner hoisted over Ceylon." He lived in the 12th century.

17. Cholian Kassapa Thera

He was a master of the Tripiṭaka and the Pāli language, Among his works are the commentary on the Abhidhamma, works called "Moha Vicchedani", the

commentary to the Vinaya Piṭaka "Vimati Vinodani", and the "Anāgatavaṁsa". In the Sāsanavaṁsa (History of Buddhism), and a Burmese Pāli work called the Ganthavaṁsa, it is mentioned that he was a Tamil from Chola. In the concluding stanzas to 'Mohavicchedani' he mentions that he was a resident of a monastery called "Nāgana" in Nāgapattanam of the Chola country.

18. Anuruddha Thera

He lived in the 10th or 11th century and his birth-place is said to have been Kāveripaṭṭanam. His most famous work is a manual of Abhidhamma, the *Abhidhammattha-Sangaha*, which has served as an introduction to the Abhidhamma philosophy for over eight centuries. It is still very popular, e. g. in Burma and Ceylon. Throughout the centuries, many commentaries have been written on it, and in our times it has been translated into Western languages. Another two treatises on Abhidhamma, written in verse, have been attributed to Anuruddha Thera, *Paramattha-vinicchaya* and *Nāmarūpapariccheda*; but his authorship of these two is doubted by some scholars, as also that of the *Anuruddha-sataka*.

19. Dhammakitti Thera

He was a Cholian Bhikkhu of the 13th century who came from South India to Ceylon. He wrote the first part of *Cūla-vaṁsa*, which is a continuation of the Mahāvaṁsa, the famous chronicle of Ceylon. His addition to it extended from King Sirimevan up to his own time. Also a Chronicle of the Tooth Relic (*Dāṭha-vaṁsa*) has been ascribed to him.

Further we could infer from historical information that a large number of learned Buddhist monks and laymen lived in the various cities and villages of South

India. Most of the books they wrote, except two, have perished. From the list of names of the Buddhist villages and hamlets, from the names of Buddhist monks and laymen still available, from the large number of Buddhist ruins still surviving, we can draw the inference that Buddhism once flourished in South India from the 3rd to the 13th century of the Christian era.

From the history of Ceylon we can get further information about the state of Buddhism in South India in the 14th and 15th centuries. King Pandit Parakramabāhu early in the 14th century got down a learned bhikkhu who was a linguist, to help in the translation of the Jātaka book to Sinhala. A minister of King Bhuvanekabahu IV of Gampola, named Sendhilankāra, caused a Buddhist monastery to be built at Kānchipūra. This is evidenc | f Buddhism in South India even at this late stage. From these facts we can conclude that right up to the coming of the Europeans Buddhism lingered in South India.

Though Buddhism in India had to yield to Hinduism, yet the period when Buddhism flourished was one of which the Tamil nation can rightly be proud in view of its outstanding contribution to Buddhist literature in Tamil, Pāli and Sanskrit. Now, after the time of religious rivalries is passed, this period may well be remembered as a strong bond between the Tamil nation and the Buddhist countries.

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APPENDIX

Extracts from the MANIMEKHALAI

Translated by

Rao Bahadur Krishnaswami Aiyangar

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The footnotes have been added by the Editor of 'The Wheel' Series.

Extracts from the Manimekhalai

Modern inter-religious conferences seem to have had a precusor at the time when the "Maṇimekhalāi" was composed. Book I contains the royal announcement of the annual Indra Festival celebrated at Puhār (Kāveripaṭṭinam), in which we read :

"Let those well-versed in the holy teachings take their place under awnings, or in canopied halls. Let those well-versed in various religions assemble in the halls of learning set apart for discussion. Give up feelings of enmity even to those who are inimical to you."

(Book I; transl. p. 115)

From BOOK V

The hermit Sanghadharma taught her (i. e., Maṇimekhalāi's friend, Sutamati) the teaching of the Buddha:—'My king possessed of all good qualities by nature, the embodiment of all good qualities without diminution, having learned by experience various kinds of life in this world, took it upon himself to use his life not for the attainment of his own salvation, but for the exercise of kindness to things living, in order that the whole mass of living beings might attain to that salvation. Thus turning the wheel of the law he conquered desire.' (p. 123).

. . . Just then appeared in the guise of a lady of the city, the goddess Maṇimekhala, with a view of witnessing the celebration of the great festival just then taking place in the city. She went round the pavilion

containing the seat of the Buddha, reciting the following laudation :—

'Shall I describe you as the knowing One, the pure One of good deeds, the ancient One, the exalted One, who knew how to lead life in this world? Shall I describe you as the One who got beyond the reach of love, who was the sure guardian of all, as the One who destroyed the enemy, evil conduct? How shall I describe the feet of him who set the wheel of thousand spokes in motion, without a thousand tongues to describe with ?' * (p. 124)

Book VI relates that for protecting young Manimekhalai from Prince Udayakumāra who was in search of her, the goddess Manimekhalā put her to sleep by a charm and "carried her through the air thirty Yojanas south", to an island calle Maṇipallavam which has been identified with the island Nāgadīpa, off the coast of Ceylon. The story continues:

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* *An alternative rendering of this passage :*

"O Lord! You are the Wise, the Pure, Pious and the Ancient, above all others in austerity'

O Lord ! You destroyed the evils and discarded anger; you are the Omniscient.

O Lord ! Yon conquered Mara; you are the Blissful; and you condemned the unholy and false ways.

O Lord ! Your feet are marked with thousand-spoked wheels.

I do not have thousand tongues !

How shall I praise thee ?"

From "Story of Buddhism, with special reference to South India", Publ, by the Dept. of Information and Publicity, Govt of Madras, 1960.

...Manimekhalai woke up from sleep on the sandy beach of Maṇipallavam. Looking round she found nothing that was familiar to her, and felt herself as strangely placed as a soul in a new birth. ... She wandered about till she came to what seemed to be a Seat of the Buddha. The seat had been placed there by Indra, and had the miraculous power to let those who worshipped it know their previous life, as Buddha Himself had delivered a sermon sitting on it. This happened on the occasion when two neighbouring Nāga chiefs, related to each other, fought for possession of it. As the war proved destructive Buddha appeared before them and pacified the combatants by preaching a sermon. (Book VIII; p. 131/132)

At sight of this, Manimekhalai forgot herself in wonder. Her hands automatically folded over her head; from her eyes flowed tears of joy; she circumambulated the divine seat three times, and prostrated before it. Getting up, she looked at the seat again, and began to recollect all that had taken place in her previous existence. (Book IX; p. 132)

Manimekhalai walked about admiring the beauty of the sand dunes, flower gardens, and cool tanks. In a short while there appeared before her a lady who accosted her: 'Who are you that have arrived here alone like a woman who had suffered shipwreck?' (after replying to her, Manimekhalai) wished to know who the other lady was. The lady said that in the neighbourhood of that island was another called Ratnadvīpa ('the island of Jewels'). 'There on a high peak of the hill Samantakūṭa* there are the footprints of the Buddha. Having offered worship at the footprints I came to this island long ago.

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* This refers to the Sri-pāda peak in Ceylon ("Adam's Peak")

Since then I have remained here keeping guard over this "Dharma Seat" under the orders of Indra. My name is Tīva-Tilakai (Dvīpa Tilakā). People following the Dharma of the Buddha strictly, offering worship to this "Buddha Seat" will gain knowledge of their previous birth, knowing their past as a result of this worship. It is only those few who are fit to acquire *Dharmapada* forsooth. Since by such a worship you have acquired knowledge of your previous birth, you must be such a great one. In front of this seat there is a little pond full of cool water, overgrown with all varieties of water-lily. From that will appear a never-failing "begging bowl" by name Amuda-Surabi (Amrta Surabhi). The bowl appears every year of the day (of full moon) in the season of the early sun, in the month of Rishabha, in the fourteenth asterism, the day on which the Buddha himself was born. That day this year is to-day and the hour is just now. That Bowl, I ween, will come into your hand. Food put into it will be inexhaustible. You will learn about it from Aravaṇa Aḍigal who lives in your own native city.' Manimekhalai on hearig this, making her obeisance to the Buddha-seat, went along with Tīva Tilakai, and, circumambulating the pond, stood in front of it. The Bowl emerged from the water, and turning round to the right reached the hands of Manimekhalai. Manimekhalai felt delighted beyond measure and uttered the following chant in praise ofthe Buddha:—

'Hail! holy feet of the Hero! that subdued Cupid,
Hail! holy feet of Him! who destroyed the evil path,
Hail! holy feet of the Great one! Labouring to set
others in the path of Dharma!
Hail! holy feet of the Perfectly Wise! who gives to
others the eye of wisdom,

Hail! holy feet of Him! whose ears are deaf to
evil words,
Hail holy feet of Him! whose tongue never uttered
other than truth,
Hail! holy feet of Him! who visited hell itself
to destroy suffering there,
Hail! holy feet of Him! that destroyed the sorrows
of those of the Nāga world!'

'To praise you is beyond the power of my tongue; to bow at your feet is alone possible for my body.'

To Manimekhalai in this attitude of prayer, Tīva-Tilakai expounded the sufferings of hunger and the merit accruing to those that enable creatures to appease hunger. 'Hunger,' she told Manimekhalai, 'will destroy good birth, will kill nobility, will cut off the hold that learning has upon the learned people as the great support of life, will deprive people of all feeling of shame, will spoil qualities that are beautiful, will make people stand at the door of others with their wives. Such indeed is the nature of the sinful craving hunger.'

'Food provided to allay the hunger of those that cannot otherwise satisfy it, is true charity, and all right kind of life in this world comes to such people. Among those that live in this world those that give food are those that give life. Therefore to those that are hungry that which will destroy hunger.' (Book XI; p. 137)

BOOK XXX

Maṇimekhalai who had already learned all that had happened in her previous birth, after having taken upon herself the duty of giving gifts (dāna) and walking in

the path of right conduct (sīla), worshipped three times the triple jewel of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, placing herself entirely under its protection, and then saluted the bhikkhu Aravana Adigal. The bhikkhu, in expouding to her the righteous path of the Dharma said :

"At that time when the world was full of beings poor in understanding, the Buddha, at the earnest entreaty of all the celestial beings of Tushitaloka, appeared on earth, leaving that heaven of joy empty. Then, seated at the foot of the Bodhi tree he conqured the enemy Māra and became the Victor (jina). The good teaching of the Four Truths which the beautiful victor imparted after having pulled out by the roots the three faults[1], were taught with ineffable beneficence in the the past by innumerable other Buddhas. These Truths provide the means of crossing the ocean of existence by destroying the twelve Nidānas.[2] These latter appear one from the other in order as cause aud effect, and being capable of reappearance, (each link) as consequent upon that which is before it, assume the form of a never-ending circle. When in this order of cause and consequence the first ceascs to exist, the next follows in cessation; when it comes into existence, that which follows it does so inevitably. So these are properly described as a chain of causes and conditions. Thus arranged these twelve Nidānas fall into four divisions[3], showing three joints[4]. Appearance in birth or rebirth is of three kinds (human, heavenly or of the nether world), and is of

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1. The three Roots of Evil (akusala-mūla): greed hate and delusion.
2. The twelve links of the Dependent Origination (paṭicca-samuppāda).
3. The four sections (Cattāro saṅgahā), see Visuddhi Magga (tr. by Nyanamoli), Ch XVII, § 290.
4. The three joints (ti-sandhi), see VisM XVII, § 289.

three divisions in time, past present and future.[5] These also produce the faults, deeds and there consequences[6], and are impermanent and cause only sorrow. He who gets to understand this character of these Nidānas, he knows what will assure him the permanence of release (Nirvāṇa).

"Further it becomes the means for the cultivation of the Four Truths[7], and is constituted of the five Skandhas. It is capable of being argued in the six forms beginning with the 'assertion of truth'.[8] It results in the four forms of excellence. It is open to question in four ways and being capable of respective answers in four ways similarly. It is without origin and without end. It is a series of continuous becoming without ever reaching final destruction. It neither does, nor can it be described as being done. It is neither self nor is it possessed by another self. It is nothing that is gone, nothing that is to come. It cannot be brought to an end, nor is it to end itself. It is itself the result of the deed, birth and cessation. Such is the nature of the twelve causes and conditions beginning with ignorance, and called the Nidānas. These twelve are :-

(1) Ignorance (*Pedamai* Sans. *Avidyā*),
(2) Action (Seykai, Sans. *Karma*),
(3) Consciousness (*Uṇarvu*, Sans. *Vijñāna*),
(4) Name and Form (*Aru-uru*, Sans. *Nāmarūpa*)
(5) Six organs of sense (*Vāyil*, Sans. *Saḍāyatana*)
(6) Contact (Uru, Sans. Sparsa),
(7) Sensation (*Nuharvu*, Sans. *Vedanā*),

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5. See VisM. XVII. § 287.
6. See in VisM XVII, § 298 the threefold Round' (ti-vaṭṭa) of defilements (kilesa), kammic action (kamma) and kamma-result (vipāka).
7. See VisM XVII § 300. 8. "Six Forms", see ib., § 299.

(8) Thirst or Cravlng (*Veṭkai*, Sans. *Trsṇa*),
(9) Attachment (*Parru*, Sans. *Upādāna*),
(10) Becoming or existence (*Pavam*, Sans. *Bhava*),
(11) Birth (*Torram*, Sans, *Jāti*),
(12) The result of action, old age and death (*Vinayppayan*, Sans. *Jarā-maraṇa*).

"If people understand the twelvefold nature of the chain of cause and effect, they then understand the supreme truth and will enjoy permanent bliss. If they do not, they are bound to suffer in the depths of hell.

(1) Ignorance consists in not understanding what was explained above, in being liable to delusion and in believing in what one hears to the neglect of that which one is able to see for himself, as believing in the existence of the horns of a rabbit because someone else says that they do exist.

(2) In the three world, life is illimitable, and living beings in them are of six classes. They are men, gods, brahmas, the inhabitants of hell the crowd of animals and spirits. According to good deeds and bad, life takes its birth in one or other of these. Ever since it assumes the form of embryo, the result of these deeds will show themselves either in the happiness of mind or in anxiety of suffering. Of these evil deeds—killing theft and illicit sexual behaviour show themselves as evils springing up in the body. Lying speaking ill of others, harsh words and useless talk, these four show themselves as evils of speech. Desire, anger and illusion are three evils that arise in the mind.* These ten the wise would avoid. If they should fail to do so, they would be born as animals or spirits or beings of the nether

* These are the 'ten unwholesome courses of action' (dasa akusala kamma-patha).

world, and make themselves liable to extreme anxiety of mind and suffering. Good men, on the contrary, would avoid these ten, and assuming the good discipline (sīlam) and taking upon themselves to do deeds of charity (dānam), will be born in the three higher classes of beings, such as devas (gods), men or Brahmas, and live a life of enjoyment and happiness as a result of good deeds.

(3) Consciousness (Uṇarvu) consists in feeling like one asleep, without the feeling leading to any action, or to any satisfaction *

(4) Name and form consist in that which has the feeling described above, and constituting mind and body.

(5) Organs of sense are, on examination, those that carry consciousness to the mind (vijñāṇa or Ullam).

(6) Contact consists in vijñāṇa and the organs of sense experiencing touch with other things (veru pulangal).

(7) Sensation (Nuharvu) consists in the mind or Vijñāna enjoying that of which it has become conscious.

(8) Thirst or craving consists in not feeling satisfied with that which is thus enjoyed.

(9) Attachment consists in the desire for enjoyment impelling one into action.

(10) Becoming consists in the accumulation of deeds indicating the consequence to which each leads.**

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* This might be a reference to the definition of Consciousness, in this context, as Rebirth Consciousness (patisandhi citta) which is a kind of subliminal consciousness bhavaṇga citta).

** This refers to a twofold division of Becoming (bhava), the Kamma—process (kamma-bhava) and the Rebirth-process (upapatti-bhava).

(11) Birth (Tonral) consists in the result of deeds leading to the conscious taking of birth in one or other of the six forms of birth in the inevitable chain of cause and effect.

(12) Disease (Piṇi) consists in the suffering of the body by a change from its natural condition in consequence of the result of deeds. Old age (Mūppu) consists in the loosening of the body as one draws nearer and nearer to the end. Death (Sākkaāḍu) ultimately consists in the human body, composed of life and body, disappearing as the setting sun.

"From ignorance arises action; from action springs consciousness; from consciousness come name and form;* from name and form spring the organs of sense; through organs of sense contact becomes possible; contact results in sensation or experience; experience produces desire; from desire springs attachment; from attachment comes into existence collection of deeds; as a result of this collective deed arise various other forms of birth; birth inevitably brings along with it age, disease and death, and the consequent anxiety and the feeling of incapacity to get rid of it. This never-ending suffering is the ultimate result.

In such a never-ending circle of experience, when ignorance ceases, action will cease; with action consciousness will cease; with consciousness name and form (mind and body) will cease; with the cessation of name and form, organs of sense will cease; with the cessation of the organs of sense, contact will cease; contact ceasing, sensation or experience will cease; with sensation or experience ceasing desire will cease; desire ceasing to exist, there will be no attachment; without attachment, there is

* i. e , mind and body.

no accumulation of deeds; without the accumulated mass of deeds, there will be no becoming; with the cessation of becoming, there will be no birth, no disease, no age, no death, and in consequence, no anxiety and no helplessness. Thus this never-ending series of suffering will be destroyed.

Of these twelve Nidānas, the first two, ignorance and action, are regarded as belonging to the first section. All those that follow spring from these two. The following five, namely, name and form, organs of sense, contact experience, these five, as springing from the former two, are regarded as constituting the second division. Thirst, attachment and the collection of deeds constitute the third division as the result as evil in the enjoyment of the previous five, and, in consequence, as action resulting therefrom. It is from the folly of desire and consequent attachment that becoming arises. The fourth division includes birth, disease, age and death, since these four are experienced as a result of birth.*

Action is the cause of birth and consciousness springs out of it, where these two meet they mark the first conjunction. Where sensation and craving meet, it marks the second conjunction. The third junction comes in where the accumulation of deeds results in birth. Thus are marked the three points of junction in this chain of twelve causes and conditions.

The three forms of birth are those of men, gods and animals. These result from the consciousness in previous birth as a result of the conformations springing out of ignorance. This happens either from the delusion that this kind of birth is actually cessation of birth or the taking of birth in a new form without the consciousness,

* See VisM XVII, § 290.

or the new birth coming with consciousness and the new form existing together. The three times are the past, present and future. Of these the past includes ignorance and action. To the present refer consciousness, name and form, the organs of sense, contact, sensation, thirst (or craving), the becoming and birth. To the future belong birth, disease, age and death. The resulting anxiety and helplessness are evils that spring out of the previous series of present action.

Desire, attachment and ignorance, these and the birth resulting therefrom, constitute action in the present and cause future birth. Consciousness, a name and form, organs of sense, contact, sensation (or experience), birth, age, disease and death, these are the consequential experience in life, both present and future. These are full of evil, of deeds, and of consequences resulting from these deeds, and thus constitute suffering. Being such, they are all impermanent. While the nature of release (Vīḍu) consists in the understanding that there is nothing like a soul in anything existing.

Consciousness, name and form, the organs of sense, contact, sensation, birth, disease, age, and death, with the resulting anxiety and helplessness, these constitute disease. For this disease the causes are ignorance, action, desire, attachment and the collection of deeds. For suffering and birth, attachment is the cause; for bliss and cessation of birth, non-attahement is the cause. Words that embody this idea constitute the 'Four Truths', namely, suffering, the cause of suffering, removal of suffering, and the way to remove suffering.

There are four kind of questions and answers :-

(1) To give a definite reply; (2) to separate the component parts of an issue and answer these separately;

(3) to answer by a counter question; and (4) to keep silence in answer to a question.*

To a question whether a thing that comes into existence will also go out of existence, if the answer is 'it will', this is to give a definite reply.

To a question whether a dead man will be born again or not, the inquiry whether in life he was without attachment or not, is to answer by separating the issues involved, and to give separate answers to it.

To a question whether it is the seed that is first or the palm-tree, the enquiry which seed and which particular tree, is answer by a counter question.

To a question whether 'the sky flower' is new or old, silence is the best answer; this is one way of getting round an inconvenient question.

Bondage and release result from the Skandhas (the aggregates of things). There is no agent outside entitled to bring them into contact. For the Skandhas and their manifestations as described above, the cause is the group of three evils: desire, anger and illusion.

Examine separately and understand that everything is impermanent, full of suffering, without a soul and unclean; thus treating it, give up desire ! Realizing that friendliness, compassion and joy (at the well-being of others) constitute the best attitude of mind, give up anger ! By the practice of hearing (sruti), mentation (cintana), experiencing in mind (bhāvanā) and realizing in vision (darsana), reflect, realize and give up all illusion ! In these four ways get rid of the darkness of mind !"

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* See Anguttara-Nikāya, Threes, No 68; Fours, No. 42.

In these auspicious words, free from inconsistency, (Aravaṇa Aḍigal) exhibited the illuminating lamp of knowledge. Manimekhalai having assumed the habit of an ascetic (*tāpasi*) and having heard the excellent exposition of the Dharma, devoted herself to penance * that she may get rid of the bondage of birth.

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* *Noṭṭal*; better to be translated by "religious life".

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THE WAY OF THE NOBLE

by

T. H. Perera

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Kandy 1968 Ceylon

THE WHEEL PUBLICATION No. 126

Homage to that Blessed One, the Perfect One,
the Buddha Supreme!

THE WAY OF THE NOBLE

"Yea, by my troth this have I seen, no hearsay this,
In one communion bound of holy life
A thousand (saints who had) abandoned death;
Disciples of these too, five hundred yea,
And more, ten hundred, yea, and ten times that
Who all had reached the Stream, the Holy Way".[1]

The title of this essay is the English rendering of the Pāli term *Ariya Magga* – the Noble Way or Path. The *Ariya-Aṭṭhaṅgika-Magga* is the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism, which leads to the state of an Ariya, or Noble One. The Buddha Dhamma claims no affinity to the word 'Aryan' which is used to distinguish a stock of the human species from other stocks of the same species on the basis of colour and race. The Buddha-Dhamma views with disfavour adventitious distinctions such as the colour or caste of a man, for the satisfying reason that, born of the knowledge of the real nature of phenomenal existence, it embraces in a compassionate oneness all living things in the entire universe with an all pervading loving-kindness.

The word Aryan comes from the Pali word *ariya (Skr:, ārya)* which means pure or noble. The Buddha-Dhamma recognizes one who has cleaned himself of the

impurities of mind as noble or pure. In this respect, Lord Buddha is acclaimed as the Greatest Ariya. Hence, the Four Eternal Verities which he discovered are called the Four Noble Truths (*ariya sacca*). The disciples of the Buddha who had understood and realised the Four Noble Truths are called the Noble Ones (*ariya-puggala*). The word *ariya*, also, means one who sees things as they truly are.[2] It is only when one sees this psycho-physical (*nāma-rūpa*) combination called a being, as it really is, that he gets an aversion for existence, and is urged to take the "*ascent*" leading to the Ariyan Way, the exclusive *via sacra* of the Noble Ones.

In this Essay I shall confine myself to the first stage of the Ariyan Way – the first stage of the Way that leads to full sanctitude, Arahantship. A person who steps on the first stage of the Ariyan Way is also called a Stream-Winner. The Pali word *sota* means a stream. He wins or attains the stream (*sotāpatti*), and is, then, a Stream-Winner (*sotāpanna*). He is taken up the Stream that leads to Nibbāna. He is rewarded with a glimpse of Nibbāna, for the first time, in the ups and downs of his *saṁsāric* (the process of repeated births) existence.

This supreme achievement, the initial step to cross over the turbulent waters of the cosmic ocean of births and deaths demands of the aspirant to the Way a systematic, sustained and steadfast preparation anterior to its consummation—a consummation which is possible only by putting forth "human strength, human energy and human striving".[3]

What is it that prompts us to embark on this great spiritual adventure on "the sea of the six senses with its waves and whirlpools, its sharks and demons (symbolis-

ing its dangers and temptations)"?* It is suffering (*dukkha*) inherent in life. The Buddha-Dhamma alone, of all religions, positively affirms that life is suffering, life wherever it exists from the highest Brahma world to the uttermost hell is suffering. Life in the immeasurable past was suffering and life yet to come will also entail suffering. This is samsāric suffering (*bhava-dukkha*). The present suffering is visible in so many ways as: physical and mental suffering, as man's conflict with his environment and as the result of man's insatiate desire to pamper his "I", his Ego. We have plenty of evidence in the Buddhist Canon[4] to establish the suffering inherent in the process of Becoming *(bhava)*. Based on this knowledge and on the suffering now being felt, and with implicit confidence *(saddhā)* in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, Buddhists genuinely interested in overcoming suffering embark on this great adventure.

Now, let us discuss the prior preparations that he, we shall call him the Pilgrim on the Way, has to make for the purpose of stepping on the Ariyan Way. *The Saṁgīti Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (No: 33) mentions four necessary conditions for Stream entry (*sotāpatti-yaṅga*). They are:-

1. Association with the good (*sappurisa saṁseva*)
2. Hearing the good Teaching *(saddhamma savanaṁ)*
3. Wise reflection *(yoniso manasikāra)*
4. Practice in those things that lead up to the Teaching and its corollaries *(dhammānudhamma paṭipatti)*.

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* *The Basic Position of Sila* by Miss I. B. Horner, published by the Bauddha Sahitya Sabha.

I. Association with the good

It will be admitted on all hands that through association with the good, the Pilgrim on the Way enriches his mind with all that is wholesome and noble. In the galaxy of the good Lord Buddha shines without a peer. He has passed away, but His Teaching is with us, in its pristine purity, as a living symbol to speak to us of the exceeding rare goodness which permeated His entire vigorous, radiant personality. Here are His own words in support:- "Therefore, O Bhikkhus, you to whom the truths I have perceived have been made known by me—having thoroughly made yourselves masters of them, practise them, meditate upon them, and spread them abroad, in order that the pure religion may last long and be perpetuated, in order that it *may continus to be for the good and happiness of the great multitudes, out of pity for the world, to the good and the gain and the weal of gods and men''*.[5]

The Noble Ones who have gained the four stages of Holiness and their respective Fruition (*phala*) are also among the good. Those worldings who are treading the mundane Noble Eightfold Path with a view to gaining Deliverance come next. Those individuals who have dedicated their lives to ameliorate human suffering such as philanthropists and social service workers are also among the good. The *Dhammapada*[6] advises us not to associate with friends who are evil-doers, or with friends whose lives are blameworthy; on the other hand, to associate with friends who are good, the best of men. There are two conspicuous characteristics visible in the good, namely: gratitude (*kataññutā)* in its manifestation by word and deed. Lord Buddha gazed steadfastly for seven days at the Bodhi Tree beneath whose shade He gained Supreme Enlightenment.

2. Hearing the Teaching.

The benefits gained by hearing the Good Law are so obvious that their recapitulation here seems to me rather superfluous. In the long ago days the mode of receiving the Dhamma was by hearing. The word *sāvaka* meaning a disciple of the Buddha has its origin in the word *suvanaṁ*. The *Mahā Mangala* Sutta hails the hearing of the Dhamma as a Blessing (*kālena dhamma savanaṁ etaṁ mangala muttamaṁ*), and immediately after in the next verse the Sutta proceeds to hail religious discussions (*dhamma sākacchā*) as a Blessing. These twin tasks invariably reinforce and strengthen Confidence, already referred to, which our Pilgrim carries as his staff till the goal of the holy life is reached. In modern times there are many books on various aspects of the Buddha - Dhamma. In Buddhist countries the radio is also a very useful medium in the dissemination of the Dhamma. Despite these modern facilities the time honoured custom of hearing the Dhamma, seated cross-legged at the feet of venerable monks, awakens a deep sense of piety and a spiritual exhilaration. *The Dhammapada* pays this excellent tribute to those who hear the Dhamma: "He who imbibes the Law lives happily; his mind is serene. The wise always rejoice in the Law, well-proclaimed by the Buddha".[7]

Knowledge of the Dhamma (*pariyatti*) leads to its practice (*paṭipatti*) and practice leads to the realisation (*paṭivehda*) of Nibbāna. the end of suffering. Wherefore, "the Dhamma is well-expounded by the Buddha, to be self realised, with immediate fruit, inviting investigation, leading to Nibbāna, to be comprehended by the wise, each for himself". (*The Mirror of the Dhamma*)

3. Wise Reflection.

The Dhamma that has been either heard or read has to be wisely reflected upon, and then acted upon. It is, indeed, a matter for much concern and regret that most Buddhists listen to or read the Dhamma as a matter of course and then resign it to oblivion. Thereafter they turn once again to chase after pleasure. Let them wisely reflect on this quotation from the *Sutta Nipāta*, verse 62 (Tr. by Lord Chalmers):

> " .... Be sure
> pleasure's a chain, brief bliss,
> short rapture, long drawn woe,
> a baited hook for fish".

Wise Reflection has to be clearly distinguished from Unwise Reflection *(ayoniso-manasikāra)*. Wise Reflection functions as a wholesome agent. Says the Buddha: "thus employed, O monks, it leads to the Highest" - the Highest which is the very opposite of the recurrent process of births and deaths. On the other hand, Unwise Reflection does nobody any good. It is the womb which gives birth to unwholesome things. Says the Buddha: "Monks, I have not seen (with the Buddha eye) any single thing which conduces more to the arising of wholesome things that have not yet arisen, and to the expulsion of unwholesome things that have already arisen, than Wise Reflection". In this context Wise Reflection shortens the process of Becoming, while Unwise Reflection lengthens this sorrow-fraught process.

Wise Reflection, with Mindfulness keeping guard, brought to perfection by sustained and indefatigable endeavour, leads to mental synthesis, to mental equipoise

and one-pointedness of mind, the prelude to Insight, which then illumines the Pilgrim's vision to see things as they truly are. More of this later. The *Dhammapada* encourages the Pilgrim thus :—

> ": He who dwells in the Law, delights in the Law. meditates on the Law, reflects on the Law, that Bhikkhu will never fall away from the true Law".[8]

4. Practice in those things that lead up to the Teaching and its corollaries.

The Buddha=Dhamma, it should be noted here, is not meant for the purpose of exhibiting one's intellectual legerdemain; nor is it for the purpose of displaying one's dialectical skill; nor does it encourage salvation by proxy through prayerful appeals by a sinner to a supernatural being; nor does it preach a vicarious salvation. The Buddha Dhamma is a practice (*patipadā*) a gradual practice upon a well-mapped and tested Path, based on the ethical potential of man, for the one and only purpose of crossing over and going beyond the confines of the space-time cosmos. And for the purpose of crossing over, the Pilgrim has to walk the Path himself by his own efforts and energy, and without taking a wrong turning. The Buddhas merely show the Way. The *Dhammapada* at Verse 276 is quite emphatic on this point :—

> "Striving should be done by yourselves, the Tathāgatas (Buddhas) are only teachers. The meditative ones who enter the Way are delivered from the bonds of Māra".

The Buddha Dhamma is a discovery. The Buddha Gotama rediscovered the Ancient Path which the Buddhas of the past trod to gain Deliverance. The Ancient Path

is the Noble Eightfold Path: "This is the Middle Path; which the Perfect One has discovered, which makes one both to see and to know, and which leads to peace, to discernment, to enlightenment and to Nibbāna".[9]

The Blessed One, on the occasion of sending forth His first mission of sixty Arahants, spoke about the Ancient Path in this manner "Preach, O Bhikkhus, the Dhamma excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end".[10] The Dhamma is excellent in the beginning (*ādi kalyāna*), which is Morality (*sīla*), exhorting to avoid all evil (*sabba pāpassa akaranaṁ*). It is excellent in the middle (*majjhima kalyāna*), which is Concentration (*samādhi*), exhorting to do good (*kusalassa upasampadā*). It is excellent in the end (*pariyosāna kalyāna*), which is Wisdom (*paññā*) exhorting to cleanse one's mind (*sacitta pariyodapanaṁ*). And this is the Ancient Path.

This is the triple division of the Noble Eightfold Path, in which the Pilgrim has to train himself anterior to his stepping on the Ariyan Way or winning the Stream. The training is gradual, step by step, "for the attainment of Wisdom does not come at once, but by a gradual training, a gradual working out of cause, a gradual practice (*anupubba-sikkhā, anupubba-kriyā, anupubba-paṭipadā*")[11]

It would be relevant, at this point, to set side by side the factors of the Noble Path and the triple training in Morality, Concentration and Wisdom :—

Factors of the Path	*Triple Training*
3. Right Speech (*sammā vācā*)	Morality (*sīla*)
4. Right Action (*sammā kammantā*)	
5. Right Livelihood (*sammā ājīva*)	
6. Right Effort (*sammā vāyāma*)	Concentration (*samādhi*)
7. Right Mindfulness (*sammā sati*)	
8. Right Concentration (*sammā samādhi*)	
1. Right Understanding (*sammā diṭṭhi*)	Wisdom (*paññā*)
2. Right Thought (*sammā sankappa*)	

The sequence of the Path Factors has been here transposed for indicating that this is the order in which the perfecting of the Noble Eightfold Path has to proceed. Nevertheless, a degree of Right Understanding is indispensable at the very start, for giving the right and cogent motivation for one's endeavour.

I make bold to say that the Tripitaka or the Three Baskets containing the entirety of the Teaching of the Buddha, is devoted to this triple training. I am fortified in my view in that the Blessed One says: "Just as, O Bhikkhus, the mighty ocean is of one taste, the taste of salt; even so, O Bhikkhus, this Dhamma is of one taste, the taste of Deliverance (*vimutti*)".[12] And, in the Dhammapada He says: "Following upon this Path you will put an end to suffering".[13]

The Dhamma has to be lived in and practised according to the above triple training. There is absolutely no deviation from this training. The mastery of Morality (*sīla*) makes possible the mastery of Concentration (*samādhi*) and this of Wisdom (*paññā*). No skipping of

any of the factors is allowed. We are advised not to follow the technique of the jumping frog. There is no short-cut to Nibbāna.

There are no special occasions on which to practise the Dhamma, nor is it confined to the four poya* days only. The Dhamma is part and parcel of one's life, and is closely associated with oneself. Wherefore, the Buddha says: "Abide with oneself as an island, with oneself as a refuge, abide with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as a refuge. Seek not for external refuge."[14]

The Pilgrim is warned not to seek external refuge. Why? The Buddha, in conversation with his last convert Subhadda, told him that it was only in His Dispensation that the Noble Eightfold Path existed, and, hence the four true Samanas. He further added that other schools of thought did not contain the Noble Eightfold Path, and therefore they were devoid of the four true Samanas.

The four Samanas are: i. The Stream-Winner (*sotāpanna*), ii. the Once-Returner (*sakadāgāmi*), iii. the Never-Returner (*anāgāmi*), and iv. the Perfect One (*arahant*). These four stages and their respective Fruitions (*phala*) together with Nibbāna are the Nine Transcendental Dhammā (*nava lokuttara dhamma*) which every genuine Buddhist ardently endeavours to consummate ere long.

The Pilgrim should always bear in mind the fact that he has taken Refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha in order to gain a clear understanding and per-

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* The four phases of a lunar month. The Sinhala term for Uposatha Days.

** Another term for Noble disciples.

ception of the Four Noble Truths:- This is Misery. This is the Origin of Misery. This is the Cessation of Misery. This is the Path leading to the cessation of Misery - the Noble Eightfold Path. It is only by the realisation of the Four Noble Truths by the Pilgrim that he can cry a halt to this incessant turning on the Wheel of Life, and attain the end of suffering.[15]

The Pilgrim, therefore, is advised not to go off the Path by seeking refuge elsewhere, for in the words of the Buddha: "Men, driven by fear, go to many a refuge - to mountains and forests, to groves, to fanes and trees".[16] The Buddha, in no uncertain terms, assures the Pilgrim that in none of them is found a refuge, and that none of them can ever deliver him from the woes of recurrent existence.[17]

There is one other aspect in the practice of the Dhamma, which to my mind is of paramount importance. I mean the practice of the Dhamma in its spirit and in its letter is of far greater importance than the mere external manifestations of Devotion (*bhakti*). I certainly do not frown at the traditional modes of worshipping the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha by visiting temples. The thought processes that run across the mind during these moments of devotion are undoubtedly wholesome (*kusala*). They provide the Pilgrim with spiritual nutriment to support him on the Way.

However, these acts of devotion and piety by themselves will not tend to purify his inner being. They are powerless to crush the might of Māra (Death). And the successful conquest of Māra is the conquest of one's self through internal purification. "Though one should conquer a million men in the battlefield, yet he, indeed,

is the noblest victor who has conquered himself".[18] The same idea is again amplified: "One's own self conquered is better than all other people conquered; not even a god, Brahma or Māra can change into defeat the victory of a man who has conquered himself",[19] And this conquest of one's self is one's own business. It is achieved by wisdom. The Buddha Dhamma teaches deliverance of mind by Wisdom, and definitely not by following mere tradition, purposeless rites and unreasoning dogma.

Turn wherever you will, the Buddhist texts insist on the inner purification of the being. And this inner purification is only possible through external ethical behaviour or moral conduct (*sīla*). The Dhamma provides a number of precepts[20] or moral observances or pledges which a lay person takes upon himself to promote his moral well-being. These precepts are not commands. Their observance is left to the individual with himself as tribunal, on the assumption that their observance is good for himself as well as to the society of which he is a member, and in regard to our Pilgrim the observance of the precepts is the initial step of his training.

The Pilgrim, having established himself well and truly on Morality, now proceeds to train his mind—the fickle and restless mind. As he has already controlled the sense-doors which provide nutriment to the mind, he will find his task not so difficult. His task is to purge the mind of all impure states by employing the four great efforts,[21] so that the mind could be tranquillized[22] and stabilised to hold on to one object, and exclude all other objects that enter his mental periphery.

This done, the Pilgrim enters upon the third stage of his training to gain Insight-Wisdom (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) which is the sole monopoly of the Buddha-Dhamma.

This helps him to penetrate phenomental existence, which then presents him with Reality or the true nature of all existence: its impermanency (*anicca*), its imperfectness (*dukkha*) and its impersonality (*anattā*). He has thus completed the triple training which could be summed up as: the training of his body's actions, the training of his mind and the acquisition of Insight-Wisdom.

This triple training has yet another important aspect which deserves to be mentioned here. It is an aspect which is a natural growth and it synchronises with the training. I have in mind the Seven Stages of Purity[23] contained in the *Rathavinīta Sutta* (*Majjhima*)[24], which is illustrated by the simile of a grand state drive laid out in seven stages. I do not propose to dwell on this Sutta here, but I shall draw from it relevant matter in the course of developing this essay.

There is one more significant matter which I should touch upon before I close this fourth condition preparatory to the Pilgrim's "Ascent". I am referring to the Nine Great Insight Knowledges (*nava mahā vipassanā ñāṇa*), each of which is a fundamental asset in the development of the Pilgrim's mind leading up to Maturity Knowledge (*gotrabhu-ñāṇa*), at which point he gains Purity of Insight into the four Paths of Holiness (*ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi*).

Let us now follow the Pilgrim on the Way. He has arrived at Right Concentration on the mundane Path. With mind tranquillised and stabilised and with one-pointedness of mind, known as "attainment" Concentration (*appanā-samādhi*), he penetrates this fathom-long body and perceives the three characteristics already

mentioned above, characteristics common to all compounds *(sankhāras)*. Furthermore, wherever he turns, he sees these three characteristics everywhere, throughout the entire universe.

Engaged in this deep contemplation on the evanascent nature of all phenomena, a day arrives, when the Pilgrim notices an aura (*obhāsa*) radiating from his body. His whole personality is permeated with a joy and happiness never before felt by him. While in this ecstatic state he may believe that he has attained enlightenment. However, a little while later, his mind clears itself and he realises through Purity of Insight regarding the right and wrong path *(maggāmagga-ñāṇa-dassana-visuddhi)* the distinction between the mundane Noble Eightfold Path of the worldling and the supramundane Noble Eightfold Path of the Noble One.

Perceiving the Right Path, the Pilgrim pursues his contemplation on the three characteristics, with added zeal and vigour. This confers upon him Purity of Insight into the Path of Progress (*patipadā-ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*). At this point the Pilgrim obtains, step by step, a clearer and more comprehensive knowledge of his progress on the Path heading for the Ariyan Way. This knowledge is ninefold as I have already mentioned. I shall give here a bare summary without which the reader will fail to understand the gradual evolution of the Pilgrim's mind to the supramundane.

The Pilgrim, who has perceived the arising and passing away of all conditioned things, takes hold of the passing away of things, which is more conspicuous than their arising. He directs his mind to the dissolution *(bhanga)* of things and perceives that both mind and

matter which make up the so-called being are a constant flux, not remaining the same for two consecutive seconds. This knowledge of the dissolution of things creates in his mind a fear, a terror *(bhaya)* for the five aggregates of existence. This knowledge that views existence with fear leads him to grasp the misery and vanity (*ādinava ñāṇa)* of existence. This knowledge leads to aversion, to disgust (*nibbida ñāṇa)*, which, in turn, leads to the will for Deliverance from existence *(muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa)*. Thus willed, he proceeds to develop the three characteristics of the impermanency, the imperfectness and the impersonality of all things *(paṭisankhā-ñāṇa)*. This knowledge results in an attitude of neither attachment nor aversion to the things of the world—he looks at everything with complete equanimity (*sankhārupekkhā-ñāṇa*).

Arriving at this point of his spiritual culture, the Pilgrim takes one of the three characteristics of existence, whichever appeals to him most, and begins to develop it to the utmost degree. He is gradually drawn towards the Stream *(sota)*, and prepares to take the plunge, for he knows that at any moment the Path will reveal itself. He tightens his grip on the particular characteristic he has chosen, and awaits the event. Behold! his mind-door alerts and a *Javana* (Impulsion) thought process runs thus :-

2	2	3	4	5	6&7
parikamma	*upacāra*	*anuloma*	*gotrabhu*	*magga*	*phala*
(preliminary)	(access)	(adaptation)	(maturity knowledge)	(path)	(fruit)

The Pilgrim has now arrived on the Ariyan Way, having taken the "ascent" with the knowledge associated

with Purity into the Four Paths of Holiness (*ñāṇadassana-visuddhi*). He is now no more a worldling *(puthujjana)*. He has transcended the mundane consciousness *(lokiya citta)* and has gained the supramundane consciousness *(lokuttara citta)*. He has entered the Stream. He is a Stream-Winner *(sotāpanna)* and is taken up the Stream to Nibbāna. He is a Noble One (*ariya puggala)*. He gets a glimpse of Nibbāna, for the first time in the ups and downs of his samsāric existence. The Stream Winner becomes conscious of Fruition (*phala*) immediately after, with no interval between *(samadhimānantarikaññamahu)* the Path and the Fruition of Stream-entry.

Our Pilgrim, if he fails to attain Nibbāna in this life itself, will be born seven times at the most, and never an eighth time. He will not be born in the four states of woe. He will not commit the five weighty *(garuka)* crimes, namely: i. parricide, ii. matricide, iii. killing an arahant, iv. shedding blood from the Buddha's body and v. causing a schism in the Sangha.

Our Pilgim, on entering the Stream, breaks the first three fetters *(saṁyojana)* that bind him to the Wheel of Life.

They are :-

i. Self-Illusion *(sakkāya-diṭṭhi)*. This is the belief that there exists in the individual a permanent, stable and an abiding entity called a soul*. The Buddha dismissed the soul-theory as untenable in the light of His minute analysis of the five aggregates which make up the so-called individual. 2. Doubts

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* The *Dhammasangani* lists twenty soul-theories.
Also see: The Truth of Anattā by Dr. Malalasekera (Whee Publication No. 94)

(*vicikicchā*). They are doubts in regard to (i) the Buddha, (ii) the Dhamma, (iii) the Sangha, (iv) the monastic rules of conduct, (v) the past, (vi) the future, (vii) both the past and future (leading to *Kamma* and *vipāka*) and (viii) Dependent Origination (*paticca-samuppāda*).

3. The belief in the efficacy of ceremonies and rites (*sīlabbata-parāmāsa*). This is the view held by ascetics and brahmins that purification can be gained by rules of moral conduct or by rites or by both rules of moral conduct and rites.

Although it was my intention to follow the Pilgrim up to the moment he stepped upon the Ariyan Way, I now feel that I should follow him as he graduates through the remaining three stages of the Path of Holiness. Accordingly I shall briefly provide the reader with the basic information regarding his further progress on the Path.

The noble Pilgrim, encouraged by a glimpse of Nibbāna, renews his contemplation on the three characteristics again and again. He also reviews the Seven Stages of Purity. In the fifth thought moment of the supramundane *javana* thought-process he attains the state of a Once-Returner (*sakadāgāmi*). Thereby he neutralises the force of seven births assigned to a Stream-Winner and limits it to one birth only, i. e. within the sense-sphere. He gets a vision of Nibbāna in its Fruition consciousness (*magga-phala*). He attenuates or weakens the fourth and fifth fetters, namely: sense-desires (*kāma-rāga*) and ill-will (*patigha*), two powerful fetters that had bound him to existence from a beginningless past.

Thereafter, the noble Pilgrim, now a Once-Returner, develops, as before. the contemplation on the three characteristics and reviews the Seven Stages of Purity. In the supramundane thought-process at the fifth thought-moment, he gains the state of a Never-Returner *(anāgāmi)*. He destroys the force present in a Once-Returner of being born once. As a Never-Returner he destroys completely the fetters of sense-desires and ill-will. Hence, he does not return to this planet nor does he seek a celestial abode. If he fails to attain Nibbāna in this life, he is reborn in the Pure Abodes (*suddhāvāsa)*, a special reserve for Anāgāmis. There he attains full sanctitude (arahat-hood), and on passing from there is reborn no more.

Our noble Pilgrim, as before. pursues his contemplation and reviews the Seven Purities. At the fifth moment of the supramundane thought-process, canker-less[24] he attains the supreme goal of the Holy Life-that of a Perfect One (*Arahant*). A Perfect One totally eradicates the five higher Fetters of (i) the desire for the Form World (*rūpa-rāga*), (ii) the desire for the Formless World (*arūpa-rāga)*, (iii) conceit (*māna*), (iv) restlessness (*uddhacca*) and (v) ignorance (*avijjā*). Our noble Pilgrim now comprehends: "Destroyed is birth, done is what was to be done, and there is no more of being such or such".

I have now to make a few observations regarding the Stream-Winner, who is, in fact, the theme of this Essay. As I indicated earlier, the fifth supramundane *javana* thought-moment is the Path-consciousness (*magga-citta*), and the two succeeding thought-moments, the sixth and the seventh are the Stream-entry Fruition-consciousness (*sotāpatti-phala-citta*). It is during this

infinitesimally short period of time that a Stream-Winner gets a glimpse of Nibbāna.

At the moment when the Pilgrim wins the Stream he comprehends the Four Noble Truths: This is Suffering: This is the Origin of Suffering: This is the Cessation of Suffering: This is the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering. This knowledge concerning the Four Noble Truths helps him to steer clear of the rocks and shoals; that is, the numerous views (*diṭṭhi*) which he comes across on the Stream.

1. The knowledge of Suffering (*dukkha-ñāna*) helps him to steer clear of the views: (i) the view of an abiding self or soul and (ii) the view that the aggregates are lasting, beautiful, pleasurable and self.

2. The knowledge of the Origin of Suffering (*dukkha samudaya ñāṇa*) steers him clear of (i) the view that there is no birth after death (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*), (ii) that there is a Creator God and (iii) the view that everything comes into being spontaneously without a cause (*ahetuka vāda*).

3. The knowledge of the Cessation of Suffering (*dukkha nirodha-ñāṇa*) steers him clear of, (i) the view of Eternalism (*sassata-diṭṭhi*), (ii) the view that the Realm of Neither Perception nor non-Perception is Nibbāna and (iii) that the sphere of beings devoid of consciousness (*asaññā-satta*) is Nibbāna.

4. The knowledge of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering (*dukkha nirodha gāminī paṭipadā ñāṇa*) steers him clear of (i) the view that there is no effect (*vipāka*) in giving (alms), nor reward for good deeds nor punishment for evil deeds (*akiriya diṭṭhi*), (ii) that there is neither this world nor a world beyond, there is no moral

obligation toward father and mother and that in this world there are no recluses or brahmins of virtuous conduct, who with wisdom revealed and proclaimed the true nature of things (*natthika-vāda*) and (iii) the view that eternal happiness can be had by following either self-indulgence or self-mortification.

The knowledge of winning the Stream (*sotāpatti-ñāṇa*) is spoken in terms of "all that is bound to arise is bound to cease", or, in other words, whatever is born must die (*uppāda vaya dhammino*). This realistic view of the transiency of all compound things is best illustrated in the tragic story of the young mother Kisā Gotami which is found in the commentary to the *Anguttara Nikāya*. Almost demented at the loss of her first-born baby boy, she ran along the streets of Sāvatthi crying: "Give me medicine for my son". A kindly person directed her to the Buddha, who sensing the spiritual maturity in her, sent her on a mission to fetch a few grains of mustard from any house where no one had ever died. She failed to obtain the grains of mustard in the manner instructed by the Buddha. While returning to the Buddha, it suddenly dawned upon her that her son was not the only one that death has overcome, and that that was a law common to all mankind. She then took her dead child to the charnel ground.

When she stood before the Buddha, he gently asked her: "Gotami, did you get the tiny grains of mustard seed?" "Done, reverend Sir, is the business of the mustard seed". She had gained the knowledge of Stream-entry.

The Sangīti Sutta (mentioned earlier) speaks of four qualities or accomplishments found in a Stream-Winner (*sotapannassa-aṅgani*). They are born of an unshakable

confidence (*aveccappasādo*) in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. He has realised (i) that the Buddha is, indeed, that Blessed One, Worthy, Fully Enlightened, endowed with knowledge and virtue, Well-gone; Knower of the three worlds, Incomparable Charioteer of Beings to be tamed, Guide of gods and men, the Enlightened Lord.

He has realised (ii) that the Dhamma is well-expounded by the Lord, is visible, immediate, inviting to come and behold, leading to Deliverance and to be understood through experience by the wise.

He has realised (iii) that the Sangha is on the Path to final happiness, on the straight Path, on the Path of wisdom, on the Path of correct living; has attained the four Paths (of holiness) and their fruitions; is worthy of offerings brought from afar, is worthy of hospitality, of gifts, is worthy of reverence, is an incomparable field of merit to the world.

He is also conscious of the fact that (iv) the Stream-Winner is possessed of the purest virtue, (*ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti*) leading to supramundane concentration.

What, then, is this purest virtue? it is virtue that is unbroken and continuous at the beginning, the middle and the end, and wherein the precepts are not broken at any point, but are observed throughout in their natural order; it is a virtue where the precepts are not broken here and there; it is a virtue free from craving; it is a virtue praised highly by the wise; it is a virtue unadulterated by desire and false views; it is a virtue that induces neighbourhood (*upacāra*) and attainment (*appana*) concentration.

As I conclude this Essay, I must repeat, with all the emphasis at my command, that inner purification is productive of greater good than evanescent material possessions or temporary celestial comforts. For as the Blessed One says :—

> " Better than absolute sovereignty over the earth, better than going to heaven, better than lordship over all the worlds is the Fruit of a Stream-Winner".[25]

Everyone should ask himself the question : What is the meaning of life? To the materialist who worships at the altar of Hedonism, the meaning of life is: "Eat, drink and enjoy, for tomorrow we die". To the Buddhist, who understands the Law of Causality, "he who sees uprising by way of cause sees Dhamma; he who sees Dhamma sees uprising by way of cause" (*yo paṭiccasamuppādaṁ passati so dhammaṁ passati, yo dhammaṁ passati so paṭiccasamuppādaṁ passati*)[26]. To him the meaning of life is to gain Insight and see himseif as he really is. To this end he treads the Noble Eight-fold Path as taught by the Shower of the Way. Insight rewards him with entry into the Stream. May you with stirred up energy, with human strength and with determined zeal, strive to gain the Stream here and now.

With this fervent and sincere appeal we dedicate this Essay to our readers. If in the perusal of it they obtain the inspiration and earnestness to embark on this great spiritual adventure possible to man, we can then have the satisfaction of knowing that our labours have been worthwhile, and by that they are fully compensated.

> " Great is the goal. that the man of
> stirred up energy, remote from evil,
> unfavourable things, can make perfect".
>
> (Saṁyutta ii, 29)

Notes

1 This quotation is from the Brahma Suttas of the *Saṁyutta Nikāya* vi, 2, 3, Brahma Sahampati visits the Buddha, who was living with the Magadhese at Andhakavinda. He notices a large assemblage of monks seated in front and on either side of the Buddha. Among them are a large number of Arahants (saints), and, also, a numerically larger number of those who have reached "the Stream, the Holy Way", the subject of this Essay.

2 It is Insight Wisdom (*vipassanā-ñāṇa*) that helps to reveal phenomenal existence as it really is: its impermanency (*anicca*), its imperfectness (*dukkha*) and its impersonality (*anattā*).

3 *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, ii, 28, 29.

4 *Majjhima Nk.* i, 173. Also *Saṁyutta Nk.* xv, i; xv, 3; xv, 13.

5 *Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta*, Dīgha Nk. xvi.

6 *Dhammapada*, verse 78.

7 Ibid. Verse 79.

8 Ibid. Verse 364.

9 *Saṁyutta Nk.* LVI, ii.

10 *Vinaya Mahāvagga*, p. 10.

11 *Majjhima Nk.* i, 479.

12 *Udāna*, p. 67.

13 *Dhammapada* verse 275

14 *Maha Parinibbāna Sutta*, *Dīgha* xvi, p. 108.

15 The *raison d'etre* of the Buddha-Dhamma is the Four Noble Truths. It is only by a clear understanding and perception of the Four Noble Truths that one can call a halt to the process of Becoming. "By not seeing the Aryan Truths as they really are,

Long is the path that is traversed through
many a birth,
When these are grasped, the cause of
rebirth is removed,
The root of sorrow is uprooted, and
then there is no more birth".
(Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta)

16 *Dhammapada* verse 188.

17 Ibid. Verse 189.

18 Ibid. Verse 103.

19 Ibid. Verse 105.

20 While admitting that the monastic-rules (*pātimokkha*) are more exacting and demanding so far as monks are concerned, however, the fact remains that the precepts laid down by the Buddha for monk or layman have one underlying motive behind them, namely: the successful Walk on the Way resulting in the purification of vision. The initial step to gain this all too important vision is Morality *(sīla)* consisting in purity of body's actions, in purity of speech and in purity of living.

Those who criticise the negative aspects of the precepts should be told of the dynamics of the Dhamma. For example the Buddha-Dhamma breathes the spirit of loving-kindness and compassion toward all living beings; the spirit of charity *(dāna)* instead of stealing; the spirit

of chastity instead of unbridled passion; the spirit of reconciliation instead of slander; the spirit of truth instead of lying etc. It should be noted that the ten unwholesome actions *(dasa-akusala kamma patha)* have their corresponding wholesome actions *(dasa kusala kamma patha)*.

21 The Four Great Efforts are: (i) The Effort to avoid the arising of evil, unwholesome things that have not yet arisen; (ii) The Effort to overcome the evil, unwholesome things that have already arisen; (iii) The Effort to arouse wholesome things that have not yet arisen; (iv) The Effort to maintain the wholesome things that have already arisen, and to bring them to growth, to maturity and to perfection.

22 It is by employing the technique called Mental Development *(bhāvanā)* that mental tranquility is produced. Mental tranquility is the precursor to the development of Wisdom *(paññā-bhāvanā)* or clear Insight *(vipassanā-bhāvanā)*. For further information please read Ch. iv of "Fundamentals of Buddhism" by the late Venerable Nyanatiloka Maha Thera.

23 The Seven Stages of Purity are: (i) Purity of Morality *(sīla visuddhi)*, (ii) Purity of Mind *(citta visuddhi)*, (iii) Purity of Views (*diṭṭhi visuddhi*), (iv) Purity consisting in overcoming all doubts (*khankhā vitaraṇa-visuddhi*). (v) Purity of Insight regarding the Right and Wrong Path (*maggāmagga ñāṇa dassana visuddhi*), (vi) Purity of Insight regarding the Path of Progress (*paṭipadā ñāṇa dassana visuddhi*), (vii) Purity of Insight into the Four Paths of Holiness (*ñāṇadassana visuddhi*).

24 Cankerless. It is by totally destroying the Cankers *(āsava)*, also called the floods (*ogha*), that the Anāgāmin attains the state of an Arahant. Vide: The Four Cankers — Bodi Leaves No. B. 34 by the present writer.

25 *Dhammapada,* 178.

26 *Majjhima Nk.* i, 190 - 191.

ASPECTS OF REALITY
AS TAUGHT BY THERAVADA BUDDHISM

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ASPECTS OF REALITY AS TAUGHT BY THERAVADA BUDDHISM

IN regard to the question "What is ultimate reality?" the different schools of philosophy or systems of thought seem to fall into two main divisions. Some of them say that the ultimate reality is one; they believe in a permanent unity behind all the variety and change of the world. They are the monists, theists, animists, eternalists, traditionalists, fideists, dogmatists, ontologists, realists, idealists, and energists. All these schools, though distinct among themselves and even opposed to each other on many points, nevertheless have this in common: They accept an ultimate reality as an entity in the metaphysical sense, whether that entity be called substance, or soul, or God, or force or categorical necessity, or whatever other name may yet be invented. They may be said to follow a subjective method, molding reality on concepts; hence theirs is mostly a method of conjecture. The other schools say, some of them not very explicitly but still implicitly in their doctrines, that the ultimate reality is plural. They follow an objective method, molding their conceptions on observations. They generally deny a unity behind or within nature's plurality. These are the dualists, pluralists, atheists, nominalists, relativists, rationalists, positivists, phenomenalists, annihilationists, occasionalists, transformists, progressivists, materialists, and so on. Here again, all these schools, though differing among themselves on many points, have this in common: they reject a metaphysical entity.

Now, what is the place of Buddhism among these different "isms"? The answer is that it does not belong to either group. The ultimate reality of the phenomena in the universe—the chief phenomenon around which all others centre being the "I", the self—is, according to Buddhism, neither plural, nor one, but *none*. In religion and philosophy, as well as in metaphysics, the words "real" and "reality" express more than one aspect of things: the actual as opposed to the fictitious; the essential as opposed to the accidental; the absolute or unconditioned as opposed to the relative or conditioned; the objectively valid as opposed to the ideal or the imagined; that which ultimately and irreducibly is opposed to that which by means of various names signifies the mind's stock of knowledge. It must be admitted that in the suttas, or discourses, attributed to the Buddha, we do not find any terms exactly corresponding to "real" and "reality," but all the above antitheses do occur, and find expression in a variety of ways. The Buddha's teachings are more deeply and directly concerned with truth and the pragmatic importance of things, more with what might be called "spiritual health," than with theories. There are certain facts regarding spiritual health, however, about which it is necessary to have right views in order that action may be taken accordingly. These are *the* actualities; other things are of very much less value. The true is, therefore, the actual, that which is; it is expressed by the Pali word *sacca* (Sanskrit, *satya*), which means "the fact" or "the existent."

It must always be borne in mind that Buddhism is primarily a way of life and, therefore, that it is with the human personality that it is almost wholly concerned. Various metaphors are used to describe the essential

nature of the personality;* they are meant not so much to indicate the ontological unreality of objects and sense impressions (like the *māyā*, or illusion, which we come across in the Vedānta) as to express a repudiation of permanence, a sense of happy security, a super-phenomenal substance or soul underlying them. They are also meant as a deprecation of any genuine, satisfying value in spritual life to be found either in "the pride of life" or in the lust of the world.

At the time of the Buddha there were in India views similar both to those of the Parmenidean school of Greater Greece—that the universe is a plenum of fixed, permanent existents—and to that other extreme held by Gorgias and the Sophists, that nothing is. In all things the Buddha's teachings represent what he terms the Middle Way (*majjhimā paṭipadā*), and here, too, he formulated the doctrine of the golden mean, the theory of conditioned or causal becoming, the most succinct statement of which is to be found in the *Saṁyutta-Nikāya*.** "Everything is : this, O Kaccayana, is one extreme; everything is not: this, O Kaccayana, is the second extreme." The Tathāgata (that being the term which the Buddha used when speaking of himself), not accepting these two extremes, preaches his doctrine of the Middle Way.

The followers of the first extreme were known to the Buddha as eternalists (*sassatavādino*). Some of them

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* E. g. "To regard the body as something of worth would be like taking frescoes to be real persons." Or, again, "As one would view a bubble, as one would view a mirage, so should the world be looked at." (*Dhammapada*, 170.) "The world is like a dream " (*Saṁyutta Nikāya*, III, 141.)

** *Saṁyutta Nikāya*, II, 17. See Mrs. Rhys Davids, trans., F. L. Woodward, *Kindred Sayings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926), Vol. IV, p. 13.

stuck to the old sacrificial religion which promised blissful existence in heaven after death. Others favoured a monistic view of the universe and believed in the attainment of a supreme bliss which consisted in the dissolution of personality in an impersonal, all-embracing Absolute. There were others who held the idea of an eternal, individual soul, which, after many existences, would return to its genuine condition of free spirit as a result of accumulated merit. These various views are described in the Brahmajāla Sutta of the *Digha-Nikāya*.* It is interesting to note from these descriptions that the various schools of idealism, which later appeared in the West, had their counterpart in the India of the Buddha, e. g., subjective idealism, which holds that it is the "I" alone which exists, all the rest being a modification of my mind; or the objective idealism which holds that all, including the "I", are mere manifestations of the Absolute; or again, the absolute idealism of Hegel which informs us that only the relation between the subject and object is real.

All these varieties of idealism the Buddha held to be "painful, ignoble, and leading to no good, because of their being intent upon self-mortification."** Idealism. according the Buddha, has but one reality, that of thought, and strives for but one end, the liberation of the thinking self. Addiction to self-mortification is merely the practical side of the speculations of idealism, in which the "self" is sublimated with the natural consequence that the "self" must be liberated from matter;

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* The first discourse of the *Dīgha Nikāya*. See T. W. Rhys Davids, trans., *Dialogues of the Buddha* (Loudon: Oxford University Press, 1901), Vol. I.

** *Majjhima Nikāya, Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*. See Lord Chalmers, trans, *Further Dialogues of the Buddha* (London: Oxford University Press, 1926).

the "soul" must be freed from the bonds of the body. The passions of the body must be subdued even by force; body becomes the eternal enemy of the spirit, to be overcome by prayer and fasting and other austerities.

The followers of the second extreme, who denied any survival of the individual after death or any retribution for moral and immoral deeds, the Buddha called annihilationists (*ucchedavādino*). The annihilationists, too, or, as they came to be called here later, the materialists, had many varieties of belief in ancient India, Some, like the Epicureans, denied any external agency as the cause of matter and maintained that the highest good was pleasure. Others, very much in the manner of Hobbes or Comte or John Stuart Mill, held that only the sensuous could be an object of knowledge. But all of them saw only one origin, matter, and strove only for one end, material well-being. Increase of comfort, said the Buddha, only leads to desire for still more, and the desire for more leads and will always lead to conflict and conquest. He, therefore, condemned materialism as "despicable, vulgar, ordinary, base, and leading to no good."*

In the Buddha's view, both idealism and materialism, though theoretically opposed, converge both in their starting-point and in their goal, for "self is their beginning and satisfaction their end." Between these two extremes, therefore, of materialistic self-indulgence and idealistic self-denial, not as a comprise, but, "avoiding both," the Buddha formulated the Middle Way, "the way of knowledge and wisdom," not in the wavering of speculation, or in the excitement of discussion, but "in tranquillity of mind and penetrative

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* Ibid.

insight, leading to enlightenment and deliverance, enlightenment with regard to the real nature of things and deliverance from suffering and its cause."*

In following the middle course the Buddha borrowed from the eternalists their doctrine of the gradual accumulation of spiritual merit in a series of existences, but rejected their doctrine of an eternal spiritual principle. He saw contradiction in assuming an eternal, pure, spiritual principle which for incomprehensible reasons became polluted with the filth of mundane existence only to revert later to original purity. With the annihilationists he denied every permanent principle. The Buddha's originality consisted in denying substantiality altogether and converting the world process into a progression of discrete, evanescent elements. His position was not an easy one, because he had also to find a theoretical basis to establish morality. He was faced with the contradiction of a moral law without a personality on whom the law was binding, salvation with nobody to reach the goal. How he solved the problem will appear in the sequel.

The shortest statement of the Buddha's doctrine is contained in a formula which has come to be regarded as the Buddhist credo: "Whatsoever things proceed from a cause, the Tathāgata (i. e. the Buddha) has declared the cause thereof; he has explained their cessation also. This is the doctrine of the Great Recluse." It declares, in other words, that the Buddha has discovered the elements of existence, their causal connection, and a method to suppress for ever their active efficiency and secure their quiescence.

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* Ibid

The Buddha claimed that his was a practical teaching; its object was to show a way of escape from the ever-revolving round of birth-and-death, which constitutes *samsāra* and which is considered a condition of degradation and suffering (*dukkha*). This way of escape was meant primarily for human beings. True to this central conception, therefore, as stated above, the Buddha started with a minute analysis—using "analysis" in its strictest sense of "dissolution"—of the human being into the elements of which his being is composed. Analysis has always played a very important part in Buddhist teaching; in fact, one of its names is the doctrine of analysis (*vibhajjavāda*).

In this analysis, the human being was found to consist of two parts, *nāma* and *rūpa*, loosely translated as mind and matter, *rūpa* representing the physical elements and *nāma* the mental ones Matter is composed of the four elementary qualities of extension, cohesion, caloricity (*tejo*), and vibration. The relative qualities of hardness and softness and the occupation of space are due to the elementary quality of extension (*paṭhavī*). It is the element of cohesion (*āpo*) which makes the many parts adhere intrinsically and to one another, and this prevents an aimless scattering about or disintegration, thus giving rise to the idea of a "body." Caloricity depends on vibration (*vāyo*), for by increased vibration the temperature rises and when the temperature is lowered the speed of vibration is reduced; thus do gases liquify and solids solidify.*

The mental elements are similarly divided into four groups: feelings or "receptions" (*vedanā*), ideas or "per-

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* For a very good exposition of this and what follows, see Th. Stcherbatsky, *The Central Conception of Buddhism* (London, Royal Asiatic Society, 1923).

ceptions" (*saññā*), what is variously translated as "mental activities" or "complexes" (*saṇkhāra*), and cognition or "conception" (*viññāṇa*). *Rūpa* (matter) and these four divisions of *nāma* (mind) are called *khandhā* (aggregates or groups). The whole, in brief, is an analysis of the "I" or "personality" (*sakkāya*). The apparently unitary "I" is broken up into a number of layers, somewhat as in a burning flame a number of layers of colour can be distinguished. But the layers of colour in a flame are not parts laid out after the fashion of pieces in mosaic, alongside one another; so also is it with the five *khandhā* or groups. They are a continuous, unbroken process of action, of which it is expressly said that they are a "burning".* In all of them an arising and a passing away are to be cognized; they are not parts of a whole but forms of action, a process of mental-corporeal "nutrition" or "sustenance," in which the corporeal as well as the mental forms of grasping (*upādāna*)** fall together into one conceptual unity. They are different modes in which the "I" enters into relation with the external world, lays hold of it, "seizes" it. The relationship is not an immediate relation with the external world in which a metaphysical "I" is endowed *a priori* with the power of cognizing, nor is it the mediate relation of a purely physical process in which the "I" only builds itself up *a posteriori* on the basis of continued experiences.

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* *Sankhāra* is a very difficult term to translate, since it means various things in various contexts. Etymologically, it means "what is put together as a composite thing." See T. W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pāli-English Dictionnry* Pāli Text Society), s. v.

** 'The form, O monks, is aburning" (*rūpaṁ bhikkhave āditta*ṁ and so on with the other *Khandha*. *Saṁyutta Nikāya, Khandha Saṁyutta*, 61. See F. L. Woodward, *Kindred Sayings* (London: Oxford University Press. 1927), Vol. V.

The external world with which the human being comes into relationship is also analyzed into its component elements. This relationship is one of cognition, and in discussing how this cognition is established mention is made of cognitive faculties (*indriya*) and their objects (*visaya*). There are thus six cognitive faculties or senses—the senses of vision, audition, smell, taste, touch, and the faculty of intellect or consciousness.* Corresponding to these as objects of cognition are, respectively, colour and shape, sound, odour, savours, tangibles, and non-sensuous objects. These twelve factors, the cognitive faculties and their objects, are called *āyatanāni*, or bases of cognition. The term *āyatana* means place, sphere, entrance, or point of support, and is used to cover both organ of sense (internal or *ajjhattāni āyatanāni*) and sense object (external or *bahirāni āyatanāni*), the meeting of which constitutes cognition (*viññāṇa*). This cognition, which results from the meeting, can be divided into six classes, according to the cognitive faculty concerned and the sense object, such as eye-cognition (*cakkhuviññāṇa*), and so on In the case of the sixth cognitive faculty (*manas*), consciousness itself, i. e., its preceding moment acts as a faculty for apprehending non-sensuous objects. The three constituents that comprise a cognition—sense faculty, sense object, and resultant consciousness—are classified under the name *dhātu* (element). We thus get eighteen *dhātu*—the six sense faculties, their six sense objects, and the six varieties of resultant consciousness. This consciousness is the experience of the unity between concept and object; it is not something that *is*, but something that *becomes*. It is not an object of knowing,

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* For an excellent exposition of this point, see Paul Dahlke, *Buddhism* (London: The Macmillan Company, 1927) pp. 129 ff.

but knowing itself, an ever - repeated new becoming, new upspringing out of its antecedent conditions. As such it resembles what the physicist calls living - force, vital energy. It is formed, enfleshed, in *nāma-rūpa*, (mind-form, i. e., mind and body). Mind-form is the antecedent condition of consciousness, on the basis of which the next new upspringing of consciousness will assume new individual value. Consciousness is actuality as action, which means something that is not but which, in order to be present, first must ever spring up anew. Between mind-form and consciousness exists the same ceaseless, quivering, leaping play which exists among the ever-repeated, new moments of combustion of a flame and its external shape. Without sufficient cause (*aññatra paccayā*) no consciousness can arise.* Just as for consciousness to be present, it must ever and again spring up anew, similarly the antecedent conditions upon the basis of which it springs up must also be present. It is from the friction of the living contact of senses with things that consciousness is born. It is thus a process of nutrition, of grasping, which embraces itself in its grasping, a process of growth, in which one moment is neither the same as the next, nor yet another, but in which every moment becomes another, passes into that other, just as one moment of a flame is neither the same as the next, nor yet another, but becomes the next.

The human personality and the external world with which it enters into relationship are thus divided into *khandhā*, *āyatanā* and *dhātu*. The generic name for all three of them is *dhamma* (plural *dhammā*), which is

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* See the *Majjhima Nikāya* (*Further Dialogues of the Buddha*) (London : Oxford University Press, 1926—), *Mahā Taṃhā Sankhaya Sutta*, 38.

translated as "element of existence." In Buddhism these *dhammā* are the only ultimate reality. Broadly speaking, the *dhammā* are divided into two classes, *sankhata* (conditioned, i. e., subject to various conditions) and *asankhata* (unconditioned). According to Theravāda, Nibbāna is the only *asankhata-dhamma*: all other *dhammā* are *sankhata* (conditioned). The *sankhata* (conditioned *dhammā*) have four salient characteristics: they are non-substantial (*anattā*), evanescent (*anicca*), in a beginning-less state of commotion (*dukkha*), and have quiescence only in a final cessation (*nirodha*).

It must always be recalled that the basic idea of this analysis is a moral one. Buddhism is defined as a religion which teaches defilement and its purification (*saṅkilesa* and *vodāna*). Purification or salvation lies in *Nibbāna* or *nirodha*, which is cessation from *saṁsāra*. Thus, when the elements of being are analyzed, they are divided into purifying and defiling elements, good and bad (*sāsava* and *anāsava*), propitious to salvation and averse to it (*kusala* and *akusaia*). Purifying, good, and propitious factors are those elements, those moral factors, that lead to *Nibbāna*; their opposites lead to or encourage *saṁsāra*.

This analysis was part of the Buddha's attempt to find answers to the great, primary questions which lie at the bottom of every religious system, which form the seed of religious development, upon the answer to which depends the nature of any religious philosophy - such questions as: Whence am I? Whither do I go? What happens to me after death? How do I know myself? How does this world enter into me, into my consciousness? To the Buddha's way of thinking, all these questions have one great fallacy, that of begging the question, *petitio principii*. His view was that there

should be another question prior to all these inquiries, upon which depends the very possibility of further questioning, namely: Is there anything at all which deserves the designation "I"? Here was a problem which the Buddha felt could not be solved by argument or mere logic (*atakkāvacara*), for, in logic, one has to presuppose the reality of the thinking subject as standing outside the process of thinking, as a witness or, rather, as a judge. Only one kind of logic, he said, could help here: the logic of events, because it is beyond sophistry; actuality can be understood not by argument but by analysis (*yoniso manasikāra*).*

As a result of such analysis, the Buddha discovered that the individual, conventionally called "I" or the "self," is a mass of physical and psychical elements without any permanent entity behind them to keep them together, without any "soul" inhering in them, the elements themselves being a mere flux (*santāna*), a continuity of changes. In postulating a mythical, unchanging entity as the possessor of changing qualities, one merely assumes, he said, the existence of that which has to be proved. The conviction that men hold that, though thought and actions change, the thinker and the doer remain the same, was a delusion, for it is exactly by thought that we change our minds, by actions that we change our lives. Actions cannot exist apart from the doer, cannot exist freely as such. If the action changes, the so-called actor must change at the same instant. Thus, the "I" must be identified with action. It is only the "I" which can walk and sit and think and eat and sleep. But that "I" is not a permanent, unchanging entity; it is identified with the action and is the action

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* For an explanation of this very significant word, see *Pāli-English Dictionary*, s. v.

itself, and thus changes with the action. "I" cannot stay at home while "I" go out for a walk. It is the conventional language (*sammuti*) which has spoiled the purity of conception (*paramattha* - ultimate sense, the supreme-thing-meant), though, in some cases, language does remain pure enough, as when we say, "It rains." Who rains? Simply, it rains, meaning, there is rain. Likewise, the concept should not be: "I think," but "There is thinking." This is the teaching which came to be known as the doctrine of *anattā*.

In this doctrine, the Buddha went counter to the three main systems of philosophy that were current in India in his, say, the teaching of the Upanisads, of the Sāṇkhya. Briefly stated, the Upanisadic teaching is a kind of monism, where a real being, Brahman, is assumed to be something eternal, without beginning, change, or end, and man's soul (*ātman*) is assumed to be an integral part of that Being, *Ātman* and *Brahman* being one. The Jainas had a highly developed theory of moral defilement and purification and a theory of spiritual existence extending even to plants and inanimate, non-organic things, which are also supposed to possess souls. The *Sānkhya* taught the existence of a plurality of souls, on the one hand, and of a unique, eternal, pervasive, substantial matter, on the other. Buddhism is opposed to all three systems. Forsaking the monism of the Upanisads, it declares that there is no real unity at all in the world. Everything is discrete, separate, split up into an infinity of minute, impermanent elements, without any abiding stuff. It agrees with Jainism in opposing the monism of the Upanisads and in maintaining that being is joined to production, continuation, and destruction, but disagrees with the Jaina doctrine which ascribes to a *kamma* a physical nature. To the

dualism of *Sānkhya* the Buddha opposes the most radical pluralism, converting the world process into an appearance of evanescent elements, and calls the eternal pervasive matter, which is imagined as their support or substratum, a mere fiction.

The term *anattā* (Sanskrit, *anātman*) is usually translated as "no soul," but, strictly speaking, *attā* is here synonymous only with a permanent, enduring entity, ego, self, conscious agent, etc. It is the permanence that is denied in *anattā*. The underlying idea is that, whatever may be designated by these names, it is not a real, ultimate fact; it is a mere name for a multitude of interconnected facts which Buddhist philosophy attempts to analyze by reducing them to real elements (*dhamma*). Buddhism does not deny the existence of a personality or a "soul" in the empirical sense. What it does deny is that such a "soul" is an ultimate reality, a *dhamma*. The Buddhist teaching of *anattā* does not proclaim the absence of an individuality or self; it says only that there is no permanent individuality, no *unchanging* self. Personality or individuality is, according to Buddhism, not an entity but a process of arising and passing away, a process of nutrition, of combustion, of grasping. A man's personality is conceded as being something real, a fact (*sacca*) to him at any given moment, though the word "personality" is only a popular label and does not correspond to any fixed entity in man. In the ultimate constituents of conditioned things, physical and mental, Buddhism has never held that the real is necessarily the permanent. Unaware of this anticipation, modern philosophers like Bertrand Russell are asking modern philosophy to concede no less.

The Buddhist term for an individual, a term which is intended to suggest the Buddhist view as opposed to

other theories, is *santāna* (stream), viz the stream of interconnected facts. It includes the mental elements as well as the physical, the elements (*dhammā*) of one's own body and external objects, as far as they constitute the experience of a given personality. The representatives of the eighteen classes of *dhātu* mentioned earlier, combine to produce the interconnected stream. Every combination of these elements represents a nominal, not an ultimate, reality. The number of psychical elements at any given moment is variable. It may be very considerable, because undeveloped, dormant faculties are also reckoned as actually present. Some *dhamma* are constant, present at every moment, others only under certain conditions. Elements which combine at any moment vary both in number and in intensity. In any individual, at a given moment, a certain element may predominate. All mind at every moment is an assemblage of mental faculties (*saṅkhāra*) or elements. Two elements, which are constantly present, are most precious: *samādhi* (power of concentration) and *paññā* (insight). If they become predominant they change the character of the individual and his moral value. The predominant element in ordinary men is ignorance (*avijjā*), which is the reverse of *paññā* and not merely its absence. It is a separate element, present at the same time with dormant *paññā*. But it is not constant, and can be cast out of the mental stream.

There is a special force of *kamma*, sometimes called *prāpti*, that holds these elements in combination. It operates only within the limits of a single stream and not beyond. The stream of elements kept together is not limited to the present life but has its source in past existences and its continuation in future ones. This is the Buddhist counterpart of the soul or self in other systems.

From the denial of substance follows the denial of of every difference between the categories of substance and quality. There is no "inherence" of qualities in substance; in this respect all real elements (*dhammā*) are equally independent. As separate entities they then become "substances" *sui generis*. All sense data are also substances in the sense that there is no stuff they belong to. We cannot say that matter *has* extension, cohesion, temperature, and vibration, but that matter *is* extension, etc., and that without these qualities there is nothing called *matter*. Matter is thus reduced to mere qualities and forces which are in a constant state of flux, in which there is no entity to support the qualities or to be the possessor of attributes or, as substance, to stand under them all, to uphold them all, and to unite all the phenomena associated with it. Independent of attributes, there is no substance, no substratum, not even the idea, because the idea is dependent on certain conditions. When science bends more and more to the view that all matter is merely a form of energy, a grouping and regrouping of forces, as advocated by scientific materialism, or as some would prefer to call it, energism, it is only admitting in different words the unsubstantiality of matter, which the Buddha declared more than two thousand years ago.

The same principle applies to the mental sphere. Mind is not an entity but a function; consciousness is thought, and it arises when certain conditions are present. Thought does not arise as the action of a "thinking subject," but is conditioned by, originates from, is dependent on, other states. As such, it will again be the condition, the origin, the *raison a'etre*, of further states. When it ceases to be it passes on its momentum, thus giving the impulse to new arising. Yet the individuality

of consciousness is not a mere physical process either. It is a process of grasping and will last only as long as grasping lasts. Just as a fire can burn only as long as it lays hold of new fuel, so the process of individuality is a constant arising, an ever-renewed laying hold of the objects of its craving. It is craving that causes the friction between sense objects and sense organs, and from that friction leaps forth the flame of new *kamma* which, because of *avijjā* (ignorance), will not be extinguished, but in grasping lays hold of fresh material, thus keeping alive the process of burning.

Thus the universe, with all that is in it, represents an infinite number of discrete, evanescent elements, in a state of ceaseless activity or commotion. They are only momentary flashes of efficient energy, without anything perdurable or stable, not in a condition of static being, but in a state of perpetual becoming. Not only are entities such as God, soul, and matter denied reality, but even the simple stability of empirical objects is regarded as something constituted by our imagination. The empirical thing becomes a thing constructed by a process of synthesis on the basis of sensations. Reality does not consist of extended, perdurable bodies, but, of point-instants (*khana*) picked up in momentary sensations and constituting a string of events. Our intellect, then, by a process of synthesis, so to speak, puts them together and produces an integral image, which has nothing but an imagined mental computation.

A single moment of existence is thus something unique, unrepresentable and unutterable. In itself, set loose from all imagination, it is qualityless, timeless, and spaceless (indivisible), timeless not in the sense of an eternal being, spaceless not in the sense of being ubiquitous, motionless not in the sense of an all-embracing

whole, but all these in the sense, respectively, of having no duration, no extension, and no movement. It is a mathematical instant, the moment of an action's efficiency. A representation and a name always correspond to a synthetic unity, embracing a variety of time, place, and quality, but this unity is a constructed unity, constituted by an operation of the mind, a chain of moments cognized as a construction on the basis of some sensation. Actions take place in time and space, as the expression of the pure simultaneousness of things and time as the pure successiveness of the process, but there is no space or time apart from their being correlatives of the concept.*

There are thus two kinds of reality: the one, ultimate or pure reality (*paramattha-sacca*), consisting of bare point-instants (*khana*), without definite position in time or space and with no sensible qualities; and the other, empirical reality (*sammuti-sacca*), consisting of objectivized images, endowed by us with a position in time and space and with all the variety of sensible and abstract qualities.

How, then is the illusion of a stable, material world and of perdurable personalities living in it produced? It is in order to explain this that the Buddha put forward the doctrine of dependent origination (*paticca-samuppāda*). Just as the Four Noble Truths - of Suffering, its Cause, its Cessation, and the Way thereto—form the heart of the Buddha's teaching, so does the doctrine of *paticca-samuppāda* constitute its backbone. According to this doctrine, although the separate elements (*dhammā*) are not connected with each other either by a pervading stuff in space or by duration in time, there is nevertheless a connection among them. It is this: Their manifestations are subjects to definite laws, the laws of causation

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* The Buddhist conception of time and space is given in *Saṁyutta Nikāya*. See Woodward, *Kindred Sayings*, Vol. I.

(*hetu-paccaya*). The flow of evanescent elements is not a haphazard process (*adhicca-samuppanna*). Every element, though appearing only for a single moment, is a "dependently - originating - element," i.e., it depends for its origin on some other preceding element or elements. Thus, existence becomes dependent existence (*paticca-samuppāda*), and this is expressed by the formula, "If there is this, there comes to be that" (*asmiṁ sati. idaṁ hoti*). Every momentary entity springs into existence or flashes up in coordination with other moments. Strictly speaking, there is no causality at all, but only functional independence, no question of one thing producing another, since one momentary entity, disappearing as it does at once, cannot produce any other entity. The relation is one of "consecution", in which there is no destruction of one thing and no creation of another, no influx of one substance into another, but only a constant, uninterrupted, infinitely graduated change.

Thus, the formula, "If there is this, there comes to be that" came to be supplemented by another formula, "Not from itself, not from something else, nor from a combination of both, nor by chance, does an entity spring up." It is coordinated, not actually produced. There is neither *causa materialis* (continuing substance) nor *causa efficiens*. This view of causality, that the law of causality is rather the law of coordination between point-instants (*khaṇa*), is not strange to modern science and philosophy. The world of Buddhism is like the world of the mathematician; the world dies and is born afresh at every instant; it is evidently the world that Descartes was thinking of when he spoke of "continuous creation."

The fact that the Buddha declared the *khandhā* (*nāma* and *rūpa*, i. e., mind and matter) to be completely free from any unchanging, undying essence does not mean that Buddhism taught annihilation of body and mind at death. For, besides the doctrine of transience (*anicca*) and soullessness (*anattā*), there is also the doctrine of *kamma*, or the transmitted force of the act, bodily and mental. A living being is a *khandha*-complex, ever changing, but ever determined by its antecedent character, and that is ruled by *kamma*. The long-drawn-out line of life is but a fluctuating curve of evolving experience. Man, even in this life, is never the same, yet ever the result of his pre-existing self. Action, which is another word for *kamma*, will be present as long as there is existence, because existence is not something static but a process. A process must proceed and this is done by activity, the activity of the senses. Just as a flame cannot exist without consuming, its very nature being combustion, so also the senses cannot exist without activity. But this is not the same as the psychological determinism of Leibniz and Herbart, for *kamma* is not fatalism. "If anyone says," declares the Buddha, "that a man must necessarily reap according to all his deeds, in that case no religious striving is possible, nor is there an opportunity to end sorrow." *.

How is the doctrine of rebirth to be reconciled with that of *anattā*? The question, "What is reborn?", is based on ignorance of the selfless process of *kamma*. *Kamma* is not an entity that goes from life to life, like a visitor going from house to house. It is life itself, in so far as life is the product (*vipāka*) of *kamma*. In each step we take now in full-grown age lie also the feeble

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* *Anguttara Nikāya*, I, 237. See F.L. Woodward, *Gradual Sayings*. London: Oxford University Press, 1923), Vol. I.

attempts of our babyhood. The present actuality, which expressed itself as the result of all the preceding processes, carries in its very action all the efforts which went into the making of the previous actions. When a seed becomes a sprout this is done by the last moment in the seed, not by those moments when it lay placidly in the granary. Yet, it is also true in a sense, that all the preceding moments of the seed are the indirect causes of the sprout. Every moment in the phenomenal world has its own totality of causes and conditions owing to which it exists. What we regard as a break in the continuity is nothing but the appearance of an out-standing or dissimilar moment. Death is but one such moment.

When a man dies, the component elements of his new life are present from its very inception, though in an undeveloped condition. The first moment of the (apparently) new life is called conventionally *viññāṇa*, "conception." Its antecedent is *kamma*, which in the formula of the doctrine of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) is designated *saṅkhārā* (pre-natal forces). These *saṅkhārā*, which through conception (*viññāṇa*) find continuity in the new life, contain latent in them the *anusaya*, which is the name for the resultant of all the impressions made on the particular flux (*santāna*) of elements in the whole course of its faring (*saṁsāra*). It is these latent factors that the psychoanalyst, for instance, finds as so much refuse and slag in a man's mind when he penetrates into it. They are his heritage of action (*kammadāyāda*), brought down through countless lives and not inherited by him, as is sometimes stated, as the heritage solely from the past of his race. Life is kinetic; rebirth in Buddhism is nothing but a continuity of impulse, *kamma-santati*.

It is sometimes said that the doctrine of *anattā* takes away moral responsibility and that with it goes overboard the whole fabric of social morality. But it will be seen from what has already been stated that there is no contradiction at all between the denial of an unchanging entity and the fact that former deeds engender a capacity for having a consequence. In fact, the doctrine of *anattā* enhances the idea of responsibility, for there is here no Saviour or Redeemer to intercept the unfailing consequence of one's action. Likewise, the statement that the doctrine of *anattā* is inconsistent with free will is also due to a misconception. If nothing arises without a cause, if everything is of "dependent origination," can there be free will? That is the question. There is a tradition that the doctrine of dependent origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) itself was established by the Buddha in defence of free will and against a theory of wholesale determinism. The Buddha singled out for special animadversion the doctrine of his contemporary, Makkhali Gosala, who maintained that all things are unalterably fixed and that nothing can be changed. The Buddha called this the "most pernicious" of doctrines.* On the other hand, the Buddha declared himself to be an upholder of "free action" (*Kriyavādi*). The law according to which moral or immoral deed must have its fruition is the law of *kamma*, but in order to have a consequence the action must be produced by an effort of the will. The Buddha declared, "Will alone is kamma" (*cetanāham bhikkhave kammaṁ vadāmi*).** It must also be remembered that free will really means "strong will," for the possibility of choosing shows the presence of two or more opposites. If there were no attraction or motive equilibrium would

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* Ibid., I, 33.

** *Anguttara Nikāya*, III, 415.

have been established already and no choice would be necessary. When inducement or coercion is not absent, it is a contradiction to speak of free will. Will is thus only a milder term for craving, and craving exists only in dependence upon feeling. Our real freedom lies, therefore, not in the will but in being without will.

How is the cessation of this round of birth-and-death, which is transient, sorrow-fraught, and "soulless," brought about? By following the path laid down by the Buddha. There are two factors that help a man to get started on the path: the one is right reflection (*yoniomanasikāra*) and the other is friendship with the good (*kalyāṇamittatā*). The Buddha is man's best friend; that is why the appearance of a Buddha in the world is an event of such significance. The cessation of suffering is called *nirodha* or *Nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* has so often been discussed that there is no need to say much here.

Only when the grossly wrong views regarding personality are disposed of is the path entered upon which leads to final deliverance. *Nibbāna* consists of two stages. When, by treading the Noble Eightfold path, the process of the arising of craving has come to a stop, the grasping of the "aggregates" (*khandhā*), which form the individual will cease also. When the lust for life has ceased, no further rebirth will take place, and the highest state, that of a saint (*arhant*) is attained. But, when the lust for life has ceased, life itself will not disappear simultaneously. Just as the heat in an oven, produced by fire, will remain for some time even after the fire is extinct, so the result of the craving which produced rebirth may ramain a while even though the fire of the passions be extinct. In this state of sainthood or *arhant* - ship which is called *Nibbāna* with residue (*saupadisesa-Nibbāna*), neither act no thought can be

regarded as moral or immoral. The arhant's apperception is ineffective. His actions are not influenced by craving and do not, therefore produce *kamma*. They are free from tendencies, from likes and dislikes. Where no new *kamma* is produced no results follow. But, when the result of previous *kamma* is exhausted and the *arhant's* life comes to an end, this state is called *Nibbāna* without residue (*anupadisesa-nibbāna*).

In this final emancipation, all suffering (*dukkha*) ceases. *Nibbāna* is where lust, ill will, and delusion are not. In Buddhism life is a process which has its sufficient cause neither in something metaphysical, like God, nor in something physical, e. g., parents. It is a process which is destined to come to an end and awaits the moment of coming to an end. Ignorance (*avijjā*,) i.e., ignorance about life itself, is the beginningless starting-point from which life ever and again springs forth, as from some hidden source that never dries up as long as it remains undiscovered. Life is begotten of ignorance; what keeps it going is grasping or clinging, which is prompted by craving (*taṇhā*). In life, grasping is the only activity, and there is only one actual object of this grasping, that which is conventionally called personality. Personality is the object in dependence upon which grasping exists, and, at the same time, is that which exists in dependence upon grasping. It is grasping that gives life its nutrition (*āhāra*). Through this nutrition, through the power of maintaining itself, life proves itself to be life. But to say this is not to say that grasping is the cause of life; that would be like saying that the cause of a flame is the fuel there present. Fuel creates no flame; it only maintains the flame. To understand this, to realize this, to live it out—that, in the deepest sense, is Buddhism.

Ignorance is destroyed by knowledge, by insight. The first step is insight into the real nature of conditioned things (*sammasana-ñāṇa*), as having the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and soullessness. He who perceives suffering only, but not the transiency thereof, has only sorrow, but when the unreality of life is understood, the unreality of suffering will also be perceived. From this understanding will ensue insight into the nature of all things as processes (*udayabbaya-ñāṇa*), the knowledge that there is nothing but a process of becoming. The next step is insight that becoming is ceasing (*bhaṇga-ñāṇa*). Becoming and ceasing will be seen as two aspects of one process. This is followed by knowledge of the dangers that have to be feared (*bhaya-ñāṇa*) and the understanding of the perils inherent in clinging (*ādīnava-ñāṇa*), together with the reasons for being disgusted with such an empty show (*nibbida-ñāṇa*). Thereupon arise the desire to be set free and the knowledge thereof (*muñcitukamyatā-ñāṇa*) which will grow into recontemplation (*paṭisaṇkhāna-ñāṇa*), that is, contemplation of the characteristics of transiency, sorrow and soullessness, but with increased insight as seen from a higher plane. This will be followed by even-mindedness regarding the activities of life, which is due not to lcak of interest but lack of self-interest. The climax of discernment is reached with the insight of adaptation (*anuloma-ñāṇa*), which is the gateway to emancipation (*vimokka-mukha*), where the mind is qualified for final deliverance.

The basis of all this is renunciation. Renunciation cannot be learned; it must grow, like the dawn. When it is night we can admire the millions of stars but all their beauty and the glory of the moon, too, fade with the

first rays of the sun. Renunciation begins when one learns to distinguish between the value a thing has because one wants it and the value it has apart from one's desire. The value of a thing is regulated by one's desire for it; if one wants to know its real value one must give up one's desire for it, but then it will be seen at once that it has lost all value. To be carefree—that is the secret of happiness—but not to be careless. This freedom from care is the result of forgetting the self, the result of self-renunciation. When pleasures vanish of their own accord, they end in keen anguish of the mind; when relinquished by one's own will, they produce infinite happiness, proceeding from tranquillity. Just as darkness can be experienced only when all light is extinguished, so, also, *Nibbāna* can be realized only when all attachment has been destroyed.

The realization of this truth is attained by the threefold practice of *sīla*, *samādhi*, and *paññā*. *Sīla* is discipline of both body and mind, whereby the defilements that cloud wisdom are removed. But mere morality is not enough; it must be accompained by mental development. All morality which strives to perpetuate the self is a subtle kind of selfishness. The more subtle and sublimated it is, the more rationalized and idealized, the more dangerous. *Samādhi* is the stilling of thought, the perfect equilibrium of mind, which is attained by the *Jhāna* (Sanskrit, *dhyāna*), the so-called "trances". They constitute the first taste of the happiness of *Nibbāna*. It is the joy of having found a possibility of escape from the round of birth, suffering, and death. The increase of this joy becomes sheer delight, which then gives place to a serene tranquillity, and then to a sense of security and equilibrium, the bliss of well-being (*sukha*), which is the very opposite of

insecurity and unbalanced striving. In that state of tranquillity, not disturbed by likes and dislikes, not made turbid by passions, not hazed by ignorance, like sunlight that penetrates a placid lake of clear water, there arises the supreme insight (*paññā*) that "All birth and death have ceased; the noble life has been lived; what had to be done has been accomplished, and beyond this there is no more." This is the supreme moment of illumination when the saint (*arhant*) sees the whole universe with the vividness of a living reality. It is described as a double moment, a moment of feeling as well as a moment of knowledge. In sixteen consecutive thought - instants, the *arhant* has been through the whole universe and has seen it in the four stages of its evolution toward quiescence. This supreme moment of illumination is the central point of the teaching regarding the path to deliverance.

Such is *nibbāna*, where the insight of non-self has taken the place of delusion and ignorance; where being will be seen as a mere process of becoming, and becoming as ceasing; where the spell that has kept us in bondage will be broken; where the dream-state will vanish into reality, and reality will be realised. This reality is not the eternalization of a self but the escape therefrom, not the deliverance or the salvation of the self but the deliverance and salvation from the self, from the misconceived "I". And with this, the last word has been said. Where craving has ceased, the process of becoming, which is grasping, has ceased also. Where there is no more becoming, there is no more birth, with all its concomitants of sorrow, decay, and death.

Is *Nibbāna* annihilation ? Yes and no. Yes, because it is the annihilation of the lust for life, of the passions, of craving and grasping, and all the things that result

therefrom. But, on the other hand, where there is nothing to be annihilated, there can be no annihilation. That which constantly arises and is arising is nothing but a process of change and in changing also constantly ceases—that cannot be said to be destroyed; it merely does not arise again. *Nibbāna* is thus best described as deliverance, surpassing all understanding, above all emotion, beyond all striving, the non-created, the non-conditioned, the non-destructible, which all may attain through insight and realization. It is the culmination of the Buddha's teaching: "Just as, O monks, the ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt, so the doctrine and the discipline have but one taste, the taste of deliverance." *

"Hard is the infinite to see; truth is not easy to see; craving is pierced by him who knows; for him who sees, naught remains." **

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* Ibid., IV, 201.

** *Udāna*, VIII, 2. See F. L. Woodward, Trans., *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon*, Pt. II (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1935).

Aspects of
BUDDHIST
SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY

Two Essays

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A RECENT CRITICISM OF BUDDHISM

PROFESSOR Toynbee in his recent work, *An Historian's Approach to Religion*, makes certain criticisms of Buddhism on the basis of what he believes to be the account given of the life and teaching of the Buddha in the Hinayanian[1] scriptures. It is proposed in this article to examine these criticisms in the light of the relevant material in the Pali Canon, which the Hinayana School holds in high regard as its main source of knowledge and inspiration with regard to the Buddha and his doctrine.

Toynbee's criticisms may be briefly listed as follows. He asserts that (*a*) there is a basic inconsistency between the life and teaching of the Buddha and that (*b*) it would seem that his life has at least more value than his teaching since (i) the account given of human nature in his teaching is wanting, (ii) the goal it sets forth would appear to be intrinsically unattainable and that (iii) even if it were attainable it would not seem desirable.

I

Let us examine the grounds on which these criticisms are made and see whether they are justified in the light of the account given of the life and teaching of the Buddha in the Pali Canon.

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1. 'Hinayana" is not a very happy term to denote the Theravada School of the S. E. Asian countries partly because it is a term of contempt but mainly because it tends to presuppose the Mahayana metaphysics. I am using it, as no doubt Toynbee does merely to denote by it the Southern School of Buddhism.

Toynbee says that "the Buddha was an illogical evangelist" (p. 77) and speaks of his "sublime inconsistency" (p. 64) or "sublimely illogical practice" (p. 73). Now, what is the nature of his inconsistency? There seem to be three respects in which a religious teacher may be held to be inconsistent. His life may be inconsistent in the sense that his response or pattern of behaviour in some situations may be radically different from that of other situations which are essentially like them. His teaching may be inconsistent in that there are at least two propositions in it, one of which or what it entails contradicts the other or what the other entails. Lastly, while his life may be perfectly consistent and his teaching a coherent whole when taken independently of each other, his life may not be compatible with his teaching and vice versa. When Toynbee speaks of the inconsistency of the Buddha he seems to have this last sense in mind.

Strictly there is nothing 'illogical' in this kind of inconsistency since such a state of affairs is quite conceivable and perhaps not uncommon, since it is not everyone who for good or for worse practises what he preaches. Consider, for instance, the case of a person who says quite sincerely that it is bad to smoke but continues to smoke or says that it is good to have a regular medical check-up but does not himself do so. In both cases we find a person asserting that a certain proposition p is true and behaving as if he does not believe p or finds it difficult to live up to the demands that p makes on him. In such situations, however valid the grounds for asserting the truth of p may be, his behaviour seems to undermine or impugn it, since not only do his actions not seem to follow on the track of his beliefs but appear to

go contrary to them. I suppose this is part of what Toynbee intends to convey by calling this relationship between teaching and practice 'illogical'. But perhaps he means more. Consider the case of the person who says that he has given up smoking but continues to smoke. Such a state of affairs is also quite conceivable and therefore cannot strictly be called 'illogical' but his behaviour shows that his statement is false. In the previous case the statement "it is bad to smoke" could still be true even if he smoked but the statement "I have given up smoking" cannot possibly be true in the light of his behaviour since his behaviour is directly relevant to the truth or falsity of his statement.

Consider Toynbee's own statement of the case he makes: "The Hinayanian scriptures purport to be recording the Buddha's practice as well as His preaching; and if their record is true, we are bound to conclude from it that the Buddha was not preaching what He was practising. In preaching, if He did preach this, that man's paramount aim ought to be self-extinction, He was recommending to others a course of action which He had rejected for Himself when the Tempter, after His attainment of Enlightenment, had suggested to Him that he should make His exit into Nirvana without delay. In choosing, instead, deliberately to postpone His own release from Suffering in order to work for the release of His fellow sentient beings, the Buddha was declaring, in a positive act, that, for Himself, he believed that to suffer in the cause of Love was a better course than to release Himself from Suffering through Self-extinction" (p. 292). In other words, if Buddha taught the proposition that "man's paramount aim ought to be self-extinction" (p), then in not extinguishing himself when he

gained this knowledge he was acting as if he did not believe in *p* as far as he was concerned. Toynbee puts this argument in a slightly different form elsewhere. He says that if the attainment of Nirvana involves the suppression of both good and bad desires, then after attainment there should be no motive or desire on his part to preach. If he does preach out of Love or Pity, this would be incompatible with his teaching about Nirvana since there would be at least some desires (Love, Pity) which have not been suppressed and continue to influence his behaviour. Either his claim about the nature of Nirvana as a state in which all desires (good and bad) are suppressed is false or his behaviour is not compatible with his teaching. So "if this impartial suppression of all desires, good and bad alike, was thus a logical consequence of the Hinayanian Buddhist doctrine, the Buddha Himself was guilty of a sublime inconsistency" (p. 64). In short, if the Buddha's teaching about the nature of Nirvana and the means of achieving it is true then his practice is not only quite incompatible with it but seems to show that this teaching was false.

It is worth pointing out that although Toynbee sees an incompatibility between the teaching and practice of the Buddha, one of the points often stressed in the Pali Canon is that the Buddha "preached what he practised and practised what he preached" (yathāvādi tathākāri yathākāri tathāvādi[2]). Let us start at a point where Toynbee and the Pali Canon seem to agree, namely, that what the Buddha suffered during the forty five years of his ministry was inspired by his Love for mankind. As

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2. Itivuttaka, P. T. S. Ed. 122.

Toynbee puts it: "Even if He did recommend in His teaching a self-centred pursuit of self-extinction, He was tacitly countermanding His words by his acts of self-devoting love" (p. 292). The Pali Canon makes frequent reference to the love and compassion of the Buddha. One of his lay disciples, Jivaka, says on one occasion: "I have heard it said that God is loving (Brahmā mettāvihāri) but I have seen with my own eyes how full of love the Blessed One is (Bhagavā mettāvihāri)"[3]. Where the Buddha converts the robber Angulimāla at the risk of his life, his kindness is referred to (Buddho ca kāruniko[4]) and it is often mentioned that the Buddha preaches not through desire for gain or glory but out of compassion and benevolence (anukampako Bhagavā hitesi anukampam upādāya dhammam desesi[5]).

If the Buddha practised Love, did he also not preach it? The injunctions to practice love and compassion towards our fellow beings are much more numerous in the Pali Canon than the references to his own example. The Buddha tells his followers: "Just as a mother loves her only child even more than her life, do thou extend a boundless love towards all creatures"[6]. The importance that he attaches to the cultivation of love for our fellow beings above all else is seen from the following statement that he makes: "None of the good works employed to acquire religious merit, O monks, are worth a fraction of the value of loving-kindness" (mettā)[7] Then there is the well-known saying to his disciples: "Even if ruffians

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3. Majjhima Nikāya, P. T. S. Ed., I. 369.
4. Ibid., II. 100.
5. Ibid., II. 238.
6. Sutta Nipāta, P. T. S. Ed. p. 26, verse 149.
7. Itivuttaka, P. T. S. Ed. 19-21.

were to seize you and cut you limb from limb with a doublehanded saw, you would not have carried out my bidding if you felt the slightest anger towards them"[8].

It would appear, therefore, that not only did the Buddha practise Love but he preached it and, viewed in this manner, there does not seem to be any inconsistency between what he practised and what he taught. But Toynbee is now likely to raise the question as to how his teaching about self-sacrificing love would be compatible with the proposition "if He did preach this, that man's paramount aim ought to be self-extinction" (p. 292). If Love and Pity along with selfish desires were to be extinguished in Nirvana, how can they continue to influence a person after his attainment of Nirvana? If the latter is true, the teaching about Nirvana would be false.

In spite of Toynbee's use of the epithet "self-extinction" to denote the ideal set up in Buddhism, it seems to be fairly clear from his references to the concept of Nirvana (pp. 62, 63) that he quite rightly does not subscribe to the annihilationist view of Nirvana which has been discarded by scholars on the ground that it does not take account of the positive description of Nirvana in the Pali Canon as also Buddha's own categorical denial that Nirvana was annihilation. But Toynbee does not seem to take account of all the implications of this view. Just as much as it is man's duty to attain "self-extinction" it is equally a duty of his to attain ultimate Reality for "self-extinction" and "ultimate Reality" are paradoxically synonymous. The Buddha's view seems to have been that the categories of logic do

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8. Majjhima Nikāya, I. 129, 186.

not apply to (atakkāvacara) Nirvana. As such Nirvana cannot strictly be described by positive or negative epithets. Positive epithets suggest empirical reality and negative ones annihilation, both of which are misleading. Nirvana is a transcendent reality beyond space (na katthaci, kuhinci), beyond time since "the distinctions of past, present and future do not apply to it" and beyond causation (na paṭiccasamuppannam). The passage from our finite self-centred existence to Nirvana is pictured as one from bondage to Freedom (vimutti) and Power (vasī), from imperfection to Perfection (parisuddhi, paramakusala), from unhappiness to Perfect Happiness (paramasukha), from ignorance to Knowledge (vijjā, aññā), from finite consciousness to transcendent Infinite Consciousness (anantavijñāna), from the impermanent to the Permanent (nicca), from the unstable to the stable (dhuva), from fear and anxiety to Perfect Security (abhaya), from the evanescent to the Ineffable (amosadhamma), from a state of mental illness to a state of Perfect Mental Health[9], from darkness to Light (āloka) etc.

In Mahayana we are familiar with the conception of the Buddha as embodying Infinite Wisdom (mahāprajñā) and Infinite Love (mahākaruṇā) but this conception seems to have its roots in the Pali Canon where Nirvana is depicted not only as a state of Perfect Knowledge (vijjā, aññā, jñāṇa) but as a state in which the 'boundless states' (appamaññā) of Love (mettā), Pity

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9. Anguttara Nikāya, P. T. S. Ed II 143. Here diseases are classified as bodily (kāyikaroga) or mental (cetasika-roga) and it is said that while we have bodily diseases from time to time mental illness is almost continual until Arahantship is attained so, that only the saint can be said to have a perfectly healthy mind.

(karuṇā), Sympathetic Joy (muditā) and Equanimity (upekkhā) find their fulfilment[10]. Nirvana is frequently defined as a state in which craving (lobha), hatred (dosa) and delusion (moha) are completely extinguished, but with the elimination of hatred, for instance, perfect Love (mettā) takes its place. One who has attained Nirvana is, therefore, endowed with the finest qualities of compassion, utterly refined and removed from the slightest tinge of selfishness. With the total elimination of the finite self-centred qualities of craving, hate and delusion the transcendent mind, shining with its natural lustre (pabhassaram cittam), is wholly filled with perfect renunciation and charity (alobha, arāga, cāga), loving-kindness (mettā) and perfect wisdom (amoha, paññā). So with the eradication of the selfish desires Love and Pity find their perfect expression.

In other words, far from it being inconsistent for one who has attained Nirvana to minister and preach unto others out of pity and compassion, it would be quite natural for him to do so. He does this not out of earthly considerations of gain or glory or out of a sense of duty for, as one who has attained the Highest, he is described as one who is 'free from debt' (anaṇa) and as 'one who has discharged his obligations' (katakaranīya) but because it would be just what such a person would quite naturally do by virtue of his attainment.

The role of Love and Compassion before and after the attainment of the ideal is not infrequently referred to in the texts. A person, for instance, who attains final salvation after the cultivation of these qualities of

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10. Majjhima Nikāya, I. 297.

love, compassion and meditation is described as "one who is cleansed with an internal bathing" (ayam vuccati bhikkhave bhikkhu sināto antarena sināṇena)[11] and it is urged that this bathing is to be done not in the river but "in the waters of Love and Compassion for one's fellow beings" (idheva sināhi brāhmana sabbabhūtesu karohi khematam)[11]. Consider again the following passage : In whatever monk who was covetous, covetousness is got rid of, who was malevolent, malevolence of mind is got rid of, . . wrath . . grudging . . hypocrisy.. spite . . jealousy . . stinginess . . treachery . . craftiness . ., who was of evil desires, evil desire is got rid of, who was of wrong view, wrong view is got rid of . . He beholds himself purified of all these evil unskilled states, he beholds himself freed (vimuttam attānam samanupassati) . . When he beholds himself freed, delight is born ; rapture is born from delight; when he is in rapture the body is impassible ; when the body is impassible he experiences joy ; being joyful the mind is concentrated. He dwells, suffusing one direction with a mind of loving-kindness (mettāsahagatena cetasā), likewise the third, likewise the fourth ; just so above, below, across ; he dwells having suffused the whole world everywhere, in every way with a mind of friendliness that is far-reaching wide-spread, immeasurable, without enmity, without malevolence. He abides . . with a mind of pity (karuṇā),.. with a mind of sympathetic joy (muditā) . . with a mind of equanimity (upekkhā) . .without enmity, without malevolence. It is as if there were a lovely lotus-pond with clear water, sweet water, cool water, limpid, with beautiful banks ; and a man were to come along from the east, west, north, or south, overcome and overpowered by the heat, exhausted, parched and thirsty and

11. Ibid. I. 39

on coming to that lotus-pond might quench his thirst with water and quench his feverish heat. Even so . . one who has come into this Dhamma and discipline taught by the Buddha, having thus developed loving-kindness, pity, sympathetic joy and equanimity attains inward calm[12].

That Love and Pity ceases or ought to cease with the attainment of Nirvana is a basic misconception due to misunderstanding the nature of this ideal. It is quite expressly stated that the saint who has attained perfection (sampannakusalam paramakusalam uttamapattipattam samanam ayojjham [13]) is endowed among other things with "right thoughts (sammā-sankappa) which do not require to be further disciplined (asekha)"[13] and these right thoughts include *ahiṁsā* (avihiṁsā-sankappa) which is a positive concept in Jainism and Buddhism.

That a person on attaining perfection whether he be the Buddha or one of his disciples ought to pass away immediately into Nirvana without being a light unto the world by his example and teaching, is an idea which is quite alien even to Hinayanian ways of thinking. The Buddha exhorted his disciples who were arhats to go and preach unto the world for the good and happiness of mankind [14]. Perhaps Toynbee was misled by the significance to be attached to the first 'Temptation' of the Buddha. According to the explanation in the Pali scriptures themselves the Buddha's compassion is in no way compromised by his attainment of Nirvana. He hesitates for a moment wondering as to whether he should preach, not because of any lessening or lack of love on his part for his fellow beings nor because he

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12 Ibid. I. 283.
13. Ibid II. 29.
14. Vinaya, P. T. S. Ed. I. 21.

thought that Nirvana 'was a prize to be clutched' (p. 293) but because he wonders whether the world, immersed in and getting satisfaction from its petty self-centred desires, hates and its cherished erroneous beliefs, would hearken unto a teaching which involves a total abnegation of all this. His thoughts on this occasion as recorded in the scriptures are as follows ; "Should I teach what I have found with difficulty? This Dhamma is not readily comprehensible to those given to craving and hate. It goes against the current, is subtle, profound, and difficult of comprehension and as such those who are slaves to their desires and are enveloped in darkness, would fail to see its truths"[15]. It is only after he looks into the hearts and minds of men and sees that there are among them those who would understand that he decides to preach.

Love and Compassion as ideals exemplified in the lives of Buddha and his disciples, far from being incompatible with the teaching of the Buddha, have a central place in Buddhism both as a means to the attainment of Nirvana and in a refined and transcendent form comprising the goal itself. Nirvana was only the extinction of the fires of greed, hate and delusion in the infinite waters of transcendent and unconditioned Love and Wisdom. When the Buddha or one of his disciples attained this transcendent state he came back to make use of his psycho-physical personality to serve others until it passed away The theory that it would be an act of selfishness to seek to share one's spiritual gains with another is unequivocally condemned by the Buddha in a sermon on the ethics of teaching. The brahmin Lohicca holds the view: "If a religious person acquired

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15. Majjhima Nikaya, I. 168.

some spiritual state, then he should tell no one else about it. For what can one man do for another ? To tell others would be like the man who, having broken through an old bond, should entangle himself in a new one. Like that is this desire to preach to others ; it is a form of selfishness. For what can man do for another ?" [16]. The Buddha dismisses this as a false and evil view (pāpakam diṭṭhigatam) and among the reasons given for doing so, is that such a person would be one who is lacking in love and sympathy for the welfare of others.

II

If the Buddha's life has value, as Toynbee grants, it would be difficult to see how his teaching, of which his life was an expression, lacks value. Here again Toynbee seems to entertain this view owing to a misunderstanding of Buddhist teaching. Let us consider his criticisms in detail. Toynbee says that the Hinayanian account of human nature is defective : "If a twentieth-century inquirer, brought up in the Christian tradition, found himself called upon to answer these questions as best he could, no doubt he would be likely to declare in favour of Christianity and the Mahayana as against the Hinayana. On the question of fact he would find the Hinayana's diagnosis superficial in its failure to distinguish between self-devoting and self-centred desires. He would find that a superficial diagnosis had led to a wrong valuation and a wrong prescription" (p. 291). Earlier in his work Toynbee seems to concede the distinction between good and bad desires, but both are to be suppressed for the attainment of Nirvana :

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16 Dīgha Nikāya I. 224 ff.

"If the Buddha was right as surely He was, in holding that absolute detachment can be achieved only through the extinction of all desire whatsoever, then the Hinayana must require not only the suppression of desires that are ordinarily regarded as being selfish, such as those of personal pleasure, prosperity, and power for oneself, but also the suppression of desires that are ordinarily regarded as being altruistic, such as Love and Pity for one's fellow sentient beings" (p. 64).

Although the analysis, classification and valuation of desires in Buddhism would not be the same as what Toynbee adopts, it would be quite incorrect to say that Buddhism fails to distinguish between self-devoting and self-centred desires. According to Buddhism, the springs of action are sixfold comprising the three immoral bases of action (akusalamūla), namely craving (lobha, rāga), hate (dosa) and erroneous beliefs (moha) and the three moral, bases of action (kusalamūla) consisting of their opposites, selflessness (alobha cāga), love (adosa, mettā) and wisdom (amoha, paññā). One of the terms generally translated as desire (taṇhā) literally means 'thirst' (Skr. trsṇā) and there are said to be three thirsts, the thirst for sensuous pleasures (kāmataṇhā), the thirst for selfish pursuits (bhavataṇhā) and the thirst for destruction (vibhavataṇhā). Of these the thirst for sensuous gratification (kāmataṇhā, kāmarāga) and the thirst for selfish pursuits (bhavataṇhā) such as the desire for self-preservation, self-continuity (personal immortality), self-assertion (power), self-display, self-respect etc. arise from the basis (lit. root, mūla) of craving (rāga, i. e. kāmarāga, bhavarāga). The thirst for destruction (vibhavataṇhā) springs from (the root of) hate. These are the three forms of thirsts or desires, which continually seek and

find temporary satisfaction (tatratatrābhinandini) though ever remaining unsatisfied and provide the fuel for the process called the individual. The distinction made between these unwholesome desires (taṇhā) based on craving and hate, and righteous aspirations (sammā-sankappa) based on selflessness and Love is so marked that the term 'thirst' is not used to denote the latter. What springs from selflessness and Love are not 'thirsts' unlike the products of craving and hate. Love (mettā) is as such not termed a desire since a desire in the above sense of a 'thirst' (taṇhā) is basically self-centred and its role would be to build the house that is the individual from birth to birth Selflessness (alobha, cāga) and Love (mettā) as the opposites of craving and hate, when they occur in their purest from, do not have these characteristics and are hence not considered desires in the sense of 'thirsts'. In fact by not doing so, Buddhism recognises the wide gulf that exists between the two. Desires are narrow and selfish (pamāṇakatam [17]) while selflessness and Love are boundless (appamāna [17]). And what the Buddha recommends is the complete elimination and eradication of the former until the mind is entirely suffused by the latter in their most refined state. The distinction and opposition between the two as motives of action is often mentioned. For instance, it is said that "one's speech may be opportune, or inopportune, true or false, gentle or harsh, useful or futile and *inspired by Love (mettacittā) or influenced by hate (dosantarā vā)*"[18]. The narrow desires are in fact to be eliminated by the development of the latter, their opposites. It is said that "by cultivating Love (mettam bhāvayato), ill-will (byāpāda) subsides"[19].

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17. **Majjhima Nikāyā, I. 297.**
18. Ibid. I. 26.
19. Ibid I. 424

The criticism is sometimes made that although the culti vation of selflessness and Love may be recommended as a means to an end, namely, in order to expel craving and hatred, they too have to be given up in order to attain the state of perfect detachment which is Nirvana. There are passages in the Canon which *prima facie* appear to favour such a theory. It is said, for instance that the mind's emancipation through Love (mettā-cetovimutti) is conditioned (abhisankhata) and, as such, impermanent and liable to cease and, realising this, he attains the supreme secure state of Nirvana[20]. To cite another instance, it is recommended that one should work for the cessation of evil habits (akusalānam sīlānam nirodhāya paṭipanno) as also for the cessation of good habits (kusalānam sīlānam nirodhāya paṭipanno) or for the cessation of good aspirations (kusalānam sankappānam nirodhāya paṭipanno)"[21]. It is perhaps passages of this sort, which if not carefully examined in their respective contexts are likely to lead one to the conclusion that the Buddha recommends the suppression of both good and evil and that both are almost valued alike.

But, if these very same passages are carefully studied in their contexts and on the general background of Canonical thought, they would acquire quite a different meaning and significance. Let us take the passage that we have just referred to. Here the question is asked: "How should one conduct oneself in order to eliminate evil habits ?"[21]. The answer given is that we should exercise our will (chandam janeti) or master-desire as Toynbee would have it (see below) and by a process self-analysis and effort on our part, strive (*a*) to eliminate

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20 Ibid I. 351.
21. Ibid. II. 26.

evil states that have arisen, (*b*) to be on our guard against the arising of evil states not arisen, (*c*) to make arise good states not arisen, and (*d*) to preserve (ṭhitiyā), to not allow to fall into desuetude (asammosāya), to further develop (bhiyyobhāvāya), to bring to maturity (vepullāya), to cultivate (bhāvanāya) and perfect (pāripūriyā) good states that have arisen. Evil, in other words, is to be eradicated and prevented from influencing us and part of the means for doing so is to cultivate the good. Now in this same passage when we come to the question 'How is one to conduct oneself in order to eliminate good habits ?', the answer given is precisely the same as the above comprising (*a*), (*b*), (*c*) and (*d*). Indeed it would look paradoxical as to how one can eliminate good habits (kusalānam sīlānam nirodhāya patipanno) were not the crucial distinction drawn in this passage between "conditioned virtue" (sīlamayo) and perfected "natural virtue" (sīlavā). It is said that the perfect saint who has attained final salvation (cetovimuttim paññāvimuttim yathābhūtam pajānati) is "naturally virtuous and not virtuous through conditioning" (sīlavā hoti no ca sīlamayo).

With regard to the elimination of the good aspirations, we find the same paradoxical statement, that this is to be done by eliminating evil states of mind and cultivating the good states of mind to perfection and here again the saint "who has attained the highest perfection (sampannakusalo), the highest good (paramakusalo) and the highest attainment (uttamapattipatto)" is said to be, among other things, "endowed with righteous aspirations which do not need further refinement or disciplining" (asekhena sammāsankappena samannāgato'). This conception of the Arhat is surely far removed from that of a person who has attained a state of cold quietist indifferentism prior to extinction.

The distinction made in the Pali Canon is that of the Conditioned (sankhata) goodness of those whose self-centred desires (i. e. the threefold thirsts) are not completely eradicated and the pure goodness of the perfect ones or the Arhats in whom these thirsts or desires have been completely extinguished. The conditioned goodness requires further disciplining (Pali, sekha; Skr. s'aiksya from√s'iks, to discipline, train) while the perfect goodness (paramakusala) of the saint does not require such disciplining or further refinement (asekha). The latter is naturally virtuous (sīlavā) while the virtue of those who have not as yet attained perfection is artificial and conditioned (sīlamayo). This is no denial of the importance of selflessness and Love the cultivation of which is necessary though not sufficient for the extinction of the self-centred desires but a recognition of the extent to which these same self-centred desires may condition and dominate much of our so-called acts of selflessness and Love so that it is only on attaining the detachment (virāga) of Nirvana that our Love and Pity could be entirely disinterested. What passes for Love and Pity is influenced consciously or unconsciously by our desire for gain or glory in earth or heaven and other such self-centred considerations such as fear of man or God. Disinterested Love and Pity can arise only when the mind at all its levels is totally purged of all such self-centred desires and considerations.

III

Now this goal, says Toynbee 'looks intrinsically unattainable': "Absolute detachment looks as if it might be intrinsically unattainable, because it is hard to see how the intensely arduous spiritual effort to detach

oneself from all other desires can be achieved without attaching oneself to the single master-desire of extinguishing every desire save this. Is the extinction of the desire to desire nothing but the extinction of desire a psychological possibility ?" (p. 64). To say that absolute detachment is intrinsically unattainable would of course imply that the claims made by the Buddha and some of his disciples to have attained such a state are in fact mistaken or false, but it is not primarily by an examination of these claims that Toynbee makes this assertion. Instead he (i) asserts that the giving up of desires entails the presence of a single master-desire intent on eliminating all desires save this and (ii) questions the psychological possibility of extinguishing this master-desire.

That the giving up of desires is to be accomplished by attaching oneself to a master-desire is precisely what Buddhism states: "Desires are to be given up depending on Desire" (taṇhaṁ nissāya taṇhaṁ pahātabbaṁ[22]). This master-desire is more usually designated by the term 'will' (chanda, sometimes translated as 'desire'[23]) and is defined as "the will to prevent the arising of evil states of mind not arisen, the will to keep out evil states of mind which have arisen, the will to make arise good states of mind which have not arisen and the will to preserve, develop, refine and perfect good states of mind which have arisen"[24]. In short it is the will or desire to do away with the unwholesome desires ('thirsts,' taṇhā) and to refine the wholesome states of mind to perfection by completely eliminating the impact of the former on the latter until these good states of mind (Selflessness,

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22 Anguttara Nikāya, II 146

23 v. Kindred Sayings, P. T. S. Ed., V. 239 ; also p. 243, fn.

24. Samyutta Nikāya, P. T. S. Ed , V. 268.

Love, Wisdom) cease to be in the least self-centred or affected by erroneous beliefs. This is the role of the master-desire which in a wider sense comprises the acts of will (chanda), the physical and mental energy (viriya), the thoughts (chitta) and the mental investigations and analyses (vīmaṁsā) directed towards the above end. So, on this count, the Buddhism of the Pali Canon would have no quarrel with Toynbee's assertion that a master-desire would be necessary to give up every desire save this.

The disagreement would be with the next step of Toynbee, namely, his statement that it would be psychologically impossible to extinguish this master-desire. If by "the desire to desire nothing but the extinction of desire" Toynbee means "the master-desire" the objection would be 'Is the extinction of the master-desire a psychological possibility?' But why is this psychologically impossible? Apart from the mere suggestion Toynbee does not seem to make it at all clear as to why this is so. He does not provide any empirical grounds or logical reasons for holding that this would be psychologically impossible. Would he say that from what we know of the psychology of man it would by no means be likely for one to have a desire to do away with desires or to extinguish a desire to do away with desires. Now, Buddhism would grant that in desiring to do away with desires one would be going against the natural current (paṭisotagāmi) of the mind which continually seeks the gratification of its self-centred desires without ever finding satisfaction. But Buddhism would not grant that this is psychologically impossible and would point at least to the example of the Buddha and some of his disciples. It would be psychologically difficult particularly for those whose self-centred desires are strong but by no means psychologically impossible even for them.

On the other hand, is Toynbee's objection to the possibility of desiring the extinction of the master-desire primarily a logical one ? Is he saying that just as much as we need have a master-desire to extinguish desire, it would seem necessary to have a super master-desire to extinguish the master-desire and that this would lead to an infinite regress ? And is he also suggesting that the master-desire like the first-order desires cannot achieve permanent satisfaction ? If the objection is in this form, it has already been raised and met in the Pali Canon itself. A brahmin asks Ananda how desire can be fully extinguished since the extinction of desire by desire would be an unending process :

> " 'What is it, master Ananda, for which the holy life is lived under Gotama the recluse ?'
>
> ' For the sake of abandoning desire (chanda), brahmin, the holy life is lived under the Exalted One'.
>
> ' But is there any way, is there any practice, master Ananda, for the abandoning of desire ? '
>
> ' There is a way, brahmin, there is a practice for abandoning desire'.
>
> ' Pray, master Ananda, what is that way and that practice ?'
>
> ' Herein, brahmin, a monk cultivates the basis of psychic power of which the features are desire (chanda) . . energy (viriya) . . thought (citta) . . investigation (vīmaṁsa) together with the co-factors of concentration and struggle. This, brahmin, is the way, this is the practice for the abandoning of desire'.
>
> 'If that be so, master Ananda, it were a task without end, not one with an end. That he should get rid of desire by means of desire is an impossible thing'.

'Then, brahmin, I will just question you in this matter. Do you answer as you think fit'.

'Now what think you, brahmin? Was there not previously a desire in you (urging you) thus: "I will go to the Park"? When you got to the Park was not that particular desire abated?'

'Yes, indeed is was, master'.

'Was there not previous energy (viriya) in you (urging you) thus: "I will go to the Park" . . thought (citta) in you . . deliberations (vīmamsa) in you . . When you got there did not energy . . thought . . delibrations subside?'

'Yes indeed, master'.

'Very well then, brahmin. That monk who is an Arhat..who is released by perfect insight,—that desire which he had previously to attain Arhatship, now that Arhatship is won, that desire is abated..' "[25]

The argument is that logically the master-desire is not on the same footing as the first-order desires for unlike these self-centered desires which continually seek gratification without being permanently satisfied the master-desire would achieve final satisfaction and be extinguished with the eradication of the self-centered desires.

IV

The next criticism is posed in the form of the question as to whether the pursuit of absolute detachment, if feasible, is also good: "They sought to detach themselves from every form of mundane society and, beyond that, from the lust of mundane life itself; and the

25 Kindred Sayings. V. 243, 5.

very sincerity and resoluteness with which these Hinayanian Buddhist philosophers pursued their spiritual quest raise two questions: Is absolute detachment an attainable objective? And supposing it to be attainable, is the pursuit of it a good activity?"(p. 63, 64). Perhaps this criticism which was based on the misconception that Love and Pity were extinguished in Nirvana along with self-centered desires, is already met in so far as we have pointed out that these good states of mind, far from being effaced in Nirvana are refined and perfected so that they are no longer dependent on the egoistic base of the self-centred desires.

Yet the objection may be raised in another form. It may be asked how Love and Pity can be cultivated in the abstract by cutting oneself away from the life of society for the sake of one's own salvation. Is this not a radically egoistic pursuit in itself? Is not the ethic of Hinayana Buddhism rooted in the idea of achieving one's own salvation with no concern for others and even one may say at the expense of others who have to provide with their toil and sweat the basic necessities of life without which even their selfish ascetic existence would not even be possible.

This picture does not do justice to the Buddhist conception of the religious life. The Buddha does not say that the contemplative life (vita contemplativa) lived apart from the active life of society, was essential even to seek the goal of Nirvana in this life itself, although there is no doubt that the contemplative life was recommended in view of the better opportunities that it provides the individual. The life of the Buddhist contemplative, i.e. the monk, is not the same as that of the ascetic who retires from the world. He dwells aloof from society but nevertheless in society giving moral guidance and spirit-

ual instruction to laymen. This work of his for society is considered as valuable as the production of mundane goods and services on the part of the other members of the society. Although he seeks to achieve the final goal by his own individual effort yet the means of achieving it as well as the goal itself is stamped with selflessness. If he achieves his goal he continues to be of the greatest service to others because of his spiritual knowledge and attainments, with no expectation whatsoever of earthly or heavenly reward.

Can such a life be called egoistic? Although the term 'egoist' strictly refers to an individual whol seeks as an end his own welfare, we normally use the term to denote one who seeks primarily his personal material welfare even at the expense of others. But would a person who seeks primarily his own spiritual welfare at the expense of his material welfare or even his life and seeks it partly by his selfless service in the present and in order to be of the greatest service to others in the future, rightly be called an egoist? In so far as he seeks primarily his own spiritual welfare until he reaches the goal he may be called an enlightened egoist. But in so far as he does this by cultivating a selfless love for his fellow beings culminating in a state of perfect selfless Love which enables him to live the rest of his life solely in the service of others it would at the same time be the life of an enlightened altruist. Buddhism holds to the principle that one cannot save another without saving onself. The Buddha tells Cunda: "It is not possible for one who is stuck in the mud to help out another but it is possible for one who is not stuck in the mud to help another who is stuck in the mud. It is not possible that a man who has

not saved himself can save another but it is possible for a man who has saved himself to save another"[26].

Toynbee says that "the Mahayanian Buddhist's verdict on the Hinayanian philosopher can be summed up in an inversion of the Scribes' and Pharisees' jibe at Christ on the Cross. 'He saved himself; others he cannot save' " (p. 65). The Hinayana philosopher's reply would be : 'He saved himself so that others he can save'. The Buddha first trained his disciples to be Arhats and then sent them into the world to work and preach for the good and happiness of mankind. It would seem odd to call these Arhats, who like Punna went among unknown peoples ready to meet the worst persecution and even death with hearts of love, egoists. The ethical ideal recommended in the Pali Canon, as representative of the Hinayana viewpoint, is that of enlightened egoism-cum-altruism, the one being dependent on the other. The Buddha says : 'Monks, there are these four persons in the world. What four? He who is bent neither on his own welfare nor on the welfare of others; he who is bent on the welfare of others but not his own; he who is bent on his own welfare but not of others and he who is bent on the welfare both of himself as well as of others..He who is bent on the welfare of oneself as well as of others, is of these four persons the chief and best, topmost, highest, and supreme"[27]. According to this valuation the the best of all people is he who works for his own good as well as for the good of others, there being no conflict between the two ends when the good happen to be moral and spiritual.

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26. Majjhima Nikāya, I. 46
27. Anguttara Nikāya, II. 95.

SOME ASPECTS OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA AND BUDDHIST ETHICS

COMPARING the ethical teachings of the Bhagavadgita with Buddhism, Radhakrishnan in his *Indian Philosophy* makes the following observations : "Both protest against the absolute authority of the Vedas and attempt to relax the rigours of caste by basing it on a less untenable foundation. Both are manifestations of the same spiritual upheaval which shook the ritualistic religion though the *Gita* was the more conservative and, therefore, a less thorough-going protest . . In the descriptions of the ideal man the Gita and Buddhism agree. As a philosophy and religion the Gita is more complete than Buddhism which emphasises overmuch the negative side. The Gita adopts the ethical principles of Buddhism while it, by implication, condemns the negative metaphysics of Buddhism as the root of all unbelief and error." [1]

The impression that this passage leaves in the mind of the reader is that the Gita, though less critical of the Vedic tradition than Buddhism, nevertheless adopts, on the whole, the ethical principles of Buddhism and gives them a less extremist interpretation on the background of a more satisfying positive metaphysics.

Now, whatever the difference of opinions that scholars have about the origin of the Gita, they seem generally to agree that the work in its present form is eclectic in character and contains in it many strands of Hindu thought somewhat loosely knit together. As such

1. pp. 526, 7.

it is not surprising that the *jnānamārga* (way of intuitive knowledge) of the Upanishads should be well represented. Now it is from these passages that Radhakrishnan quotes[2] in support of his statement that "in the descriptions of the ideal man the Gita and Buddhism agree." But this agreement in the content of these passages which idealise the *muni*[3] or the "contemplative seer" is understandable for there is much in common between the way of salvation in Buddhism and the *jnānamārga* of the Upanishads and, to this extent, the ideal man and the ideal life pictured in each is very much similar. It may also be granted that the Gita references to this life have a more Buddhistic tone than the Upanishads in that phrases and concepts more typically Buddhist than Hindu such as "*rāga-dvesa*" (II, 64), "*maitri*" (XII. 13), "*kāruṇa*" (XII. 13), and "*nirvānam*" (II. 72) occur among them, betraying possible Buddhist influence on the Gita.

But surely the Gita ideal is at variance with the *jnānamārga* of the Upanishads, if we go by the main trend of its thought and its special emphases, which show a persistent and distinct preference for the Personal conception of God as against the Impersonal, for devotion (*bhakti*) as against abstract meditation on the Impersonal Absolute, and for the path of disinterested action based on moral imperatives (*karmayoga* and *svadharma*) as against the way of contemplative knowledge (*jnānamārga*). It is true that in this respect the Gita contradicts itself or at least provides only a very loose synthesis of doctrines which are apparently mutually inconsistent. For instance, although it is essential and generally maintained that the worship of the Personal Lord is

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2. i. e, II. 55-72; IV. 16-25; V. 18-28· XII 13-16.
3. II. 56; V. 28; XII. 19.

better than meditation on the Impersonal Being[4] which is Unmanifested (*avyaktam*) yet it is expressly mentioned earlier that "men of no understanding think of Me, the Unmanifest (*avyaktam*) as having manifestation (*vyaktim āpannam*) not knowing my higher nature."[5]

These two conceptions of God show up the inconsistency of the Gita teaching. On the one hand we are told that the highest intuition of God reveals his Being as Impersonal and without this intuition salvation is not possible. On the other hand it is said that worship of God as Personal (which necessarily entails an erroneous conception of the Divine Being according to the former view) is the easier, the more proper and the natural path to salvation, thus implying that entertaining an erroneous conception is not only no bar to salvation but is in fact the better path to it.

The same inconsistency is manifest where the life of the *muni* or the sage, who on attaining perfection is in no need of work that needs to be done[6], is represented, on the one hand, to be the ideal while the life of disinterested action is more often held up as the superior[7] though both guarantee salvation.[8]

Yet notwithstanding this divergence of doctrines in the Gita we should not overlook the fact that the ideal man as portrayed in the main teaching of the Gita is far removed from the Upanishadic ideal of the contemplative seer even though an Upanishad like the Isā is almost an epitome of the religious philosophy of the Gita while the contemplative seer finds a place, though not an important place, in the total background of Gita teaching. The Gita ideal is the man of action, who performs his social duties purely out of a sense of obligation and devotion to God.

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4. XII. 1, 2, 5. VII. 24. 6. III. 17. 7. V. 2; VI. 2. 8. V. 5.

In the circumstances it would be unfair both by the Gita as well as by Buddhism to say that "in the descriptions of the ideal man the Gita and Buddhism agree" merely on the ground of the similarity between the Buddhist sage and the contemplative seer of the Upanishads for whom the Gita finds a not too important place in the scheme of things. If, therefore, we study the Gita ideal in relation to the Buddhist it is at the level of social ethics that we have to make the comparison, no doubt on the general background of the metaphysics of each.

Now it would seem from the statements of Radhakrishnan (e. g. the passage quoted above) that even at the level of social ethics there is a similarity rather than a disparity in the ethical attitudes and outlook of the Gita and Buddhism. I propose to show that this is by no means the case and that in this respect the ethics of the Gita is to be contrasted rather than compared with the ethics of Buddhism. For this purpose I would like to show that there is a significant radical disparity between the attitude of the Gita and that of Buddhism at least on the problem of war and the belief in caste.

But before we go into the details of these problems it is necessary to point out that the fundamental difference between the metaphysical background of the ethical doctrines of the Gita and Buddhism is not that the metaphysics of the Gita is positive and that of Buddhism is negative as Radhakrishnan has tried to point out, but that the Gita metaphysics throughout maintains a deterministic view of the universe and of all events in it, while Buddhism on the contrary vehemently upholds freewill though granting the causal relatedness of events. This seems to be the essential difference

between the metaphysical standpoints of the Gita and Buddhism touching ethics.

It would seem that one of the fundamental pre-requisites of ethical action is that man should be free to choose between alternative courses of action open to him and should be solely responsible for the decisions he makes. If this is not granted moral injunctions would appear to lose their point. No one would deny that the Gita contains moral advice but this advice, it should be noted, is given in a context in which it seems on the whole to be taken for granted that the actions of men are strictly determined by nature (*prakrti*) which is controlled by the fiat of God. Nothing is more striking than the advice that Arjuna who has been seeking for an answer to the moral question as to whether he should fight or not, gets in the last chapter, where he is told that he has no choice in the matter for "if indulging in self-conceit thou thinkest 'I will not fight,' vain is this thy resolve. Nature will compel thee (*prakrtis tvām niyoksyati*),[9] notwithstanding the statement that "he may ponder over it fully and do as he choosest."[10]

This deterministic role or compelling power *prakrti* or Nature over which the individual has no control is one of the basic themes of the Gita and reference is often made to it. Thus in making a case for the necessity for action (*karma*) one of the arguments employed is that for individuals action is inevitable "for no one can remain even for a moment without doing work; everyone is made to act (*karma kāryate*) helplessly (*avasāh*) by the impulses born of Nature (*prakrtijaih*").[11] It would appear that individuals cannot help but act and that their actions are the mere working out of impulses generated by Nature

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9. XVIII. 59. 10. XVIII. 63. 11. 5.

(*prakrti*) over which they have no control whatsoever—a fact which is clearly indicated by the term "*avasāh*" which implies that the indvidual "has no power of mind" to offset the force of the impulses which dominate his actions. Later in the same chapter it is argued that this dominant power of Nature under whose yoke man can but only humbly submit afflicts even the man of knowledge for "even the man of knowledge (*jnānavān*) acts in accordance with his own Nature (*prakrti*). Beings follow their Nature (*prakrtiṁ yānti bhūtāni*). What can repression accomplish ?"[12] Samkara here interprets *prakrti* to mean "the sum total of the good and evil mental dispositions due to past actions manifest in this life."[13] Radhakrishnan however explains that this verse seems to suggest the omnipotence of nature over the soul and requires us to act according to our nature, the law of our being and adds that "it does not follow that we should indulge in every impulse. It is a call to find out our true being and give expression to it."[14] Yet if we take this verse for what it states in the context of the traditional comment of Samkara it is clear that *prakrti* here does not mean "our true being" as opposed to our false nature but our being as composed of all the modes which have potencies for both good and evil; and what the verse implies is not that we should not indulge in every impulse but that we cannot help but give vent to our impulses which we are unable to suppress, in that we are under the domination of *prakrti*.

The relation of this *prakrti* with the Supreme Being appears to be differently conceived in different contexts.

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12. III. 33.
13. *Prakrti nāma pūrvakrtadharmādisaṁskāro vartamānajanmādāvabhivyaktah.*
14 *The Bhagavadgita, p. 146.*

On the one hand the omnipotence of the Supreme Being requires that he should be the ultimate cause and ground for the operations of *prakrti*. On the other hand since the Supreme Being is transcendent though immanent in in every individual it was necessary that his being should be conceived apart from the operations of *prakrti*. We thus find it stated in one place that the Supreme Being sends forth the multitude of beings fixing the *prakrti* of each: "I send forth again and again this multitude of beings who are helpless (*avasam*) under the power of *prakrti* (*prakrter vasāt*) having fixed the *prakrti* of each (*prakrtiṁ svām avaṣṭabhya.*")[15] But in another context, *svabhāva* or inherent nature which is same as *prakrti* in connotation (see below) is said to operate independently of the Supreme Being: "The Lord does not create for the world agency or acts; nor does he connect acts with their consequences. It is inherent nature which works these out."[16]

Here the word *svabhāva* is used in a context in which *prakrti* would have fitted equally well. *Svabhāva* or "intrinsic nature" is here regarded as the ultimate agent or cause of all action as well as what brings about the natural consequences of these, very much in the manner in which *prakrti* was considered to perform this role in similar contexts.[17] But the use of the word *svabhāva* is much more significant in this context, where *svabhāva* is said to function independently of the Lord, since the word seems in its origin to have reference to a theory which gave a purely mechanistic or deterministic account of the universe without theistic assumptions.

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15. IX. 8. Radhakrishnan translates *prakrtiṁ svām avaṣṭabhya* as "taking hold of nature which is My own." Even this translation would grant the ultimate power over *prakrti* to God but to take *svām* as "each one's own" is more consistent with the Sanskrit idiom.

16. V. 14. 17. cp. XVIII. 59; III. 33.

The earliest reference we have is possibly the Śvetāśvatara Upanishad [18] where *svabhāva* along with Time (*kāla*), Fate (*niyati*) etc. are mentioned as possible alternatives to the theistic explanation of the universe. Again, Jñānavimala commenting on the *Praśnavyākaraṇa Sūtra* says that "some believe that the universe was produced by *svabhāva* and that everything comes about by *svabhāva* alone."[19] Then in the *Tarkarahasyadīpikā*, a commentary on the *Saḍdarsanasamuccaya*, we find Gunaratna quoting from the upholders of the theory of *svabhāva* a stanza which says: 'What makes the sharpness of thorns and the varied nature of beasts and birds? All this comes about by *svabhāva*. There is nothing which acts at will. What is the use of effort?"[20] This shows that the term *svabhāva* had reference to a theory which maintained that the universe was strictly determined and that all the processes in it were fully explicable in terms of such determinism and as a result denied freewill and the value of human effort to alter the course of events.

We cannot be certain whether the author of the Gita was trying to synthesise *svabhāva-vāda* as well into its general metaphysic. It is also difficult to determine the exact relationship between the workings of *prakrti* or *svabhāva* and the Supreme Being of the Gita, since on a monistic or monotheistic interepretation the *prakrti* or *svabhāva* would be ultimately dependent on Deity, while on a dualistic Sānkhya analysis they would be independent.[21] And the Gita does not seem wholeheartedly to support one interpretation, although the emphasis on a Personal God as the highest reality, lends support to

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18. I. 2. 19. Comment on *Praśnavyākaraṇa* 7.
20. Ed. L. Suali, Calcutta 1905, p. 13.
21. v. XIII, 19 : *prakrtiṁ puruṣaṁ caiva.*
viddhyanādyubhāvapi.

the monotheistic rather than the dualistic analysis. But so much seems to be clear, that whatever interpretation we adopt and whatever the import of moral injunctions in the Gita, the Gita metaphysic is thoroughly deterministic and, as such, is opposed to the doctrine of freewill and to the possible value of human effort since human beings are helpless (*avasāḥ*) in the predicaments in which they are placed.

It is, therefore, to be expected that in the last chapter after a long-winded argument Arjuna should be told that Nature (*prakrti*) over which he has no control "will compel him" to fight. It is also not surprising that one of the arguments employed to urge Arjuna to fight should be that "his enemies are already slain by God before the event" [22] or that "he should kill them and not desist since they are already doomed by him" [23] and that he is not ultimately responsible morally for their death since "he is to be only an occasion (or an instrument) for God's action."[24] The metaphysical import and ethical significance of this argument has been well expressed in the words of Radhakrishnan himself where he says that "the writer seems to uphold the doctrine of Divine predestination and indicate the utter helplessness and insignificance of the individual and the futility of his will and effort. The decision is made already and Arjuna can do nothing to change it. He is a powerless tool in God's hands . . . Arjuna shouid feel, 'Nothing exists save thy will. Thou alone art the doer and I am only the instrument.' "[25]

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22 XI. 33 : *mayi'vai'te nihitāḥ pūrvameva.*
23. XI. 34 : *mayā hātans tvām jahi mā vyatiṣṭhāḥ.*
24. XI. 33 : *nimittamātram bhava.*
25. op. cit., p. 280, 1.

Very much on the same lines is another argument as to why Arjuna should fight, namely, that since salvation is predestined and assured for all beings including Arjuna there is no cause for worry and he should carry out his allotted task whatever this may be. "Beings originate in the Unmanifest (*avyakta*), in the middle they are manifest and they would be immersed in the Unmanifest in the end. So why worry?"[26] Attainment of the state of *avyakta* or the Unmanifest which is the highest state of the Absolute[27], is equivalent to salvation, so that what is implied in this verse is that all beings would finally attain salvation in spite of the many vicissitudes they would have to go through in the course of their evolution and this is predetermined or predestined by the fiat of God.

If we compare this deterministic or fatalistic ethic and metaphysics with that of Buddhism we find that the latter is totally opposed to it. Not only do the Buddhist texts repeatedly uphold the doctrine of freewill and the value of human effort in offsetting the burden of the past and altering the course of the future, but they strongly condemn all types of metaphysical theories which give a deterministic or fatalistic account of the universe.

One such metaphysical theory which is often singled out for criticism in the Buddhist texts is that of Makkhali Gosala and this theory is condemned because of its unmitigated fatalism. Now, in this respect, it would appear that there is much in common between the metaphysics of the Gita and the philosophy of Makkhali. Makkhali denies the value of personal effort or human endeavour (*natthi attakāre . . natthi purisākāre . . natthi purisaparakkamo*);[28] so does the Gita when it says that

26. II. 28. 27. VII. 24.
28. Digha Nikāya, P. T. S., I. 53.

"mental suppression (of the impulses) can accomplish nothing."[29] There is even verbal agreement in the description of the state of man and the processes of nature. "All beings" (*sabbe sattā*, *sabbe bhūtā*) according to Makkhali, "are devoid of the power of will" (*avasā*), an epithet frequently used in the Gita to denote the same (e.g. *sarvah . . avasah*, everyone is devoid of the power of will[30]; *bhūtagrāmam . . avasam prakrter vasāt*, the multitude of beings helpless without the power of will on account of the power of *prakrti*). Man is thus impotent in the Gita since he is subject to the power of *prakrti* or *svabhāva*; in the philosophy of Makkhali all beings are impotent and helpless in that they are "subject to Destiny (*niyati*), Fate (*sangati*) and Nature (*bhāva-parinatā.*")[31] As Basham[32] says, "*Bhāva* seems in this context to be synonymous with *svabhāva*, i.e. inherent character or nature. It suggests, below the fundamental category of Niyati sets of conditions and characteristics in each entity which, acting as factors subordinate to the great principle, control growth, development and rebirth." There is yet another significant feature in respect of which the two philosophies seem to agree. Salvation as taught by Makkhali is predestined for each individual "for, just as a ball of thread when thrown would unwind itself to the end, the wise and fools alike will attain salvation after journeying through samsaric states"[33] This view has been called *saṁsāra-suddhi*[34] or salvation through transmigration and has been more explicitly referred to in a stanza in the Jātakas[35] where the dependence of salvation on Destiny is clearly brought

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29. III. 33 30. III 5. 31. Digha Nikāya. I. 53.
32. A L. Basham, *History and Doctrines of the Ajivakas*, p. 226
33 Digha Nikāya, I. 54 34. Ibid; cp. Majjhima Nikāya I. 81, 2.
35. Jātaka, VI. 229.

out. "There is no open door to salvation, Bîjaka. Await thy Destiny (*niyati*). Joy or sorrow is obtained by Destiny. All beings are purified through transmigration (*saṁsāra-suddhi*); so do not make haste (to attain) what is to come." It would be seen that these sentiments are very similar to what is found in a stanza of the Gita [36] where it is said that "the beings who originate in the Unmanifest Reality and live in a manifest state in the middle will eventually attain the Unmanifest Reality. So why worry?" The context of this stanza of the Gita reveals the import of the argument, namely, that Arjuna should not desist from fighting since his ultimate salvation as well as that of all beings including his enemies is assured. In fairness to the Gita, however, it must be mentioned that this doctrine of the inevitability of salvation appears to go against the grain of the moral advice of the Gita,[37] although it is implicit in its deterministic metaphysics.

How strongly these doctrines which denied freewill and the value of human effort and proclaimed the inevitability of salvation have been condemned in Buddhism may be seen by the references which Buddha makes to Makkhali and his theories in the Pali texts. In one place the Buddha says that he knows of no other person (than Makkhali) born to the detriment and disadvantage of so many people, comparing him to a fisherman casting his net at the mouth of a river for the destruction of many fish.[38] In another passage his doctrines are said to be the worst of all the doctrines of the recluses.[39]

There is also the pointed reference to and a criticism of aspects of these doctrines when taken up separately.

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36 II. 28 37. XVIII. 64-6.
38. Anguttara Nikāya, I. 33. 39. Ibid., p. 286.

Very often the denial of freewill (*akiriyāvāda*) is denounced. It is said that "the view that there is no freewill when, as a matter of fact there is freewill, is a false view."[40] The value of personal effort (*attakāro*) no doubt in making the future course of events different from what they would otherwise be, is often stressed and it is maintained that there is such a thing as initiative (*arabbhadhātu*), enterprise (*nikkamadhātu*), endeavour (*parakkamadhātu*), courage (*thāṇadhātu*), perseverance (*ṭhitidhātu*) and human instrumentality (*upakkamadhātu*)[41] against the determinists who denied such a factor in human undertakings. The doctrine that salvation would be attained in due course by faring on in *saṁsāra* or the empirical states of existence is also severely criticised; it is said that "the goal of existence (i. e. salvation) where there is neither birth nor decay cannot be realised by merely faring on (gamanena)."[42]

The main difference between the determinism of Makkhali and that of the Gita is, of course, the fact that the latter is theistic. Though the Gita would grant that all activity is directed by the operations of *prakrti* over which we have no control, it would, as we have shown above, submit that *prakrti* would find its ultimate sanction in the Divine Being, though there were passages betraying the dualistic Sānkhya analysis that the Divine Essence was quite separate from the workings of *prakrti*. Samkara's comment that *prakrti* was the sum total of good and evil mental dispositions of actions committed in the past (*pūrvakrta-*) is more in accord with the latter view and is an attempt to explain the present and the future in terms of the past activity of the individual. On the other view which appears to be the dominant one, the

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40. Majjhima Nikaya, I. 405.
41. Anguttara Nikāya, III. 337 ff.
42. Ibid., II. 48.

prakṛti of each individual is fixed at creation in accordance with the prescience and providence of the divine will. Now it is worth nothing that Buddhism distinguishes between these two types of determinism though condemning both of them unequivocally. One is the theory that our present actions are fully determined by the actions of the past (*pubbe-kata-hetu*)[43] and that we are in no sense free to act. The other is that all our actions are fixed in their entirety by the fiat of God (*issaranimmāṇavāda*);[44] as Radhakrishnan would say, "there is nothing however small or insignificant that has not been ordained or permitted by God even to the fall of a sparrow "[45] Now it is significant that both these theories are condemned in the Pali canonical texts[46] and with it the framework of Gita metaphysics which appears to synthesise both these theories.

In spite of the deterministic background of the Gita ethic there is no doubt that there is much in common between the moral injunctions of the Gita and of Buddhism and this is not surprising considering the eclecticism of the Gita. But it is equally important to stress the differences especially when these differences are fundamental to the philosophy of each and reveal mutually opposed ethical attitudes to the problems of life. I propose to illustrate these differences by taking up the divergent attitudes that Buddhism and the Gita adopt in respect of the problem of war and caste.

I would hold that the attitude to war in the Gita is totally opposed to that of Buddhism. Yet, before we could illustrate the differences in the attitudes of each, it would be necessary to clarify the Gita attitude to the problem

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43. Ibid. I, 173-5. 44. Ibid. 45. op. cit., p. 229.
46 Anguttara Nikāya, I, 173-5.

of war. I would hold that the Gita maintains that it is the moral duty of the soldier to fight in the event of any war in which the state is engaged.

Radhakrishnan's interpretation of the Gita appears to be fundamentally different in that he seems to believe that the Gita speaks of war only in a metaphorical sense as referring to the moral struggle in man and nature and not to military action. Thus, commenting on the opening verse of the Gita, Radhakrishnan takes *dharma-ksetre* to refer to the world instead of taking it as an epithet of *kuru-ksetre*, the classical home of Vedic dharma. He says: "The world is *dharmaksetra*—the battle ground for a moral struggle."[47] Then again, commenting on the phrase *māmanusmara yuddhya ca* (remember Me and fight)[48] he says "it is not a fight on the material plane that is intended here for it cannot be done at all times. It is the fight with the powers of darkness that we have to carry on perpetually."[49] This metaphorical interpretation is often reinforced by frequent attempts to give the figurative meaning of otherwise literal statements. Thus Gita I.14 which states that "Krsṇa and Arjuna blew their celestial conches when stationed in their great chariot yoked to white horses", is to be taken metaphorically for, says Radhakrishnan, "throughout the Hindu and Buddhist literature the chariot stands for the psycho-physical vehicle. The steeds are the senses, the reins their controls, but the charioteer, the guide, is the spirit or real self, ātman. Krsṇa, the charioteer, is the Spirit in us."[50]

However ingenious Radhakrishnan's attempt may be to give a metaphorical account of the Gita injunctions

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47. op. cit., p. 79.
48. VIII. 7.
49. op. cit., p. 229.
50. Ibid., p. 85.

to fight, it does not appear to be successful, for the greater majority of the passages containing references to war, far from admitting of metaphorical interpretation, have sense only when taken literally. On the other hand, the few passages which may possibly be interpreted metaphorically are so interpreted only at the cost of obscuring their meaning especially when we consider their contexts. Thus the fact that Krsṇa and Arjuna are stationed in their chariots is mentioned in a general description of the battle field and the events taking place in it. If we interpret "chariot" here to mean the psycho-physical vehicle and Krsṇa as representing the Spirit in us, as Radhakrishnan does, it would be difficult to explain in similar terms the other paraphernalia of war mentioned as well as the significance of the numerous other personalities besides Krsṇa who are mentioned by name. And again the only passage which Radhakrishnan adduces as not admitting of a literal explanation[51] would be given a more natural interpretation if "*sarvesu kālesu*" is taken as qualifying the nearest verb "*anusmara*" rather than "*yuddhya*" and the stanza translated:" therefore remember Me at all times but fight."

On the other hand an analysis of the positive injunctions to fight would show that it was at least incumbent on a soldier (*ksatriya*) to fight in the event of a war in which the state is engaged, for fighting in such a war is always part of his *dharma* or social duty as being one of the demands made by the state an the soldier. It is said that "having regard to his own duty the ksatriya should not falter for there exists no greater good for a ksatriya than a war enjoined by duty."[52] It is true that there are injunctions to the effect that the fight should

51. VIII 7. 52. II. 31.

be undertaken with selfless motives in a spirit of self-denial "free from desire and egoism"[53] and that fighting regardless of consequences "treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat" brings with it no sin.[54] Even if we grant that it is psychologically possible to engage in war "free from desire and egoism," the effect of these passages is, more or less, nullified by the numerous appeals made to selfish reasons as grounds for fighting. Thus moral grounds appear to be set aside when it is said that the refusal to fight amounts to "unmanliness"[55] Failure to answer the call to fight is "ignoble and un-Aryan and causes disgrace on earth."[56] Warriors who desist from fighting "incur ill-fame and ill-fame is worse than death."[57] Could anything be sadder, it is asked, than hearing the taunts of his enemies.[58] "If you are victorious you enjoy the earth[59] and if slain you go to heaven."[60] Fighting in a war, enjoined as duty by the state, is an open door to heaven.[61] The general impression these passages seem to leave in the mind of the reader is that the Gita is recommending the soldier to fight at any cost in a war in which the state is engaged. If he fights with selfless motives (and the psychological possibility of this many people would be inclined to doubt) he incurs no sin, whereas if he fights with selfish motives he would still stand to profit either by the gain and honour on earth or by the glory in heaven.

This teaching, that the soldier should fight at any cost in such a war is reinforced by the metaphysical arguments in support of war. It is implied that Arjuna should not feel sorry for the death of his enemies among whom were his teachers and kinsmen since "wise men

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53. III. 30; VIII. 7. 54. II. 38. 55. II. 3. 56. II. 2.
57. II. 34, 5. 58. II. 36. 59. XI. 33. 60. II. 37. 61. II. 32.

do not grieve for the dead or for the living."[62] Now it is true that according to the best teaching of the Upanishads and Buddhism those who have transcended and overcome the world do not entertain thoughts of grief. But to argue that the soldier should likewise "not grieve for the dead" is to commit the fallacy that, since the wise do not grieve for the dead, those who do not grieve for the dead are wise. Then there are those arguments which seem to imply that the soldier is in fact not morally responsible for the act of killing either because he is not a moral agent as he is devoid of free-will and is not morally responsible for his actions (as discussed above) or that since God is finally and solely responsible for the death of Arjuna's enemies in that "his enemies are doomed" Arjuna is only an instrument in God's hands.[63] Finally, it is argued on metaphysical grounds that physical killing is not in reality killing for the souls of people are eternal[64] and indestructible[65] and "one is not slain when the body is slain."[66]

The contrast between the Gita attitude to war and the Buddhist is brought out in the advice Buddha gave when he was placed in a similar situation to that of Kṛṣṇa on the eve of a battle between his own people, the Sākyas and their blood brothers, the Koliyas. The immediate cause for going to battle was that the Sākya and Koliya tribes were both making claims and demands on the waters of the river Rohini which flowed between their territory. The soldiers or ksatriyas on each side were assembled (as the Kurus and Pandavas had assembled) when the Buddha intervenes and asks them what the war was about. The answer was that it was over

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62. II. 11. 63. XI. 33, 4. 64. II. 12.
65. II. 17-25. 66. II. 20.

water and the Buddha asks them what the water was worth, to which it was replied that it was worth little. It turns out that both sides in their folly were prepared to sacrifice the invaluable lives of their soldiers for the sake of water which was of little worth. And the futility of their war becomes apparent when the Buddha advices them in the words, "Why on account of some water of little worth would you destroy the invaluable lives of these soldiers."[67] The merits and demerits of the war as a whole are judged here by its possible consequences and the suggestion seems to be that the causes for which wars are fought and lost are trivial in comparison with the human sacrifices involved. While the Gita held that victory brings in its train honour and the gain of a kingdom[68] while annihilation secures the reward of heaven,[69] the Buddha (commenting on the war between Kings Ajatasattu and Pasenadi) is supposed to have said that "victory arouses enmity and the defeated live in sorrow."[70] Wars result only in further wars, according to Buddhism for "the victor obtains for himself a vanquisher."[71] War, as such, is condemned as an evil since it involves the destruction of invaluable human lives and such evils, we are told, should not be committed even though it be deemed that it is part of one's duties to one's king (*rañño rājakaraṇīyam kātuṁ*[72]) It is, therefore, not surprising that the life of the soldier was looked down upon in Buddhism and even "trading in the weapons of war" (*sattha-vaṇijjā*) was considered a wrong mode of livelihood.[73]

This seems to be the antithesis of the Gita attitude to war and the fact may be further illustrated if we go into

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67. Jātaka, V. 412-4. 68. XI. 33. 69. X. 32.
70. Saṁyutta Nikāya, I. 83. 71. Ibid., p. 85.
72. Majjhima Nikāya, II. 188-191. 73. Anguttara Nikāya, III. 208.

the details. It seems to have been an Epic tradition that "the warrior who falls in the battle ground while fighting attains heaven."[74] As such it finds expression in the Bhagavadgita where it is said that "if slain you shall go to heaven"[75] and "happy are the ksatriyas for whom such a war comes of its own accord as an open door to heaven."[76] Now this tradition finds mention in the Buddhist texts where a warrior chief (*yodhājīvo gāmaṇi*) tells the Buddha that he has heard from his ancestral teachers in the martial arts that the spirited soldier who fights with zeal and slays his opponents in battle is rewarded by being born in the company of gods in heaven. The warrior chief wants to know whether this is so and Buddha's reply is that, on the contrary, he is born in hell for his actions.[77]

It is therefore not surprising that it is Arjuna's attitude, which is condemned in the Gita, that would appear to be similar to the Buddhist. Although *ahiṁsā* or non-violence is mentioned in the Gita[78] as one among a list of virtues, nowhere is the concept woven into the central themes of Gita philosophy and it is difficult to see how a soldier whose duty is to fight and kill as many of the enemy as possible can exercise *ahiṁsā* in these acts. The injunction to fight is, therefore, a negation of the ideal of *ahiṁsā* and the only representative, if at all, of the philosophy of *ahiṁsā* in the Gita seems to be Arjuna. Arjuna's indecision and anxiety is not due to any lack of courage on his part but arises out of a moral conflict. On the one hand the love of his enemies for whom he feels compassion,[79] a typically Buddhist virtue, makes him desist from the fight but on the other hand he is not

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74. Mahābhārata, Udyogaparva, 32, 65. 75. II. 37. 76. II. 32.
77. Saṁyutta Nikāya, IV. 308, 9.
78. X. 5; XIII. 7; XVI. 2; XVII. 14. 79. I, 28; II. 2.

sure whether it is not his duty to fight. The Gita resolves the comflict by dismissing the former and making a case for the latter alternative. As such it would not be fair by Arjuna to call his a "mood of sentimental self-pity"[80] for, in a Buddhist context, Arjuna would have resolved the conflict by being a 'conscientious objector' or non-resister who considered it his moral duty not to fight, without blindly obeying the dictates of his king or state and believing them to be part of his moral duties. Left to his own devices Arjuna seems to favour the Buddhist solution for he weighs the consequences of the war as a whole and finds them disastrous.[81] He is by no means impelled by cowardice or selfish motives for "he does not long for victory, kingdom or pleasures or even his own life."[82] Radhakrishnan accuses Arjuna of "talking in terms of enlightened selfishness"[83], but Arjuna, on the contrary, is prepared to offer non-resistance and sacrifice his life for the sake of what he considers at heart to be right without desiring the gains and glories of earth or heaven. "These I would not consent to kill though killed myself even for the kingdom of the three worlds; how much less for the sake of the earth?"[84] "Far better would it be for me if the sons of Dhrtarāṣtra, with weapons in hand, should slay me in the battle while I remain unresisting and unarmed."[85] To do justice to Arjuna one must say that, except for his indecision and failure to apprehend clearly that it was no moral duty of his to fight and kill fellow human beings, his general attitude is Buddhist to the core. The Bhagavadgita in condemning this right along, therefore, takes up a position which is the antithesis of the Buddhist attitude to war.

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80. op. cit., p. 98. 81. I. 38-43. 82. I. 32.
83. op. cit., p. 91. 84. I. 35. 85. I. 46.

Radhakrishnan sums up the Buddhist and Gita teachings on caste by saying that "both attempt to relax the rigours of caste by basing it on a less untenable foundation." He is of course much less explicit when he elaborates on this point for he says that "the Gita recognises the caste divisions . . the Gita broadly distinguishes four fundamental types of individuals, answering to the four stages of the upward ascent. Basing caste on qualities the Gita requires each individual to do duties imposed by his caste . . The confusion of birth and qualities has led to an undermining of the spiritual foundation of caste."[86]

Here again, I would hold that the Gita attitude on caste is the very opposite of that of Buddhism and that while the Gita in keeping with the Vedic tradition gives religious sanction to caste and attempts to provide an intellectual justification for it, Buddhism denies the validity of such a religious sanction and holds that there is no basis whatsoever for holding to caste distinctions. This would be clear if the specific arguments or assumptions on which caste is upheld in the Gita were placed side by side with the relevant arguments against caste as found in Buddhism. It may however be granted that the Gita agrees with Buddhism in holding that people of all castes may obtain the highest spiritual attainments, but the important difference lies in the fact that while the Gita upholds caste distinctions on religious and genetical grounds, Buddhism denies the reality and and validity of these distinctions on these very grounds.

One of the arguments of Arjuna was that among the undesirable consequences of war was the possible danger of the "intermixture of castes" (*varṇa-sankara*). Since

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85. *Indian Philosophy*, p. 570, 1.

the prohibition of intermarriage as between castes was one of the principles of caste theory it shows that according to the author of the Gita the "intermixture of castes" was a disastrous consequence. In Buddhism, on the other hand, intermixture of castes considered both as an historical fact and as a possibility was adduced as an argument against the reality and validity of caste distinctions. It is said that even those who claim caste purity have had mixed ancestors, the implication being that the hereditary distinctions of caste are unreal.[87] If this is an argument to show the historicity of caste mixture, the biological possibility of the mixture of castes, it may be mentioned, is also brought forward as an argument against the reality of caste distinctions.[88] Arguing for the unity of mankind as against the distinctions of caste, Buddha says, there are differences of species and genera among plants and animals "although such distinctions are not found among humans" (*evaṁ n'atthi manussesu liṅgaṁ jātimayaṁ puthu*).[89]

Now the crucial passage in the Gita which according to Radhakrishnan undermines the traditional Hindu basis of caste is the one which says (to follow Radhakrishnan's translation): "The fourfold order was created by Me according to the divisions of quality and work" (*cāturvarṇyam mayā sṛṣṭam guṇa-karma-vibhāgasah*). Commenting on it Radhakrishnan says, "the emphasis is on *guṇa* (aptitude) and *karma* (function) and not *jāti* (birth). The *varṇa* or the order to which we belong is independent of sex, birth, or breeding. A class determined by temperament and vocation is not a caste determined by birth and heredity."[90] If this interpretation is intended for the two lines of the stanza

87. Digha Nikāya, I. 92-7.
88. *Majjhima Nikāya, II. 153, 4.*
89. Sutta Nipata, 118.
90. op. cit., pp. 160, 1.

quoted above its absurdity would be apparent if its full implications are worked out. For if it is correct what is meant by these two lines is that there are four and only four types of individuals each with a special aptitude for performing a special type of social duty which is obligatory on his part. Now the references to the four types (as is evident from the word *cāturvarṇyam*) is obviously a reference to the four castes, viz. the brahmins, ksatriyas, vaisyas and sūdras. But, if as Radhakrishnan says "the *varṇa* or order to which we belong is independent of *birth*", then what is meant is that there may be brahmins who have the aptitude of sūdras and sūdras who have the aptitude of brahmins, so that it becomes the duty of these people who have been born in the wrong castes to do the work for which they have a special aptitude! This would cut the ground beneath the concept of *svadharma* in the Gita.

Now if the individual types were created in accordance with their *guṇas* or aptitudes and *karmas* or social functions, it is difficult to see why the number of types should be *four* and not less or more, for if, the types represented the *guṇas* there would have been three types corresponding to the *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, while if they represented the *karmas* or social duties, surely many more.

But these two lines could be interpreted without absurdity in the general background of Gita thought if they are construed as an attempt to give a religious sanction as well as a justification for the hereditary basis of caste. On such an interpretation it would appear that the fourfold caste structure of society (based on heredity) is fundamental, absolute and divinely ordained as being the creation of God himself, and is not a product of human conventions. The purpose of

such a creation would be to ensure the stability and maximum efficiency of society since each caste had a special aptitude for performing the social duties they were expected to perform and it was the specific duty (*svadharma*) of the members of each caste to perform the duties for which they were so created.

This appears to be the more natural interpretation but if so it means that the Gita not only holds that caste is a creation of God but attaches special sanctity to the four castes qua *four*. Now both claims have been contested in Buddhism. The Brahmin claim was that the Brahmins were created from the mouth of God (*mukhato jātā . . brahmanimmitā*[91]), a theory which goes back to the Purusa Sūkta of the Rgveda[92], which says that the Brahmin was the mouth of God (*brahmaṇo'sya mukham āsīt*) and that all castes were created out of the Divine Person. This claim to a special association with Divinity was criticised by Buddhism on the grounds that the Brahmins like the people of all the other castes were evidently born of human parents.[93] But it is equally important to note that Buddhism held that there was nothing absolute even about the quaternity of castes. The Buddha argues that "among the Yonas and Kāmbojas and others living in the bordering territories there were *only two castes* (*dveva vaṇṇā*), namely the lords and and serfs."[94] In fact it is asserted that caste names have only an occupational significance[95] and that birth is no index to caste,[96] thus denying the hereditary basis of caste altogether, while the theory of caste as promulgated by the Vedic Brahmins is referred to as "a false and immoral view" (*pāpakaṁ diṭṭhigataṁ*[97]). It would thus

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91. Majjhima Nikāya, II. 149. 92. X 90.
93. Majjhima Nikāya, II. 149. 94. Ibid. 95 Sutta Nipāta, 119.
96. Samyutta Nikāya, I. 166. 97. *Majjhima Nikāya, II. 154.*

appear that while Gita tries to uphold, justify as well as give a religious sanction to the caste theory, Buddhism in countering these very arguments is presenting the opposite view so that it would be neither fair by the Gita nor by Buddhism to say with Radhakrishnan that "both attempt to relax the rigours of caste by basing it on less untenable foundations."

THE BUDDHIST MONK'S DISCIPLINE

Some points explained for laypeople

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Preface

IN the small treatise which follows, the good of both bhikkhus (Buddhist monks) and of the lay Buddhist householders has been aimed at and the information presented, the writer believes, is available in no other book. The standards of conduct described here are those of the Vinaya well-practised and of the layman's discipline well-applied. What use indeed is there in presenting other than the high standards laid down by Lord Buddha himself in the Vinaya, since falling away from good conduct is all too easy and may all too easily be seen, not least in Buddhist lands? For those who follow the training in Buddhist Doctrine and Discipline (Dhamma-Vinaya) only the best, surely, is good enough.

As to terminology, the writer has used the Pāli word *añjali* for what is often called "placing together the palms of the hands" (añjali-kamma), and the "five-point-rest" (pañcaṅga-vandanā) for what is commonly called "prostration".

This book has greatly benefited from the corrections and additions suggested by my revered Upajjhāya, Ven. Chao Khun Sāsana Sobhana, and others.

May this work be for the practical welfare of all who strive on the Path of Saddhamma!

Wat Bovoranives Vihāra
Bangkok, Thailand
8th day of the Waning Moon of Citta
B. E. 2510.

Bhikkhu Khantipālo

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THE BUDDHIST MONK'S DISCIPLINE

Introduction

The Teachings given by Lord Buddha which are preserved and practised to the present day, are known in the ancient texts as the *Dhamma-Vinaya*. Although there is a great loss of meaning when translating these two terms into English, they may be rendered as *Doctrine* and *Discipline*. Numerous books are given over to explaining aspects of Dhamma but perhaps because of its monastic meaning the Vinaya seems neglected and not given due prominence. It will be the task of this booklet to examine Vinaya from a particular point of view, — that of the Buddhist layman and how a knowledge of some of its rules can be useful to him.

This term 'Vinaya' has not only monastic connotations. It is true that the Vinaya-collection[1] contains at great length and in detail the training-rules, prohibitions, allowances and regulations governing a bhikkhu's life but there is at least one important instance of the term being applied to the conduct of lay-people. The sub-title of the famous Discourse called the 'Exhortation to Sigāla', is 'Gihi-vinaya' or the Householder's Discipline, a worthy name for a masterly exposition[2]. In a more narrow sense, the layman's Vinaya is his Five Precepts[3]

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1 see Bibliography. 2 see *Everyman's Ethics*, Wheel No. 14.

3 see *The Five Precepts*, Wheel No. 55.

since these have the same function of 'removing the unskilful' as the much greater body of training-rules in the Vinaya-collection has for a bhikkhu. This is in fact what the word 'Vinaya' means: driving out, abolishing, destruction or removal, that is, of all the overt ways of behaviour which obstruct progress along the Practice-path of Dhamma.

Why then were the Vinaya training-rules laid down? Many times in the Vinaya-collection Lord Buddha says: 'On account of (some event necessitating action), O bhikkhus, I shall make known the training-rule for bhikkhus (some times adding), "founded upon these ten reasons:"

> For the welfare of the Sangha (community of monks),
> for the comfort of the Sangha,
> for the control of unsteady men,
> for the comfort of well-behaved bhikkhus,
> for the restraint of the pollutions (āsava) in this present life,
> for guarding against pollutions liable to arise in a future life,
> for the pleasing of those not yet pleased (with Dhamma),
> for the increase of those pleased,
> for the establishment of True Dhamma and
> for the benefit of the Vinaya."[1]

The great Teacher and Commentator, Ven. Buddhaghosa, gives the following verse-definition of the Vinaya in the Atthasālinī:

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1 In the Anguttara (Book of the Twos), two further reasons are found: "for sympathy with householders" (a very important consideration) and, "for breaking up factions of evil-minded bhikkhus" (stressing how the Vinaya has protected the Sangha).

" This Vinaya(Discipline) is called the Vinaya
By those knowning the meaning of Vinaya
Because it disciplines (actions of) body and speech,
(Since consisting of) various and excellent
principles".

This verse stresses the usefulness of Vinaya in disciplining the body and speech (as the Five or Eight Precepts do for lay-people) and this again drives home the support given by Vinaya to Dhamma. To have one without the other is actually inconceivable from a Buddhist point of view. For instance, a Dhamma taught without Vinaya would be a teaching in which no opening or beginning was shown of a path to be practised. A Vinaya without Dhamma on the other hand, would be an empty formalism, a discipline bearing little fruit or advantage. Both parts of the Buddhist Dispensation (sāsana) go hand-in-hand whether one considers the bhikkhu's or the layman's training.

A good Buddhist layman is one who makes every effort to keep pure the Five Precepts and to practise at least the Dhamma taught in the 'Exhortation to Sigāla.' In the same way a good bhikkhu strives to train himself without falling into offences, in the 227 training-rules of the Patimokkha which at the time of his Acceptance as a bhikkhu, he has undertaken to observe. It is often said that the laymen keeps five, while the bhikkhu's load is two hundred and twenty-seven precepts but for the latter this is only part of the truth since he has, besides the Fundamental Rules in the Patimokkha,[1] numerous others to train in, these being found scattered throughout the Vinaya-Collection.

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1 see Bibliography.

Here we may remark upon one difference between the precepts of a layman and those of a bhikkhu. The former are all of a moral nature, such as are esteemed in all religions (with the possible exception of the fifth since in some faiths abstinence from alcohol is not taught). For this reason, they fall into the class of 'natural' precepts (pakati-sīla). But the bhikkhu, besides having precepts of this nature, has many more which are special to his mode of life. These precepts are called 'Formulated' (paṇṇatti-sīla). Although they have little or no application in the life of a layman, they are very important for the bhikkhu, including all sorts of ways of restraint and good conduct proper for him. It should not be thought this latter sort of precept is less important to him than those in the group of natural morality, for this would be to apply worldly standards of judgement to a code of discipline designed to promote an unworldly way of life.

The concern among both bhikkhus and laity, for keeping the precepts pure and for not falling into any offence, may be called scrupulousness. Many times in the Vinaya it is mentioned that "scrupulous bhikkhus" (kukkuccāyanta bhikkhū) would not accept some article until Lord Buddha had made it allowable. Again, we find constant references to "bhikkhus of few wishes" (appicchā bhikkhū) who were ashamed of the unbecoming and unscrupulous behaviour of other monks. Light is thrown here upon an important connection between Precepts generally and the Dhamma. In being 'scrupulous' or 'of few wishes' a number of skilful mental factors valuable to one's training, are present. Among these, the pair known as Shame and Fear of Blame (hiri-ottappa) are actually called by Lord Buddha "the guardians of the world". Shame is seen when one

reproaches oneself for an evil done or about to be done and when one has an inward fear derived from thinking of the unpleasant results to be experienced from that sort of kamma. Fear of Blame is rather the restraint imposed by fear of others' censure or by the thought that honourable persons whom one respects, such as parents or teachers might get to know of such evil. Being 'of few wishes' is another word for contentment (santutthi), a very valuable quality for a bhikkhu. The other most prominent factor in this scrupulosity and modesty, is Mindfulness (sati) which is indeed at the root of all Buddhist training at whatever level. When there is mindfulness, however many precepts one keeps, it is likely that they will be well and carefully guarded. Mindfulness makes one careful and skilful even in mental kamma, not to mention those involving body and speech! It makes possible that all-round restraint often described by the simile of the turtle, which creature is immune from danger after having withdrawn its legs and head inside its shell. Of the bhikkhu it is said:

"Beneficial is control of eye,
Control of ear is beneficial too,
Beneficial is control of nose,
Control of tongue is beneficial too,
Bodily control is beneficial,
Control of speech is beneficial too.
Beneficial is control of mind,
Everywhere restraint is beneficial.
The Bhikkhu here restrained in every way
Free utterly is he from every ill".

(Dhammapada 360 - 1).

All the various rules of the Vinaya might indeed be summed up in these verses. Further we have the famous

exhortation of Lord Buddha to the bhikkhus: "Be perfect in virtue (sīla), O bhikkhus, be perfect in the Pāṭimokkha. Dwell restrained according to the Pāṭimokkha. Be perfect in conduct and (place of) resort *seeing danger even in the slightest faults*, and train yourselves by undertaking rightly the rules of training". It is from such exhortations as this that the scrupulousness of a good bhikkhu is born. He resolves to make effort to train himself thus: "I shall be perfect in virtue. I shall be perfect in the Pāṭimokkha. I shall dwell restrained..... perfect in conduct and (place of) resort, seeing danger even in the slightest faults....."

Unscrupulousness, if we consider it in the light of these passages will obviously indicate the presence of unrestraint and lack of mindfulness to say the least, and probably the lack of shame and fear of blame (ahiri, anottappa). Quite often strong currents of craving (taṇhā), possibly unrecognized, may be involved, pride (māna) may have a hand, (not wishing to submit to the whole discipline), and false views (micchā-diṭṭhi) so often allied with pride, may tangle matters further by throwing out a smoke-screen of 'reasons'.

However this may be, the rules of training are praised by Lord Buddha in words which must prevent anyone from regarding them as 'mere external rules': "Now all these rules combine together to make up the three trainings. What three? The training in supreme morality, the training in supreme collectedness and the training in supreme wisdom. Herein are combined one and all of these rules..... Thus, O bhikkhus, one who partly fulfils these observances experiences attainment partially, while one fulfilling perfectly comes to experience the complete attainment. Not barren of results, I declare,

are these rules of training." (Anguttara Nikāya III,9,86). Or, we have in Dhammapada (verse 31) :

" The bhikkhu who delights in heedfulness
And looks with fear on heedlessness,
As a forest fire advances fast,
Burns up all fetters, great or small."

Reason enough if a bhikkhu has set his heart upon Nibbāna, to keep the training rules strictly! Now the path of one who has gone forth from home to homelessness and who sincerely tries to train in those rules which he has undertaken, is reckoned to lead directly to Nibbāna. It is therefore a great evil to obstruct one who has set himself upon this course, while it is great puñña[1] to aid such a one.

In the Buddhist Dispensation there is mutual help given, by bhikkhus to lay-people in the form of Dhamma suitable for their practice and by lay people to bhikkhus when they offer the Four Supports: Robes, food, shelter and medical necessities. In this way householders support the community of bhikkhus from among whom those with knowledge and experience support the laity with Dhamma. Just as no bhikkhu worthy of the robe would cause trouble among laypeople but only wish to help them, so devoted and knowledgeable householders think only to help bhikkhus and samaneras (novices). In order to do this they must, of course, have at least some idea of what is and what is not allowable for bhikkhus as laid down by Lord Buddha in the Vinaya.

It happens that bhikkhus are now travelling more widely and able to visit and live in countries where

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1 *Puñña* ('u' as in 'put') is the benefit of increasing purity of mind derived from skilful actions such as generosity, virtue, helpfulness, etc. 'Merit' is an inadequate rendering.

formerly it was not possible for them to go. Also many people from non-Buddhist lands now travel to and stay in those countries where there is a living tradition of Dhamma, some of them becoming interested and wishing to know what should and what should not be done in respect of bhikkhus. There is consequently a need for knowledge among lay-supporters and others of some points of Vinaya. In this small book, the only points dealt with will be those where lay-people are somehow involved, while Vinaya matters of concern to bhikkhus alone may be investigated in more comprehensive works.[1]

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1 See Bibliography.

The Training Rules

As the bhikkhu's life generally gives many occasions for contact with lay-people (except for the bhikkhu engaged in meditation practice), and as erring bhikkhus were not absent from the Sangha even in the days of Lord Buddha, so there is quite a large body of legislation relating to just these occasions. Because of the wrong conduct of various bhikkhus, Lord Buddha had cause to lay down large numbers of training-rules which if infringed would become offences for the guilty bhikkhu. It sometimes happened that a rule had to be modified, and sometimes various allowances proved necessary to qualify the range of the original rule. In this way many of the training rules were tested in the light of experience until they became perfectly practical.

All these rules fall into seven classes according to the seriousness of the offence involved when they are broken. Briefly, these seven classes with some of their characteristics are as follows :

1. *Defeat* (pārājika). The first four training-rules of the Pāṭimokkha if broken become offences by which a bhikkhu is defeated, no longer able to live in communion with other bhikkhus, never able in the present life to be ordained bhikkhu again, and being no longer "a son of the Sakya" (or the Buddha), he should disrobe immediately. These four offences are:

   1 sexual intercourse of any description,
   2 taking what is not given with intention to steal,
   3 depriving purposely a human-being of life in any way,
   4 falsely claiming superhuman states of attainment.

2. *Formal Meeting* (sanghādisesa). Thirteen 'heavy offences', the second group in the Pāṭimokkha, for the

commission of which there is a special disciplinary procedure designed to humble and purify the offender who must, however, first confess to being guilty (as with all other offences) Of special interest to the laity are numbers two, three, four and five which concern:

2 engaging in bodily contact with a woman with lustful intent,
3 addressing a woman with lewd words,
4 speaking to a woman in praise of sexual intercourse,
5 acting as a go-between for a man or a woman.

In the more detailed considerations below, we shall return to some implications of the first and last of these.

3. *Grave Offences* (thullaccaya). These are numerous but not found in any one part of the Vinaya. Sometimes they are the type of offence resulting from partial commissions of acts which if completed would entail Defeat or Formal Meeting. They may, in common with the other classes of offences below, be cleared up by making a confession to another bhikkhu who has not committed the same offence.

4. *Expiation* (pacittiya). Ninety-two in number and all found in the Pāṭimokkha, these training-rules cover a very wide range of subjects, some of which it is useful for lay-people to know.

5. *To be Confessed* (pāṭidesaniya). Only four rules in the Pāṭimokkha, which find little application today.

6. *Wrong-doing* (dukkaṭa). A very numerous category, for the avoidance of breaking which, care is needed. The 75 trainings (sekhiya) found in the Pāṭimokkha and which contain numbers of points of interest to the layman, become when broken, offences of wrong-doing.

7. *Wrong speech* (dubbhāsita). This includes all unprofitable speech not found in the above classes, as for instance, the use of coarse words uttered in jest. While there are numbers of cases for offences in the above classes, there is only one here.

The Value of vinaya

We have already seen that Lord Buddha, in laying down the training-rules for bhikkhus, was much concerned with the well-being of the laity. He had in mind for instance, "being in sympathy with householders", "the pleasing of those not pleased (and) the increase of those pleased" (with Dhamma) alongside more monastic considerations. In another passage of very frequent occurrence in the Vinaya collection, Lord Buddha whenever he rebuked some erring bhikkhu, would say: "It is not, foolish man, for the pleasing of those not pleased (i. e. outsiders, those of other faiths), not for the increase of those who are pleased (by their practice of Dhamma-Vinaya, i. e. Buddhists), but foolish man, it causes displeasure among those who are not pleased as well as in those who are pleased, and it causes wavering in some" (i. e, those who are interested in Dhamma but have not yet gone for Refuge to the Triple Gem). The very obvious effects which bad conduct by one in robes has upon lay-people, is here very strongly emphasized.

The converse is also true since a bhikkhu who has been well-trained under good teachers and learnt thoroughly the theory and practice of Dhamma and Vinaya, is indeed a great recommendation to the excellence found in the Conqueror's Dispensation. A picture of such a bhikkhu is awakened in the mind's eye by Dhammapada verse 378 :

" Calm in body, calm in speech,
Tranquil and composed of heart,
Whoso has spewed out worldly wants
'Serene' is such a bhikkhu called."

The Dhamma which all Buddhists revere as most precious and which is practised by all who are truly followers of Lord Buddha, has been preserved for the peoples of the present by the Sangha. This community of bhikkhus, those so to speak who have specialized in Dhamma, has been preserved by close adherence to the training-rules laid down in the Vinaya. That this sequence is true may be seen from several instances in history when bhikkhus no longer paid heed to the Vinaya and so lost the respect and support of the laity. Not having this support, they drifted towards being householders themselves and having become priests with families, they could give less time to learning and practice of Dhamma. Books got lost and were not replaced and the tradition became steadily more degenerate until no teaching at all remained, only 'protection-ceremonies' and the like, often performed in a language not understood even by the priest, let alone by the people. The present time, alas, could also show some 'Buddhist' traditions of which these words are true.

This preservation of the Dhamma by Vinaya and hence by the Sangha to whom the Vinaya applies, finds expression in a simile in the Vinaya-introduction where it is said: "flowers loose upon a flat piece of wood, not tied together by thread, are scattered about, destroyed by the wind. What is the cause of that? Since they were not held together by thread....." This is said to apply to the teachings of some former Buddhas who gave little of the Dhamma to their disciples and who did not lay down

the Vinaya or make known the Pāṭimokkha. It is a cause for rejoicing that Gotama the Buddha *has* explained Dhamma in detail, made known the Vinaya and pointed out the fundamental training-rules of the Pāṭimokkha. "It is as if, Sāriputta, various flowers placed on a piece of wood, tied together by thread (as a garland), are not scattered, whirled about, or destroyed by the wind. What is the reason for that? They are well tied together by thread." This means simply that the winds of impermanence cannot so easily destroy the various aspects of Dhamma when these are secured by the thread of the Vinaya.

This brings us to appreciate the reverence which the Vinaya-collection is accorded by all true bhikkhus as well as by knowledgeable laymen. This collection is given first place among the three collections (piṭaka) of Buddha-word, a fact which indicates that it is the support and mainstay of the other teachings. As it is said: "the Vinaya is the very life of the Teaching (Sāsana); so long as the Vinaya endures, the Teaching endures, therefore let us rehearse the Vinaya first" (at the First Council-Sangāyana).

"Reform of Vinaya"

If one appreciates that Vinaya is indecd the mainstay, it will not be difficult for Buddhist laity, even in non-Buddhist countries to realize that ideas of changing (sometimes called 'reforming') the Vinaya, in order as it is said, 'to suit modern conditions', find no favour with the Sangha as a whole. There are many objections to such a course of action, in which indeed, there would be almost no advantages. In what follows, the writer wishes to examine these objections and to show plainly their dangers and disadvantages.

Firstly, if one reads through the Vinaya, while there are a number of points which apply specially to eastern countries, some even being limited to conditions peculiar to ancient India, none of these relate to the main principles of the bhikkhu-life. The workings of the Vinaya in the life of the bhikkhu of the present day is not made difficult by obsolete training-rules. Those no longer having any application are very few and are really not of great importance.

All the main principles of the bhikkhu-discipline are as valid now as they were when instituted by Lord Buddha two and a half millenniums past. This is indeed a marvellous proof of the wisdom of Lord Buddha who has so well formulated these rules. Nor is the structure of the Vinaya absolutely rigid and it does therefore permit necessary adaptations which are still within the spirit of the training. The use by bhikkhus of modern methods of transport might be taken as an example. This would not have been possible for them if Vinaya was taken as a completely rigid code.

Secondly, there are the words of Lord Buddha himself: "So long, O bhikkhus, as you appoint no new rules, and abolish not the existing ones, but proceed according to the training-rules as laid down, so long will bhlkkhus be expected to prosper, not to decline" (Seven conditions for the Welfare of Bhikkhus, Discourse, A.N. 7, 21). This statement of the Teacher is always to the fore whenever there are gatherings of senior bhikkhus meeting to determine some Vinaya-question arising out of modern conditions. Or, there are such exhortations from sources outside the Pāli Canon as these words attributed to Lord Buddha: "O bhikkhus, after my Parinibbāna, you should revere and honour the precepts of the Pāṭimokkha. Treat

them as a light which you have discovered in the dark, or as a poor man would treat a treasure he had found. You should know that they are your chief guide and there should be no difference (in your observance of them) from when I yet remained in the world" (The opening words of the 'Discourse of the Teaching bequeathed by the Buddha').[1]

Then there is a consideration based upon the events of the First Sangāyana (Council). In this great gathering of Arahants, Venerable Mahākassapa who was its president, put forward this motion: "If it seems right to the Sangha, the Sangha should not lay down what has not been laid down, nor should it abolish what has been laid down. It should proceed in conformity with and according to the training-rules which have been laid down. This is the motion. Your reverences, let the Sangha listen to me, if it seems right to the Sangha, the Sangha should not..... (thrice repeated), It is pleasing to the Sangha, therefore it is silent. Thus do I understand." All those who are Accepted as (Theravāda) bhikkhus in the present day, follow this tradition as laid down in the First Sangāyana. This is Tneravāda tradition, it is based upon the decision of those great elders who were ennobled with the highest nobility. Who are we indeed, to go astray from their way?

Although the Teacher before his Parinibbāna spoke thus: "After my passing, Ananda, let the Sangha if it so desires abolish the lesser and minor rules of training," no Sangha anywhere actually ventured to do this, partly because of the uncertainty in defining 'the lesser and

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1 See "The Buddha's Last Bequest", The Wheel No 112.

minor rules' and partly because they were constrained out of respect to preserve that which had been instituted by the great Teacher. Ācariya Nāgasena explains that "the Tathāgata spoke thus testing the bhikkhus: 'Will my disciples on being left by me adhere to the lesser and minor rules of training after my passing, or will they repudiate them?' (Milinda Paññhā text PTS 143) There is also the consideration that those of other sects might say, 'while the Teacher (Gotama) was alive, his disciples respected and honoured his precepts but now that he is no more, they throw off the training'. But principally the reason was devotion arising from the successful practice of Dhamma Vinaya.

Supposing that someone proclaimed that he wished to 'reform' the Vinaya. In doing this or in trying to do this, he would depart from Theravāda tradition and place himself apart from others following Theravāda. He would in fact only start a new sect, and who is in favour of sectarianism? If he were a bhikkhu, by his departure from the training laid down in the Vinaya he would only bring upon himself offences, being burdened with which and failing to confess them, he would be precluded from making much progress on the Practice path of Dhamma.

Again, *who* will change the Vinaya? As the Vinaya is the province of bhikkhus, laypeople obviously cannot do so. One bhikkhu cannot effect any changes since Vinaya-decisions are arrived at after the consultation of a Sangha. A Sangha of young bhikkhus is not qualified to do so since decision arrived at by them might well be swayed by preferences, or be based upon both lack of learning and lack of purity of heart. A Sangha of senior bhikkhus competent to decide upon Vinaya-questions will scarcely undertake such a task since their training has

imbued them with a deep sense of respect for the Vinaya. Any decision arrived at by a meeting of less than all bhikkhus in the world (!) would be sectarian in character and be the cause of Sangha-schism (an offence of Formal Meeting and therefore very serious). Even if such a gathering could be contrived, not only would respect for the traditions of the Arahant Elders easily triumph, but also the dissident voices would be found to represent somewhat unbalanced individuals. Actually, *no one at all* can be found who would be competent to undertake 'changing the Vinaya'. (But there is, as pointed out above, provision for decisions on Vinaya questions by a council of senior bhikkhus well versed in Vinaya and the Commentaries as found in Siam).

Another point to consider is that even if changes were agreed upon by all competent authorities and the Sangha therefore unanimous, how far are such changes to go and when will this changing ever stop? This question, among all other considerations here, has always deterred Theravāda Elders from effecting any changes. Ven. Chao Khun Sāsana Sobhana writing in Siam recently, says: "The argument of the Theravāda Buddhists against the revision of the Vinaya is that while it is true that towards the end of his life, the Buddha did give permission to his disciples to suspend the minor rules, the First Council was not able to reach an agreement as to what 'minor rules' signified." They have thus remained in the Pāṭimokkha until the present time and have thus ensured that the standard of conduct and the direction of the training have remained the same (for those undertaking the training seriously) as they were in the Buddha time. Ven. Paññāvaddho in his review of the Bangkok edition of "The Pāṭimokkha" has written: "It has been said by some people that in this modern day

and age, some or many of the rules are archaic, restrictive or otherwise undesirable in the greatly altered circumstances of modern civilization. But it must be remembered that the Vinaya, with the Pāṭimokkha as its basis has maintained stability in the Sangha since the time of Lord Buddha."

Finally, there is a consideration based upon the nature of the training and the end which it has in view. From the Buddha-time down to the present it has been found that a careful application of the Vinaya's principles by a bhikkhu in his life promotes his practice and understanding of Dhamma: Vinaya leads to restraint, restraint to the absence of remorse, absence of remorse leads to joy, joy to delight, delight to tranquillity, tranquillity leads to happiness and happiness to collectedness, collectedness to knowledge and vision of the truly existent, knowledge-and-vision of the truly existent to revulsion[1], revulsion to dispassion and dispassion to freedom, freedom to knowledge-and-vision of freedom and knowledge-and-vision of freedom leads to Nibbāna free from (clinging to) substrata (for rebirth)" (Vinaya, Parivāra, 169). When Vinaya has been so formulated as to guide a bhikkhu to the goal of Nibbāna, who shall entertain thoughts altering it? It is we who have to change by our practice of the Dhamma-Vinaya, to come up to its level, and not to expect it to change for us. In this connection, there is a little fable:—

At one time there was a great and flourishing tree standing as it had stood for many, many hundreds of years. It was so beautiful that men and women bringing

1 Nibbidā, a word impossible to render into English as it encompasses meanings such as: revulsion (but without hatred or dislike), weariness (but without physical tiredness) and means literally 'turning-away from'.

their children would come from scores of miles about to gaze in wonder at its perfect and majestic shape. Under its mighty spread of branches multitudes could sit down enjoying its cool shade. Even animals would come and delight themselves according to their several habits, some upon the grass beneath and some sporting amid the profusion of leaves, flowers and fruits. And such flowers of such fragrance — no one knew where else their like might be found. And such fruits as this tree bore and in such abundance! No wonder that they are called best, highest, foremost and supreme among all fruits produced by other trees. So the seasons and the years rolled by and still the mighty tree stood hardly changed, for where one branch died off, another grew to replace it. The delight of many beings, visible and invisible, was in the health and long life of this ancient tree. Then, in accordance with the change inherent in things, fashions changed and trees in their natural vigour were no longer praised but trimmed and artificially-shaped trees were thought more beautiful. Agitation began among some men for the tree to be shaped up according to modern taste. Eventually, due to debased ideas of people by that time, loppers and clippers tried their hands upon the millennial giant. Branch after branch fell loaded with flowers and bearing fruits. "Never mind," they said, "it will look much better when we have finished." Before long, the tree was pruned into the form of a perfect cube and this was regarded by almost everyone with satisfaction. Only a few ignorant people regretted the sawn-off limbs and bare branches with a few clusters of leaves left here and there. These ill-educated persons were heard regretting the lack of any shade. How stupid of them!

It is needless to say that the venerable tree flowered and bore fruit no more and due to shock, died shortly

afterwards, leaving only its great, but dead framework which then became an object for the speculative theses of numerous men of books.

Thus it is that most bhikkhus generally would not talk of 'changing' but of 'tampering with' the Vinaya. After all, when closely examined many proposals to bring about changes in the body of Vinaya are found to be based upon the Roots of Unskill. A simple case will illustrate this. A bhikkhu experiences pangs of hunger in the evening (in spite of allowable drinks!) which cause him to announce that he does not believe in strictly following Vinaya in this respect, since this would be an extreme of self-torture (!); the climate is too cold; modern times demand a change; 'I follow Mahāyāna' (!) ----- or one of a thousand such excuses. He accordingly proposes that the training-rule regarding not taking food afternoon and before dawn, be abolished. "After all", he reasons, "it is only a pācittiya offence — nothing much". Meanwhile he has a good supper every night and not only his belly but also his greed, that Root of Unskill, are thoroughly satisfied. If the former is a little distended, the latter is certainly greatly increased while the spirit of renunciation has fled from his dwelling. And of course, where Greed is increased, so automatically is Aversion and Dullness..... and so on.....

Anyone whether bhikkhu or layman who holds such a view or reasoning concerning his training rules as the imaginary bhikkhu above, actually makes for himself a real stumbling-block upon his own path. The mental attitude of thinking, "Oh, it does not matter, only a little thing!" — is one to watch, since it appears at the gate of the wide and easy path leading downwards. Such slack ways of thinking, really urged on by some hidden cra-

ving, are just the reverse of the disciplined scrupulousness upon which so much stress is laid in the Vinaya.

Slackness and strictness in regard to the Vinaya are not to be associated in any wholesale fashion with this 'yāna' or that 'vāda' (vehicle or way). In Theravāda, as in other Buddhist traditions, there are those bhikkhus who are strict as well as those who are slack. Wherever there is a good Teacher who is concerned with the practical application of the Dhamma, there the Vinaya will be carefully followed. But where neither such a Teacher nor a good Vinaya tradition are found, there undisciplined behaviour will result, with a victory for not-Dhamma (adhamma).

Standards of Discipline

One important principle to remember about the Vinaya is that a life based upon its principles is very different from the ordinary life. The Vinaya guides a bhikkhu in conducting himself so as to "go against the stream" (of craving) and his life and way of doing things is often opposed to the ways of one who "enjoys the five strands of sense-pleasures". Take food again as an example. An ordinary person not undertaking any religious discipline may eat, his mind delighted by sense-impressions of taste, smell, colour and so forth and probably therefore overwhelmed with greed. He may chatter with others and if the food is delicious, overeat. Restraint and mindfulness, by contrast are the marks of a good bhikkhu taking his food, which he regards as medicine to keep his body going and should greed arise, uses the meditation upon the loathsomeness of Food to dissolve it. He talks but little, has his senses under control and eats only moderately.

The reason for this difference of attitude is not hard to see. One who is blown about by the winds of craving throughout his life, not understanding kamma and its fruits and therefore not grasping the meaning of dukkha, is set on no sure course and wins little advantage in his or her life as a human being. One who wishes to become a bhikkhu, on the other hand, *has* determined upon a definite course of action which is given guidance by the Vinaya and his practice of it, after his Acceptance (upasampadā). The Dhammapada (verse 75) emphasizes this:

> " One is the way to worldly gain,
> Another to Nibbāna leads.
> Clearly comprehending this
> The bhikkhu-follower of the Buddha
> Should not delight in honour and gain
> But devote himself to solitude."

It may be that some of the training-rules to be dealt with below will seem strange and complicated, even unnecessary. They *are* unnecessary for a layman but they have a definite part in the life of a bhikkhu and help him generally in developing that scrupulousness which is so essential to bhikkhu-life. For this reason, lay-people who are so fortunate as to be able to invite a good bhikkhu to their towns, should be truly pleased to help him keep the Vinaya. Those who do this, which is the doing of what is a little difficult and therefore requires effort but bears splendid fruits, are themselves undertaking the training rightly. A bhikkhu such as the verses below depict is really worthy of help and support:

> " For a bhikkhu wise who practises this Sāsana
> Control of senses and contentment too,
> And by the Pāṭimokkha well-restrained,
> And company of keen and noble friends

Who follow purity of livelihood —
Such things as these being the holy life.
The bhikkhu who has in the Buddhasāsana
Serenest joy and faith that satisfies,
Surely he can reach unto the State of Peace,
The bliss of pacifying all conditioned things."

(Dhammapada 375, 381).

Some aspects of the Vinaya

In the following Vinaya information useful to laymen, most emphasis will be upon the offences incurred in certain situations by bhikkhus and how laypeople can help them avoid these, together with some remarks upon the customary conduct of laypeople in the presence of a bhikkhu. As, in Buddhist countries, the laypeople's code of manners and conduct is much influenced by the seventy-five trainings, a group of rules kept by both bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras, it seems appropriate to include this matter here. The writer has, for the sake of easy reference, gathered the various points, some suggested through the kindness of others, under five headings: Greetings, Living-quarters, Food and Drink, Travel and General Conduct. In the Conclusion are set out some observations upon the way bhikkhus are regarded by the laypeople of Siam at the present time.

Greetings

It is generally felt in Buddhist countries that the common western form of greeting, the handshake, is unsuitable when greeting bhikkhus. The point here is that a bhikkhu must avoid all bodily contact with women. Since if lust arose in him, he could be embroiled in a heavy offence, entailing Formal Meeting. For these reasons it is obvious that the handshake is not a suitable

greeting and, in the case of a bhikkhu, if one has invited him knowing that he has knowledge and experience of Dhamma which is not one's own, then greeting by hand-shake will not express one's willingness to learn, as well as do the traditional gestures.

In a public place, a bhikkhu is traditionally welcomed and parted by 'action of añjali', inclining the head and sometimes the body. This position of the hands is associated in theistic religions with prayer (one thinks of Duerer's famous "Praying hands") but its use and meaning in Buddhist tradition is rather different.

Here, given space, one might elab orate a little upon relationships of mentality (nāma) with materi ality (rūpa) and the reverse. Suffice it to say that there are certain gestures and positions of the body which lead to the arising, maintenance or increase of skilful and concentrated mental states. We are concerned here with two of them, 'action of añjali' and, what is usually called 'prostration' but which we prefer to call the 'five-point-rest' or 'lowering' the body.[1] Of these, 'action of añjali' is commonly seen when lay people greet bhikkhus at stations, in the streets, within a hall, or other public place. The amount of respect thus accorded to a particular bhikkhu tends to be expressed by the height at which the hands are held (from the heart up to the forehead) and the angle at which the head and body are inclined. However, any exaggerated form of 'añjali' is disliked and not encouraged since it usually expresses some mental stain in the mind of the person making it (such as flattery, stupidity, conceit, etc.). What has been said here also applies to all novices and junior bhikkhus when respecting their seniors in the Sangha. It is also widely used by Buddhist lay people when greeting each other.

1 See Preface

Another point which should be mentioned and which applies both to 'action of añjali' and 'five-point rest' (see below), is that the action of respecting one who knows Dhamma by one who wishes to learn, *is for the benefit of the latter.* Through associations with prayer which will be present on many western minds, it is often assumed that these actions when performed by Buddhists, are acts of propitiation or are somehow for the benefit of whoever is 'on the receiving end' (i. e. a Buddha image, or a bhikkhu)! This is indeed very far from the truth since even when Lord Buddha was teaching, he said: "But also, bhikkhus, if others should speak in praise of me, in praise of the Dhamma, or in praise of the Sangha, you should not on that account be filled with pleasure and gladness, or be lifted up in mind..... (For if that happened) that also would become a danger to your own selves" (Dīgha Nikāya. 1, para 6).

This is certainly true of good bhikkhus of the present who will know that to have a mind that is stuck in the desire for praise and honour, which is one of the eight worldly conditions, is also one of the marks of an ignorant, worldly person and far from the ideal of the Noble Disciple (Ariyasāvaka) to which he aspires. Thus a bhikkhu does not teach the advantages of 'the action of añjali' and 'five-point rest', because he wants to be honoured but because these things are skilful ways of conduct and increase the puñña of those performing them. According to a famous verse, this puñña increases in four ways:

" He of respectful nature who
Ever the elders honouring,
Four qualities for him increase :
Long-life and beauty, happiness and strength."
(Dhammapada 109).

Just as a bhikkhu will 'honour the feet' by the five-point lowering before his preceptor, teacher or any elder bhikkhu, besides at shrines and in temples where there are Buddha-images, so do lay-people lower themselves to their bhikkhu-teacher of Dhamma. This they generally do in a relatively quiet and enclosed space such as a temple, bhikkhu's lodging, or in their own houses where they may have invited bhikkhus for teaching, chanting or for making puñña by giving gifts. At the time when they respect a Buddha-image, their Teacher, or other bhikkhus in either of these ways, they encourage their children to do likewise, thus early inculcating a sense of repect which is bound to bear good fruits in the future. Happiness and peace characterize the faces of those who perform these acts of reverence with care. After all, is not happiness associated with an absence of mental stains?

Some laypeople, however, do these things carelessly so that they become unmindful of their meaning and benefits; but those who really aspire to make progress on the Path never do so, unmindfully, however often they have cause to greet with the añjali or lower the body in the 'five-point rest'.

In the West where these customs are not established among Buddhists and where bhikkhus are in any case, very few in number, carelessness is not likely to be a hindrance although there is another one which deserves a little attention. Among some people one finds what amounts to a strong aversion to the practice of lowering the body. It may be that they hold some wrong view, perhaps an unconscious trait persisting from Protestant Christianity (idolatry, the bowing down to idols, etc). Perhaps it may be connected with the idea dealt with above, that the other requires or expects to be worshipped,

or perhaps compounded with some 'view' which is like a smokescreen put out to conceal the true cause for objection — which is *pride*. It is the head which contains the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, many touch organs and that agglomeration of nerve tissue called the brain, a circumstance which powerfully reinforces the idea of ego. That this topmost and splendid piece of apparatus should be lowered on to the ground at the feet of another will naturally cause the mental stain of pride to object and perhaps to put out a smokescreen..... "It's not part of our culture"..... "only an eastern custom.,...." etc.

The modern world manages most successfully to stimulate all the mental stains in man, among them the mental stain of pride is fostered by such notions as: "I'm as good as any man." As far as the training in Dhamma-Vinaya is concerned, such ideas do not apply and it is the humble man who goes forward, not he who is stiff with pride and therefore has no chance to learn. A Tibetan work, "Trees and Water" puts it like this: "Just as the branch adorned with good fruits is bent down beneath their weight; so a wise man's mind adorned with all qualities is bent downwards with humility and calm and knows no pride. (But) just as the fruitless branch of a tree has the nature to grow aloft, so the head of the haughty man is always held high for his heart is not humble."[1]

The traditional position of lowering the body cannot be excelled for encouraging humility. It is known as the five-point lowering (pañcanga vandanā) since in making it, five points are on the ground: (1) the forehead, (2-3) the two forearms, (4-5) the two knees.

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1 See "The Wisdom Gone Beyond", Social Science Press of Thailand, Phaya Thai Rd., Bangkok.

It is common for bhikkhus to acknowledge respectful salutation in either of these ways by saying, (in Ceylon) "Sukhi hotu" (May you be happy) and in Siam often "Āyu vaṇṇo sukhaṁ balaṁ" (Long-life, beauty, happiness and strength). In English, "May you be happy" seems very suitable since all Dhamma practices undoubtedly bring happiness.

What has been written here has only been set down with a view that laypeople should understand, as bhikkhus and samaneras have been taught to understand, what is truly beneficial. Neither Lord Buddha, nor any teacher in Buddhist tradition has ever prescribed that this or that sort of greeting for a bhikkhu *must* be made. There is actually no rigid formality about this at all and much the same course of individual conduct applies in a Buddhist country like Siam, as commonly applies in the days of Lord Buddha: "Having approached (Lord Buddha) some lowered themselves before the Lord and sat down to one side: some greeted the Lord politely and having conversed in a friendly and courteous way, sat down to one side; some by their 'action of añjali' to the Lord, sat down to one side; some proclaimed their name and clan and sat down, while others without saying anything just sat down likewise." The commentary upon this frequently recurring passage in the Suttas, makes it quite clear, however, that those who greeted him with humility reaped ample fruits, while those who "just sat down" were people with minds beset by pride, false views and the rest.

The information gathered here and elsewhere in this book is, the writer believes, very difficult to come by in other works. Yet this is standard practice in the East where it never has to be explained since people are in contact with a living tradition. As and when readers

also make contact with a living Buddhist tradition, it will also be useful for them.

Living-quarters

In a Buddhist country, when a bhikkhu has cause to go to some place where there is no vihāra (monastic dwelling), he will probably stay in a house with lay people. If they are reasonably wealthy, a small room will have been set aside by them as a family shrine and in this, the bhikkhu will be invited to stay, study, meditate and sleep. It is customary that only bhikkhus are invited to sleep in a shrine-room, no member of the family doing so, that room being reserved at other times for pūjā and meditation.

If Buddhists in other lands are able to set aside such a room for their own special devotion and practice, it may prove very useful when they are able to welcome a bhikkhu. Its position in the house must of course be decided by circumstances, but relative quietness is a con-deration and it is preferable to have it upon an upper floor. In houses where gardens contain a small detached outbuilding, this will be even more suitable.

There are some offences into which a bhikkhu may fall regarding his place of lodging. The first is that he cannot sleep in the same room with one who is not fully ordained as a bhikkhu, except for a limited period of three nights; while a second training-rule states "should any bhikkhu sleep along with a woman, this entails expiation." The commentary takes this to mean "under the some roof" but as this will cause much inconvenience, it should rather be taken that he should have a room to himself away from one in

which a woman sleeps.[1] There is here the consideration seen in many places in the Vinaya that not only should a bhikkhu be able to maintain his special mode of life with ease, but also that his repute, the reputation of the Sangha as a whole and of course the good name of the Dhamma, should in no way suffer, not even from those who might invent and spread malicious gossip. For these reasons, strict bhikkhus are most circumspect in their meetings with women (as the Vinaya leads them to be) while well-informed women in Buddhist lands help a bhikkhu, by their modest and careful behaviour, to keep to his code of discipline.

In the handling of certain things, there are offences for a bhikkhu and these, therefore need not be left about in his place of residence. In this list there are both the animate and the inanimate. Thus women and girls however small,[2] are included here, it being an offence for him to touch one even though his mind is quite free from sensual intentions. Thus women keep their distance from a bhikkhu and avoid actions which could lead him to come into contact with them. It may be emphasized once again, that this is simply for the good of the bhikkhu concerned, who since Arahants are not easily

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1 This interpretation may not be acceptable to the strictest bhikkhus for whom some small self-contained residence (as a flat without women residents) would be needed. In respect of the different interpretations possible in some points of vinaya, it is worthwhile for lay people to enquire beforehand regarding particular points about which an individual bhikkhu, or the tradition to which he belongs, holds to strictly. Another case is in the handling of money.

2 It is one of the wrong ways of livelihood for a bhikkhu if he fondles children, boys or girls,— such tactics to increase gains or popularity being best left to politicians!

met with, is still capable of experiencing lust. Lord Buddha's Teachings as one soon sees are always realistic. Women's clothes and articles of jewellery and cosmetics also cannot be touched by him. Neither can female animals, dolls or money.

Money

Regarding money there are some bhikkhus who are of the opinion that this training-rule cannot be kept in the modern world and they are willing to handle it for their own transport. (The use of money by bhikkhus is certainly not a new thing since the original cause for the holding of the Second Sangāyana at Vesali in Buddhist Era 100, was the acceptance of gold and silver by them). Lay-people are also heard to criticize bhikkhus who do not agree to handle money, on the grounds that this impedes the work of spreading Dhamma. On the other hand, there are traditions where bhikkhus bear in mind that this is an offence of expiation with forfeiture, while Lord Buddha has said: "I do not say, O bhikkhus, that *in any way* may gold or silver (=money and valuables according to the Commentary) be consented to, may be looked about for." The Second Sangāyana ruled that it was inadmissible for bhikkhus to possess money and referred to the training-rule in the Pāṭimokkha (Nissaggiya Pācittiya 18). Where this rule is fully adhered to, lay-people do not therefore give money to bhikkhus, nor expect them to carry it. Money can be made available for the use of a bhikkhu but not given to him. Such money which is called after that which it purchases, the "Four Supports",[1] *remains the property of the donor* but is kept by the bhikkhu's steward or attendant who is often a lay-disciple in training, to be used whenever this becomes

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1 See page 7

necessary. At the time when such "four supports" are made available, the donor may say to a bhikkhu (or bhikkhus), "I invite you, sir, with this sum of ..... for the four supports" at the some time handing that amount to the bhikkhu's steward. Or a bhikkhu may receive from the hand of a layman a slip of paper reading: "I invite you with the Four Supports equal in amount to the sum of..... which has already been handed to the steward. As you have need of it, please request it from him." Whatever is needed is then bought by the steward from that money. In this tradition, a bhikkhu has no money-troubles and may leave such affairs to his steward. He is thus free from thoughts on having only a little and not troubled by thoughts of what he will buy if there be much money. He can therefore concentrate on the work of Dhamma and Vinaya which he has chosen as his life.

Other items which it is not allowable for a bhikkhu to touch include: fruits (when still growing on trees), weapons, poisons (unless as prescribed medicines), nets and snares, seeds and musical instruments. Generally he will have no need of radio or television either!

Food and Drink

Perhaps one of the best-known training-rules of the bhikkhu concerns his not-eating between midday and dawn for it is an offence for him even to touch food, let alone eating it during this period which is called the "wrong-time". Lay-people keeping the Eight Precepts upon Uposatha Days or at other times have basically the same discipline. As the sixth precept they recite: "I undertake the training-rule refraining from eating at the wrong-time." A sāmaṇera (novice) has also to keep this precept every day while he commits himself still to observe the Ten Training-rules for novices. It has many advantages both

for the bhikkhu and sāmaṇera, as well as for lay-people. The former benefit since they have free time, thoughts not concerned with food, lightness of the body which is suitable for study, meditation and so on. As for the latter, they are not burdened by having to prepare food for bhikkhus at night.

Although not included among the heavy offences, this training rule (an offence of expiation) will not be broken by the scrupulous bhikkhu (unless ill) since its breaking implies giving way to craving, losing the spirit of renunciation, encumbering the stomach and hence making mind-development more, not less difficult.

The 'right-time' for bhikkhus (and sāmaṇeras) to eat begins when the day is light enough to see the lines on the palms of one's hand and ends at noon. During this time a bhikkhu may eat once[1] or twice. If the former then an adequate quantity of food is needed to last for twenty-four hours, while if he eats twice the second meal is usually served about quarter past eleven so as to finish well before noon.

There are very few dietary restrictions and these are reasonable, ruling out the consumption of certain animals' flesh (for instance, dogs', snakes', tigers', bears', hyaenas') and also that of human beings. Here we may briefly consider the question of meat in relation to the bhikkhu. The word bhikkhu is derived from the root 'bhikkh' = to beg (this English word is from the same Indo-Aryan root). Although a bhikkhu when he goes out to obtain almsfood does not beg (he collects whatever is offered), since he is not allowed, unless ill to ask for food, still he is largely dependent upon whatever is put into his bowl. After he

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1 see "The Blessings of Pindapāta" and "With Robes and Bowl"; The Wheel Nos. 73 and 83/4.

has returned to the vihāra, he may if he wishes, select whatever vegetable foods he has been given and eat only that. In this respect it is proper to remember that when Devadatta requested Lord Buddha for a ruling that bhikkhus should abstain from flesh, the latter did not agree to rule thus, saying: "and the eating of flesh that is pure in three respects, that is to say, that the eater has not seen, heard or suspected that it has been killed (specially for bhikkhus) is allowable." (Flesh and fish allowable must however be cooked as bhikkhus cannot eat any kind raw or uncooked). There is also the Discourse to Jivaka on the same subject and the oft-quoted Amagandha Discourse in which the evils of ill-conduct in so many ways are pointed out as much more harmful than the eating of meat.

We may summarize by saying that as far as his alms-round is concerned, a bhikhhu receives whatever is offered without discrimination (except the unallowable meats which he is not very likely to be given nowadays). If he wishes to be a vegetarian, he may choose from among the food placed in his bowl although where he receives only little, this will be very difficult for him. In any case, whether almsfood or that brought to the vihāra by lay-supporters, he cannot ask for this or that kind of food unless he is ill, when it is allowable to do so. In countries where the almsround is not possible, a bhikkhu or a sangha of bhikkhus, will be dependent upon lay-people who agree to give support. Where a number of bhikkhus are staying, laypeople will organize the buying, cooking and offering of food in the way most convenient to them and in accordance with the Vinaya. There is no need for food offered by them to be special but it should be nutritious. Therefore, laypeople should not ask, "Do you like .....?" Or "What shall we cook for you today .....?" The bhikkhu tradition

is to accept whatever laypeople wish to offer from the food they have themselves, in this way being as little trouble as possible to house-holders of whom it is as true, now as it was in Lord Buddha's days, that they have "a lot to do" (bahukiccaṁ).

A bhikkhu cannot go to a restaurant or shop and buy or order food (or anything else for that matter). Nor can he personally store food overnight. Once food has been formally offered (see below) to him, it must be consumed by him before noon, or else left for lay-people to finish. Again, a bhikkhu cannot cook for himself (although he is allowed to reheat food cooked already). Storing or cooking may however be done by a sāmaṇera or by a lay-disciple in the vihāra. The principle underlying these three training-rules is that Greed, ever-ready to spring up where food is concerned, should of course be discouraged, while the bhikkhu's dependence upon laypeople is greatly stressed. He is taught to reflect every day: "My life is dependent upon others, — this should frequently be reflected on by one gone forth" (Discourse on the Ten Conditions, AN X,).

We should now deal briefly with the formal offering of food and other items, to a bhikkhu. It is a slight offence, for a bhikkhu intentionally to touch, let alone consume, food or drinks which have not been offered. The reason lying behind this rule is not difficult to see. A bhikkhu is always very careful to avoid any act which could even be interpreted as approaching an offence of Defeat. Taking what is not given with intent to steal is a Defeat-offence and even if he has not fallen completely into this, he may have a Grave Offence to confess. Hence the importance of formal offering. This offering is done by placing into his hands every item to be consumed. except these things be on a tray when this may be offered. A layman raises from

the table, plates and dishes (or tray) bearing food *with both hands*, or with the left hand touching the right wrist when the item concerned is a small one (as salt-cellars, etc), and gives each one into the hands of the bhikkhu. If there are a number of bhikkhus, the most senior is offered food first and the others in due order afterwards. It is not necessary to offer food into the hands of sāmaṇeras as this training-rule does not apply to them. Having completed the offering (to each bhikkhu) a lay-man will usually salute with añjali and then take a seat a little to one side, waiting to see whether he can be of any further help. He should not, after having placed the food into the hands of bhikkhus, touch it again and if he does so, that food or drink must be re-offered. Should he *receive* anything from the hand of a bhikkhu, whether it is food or such things as paper or books etc, it is again skilful training for the layman to salute with añjali before taking it.

Due to the training-rules above, bhikkhus cannot share food from the same dishes as those being used by laypeople and it is customary to give them their food apart. In a family this could be just one end of the table while in any lay assembly where many are dining, bhikkhus should have a table specially set aside for them. Sāmaṇeras since they do not have the Acceptance into the Sangha as bhikkhus, cannot share food with the latter and should be given separate food and traditionally eat sitting elsewhere. As honoured guests in the houses of lay-people, bhikkhus are offered their food before the family sits down to eat, or when there is not time for this, their food is first formally offered to them before others eat. Since it is an offence for a bhikkhu to eat or drink standing, he should always be offered a seat. He cannot therefore take food buffet=style since eating is for him a serious matter, a meditation and not an occasion for delight or gossip.

So far we have referred to a layman offering the food but the case is different when a lay-woman makes the offering. A bhikkhu does not receive anything directly from the hands of a woman, but she may place whatever is to be offered upon the small receiving-cloth which a bhikkhu carries. Once she has placed It upon this cloth, it is considered to be offered into his hands.[1] In formulating such ways of conduct as these the theras of the first Sangāyana (Council) have been most careful to guard against physical contact between the sexes so that no possibility of slander, or of infatuation, might arise. One may here remember the opening suttas of Anguttara Nikāya: "O bhikkhus, I do not perceive at all any other form which thus stands taking hold of the mind of man as does this, --- the form of woman ... sound, ... scent ... taste ... the touch of woman. O bhikkhus, I do not perceive at all any other form which thus stands taking hold of the mind of woman as does this,—the form of man, sound, scent, taste, touch of man." These words of Lord Buddha find practical expression in the Vinaya training rules for both bhikkhus and for bhikkhunis, (when they existed).

As regards placing food into a bhikkhu's bowl which is in his hands, whether he is standing, as on the alms-round, or sitting in a layman's house, there is no difference between the way it is done by a layman and a laywoman. Nor does the bowl have to be offered to him since it is in his hands.[2]

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1 Custom in Ceylon and Burma does not use this receiving-cioth and women may offer bhikkhus dāna, provided that their fingers do not come into contact.

2 In Ceylon, his bowl may be taken from him by a laywoman for placing food in it into his hands by her, both actions so performed that there is no physical contact.

Other articles besides food and drink which should be offered to him include anything which will go inside the body, such as medicines. Also, his bowl, robes and other requisites if they are touched by laypeople, as these are then considered to be out of his possession. Upon occasions of making puñña when bhikkhus are invited, the gifts which are offered to them by the laity such as flowers, incense, candles, medicines and any other items useful for their lives, may also be formally offered. If such an occasion is during the 'wrong-time' and lay-people wish to offer food in tins or jars (milk is included), these things cannot be placed into his hands or accepted by him but intimation is made to the bhikkhus of its offering and it is put aside to be kept by a sāmaṇera or lay-disciple. Such small points as these constitute not only a discipline for bhikkhus but also for the laity who may thereby grow in carefulness.

It was emphasized above that offering, whether by a layman or laywoman, is made with *both* hands. This is not simply some sort of ritual but has a very good reason behind it. When one gives something in the ordinary way. the giving is done with one hand if the object permits it. This kind of giving may as a fact become habitual in the sense that one is not aware any more of 'giving' and from a Buddhist point of view this shows slackness of mind and lack of care. Now, bhikkhus who are striving on the Path of Dhamma-Vinaya are said to be a 'good field for puñña', that is, the results to be expected from giving to them as they strive towards Nibbāna leading a pure life, are great indeed and will result in clarity and peace increasing in the hearts of the donors. Thus, it becomes important when making offerings to b hikkhus, whether of their daily food or upon some special occasion, to make the offering consciously, with a strong intention of giving. The stronger

the intention, which is here skilful kamma, the greater the fruits of happiness reaped by the donors. So that laypeople are reminded to make this giving-intention strong, they are instructed to offer with both hands — an act which requires more forethought than the usual ways of giving. Respect is also expressed in this method of offering and it is also used by new bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras when presenting anything to their teachers or preceptors.

The meal having been consumed, a bhikkhu chants briefly (and a number of bhikkhus for some time) verses of well-wishing for the laity. It is actually an offence of wrong-doing for him (them) not to do so if laypeople are present. The least which is done will be for a senior bhikkhu to say a few words such as: 'Long-life and beauty, happiness and strength" (āyu vaṇṇo sukhaṁ balaṁ). Whether laypeople have also finished eating, or whether they have not yet begun, at least the donor will sit quietly with folded hands listening to these words or verses of well-wishing. Every word of the Pāli verses may not be understood but it is more important that the mind should be concentrated upon the chanting to the exclusion of everything else. A mindful and concentrated mind is always full of skilfulness. Frequently, such chants as are translated below form the core of well-wishing:

" Just as the rivers full of water
Fill the ocean full,
Even so does that here given
Benefit the dead (the hungry-ghosts, peta).
Whatever by you wished or wanted
May it quickly be,
May all your wishes be fulfilled —
As the moon upon the fifteenth day, (the full moon)
Or as the wish-fulfilling gem."

" May all distresses be averted
May all diseases be destroyed
May no dangers be for them
May (they) be happy, living long.
He of respectful nature who
Ever the elders honouring,
Four Qualities for him increase:
Long-life and beauty, happiness and strength."

As the close of the chanting it is the custom in many places to say "Sādhu, sādhu ..." and then raising the hands in añjali to the forehead, to lower the body. "Sādhu" means, 'it is well' and is an expression of delighted approval heard everywhere in Buddhist countries when a deed of puñña has been done, such as giving, helping, listening to Dhamma and so forth.

As regards drinking, a bhikkhu may not drink distilled or fermented intoxicants (surā - meraya - majja) (except minute quantities contained in necessary medicines). Before noon any other drink may be offered to him, with or without milk. After twelve o'clock noon it is not allowable for him to take milk, or any drink containing milk, cereals, eggs etc, nor any kind of soup. He may be offered any fruit-juice (uncooked but strained and free from particles of fruit), or any of the bottled soft drinks which are now common. The five 'medicines' allowable over a period of seven days may also be taken by him if he is indisposed. The first of these, ghee, is generally not available outside India but the other four are common: butter (but not cheese), vegetable oil (such as margarine), honey, molasses (including all sorts of sugar). If more of these is accepted by him than he can consume in one evening, it may be kept by him for seven days at most. Any remaining after this time he cannot

consume without falling into an offence. It is thus common for these 'medicines' to be kept by a sāmaṇera, or lay-disciple to be offered as they are needed. Tea, coffee and cocoa (all without milk) are also allowable drinks during the afternoon and evening. With these various allowable drinks and fortified in any case by having few desires and some ability to endure, bhikkhus (and sāmaṇeras) sustain themselves for study, practice or teaching.

Travel

Since a bhikkhu keeping strictly to the Vinaya will not handle money, if he is being invited to teach or to stay, it is customary in Buddhist countries for a layman to come and fetch him. Where distance prevents this, train tickets may be bought and sent to him. If the journey is a long one, he may be accompanied by a lay-disciple who will buy tickets and the bhikkhu's food at the right time. When he is travelling alone, it is usual to meet him at the station.

A bhikkhu commits an offence if he makes an arrangement to go on a journey with a woman, so that if he is accompanied, his companion must be a man (though where a male companion is present, women may also be in the party as well). This is another provision to prevent offences and to stop the wagging of slanderous tongues. When the bhikkhu travels by car, a woman should not sit beside him though of course a man may do so. It is preferable that he does not travel in a car with only a woman who is driving.

There are also several places to which it is not proper to take bhikkhus, such as the following which are called the 'wrong resort' for bhikkhus: namely crowded places or places of entertainment, theatres, concert halls, cinemas,

stadiums, games-fields, exhibitions, fairs, casinos, night-clubs, brothels, army parades, and even fields of battle. It is common-sense that bhikkhus have no need for the various sorts of sense-stimulation provided by such places.

General Conduct

In Buddhist countries such as Siam, the general conduct of laypeople in the presence of bhikkhus is moulded upon the discipline followed by bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras when they are in the presence of theras. Much of this code of good conduct is contained in the articles of the seventy-five Trainings (sekhiya) found in the Pāṭimokkha. Rather than comment upon all these, we may select the most important groups of points for outline explanation.

Buddhist laypeople living in Siam have a good chance to acquaint themselves with the details of this conduct since they can at any time go to a Wat where the Vinaya is well observed and see for themselves how bhikkhus do things. They have another chance also not available to most Western Buddhists for the custom here (and in Burma, Laos, Cambodia) is that most young men (and a few young women) ask for temporary ordination over periods of time ranging from one to four months. While they are in the robes they learn, among other things, how to conduct themselves in the manner proper to those who have gone forth. Every day they receive instruction in the Vinaya (and much else) which includes, of course, the seventy-five Trainings. Not only that, for these Trainings, while they constitute only small offences when broken, actually are very important since they cover events of everyday occurrence such as walking, sitting, wearing robes, eating, teaching and listening to Dhamma. When these temporarily-ordained monks

(often called 'Rains-bhikkhus) disrobe and return to their homes, they take with them experience of a good discipline and it is this which becomes the basis for lay conduct in the presence of bhikkhus. As this training in good conduct applies to contact between laypeople and bhikkhus, almost as much as it does between junior bhikkhus and theras, so there is a considerable basis for common understanding and hence concord.

What sort of things are included in this training? First, we may mention regulation of the body in the four positions, the first of these being *walking*. When walking in company with a bhikkhu, a lay person will walk somewhat behind him rather than immediately at his side, and certainly not push in front, always giving way to him where this is necessary. This is particularly important if the bhikkhu is talking Dhamma when it will be an offence for him to follow behind a lay person, or to walk to one side of the path while doing so. The ancient Buddhist tradition from India prescribes that one should as a mark of respect, "keep one's right side towards" one's teacher, the right side of the body being symbolically that associated with conscious effort and general skilfulness in conduct. If a bhikkhu is sitting and a lay man has occasion to pass in front of him (a lay woman will observe a stricter decorum and not come very near a bhikkhu) it is good training in mindfulness to stoop the body and head and perhaps say something like, "Excuse me, sir."[1] Again, if a lay man or woman should enter a room where a bhikkhu is sitting and perhaps talking Dhamma with

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1 The traditional mode of address used for bhikkhus in the time of Lord Buddha, and still used in Ceylon, is "Bhante" (venerable sir).

others, he or she usually performs 'the action of añjali' or lowers the body, according to what is suitable, before sitting down.

In *standing*, one should not stand upon a higher step or level than a bhikkhu and talk to him. We have in English the phrase 'to look up to' implying respect, and if one is learning Dhamma that is what one should do, literally as well as figuratively. Standing, one does not stand too near or too far but at the 'right' distance. One's hands should be clasped in front and one's body controlled while talking to a bhikkhu, in Buddhist countries agreement or questions being accompanied by 'the action of añjali' in the case of talking to a senior bhikkhu. All these bodily actions help one to correct the mind and ensure that it is functioning in a way proper for the reception of Dhamma. Should the bhikkhu be bare-footed, as is often the case in the East, a lay person with shoes on will not talk to him but remove his or her shoes first.

This is because it is an offence for him to talk dhamma to one who is wearing shoes when he is not, though this situation is not likely to occur in the cold countries of the West.

When *sitting*, expecially if Dhamma is the subject of a bhikkhu's speech, one should sit attentively and not sprawling in a chair. It is also against the spirit of the Vinaya for a bhikkhu to teach Dhamma to one who is smoking. (It is not against the letter as this custom was not prevalent in Lord Buddha's days). However, smoking is bound to distract from listening to Dhamma and as often a sign of unmindful or tense states of mind. All such conditions are opposed to the profitable and attentive hearkening with which Dhamma should be received. Dhamma is so important, so valuable, that it becomes an

offence for a bhikkhu to teach it to anyone who shows by his bodily position that his mind is not concentrated to receive it[1]. The body should be controlled when sitting such that the feet are tucked in under a chair (or inconspicuous if sitting on the ground), with the back reasonably erect and hands placed comfortably in the lap. In sitting down a layperson is careful to notice whether the chair he is about to sit upon has a bhikkhu's robe upon it. If so, he will sit elsewhere or else remove the robe offering it to the bhikkhu. As the robe is a symbol of the pure life in Dhamma, it is never sat upon or leaned against by laypeople. A seat taken by a layman or woman should not be higher than that used by the bhikkhu and if several people are seated on the ground, a bhikkhu should be given a separate mat to sit upon. All these sort of things are also observed by good bhikkhus in the presence of their Teachers and other theras, and make for a spirit of respect and harmony.

Then in *lying-down*, laymen if they do so in the same room as a bhikkhu, will never point their feet at him. Nor for that matter will any Buddhist, whether in robes or "wearing white" (a layperson), lie down with his feet pointing towards any respected or sacred object in a room such as Buddha-images, stupas, pictures of the Buddha or of any Teacher alive or dead, Buddhist scriptures, and so on. The head is always placed in their direction and usually before lying-down, a triple lowering is made to any shrine etc., which happens to be in the room.

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1 Under 'nonsensical chatter' (samphappalāpa), Tibetan tradition counts it 'true' nonsense to teach Dhamma to one who is unprepared. There is also worldly nonsense (animal-talk, see below) and untrue nonsense (tales).

On the same principles as those set out above, if a bhikkhu is sitting, a layperson does not talk to him standing but after lotussing or lowering the body, sits down to talk; while if a bhikkhu is standing, a layman will stand to talk with him. It is part of the reasonableness of this training that almost none of the usual lay conduct mentioned here is performed if a layperson is ill.

If one approaches a bhikkhu to give something, while he is sitting, one's head should not be higher than his own and better lower. This avoids leaning over him and also helps the donor to give with a humble mind which in itself will bear good fruits.

Generally in talking to a bhikkhu one should try to avoid unsuitable subjects of discussion. Bhikkhus were several times rebuked by Lord Buddha for engaging in 'animal-talk' which is defined by this quite common passage in the Discourses: "Talk about kings and robbers, ministers and armies, danger and war, eating and drinking, clothes and dwellings, garlands and scents, relations, vehicles, villages and markets, towns and districts, women and heroes, street talk, talk by the well, talk about those departed in days gone by, idle chatter, talk upon the world and the sea, and also on gain and loss" (A.N. X, 69). When one comes to think about it, this list covers most of the subjects to be found in our newspapers! A layman may also remember that Right speech, the third constituent of the Eightfold Path, is defined as: restraint from lying, slander, rough speech and chatter. Nor is it suitable to ask a bhikkhu what food and drink he likes, unless he is ill. Again, it is not proper to ask about the attainments which he has won through his Dhamma-practice. It is an offence of expiation for a bhikkhu to tell a layman even the truth regarding his own attainments,

and an offence of Defeat should he be tempted to lie saying that he has won what has not been won by him. Also among requests which are improper, as they could embroil a bhikkhu in what is not-Dhamma, are questions upon luck, signs, stars and palms. All this is called animal-knowledge by Lord Buddha and he has made it an offence of wrong-doing for a bhikkhu to learn or to teach it.

In this section also, one might mention some special provision regarding the conduct of laywomen. For instance, when coming to a bhikkhu for instruction in Dhamma, it is proper if a man or boy accompanies the laywoman. Where this is not possible, provided that there is another bhikkhu or sāmaṇera in the room when the teaching of Dhamma takes place, there will be no offence for the bhikkhu. But he should not find himself alone with a woman in a room, expecially one into which others cannot see. Again, women desirous of Dhamma-instruction should not visit a bhikkhu after dusk but do so during the day. All these provisions are to guard individual bhikkhus against their own mental stains and so help them in their training, thus being for the well-being of the Sangha and therefore, since the Sangha guards and maintains the Dhamma, for the good name of Dhamma too.

Laywomen when visiting a vihāra are therefore very modest whenever they have cause to speak to bhikkhus. Their dress should be modest and their persons devoid of ornaments while they address themselves to bhikkhus with humility. In so doing, they help both themselves and the bhikkhus, themselves by following the way of Dhamma which is to realize the impermanent, unsatisfactory and unbeautiful nature of the body and the

bhikkhus by remembering that most of those in the yellow robe have not yet conquered the mental stains (kilesa).

Those laypeople who are very well practised and who have seen for themselves the immense value of Dhamma, will in the presence of their Teacher or other respected bhihkhus, sit keeping their hands lotussed all the time. Faith (saddhā) and serene clarity (pāsāda) of mind do, after all, increase in proportion to one's experience of Dhamma. Laypeople having this sort of deep appreciation of Dhamma after 'the action of añjali' and the triple lowering are also seen to recite when their teacher or other bhikkhus are departing: "Excuse me, venerable sir, for all the faults I have committed through the three doors (of mind, speech or body); for these please forgive me. A second time, venerable sir ..... A third time, venerable sir ..... please forgive me."[1] Only those who have had the blessing of a personal Teacher and who feel great reverence for him, will feel like making this opening-up of faults. It has been included here just because it is a very good practice. All who are not Arahants, have the stain of pride and will therefore grow in the Dhamma as this is lessened and genuine humility increased. This practice can sometimes be beneficial. *The conduct of Buddhist laypeople in the West towards bhikkhus who are their teachers may in these matters vary somewhat with the customs of the country which are accepted as polite. It may be stressed once again that such behaviour, governed by mindfulness and wisdom, is for the welfare of all who practise Dhamma.*

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1 "Okāsa, aham bhante, dvārattayena katam, sabbam aparādhaṁ khamata me bhante.
Dutiyampi, aham bhante, ...
Tatiyampi, aham bhante .....khamatha me bhante."

Finally, a word may be said upon what a bhikkhu may do in connection with lay ceremonies, and what he may not. Where there are numerous bhikkhus as in Siam, they are frequently invited to the houses of people for teaching, chanting and upon occasions of making puñña. For instance, at the time when a new house is occupied, as well as the various anniversaries of birth and death. Their chanting of the words of Lord Buddha to the listening laypeople who sit with 'action of añjali' and minds concentrated upon the chanting, brings, in this case, peace and happiness. But it should not be thought that without the effort of hearkening on the part of the laypeople, that blessing automatically results. Indeed, bhikkhus and their chanting are in no way a vehicle for the bestowal of 'sacraments' or blessings. What are sometimes written about as 'blessings' in connection with bhikkhus' chanting, would accurately be called well-wishings (see the stanzas translated above in the section on food etc.). In other words, a bhikkhu's work is not that of a priest.

Bhikkhus may be invited to chant stanzas of well-wishing before or after a marriage, an occasion when the engaged or married couple jointly make puñña to ensure the success of their new life. However, a bhikkhu cannot 'marry' laypeople as do priests in other faiths. Should he do so, he stands in danger of falling into a heavy offence, the fifth of the Formal Meetings (sanghādisesa) where, acting as a go-between either for a man to a woman or a woman to a man, quite rules out the possibility of bhikkhus marrying others. Marriage in Buddhist countries is purely a lay-contract between the parties undertaking it, the ceremony being conduct by a senior layman, this being ratified in various ways through some government agency.

Conclusion

It now remains only to say a little about how bhikkhus are regarded by laypeople in Siam at the present time. In this matter, as in so many others, one may perceive two extremes and a profitable middle course. One sort of extreme attitude which is somctimes found (more often in the West than Siam) is that of unqualified praise of certain bhikkhus. In the eyes of those laypeople who follow him, he can absolutely do no wrong. It is as though they are bewitched by the yellow robe and out of faith, may be but sometimes from less noble motives, will hear no word against their idol and see no imperfection in him. He is an Arahant, a Bodhisattva or by whatever other name they like to glorify him! Some amongst them out of delusion, imagine that all those who wear the yellow robe are automatically Arahants and so lavish a bhikkhu with praise such that if his head is not turned and his heart not corrupted by such flattery, it will be a great wonder. Such sweet doses of 'spiritual' praise are very liable to cause a personality-cult, rather than devotion to the Triple Gem.

The other extreme which is much less common is the sort of drain-inspector's attitude to bhikkhu's life. It is the very critical, probing examination of a bhikkhu and his way of doing things, which springs out of the Root of Hatred. Slander is often employed as well so that small offences of omission and commission by a bhikkhu become magnified into mountains of iniquity. Untrue stories are eagerly chewed over and added to the unwholesome mess and perhaps the people pride themselves upon the benefits which they are bringing about by making public what they regard as hidden crimes.

In Siam, neither of these two extremes is prevalent. People tend to be respectful to bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras but unless particularly devoted to a Teacher, do not lavish devotion upon those they do not know. There are after all, about a quarter of a million men and boys wearing robes in Siam and the quality of bhikkhus in such a large Sangha, very naturally, varies considerably. On the other hand, laypeople generally shut their eyes to small faults of bhikkhus and rarely criticize. This is quite proper since criticism is of no avail unless it can raise the other from unskill to skill. A Teacher has much power over both his monastic and lay disciples but a layperson rarely possesses such ability. It is well to reflect about kamma and how each person is: "owner of kamma, heir to kamma, born of kamma, bound by kamma, determined by kamma" for such reflection cultivates equanimity. Each person trains himself, a bhikkhu according to his knowledge and ability and a layman likewise.

Thus, we have all, bhikkhus and laity alike, a great debt of gratitude to Lord Buddha who has "made known the training-rules for bhikkhus founded upon these ten reasons:

For the welfare of the Sangha,
for the comfort of the Sangha,
for the control of unsteady men,
for the comfort of well-behaved bhikkhus,
for the restraint of the pollutions in this present life,
for the guarding against pollution liable to arise in a future life,
for the pleasing of those not yet pleased (with Dhamma),
for the increase of those pleased (wtihD hamma),
for the establishment of Ṭrue Dhamma,
and for the benefit of the Vinaya."

"Ayaṁ dhammo ayaṁ vinayo idaṁ Satthu-sāsanaṁ" (This is Dhamma, this is Vinaya, here indeed is the Teacher's Instruction).

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From the

FOREWORD

to the

FIRST EDITION

ERRATA

Page 33 line 7 from below: *For* diretly *read* directly

„ 34 „ 6 „ „ *Read* atakkāvacara (no hyphen)

Page 60 last line: *For* kāmāvcarakusala
read kāmāvacarakusala

Page 68 line 2 from below: *For* santece dent *read* antecedent

„ 68 „ 3 „ „ *For* tance *read* stance

„ 80 „ 6 „ „ delete comma between
step & should

(underlined words in italics)

BHIKKHU DHAMMAPALA

Udawatte Temple,
Kandy.
March 15th, 2487—1944.

From the

FOREWORD

to the

FIRST EDITION

THE nature of the radio-lectures delivered by me was such that a more careful study of them was thought to be useful not only for the many who listened in at the time, but especially for all who were not in the same position.

The lectures, which form a series, touch upon the most essential parts of the Buddha's teaching, the Four Noble Truths, the three characteristics of anicca, dukkha and anatta, the doctrine of kamma, the Paticca-samuppada and the deliverance of Nibbana. The second part of the lecture on Soullessness, being of a more polemic nature, could not be broadcast for obvious reasons, but was delivered at the Y.M.B.A., Colombo, the original publishers of this series, under the caption: "Can the soul-idea be vindicated?" The many questions which followed this and other similar lectures are a proof of the great interest taken in Buddhism by the intellectual classes, if only the Norm is presented to them in a normal way which will satisfy their hunger for truth.

May this publication bring about, if not satisfaction, at least a whetting of their appetite.

BHIKKHU DHAMMAPALA

Udawatte Temple,
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THE EVOLUTION OF TRUTH

DHAMMA CAKKAPPAVATTANA SUTTA

"Aparutā tesan amatassa dvārā
Ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddhaṁ."
"Ope are the doors to the Deathless State;
Ye that have ears, send forth true faith!"

WITH those solemn words the Buddha declared his intention to preach his noble teaching, "deep as a lake, hard to perceive, difficult to grasp, tranquil, sublime, beyond sophistry, abstruse, comprehensible (only) by the wise" (Majjh. N. 26).

After having attained that "unsurpassable supreme Enlightenment,"—while the Master was seated at the foot of the goatherd's banian-tree at Uruvelā—he hesitated whether it would be of any use to make his newly found truth known to the world. For "to mankind devoted to, intent on, and delighting in its attachments it is hard to understand this condition of things, their causal connection, their dependent origination, the cessation of all conditioned things, the rejection of every basis of rebirth, the waste of craving, dispassionateness, cessation, Deliverance" (Mahā Vagga 5).

But then also the thought came to him that there would be beings only slightly covered with the dust of worldliness, who, not hearing the Norm would go to ruin, but hearing it might become knowers of the truth.

It was for the sake of those few that the Lord Buddha established at Benares in the Deerpark at Isipatana his Teaching supreme, "which cannot be overthrown either by monk or priest, by god or devil, or by anyone in the world" (Majjh. N. 141).

It is in this first Discourse that the Lord Buddha points out that Middle Path which alone can lead to Deliverance by the avoidance of both extremes.

Now, after more than 2,500 years, that same discourse is still applicable, word for word, because only a few have understood and seen, whose ears and eyes were only slightly covered with the dust of ignorance and lust.

The doors to the Deathless are opened wide still for everyone who cares to see.

But also the two extremes are there, more attractive than ever. One extreme is "being intent upon luxurious living in sensuous pleasures, which is despicable, vulgar, ordinary, base, leading to no good." It is the extreme of Materialism which sees but one origin, matter; and which strives but for one end, material well-being.

The other extreme is "being intent upon self-mortification which is painful, ignoble, leading to no good." It is the extreme of Idealism, which sees but one reality, that of thought; and strives but for one end, the liberation of that thinking "self".

It was again at the end of last century that scientific Materialism and Idealistic Monism confronted one another as two independent modes of thought. Theoretically opposed like two extremes, they practically converge both in their starting point and in their goal. "Self" is their beginning and satisfaction is their end.

There is very little difference between the Materialists, condemned by the Lord Buddha, the Epicureans of 300 B.C. denying an external agency as the cause of matter and hence

concluding that the highest good was pleasure, and the later Materialists like Hobbes, or the Positivistslike Comte and Stuart Mill, holding that only the sensuous can be an object of knowledge.

Though cautious thinkers have abandoned the attempt to explain the entire universe in terms of matter and motion,—though the frank materialism of Moleschott (1852), relegating all the phenomena of life and mind to the changes of matter, is dead to all appearances,—yet this scientific thinking had deep repercussions, the effects of which will long still be felt.

As soon as science became applied, human craving monopolized it for the sake of its own satisfaction. Inventions have been utilized for the increase of comfort. But increase of comfort has only led to desire for still more; and the desire for more has led and will always lead to conflict and conquest. "Over-civilisation has brought us to a point where the work of getting food is so strenuous that we lose our appetite for food in the process of getting it" (Lin Yutang).

Life has become unnatural because it has become mechanized; man is reduced to the position of a cogwheel in a machine. Like a cogwheel is moved on and on by other, sometimes smaller, wheels, and thus by turning round and round merely passes on that movement to the next,—thus man, to find his place in society, must move on with society and in his whirling round gets hold also of others, whom he drags along with him in the vortex of materialism.

Surely, that is "despicable, vulgar, ordinary, base, leading to no good".

The other extreme is Idealism, which expresses itself in different ways. Yet at bottom they are outgrowths from one root: self.

Fichte in his subjcctive Idcalism held that it is the

"I" alone who exist; all the rest is a modification of my mind. Schelling and Berkeley tell us in their objective Idealism that all, including the "I", are mere manifestations of the Absolute. Finally Hegel informs us in his absolute Idealism that only the relation between subject and object is real.

Has all this anything to do with the extreme against which the Buddha warned us, when showing his Middle Path?

Addiction to self-mortification is merely the practical side of the speculation of idealism. In idealism the "self" is sublimated, with the natural consequence that the "self" must be liberated from matter; soul must be delivered from the bonds of the body. The passions of the body must be subdued even by force; body becomes the eternal enemy of the spirit which can only be overcome "by prayer and fasting" (Mt., 17:21).

This kind of idealism will easily lead to pretension, simulation, deceit, hypocrisy; it is much more dangerous than materialism; for materialism may make a man bad and that is the end of it; but idealism will sublimate the evil and call it good; egoism becomes an eternal soul; killing becomes justice; nations are suppressed for the sake of freedom, and God in heaven is thanked for a victory here on earth.

Thus idealism becomes fanaticism.

Surely, that is "painful, ignoble, leading to no good."

Between the two, not as a meeting-place, not as a compromise of the two extremes of materialistic self-indulgence and idealistic self-denial but "avoiding both" the Blessed One has found the Middle Path, a Path not of mediocrity, but of the highest truth and attainment, "giving knowledge and wisdom," not in the wavering of speculation, not in the excitement of discussion, but "in tranquillity of

mind and penetrative insight, leading to Enlightenment and Deliverance," enlightenment with regard to the real nature of things, deliverance from all suffering and its cause.

Thus the Noble Eight-fold Path, though a path of earnest striving, unremitting endeavour, and perseverance till the end, can only be entered upon by right understanding, Right Understanding of the Truth.

With this we arrive again at the old question which remained unanswered 1900 years ago: "What is truth?" (John 18:38).

Truth is usually defined as the correspondence between the intellect and the object. The intellect, however, being the *act* of understanding, can increase. But increase and growth involve change. Thus even truth is subject to change. This is called *subjective* truth.

Of a purely *objective* truth we can know nothing, because any experience of it would make it subjective. Truth, therefore, is not something existing in itself, but is a mental experience. Now that experience will not be the same in all.

No one expects a child of four to have the same religious notions as a college-student; and an adult's experience will be quite different again. There is growth in truth, and for that very reason it *cannot* be *proved*, but only be *experienced*. Proved can only be that which is static, has the nature of an entity.

Therefore, to understand that truth is a process, that truth is actuality, that is Right Understanding.

And what is actual? That all component things are sorrow-fraught. This is the first Noble Truth.

Birth is called suffering, because becoming itself is the manifestation of the aggregates, the condition *sine qua non* of all misery, and also the evil result of past dissatisfaction.

Decay is called suffering as the dwindling of vitality.

Death is called suffering as the dissolution of the

aggregates.

Thus the arising as well as the passing away of the aggregates is a source of woe, the first as potential, the last as actual.

Sorrow is called suffering which results from loss of relations, wealth, health, virtue or right understanding.

Lamentation is the suffering which finds expression in weeping and crying.

Pain is the suffering of bodily discomfort.

Grief is the suffering of mental disagreement.

Despair is the suffering of worry and mental unrest.

"To be associated with things one dislikes, to be separated from things one likes, not to get what one wishes—that also is suffering."

This together with the last two *viz.* grief and worry represent the mental characteristic of suffering.

Finally and summarily "the five aggregates of clinging (pañcupādānakkhandhā) are suffering," by which in one word are indicated the root and cause of all suffering, namely clinging (upādāna).

This is the second Noble Truth:

The source of all suffering is attachment, craving, clinging.

This craving takes one of three forms: craving for sense-pleasures, craving for permanent existence or eternalism, craving for no more existence or annihilationism.

The truth of this statement will at once become clear when it is considered (and this is the third Noble Truth) that with the utter cessation of craving also suffering will come to an end. For he who has no desires is always content. Contentment cannot be obtained in any other way, for desires are unsatisfiable, likened unto a bare bone with which a dog cannot still its hunger, decaying flesh which is poisonous, a torch of straw borne against the wind which

thus burns the hand of the bearer, borrowed goods which cannot be kept in possession.

Is it pessimism to consider pleasures as suffering? No, it is actuality! But to consider the satisfaction of the senses as real pleasure—that is sheer folly. In order to cure that folly, the fact of suffering is raised to the rank of a noble truth; for folly can only be cured by wisdom.

This shows again how Buddhist Ethics or moral principles, like everything else in Buddhism, are based on a foundation quite different from morality in other religions.

Mental development is exactly what is needed for the development of morality. For, "when religion ceases to be wisdom, it becomes superstition overlaid with reasoning" (George Santayana).

In other religions good conduct is enough to become a saint: "If ye have love ye have perfected the law," said St. Paul to the Ephesians.

According to later reformers like Luther, faith alone is enough for salvation.

But in Buddhism real virtue is impossible without the foundation of reason. The truth must both be experienced and understood.

To experience suffering surely can be done by any being endowed with feeling; that, however, does not prevent a possible return. Understanding therefore is necessary of the real nature of the evil and of its cause. When properly understood suffering will be seen as an effect of action which must have been evil to produce such a bad effect. When thus understood in connection with action, it becomes living like actuality itself. No longer passive fate, but active "kamma" which means self-responsibility.

Action is not finished with action and it is just that which makes life so terribly actual.

At every moment I am reaping the fruit of the past;

at every moment I am sowing the seed for the future.

Is there then no escape possible, no salvation? There is! And the escape lies along the Noble Eight-fold Path of which Right Understanding is the first step. Like knowledge of a disease is the chance for a cure, thus understanding the cause-and-action of suffering is the beginning of Deliverance.

This understanding should be accompanied by the right intention. It should express itself in word and deed, in practical daily life, in perseverance and in mind control.

Thus should suffering be comprehended, the cause of suffering eradicated, the cessation of suffering realized and the path leading to the cessation of suffering developed. For, the knowledge of the truths must be translated into function, if ever the task will be accomplished.

This is the Noble Path which avoids the two extremes of Materialism under all its disguises and of Idealism with all its false decorations.

It is the Path of Actuality that leads to Reality. Only having realized this Path with knowledge and insight, the deliverance of mind is steadfast, the last life is reached, rebirth no more waits.

And how did the five monks to whom this first sermon was preached receive it? What was their reaction? "All received it with joy."

Yet, only of one it is said that his eyes opened to the truth; and he reflected: "Whatsoever is of the nature of arising that is also subject to cessation."

No rapt enthusiasm, no utterance of admiration, but the deep tranquillity of a lake without ripple, reflecting the pure light of the sun.

Cessation, that is it where the Path leads to. Cessation, not of being, for there is no permanent soul to cease, but cessation of *arising* (bhava-nirodha=nibbāna). Thus cessa-

tion is not a doctrine of rationalized suicide, not of annihilation, and hence it does not lead to asceticism. Only in one sense does the Buddha admit to be an annihilationist, namely in so far as he teaches the annihilation of the passions, of evil inclinations, of craving.

To reach this sublime state of perfection there is only one way, the way of renunciation. To renounce is to give up, to let go, to abandon, to discard. And its object is all that has the appearance of being. To be is an affirmation of self, of permanency. Hence all morality which strives to perpetuate self or soul, is a subtle kind of selfishness hence *im*morality. And the more subtle and sublimated, rationalized and idealized it is, the more dangerous and the more difficult also to escape from it.

Here no rectification of thought will suffice, but only the stilling of thought. No argument can solve this problem; for the more words we use, the greater the chances for misunderstanding. Only one thing is to be done: just ceasing.

And in ceasing we will cease: In letting go we shall arrive: In giving up we shall obtain. For, that which we abandon is the burden of sorrow; that which we discard is the fetter of self. And thus renunciation becomes freedom, relief, deliverance, a foretaste of Nirvana.

This doctrine of cessation, so characteristic in the Buddha's teaching, is the natural outcome of his discovery that all our suffering is due to our own craving. If craving is suffering, then renunciation must be happiness.

In the renunciation of self the clouds of ignorance clear up, for in the light of non-self (anattā) things are seen in their true impermanent nature. In the renunciation of self all distinction between self and others disappears and love becomes truly universal. In the renunciation of self all fear becomes impossible, for fear is the child of delusion and

attachment. "When pleasures vanish of their own accord, they end in keen anguish for the mind; but when relinquished by one's own will, they produce infinite happiness proceeding from tranquillity" (Vairāgya Sataka).

While leading his ascetic life Prince Siddhartha had to leave his five companions to find enlightenment all by himself. Only after having purified himself from this attachment he was able to attain what he had sought up to now in vain. Perfect in renunciation, pure in detachment, with insight in truth, he could return to his former companions without running risks of being defiled by their ignorance and craving, "unaffected by good and bad alike, even as a lotus fair to water gives no lodgement" (Sutta Nip. 6).

Thus also the mind has to detach itself from the five senses of the body. Purified in detachment, enlightened by the truth, the mind can give guidance to the impressions in the five senses, and thus lead experience up to full realization.

Then all feelings and perceptions will be conceived as impermanent, then they will lead to dispassion (virāga), to cessation of craving (taṇhā-nirodha). Thus forsaking them one will cling to nothing in the world, and without worry one will attain Deliverance for himself. Then one will know: "Destroyed is the possibility of rebirth, led is the holy life, done is what had to be done, nothing more for this life."

Then truly it may be said: "Oh death! where is thy sting? Oh grave, where is thy victory?" Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. xv 55). Not because this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, not because this mortal shall have put on immortality, but because no death can sadden, where no more birth occurs.——

Thus set the Master rolling the Wheel of Righteousness "excellent in the beginning through its foundation on

morality, excellent in the middle through its development of calm and insight, excellent in the end through its termination in Nibbāna" (Vis. Magga, II 7–2).

"Well-proclaimed is the Teaching of the Blessed One, to be realized in this life, yielding fruit immediately, inviting investigation, leading up to Nibbāna, to be attained to by the wise, each one for himself."

(*svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo, sandiṭṭhiko, akāliko, ehipassiko, opanayiko, paccattaṅ veditabbo viññūhi*).

As one with might
could set aright
what had been overturned,—
As one has shown
what was unknown,
(what still had to be learned)
To men astray
he told the way,
(to truth he gave the key;)
Into the night
he brought a light,
so that all men could see.

Seyyathāpi bho Gotamo nikkujjitaṅ vā ukkujjeyya,
paticchannaṅ vā vivareyya,
mūlhassa vā maggaṅ ācikkheyya,
andhakāre vā telapajjotaṅ dhareyya
cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhinti

Like these waves of sound spread and roll on and contact you all, may thus the thoughts of loving kindness which permeated these words reach you too and set vibrating in your hearts and minds similar thoughts, so that there may be peace even in war, love amidst hate, freedom from lust in a world of craving, freedom from suffering in an ocean of misery!

MAY ALL LIVING BEINGS BE HAPPY!

SOULLESSNESS

ANATTALAKKHANA SUTTA

(Mahā Vagga I 6, 38—47)

"*Netaṅ mama—nesoham asmi—na meso atta*"
"This is not mine- this I am not—this is not my Self."

THERE are some great primary questions which lay at the bottom of every religious system, which form the seed of religious development, upon the answer of which depends the nature of any religious philosophy. These questions have been puzzling mankind from time immemorial and they will be troubling him for ever more to come, because, though the answers to those weighty questions have been as numerous as there are different religions, they have been unable to satisfy the thinking mind.

The reason of the unsatisfactoriness of all these answers —and we may safely predict that any future trial to find a new solution to those problems will be equally unsuccessful—lies in the fact of the intrinsic impossibility to formulate an answer. Any answer is besides the point because those "weighty" questions are based upon misunderstanding. All of them begin to assume the existence of the very thing they want to prove; in other words: they beg the question, or in more philosophical terminology: they are guilty of the sophism called "*petitio principii.*"

Some of those questions are: Whence am I? and whither do I go? How do I know myself? What happens to me after death? How came I (or life) into this world? and how does this world enter into me, into my consciousness? Is the soul the same as the body or not?

These and similar questions are sometimes said to be of vital importance, but then only to those who choose to enquire into them, like children will make a vital problem of the discovery that a round peg does not go into a square hole. But a person with reason and insight will see at once that it does not fit. Not the peg or the hole, but the child is wrong here. So also not the play of world-events, but only those who put such questions are to blame.

It will be seen that there should be one question prior to all those enquiries, and upon which depends the very possibility of further questioning, namely: Is there anything at all which deserves the designation of "I"?

The method followed by the Buddha in solving this question is the most scientific. He does not base his doctrine on logic, for by doing so one ought to presuppose the reality of the thinking subject as standing outside the process of thinking, as a witness or rather as a judge.

That which is not logic in reasoning will be either illogical or a-logical.

Illogical is that which is contrary to logic. Such is faith, belief, acceptance on the authority of someone else without being able even to ascertain the existence of such an authority.

Logic in reasoning, as is said, cannot solve the difficulty, because it presupposes that which it is out to prove; hence it becomes a sophism: *petitio principii*.

Only one kind of logic can help here, the logic of events; only this kind of logic is beyond sophistry and on this a-logical basis the Buddha has grounded his teaching of

soullessness.

The logic of events, of facts, the doctrine of actuality can be understood not by argumentation, but by actual analysis.

Whatever we know of the body is known in its parts and in its entirety as subject to change. Within seven years even the smallest particle has been replaced. Composed of the four elementary qualities of extension, cohesion, caloricity and vibration, the ultimate insubstantiality of all so-called solid matter is evident.

The relative qualities of hardness and softness, the occupation in and of space, are due to the elementary quality of extension (paṭhavī.) It is the element of cohesion (āpo) which makes the many parts adhere intrinsically and to one another, and thus prevents an aimless scattering about or disintegration, thus giving rise to the idea of a "body". Caloricity (tejo) depends on vibration (vāyo) for by increased vibration the temperature rises and when the temperature is lowered also the vibration is reduced in speed so that gases liquefy, and liquids solidify.

Matter being thus reduced to mere qualities and forces which are in a constant state of flux, *there* certainly no permanent entity can be discerned.

Is not there, however, present a something which supports the qualities, which is the possessor of the attributes, which as a substance stands under them all, upholds them all and unites all the phenomena?

Dimensions, form, place, colour, action, even material might change, yet is not there a something which remains unaltered?

A table may be round or square, have three or four legs, have any colour, and be made of wood or iron,—yet for all that it remains a table. Is there then not a something independent from the phenomena?

Independent from all attributes there is naught, no substance, no substratum, no entity,—not even the idea or concept! For it is impossible even to think of an object without any qualities. The qualities together form the object. The qualities, the phenomena may change, but then also the object changes.

A carpenter can make a round table from a square one; still it remains a table. But that is not the entity which has persisted, but only the idea thereof, namely the concept of an object suitable to lay out meals, to keep smaller articles on, to do writing work, to play games, etc. Yet that idea is dependent on certain conditions, *e.g.* a flat top; for if *that* would be removed even the *idea* of table cannot remain connected with the remainder. Substance therefore is a mere concept, has no existence except in a worldling's imagination. When science bends more and more to the opinion that all so-called solid matter is merely a form of energy, advocated by scientific materialism, or as some prefer to call it: *Energism*, that is only admitting in different words the ultimate insubstantiality of all so-called solid matter.

The view that matter or the body is the real self, or ego-entity must lead to the doctrine of annihilationism (uccheda diṭṭhi), the perishing of that "self" at the disintegration of the body.

The view of the persistence of a self after the breaking up of the body (sassata diṭṭhi) will therefore find another more permanent seat for that self, namely the mind.

The biologist Haeckel and the chemist Ostwald were the real pioneers of this modern revolt against traditional metaphysics. Yet in the Anattā-doctrine of the Buddha a substance-like entity either in matter or mind, underlying and supporting the phenomena was most categorically denied 25 centuries ago.

Yet matter shows more permanency than thought. If thus the body cannot be held to be a permanent entity, still less so can the mind be said to be an everlasting soul or self.

"Better were it, O monks" said the Lord Buddha (Saṅ. II p. 94) "that the untrained average man should conceive this body composed of the four primary elementary qualities as soul, rather than the mind. And why? The body is seen to persist for a year or two . . for a generation or even for a hundred years . . while that which is called consciousness, that is mind, that is intelligence, arises as one thing, ceases as another, both by night and by day.

Feelings (vedanā) are of three kinds, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral. Now feeling is mental, for if contact is not mentally perceived, no concept of feeling will be formed. Can this mental action of sensation said to be the self? Or is (saññā) *the perception* of this sensation the self? But then if a pleasant sensation makes place for an unpleasant feeling one would have to admit that the "self" has changed.

There is, however, an experience which gives the impression that there is something which remains the same even though sensations, impressions, perceptions, concepts change. That remaining, unchanging entity is called the soul. Now it is clearly not our duty to disprove any statement which is made without sufficient ground. On him who puts the thesis rests also the burden of the proof. Otherwise: "*quod gratis asseritur, gratis negatur*" — "What is gratuitously asserted, may be gratuitously rejected."

A so-called direct proof for the existence of a soul as a permanent entity to be distinguished from changing modes of action, is the firm conviction that, though thoughts and actions change, yet the thinker and the doer remain the same.

In refutation it must be said that even the most firm

and universal conviction cannot prove a fact. For conviction is feeling, sentiment, emotion, but proof requires reason. The general conviction of many centuries that this earth was the centre of the universe, even the ecclesiastical condemnation of Copernican astronomy, for upholding which Galileo had to undergo dire penalties and Giordano Bruno was burnt at the stake, could never change the fact that this earth is a minor planet turning round the sun which is only a star not of the first brilliancy. Conviction is no proof.

But even if we let this pass for argument's sake, we can*not* admit that the thinker and doer remain the same, for it is exactly by thoughts that we change our mind, by actions that we change our habits.

If that change does not always come all of a sudden and for that reason is less conspicuous, yet the change is not less real for that. Actions cannot be separated from the doer, cannot exist purely as such—There cannot be *walking* without a body that walks. If therefore the action changes, the so-called actor must change at the same instant. Thus the "I" is identified with the action. It is only that "I" which can walk, and sit, and think, and eat, and sleep. But that "I" is not a permanent, unchanging entity; it is identified with the action, is the action itself, and thus changes with the action. "I" cannot stay at home, while "I" go out for a walk.

It is the conventional language which has spoilt the purity of conception, though in some cases even the language has remained pure enough, as *e.g.* in the intransitive form of impersonal verbs; *e.g.* it rains. Who rains? What rains? Simply: *it* rains, meaning rain rains. Likewise the concept should not be: I think, but thought thinks.

The fact that conventional language uses the terms "I" and "mine" may be advanced in support of the human

conviction; but that does not make that conviction any more true than our way of speaking of sunrise and sunset.

The individual, conventionally called "I" or "self", is a mass of physical and psychical elements without a soul behind them, without a soul inhering in them, the elements themselves being a mere flux (santāna), a continuity of changes without identity.

The Sānkhyas too believed in constant change, but a change of the same substratum, eternal matter.

The assemblage of impermanent elements, however, does not require a permanent entity to keep them together. The very presence of an unchanging substance would prevent any change in the phenomena dependent on it.

In postulating a mythical, permanent, unchanging entity, as the possessor of changing qualities, one merely assumes that, the existence of which had to be proved. A single moment of existence *has* no qualities, but it *is* those qualities.

Matter does not *have* extension, cohesion, temperature, vibration, but it merely *is* all that, and without that it is not. Mind, likewise, is not an entity, but a function, consciousness is thought, and it arises when certain conditions are present: the object, the sense-organ, the proper attention. Thus a thought arises not as the action of a thinking subject, but conditioned by, originating from, dependent on other states. And as such it will be again the condition to, the origin of, the *raison d'etre* of further states,—in ceasing passing on its movement, thus giving the impulse to new arising.

"Mind arises from a cause; and without assignable conditions consciousness does not come about" (Majjh. 38). Then the Lord Buddha further explains in the Mahātaṇhā-sankhya Sutta, that consciousness is conditioned by the objects, *i.e.* thought arises in dependence on objects presented to the sense-organs. If the object is a visible shape and

is presented to the eye, then dependent on those conditions a thought may arise which is called in this case eye-consciousness, like fire derives its name, wood-fire, grass-fire, from the fuel applied.

Without fuel, however, no fire. Without objects and organs, no thought can arise. Becoming is according to the stimulus (lit. food) and when that stimulus ceases, that which has become also ceases.

"Void is this of self, or aught of the nature of soul"

(Mahā Vedalla Sutta: Majjh. N. 43)

The teaching of *anattā* does not proclaim that there is no individuality, no self, but only that there is no permanent individuality, no unchanging self.

Personality or individuality is according to Buddhism not an entity, but a process of arising and passing away, a process of nutrition, a process of combustion, a process of grasping.

This individuality has no permanent existence, like a wave in the ocean is only existent as a process, and in rolling on makes itself, and destroys itself.

Yet the individuality of consciousness, though not a permanent entity or soul, is neither a merely physical process. It is a process of grasping. Like fire can only burn as long as it lays hold of new fuel, thus the process of individuality is a constant arising, an ever-renewed laying hold of the objects of its craving, a process of grasping.

It is craving which causes the friction between sense-objects and sense-organs; and from that friction leaps up the flame of new "kamma" which in ignorance will not be extinguished, but in grasping lays hold of fresh material thus keeping alive the process of burning.

"All is aburning, o monks. The eye is burning, form is burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning. And whatever feeling arises dependent on that contact,

that also is burning, burning with the fire of lust, the fire of hate, the fire of delusion" (Mahā Vagga, I 20.2).

As long as that fire is kept aflame, there will be the delusion of "self", there will be the craving to perpetuate that individual self, so that it becomes a something rather than a function, an entity rather than a condition, a soul which sharply separates man from the animals, which have no souls worth saving.

Thus in the ultimate sense this deluded affirmation of self as a permanent soul, is craving which says: "This is mine" (etaṅ mama); it is pride which says: "This am I" (eso ahaṅ asmi); it is the erroneous view which says: "This is my soul" (meso attā).

The error is rooted in craving and pride—craving for happiness and bliss—pride which cannot acknowledge defeat. Where the wrong view of an everlasting soul is thus connected with craving for permanency and bliss, there the teaching of soullessness must necessarily follow from the teaching that all things are impermanent and unsatisfactory.

If there were in this body a soul, if feeling, or perception, mental differentiations, or consciousness were the real self, then the body would not be subject to ill, the mind would not be subject to distress; for if they were the real self, they would be in a position to order: "Let this be so, let this not be so!" If then the body and the mind are impermanent and for that reason sorrow fraught, one is not justified in thinking: "This is mine; this am I; this is my soul!"

Few there are in the world who identify this perishable body with a permanent entity or soul. On the other hand there are many who maintain that the mind or one of its functions, like sensation, perception, mental differentiations or consciousness are identical with an individual, permanent soul, or that those functions possess such a

soul-entity, or that they contain in their action such a permanent self, or, finally, that they are contained by or in a soul.

There are many who even now try to prove the existence of a soul. It is maintained by them that the changing mind and character are supported by an unchanging soul. This supposed soul escapes all observation, even though there may be some awareness of thought and action. A direct proof of this existence of a permanent soul is universally admitted to be impossible; it cannot be known directly in itself. Which, however, cannot be known directly in itself, might be known sometimes indirectly from its working. If an effect can be observed, we may legitimately conclude to the existence of a cause. And the nature of the effect proves to some extent the nature of the cause. There is no need to put one's finger in the fire to find out whether the fire is hot. One can readily conclude to the heat of the fire, if the temperature of the water increases, while being placed over the fire.

Similarly a permanent soul, if it would be existent, must produce effects according to its nature. Now a being in order to be permanent, as the soul is supposed to be, cannot be material, because matter is composed, and what is composed is also decomposible, that is impermanent. Hence the permanent soul should be immaterial. This is fully admitted even by the strongest adherers to the soul theory. Indeed they claim the soul to be spiritual.

But if the soul is immaterial, its working must be immaterial also, and its existence and functioning should be independent from matter.

Around this turns the whole argument in favour of or in disproof of the existence of a soul. This independence from matter is attempted to be proved in various ways. We shall consider and refute them one by one.

The first alleged proof is taken from *external evidence*, namely the opinion of all men. If all people agree upon one point, it is said to be the voice of nature which cannot err. It is said that all people at all times were convinced of a continued existence after death. Now this argument loses its very foundation, because *not* all men believe in a soul. One sixth of the world's population is Buddhist and denies the existence and the very idea of a soul; further there are millions of atheists and scientific men who have lost all faith in God, soul and religion; who have turned completely materialists; who, even if some of them accept the existence of a substance underlying the phenomena, will consider this to be of a purely material substance dependent on, and perishing together with the co-existing form; further still, even the majority of the so-called believers are so only in name, for they contradict their faith by their deeds whenever they commit a mortal sin, thus condemning their souls to eternal damnation for the sake of a short-lived satisfaction, which they certainly never would do, if they really believed in an eternal soul.

Thus there remains only a very small minority who really and actually believe in their soul. And they can certainly not claim to echo the voice of nature. For their conviction is not even a natural growth of mental development, but rather a remnant of the childish submission in their youth to the dogmatic interpretation by ecclesiastical authorities. This kind of blind faith which, enforced upon the child, remains sometimes a habit in uneducated adults, is in reality the crudest form of religion, hardly to be distinguished in degree from the superstitious practices of primitive tribes.

But, moreover, what is this voice of nature? It is nothing else but the collection of individual opinions, like a nation is the collection of persons, born and living in

the same country. If one individual can err, so can two or three, or a thousand, or a million, and even all.

The fact of general opinion, even of the whole human race, should never be overestimated. In the past we have seen how the strongest convictions have finally crumbled up, so that they now seem ridiculous to us.

Yet in their days people have made even the sacrifice of their lives for convictions, generally disbelieved then, but now equally generally accepted; which is only another way of saying that general opinion has changed.

Only 400 years ago the mass of civilized humanity laboured under the delusion that the sun goes daily round the earth; that this earth forms the centre of the universe. Copernicus stood practically alone opposing not only what was then said to be common sense, but also divine revelation and the authority of the Bible. Galileo was jailed and by threat of torture compelled to disavow his former opinions, because his telescope contradicted the Bible. Because Giordano Bruno dared to draw some inferences from the Copernican theory contrary to the Scholastic Philosophy of the church based on Aristotle, he was excommunicated and handed over to the secular authorities with a recommendation of a "punishment as merciful as possible and without shedding of blood," the atrocious formula for burning alive. He perished in the flames, turning his eyes away from the crucifix which was held up to him, the victim of theological stupidity and self-applauding intolerance, the martyr for freedom of thought.

It was and still is the common daily testimony of the sense of sight of every being, that the sun does move round the earth—And yet, that sense of sight, that common sense, that general opinion, that divine revelation, that biblical authority, were clearly mistaken and false.

The same happens even nowadays, and might happen

ever and ever again. What was only yesterday proved by science and tested in practice, is overthrown to-day by some newer theories equally proved and tested and universally accepted, . . till to-morrow some more advanced theories are brought forward, explaining the same facts quite differently, but more logically and more according to the truth.

Does truth change ? If by truth is meant (as it is defined in Philosophy) the harmony between consciousness and the known object, then truth will change with any increase or decrease of knowledge; then there will be degrees of truth, of objective truth in which the object becomes better known, or of subjective truth in which knowledge becomes clearer. If truth, on the other hand, is taken in itself, it must be said to have no existence at all; for if an object is not related to any knowing mind, in which would then exist its truth ?

Moreover, we usually call a thing true, if it corresponds with the idea we have formed of it; but our ideas themselves, according to which we judge the truth of things, are formed from impressions of those selfsame objects.

Thus it will be seen that a general, or even universal agreement of opinion is no sign of proof of the truth.

To say then that the voice of nature, if there would be any such thing, cannot err is neither induction, *i. e.* a conclusion from individual experience to a general truth or principle, nor deduction, *i. e.* an application of a universal characteristic to individual cases. It is merely bad logic based on sentiment rather than on reason.

In this way then we have disposed of external evidence in favour of the soul-idea in two ways namely in so far as we have shown that the existence of a soul is not the universal opinion, and even if it were so, it would prove nothing.

It may be true that all people at all times believe in

existence afer death; even we Buddhists accept this doctrine; but existence after death does not involve a *permanent* existence after death, neither the existence of a permanent soul. Even the Hindus, who believe in transmigration of soul as opposed to the soulless rebirth in Buddhism, do not really believe in individual, permanent souls; for according to Vedanta the soul after transmigration through many lives in Samsāra will be re-united, re-absorbed in Brahman from where it was emanated in the beginning of its wandering. There its individual existence will have come to an end.

External evidence thus having failed, we come to a whole series of arguments alleged to be proofs from *internal evidence*.

Internal evidence means evidence which manifests itself not directly in its existence, but only indirectly through the manifestation of action. Thus, *e.g.*, when a car-tyre goes flat we may safely conclude that there must be a hole somewhere in the tube, even if we cannot discern it with the eye. For if there were no hole, the air could not have escaped.

Similarly from the working of the intellect we may draw some conclusions with regard to the nature of the intellect.

Everything is received according to the nature of the receiver. Water, *e.g.*, takes the shape of the glass tumbler in which it is contained. Colours can only be perceived by the sense organ of sight; sound only by the ear, etc.

Now the mind is said to have *universal* or *general* ideas. Though John Locke, the English Philosopher of the 17th century, in his doctrine of ideas maintained that universal ideas stand for individual objects, which are real in the context of experience, this would be a proof for the materiality of universals, rather than for anything else. There will be, however, very few supporters of the soul-theory if

any, to support this opinion, for, if universal ideas stand for individual objects, they would cease to be universal. And that is exactly our point of view. Berkeley, though a Bishop of the Church of England, and an Idealist in the fullest sense, thought rightly that all ideas are particular; things or objects as presented are individual; they are given together with the relations, each of which may be described by concrete reference to the presented object or event. There is no such thing as shape apart from objects possessing shape, nor colour apart from things having colour, or any idea of motion except as bodies moving (Principles of Human Knowledge). The idea of a triangle is dependent on the knowledge of various types of triangle. The idea of colour has no reality, cannot be thought of except as red, or blue, or white, etc. Universality has no meaning apart from the relationship of particulars. An idea is general only in so far as it stands for particulars of the same kind. We speak about humanity. It is true, this idea maintains even though individuals die and are born, even though after hundred years the whole human race has been renewed. But still the idea is only possible as a collective noun through knowledge of individuals. Thus the idea is based on, and derived from material experience, and therefore cannot be said to be immaterial. A proof that the so-called universal or general ideas are based on a material foundation can be obtained from the fact that, if the material experience is insufficient or wrong, the so-called general ideas will suffer from the same deficiency. The first Europeans, *e.g.*, who landed in Africa created a panic by their mere appearance, because they were not considered to be human beings. Clearly the idea of a particular colour had crept into the idea of a human. Only when experience grows, ideas become enlarged, so that the most general or universal idea is dependent on the largest amount of individual, particular

experience which is always material.

If therefore universal ideas do not contain anything immaterial, the intellect itself cannot be said to be immaterial. Thus even if there would be a soul, we might conclude from its material action that it too would be material. But material is composed, hence it is also decomposable or impermanent.

A second refutation can be drawn up from the major premise that everything is received according to the nature of the receiver. Now it is beyond doubt and everyone will have to admit it for himself, that the mind has many times very material and materialistic ideas, thoughts of lust and hate, of profit and comfort.

Those thoughts must come from a material source. Now, if the soul is said to be that source, then it is a very material soul, indeed; decomposable also, because material, and hence impermanent, and no soul at all.

Another argument from internal evidence to prove the existence of an immaterial, permanent soul is taken from the fact that the mind seems to have *immaterial concepts* like unity, truth, virtue, justice. Those concepts, however, are not truly immaterial, as they have been derived from material experience. The idea of unity arose only, when, after counting for a long time with beads or beans, we were able to substitute units for those objects. Unity is nothing but uniformity from a certain point of view, while the differences are intentionally overlooked. Even unity and order in nature, on which science has built its laws and axioms, have no real existence, but are based on experiment and observation, hence thoroughly material, and can be overturned by new observation and experiment.

Even thousand scientific experiments do not definitely prove a fact, and make it a law, but one single experiment can upset the law and prove its invalidity.

Like physical phenomena do not follow an absolutely rigorous necessity, but permit a contingency, incalculable like chance, so the mind does not follow any fixed law. Though conditioned and influenced, its choice cannot be predicted; thus the alleged perfect regularity, uniformity, necessity of things is a mental fiction, a proof of the possibility of mental aberration in its lack in actuality rather than of immateriality.

Likewise truth, virtue, justice, etc., are only ideas resulting from associating different experiences; they are dependent on education, and that is not even a sign of reason, still less of immateriality. For, even a dog can learn to do many things and finally come to "understand" that putting up his right paw means a piece of cake. Education which is nothing but mental training, brings ideas together; and once they are associated the point of connection might become hidden in the sub-conscious mind. The real connection being forgotten or suppressed, the mind will try to establish an artificial link which is called rationalisation. If ideas like virtue and justice were really immaterial and permanent they ought to remain the same and unaltered in different times and climes. But the association of ideas depends on acquired learning and cannot be therefore an inherent natural action of a permanent soul. Thus a Christian who keeps two wives is guilty of bigamy and considered as very immoral. But a Muslim can be very virtuous in the legal possession of many more than two. That morality changes is a truism. Not so very long ago slavery was deemed right, encouraged by the State, sanctioned by the church, but that way of thinking has given place to a morality which judges slavery to be wrong, because it assigns higher values to human personality. A few hundred years ago any father had the absolute right of life and death over his own children; nowadays we have

even laws for the prevention of cruelty against animals. The moral laws which prevail here in Kāmaloka, do not hold good in Brahmaloka. Thus these few examples show that abstract ideas like virtue, justice, morality are very much impermanent and can therefore not be the expressions of a permanent soul.

But then, the mind can conceive *essential* ideas, it is said, expressing the intrinsic nature of things, such as definitions comprising the common genus and the specifying difference. These are said to be unchangeable and can therefore only be conceived by an unchangeable, permanent entity or soul. Definitions are said to originate from Socrates, while Plato built up a system of eternal ideas. But definitions have as little reality about them as a mathematical problem. They may be useful or even necessary for logical distinctions, but they cannot be said to be either permanent or impermanent, because they are mere mental fiction.

Definitions, essential ideas, so-called eternal principles, are all based on material experience and exist only in particulars. It is the very nature of essence to be particularized. It is true we try to separate the idea of man from this or that individual. But at once we find it impossible for the essential idea to exist separately, and equally impossible to unite it with the individual, as we do not see any relation. This unnatural and illogical position arises from the mistake that we tried to separate the two: essence only exists in particulars. Thus they are not unchangeable in this sense that the objects to which they refer and on which they depend, are changeable and impermanent. The particulars being material, so are therefore definitions and essences, abstractions and universals.

The last arrow on the bow of internal evidence from the intellectual powers is the *reflex idea*. In reflection thought becomes the object of thought. And here certainly, say

the upholders of the soul-idea, is nothing material. According to Buddhism the mind is classed as a sense, the internal sense, and thus we have two sources of ideas: sensations which have come through the external sense-doors, eye for sight, ear for sound, nose for odour, tongue for taste and the whole body for touch,—and sensations furnished by the mind of its own operations, reflection. Thus reflection is the knowledge of perceived sensations. When sensations are material and are perceived in material sense-organs, how then can the knowledge thereof become at once immaterial? Reflex ideas are also experienced in animals; they too show to have memory, attachment, revenge. Yet nobody will maintain that animals have an immortal soul, for never yet has a dog been baptized to save his soul from eternal damnation. But if animals can have reflections without a permanent soul, why should a soul be postulated in the case of humans?

There is separate from the intellect another power in man which is the subject of much controversy, and that is the will.

The supporters of the soul-theory try to make the working of the powers of the will dependent on the soul they imagine, and like for the intellectual powers they claim the will-power to be immaterial, because it strives, they say, not only after material and particular, good things, but for the absolute good. This is not true, because the absolute good cannot be known; would it be known, it would cease to be absolute and become relative. What cannot be known cannot be desired or willed for, and such a general object cannot have any attractive power. No man can love the most beautiful woman in the world without knowing her, though this is still rather material. One always strives for some particular good which is always material. '"Immaterial objects" do not exist'; this is a mere phrase containing a

contradiction in terms.

It is maintained, however, that some will-objects are unchangeable, *e. g.* it is always good to respect one's parents. But if that respect would include even obedience with regard to evil, it would no longer be good, and thus no fitting will-object.

Whatever is good or bad is only so with respect to its good or bad effect. "Kamma" is only "kusala", if there is a "kusala vipāka". And as the effect or the result is always particular, a concrete instance, the action and volition must be of the same kind.

From this follows a last objection namely the freedom of the will. In inorganic matter we see an absolutely rigid determinism towards a certain end, but in similar circumstances man remains free and master over his actions, which clearly show his superiority over and independence from matter. Thus if the will is free, that is independent, it must be immaterial and then also permanent.

The discussion on the freedom of will is usually opened from the wrong perspective. For, whether one accepts the freedom of the will or rejects its independence, in both cases the will is taken as an entity, as something existent, be it free or be it bound.

Will, however, can neither be said to be free, nor bound, because it is non-existent. It merely arises, whenever there is the possibility of a choice. If there is nothing to choose from, there can be no question of willing. On the other hand, the possibility of choosing shows the presence of two opposites or more. The possibility to choose what is evil shows that the action is conditioned and influenced, and therefore not free.

Even if one chooses to do what one *knows* to be harmful to himself, there will still be some motives which brought about that choice. *E. g.* knowing that association with certain

people will bring one to excessive drinking and gambling and other actions which bring about financial difficulties, deterioration of health, and the ruin of family-happiness, yet one might seek that company because one lacks the moral strength to break with them.

To show one's courage, to imagine one's independence, are sufficient subconscious motives to influence and determine one's choice against the better dictates of reason and common sense. Even one's pride might not allow one to go back on a previous decision, even if it is perceived as harmful.

If there were no attraction, no inducement, no motive, equilibrium would have been established already and no choice would take place.

Thus volition arises only when a choice becomes possible. If there is a choice possible, there will be attraction and repulsion which influence the choice and make it not free. If there is no choice, then, of course, there is no will at all, but determinism and no freedom whatever. When we, therefore, must admit that this inducement and coercion is never absent, we must also conclude that will is never free.

As we can only strive for one end which we see and understand as best, according to our limited capacities, so we can only choose those means which seem to us the best under given circumstances. The reasons which induce us to choose a certain means may differ in different people according to their understanding; but, though the line we follow may differ, we all follow the line of least resistance.

To speak about "free will" contains really a contradiction, which is carefully avoided in our Buddhist Psychology. For, "free will" would indicate the existence of a will prior to, and independent from a choice, while "will", which is but another and milder word for "craving",

does not exist separately, but only arises in dependence on contact and feeling: "phassa paccayā vedanā—vedanā paccayā taṇhā." Where contact and feeling cease, no craving can arise.

This teaching is not the same as the Psychological Determinism of Leibniz and Herbart, in so far that the doctrine of Kamma is not fatalism.

Kamma is volition (cetanā) said the Lord Buddha; but volition itself is based on consciousness which is continually arising and passing. It is this consciousness fettered by craving which is ignorance; but freed from the fetters (samyojana) and defilements (kilesa) it is Deliverance or Nibbāna. Freed from craving there is pure insight, and no more volition, no more Kamma. Thus our real freedom lies not in the will, but to be without will.

Thus we have then disposed of all the so-called proofs in favour of a permanent soul.

Some Western scholars in Oriental languages, though not scholars in the teachings expressed therein, yet venture to offer their criticism on this most essential point in the Dhamma. They will explain "no-self" as "self" in the following way: When the Buddha speaking of the components of the aggregates of clinging (pañcupādānakkhandhā) said of each separately: "that does not belong to me; that am I not; that is not my self," what else could he mean but that the self or soul exists separate from them? To which we answer: Had the Buddha stated simply and diretly that there is no permanent ego-entity, he would have given the impression of siding with the Annihilationists against the Eternalists. Well, both schools of thought were wrong and the Buddha wanted to show to both their wrong. Therefore, without saying that life comes to a complete end at death, which is the teaching of Annihilationism, he merely analysed the so-called being and whatever he found of

matter or of mind, he did not find a soul there.

Could he have taught us the doctrine of no-self (anattā) more explicitly and more impressively?

Whatever there be, "that does not belong to me; that am I not; that is not my self (netaṅ mama, nesohaṅ asmi, na meso attā).

Personality was described by the Bhikkhunī Vajirā as a bundle of aggregates, thus a stream of successive states without abiding entity.

There is then no sound basis for the assertion that the soul is distinct from the body or mind. If, therefore, one maintains that the soul is immortal, one must equally predicate that body and mind are immortal, which is clearly absurd.

Human soul cannot be distinct from human life, and human life collapses together with the body, just like animal life and body.

What remains? The influence of good or bad deeds, which will cause another life on the same basis of good or bad.

There is no soul, there is no self, no permanent I or ego-entity. But there is a flux, a process of life, of action and reaction, which rises and falls like the waves of the ocean. Those waves will come to rest, that process will come to a stop, when all desires are stilled, because "I" is an expression of selfishness, of craving. When craving has gone, no "I" will be left.

If the teaching of the Lord Buddha is rightly said to be beyond sophistry (atakkā-vacara), it is never *more* so than with regard to the teaching of soullessness (anattā). For, any reasoning, even the purest logic, will presuppose the Ego in thinking, as Descartes did: "I think therefore I am—Cogito ergo sum."

"Soullessness" cannot be proved with reason, like

darkness cannot be seen by bringing in a light. Darkness can be experienced only when all light is quenched. Likewise "soullessness" can only be realized when all selfishness is excluded. When the craving of "mine" and the pride of "I" have vanished, then also the error of self (sakkāya-diṭṭhi) cannot arise.

But when there is no more thought of self, disgust will be felt, leading to dispassion on the Path of Sainthood; and this detachment will produce the sweet Fruit of Emancipation with the knowledge of attainment that "the possibility of rebirth is extirpated, lived is the holy life, done is what had to be done, beyond this there is none."

The load of life laid low,
The precious price is paid;
The waves of well and woe
Of stormy stream are stayed.
The direst duty's done,
A tenfold tiger tamed;
The weary war is won,
The timeless term obtained.

It is significant that after hearing the first discourse of the Buddha only one of the five disciples understood and even he could only *enter* the Path to Holiness. A fuller explanation of the Truth was necessary. But after hearing this second discourse, the Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta, all five attained the highest perfection of Arahatship.

"Soullessness" is indeed a "lakkhaṇa", a distinguishing mark, the essential characteristic of the Truth. For with self all morality is immorality, but without self good and bad alike are transcended in the pure deliverance of heart and mind, in the freedom from all attachment or lust, from all aversion or hate, from all ignorance or delusion.

May the understanding of soullessness grow in us through the practice of unselfishness!

"May we come unto this darkness which is beyond the light of mere reason; may we without seeing and without knowing, see and know that which is above vision and knowledge, through the realization that by not seeing and by not-knowing we attain true vision and knowledge" (Dionysius, the Areopagite). May in the realization of non-self all beings be happy!

JOY AND SORROW

"Dukkhañc'eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhañ"
"One thing only do I teach
Woe and how its end to reach. (Majjh. Nik.)

IN THIS saying the Lord Buddha has summed up the whole of his noble teaching, laid down its essential features, and indicated the line of thought and action, which we, his disciples, ought to follow, if we too wish to attain what so many have attained before us, and what all of us are striving for, Buddhists and non-Buddhists, knowingly or unknowingly,—the attainment of the highest and purest bliss.

The very fact that we all are striving for greater happiness, shows that the degree of happiness in our possession is not satisfactory, that that degree of happiness is not even considered as good. We do not strive for what is better, but for the best. The best, however, is not better than the good, but it is the good which we have recognised as such. And after having recognised it, all the rest cannot even compete; it becomes simply evil, and as such it is rejected, whatever other name we may give to it.

Because the good is not attained, the quest of the good involves striving, struggle. Hence it is that even the most vague idea of happiness contains an element of no-

more-struggle, no-more-striving, attainment, equilibrium, rest. It is the eternal rest we all are seeking.

"The night keeps hidden in its gloom the search for light;
The storm still seeks its end in peace, with all its might."

(Rabindranath Tagore)

Rest is the natural goal of all action; and all action, because it is non-attainment, is dissatisfactory: *dukkha*. As life is action, actuality, non-attainment, striving, it is also impermanent. Hence life is sorrow-fraught, because it is impermanent.

To see that there is suffering in the world is not such an extraordinary discovery. The greatness of the Buddha's insight, however, lies in the fact that he realized that *everything* is suffering; in other words, he saw not merely that there was suffering *in* life, but he realized that life itself is suffering.

Thus suffering is actuality and as such it forms the foundation of the Buddha's teaching. This does not make Buddhism pessimistic. It has merely to be accepted as a fact, as the truth, as actuality. There is nothing to be unhappy about the fact of "*dukkha*", but there is something to be learned from that fact. Indeed the whole of Buddhism is dependent on it. Here in suffering lies the origin of Buddhism, and in the deliverance of suffering its culmination.

Even if Buddhism would teach the universal fact of suffering without showing at the same time the deliverance thereof, still it could not be said to be pessimistic; it would be stating the truth without exaggeration. But pessimism is an exaggeration towards the dark side. It would be pessimistic to state that no deliverance, no cessation of suffering were possible. But the Buddha said: "As there is in the mighty ocean but one taste, the taste of salt, thus there is in my teaching but one taste, the taste of Deliverance" (Udāna).

So stands Buddhism marked, not as a pessimistic religion, a religion of sorrow and sadness, but as leading to the purest happiness and joy, because it teaches the deliverance from sorrow.

But in order to be delivered from sorrow, we must first understand what sorrow is.

Like the idea of happiness is linked up with eternal rest, so the idea of unhappiness is based on restless change. It is the teaching of change, of transiency, of impermanence: *anicca*, which makes us understand all as suffering: *dukkha*.

To see the world as a continual flux, to see its dynamic nature, its perpetual impermanence, should not seem to be so very difficult to people who are used to discriminate. Yet most of those who even scientifically accept universal impermanence, make a double exception, thereby breaking down their own logic. First of all there are those who are firmly convinced of the impermanent nature of all things, but who maintain at the same time an underlying substance which unchangingly supports the ever-changing phenomena. Secondly there are those who place themselves outside the field of observation, thus imagining to judge the phenomena objectively, as if they were the only fixed point in this raging ocean of change.

No, there is no exception to the law of nature that all component things are transient: *sabbe sankhārā aniccā*.

But why should suffering always be the result of impermanence?—Not *all* separation is bound up with sorrow.

The rays of the setting sun part with the landscape, clouds are dispersed by the blowing wind, yet there is no suffering. Only that separation, only that transiency, which is experienced through the delusion of self, is experienced as sorrow. But when there is no "self", when soullessness, "*anattā*", is not only known but also realized, then there will still be transiency, but no more sorrow. And

transiency too will be no more when all component things are decomposed.

Sorrow thus depends on transiency, and on the misconception of "self". As long as "self" is not understood as a misconception, as a delusion, as an act of ignorance, so long also impermanency will not be understood as suffering. Here nothing can be learned by argument. Here nothing can help, but to pass, over and over again, through the crucible of suffering and thus to learn by experience. This is the meaning of Samsāra. It is our egoism which makes us suffer, and suffer direly all the more, because we suffer in ignorance.

The fact of suffering is admitted by all, but it is not by all understood in the same way.

There are some, (like the Hindus,) who do not see sorrow as real, but as an illusion; it is an illusion indeed to see sorrow as an illusion, not as real. There are others, (like the Christians,) who admit the wide-spread fact of sorrow in human life, but they consider it as a divine favour: "Blessed are the sorrowful." It is the sickly effect of an over-worked imagination.

There are others again, (like the Moslems,) who do not see much evil in the world at all and submit to it fatalistically. It is contrary to actuality.

But in Buddhism sorrow is not accepted as a blessing in disguise, but as an evil to get rid of; sorrow is not an illusion, but real enough, though it is dependent on ignorance; sorrow is not to be submitted to, but to be overcome. And Buddhism alone teaches how to overcome in a final victory which needs not to be fought again, because it teaches how to uproot the evil and cut down the root by the overcoming of craving, through which alone an escape from "self", from sorrow and transiency is possible. If the breadth and the depth of a religion may be measured

by the keenness of its analysis of evil and by the appropriateness of the salvation which it offers, then certainly the prize should go to Buddhism. For, when sorrow is identical with life, the only solution lies in no-more-rebirth. But rebirth and all the evil resulting therefrom will occur as long as there is the will to live.

Thus that will to live, that desire to be, that lust to enjoy, that craving to possess, that clinging to keep, has to be rooted out so that it will not grow again.

"Through not understanding the Noble Truths of Suffering, its origin, its cessation and the way to its cessation, we have been wandering in this beginningless Samsāra, both you and I," said Lord Buddha. (Parinibbāna Sutta).

It is ignorance that leads to rebirth *i.e.* to sorrow; thus it is in knowledge that the great problem of life and death must be solved. To understand that decay, disease, death, sorrow, lamentation, grief, woe and despair are unsatisfactory does not require much understanding indeed. But to understand that birth is suffering, it is necessary to know that birth is not only the physical process in which a living being appears in this world, but also the mental conception which is followed by craving. It is the birth of the defilements (kilesajāti): greed, hate, delusion, pride, false belief, scepticism, sloth, agitation, unscrupulousness and recklessness of consequences. It is the birth of actions (kammajāti) which will give rise to effects (vipakājāti). Understood in this way, any existence is evil, for it is arisen from craving and offers fresh fuel for ever-renewed craving. But to understand that life itself with all its beauty and joy is suffering, one must have tasted and understood the impermanency of life. Experience and understanding both are necessary. For if transiency is only experienced, it might well become a new source of fresh delight which keeps away the boredom and the tedium of constant and

unchanging beauty and joy. Is not the sea made beautiful by the rise and fall of her waves? Do not the different seasons add to the attraction of nature? Does not a change of food add to better appetite, a change of climate to better health?

But the fact that our craving ever wants a new supply of new delights must lead to disappointment, because the supply is not always at our command. Not to understand this is ignorance of the first Noble Truth of the universality of sorrow. To miss this point is to miss the whole of Buddhism. No introduction, no argument can be of any use. He, who finds happiness in suffering, who is satisfied with what he has, will never seek beyond. The understanding, the realization of sorrow, of life as sorrow, is a growth of insight. No fruits can be expected of a seedling; growth is necessary and development, till at the proper season from the fading blossom of transiency will ripen the fruit of understanding.

What matters it, if that fruit be bitter in taste, as long as it cures the chronic disease of craving? Sorrow, if recognised as a by-product of "self", may become the means, may open the road to Deliverance, like the proper diagnosis of an illness is the first step, the chance for a cure.

But the sorrow, the suffering, on which the Lord Buddha based his doctrine of actuality and deliverance, is more than pain-laiden affections. The five aggregates of clinging (pañcupādānakkandhā), the psycho-physical composition of mind and body (nāma-rūpa) itself is said to be sorrow. Thus suffering is both bodily and mental, it is the imperfection inherent in life, whatever form that life may take.

A certain amount of happiness may fill the emptiness within to some extent, but that craving, like an abysmal emptiness, will never be *ful*filled. Before the cup is full to the brim, it has sprung a leak at the bottom. Hence

that constant thirst resulting from that fleeting happiness. When the object of craving is within reach for a moment, that craving becomes clinging (taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṇ); but clinging is impossible because all is impermanent (*anicca*).

Even if one finds some little happiness through satisfying one's desire, does this mean that complete satisfaction will give complete happiness? Because a thirsty man gets satisfaction in drinking water, everlasting bliss is not found in being drowned.

It is the want which makes one strive for satisfaction, but if that satisfaction is obtained, the need for it is not longer felt, and it is not wanted any more.

Even the satisfaction bears in itself the seed of fear and discontent, fear owing to its uncertainty, discontent over its impermanence, which is even hidden in the folds of smiling lips, while it leaves one afterwards more empty than ever before.

The satisfaction of a want is not a final satisfaction; it seems only to create a new want instead.

Modern civilisation has made much progress and given to man many comforts. But those very comforts have only made life more complicated; easier communications have made the problems and quarrels of families those of nations. It is like an attempt to reach the horizon; the harder one strives, the greater is the disappointment for not getting nearer the goal.

But why then is the goal unattainable?

Because the goal exists not in reality, but only in the mind's fiction. Not by striving, but by bringing the mind at peace, by giving up even the idea of self, is it possible to attain that rest and equilibrium which form the foundation and essence of happiness.

But the striving which is involved even in the attainment of states of spiritual absorption (jhāna) is attended

with great difficulties and is known as the distressful path (dukkha-paṭipadā). It would be interesting to draw a comparison here with what mediaeval spiritual authors have called "the dark night of the soul".

Thus "dukkha" is not only bodily pain (kāyika dukkha) and mental distress (cetasika dukkha), that is physical and psychological suffering, — it is also the ethical, religious experience as opposed to bliss and even the difficulty encountered in the process of attaining that bliss. Nay, even joy and delight itself is called sorrow-fraught: "nandī'pi dukkhā"; not merely because joy and delight are not lasting, but far more because delight is a fetter (nandi-saṅyojana) which will prevent the attainment of perfect freedom.

Though delight is thus shown as a source of sorrow, yet sorrow, well understood, can become a source of happiness. Here especially lies the greatness of the Buddha's teaching, that it shows the Deliverance from sorrow and also from pleasure which leads to sorrow.

Like the knowledge of an illness, though painful in itself, may be the reason why one consults a doctor, who finally cures the disease,—similarly the understanding of all life as suffering will be the driving force to seek a remedy. And as of all religious teachers only the Buddha has pointed out to *all* life as sorrow-fraught, it is natural that to him we turn in confidence.

Confidence is not the same as Faith. For Faith is in things which cannot be known; knowledge destroys faith and faith destroys itself, for it is based on that which it cannot know. Faith is defined (by Pope Pius X) as a real assent of the intellect, thus condemning those Modernists holding that faith is merely a blind feeling about religion in the sub-consciousness.

Voltaire said: "The proof of faith is that it is unintelligible." "Faith is to believe in something which your

reason tells you cannot be true, for if your reason approved of it, there could be no question of blind faith." (Edwin Montagu).

Confidence, however, is not a mental acceptance of that which cannot be known; it is an assured expectation, not of an unknown beyond, but of what can be tested and experienced and understood by every one for himself (paccattañ veditabbo viññuhi). It is the confidence a student has in his teacher who explains in the class-room the inverse square law of gravitation as stated by Newton. But if the student has heard something of the relativity-theory of Einstein, he will not implicitly believe his teacher and his text-book, but reserve his judgment till the time that he will be able to investigate for himself.

Likewise a student of Buddhism will have confidence in the Teacher, because his teaching can be tested and ought to be tested. As a doctrine of actuality Buddhism cannot attach any value to blind submission. No possible good can follow from the neglect of use of the very sense, which lifts man sky-high above his surroundings, the use of reason. But when, walking on the Path, one sees the light grow while proceeding, one may safely continue in confidence and yet investigate the path step for step. It is that confidence, which is the immediate fruit of the understanding of sorrow: dukkh' upanisā saddhā. And it is that same confidence which gives already that first taste of the happiness towards which all striving is moving. It is the joy (pāmojja) of having found a possibility to escape from this round of birth, suffering and death; the increase of that joy will become sheer delight (piti) only to make place for a serene tranquillity (passaddhi) and that sense of security, equilibrium, the bliss of well-being (sukha), which is the very opposite of that sense of insecurity, unbalanced striving, which is sorrow-fraught (dukkha).

When this tranquillity and sense of security have been obtained through the experience and understanding of suffering, the vicissitudes of life will not longer be able to create disturbances in the peace of mind.

Concentration of mind (samādhi) will become as a second nature; and in that natural peacefulness things will be seen in their real nature, not coloured by likes or dislikes, not disfigured by passions, not hazed by ignorance, like objects can be seen at the bottom of a rippleless lake of clear water.

It is with this knowledge and insight into the real nature of things (yathā-bhūtañāṇa-dassana) that the golden means can be attained, when exaggerated enthusiasm is cooled down, thus preventing the disillusion of the idealist; on the other hand preventing also the other extreme which makes life materialistic, mechanical and sombre.

By seeing things as they really are, valueless trifles will not be treated as occurrences of the highest importance, which tend to make life unnecessarily complicated.

It will leave room for a sense of humour in which we may laugh even at ourselves, for it is the sense of actuality which gives the sense of humour, in which the world is seen but as the world:

"a stage where every man must play a part" (Merch. Ven.)

"a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
signifying nothing" (Macbeth, V. 5).

It is the lack of this insight which creates worry, a resultant of craving. The world puts all its "self" in every action, and thus the reaction is so keenly felt. Indeed, "*dukkha*" has no existence apart from "taṇhā". This world is merely the shadow of truth, for the world as we know it is only the reaction of our contact and thus the reflexion of our "self." The more of "self" we have put in, the greater will be the reaction—thus we make our own sorrow and suffering. But for all that it remains a

reaction all the same, a shadow, a reflexion of self.

"The world is a comedy to those who think,
A tragedy to those who feel." (Horace Walpole).

We all can enjoy even the most terrible misery as long as it is painted upon a piece of canvas; then we can appreciate the skilfulness of the artist, the exquisiteness of forms, the beauty of colours, hardly being moved by the represented misery. The reason is that it is not "real", by which we mean that we do not take part in it, there is no "self" in it, and we are mere spectators.

Thus we are mere spectators in this picture palace of the universe. Even if we see ourselves acting on the screen, we know that that is no real self who suffers or rejoices. It is mere acting.

"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages" (As You Like It, II 7).

This sense of humour may seem rather grim now and then, as if mocking at what is holiest and dearest, at life itself. It is the grin of a skull which can look at life from the other side of the grave. Thus he who perceives and understands sorrow and the emptiness of sorrow, he perceives also a sense of the human comedy.

Through understanding the real nature of things, through understanding the nature and origin of sorrow and suffering, *i.e.* of actuality,—weariness, repulsion, disgust (nibbidā) arise which can only lead to passionlessness, dispassion (virāga), the detachment from world and self, from matter and mind which is the real freedom and release (vimutti) for which we all are striving. Detachment, indeed, is not a morbid asceticism which aims at mortification of the flesh, or at subjection of the mind, but it should grow from under-

standing as necessarily as a flower in due season from a well developed plant. It is the knowledge of things as fearful (bhaya-ñāṇa) and the knowledge of things as dangerous (ādīnava-ñāṇa), the understanding of the evil of conditionality (sankhāra-dukkha) and of the evil of changeability (vipariṇāma-dukkha), which make craving and clinging impossible, because the object is not longer seen as one worthy to possess, but rather as one causing disgust. Craving for, and attachment to disgusting states or things is impossible; and thus it is that the realization of suffering, so far from being pessimistic, leads to the deliverance from all suffering and even to the deliverance from a possible return.

Once a misconception is realized as such, it cannot be reinstated, but clarity of insight will lead to purity of virtue (sīla-visuddhi), the first of the seven stages of Purity on the way to Nibbāna.

Virtue thus purified will further purify the mind with further progress on the Path of Holiness, till finally the fruit of Sainthood (arahatta-phala) is obtained, where a final death with no more rebirth will make an absolute end to all suffering, happy (sukha) because free from all sorrow, desirable (subha) because free from all desires, which are the causes of sorrow, eternal (dhuva) because free from becoming and rebirth which result in decay and death.

May all attain to that birth-less, death-less state, the supreme deliverance of heart and mind, Nibbāna.

THE PROCESS OF LIFE

"*Kammaṅ satte vibhajati yadidaṅ hīnappaṇītatā*"
"Kamma makes the distinction between
different grades of beings."

WHERE life's entirety can only be comprehended as an unsatisfactory process of change, the natural question will arise how this proceeding takes place. If this process is not only change and unsatisfactory (anicca-dukkha), but also a mere process of changes without an entity to pass on from change to change (anattā), it will be asked, what is it then that changes, what is it that suffers and passes on that suffering, what is it that proceeds?

In a previous lecture we have seen already that Buddhism does not deny the individuality of the process, but merely the permanency of an individual.

Individual processes are differentiated and this is caused by Kamma.

Beings are said to be owners of their deeds (kammassakā), for whatever we have of other possessions cannot be said to be ours in such an intimate degree as the actions, the deeds, which have produced this very existence and life. Of nothing else but our action, our *kamma*, can we

be called owners in such an absolute sense, as over nothing else we have such absolute power of disposing.

We are called heirs to our deeds (kammadāyādā), for in the reaction we inherit the full consequences of our actions, so that whatever we are and in whatever condition we are we must see therein the effect of past causes, the fruit of previously sown seed.

It is from action, from kamma, therefore, that we take our origin (kammayoni), so that kamma is compared with the mother's womb from where this life arose.

We are linked to kamma so closely, as family-ties (kammabandhu) which cannot be broken.

But also we have in kamma our greatest protection (kammapaṭisaraṇā), so that we need not rely upon any external agency, as long as our deeds are good and pure.

"Whatever deed they do, either noble or evil, they become heirs to that."

(Dasadhammasutta, Ang. Nik. x).

Kamma (=*karma* in Sanskrit) cannot be comprehensively dealt with under one chapter heading, for all the truths and conclusions derived therefrom are centred in and emanating from the Kamma-doctrine.

To understand Kamma, one must first study the mind by which Kamma is produced; and that is Psychology. The effects of this mind-production can be deduced to some extent by reason and experience; and that is Logic. Further, Kamma leads to rebirth, renewed existence; and that is Ontology. Finally the moral aspect of skilful and unskilful action should lead to the overcoming of all Kamma; and that is Ethics. Thus we see how this one word covers the whole of Buddhist Philosophy.

When analysing a thought-unit (cittuppāda) into seventeen thought-moments (cittakkhaṇa) one will meet with some mind-impressions (manosamphassa) which are so weak

(paritta, atiparitta) that they hardly disturb the subconscious stream (bhavaṅga sota). But if an impression is strong enough (mahanta) to arrest the subconscious stream, thus not merely knocking at the sense-doors, but actually forcing an entrance, gate-crashing, only then will full apperception (javana), consciousness in the full sense, arise.

Only now arises the possibility of forming new kamma. Thus we see that, though kamma means action (from "karoti": he acts), it is an action of the mind, therefore a thought, an active thought. Here our character is formed and hence the Buddha calls kamma our inheritance, and our parent. When physical elements are added to, and combined with others, something new emerges from that composition. Similarly when psychical action is added to previously obtained psychical results, new life, new character will be produced.

Kamma thus is action, mental action; yet not all action of the mind or of the body is kamma.

Action will be present as long as there is existence, because existence is not static, but a process; and a process must proceed. The very existence of the senses consists in activity. Like a flame cannot exist without consuming,—its very nature being combustion,—so the senses cannot exist without activity.

To understand this it will be good to remember that in Buddhist philosophic terminology the senses are not understood merely as the material organs. Each sense is considered as threefold: (1) the material base (subject); (2) the material object; (3) the appropriate connection. "If the subjective eye is in good order, and if external matter (*e.g.* visible form) comes into focus, but if there is no appropriate bringing together, then the corresponding species of consciousness (*i.e.* eye-consciousness) does not come into manifestation. But if the subjective eye is in good

order and if external matter comes into focus, and if there is also the appropriate bringing together (conjunction) then the corresponding species of consciousness manifests itself" (Majjh. N., 28).

Thus if one of the three conditions is wanting, no consciousness arises, and there will be no sense-activity. This is meant when it was said that the very existence of the senses consists in activity.

It is not the mere contact between subjective organ and external object which constitutes the activity. Not the wick drenched in oil produces the flame. After analysing a poem into lines, each line into words, each word into letters, we still cannot say that those letters compose the poem; for, only when set in a particular order they will form words and sense; out of order they are sheer nonsense. Thus an individual can be analysed into corporeality, sensations, perceptions, differentiations and conceptions. Yet the mere heaping up of those aggregates would not constitute a living process in the sense of growth, of development, of kamma-formations. For even in an Arahat are present all those aggregates; but in him is missing that which binds them together in activity: craving.

Like the mind of the poet gave order to the letters which thus received life, so does craving set the aggregates in working order; and rebirth is the effect. Who only considers the formation of the letters will never be able to read and understand the poem. Thus he who only analyses the body in anatomy, or the mind in psychology, will never be able to read, understand and solve the problem of kamma, *i.e.* of life as craving.

If body or mind is conceived as a thing complete in itself, identical with itself, as an isolated self-contained entity, it becomes absolutely impossible to explain the interaction of different subjects upon one another. As long as the

process of life is cut up into artificial segments, each of them considered as something static, it is impossible to conceive the whole as a process in which all is seen in its natural connection.

As long as one is concerned with analysing individuality into the five aggregates of existence (pañcakkhandhā), one might consider a person as a rounded off whole of mind and matter (nāma-rūpa), isolated in so far as he is not another (na ca aññe). But things become different as soon as one is concerned not longer with the component parts, but with the process of its growth, kamma.

One can consider a tree in itself, composed of leaves, fruits, twigs, branches, bark, wood and further characteristics. Those peculiarities make a tree what it is, that individual tree and not another one. But all those peculiarities and component parts of the individual have come there by a process of growth; and in this process of growth the individual can no longer be isolated (na ca so),

Kamma is a process of action, mental action, mental action with craving.

"*Cetanaṁ ahaṁ bhikkhave kammaṁ vadāmi*":

"I say o monks, that karmic action is volition."

In this process of volitional activity the aggregates of an individual are not parts of a whole, but forms of action, modes of grasping.

As action with volition, kamma does not come in the field of observation, except through its effect. This effect is the reaction (vipāka). It is somewhat incorrect to call this reaction old action (purāṇa kamma), for, if action is past, it is no more action, no process of actuality.

Yet to some extent the action is continuning its process in the reaction, which is entirely dependent on that previous action. It is with a view on the inherent connection of condition and effect that both will always belong

to the same class. In dependence on the desirability or non-desirability of the effect, its cause is called either skilful (kusala) or unskilful (akusala).

From the fact that thus kamma is always either moral or immoral it must be clear that kamma is the very opposite of fate, with which it is sometimes confused. For fate has nothing to do with morality, as it is a predetermining power (real or imaginative) which fixes one's destiny with disregard of action, good or bad. Fate interferes with the working of cause and effect in so far as it produces results which are not caused by corresponding acts. As a denial of cause and effect fate must be dismissed as a mere fiction.

The undesirable effect of akusala kamma in some conditions cannot be altered, but has merely to be outlived.

Take as illustration a man who has borrowed pounds 100 from his master in order to marry. The feast being over he finds himself incapable of repaying the debt. If the master is kind-hearted, he might not confiscate his property, but say *e.g.* that his servant can pay him off with his work, one day counting for one pound. In that case hundred days will be needed before the accounts are squared, before the servant can begin to earn again something. During that period no new acquisition can be made, but his previous possessions remain his all the same.

Somewhat similarly *akusala kamma* can effect a rebirth in such a state of misery that no new *kusala* actions can be done there. This undesirable effect has simply to be outlived, "till the last penny of the debt is paid". When the effect of that unskilful action is exhausted, like a cloud which has shed all its rain, then naturally like the sunshine, the previously accumulated good tendencies will produce their good effects (kusala vipāka). This can happen at any time whenever the opportunity is favourable. It is this accumulated kamma (kaṭattā kamma) which can become

indefinitely effective (aparāpariya vedanīya kamma). If, however, it would miss the opportunity to become effective, it would become "dead", unproductive (ahosi kamma).

This unproductiveness is the only escape from this repeated round of rebirth (samsāra). From this possibly unproductive kamma one can clearly understand that Buddhism is neither an absolutely rigid law of cause and effect, where every seed *must* produce its fruits, nor fatal predetermination, nor blind chance.

"There are these three sources of irrational views", it is said in the Anguttara Nikāya (Tikanipāta, Mahā Vagga 61), "which are questioned, investigated and abandoned by the wise who follow the hereditary traditions,—three sources of irrational views which establish themselves in the denial of Kamma: (1) there are some who believe that all is a result of acts in previous lives; (2) there are others who believe that all is the result of creation by a Supreme Ruler; (3) there are others again who believe that everything arises without reason or cause. But then if a person becomes a murderer, a thief, an adulterer, etc., if this would be due to past actions, or made by the creation of a Supreme Ruler, or if this would happen by mere chance, then one would not be responsible for evil action."

Kamma is the very opposite of all these irrational views, because it is action itself; and upon each new action depend all further effects. If that action produces results, —and that depends on other actions,—those results will correspond to their cause. Any other view is unproved, unprovable, illogical, irrational, untenable.

"Karma avoids the superstitious extreme, on the one hand, of those who believe in the separate existence of some entity called the soul; and the irreligious extreme, on the other, of those who do not believe in moral justice and retribution." (Buddhism: Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids, p. 103).

What we are and that we are is not mere chance; it is not rigid determinism either, for that would leave unexplained the differences in faculties and modes of life. Like a scientific law, be it physical or biological, is clearly not a law with binding force, but only a description of a way of action, constant as far as our observation goes,—similarly the law of kamma is not a necessity of causality where every action must produce its effect. Laws are like grammatical rules for a language which have always some exceptions and might become modified in time through the progressive use of that language. Similarly an effect of a certain action cannot be predicted, because there are so many factors present which through their influence might support, impede, modify or even destroy the effect altogether. Not causality, but conditionality!

Though we speak of causality as the foundation of Buddhism, we should not take it in too strict a sense. As in science so in daily life everything is based on cause and effect—what would be the chaos in the kitchen, if one day the salt were no longer salt!—Yet modern physics sees the need of a certain free play for chance or fate, so that natural laws are not determinate and uniform for each individual case, but for the average. In the same way we cannot always speak of causation, but rather of *condition*, which has not such a rigid meaning and corresponds more faithfully to the Pāli: *paccaya*, as it is used in the last book of the Abhidhamma, the Paṭṭhāna, the Book of Origination.

If we pay attention to the operative force (kicca), kamma is fourfold.

Reproductive or generative kamma (janaka kamma) is that action which acts again in the combination of mind and matter (nāma-rūpa), or in other words the plant that gives fruits, the cause that produces effects (vipāka). Once having reproduced itself, this kind of kamma is lost in its

effect and cannot generate, germinate again. It is, so to say, a transformation, if that term be understood properly *i.e. not* in the sense of an entity, but of a process of growth. Like the seed from which a plant has grown, cannot germinate again, because it has no more existence, but lives in the plant,—so this reproductive kamma is exhausted in the act of generating. Yet the effect produced may make itself known during very long periods and many lives. It will always be, however, of the same kind as the generating kamma force.

During this course of process new actions, called supporting kamma (upatthambhaka kamma), may maintain the effects of previous actions or even intensify them, thus leading from good to better. or from bad to worse. On the other hand, counteractive action (upapīlaka kamma) may interfere with the working out of the effects of reproductive (janaka) action, weakening, modifying, impeding its potential energy, thus making good effects less good and evil effects less evil. If this kind of counter-action is so strong as to completely annihilate the effects of previous kamma, it is called destructive kamma (upaghātaka kamma).

This fourfold division according to the operating forces or function is the most important for the proper understanding of kamma. For, if all action would be reproductive, an escape from the effects would not be possible and the faring on through this round of repeated rebirths (samsāra) would be endless. Only because action can counterbalance action, and thus nullify the otherwise unavoidable result, deliverance is a possibility.

The possibilities of supporting, counteracting or annihilating the good or evil effects of action which would have been normally reproductive, depend entirely on the potential efficacy of the interfering activity. Thus there are four possibilities of producing effects (pākadāna).

Weighty kamma (garuka kamma) is that kind of action, the effects of which cannot be counterbalanced. They are fixed as to their consequences for good or for bad. Fixed in good results (sammatta niyatā) are *e.g.* the four Paths (ariya magga) in the quest of Nibbāna, inevitably establishing the state of exemption from a miserable rebirth. Fixed in bad results (micchatta niyatā) are the five crimes which find retribution in a miserable rebirth without delay *i.e.* immediately on the disintegration of the aggregates of existence (ānantarika kamma) namely matricide, parricide, murder of an Arahat, wounding of a Buddha, causing a schism in the Sangha. Sometimes we find also "wrong views" (micchā-diṭṭhi) mentioned as such a crime. In that case "wrong views" means the extreme perversity of opinion, disregard even of the law of causality and moral retribution, and not mere disbelief, resultant from lack of knowledge. Thus it will be seen that only in rare occasions kamma will be of such a nature that nothing else can even influence it.

It is logically the very last thought of a life-span which decides the immediately following rebirth; therefore it is called death-proximate (āsanna) kamma.

Thought giving rise to thought, like a flame sets all aburning which it can lay hold of,—and the last thought of a life-time being extremely weak owing to the failing physical conditions under which it arises,—this last dying thought will lack the power to influence or modify for better or for worse and thus it will give rise to the relinking consciousness (paṭisandhi viññāṇa) according to its own nature. And so it happens that this one single last thought determines a whole coming life. Usually, of course, it will be one's habitual mode of thinking which will prevail, when in dying all resistance has been reduced to a minimum. This habitual (āciṇṇa) kamma is one's tendency for good or bad, formed through numerous repeated actions during

one's life. It is extremely improbable—though not impossible—that in one's dying hours one should be able to break the fetters of habit forged during a whole life-time. But even if this would happen through force of external conditions, *e. g.* relations reminding the dying man of a certain good action done many years ago, this would not mean that all the other actions have become ineffective.

The Kamma, which through force of circumstances cannot express itself, may do so at any time when conditions are more favourable. Till then it is said to be accumulated (kaṭattā).

Take for example a miser. The energy of his whole life having been directed towards the hoarding of wealth, he has made avarice his habitual kamma (āciṇṇa). Thus most likely his last thought will be one of craving for, and attachment to his possessions, and of regret to be unable to take his wealth with him. If he dies with such-like thoughts, no other rebirth can be expected but in the planes of unsatisfiable desire (petayoni). But it may happen that through kindly influence of relations his last thoughts are directed towards nobler ideals, thus resulting in a happy rebirth owing to his good death-proximate (āsanna) kamma. As, however, the cause of this good effect was only his one last thought, the fruits thereof may very soon be exhausted, and then the habitual kamma of the miser which was temporarily suspended as accumulative (kaṭattā) kamma will get the upperhand. This exhaustion of proximate kamma may be an explanation of death of embryoes and infants.

The reverse might happen equally well, in which case a last thought of worry, *e. g.* temporarily suspends the natural consequences of a very virtuous life, as it is said to have happened in the case of Queen Mallikā, whose subsequent life in a state of misery lasted only for seven days.

Other kammic thoughts can become effective only in the second birth, in which case they are called subsequently effective (upapajja vedanīya kamma). If such a thought does not get the opportunity then, it becomes inoperative (ahosi kamma). Weaker even than this kind is the initial stage, the first moment of a thought-unit which also becomes ineffective (ahosi), unless it can produce an effect in that life itself (diṭṭha dhamma vedanīya kamma). Kamma which is so strong that it can produce an effect at any other than the above mentioned births, is called indefinitely effective (aparāpariya vedanīya kamma).

Properly classified kamma is thus—

(*A*) According to function (kicca):

1. Reproductive (janaka)
2. Supportive (upatthambhaka)
3. Counteractive (upapīlaka)
4. Destructive (upaghātaka)

(*B*) According to the strength of effect (pākadāna)

1. Serious (garuka)
2. Death-proximate (āsanna)
3. Habitual (āciṇṇa)
4. Accumulative (kaṭattā)

(*C*) According to the time of taking effect (pākakāla):

1. Effective in this very life (diṭṭha dhamma vedanīya)
2. Effective in the next life (upapajja vedanīya)
3. Indefinitely effective (aparāpariya vedaniya)
4. Ineffective (ahosi)

(*D*) According to the spheres of effect (pākaṭṭhāna):

1. Unskilful in the spheres of sense (akusala—kāmavacara)
2. Skilful in the spheres of sense (kāmāvacarakusala)

3. Skilful in the spheres of form (rūpāvacarakusala)

4. Skilful in the formless spheres (arūpāvacarakusala)

"If anyone says, O monks, that a man *must* necessarily reap according to (all) his deeds, in that case there is no religious striving possible, nor is there an opportunity to end sorrow. But if one maintains, O monks, that which a man reaps is the result of (some of) his deeds, in that case striving for holiness is possible and also the ending of sorrow" (Ang. Nik.)

The reproductivity of kamma leads us necessarily to the problem of rebirth. A problem indeed, for if there is kamma there must be rebirth, and yet there is none to be reborn according to the teaching of Anattā. It is again the misconception of self-entity which poses the problem; and it is the process of actuality which solves it. The mere asking of the question: What is reborn? is based on the ignorance of the self-less process of kamma. Kamma is not an entity which moves from life to life, like a visitor goes from house to house; but kamma is life itself, in so far as life is the product (vipāka) of kamma. In each step we make now in full grown age lie also the feeble attempts of our babyhood. As actions they were a process which ceased with the act, but that process set further processes working, actual processes.

The present actuality, which expresses itself as the result of all the preceding processes, carries in its very action all the efforts which went into the making of the previous actions. This continuity without identity,—like a flame arises ever new, being fed by ever new fuel, and yet depends in its very existence upon its continued burning, —this continuity of the process is Kamma, and this lack of identity is Anattā.

Kamma thus is not an entity, but a process, an action, energy, in-force *i.e.* a force not derived from some external agency, but from its intrinsic nature. Now that in-force which constitues the process of action, which makes action act, that is craving,—like the process of combustion makes the flame burn and consume everything that is combustible, like the mere exposure to the atmosphere sets a process of oxidization going in certain metals.

Now a flame is not "born" from wood or coal or straw, for those materials can lay side by side for hundreds of years without being burnt. They are merely the opportunity given to maintain a flame. A flame originates not in fuel but in friction and can thus arise even in materials which are not combustible, as *e.g.* flint and steel. Fuel only proffers an opportunity to the process to continue.

The application to the process of kamma will be clear. The actual origin of life is not the sexual act of a male and a female; they only provide the opportunity for a terminating life-kamma to take a new lease. Like a wick though dipped and drenched in oil will not give light unless a flame is applied to it,—like visible objects, though coming into focus, will not be seen by the eye, if there is no consciousness,—so also "it is by the conjunction of three things that conception comes about...If there be the coition of the parents and it is the mother's proper period, but if there is not the necessity of generation, then no conception takes place". (Majjh. Nik. 38).

Now this necessity of generation or rather re-generation is in oriental fashion poetically described as a heavenly musician presiding over child-conception (gandhabbo). It is clear, of course, that here is meant that karmic energy, which in its natural tendency of craving seeks to lay hold of new matter as sustenance in its process of action, of life.

A flame which was burning on the wax of a candle,

may continue to burn on the oil of a lamp, on the cloth of the curtains, on the furniture of the room, on the woodwork of the whole house. This does not mean that wax has become in succession oil, cloth, wood; for these were only the fuel which kept the flame alive; not so much as actively feeding the flame, but as being grasped by the flame passively.

An electric current may produce light in an electric bulb, or music in a radio set, or motion in an electric fan or heat in a stove. But, once more, this does not mean that light has become in succession music, motion and heat; for the bulb, the radio set, the fan, the stove, were only the means through which the electric current could express itself.

In a similar way the different modes of life, as well as the constant modifications in life are only different means of expression of kamma. Thus in the ultimate sense one ought not to say that Buddhism teaches evolution in the sense of Darwinism, though Darwin was probably right when he taught the Origin of Species. He taught evolution in the biological, physiological sense, *i.e.* he traced the originating series of the matter through which life expresses itself, as one might trace the origin of a candle to the wax manufactured by the bees without explaining thereby how the candle became alight. Like fire can not be traced by following the series of fuel dependent on which the process of combustion continued uninterrupted, so the geneaology of man is not shown by tracing the evolution of the body in the series of vertebrates, even though that probably be correct. It is kamma as a process of craving which gives the "impulse", the "élan vital", as Bergson calls it. In this process, however, it is not the mind and matter which are involved; their evolution belongs to a different type. In this process it is the evolution of kamma which

causes rebirth (cp. Milinda Paṅhā, II. 2—6), and *as* an evolution the different phases of expression of that kamma, be it even in different lives, bear the common responsibility.

This process of karmic evolution is not necessarily progress. Progress can only be considered from a fixed standpoint outside the process, but such a standpoint there is not. Process of evolution, however, could be retrogression as well as progress, because it is mere change or growth; and even degeneration, deterioration, is still a process of growth. Even in the physical sense the decay of one means the growth of another.

The frequently repeated question whether it is possible for a man to be born as an animal is really incorrect from a Buddhist point of view; for this question implies the existence of a human entity to be changed into an animal entity in its following existence.

It is craving, as the inherent force of karmic action which tends to express, to perpetuate, to reproduce. Without this tendency action would not be kamma, would not be craving. But beastly actions of the passions will naturally tend to produce beastly effects, and then the process will be evolution of retrogression. Virtuous actions and self-control will naturally tend to produce holy effects, and then the process will be evolution of progress. Actions of self-lessness, of pure unselfishness, will have no tendency to reproduce and hence will not further express themselves in effects.

When a being is born, it is neither created, nor merely propagated by its parents, but it is a product of action in the past. That action (kamma) as volition (cetanā) has constituted certain tendencies (sankhāra), inclinations and repulsions, likes and dislikes, a character which owing to the lust for life (bhavataṇhā) will seek to express itself again; and that is the evolution of rebirth (bhava paccayā jāti).

Rebirth will take place where those karmic tendencies will find the most agreeable surroundings to express themselves, the most suitable soil to take root again, the most kindred atmosphere to produce new fruits. This might be called the sympathy of kammic forces. If it thus happens that a mother's womb, having just received the sperm, is physically and kammically well disposed, a conception might take place, finally resulting in the birth of a child, having some or many of the characteristics of its parents, not because it has inherited those from them, but owing to the sympathy and attraction of similar kammic tendencies. Like the lightning from a thundercloud will never enter into the water of a deep well, but will always seek the metal point of the lightning-conductor on the top of a tower, for there it finds its greatest attraction,—so the tendencies of a character will be attrated by, will sympathize with those tendencies which are nearest in the sense of affinity.

Yet the opposite might happen, when a dying thought contains an element of hate or revenge, for those vices can never be so fully satisfied as when in near relationship with the disliked object. Then the very antipathy of kammic tendencies might become the reason of attraction, like the positive and negative poles of a magnet.

If at the moment of the sexual act, there is no kamma attracted to take rebirth from these particular parents, their act will remain barren.

While the theory of heredity does not explain, why not all the characteristics of father and mother are inherited, the Buddhist explanation is thus that the child does not inherit from father and mother, who only provided the opportunity, but that it brings its own inheritance, namely kamma, with it at the time of conception. It is this third factor, kamma, which besides the sperm and the ovum decides the conception at rebirth. Kamma thus is the real

"natural selection" which struggles on for existence, resulting not in the survival of the fittest, but of the greatest craving, which will reproduce itself for good or for bad, till insight will deprive action of that reproductive force, leading it on to no-more rebirth.

When thus all action will have been stilled, no further craving can disturb the peace, where the wheel of rebirth can no longer revolve, the peace of perfect freedom from lust, hate and delusion, the Deliverance of Nibbāna.

DEPENDENT ORIGINATION

"Five causes were there in the past
And now a five-fold fruit.
Five causes in this present life,
A five-fold fruit to come."

WHEN speaking of Origination, one can approach the subject from two different viewpoints. One is the view of those who believe in a supernatural cause and thus maintain an ultimate beginning or creation. To them the Buddha repeatedly declared that an absolute first beginning of existence is something unthinkable, and that all suchlike speculations may lead to imbecility (Ang. IV. 77). We shall revert to this view after having explained the Buddha's doctrine of origination.

His doctrine is not fruitless speculation, but is based on actuality. Hence it will be understood best, when as starting point is taken not some imaginary time in the untraceable past, called "In the beginning.....", but an actual fact of the present, which is open to investigation and experiment.

The fact of suffering and the fact that *all* is suffering, because all is impermanent, is indeed the actual basis from which one can start the reconstruction pointing towards origination; it is also the basis from where the work of

Deliverance can be started.

Unless the fact of suffering is understood as universal, as explained on a previous occasion, it is impossible to find out its origin, impossible to find deliverance therefrom. Here is no revelation needed, and hence the supernatural signifies nothing; here mere argument avails nothing, for mere words cannot solve an actual problem. And thus we start not with the beginning, but with the actual, experimental fact that life is sorrow-fraught.

Now it is clear that this sorrow and disappointment, due to the impermanence of all things, is only possible where there is conscious life to perceive the same. Thus we have the well-known formula: *jāti paccayā jarā-maraṇañ*: dependent on birth is old age, death and all kinds of woe. Like death should be understood in the sense of dissolution in the physical as well as in the psychical sense, so birth should be understood in the sense of conception, physical and mental. Thus rebirth and death do not occur only once at the beginning and the end of a lifetime respectively, but at every new thought-moment, so that the saying: "*quotidie morior*": I die daily, (1 Cor. xv. 31) receives an unexpectedly new meaning in the Buddhist sense. It is the wrong view of seeing death only at the end of a lifetime, which produces that misconception of a self, transmigrating from life to life.

Death is not caused by birth, neither is sorrow, but both are dependent in their arising on the fact of birth. Thus birth is the *conditio sine quā non*, the *upanissaya-paccaya*, the condition of sufficing efficiency. It is the natural disposition (pakatūpanissaya) of any birth to give rise to sorrow; not the cause thereof, but the necessary circumtance under which that relation obtains, an indispensable, santece dent phenomenon. The characteristics of decline (jaratā) and impermanence (aniccatā) are natural to all matter

that exists. They are not produced by any principle at all *i.e.* not by kamma, mind, season or nutriment (lakkhaṇāni na jāyanti kehicīti pakāsitaṅ).

Where suffering is dependent on birth by which it is conditioned, birth itself is caused by kamma.

"Dependent on the kamma-process of becoming is rebirth" (bhava-paccayā jāti). It is the active kamma-process which produces the passive rebirth-process (uppatti-bhava), where the reaction has to work out, where the result (vipāka) has to be outlived. It is the will to live which makes one live again. It is this lust for life which conditions the kind of life to come. No other doctrine can explain the differences which appear, though outward conditions may be absolutely the same. This process of becoming is volition transmuted into action with skilful or unskilful consequences. As soon as the opportunity is favourable it will reproduce itself, express itself, according to the nature of the means of expression at its disposal. Thus it is that the process of kamma is the process of becoming and the cause of rebirth.

The differences which can be observed even where external conditions of parents, blood and food are equal as in the case of twins, cannot be without a cause, cannot be mechanical products, for they do not always happen to all. As in the subjective continuity of those beings no other reason can be found, the process of becoming must be due to kamma.

It is true that there are many who wish to give this doubtful honour to some supernatural intervention. But this explanation, instead of solving the problem inside the process, induces a mysterious factor from outside, thus making the problem even more complicated and unsolvable indeed. It is no good trying to explain a mystery by one still more intricate. Moreover he who claims the honour

for the good, ought to take also the blame for the evil.

It is the karma-process which leads to rebirth, like a flame burns on through its inner nature in a process of combustion. And like a flame will always lay hold of fresh material so long as that is available, so kamma will lay hold of new material to express its process of craving. For kamma is essentially volition.

Dependent on clinging arises the kamma-process (upādāna-paccayā bhavo).

From the different kinds of clinging it can be understood, how subtle is its working, and how difficult it must be to escape its meshes. There is the more gross clinging to sensuous pleasures (kāmùpādāna). Though few are able to free themselves entirely from this snare, it is not so difficult to be at least aware of the danger. All spiritual men have given their warning, all have spoken in praise of control over the senses.

But not only the body with its natural passions must be tamed; the mind which guides the activities of the other senses ought to be controlled, its wild activities and fancies checked. A forcible repression of the bodily senses only will naturally result in a reaction which might be dangerous from a mental point of view. Suppressed passionate tendencies have often led to serious hallucinations; and if that suppression is done with a supernatural motive, it always leads to fanaticism, where sometimes blood-thirsty hate is taken for love for truth.

The clinging to erroneous opinions (diṭṭhûpādāna) is, therefore, much more dangerous, because where error is seen as the truth, all further consequences will be seen in the wrong light even though their deduction be correct,—like a sum cannot be worked out properly, even if the method be correct, if there was an initial mistake in the thesis. One of the most common erroneous opinions is the

one which sees motion everywhere and nothing moved without a cause, and yet maintains that there can be a mover who moves all but not himself.

The clinging to mere ritual (sīlabbatupādāna) is the superstition, when *e.g.* through outward washing inner purity is sought. Similar actions can be classed as spiritual bribery and only betray a lack of moral courage and sense of responsibility. It is not only an over-valuation of means to a certain end, but a reliance upon inappropriate actions which are, therefore, not means at all.

The clinging to the belief in a self (attavādupādāna) is the most subtle of all and hence the most difficult to overcome. it is this fetter of self-illusion (sakkāya diṭṭhi) in all its twenty modes, which prevents one even to enter the Path to holiness (sotāpanna). It is this root of selfishness which underlies all growth of kamma and of rebirth. It is the heat of the fire which keeps the water boiling and makes ever new steam develop.

But this clinging could not arise, if there were not craving first. Through craving is conditioned clinging (taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṁ). It is craving for sense-pleasures (kāma-taṇhā) that leads to sensuous clinging. It is craving for eternal existence (bhava-taṇhā) which gives rise to clinging to the belief in a self (attavādupādāna). It is craving for annihilation (vibhava-taṇhā) which is the origin of clinging to erroneous opinions (diṭṭhupādāna). By not realising the necessity of effects arising from causes, the possibility of further effects will be overlooked and thus rebirth denied. Craving for annihilation might also lead one to employ inappropriate means to nullify karmic reactions by superstitious practices (sīlabbatupādāna).

Craving is the real turning point, the crank which sets the wheel of rebirth, the machinery of life and death, aworking. Craving imparts selfishness, that is the I-concept, to

mere sensation, thus fertilising the seeds produced by previous action. Here with craving the problem of rebirth is given anew, and with the cessation of craving this problem is solved. In the process of craving kamma is conceived which in due time will grow out into rebirth and death,—like from friction the spark is born which will grow out into a conflagration. With this process of grasping is given the explanation of individuality, for life is a process of grasping.

If craving is dissolved, the whole world becomes a mere play of the senses, where the self is no longer an actor. Where the self does not act, there is no kamma and no more rebirth, so that with the ending of craving the turning of the wheel of Samsāra will have come to a stop.

This, however, does not explain the beginning, the origination of craving. Craving, clinging, desire, volition, will, is not a force which is stored up to be discharged at any moment, but it arises anew over and over again; and in its arising lies the meaning of this whole play of world-events. For apart from this "I" the world has no meaning. The "I" is a reaction; and without this reaction; how can action be known? This reaction is sensation, and on this sensation is dependent craving (vedanā paccayā taṇhā).

Here again, sensation or feeling is not the cause of craving, but merely a condition, for without sensation no craving can arise, and yet not all sensation needs to produce craving. Here alone a break is possible; here alone in the long chain of conditioned reactions it is possible to come to a stop. If all feeling would result in craving with all its evil consequences, the attainment of Arahatship and Nibbāna would be impossible. Like a seed *can* grow up into a plant under favourable circumstances and

yet those circumstances, however necessary, are not the cause of the plant, but mere conditions to its growth,—so sensation *can* develop into craving, if the conditions thereto are favourable. The favourable condition to the arising of craving is ignorance, for, if knowledge of the real nature of things were present, craving would be impossible. It is thus to ignorance (avijjā) that we shall have to trace the origin of craving.

Feeling or sensation in any of its three modes of pleasure, pain or indifference, in so far as it is a karma-resultant, is the condition without which no craving can arise (vedanā-paccayā taṇhā). Thus pleasurable feeling might give rise to craving for more; painful feeling to craving for freedom therefrom, and indifferent feeling to craving for its tranquil sensation. Feeling, however cannot arise without contact (phassa); sensation cannot arise without the senses (salāyatana). Here it is clearly seen that the causal chain of dependent origination (paṭicca samuppāda) should not be understood as a pure succession of cause and effect; it is the growth, the development, the evolution-process where the successive stage is contained in germ-form, as it were, in the preceding one, requiring only the proper conditions to sprout forth. Thus in the six senses of mind and body are contained the possibilities of contact and sensation. Similarly in consciousness (viññāṇa) are contained the other three mental groups of sensation, perception and mental formations (vedanā. saññā, sankhāra). Thus it is said that through consciousness are conditioned corporeality and mentality (viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṅ) and that dependent on the six senses of body and mind arise contact and sensation (salāyatana-paccayā phasso). Consciousness and its mental concomitants, hence also sense-impression or contact and feeling or sensation, are all simultaneously arising and hence related in the sense of co-existence (saha-

jāta-paccaya), as a candle which is burning, burns together with its heat and light. But they are also mutually supporting one another (aññamaññña-nissaya-paccaya), like "when three sticks are set upright leaning against one another at their upper ends, each of them depends on, and is depended on by, the other two..... If one of them falls, all will fall at the same time." (Ledi Sayādaw).

Consciousness itself, however, is a product of kamma-formations in the past (sankhāra-paccayā viññāṇaṅ). Like the kamma-process in the present (kamma-bhava) will produce birth and its consequences, so the kamma-formations of the past (sankhārā) have produced this present conscious life. Like the kamma-process in the present finds its origin in craving and clinging, so the kamma of the past was formed in ignorance (avijjā paccayā sankhārā). Craving and ignorance are synonymous. Craving is ignorance, for in ignorance we crave for things impermanent, sorrowfraught and substanceless.

Further back than ignorance we cannot go, for if there would have been a time when there was no ignorance, there ought to have been knowledge supreme. But to say that knowledge supreme has produced ignorance is as nonsensical as to say that perfection could produce imperfection, that goodness could produce evil. Ignorance thus stands as the sufficient reason for life, when life is seen as a process of grasping.

Is ignorance then the ultimate beginning of everything? This question so frequently put is ignorance manifest.

To speak of a beginning where there is no entity is a sheer impossibility. A process can *have* no beginning, but *is* beginning constantly, can have no end, but is ceasing constantly. Not to understand this is ignorance; and dependent on ignorance arise the kamma-formations, which through processes of conscious grasping lead to rebirth which

is sorrow-fraught.

It is in ignorance that the I-concept is formed; it is in craving that the I-concept is maintained. Ignorance creates a delusion, and craving clings to it. And thus comes about this whole play of world-events which turns round the "self" like a wheel round its axle. But as, when the axle is broken, the wheel will not turn any more,—so, when the delusion of self is destroyed, when insight has destroyed ignorance, no further craving can arise, no further kamma can be formed, the wheel of samsāra will no more turn, the process of becoming and rebirth will have come to a stop.

Where ignorance thus gives rise to craving, the freedom from craving can only be obtained through the overcoming of ignorance in the insight into the real nature of things. Ignorance also is a kind of understanding, it is *mis*-understanding; it is cognition with craving and thus it leads to formation *i.e.* kamma. But cognition without craving *that* is right understanding which does not lead to further formation of kamma.

This understanding is not to be obtained by mere reasoning. Through purity of virtue, through renunciation and mind-control, insight will grow, insight into the real nature of things. When things are seen as void of self and impermanent, they will be understood as sorrow-fraught; and the first Noble Truth will have been realized. When it is further seen that all our disappointment arises from our craving for things void and impermanent, then craving will become an impossibility. If there is no more craving, there will be no more kamma-process of becoming, resulting in rebirth. Thus while ignorance stands as the origin of all this suffering through grasping, insight alone offers the deliverance therefrom.

Where a beginning as ultimate origin cannot be pointed

out, just because there are no entities but mere processes rolling on,—because nothing has a beginning but is only a phase in the process of evolution which is always beginning,—yet this process can come to a stop simply by no more beginning, by no more becoming.

"Let past be past, no future longings house:
The past is dead, the morrow not yet born.
Whoso with insight scans his heart to-day,
Let him ensure eternal changelessness!"

(Bhaddekaratta Sutta: Majjh. 131).

This goal cannot be attained by striving, for striving under any form keeps the process moving. But the truth has to be lived so that it may grow naturally, till the light of insight will have dispelled all shadows of ignorance, and the deliverance from all craving, which is the bliss beyond all feeling, will have surmounted all happiness and sorrow in the cessation of becoming, Nibbāna.

NIBBANA

Sorrow is found in all three worlds,
Its origin by craving wrought,
Its ceasing is Nibbāna called,
The path thereto transcendent thought."

(Abh. Sang. 509)

ONCE more we must make the universal fact of suffering the starting point of our quest. And if this time our goal is the highest, the best, the final attainment of Nibbāna, even that goal ought to be understood in the light of the truth of suffering. For Nibbāna is the deliverance from all sorrow.

This certainly is not a subject for speculation. Like sorrow must be understood and experienced, so the deliverance therefrom must both be understood and experienced. And only he who has experienced will understand. But that understanding cannot benefit others, except in the way of encouragement to follow up along the same path, so that we too may learn and discern, understand and experience "each one for himself" (paccattaṁ).

"As a departure from that kind of craving which is lust, it is called Nibbāna" (vānasaṅkhātāya taṇhāya nikkhantattā nibbānan'ti vuccati. Abhidh. S. 458).

Even if Nibbāna, objectively considered, is viewed as the absolute truth, the ultimate reality, the highest per-

fection, the further shore, the final goal, and bliss supreme, —yet it must never be overlooked that this objectivity is entirely due to our subjective view-point. Even if Nibbāna is often described in terms of positive happiness like peace, bliss, calm, permanence, freedom, deliverance,—this is only so through the departure of all that had the nature of a fetter to rebirth and sorrow.

Certainly Nibbāna is the highest bliss (paramaṅ sukhan). But if this bliss be understood as a blissful experience, a happy feeling or sensation, Nibbāna would be subject to impermanence and sorrow, because all feelings, perceptions, mental formations and concepts are impermanent and therefore sorrow-fraught. Happiness which can be experienced is, therefore, not the highest bliss, because it bears within itself the germ of dissolution. The highest bliss, therefore, must be beyond the experience of the senses. "It is just because there is no sense-experience that Nibbāna is happiness", said the Venerable Sāriputta.

Thus only by holding fast to the negative aspect of Nibbāna it will be possible to approach the subject intelligently. Yet that is not the real approach. This should be done, not by understanding, but by realizing.

For the sake, however, of encouragement in the quest for truth, we have also the means of an intellectual approach which has no further meaning and importance though, than that of a map to a traveller in an unknown land. There, like here, all names are new and strange, but can be identified at each stage of progress till the goal is reached. From the outset we must be prepared, however, to leave behind our own mode of thinking, like the traveller his home. And though travelling on the map only and by reading books can be highly interesting and can be done in an easy chair at home, yet it cannot be compared with the actual journey, even if that would involve much fatigue

and discomfort. What then shall we say about the actual attainment?

But here already we have to leave alone our comparison, and at once the language becomes unfamiliar, for "though there is a road, there is no traveller" (maggamatthi, gāmako na vijjati).

That nibbāna *is*, is beyond doubt; for where there is the thesis of a process, there must be also the anti-thesis of no-more-proceeding. Thus with the thesis of the process of life as suffering is given also the anti-thesis of the deliverance from suffering through the ending of the process of becoming—and with this we have the clearest definition of Nibbāna: cessation of becoming. *Bhavanirodho nibbānaṁ.* (S. II. 117)

Where becoming stands for the arising of sensations and conceptions, for rebirth and its consequences of woe and death, for impermanence and sorrow, for the arising of fear and craving, for the growth of the roots of all evil, of greed, hate and delusion, for the tightening of material and spiritual bonds,—there the cessation of becoming will naturally be viewed as bliss supreme. But this bliss of the cessation of becoming can only be understood, when becoming itself is understood as suffering.

But because becoming is thought of as desirable,—notwithstanding "birth, old age, sickness and death are like cowherds with staves in their hands, which drive beings on, and cut life short as with an axe" (Dhp. Com. 135) —because there are few or none that desire absence of rebirth, cessation of becoming is not understood as bliss. In the delusion of self it is seen as annihilation; and annihilation it is—namely of the delusion of self.

But like a man given over to the excessive use of drugs will always take more, preferring to dream on rather than to face actuality,—so the world clings to the delusion of

self and considers deliverance therefrom as undesirable. In the quest for truth, however, satisfaction and beauty come last. Both being entirely subjective, they arise and disappear with the idea of self. Self is the shadow made by our own action, moving along with it, inseparable. Like the shadow is longest when the sun stands lowest, to become smaller while the sun rises higher, so the delusion of self is greatest when the light of insight is lowest; but with the increase of insight the delusion will decrease. It is this growth of insight which will finally lead to the deliverance from all delusion.

As always in Buddhism, so here in the development of insight also, the starting point is actuality. Thus the first insight required will be insight into the real nature of conditioned things (sammasana ñāṇa), as having the three characteristics of impermanence, suffering and soullessness. They have to be seen as one, for who perceives sorrow but not the transiency thereof, has nothing but the pain without the hope of deliverance. But as soon as the unreality of life is understood, also the unreality of suffering will be seen.

From this understanding of unreality insight in the nature of all things as processes (udayabbaya ñāṇa) will ripen. This does not merely mean the observation that things grow and decay, but the understanding that there is nothing but a process of becoming.

The understanding of the process of becoming will naturally lead to the next step, which is insight that becoming is ceasing (bhanga ñāṇa). Though this step, should follow quite logically, yet it is a difficult one for many who in the very fact of becoming find all their delight. But if becoming and ceasing are seen as two aspects of one process, then insight into what is to be feared (bhaya ñāṇa) will arise naturally. Fear should lead to understanding

of the danger (ādīnava ñāṇa) inherent in clinging to mere processes of cessation, and of the reasons to be disgusted with such an empty show (nibbidā ñāṇa).

A desire to be set free and the knowledge thereof (muñcitukamyatā ñāṇa) will grow out into re-contemplation (paṭisankhāna ñāṇa), that is contemplation of the same three characteristics of transiency, suffering and soullessness, but with the increased insight as seen from a higher plane.

Insight of indifference to the activities of this life (sankhārupekkhā ñāṇa) will be a natural consequence of this disgust and deeper understanding, where evenmindedness is due not to lack of interest, but to lack of self-interest.

The climax of discernment finally is reached with the insight of adaptation (anuloma ñāṇā), which is the gateway to emancipation (vimokkha mukha), where the mind is qualified for the Path of holiness.

No morbid asceticism can be the way leading to emancipation, but rather the well-being of a concentrated mind without worry, without agitation, without preoccupation, without craving or clinging to either good or bad. Not even striving in the good sense can procure one this blessed state. For striving is desire; and desire can only arise for something to be attached to. How can there be attachment for what is entirely beyond sensation and mental conception? There can be no desire for Nibbāna and the attainment of Deliverance is not dependent upon striving.* Nibbāna is non-conditioned (asankhata), non-created, non-caused, non-made (akata). And what is non-composed is not decomposible, is permanent (dhuva) and indestructible (akkhara).

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* Striving, in the sense of the Fourfold Right Effort, guided by insight and not desire, is however an indispensable part of the Noble Eightfold Path.— See also 'Bodhi Leaves' No. B. 28: "Escapism and Escape".— (Editor, 'The Wheel')

Like darkness cannot be made, but the light which prevents darkness can be extinguished,—so Nibbāna cannot be made, but the passions which prevent it can be eradicated. The three roots of all evil inclinations are greed (lobha), hate (dosa) and delusion (moha). Greed and hate are opposed in character, for greed is desire to get more and hate is desire to get rid of. Thus, though opposed, they are only two forms of desire. And desire is always combined with delusion. We desire for things just because we do not know them, just because we do not realize their impermanent, woeful, soulless nature. We try to grasp the void, because delusion has created a phantom which like the rainbow finds only existence in ourselves. Trying to grasp that spectre, the rainbow, the horizon, must bring about disillusion, because they have no real existence, but change with the position of the looker-on.

To realize this, is to give up craving for them, by which all suffering also will come to an end. And that is Nibbāna!

In the depth of our hearts we feel that bliss finally depends upon rest, upon changelessness. Even the tendency of the senses to attachment is nothing but the longing after rest in the midst of restlessness. Thus even craving is but an attempt to come to this natural equilibrium. That craving does not succeed in reaching the goal is again due to ignorance. What good can be expected from a thought which was born from a misconception? If the goal is misunderstood, no striving can correct that initial mistake. On the contrary; the greater effort employed, the greater also the distance separating in the end.

If peace is sought for, this cannot be obtained by waging war. The only war which can put a stop to all war, is the war against self. A war fought against others is a war of selfishness and can never lead to true peace.

Like war and peace receive a different meaning dependent on the standpoint of the observer, so life and no-more-becoming obtain their respective values dependent on the point from which they are surveyed. From the worldling's standpoint, which is one of craving, life is real, because life is craving; and then from that same standpoint no-more-becoming is seen as unreal, empty, annihilation. But from a viewpoint beyond the world (lokuttara) from where the world is viewed as impermanent, sorrow-fraught and soulless, any craving is seen as a vain attempt,—and life itself, which is but craving, is seen as empty and unreal, while no-more-becoming is considered as perfect deliverance and highest bliss.

Thus, though the attainment of Nibbāna can rightly be said to be the absolute content,—for craving or desire under any form has become impossible,—yet it cannot be hankered after (appaṇihita). But when all the fetters have been removed, fetters which arose and were maintained in ignorance, fetters which will disappear with ignorance, then that which cannot be hankered after can be realized. "Hard is the infinite to see, truth is no easy thing to see; craving is pierced by him who knows, for him who seeth naught remains." (Udāna VIII. 2)

But is Nibbāna then total annihilation?

Even this question is put in ignorance, for there is nothing to be annihilated. Only that which is, can be destroyed. But that which constantly arises, and in arising is nothing but a process of change, and in changing also constantly ceases, that cannot be said to be destroyed; it merely does not arise again. Now it should be well understood, that like arising is a process, similarly cessation is a process, so that even when the process of arising does not occur again, the process of cessation might not have come to a stop yet. Hence we obtain a double aspect of Nibbāna.

The first one, the coming to a stop of the process of arising is called "*sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*" *i.e.* nibbāna with the remnant of the aggregates of craving. Life being conditioned by craving, the aggregates of life, *viz.* body and mind, are rightly called the aggregates of craving.

As soon as the process of the arising of craving has come to a stop, the grasping of the aggregates which form an individual, will cease also. When the lust for life has ceased, no rebirth will further take place and the highest state, that of an Arahat, is attained. But when the lust for life has ceased, life itself will not simultaneously disappear. Like the heat in an oven, which is produced by fire, will remain for some time, even though that fire be extinct,—so the result of craving which produced rebirth might remain for some time, even though the fire of the passions be extinct. Thus the acts of thought of an Arahat are neither moral nor immoral. His apperception is ineffective. Though he acts, his actions are not impelled by craving and hence they do not constitute kamma, either good or bad; they consist merely in the function (kiriyā-javana) and are free from tendencies, likes or dislikes (anusayā), But where there arises no new *kamma*, there no further *vipāka* can come about.

When, therefore, the result of previous kamma is exhausted, even the remnant of the aggregates of clinging will be broken up, and this is called *an-upādisesa-nibbāna* or *parinibbāna*.

While Nibbāna is single in its nature, yet for the purpose of logical treatment it is thus considered as two-fold. By using the two kinds of this logical distinction indiscriminately, endless confusion is caused. When thus Nibbāna is said to be a mental state, this applies only to the state of an Arahat who has overcome all the mental defilements (kilesa) and has broken all the fetters (samyo-

jana) which bind to rebirth.

Like freedom is only a negative concept, being the absence of restrictions, thus the freedom (mokkha) of Nibbāna can only be explained as the absence of defilements and mental fetters. But as those defilements are exactly the roots of all evil, the cause of all suffering, Nibbāna can be called the deliverance from sorrow.

Where Nibbāna cannot be aimed at as a positive goal, for "not by striving can world's end be reached" (gamanena na pattabbo lokass' anto kudācanaṅ: Ang. IV), striving becomes possible in the overcoming of the hindrances and obstacles. Thus Nibbāna remains unconditioned (asankhata) and uncreated (akata), not to be produced by cumulative virtue, not by purification of a soul, or by cleansing of a soul, or by cleansing of self. There is no "ego" to be made free from selfishness in order to obtain purity, but there is an "ego" to be got rid of, an "ego" misconceived by ignorance and born of craving.

When that "ego" is understood as a delusion, the first fetter (sakkāya-diṭṭhi) is broken and the stream which leads to Nibbāna is entered (sotāpatti). Like, while plunging into the water of a river, the land and the attractions thereof must be left behind, so when entering this stream of holiness, together with the delusion of self will also disappear all doubts and attachment to ritualistic performances. But in the stream itself further hindrances might occur, and they too have to be overcome. Antipathy (vyāpāda) and sense-pleasures (kāmacchanda) might retard the progress of the stream-winner, still causing rebirth, though not in woeful states. Only when even the last five obstacles will have been passed, which are desire for rebirth in form-,or formless spheres (rūparāga, arūparāga), conceit (māna) which is the final and most subtle stronghold of the dying "self," agitation (uddhacca) and ignorance (avijjā),

the stream will lose itself in the ocean and the freedom of Nibbāna be attained. As the stream is still hemmed in on both sides by the river banks, so the Path to Nibbāna is beset with difficulties. But it is exactly in the overcoming of those difficulties that the freedom of Nibbāna can be realized. Once more, Nibbāna cannot be aimed at, desired or longed for, just because it is non-conditioned and does not arise dependent on conditions. But one can strive for the extinction of craving, for the abolition of the slavery of an imaginary self, for the overcoming of ignorance. The factors to this enlightenment (satta sambojjhanga) include the perseverance of mindfulness (sati), the openmindedness of investigation (dhammavicaya) with the steadiness of abiding energy (viriya), the enthusiasm of spiritual joy (pīti) together with the sobriety of tranquillity of mind (passaddhi), the peacefulness of concentration (samādhi) with the harmony of equanimity (upekkhā).

Renunciation, not as mortification, but as a natural result of insight through which craving and clinging become impossible, is the way by which deliverance from the passions can be attained. Like a lamp must give up its oil, so that its light may shine, —similarly renunciation is an indispensable factor to enlightenment: renunciation not only of the world but of the self, "like trees the wind-blown leaves" (Theragātha 2). It is only in perfect renunciation that perfect freedom can be found. It is the will-to-live which leads to rebirth, it is thus the will-to-live which must be conquered, so that Nibbāna may be attained.

This lust for life cannot be cut short by violence. An act of violence against oneself may be caused by disgust with life, yet it remains lust for better life. The will-to-live cannot be conquered by will for no-more-life, but by understanding that there is no self to live. The delusion

of the craving for existence can be expelled by the realization of non-self. Then not only the will will be dissolved, but even the possibility of willing.

When thus the insight of non-self (anattā) will have taken the place of delusion (moha) and ignorance (avijjā), —when being will be viewed as a mere process of becoming, and becoming as ceasing,—then the spell which kept us bound so long will be broken, the dreamstate of hallucination will vanish and reality will be realized. This reality is not the eternalization of a self or soul, but the escape therefrom. Therefore Nibbāna is not a deliverance of the self, not a salvation of the soul, but the deliverance from the self, the salvation from the soul, *i. e.* from the misconceived I.

Once this deliverance is attained, no more hallucination can occur, because the source which produced this misconception, namely, craving, selfishness, is dried up.

And with this the last word has been said; for, where craving has ceased, the process of becoming, which is grasping, has ceased also. Where there is no more becoming, there is no more rebirth and all its consequences of sorrow, decay and death. And thus Nibbāna is the only Deliverance, the only Freedom, surpassing all understanding, above all emotion, beyond all striving, unconditioned, uncreated, undestructible, whereto all may attain through the overcomiming of greed, hate and delusion, through insight and realization in the Deliverance from self.

In soundless depth of breathless thought,
A silent music plays;
While all the universe around
In never-ending waves
Unknowingly, unwillingly,
For that same silence craves.

All men and beasts and things alike,
For independence strive;
For freedom from all wants and needs
Which cause their restless drive.

Thus every deed contains the seed
Through which all will arrive
At even-balanced, cravingless,
Birthless and deathless life.

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THE MESSAGE OF THE SAINTS

Thera - Theri - Gāthā

V. F. Gunaratna

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THE MESSAGE OF THE SAINTS

The field of the Tipiṭaka * literature is wide and varied. On the one hand, there are the subtle expositions of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and the profound discourses of the Sutta Piṭaka which call for serious thinking and study, while on the other hand there are the simple Jataka tales so fascinating to the young and old alike. Between these two extremes there is a class of Buddhist literature which is lofty in theme but easy to comprehend, which uplifts the mind but does not tax it. To this category belong the inspired verses of those saints—the Theras and Theris—who were mostly contemporaries of the Buddha. It is these inspired verses that are collectively known as the Thera-Theri-Gāthas** and they form part of the Khuddaka Nikāya of the Sutta Piṭaka.

The message of the Saints contained in the Thera-Theri-Gathas does not appear to have fully reached the Buddhist world of today. These exquisite poems are not sufficiently widely known among the Buddhist public; much less widely have they been read and appreciated. It is a pity that their wonderfully inspiring influence is not much felt today. But the fortunate few who have devoted their time to a regular study of these stanzas have never failed to be inspired by the uplifting spirit which continually radiates from them.

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* *Tipiṭaka* (lit.: the three Baskets) is the name of the Buddhist canonical scriptures.

** *Thera*: Elder Monks of the Buddhist Monastic Order. — *Theri*: Elder Nuns. — *Gāthā*: stanzas.

Nowhere in the whole of the Buddhist Pali literature do we find such a concentration of poetic beauty and loftiness of thought as in these 337 Thera—Theri Gathas.* Really, one must know Pali to enjoy to the full the beauty of these verses. Fortunately however, for those who cannot enjoy the poems in the original, the Pali Text Society has published translations**—thanks to the able translator Mrs. Rhys Davids—which have successfully captured and retained much of the spirit and charm of the original gāthas. As it is proposed to give the reader an opportunity of enjoying some of these translated verses, I must acknowledge my indebtedness both to the Pali Teet Society anx to Mrs. Rhys Davids.

The Background of the Gathas

These delightfully refreshing verses reflect the religious emotions and inspirations of certain pious men and women of Buddha's time who entered the Order and followed his teachings with genuine devotion.

At some time mostly in their youth, the call came to them to forsake the lay life and to take to the life of a homeless monk. This they did in a deeply rooted confidence and persevering diligently they attained Arahantship, Holiness, the final deliverance from the bondage of passions and the shackles of rebirth. Some of these verses reflect their ardent determination to

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* There are 264 Gāthas uttered by the Theras and 73 by the Theris.

** Published under the titles *Psalms of the Brethren* and *Pslams of the Sisters*. Our thanks are due to the Pali Text Society, London, for kind permission to quote here extensively from these two volumes.

reach their spiritual goal. Some record the struggle within them between the forces of good and evil and finally recall in triumphant mood the victory of good over evil, and their consequent entry into the glorious state of Sainthood. Often it is some trivial circumstance, some trifling incident in life, that gave the initial impetus to the spiritual activity and upliftment of these monks and nuns. Some would record their passionate yearning for the solitary life and their love of forest life with its solitude and the natural beauties and the opportunity it afforded them for quiet meditation. The charms of solitude and the beauties of forest life they have sung in matchless and mellifluous language. The exquisite calm begotten of the disciplined life, the contempt of the grosser pleasures of life which drag the victim down into a whirlpool of never ending desires have so deeply influenced some of them that these thoughts have become the themes of some of these fascinating poems. Whatever may be the theme, these gathas are said to have been uttered by these saints immediately after their attainment of Arahantship as an open acknowledgement* of the cause which led to their final enlightenment. They depict whether subjectively or objectively, some aspect or other of the struggle of the human mind in its attempt to escape from the thraldom of desire, and the consequent beauty of thought combined with beauty of expression make these extremely delightful reading. Sometimes a rebuke uttered by the Buddha or by someone else not only helps a Thera to rid himself of the particular fault which provoked the rebuke but it also urges him most powerfully to progress along the spiritual path leading to the state of

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* This acknowledgement is referred to in the Commentary as 'Aññā."

Arahantship, sometimes after a very short time.

These poems do not contain sufficient data about the Monks and Nuns who composed them, nor is even the identity of some of them known. Much light, however, is thrown by an ancient Commentary entitled Paramattha Dīpani written by one Bhikkhu Dhammapala of Kancipura (Madras Presidnecy). This Commentary supplies the background to the incidents mentioned in these gāthas without which some of them are unintelligible. The Theras in question were laymen who came from various levels of social life to join the Order. There were Brahmins, powerful princes and rich merchants who abandoned the luxurious life of ease and indolence, and donned the saffron-coloured robe for a life of solitude and meditation. There were also cultivators, craftsmen, fishermen, actors, elephant-trainers and labourers. To whatsoever rank or station in life these Theras belonged, there is one common feature which linked one with the other and each with all, namely, their wonderful religious ardour to which they have given expression through these inspired verses.

The Gathas as a Source of Inspiration

These poems are not only inspired, they are also inspiring. To those who wish to increase their *saddhā* (confidence) one can strongly commend the thoughtful reading of these verses over and over again. To any one who is struggling to lead the spiritual life and badly needs encouragement, to any one who has fallen from his high ideal and is lacking the necessary strength of mind to start over again, to any one who is making slow progress on the spiritual path and is in great need of the correct impetus to spur him on to quicker progress, I can

think of no other more powerful source of strength than the reading and re-reading of the Thera—Theri Gathas. They are so consoling, and so uplifting. They are also so human and so true to life. Herein lies the message of these ancient verses to us. The way of spiritual progress lies in the study and practice of the Dhamma and a contemplation of it followed by intense meditation. But, bare study or bare contemplation is sometimes difficult and dry, and is barren of results. Some extra impetus or motivation is necessary, some extra aid is required, to urge the flagging mind. When the spirit droops, when the struggle is weak, or the struggle is abandoned, what better enlivening process is there to flood our hearts with high hopes and aspirations and to galvanize us to activity once again than quietly listening to how similar situations have been successfully dealt with by these Theras and Theris of old? The stanzas of these earnest devotees show how they have reacted to set-backs and draw-backs in life similar to those with which we are afflicted, how they too have suffered within their own minds the same conflicts as we have between the forces of good and evil, and how, despite the powerful urges of evil, they have kept their steadfast gaze on their goal and how their ardent and persistent longing for the goal stood them in good stead, and ultimately helped them to emerge triumphant and obtain the glory and peace of the liberated mind. Situations such as these constitute the inspiring contents of the Thera-Theri gathas, and let us now examine some of them.

Inspiration from a Fall

It was mentioned earlier that some slight incident in life has very often been the starting point of the spiritual activity and upliftment of many of these monks and

nuns. Let us now take the case of Bhagu Thera. He was by nature slow and sluggish and was very often found to be in a drowsy condition. One day he left his cell in order to discipline himself and rid himself of this tendency. While he was walking up the flight of steps of a terrace, he fell down. Now, this fall made a deep impression on his mind and set him thinking. We know the story of how when an apple fell Newton began to think, and the discovery of the law of gravitation was the result. This Thera fell. He too began to think, but on far different lines. He began to ponder on the impermanence of all things. Nothing stands for ever. Everything must some day fall. All is *dukkha*, liable to suffering. Bhagu Thera thus made this fall of himself, the subject of his meditation, and developing insight, very soon attained Arahantship. Soon thereafter the Buddha came to see him and asked him "How now, bhikkhu, do you continue in earnest?" He answered in the following delightful stanzas :-

"Foredone by drowth I got me from my cell
For exercise, and climbed the terrace-steps
And fell thereby, all drowsy, to the earth
Chafing my limbs. Once more I mounted up.
And while on terrace too and fro I went.
Within it was all alert, composed, intent.

Thereat arose in me the deeper thought,
Attention to the fact and to the cause.*
The misery of it all was manifest
Distaste, indifference the mind possessed.

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* The original Pali expression represented by this line is "Yoniso manasikāro", i. e. the habit of systematized attention which has been highly commended by the Buddha - a way of looking down to the origin and foundation of things as they occur to the mind, as opposed to "ayoniso manasikāro" or superficiality in thinking.

And so my heart was set at liberty.
O! see, the seemly order of the Norm!
The threefold wisdom have I made my own
And all the Buddha bids me do is done."

Inspiration from Seeing the Fall and Rise of a Bull

There is another instance of a fall which became the start of thoughts leading up immediately to Arhantship. Here it was not merely a fall that constituted the incident. It was both a fall and a rise. It was the fall and rise of a bull. The Thera concerned was known as Ramanīyavihārin. He was the son of a prominent citizen of Rājagaha. He lived an idle and gay life, but suddenly the call came to him. He heard a sermon of the Buddha, renounced the world and entered the Order. Nevertheless, the comfortable life he had earlier lived, still had its attractions for him, so that, though a Bhikkhu, he had made for himself a well-polished room with ample furniture and saw to it that he was well equipped with food and drink. Hence it was that he was known Ramanīyavihārin which means "dweller in a pleasant lodge." Despite these comforts he yearned for the greater freedom of the layman's life and refusing the alms that were offered to him, decided to roam the country. One day as he was seated beneath a tree he saw several carts passing along the road. He noticed one weary bull stumbling at a rough place on the road and falling down. The carter released the bull from the yoke and gave it food and drink. Soon the fatigue was over, the bull arose, it was harnessed again, and again it began to draw the cart. This sight of the bull falling and subsequently rising again made a deep impression in the mind of this pleasure-loving Thera who had fallen off

the correct path of a Bhikkhu. Thought he to himself "Even as this bull having stumbled and fallen, has risen again and is drawing his cart again, so it behoves me who have fallen from the high position of a noble recluse, to rise up again and relive the noble life." He began to meditate on this incident and soon attained Arahantship. This Thera's short but beautiful stanza runs as follows :-

"Even though he trip and fall, the mettled brute
Of noble breed will steadfast stand once more.
So look on me as one who having learned
Of Him the All-Enlightened One, have gained
True insight, am became of noble breed
And of the very Buddha a disciple true."

Inspiration from Elephant - Training

Let us now consider the case of Hatthārohaputta Thera where also a trifling incident led to great results. This Thera belonged to a family of elephant trainers. In his youth he developed a proficiency in training elephants and used to train them very often. One day as he was training an elephant by the riverside and observing how effectively the savage tendencies of the animal gave way to the influence of his skilful training and also considering what power the presence of the trainer's hook wielded over the animal, he began to think—"Of what avail to me is this elephant-training. Is it not far better for one to train and tame himself?" So thinking he visited the Buddha, heard him preach and entered the Order He meditated on this incident and ultimately attained Arhantship. His gāthā too is short but beautiful :-

"Once roamed this heart afield, a wanderer
Wherever will or whim or pleasure led,
Today that heart I'll hold in thorough check
As trainer's hook the savage elephant."

An almost similar incident regarding the taming of an elephant has been the cause of the spiritual upliftment of a nun This will be dealt with later in the section dealing with the verses of the Theris.

Inspiration from Ridicule

Let us now consider how a trifling incident of an amusing nature led to great results. This was the experience of Lakuntaka Bhaddiya Thera. He possessed an extremely beautiful voice. He was deemed to have the sweetest voice among the disciples of the Buddha, but his physical form was not at all presentable. He was extremely short and for that reason he was called Lakuntaka which means a dwarf. One day in Savatthi a woman was driving a chariot. When she happened to pass this Thera, she laughed exhibiting her teeth. This Thera made that sight of her teeth the object of his meditation and soon arrived at the state of Anagami, the Non-returner. Later he practised mindfulness as regards the body (kāyānupassanā) and attained Arahant-ship. Thereafter he used to repeat these charming verses:-

"Beyond the gardens of Ambataka
In woodland wild, craving and craving's root
Withdrawn, and rapt in deepest reverie
There happy sits fortunate Bhaddiya.

And some are charmed by cymbals, lutes & drums
And I in leafy shadow of my trees
Do dwell entranced by the Buddha's Rule.

Let but the Buddha grant one boon to me
And if that boon were mine, I'd choose for all
Perpetual study in control of self.

They who decry me for my shape, and they
Who listen spell-bound to my voice, such folk
In toils of lust and impulse know me not.

The fool hemmed in on every side knows not
The inner life, nor sees the things without
And by a voice forsooth is led away.

And of the inner life he knoweth not
Yet can discern the things that are without
Watching alone the outer fruits that come
He also by a voice is led away.

He who both understands the inner life
And doth discern the things that are without
Clear visioned, by no voice, is led away."

(An almost similar incident appears in the Visuddhi Magga).

Inspiration from Bitter Criticism

It is interesting to trace the circumstances which led to the Arahantship of Ananda Thera, the famous disciple of the Buddha who for many years attended on him. It is well-known that Ananda Thera being preoccupied with his ministrations to the Buddha neglected his own spiritual development so much that when the

Buddha passed away all his disciples had become Arahants except Ananda Thera. Shortly after the Buddha's demise, a monk known as Vajjiputta Thera who acquired the six-fold supernormal powers found Ananda Thera preaching to a large congregation. Vajjiputta Thera, no doubt from the best of motives, criticized Ananda Thera bitterly pointing out that he had forgotten his main duty and was still preoccupied with other work. This is how Vajjiputta Thera addressed Ananda Thera :-

"Come thou and plunge in leafy lair of trees,*
Suffer Nibbana in thy heart to sink.
Study and dally not, thou Gotamid,
What doth this fingle-fangle mean to thee."

Ananda Thera was greatly agitated on hearing this bit of sharp criticism. It struck him hard. It also gave birth to a keen resolve to abandon everything else and devote the rest of his time for the one purpose for which he entered the Order, viz. to realize perfect Sainthood. He keenly realized the mistake of not having striven for Arahantship so far. What now behoves him, he felt, was not to be preaching to others but to further his own inner development which he had neglected. Feeling keen remorse he spent that night in intense meditation walking up and down. Then as he entered his room he obtained insight and in the very act of lying down on his couch he attained Arhantship.

Ananda Thera's wonderful devotion and loyalty to his Master is exceptional. There is no greater example in the whole world of a disciple's loyalty to his

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* The original of this line is 'rukkha mūla gahanan pasakkiya". This is a bidding to betake to the forest (literally, to the foot of a tree) away from the maddening crowd.

Master. Even as he lay dying on his death-bed this is what Ananda Thera uttered :-

"The Master hath my fealty and love
And all the Buddha's ordinance is done.
Low have I laid the heavy load I bore,
Cause for rebirth is found in me no more."

Inspiration from Rebuke

The reaction that rebuke or reproach causes varies with the individual. To those whose minds are not pliable, who are obstinate, headstrong and insolent, rebuke or reproach can have no salutary effect. It will only make them more stubborn. But in the case of those whose general disposition is one of benevolence and kindness, whose general tendencies are towards good and not evil, a little rebuke can sometimes have the effect of arousing in them such a degree of self-examination repentance that these thoughts may induce a high resolve to shed their faults and weaknesses whatever they are which have thus been brought to light.

Just such was the case of an Elder known as Vaddha Thera. His mother, a pious lady of the city of Barukaccha, had renounced the lay life and had entered the Order of Bhikkhunis or Nuns and subsequently realized Arahantship. Later her son entered the Order and earned a name for himself as an eloquent preacher. One day a desire arose in him to see his mother and he desired to see her alone. He therefore removed his outer robe and went unnoticed to the quarters of the Bhikkhunis. His mother seeing him come alone and without his outer robe rebuked him severely. This rebuke worked heavily on his mind. He forthwith returned to his monastery sat himself down in the

day-room and meditating, attained Arahantship. In his stanzas he freely acknowledged his attainment as being solely due to his mother's rebuke. He refers to this rebuke by the Pali word "paṭoda" which means a goad or spur. He starts by calling her "mātā", or mother, but as the inspired verses proceed, she is referred to as "bhāginī", or sister, in the sense that the entire Order of the Bhikkhunis (of which she was a member) are regarded as sisters from the point of view of the Order of the Bhikkhus (of which he was a member). As one reads these lines of inspiration one feels how intensely and completely this Bhikkhu must have been influenced by the maternal rebuke. Let us now listen to his Gathas:-

"Oh ! well in sooth my mother used the goad.
I marked her word, and by my parent taught
I stirred up effort, put forth all my strength
And won the goal, the Enlightenment Supreme,
Arahant am I, meet for men's offerings,
Thrice wise, the ambrosial vision I beheld.

Conquered is Namuci* and all his host
And now I dwell henceforth sane and immune.
Yea the intoxicants that once were there
Within, without me are extracted clean.
Nought doth remain nor may they reappear.
Lo ! wise and ripe in grace the Sister was
Who spoke this word of pregnant good to me.

For thee now even as for me
No jungle of the mind doth bar the way,
A final barrier is made to Ill.
Last mortal frame is this, to which belongs
The way world without end of birth and death
Nor ever cometh more rebirth (for thee)."

Namuci is another name for Mara.

Inspiration from Being Called a Pig

Let us now consider a case where a very bad rebuke had its most salutary effect—that is, the case of Dasaka Thera. He was the son of a slave of Anāthapiṇḍika, the great philanthropist. Later he was given the post of Gate-keeper of Jetawanarama by Anāthapiṇḍika. After some time, on account of his good conduct, he was released from slavery. Though he was freed he preferred to spend the rest of his life as a Bhikkhu and therefore entered the Order. Strangely however, from the time he became a Bhikkhu, perhaps due to the sudden cessation of arduous labour, he ceased to be energetic. He became more and more slothful and indolent and began to sleep long after each mid-day meal. When the Buddha is delivering a sermon he would get behind the congregation so that he may remain unnoticed and there he is found snoring away. The Buddha noticing this rebuked him by a gāthā comparing him to a "mahā varaha" i. e., a huge pig. This rebuke greatly agitated the Thera's mind and constantly recalling the verse uttered by the Buddha developed insight and realized Arahantship. The verse with which the Buddha rebuked him become his personal gatha in the sense that he used to repeat it every now and then pondering on its meaning which urged him on to the spiritual heights which he thereby reached. In his own words this gāthā acted as a "paṭoda" or goad to him. The gāthā runs as follows :-

Who waxes slothful and in diet gross,
Given to sleep and rolling as he lies,
Like a great hog with provender replete
The dolt comes back again and again to birth.

Inspiration from Punishment

There is a kind of pride with which some people are afflicted, which is akin to pride of birth. It is the pride of membership of some institution or body. Are we not reminded of such persons when we find the Thera Channa with egoistic pride speaking of "our Buddha" and "our Doctrine?"* This Thera could not rid himself of this weakness. On account of his pride and his obstinacy, a penalty in the nature of a social ostracism (brahma daṇḍa) imposed on him by the Buddha was carried out after his demise. In suffering this penalty Channa Thera learned to eliminate his weakness and soon after attained Arahantship which he triumphantly proclaimed in the following gatha :-

"I heard the Truth which the Great One had taught
And felt its mighty virtues, known by Him
Who all things with supernal insight knew
The Path for winning things ambrosial
I found. Past-Master he in sooth to guide
Into the way of blest security."

Inspiration from a Curse

An ox belonging to a caravan-leader called Godatta once fell on the road while it was drawing a cart. It was not possible to raise the ox although it was beaten severely by Godatta. Then, it is said, the ox assumed a human voice and uttered a curse on Godatta. This curse had the effect of impressing deeply on Godatta's

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* Channa was born in King Suddhodana's palace as the son of a maid-servant. This most probably accounts for his desire to identify himself with the Sakyans by saying "Our Buddha" and "Our Doctrine".

mind the real purpose of life. He gave away all his property and having entered the Order attained Arhantship. Among the verses he uttered this is one:-

"Even as the mettled brute of noble breed
Yoked to his load, drawing his load along
Though worn by burden past his powers (unfair)
Breaks not away, revolting from his bonds,
So they in whom, as water in the sea,
Wisdom abounds, despise not other men.
This among creatures is the Ariyan rule."

Inspiration from a Dream

There is an interesting case of how great remorse suffered in a dream led to meditation and to the realization of Arahantship. The Thera who so became an Arahant was known as Usabha Thera. He had neglected all his religious duties but was not concerned at all about this neglect. One day he dreamt that he had shaved his head and had donned a crimson-coloured robe and was going on elephant-back to the town for alms. This had attracted the attention of the people who had gathered in large numbers. Seeing the people he felt ashamed and forthwith dismounted 'from the animal. He knew his own unworthiness. Usabha Thera then awoke from his dream. He felt great remorse, and taking earnestly to meditation, attained Arahantship. His dream had acted upon him as his goad. These are the two versas he uttered :-

"A cloak the hue of purple mango-buds
Draping about my shoulder, I bestrode
The back of elephant, and so to seek
Mine alms into the village street I rode.

Down from his back in very shame I slid
When lo ! I woke and anguish seized me.
This arrogant self was then made meek and mild,
Purged were the poisons that my mind defiled."

Inspiration from Temptation

There was a Thera known as Sundara Samuddha Thera who was extremely handsome. As a young man the call came to him and he entered the Order. His mother however was unhappy in the thought that her son was not married, and when she saw other young men going about with their wives all dressed in the best of clothes and enjoying themselves at festivals, she thought of her lonely son and wept. Noticing this, a young woman of questionable character approached her and offered to entice her son back to the layman's life. The weak-minded mother not only approved the idea but also gave her many gifts. Clad in gay attire she approached the Thera but all her seductive arts failed to win over the Thera. On the contrary, the vile woman's importunities made the Thera all the more determined to pursue his goal and he resolved then and there to exert himself to the utmost in his meditations. Standing where he was he acquired the six-fold supernormal power (abhiñña) culminating in Arahantship. His verses reflect his high resolve :-

"Adorned and clad to make a gallant show,
Crowned with a wreath and decked with many gems,
Her feet made red with lac, with slippers alight,
A woman of the town accosted me !

'So young, so fair and hast thou left the world !
Stay here within my rule and ordinance.
Take thou thy fill of human pleasures. See,
'Tis I will give thee all the means thereto.

Nay 'tis the truth that I am telling thee
Or if thou doubt, I'll bring thee fire * and swear:
When thou and I are old, we both of us
Will take our staff to lean upon, and so
We both will leave the world and win both ways.'

Seeing that public woman making plea
And professing obeisance gaily decked
In brave array like snare of Mara laid,
Thereat arose in me the deeper view:
Attention to the fact and to the cause.
The misery of it all was manifest.

Distaste, indifference the mind possessed
And so my heart was set at liberty.
Oh ! see the seemly Order of the Norm.
The three-fold wisdom** have I made my own
And all the Buddha bids us do is done."

Inspiration from Nature

In all ages and climes the desire for the meditative life often goes hand in hand with the desire for the forest life and the desire to be in communion with nature. Therefore it is not surprising to find several Theras in the Buddha's time exhibiting a great fondness for the forest life with its solitude and its natural beauties, affording as they do an opportunity for quiet meditation.

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* This perhaps refers to the ordeal by fire to test one's truthfulness as mentioned in the Laws of Manu.

** This refers to the three special types of knowledge, viz knowledge of past lives, knowledge of death and rebirth of beings, and knowledge of the extinction of the taints (āsavas).

The Inspiration of Usabha Thera

There was once a monk known as Usabha Thera. After he received the higher ordination he resided in the cave of a forest at the foot of a mountain. The rainy season had come. Everywhere the woods were fresh and green. The trees and creepers and bushes were shining with a fresh foliage of healthy green. Now Usabha Thera was thrilled with the charms that nature has thus showered on the forest after the rains. Coming out of his cave one day, and possessing as he did the arañña-saññā or forest-sense, he appreciated the loveliness and luxuriant growth of the forest. He began to ponder seriously on the *fulfilment of growth* that had taken place in all the vegetation of the forest. "These trees and creepers and bushes," thought he, "are unconscious and yet by the season's fulfilment they have won growth. Why should not I, who am conscious and have attained a suitable season, myself win growth by the development of good qualities?" Thinking thus he uttered these delightful stanzas and meditating realized Arahantship:-

"The trees on high by towering cloud refreshed
With the new rain break forth in verdant growth.
To Usabha who for detachment longs
And hath the forest-sense of things, doth come
(From this responsive spring) abundant good."

The Inspiration of Vana Vaccha Thera

Let us now proceed to the case of Vana Vaccha Thera who was also thrilled with the charm of forest life. He was a Brahmin of the Vaccha clan and a native of Kapilavatthu. He was born in the forest and because he was so passionately fond of it he was called Vana

Vaccha which means "Forest - Vaccha." Later he entered the Order and went back to the forest and remained there meditating until he realized Arahantship. On being once asked by his fellow monks what comfort he gained from the forest, the verse by which he answered shows his great love of nature :-

"Crags with the hue of heaven's blue clouds
Where lies embosomed many a shining tarn
Of crystal-clear, cool waters, and whose slopes
The "herds of Indra" cover and bedeck;
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights."

The Inspiration of another Vana Vaccha Thera

There was another Vana Vaccha Thera, son of a wealthy Brahmin of Rājagaha. He too entered the Order and having attained Arahantship decided to remain in the forest in complete detachment. Once, out of compassion for his kinsmen of Rājagaha he emerged from the forest and lived among them for some time preaching the Dhamma to them. When he decided to return to the forest they implored him to live in the Vihāra close by, saying that they will wait upon him. He explained to them that he preferred to live in the forest and this he did by uttering a verse which reveals his ardent love of forest-life :-

"Crags where clear waters lie, a rocky world
Haunted by black-faced apes and timid deer
Where, beneath bright blossoms. run the silver
streams
Those are the highlands of my heart's delight."

The Inspiration of Kassapa Maha Thera

A similar delightful expression of the love of forest life is found in the verses of Kassapa Mahā Thera. This is the Thera who practised the thirteen dhutangas or austerities and soon realized Arahantship. When he was asked why at his time of life he preferred to live in the forest rather than in a monastery, this was his beautiful answer :-

"Those upland glades delightful to the soul
Where the Kareri spreads its wildering wreaths,
Where sound the trumpet-calls of elephants,
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.

Fair uplands rain-refreshed and resonant,
With crested creatures' cries antiphonal,
Lone heights where silent Rishis oft resort,
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.
Here is enough for me who fain would seek
The highest good, a brother filled with zeal.

Here is enough for me who fain would seek
A happy ease, a brother filled with zeal.
Here is enough for me who give myself
To studious toil, so am I filled with zeal."

This same Mahā Kassapa Thera was once asked how he was able at his time of life to climb the hills day after day. To this question he replied in the following forceful stanzas :-

"Where some do perish as they climb the rocks,
Heir of the Buddha, mindful, self-possessed,
By forces of the spirit fortified,
Does Kassapa ascend the mountain brow.

Returning from the daily round for alms,
Kassapa mounts some craggy coign and sits
In meditation rapt, nor clutching aught,
For far from him hath he put fear and dread.

Returning from the daily round for alms
Kassapa mounts some craggy coign and sits
In meditation rapt, nor clutching aught,
For he among those that burn is cool and still.

Returning from the daily round for alms,
Kassapa mounts some craggy point and sits
In meditation rapt, nor clutching aught,
His task is done; he is sane, immune."

The Inspiration of Cittaka Thera

Cittaka Thera was the son of a wealthy Brahmin of Rājagaha. He heard the Buddha preaching at the Bamboo Grove. Filled with faith he renounced the layman's life and entered the Order. Very soon he realized Arahantship whereupon he decided to visit the the Buddha and pay his respects to him. He was then asked by the other brethren whether he was able to meditate strenuously while living in the forest Evidently some of the questioners must have thought that the quiet of the forest life predisposes one to indolence and sleep. See however the answer given by Cittaka Thera in this vigorous and inspiring stanza :-

"Peacocks of sapphire neck and comely crest,
Calling, calling in Karanviya woods
By cool and humid winds made musical
They wake the thinker from his noonday sleep."

The Inspiration of Vimala Thera

Another Thera of Rājagaha born of a wealthy family was Vimala Thera. Seeing the Buddha one day he too was filled with faith and betook himself to a mountain cave in Kosala for meditation. One day while he was dwelling in his mountain cave where the heat was oppressive, large rain clouds gathered in the sky and soon there was a severe downpour of rain. Thereafter it was nice and cool. The rains had removed all sense of heat and oppression. The earth was cool and the winds blew. So the Thera was able to persevere in his meditations with eagerness until Arahantship was soon realized. Enraptured and overjoyed he expressed his accomplishement in the following delightful stanza :-

"The burdened earth is sprinkled by the rain,
The winds blow cool, the lightnings roam on high,
Eased and allayed the obsessions of the mind,
And in my heart, the spirit's mastery."

The Aspirations of Tālaputa Thera

Nowhere do we find the religious aspirations of devotees so well expressed as in the Thera-Theri Gathas, and foremost among such expressions are those of Tālaputa Thera. This Thera in lay life was a well-known actor who had been giving very successful performances in various parts of India. Once when he was performing at Rājagaha the thought came to him to visit the Buddha. Having done so he enquired from the Buddha whether it is true that actors on the stage after death are reborn among certain devas. Thrice the question was asked and thrice the Buddha said "Don't ask this question from me." However on being asked the fourth

time the Buddha replied that those who induce sensual thoughts in others and cause them to loose earnestness are reborn in hell. On receiving this reply the talented actor wept for he had been deceived by older actors who had told him that an actor is reborn in happy states. He then listened to the Buddha's teaching and, full of faith joined the Order. Having realized Arahantship he uttered several gathas which bespeak his ardent aspirations to attain Arahantship. Here are some of them:-

"When shall I come to dwell in mountain caves
Now here, now there, unmated (with desire),
And with the vision gained
Into impermanence
Of all that into being doth become—
Yea, this for me, e'en this, when shall it
come to be.

O when shall I, who wear the patchwork cloak,
Be a true saint of yellow robe,
Without a thought of what is "mine"
And from all cravings purified,
With lust and hate, yea and illusions slain,
So to the wild woods gone, in bliss abide ?

O when shall I, who see and know that this
My person, nest of dying and disease,
Oppressed by age and death,
Is all impermanent,
Dwell free from fear, lonely within the woods—
Yea, when shall these things be ?

O! when shall I abide (unmoved)
Because of speech abusive, not downcast,
Nor when again my praise be sung
Be filled with complacency—
When cometh this for me ? *

The Theri Gāthās—Their Nature

The Nuns of the time of the Buddha, like the Monks were renowned for their devotion and piety. As in the case of some of the Theras a trifling incident in life, a trivial circumstance often became the starting point of their spiritual effort which culminated in Arahantship, and they too like the Theras triumphantly proclaimed their achievement in inspired verses. These verses reflect their religious emotions and aspirations. Most of these nuns too had joined the Order in their youth and sometimes within a short time, realised Arahantship. As in Thera gāthas there is reflected in these Theri gāthas the struggle between the forces of good and evil and the indomitable resolve to surmount evil and reach the goal. Hence their appeal to us.

We miss however the poetic excellence that characterizes most of the verses of the Theras. We also miss that impassioned longing for solitude and that ardent love of nature and forest-life so beautifully expressed in the Thera gāthas. Nor do we find in the Theri gāthas much of that hortatory element which features largely in some of the Thera gāthas. In language, in sentiment and in outlook there are differences between the verses of the Theras and those of the Theris. This may be traced to the circumstance that in

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* To an actor on the stage it needs much effort to be indifferent to praise and blame.

the homes of the early Buddhist era the role of the woman was so different from the role of the man. There is also the added circumstance that Buddhist nuns (bhikkhuni) were not allowed by their Code of Discipline to live alone in secluded places. Intellectually too they were not of equal rank. There are however these two very noticeable features common to both types of gāthas, namely, the reflection of great piety and the manifestation of an unflinching determination to reach the goal.

Inspiration from a Burnt-up Curry

A daughter of a nobleman of Vesali was greatly interested in the practice of the Dhamma and became a lay-disciple of the Buddha. Later she desired to renounce the lay life and become a nun, but her husband would not hear of this. So she continued performing her household duties reflecting all the while on the Virtues of the Dhamma. One day in her kitchen a curry of herbs was being cooked when suddenly the flames rose high and burnt up all the herbs with a crackling noise. She was watching this. It made a deep impression in her mind. She made this sight the basis of her meditation on the impermanence of things and reached the state of Anāgāmi (Non-returner). Thereafter she gave up wearing jewels and ornaments. On being asked by her husband the reason for this, she explained that she found it difficult to lead the lay-life. Her husband consenting, she was ordained by Mahā Pajāpati to whom he took her. Her name as a nun is not known. Shortly thereafter she attained Arahantship. Later when she was brought before the Buddha, the latter with the object of encouraging her referred to the cause which led to her enlightenment in a gāthā which thereafter she used to repeat in sheer joy :-

"Sleep softly, little sturdy,* take thy rest
At ease, wrapt in the robe thyself hast made.
Stilled are the passions that would rage within,
Withered as pot herbs in the oven dried."

Inspiration from a Fall

A fall while walking led to similar results in the case of Bhagu Thera mentioned earlier. In the present case one Dhammā Theri having gone out for alms one day, was returning to the nunnery when she tripped and fell. She took this as the basis for her meditation and attained Arahantship. Thereupon she repeated this stanza in triumphant mood :-

"Far had I wandered for my daily food,
Weary with shaking limbs I reached my rest.
Leaning upon my staff when even there
I fell to earth - lo ! all the misery
Besetting this poor mortal frame lay bare
To inward vision. Prone the body lay.
The heart of me rose up in liberty."

Inspiration from an Elephant's Obedience

Similar to the case of Hatthārohaputta which had been dealt with earlier, is the case of Dantikā Theri who was also deeply impressed by the very docile attitude of a well-trained elephant. Returning from a mid-day rest on a hill she saw an elephant meekly raising his foot at the mere bidding of the trainer She began to ponder deeply. She thought that if training can exert so much influence on a powerful animal, how much more can be achieved if the trainer trains himself. She then began

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* On account of her sturdy build she was called Sturdy by the people of her area.

to train her mind in meditation and thereafter attained Arahantship. Then in a mood of sheer joy she broke forth in the following inspired verses :-

"Coming from noonday rest in Vulture's Peak
I saw an elephant, his bath performed
Forth from the river issue.
And a man
Taking his goad bade the great creature stretch
His foot - "Give me thy foot" - The elephant
Obeyed and to his neck the trainer sprang.
I saw the untamed tamed, I saw him bent
To Master's will.
And marking inwardly
I passed into the forest depths
In faith—I trained and ordered all my mind."

Inspiration from Watching Water Sinking into the Ground

The Theri Paṭācārā in her lay life suffered many bereavements within a very short space of time. She lost her husband and both her children. She also lost her parents and her brother. Consoled in her great grief by the Buddha's admonitions she reached the state of a Non-returner (Anāgāmi). One day she was washing her feet with a bowl of water. As she poured that water on to her feet, some of the water trickled some distance away from her feet and sank into the ground. She poured more water. This went further away from her feet and similarly disappeared. She then poured water for a third time. This went furtherest away from her feet and similarly disappeared. This incident made a deep impression in her mind. She began to ponder "Yes, such

also is the disappearancc of life. Some live a short while and disappear from earth. Others live longer and disappear in middle age. Yet others live to a ripe old age and then disappear. All must sooner or later disappear from this world." She made this incident the basis of her meditation on impermanence. Soon she attained Arahantship and these are the stanzas she uttered :-

"One day bathing my feet, I sit and watch
The water as it trickles down the slope.

Thereby I set my heart in steadfastness
As one doth train a horse of noble breed.

Then going to my cell, I take my lamp
And seated on my couch I watch the flame.

Grasping the pin, I pull the wick right down
Into the oil.

Lo ! the Nibbana of the little lamp !
Emancipation dawns. My heart is free !"

Inspiration from Bodily Decay

Ambapāli Theri in her lay life was the notorious young woman who lived a life of voluptuous ease. Possessed of great beauty she was sought after by many young nobles of the country. Despite her life of giddy pleasures, the thought came to her one day to build a monastery for the Buddha and his Order. Later, happening to listen to the preaching of the Dhamma by her own son, the Thera Vimala Kondañña, she turned a new leaf. She was now growing old and observing the devastating changes wrought in her own body by advancing

age, began to meditate on impermanence, uttering several verses of great pathos of which only a few are quoted here :-

"Glossy and black as the down of the bee my
curls once clustered;
They with the waste of years are like unto
hempen or bark cloth.
Such and not otherwise runneth the rune—the
word of the Truth-speaker.

Dense as a grove well planted, and comely with
comb, pin and parting;
All with the waste of the years dishevelled the
fair plaits and fallen.
Such and not otherwise runneth the rune—the
word of the Truth-speaker.

Sweet was my voice as the bell of the cuckoo
through woodlands flitting;
Now with the waste of years broken the
music and halting.
Such and not otherwise runneth the rune—the
word of the Truth-speaker

Such hath this body been. Now age-weary
and weak and unsightly,
Home of manifold ills; old house whence the
mortar is dropping.
Such and not otherwise runneth the rune—the
word of the Truth-speaker."

Gathas in Admiration of Recluses

The Theri Rohini from her young days had a great admiration for pious recluses, an admiration which never could be understood or appreciated by her father who regarded them as an idle crowd doing nothing useful. The father would many a time ask this one question - "*Kena te samaṇā piyā* ? Why are recluses dear to thee ?" The delightful stanzas which she uttered by way of reply, she would often recall after attaining Arahantship. Here are some of them :-

"Full many a day, dear father, hast thou asked
Touching recluses. Now will I proclaim
Their virtues and their wisdom and their work.

Full fain of work are they, no sluggard crew.
The noblest work they do; they drive out lust
And hate. Hence are recluses dear to me.

And when along the village street they go,
At naught they turn to look; incurious
They walk. Hence are recluses dear to me.

They clutch no coin; no gold their hand doth take
Nor silver. For their needs sufficient yields
The day. Hence are recluses dear to me."

CONCLUSION

Apart from the poetic excellence of these stanzas, apart from the sublime emotions they engender, and the note of triumphant joy that resounds within them, these stanzas, one and all, can never fail to exert a powerful influence for good on those who read them. That the struggle experienced within oneself between the forces of good and evil can ultimately end in a victory for the good and that when the struggle is over and the mind is freed from the defilements of Greed, Hatred and Delusion the resultant position is one of Calm, Peace and Happiness, is the unmistakable message of these inspired gāthas. Indeed this message must be most inspiring when we find that these stanzas forcibly direct the reader's mind to the great fact that any little event in life, any incident howsoever trifling, if it is made the object of deep contemplation can uplift the mind to the highest levels of Realization. There is thus in these Thera-Theri gāthās a definite and powerful message of hope to those who feel that evil is insurmountable especially in a highly materialistic age as the present when moral values are discounted and worldly considerations reign supreme.

May the Thera - Theri Gāthās shed their holy influence on the reader and inspire him to take up the struggle against evil with renewed confidence and redoubled vigour and may he some day reach the goal.

THE PROBLEM OF SIN

as reviewed by a Buddhist

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THE PROBLEM OF SIN

The problem of sin seems to have dogged the human race practically from its infancy. Though the word "sin" has meant different things to different people in different parts of the world and at different times, the mythologies and religions of the world have assigned an important place to the solution of this problem. Buddhists as well as Hindus believe that sin is the result of ignorance and the destruction of the latter is their common aim. But Christians, on the other hand, believe that no amount of knowledge, no amount of human effort can make an end of sin — it is something deep and intrinsic and only the grace of God through Christ can wipe it out. The humanist, with religious zeal, regards all antisocial acts as sin and the Marxist looks upon "deviationism" with the horror an Inquisitor might have felt towards heresy. The newer ideologies have only redefined the concept of sin without succeeding in eradicating the sense of sin. Indeed the problem of sin is essentially the problem of the sense of sin. The latter is entirely independent of the theories of sin. The Hindu, the Buddhist, the humanist and the rank materialist suffer from the sense of sin as much as the Jew or the Christian. Were it not so, a change of religion or the profession of a new creed could have rid humanity of this problem. But the very existence of the neuroses — disorders of the psyche in the absence of organic disease — forcibly brings to our notice the

omnipresence of the sense of sin or of the sense of guilt as it is usually called by psycho-analysts, for it is one of the chief factors encountered by the analyst in the resistance offered by the patient towards the regaining of mental health.*

But there are many people around us who do not appear to us to have any sense of sin at all. Does it mean that they do not possess it or have they managed to solve the problem? It is a psychological fact that, as is the case with the neurotics, it may not be consciously felt as a sense of sin at all: it may manifest itself as a vague feeling of dissatisfaction, or of loneliness or boredom from which the "normal" person tries to escape by throwing himself into work, or social activity, or enjoyment of the senses, or by day-dreaming, or, finally, by taking refuge in sleep. Thus the normal man's method of solving the problem is to ignore it. But to camouflage it or to ignore it is not to solve it.

We shall now try to distinguish the sense of sin from allied notions such as the sense of shame or the sense of guilt. The sense of shame has to do with recollections of anti-social behaviour without ethical overtones; and the sense of guilt has to do with the actual breaking, or with a feeling of responsibility for the breaking of the moral laws recognised by the individual as a member of the society in which he lives. Both these feelings, however, are based on overt acts and therefore directly related to actuality. But the sense of sin is essentially different from both of these because it may not be related to actuality, it does not

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* vide *An Outline of Psycho-analysis* by Sigmund Freud (The Hogarth Press) p. 45.

depend on the beliefs held by the individual or by the society to which he belongs and it may exist without its existence being recognised as such by the person who has it, as we have already pointed out. Its manifestation may be an intense feeling of loneliness in the midst of society, an intense dissatisfaction in the midst of plenty and a vague restlessness when you ought to be at peace; and its effect on the person may be to drive him into activity or to take refuge in day-dreaming or, at the other extreme, to neurosis, insanity, crime or suicide. No wonder that so elusive a feeling, so varied in its manifestations should have engaged the attention of the priests and medical men through the ages: there is evidence to show that, 1500 years ago, Indian tribes inhabiting present-day Latin America suffered from the same sort of neuroses and psychoses as modern man — the affective, schizophrenic, obsessional-compulsive and psychopathic — and if it is accepted that a feeling of guilt is an important factor underlying most, if not all, of these afflictions, then an enquiry into its origins becomes interesting.

The first condition for the arising of the sense of sin is that peculiar function of the mind known as the conscience. It approves of some of our actions and condemns some others. The common man's view is that it is something given to us by a higher power to guide us, and that we can never go wrong if we follow its dictates. But it is not quite convincing to us at all times. The conscience sometimes condemns us for a passing thought, not only for a completed act. In our practical lives we would think it unjust to condemn a person for thinking murderous thoughts and we would consider anyone who supports such "thought control" as unrealistic and dictatorial. The

conscience is essentially unrealistic and dictatorial; and the more dictatorial and unrealistic it is the greater will be the sense of sin.

The second condition for the arising of the sense of sin is a deep inner urge to take pleasure and delight in, and, above all, to *approve of*, the very thought or deed that the conscience condemns. This co–existence of condemnation and approval is what gives the sense of sin that peculiar intensity.

We can illustrate the hollowness of the claims of the conscience to guide us as also its irrationality by means of an example. You see a half-starved bullock trying to pull a heavily laden cart and the driver twisting its tail and whipping it mercilessly. Suddenly your anger flames forth, and, if you are impulsive, you pull out the whip from the hand of the driver and whip him as mercilessly as he had whipped the bullock. Doing this gives you a strange satisfaction and you explain to yourself that your action was motivated by righteous indignation. But if you analyse your action dispassionately you will notice that you derived as much pleasure in whipping the driver as the driver did in whipping the bullock. If you carry out the analysis still further, you discover that you found as much pleasure in the pain of the bullock as the driver himself and you felt an inner urge, demanding immediate satisfaction, to emulate the driver. Your action in whipping the driver was a clever move on your part to satisfy your inner urge as well as the conscience at the same time. This example not only demonstrates the fallibility and irrationality of the conscience but also brings out one of the most important aspects of the sense of sin — its ability to masquerade as virtue. They used to say of the self-righteous Puritans that they

condemned men not so much for their sins as for the pleasure they got from the sinning; what must have made their condemnation so virulent was the fact that in the depths of their hearts they approved of the very sins they condemned. If you are a saint by profession and you have been ill-used by your enemies you are constrained by your profession from retaliating; but the desire to retaliate persists and the conscience is aware of it — so you have recourse to seeing visions in which martyr-saints, who, when on earth, had long-suffering as the badge of their sainthood, actually pleading with God to avenge their blood (Revelation 6-9 & 10). Thus saint as well as sinner has been dogged by this sense of sin and has felt the need to assuage it.

Now let us turn to the various methods employed through the ages for tackling this problem. The earliest attempts known in India were those of the Vedic Aryans. At that time Varuṇa was worshipped as the supreme deity and as Dr. Radhakrishnan remarks: "In almost all the hymns to Varuṇa we find prayers for the forgiveness of sin, filled with confessions of guilt and repentance, which show that the Aryan poets had a sense of the burden of sin and prayer."* Later, with the rise in importance of Brahmaṇaspati, sacrifices became more common until, at the time of the Buddha, blood-sacrifices had become of supreme importance. But, apparently, all these methods, running the gamut from simple prayers, through elaborate ritualism, to blood-sacrifices turned out to be only temporary palliatives for the sense of sin. People began to look out for new solutions to the old problem.

The Upanishads, while maintaining an attitude of reverence for the Vedas, insisted on making direct mysti-

* "Indian Philosophy" by S. Radakrishnan, p. 77/78.

cal experience the basis for their philosophy which taught the identity of the individual self with the Universal Self. This view, especially in its Advaita form, has had great influence on thinkers in India as well as in the West. But if the individual self is in fact identical with the Universal Self, you cannot escape the inevitable corollary that all morality is refuted and that our moral sense is based on an illusion. Many and devious have been the arguments brought in support of the Vedantic view, but the unpalatable truth must be faced that the aim here is not to raise the consciousness above our every-day morality into a new dimension but to lower it to a level where distinctions between good and evil are no longer perceived.

This might sound a harsh judgment expressive of sectarian bias, but we can do no better than quote the authoritative words of Sri Aurobindo: "This thing which is evil now and in its present shape must be abandoned was once helpful and necessary to the general and individual progress. That other thing which we now regard as evil may well become in other form and arrangement an element in some future perfection. And on the spiritual level we transcend even this distinction, for we discover the purpose and divine utility of all these things that we call good and evil." (Cf. p. 167, "The Synthesis of Yoga", by Sri Aurobindo, The Sri Aurobindo Library Inc., New York, 1950)

The explicitly mentioned aim in the above quotation, it is essential to note, is to transcend the *distinction* between good and evil and not to transcend good and evil.

If Vedanta has produced great and saintly men it is in spite of Vedantic theory — these men manfully fought

the moral battle and raised themselves above their lower selves.

But of special interest to us here are the six systems of philosophy that existed at the time of the Buddha. In the Sutta Piṭaka they are described one after another as if the Buddha was only interested in presenting to us a catalogue of the non-brahmanical systems of His time. But if we look at them more carefully we can discern a common thread running through all of them — namely, attempts to present solutions to the problem of sin. We shall, therefore, try to probe into the motives that might have inspired the six philosophers to propound their theories and methods.

Pūraṇa Kassapa seems to have realised the part played by the conscience in building up the sense of sin as also the beltef that went with it, namely, that good actions have good results and evil actions have evil results. So he sought to undermine this belief and hence to cut out the root-cause of the sense of sin by teaching that if anyone kills, steals, commits adultery or speaks falsehood no sin is committed, and, similarly, that if one practises good deeds through charity, love and compassion no merit is acquired.

Makkhali Gosāla realised the importance of another aspect of the sense of sin: the word "sin" is significant only if a sense of responsibility for one's actions goes with it. He believed that if men could be taught that it is foolish to believe in personal responsibility for actions for the simple reason that we are only toys in the hands of fate then the problem of sin is solved. His teaching is called "saṁsāra suddhi" or purification through the round of rebirths: according to this everyone, the sage as well as the fool, the saint as well as the sinner,

go through a definite number of rebirths, at the end of which, all, without exception, will attain to the end of the miseries of life. Accordingly, you could behave as you pleased telling yourself "It was all predestined."

Ajita Kesakambali took his stand on pure materialism. He felt that it was a stupid notion that living beings had a special status different from that of inorganic matter. He taught that organic as well as inorganic things were made of the four elements, and when one thinks one has killed a living being, or committed adultery, all that has happened is that one group of four elements has reacted against another group of four elements. All this fuss about sin was really a fuss about nothing.

Pakudha Kaccāyana worked out another ingenious scheme to explain away the sense of sin. He taught that every living being was composed of seven elements : the usual four elements and, in addition, ease, dis-ease, and the life-principle. The speciality of this scheme lies in the view that not only is each element eternal but that each of them is completely independent of the others and can never act against the others. Thus when you think that you are killing someone you are really causing no harm to anyone at all, for how can you cause any change in eternal unchanging elements ?

Sanjaya Belaṭṭhiputta is described in the Suttas as an "Eel-wriggler" and that he was dull-witted. But probably his was a system of complete scepticism. It is a fact that a human being is not content, like the lower animals, to merely react to his environment : he needs a set of beliefs on which to base his world-view as well as the norms needed as guides to action. While, on the one hand, this has raised him far above the other animals, on the other, it has given him that sense of sin which appears

to act as a drag on his progress. Hence Sanjaya taught a complete scepticism with regard to every kind of belief, hoping thereby to destroy the foundation of the sense of sin.

The above five systems thus taught a change in beliefs as a solution to the problem of sin. But, as has already been pointed out at the beginning of this essay, a mere change in beliefs is utterly inadequate as a solution. The Niganṭhas (whose successors are the present-day Jains) realised this and therefore taught that we can make an end of sin through self-discipline. It required of its votaries high ethical ideals and strict and rigorous self-discipline. But the Buddha pointed out that such a system is workable only if we knew definitely that we had committed sins in our past lives, that we knew the exact amount of sin we had committed, exactly how much sin has been worn out by discipline aud how much is still left over. That criteria for these were never worked out by the Jains is shown by the fact that to this day they expect their saints to fast to death carrying the burden of the sense of sin to the grave.

It might be considered an oversimplification to treat all philosophical systems, as we have done, as if they were expressly invented for the purpose of removing the sense of sin. It is also a fact that one follows a religion as a matter of tradition, or that one accepts a new philosophy because it provides practically workable solutions to social and political problems, or perhaps because it appeals to one's aesthetic sense or to one's reason. But even after accepting all this, if one gets a deeper and more abiding satisfaction at all from one's religion or philosophy it will be if, in addition, it provides a solution to the problem of sin. Take the case of one suffering

from a dire disease and a Christian faith-healer comes along and miraculously cures him. He gives up his former religion and embraces Christianity out of faith. He is happier than before in his new religion and if it happens that his former religion had insisted, as in Buddhism, that one cannot escape from the results of one's actions, then a fresh cause for a deeper satisfaction for him, in his new religion, will be the teaching about grace and forgiveness of sins. Thus any philosophy of a general type which includes a world view is sure to have an aspect dealing with the problem of sin.

We shall now briefly look at the problem of sin in the West. The result of the impact of Christianity was to intensify the sense of sin. It has already been shown that the conscience tends to identify the thought with the deed; this tendency was intensified beyond all relationship with reality when Jesus taught in his otherwise inspiring Sermon on the Mount: "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body should be cast into hell." This intensification of the sense of sin together with the perverse satisfaction that the conscience gets when anybody at all is punished for wickedness led to witch-hunting and the horrors of the Inquisition. The laity could, temporarily at least, alleviate their sense of sin by the enjoyment of the "holy" satisfaction of watching the tortures of the condemned. The monks, who could not take part in the actual tortures turned, instead, against themselves and practised flagellation and other forms of self-torture.

With the rise of scientific materialism, however,

these methods of satisfying the conscience became outdated. The primitive pleasure that was derived by regarding the mentally afflicted as wicked had to give place to compassion for them. From this arose a greater awareness of mental afflictions, from the mildest neuroses to insanity and even to crime, as curable diseases. The struggle in men's hearts between what they wished to do and what they felt they ought not to do came up again — but now from the point of view of mental health. The psycho-therapists have had to develop theories and devise methods for the treatment of the neuroses and other forms of mental ill-health. As many of the neuroses are directly traceable to what we have described as the sense of sin, it would be instructive to see what modern scientific theories have to say about the problem. We shall look into the theories of Freud as a typical case and try to see to what extent they succeeded and to what extent they failed in their objective.

According to Freud, the human personality may be divided into three provinces — the Id, the Ego and Super Ego. The Id, whose field of activity is entirely in the unconscious, contains everything that is present at birth, that is fixed in the constitution, and above all, the instincts which are basically two — Eros (the unifying instinct) and the Death instinct (or the destructive instinct). The Id works on the pleasure principle and always desires instinctual satisfaction whenever an internal tension is felt. While the Id is never in direct contact with reality, mediating between it and the external world, it is the Ego which works on the reality principle. It decides whether the demands of the Id are to be satisfied at all or postponed according to the necessities of self-preservation in the real world. The most important aspect of the personality for our purpose here is the

Super Ego : it forms when the child is about five years old and takes the place of the parents and later of the teachers and other influential persons in society; but the Super Ego is much stricter and harsher in its judgments than the real parents or teachers and is ready to punish the Ego not only for actual acts but also for its thoughts and its unexecuted intentions. This shows that the Super Ego, like the Id, is not in direct contact with reality. The Ego has to try to steer a course between the demands of the Id, the threats of the Super Ego and the necessities of the real world. In normal people, if the Ego decides to disagree with the Id or the Super Ego, it takes advantage of the fact that both of them are not in direct contact with reality — it tries to placate the former by offering it substitute objects in place of the ones demanded by it and the latter by the method of rationalisation. The example of the bullock cart driver illustrates both : the punishment meted out to the driver satisfies the aggressiveness of the Id as well as the moral indignation of the Super Ego.

When the Ego is weak or the Super Ego cruel and harsh, mental and psycho-somatic diseases make their appearance; this is where the Psycho-therapist steps in and uses his methods to turn the patient into a normal person. A normal person is supposed to be one who is well-adjusted to society — but if the sole aim of each member of a society were to be well adjusted to it, ignoring its low moral level, society would stagnate and deteriorate. Great men could alter society for the better precisely because they were not adjusted to it. Besides, society is not monolithic; it contains many strata and each stratum has its own norms of morality and behaviour. So if any society wishes to maintain its stability it cannot afford to be more moral or less moral

than necessary for its stability. If those in charge of the sanctions behind society insist on a higher standard of morality, vice goes underground and leads to corrupt practices — as example we may take the failure of prohibition in the U. S. A. and elsewhere. On the other hand, if the standard of morality is lowered, as for instance in politics or public life, it can only lead to disruption of society, rebellion and chaos. The attitude of society towards moral standards has, therefore, always remained flexible. Take the case of the institutions of marriage and prostitution. When a high standard of morality was expected within the marital relationship prostitution was not only countenanced but encouraged. But a lowering of the intra-marital standards of morality has gone hand in hand with a discouragement of the institution of prostitution. Becoming adjusted to society is essentially the same as coming to terms with our lower self. The modern solution to the problem is, therefore, the same as that of the five materialist philosophers at the time of the Buddha: sex relations are to be freer and the aggressive instincts are either to be canalised into the field of sport or to be used to work up hysteria against an enemy. A natural consequence of this attitude has been to regard attempts at overcoming the passions as signs of mental disease.

A reflection of this modern trend can be seen in the fields of literature and education. In James Hilton's "Lost Horizon" a simple method for attaining sainthood as practised in the earthly paradise at Shangrila is described. With the help of a powerful herb the span of life is extended to more than three hundred years, and the aspirant to sainthood, after a century or more of self-indulgence in all the passions, finds the passions

dropping off by themselves — he becomes a saint by virtue of being too old to have any passions and of being too young yet to die. Similarly, in the story "Siddhartha" by the German Noble Laureate Hermann Hesse, a disciple of the Buddha falls in love with a beautiful courtesan and then makes his love for her the basis for the highest spiritual attainment. This general movement towards a slackening of the barriers against free indulgence of the passions has been helped by the studies of the anthropologists. In the school-room and the College campus, boys and girls have been encouraged to discuss sex freely; learned lecturers have taught them to appreciate the fact that among the Melanesians the elders trained their children in the art of self-abuse, and that in Samoa bedrooms have no walls. Thus the solution seems to be to make the Super Ego less harsh by making freer sex acceptable to society. But how far has this method succeeded ?

The direct result of the labours of the scientifically minded social reformers appears to have been the rise of the "beat" generation. The chief articles of faith of these angry young men are an insistence on free sex experience and the enjoyment of tabloid mysticism provided by L. S. D. and marijuana. The latest to join them are the micro-boppers, children between the ages of eight and twelve, all boasting of their sex experiences. This close association between free sex and the marijuana pipe dreams should remind psycho-analysts of what they must have often encountered in their professional practice: when the Ego is hard-pressed by an intolerant Super Ego the former may choose one of two ways of escape — it may overthrow the Super Ego as in mania or hypomania or it may withdraw from reality and thus create an inner world where a Super

Ego is unnecessary as in schizophrenia. The behaviour of the "beat" generation should strongly remind them of the schizophrenics. The culmination of the reform movement seems to have been reached now when it becomes difficult to distinguish between those within the mental institutions and those without them.

Thus we have shown that the deep sense of evil in our hearts cannot be removed by prayers and incantations, or by sacrifices, or by the grace of a deity, or by changing one's beliefs, or by self-discipline, or by adjusting to society, or by changing the social norms. The final verdict of Freud on this problem was: "It seems as though the activity of the other agencies of the mind is able only to modify the pleasure principle but not to nullify it; and it remains a question of the greatest theoretical importance, and one that has not yet been answered, when and how it is ever possible for the pleasure principle to be overcome. The consideration that the pleasure principle requires a reduction or perhaps ultimately the extinction, of the tension of the instinctual needs (that is, a state of Nirvana) leads to problems that are still unexamined in the relations between the pleasure principle and the two primal forces, Eros and the death instinct."* Norbert Wiener, one of the founders of the science of cybernetics, wrote: "This recognition of an element of incomplete determinism, almost an irrationality in the world, is in a certain way parallel to Freud's admission of a deep irrational component in human conduct and thought.... For this random element, this organic incompleteness, is one which without too violent a figure of speech we may consider evil".**

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* Freud op. cit. p. 68

** The Human Use of Human Beings, by Norbert Wiener. Anchor, Book A 34, p. 11.

Is the prospect so bleak? Can no way be found? We can come to a definite conclusion only after a study of what Buddhism has to say in the matter. In Buddhism it is the Way and actual practice that are all-important; the psychological notions with which we shall begin, only serve to help us appreciate the validity of the methods.

According to Buddhism the personality of a human being at any moment is the sum total of all the instincts and tendencies that he was born with and of what he has made of himself up to that moment. At the same time it is taught that consciousness (citta) is essentially pure and bright and it is only due to adventitious circumstances that it becomes impure; and these adventitious circumstances are our actions which are guided by what are known as the Hetus or root-causes. The morally good Roots are Alobha (greedlessness), Adosa (hatelessness), and Amoha (non-delusion). The morally bad Roots are Lobha (greed), Dosa (hatred), and Moha (delusion). But to assess the validity of the method taught by the Buddha for tackling the problem of sin we must first understand how we came by our instincts and tendencies at birth. The type of consciousness at birth is called the Vipāka (resultant) consciousness and is the result of our actions in the previous life. This important matter is better explained in the words of Ven. J. Kashyap in his "The Abhidhamma Philosophy" Vol. I p. 7 :

"The bad Hetus.....are the animal qualities in man. They come as fits of instinctive impulses. Under their influence, they make a man lose his self-consciousness and reasoning faculty.

"The Vipāka (resultant) of immoral consciousness, therefore, is a very dull and feeble consciousness, eminently

instinctive. It must be Ahetuka (without root-causes), for, it is too feeble to be rooted in the Hetus.

"The Vipāka of a moral consciousness, with weak Hetus, is also a feeble consciousness, and therefore Ahetuka.

"The good Hetus,—Alobha, Adosa, Amoha, on the other hand, are the higher rational qualities in a man. One who develops these in him is able to overcome his instinctive side, and make his consciousness more moral and rational.

"The Vipāka of strong moral consciousness, therefore, is a consciousness as strong and good as the types of moral consciousness themselves, accompanied by the Hetus (Sahetuka). It is Sahetuka strong enough to be rooted in the Hetus."

From the above analysis it becomes clear that the Vipāka of strong immoral consciousness is a feeble, non-rational, instinctive type of consciousness, whereas the Vipāka of a strong moral consciousness is strong enough to be rooted in the Hetus. Thus according to the explanation offered by Buddhism, the consciousness of animals, and of some human beings like those who are born idiots, are all too feeble to be rooted in the Hetus. The reason is that the former are the Vipāka of strong immoral consciousness and the latter of feeble moral consciousness.—Hence both of them are morally neutral.

If we accept the above analysis as convincing, we can try to imagine how the human consciousness might have developed during Evolution, though Buddhism, interested as it is in spiritual evolution in the vertical direction, has nothing to say about biological evolution in the horizontal direction. Perhaps in primitive human society the consciousness was mainly instinctive and therefore not rooted in the Hetus. These children of Nature might

have loved and fought and mated and died essentially like the lower animals; but their consciousness was human and therefore we might be able to imagine what sort of world they saw around them. It must have been a world of pure experience, of wonder and awe and terror, of strong but shortlived loves and hatreds and yet devoid of notions of good and evil. It must have been a world of concrete things, alive and tangible: a non-rational world withal, yet man must have felt completely at home in such a world enjoying not only its pleasures but also its pains; indeed there must have been moments in his life when he felt a one-ness with the whole universe and with all the living things in it. Perhaps it is this world, which Aldous Huxley described as "a blissful sub-rational eternity on the hither side of good and evil",* is what we perceive in our mystic moments when we are temporarily dissociated from the rational parts of our natures. This also probably explains why the mystic experience is so much more delectable and appears more real than the world of actuality.

But fully developed man is essentially a rational creature. While our instinctive nature recognises only experience, our rational nature is dissatisfied with it and wants to take an objective view of things. This is what we mean by "being aware of things". There is another aspect of man's rational faculty, an aspect which takes an objective view even of his subjective world — it is when he uses this faculty that he is said to have self-awareness. As has been pointed out by Ven. J. Kashyap, as our instinctive impulses rooted in the bad Hetus come up, they oppose our self-awareness and rational faculty

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* *Perennial Philosophy*, Fontana Book No. 272R p. 175

and try to swamp them. It is our rational faculty that opposes and tries to curb the instinctual drives. Thus the specific teaching of Buddhism is that, apart from our rational faculty, there is no separate entity equivalent to our every-day notion of a conscience. It is of this rational faculty that the Buddha spoke when He taught:

"There is no secrecy in this world when one has committed sin.

For, your own self, O man! knows what is truth and what is falsity!" (*Anguttara. Nikāya 3-4-10*)

This rational faculty, in its objective aspect, (perhaps by reason of its objectivity) creates in us a strange dissatisfaction with the world of experience. All its loves and hates and fears which appear to us to be so essential and to form the very core of our being are seen to be insubstantial and non-essential in our truly rational moments. But our thirst for life is so great that, in our ignorance, we misunderstand this dissatisfaction. Instead of realising that this feeling of dissatisfaction is the result of an insight into truth we turn our rational faculty to attempting to drown this feeling. This always takes the form of some kind of activity of the body, or of the mind or of both. In our wrong-headedness (ayoniso manasikāra) we ask (if we are metaphysically inclined): (1) Was I in ages past? (2) Was I not in ages past? (3) What was I then? (4) How was I then? (5) From what did I pass to what? — and similarly he questions about the future and the present and comes to the conclusion that he has a self, or that he has no self, or that his self is eternal etc. (Majjh. No. 2). This inability to be alone with oneself is a sure indication of our escapist tendency. Here is a man who goes to sleep because he is bored and not because his body or mind is in need of rest—he is an

escapist. If a man throws himself into work or social activity or sense-enjoyment because he cannot do without them — he is an escapist. If a man practises austerities and tortures himself ceaselessly he is an escapist. If a man has been successful in his worldly life, and though he has everything that he wants he suffers from an intolerable boredom and frequents the parlours of the psychiatrists he is an escapist. All these are the results of misapplication of our rational faculty. If we were to apply it properly (yoniso manasikāra) we would arrive at two of the truths about the unsatisfactoriness of the world, namely, 1. The world of experience cannot give us true and lasting satisfaction and 2. This dissatisfaction is due to the fact that, in spite of frustrations, we continue to expect this world to give us satisfaction—in other words, our frustrated desires are the cause of our dissatisfaction. If it happens that one is also a follower of the Buddha, one learns two more truths: that there is such a thing as putting an end to this dissatisfaction and that there is a Way to its attainment. These are the only supreme truths in the world, the other truths about which religious people dispute and quarrel are the offsprings of their imaginations.

If we now apply our rational faculty to the subjective sphere we arrive at a slightly different set of results. The unregenerate average person in his spontaneous moments feels the urge to go after and take whatever he wants, to attack or sometimes even to kill any person who comes in the way of the satisfaction of his desires, to satisfy his sexual appetite whenever it arises. But when he turns his rational faculty on to these urges, he sees himself in relation to other living beings and realises that these urges are for self-satisfaction at the

expense of others, and so he feels a strange dissatisfaction with them. On the other hand, refraining from lustful actions, refraining from taking what is not given, refraining from onslaught on creatures, and refraining from untruth gives him a strange satisfaction (avippaṭisāra, or absence of regret or remorse). But he allows his desires to rule over him; so he turns to society and its sanctions to regulate them. He gets society to approve of murder so long as it is done for the good of the tribe to which he belongs and practised on those who do not belong to it. Society then recognises the institution of marriage to regulate sexual relations, and institutes rules for the recognition of the ownership of property. Many other social institutions follow. As soon as society takes over the functions that rightly belong to the individual's rational faculty the foundation is laid for what we call conscience — the Freudian Super Ego. Parents and teachers are no longer true guides but are only representatives of society. Conscience, like society, is an attempt at a compromise between the truth as revealed by our rational faculty and the need to satisfy our urges. Hence the conscience is neither rational like our rational faculty nor non-rational like our instincts but irrational. Besides, it arrogates to itself the punitive functions of society and makes life miserable for the individual. It is of this conscience of ours that the Blessed One speaks when He tells us :

> They who feel shame where is no cause for shame and they who feel no shame when they ought to be ashamed — both enter the downward path following false views.
>
> They who fear when there is no cause for fear and they who do not fear when they ought to fear—

both enter the downward path following false views.

They who discern evil where there is no evil and they who see no evil in what is evil—both enter the downward path following false views.

(Dhp. 316 - 318)

It is this irrational conscience of ours that is unable to distinguish between thought and action. The rational way of looking at this relation between thought and action can be seen from the very first two verses of the Dhammapada :

(The mental) natures are the result of what we have thought, are chieftained by our thoughts, are made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, sorrow follows him (as a consequence) even as the wheel follows the foot of the drawer (i.e. the ox which draws the cart).

(The mental) natures are the result of what we have thought, are chieftained by our thoughts, are made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him (in consequence) like a shadow that never leaves him.

(Translation by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan)

The following points are to be noted from a study of the verses above:

1. What we are at any moment can be judged from the thoughts that are passing through our minds at that moment as well as by all the thoughts we have thought before that moment and thus permitted to modify and mould our characters.

2. A good or evil result follows when an action initiated by a good or evil thought is completed.

The Abhidhamma explanations of the evils of killing and of sexual misconduct given below have been taken from the book "The Buddha and His Teachings" by Ven. Narada Thera.

"The following five conditions are necessary to complete the evil of killing:- i. a living being, ii. knowledge that it is a living being, iii. intention of killing, iv. effort to kill and, v. consequent death.

"Four conditions are necessary to complete the evil of sexual misconduct, namely, i. the thought to enjoy, ii. consequent effort, iii. means to gratify, and iv. gratification." (pp. 373-374)*

We can compare this realistic attitude with the teaching of Jesus already quoted that whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Though it is doubtful whether, in practice, any priest was actually unfrocked for thinking adulterous thoughts, this teaching has undoubtedly given the Christian a harsh and intolerant conscience.

A further consequence of the rational attitude Buddhism has towards sin is that sin is not considered as something wicked and intrinsic but as something that has arisen in consequence of a misapplication of our rational faculty—in other words, it is something born of ignorance, a foolish act (akusala), and the sinner is a fool (bāla).

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* Buddhism certainly recognises purely mental acts, but it does not make the mistake of equating, say, a passing thought of ill-will (e g. rising anger immediately restrained, cf. Dhp. 222), a constant dwelling on thoughts of ill-will not leading to overt action (vyāpāda), and murder deliberately planned and executed.

From this account of the Buddhist explanation of the arising of sin are we in a better position to solve the problem of the eradication of the sense of sin? Is it enough if we listen to the voice of our rational faculty, lead blameless lives and train our minds to think only good thoughts? Training ourselves to think good thoughts certainly produces in our minds a deep satisfaction and an atmosphere of peace and joy; but, as has already been pointed out, the inner core of our being is made up of our instinctive urges and is entirely non-rational. No amount of rational thinking and the doing of good deeds can in any way modify or even affect our inner core. It is like arguing with an idiot or an insane person. It is for this reason that the Blessed One scoffs at the Niganṭhas for believing in the perfectionist doctrine that by austerities and discipline we can make an end of evil (Devadaha Sutta of the Majjhima). Can it be done by attaining the Jhānas? Perhaps the Blessed One is referring to the belief, held even today, that in a Jhānic state one is "in tune with the Infinite" when, as in the Sallekha Sutta, He points out that the Jhānas and Aruppas are only easeful and peaceful states. The Buddhist analysis, up to this point, appears to support the Freudian thesis that the pleasure principle of the Id can only be modified but not nullified.

But the Buddha has shown the world a Way of nullifying the pleasure principle. To understand this better let us consider how even ordinary people are sometimes able to give up powerful habits without putting up a struggle. Take the case of a young man of good family, well-educated and of excellent manners — but fond of the cruel sport of hunting animals for pleasure. All attempts to persuade him to give it up had proved fruitless. His appeal to materialistic theories in support

of his actions showed that there was in him a cruel streak that would not be denied satisfaction. One day he went with his gun to hunt as usual, carefully stalked a deer, and shot it down. He saw it fall and went forward to take possession of the kill. But when he came closer he saw that the buckshot had ripped open the side of the deer and a dead foetus was hanging out. The deer did not make the usual struggle to escape from the enemy even at the point of death. Instead, it lifted up its head and looked at its enemy, but in that look the young man saw not a hint of terror but a look of indescribable sorrow and almost of pity. Then the deer dropped back dead. The young man threw down his gun and went home in a high fever: he was confined to bed for a month. On full recovery it was discovered that not a hint of that cruel streak that was formerly in him was in evidence. What caused this sudden transformation of character? To explain it in terms of conditioned reflexes or as the result of a sudden alteration in the centre of emotional excitement, as William James would put it, is to appeal to dogma on insufficient grounds. Soviet Russia swore by the method of conditioned reflexes for the cure of the neuroses, but, if recent newspaper reports are to be believed, attempts are being made to introduce Freudian methods. In the U.S.A., where there are no restrictions on the methods employed, there was a conference of psychotherapists who condemned the attitude of the psychiatrists in trying to treat the neuroses as if they were diseases and recommended persons of the stature of Gurus to help the afflicted. All this goes to show that no infallible and completely convincing theory of the neuroses has yet been worked out. Without being dogmatic, therefore, we shall have a look at the important

aspects of the above case of a permanent change fo character.

First, it was an intense experience. Secondly, the experience was coupled with the realisation of a truth— namely, that there is no essential difference between the killing of a human being and the killing of an animal, and, thirdly, the urge to kill had been completely wiped out; a feat that no amount of conscious struggle could have accomplished.

This qualitative and permanent transformation of character we shall refer to as "transcendence" provided the quality affected by the transformation is an inborn one and not one acquired in this life. It has already been pointed out that our inborn tendencies belong to the sphere of the non-rational and that they can understand and be at home with experience and experience alone. This is the reason why truth alone is unable to affect our inner core. Experience alone is equally powerless, since, to our inner core, one experience is as good as any other — it enjoys them all. It is only when that peculiar combination of truth and experience that we can call "experiencing of truth" takes place that our inner core is transformed and transcendence takes place.

The path taught by the Buddha was the Way of Transcendence; a clear distinction has been drawn in the teaching between the mundane and supramundane aspects of the path: the former for the overcoming of evil moral habits acquired in this life and the latter for the transcending of the innate tendencies. The supramundane path is attainable only by the method of transcendence, and that too, only when the truth experienced is the Truth of Dukkha. But even in the mundane path certain traits of character which depend on our innate tendencies yield to

this method. But the process is not irreversible if the truth experienced is not the sole ultimate truth, namely, the Fourfold Truth of Dukkha. Irrational fears, for instance, do not yield to ordinary method: it is useless telling ourselves that these fears are groundless. The Bodhisatta's conquest of irrational fears is thus described in the Bhaya - bherava Sutta (*Majjh. No. 1*).

"I would seek out haunted shrines in woodland or forest or under tutelary trees and there abide in those awesome and grisly scenes—perchance there to discover fear and dread..... As I abode there, either an animal passed along, or a peacock knocked off a branch, or the wind rustled the fallen leaves, so that I thought this must surely be fear and dread coming. Thought I: Wherefore am I doing nothing but await the coming of fear and dread? Come as they may, I, just as they find me, will even so overcome them without changing my posture for them. I was pacing to and for when fear and dread came upon me; I continued to pace to and fro till I had overcome them, neither standing still nor lying down."

Here it is important to note that the Bodhisatta did not change his posture: to have changed it would have meant effort and struggle against the oncoming fear. Without struggling, without opposing, the experience of fear was transformed into experience of the truth that there was nothing to be afraid of, that the noise that set off the dread was only due to the rustle of leaves in the wind or due to a twig being broken off by a peacock. With this realisation the Bodhisatta was able to transcend his irrational fears.

When we grow, from childhood, through adolescence, into manhood many irreversible processes take place. We give up playing with the toys of childhood, we also cease feeling some of those childish fears that appeared

to be so overwhelming when we were children. We do not realise that a real transcendence has taken place. If we could but remember them, there must have been moments in our adolescence (a period when we become aware of new and unfamiliar emotions), when we experienced the truth of the silliness of playing with toys and the stupidity of allowing ourselves to be overwhelmed by those childish fears—with such experiences we must have transcended our childhood. But we believe we have only outgrown our childhood because the changes have been so gradual and imperceptible. But the hall-mark of transcendence is that, normally, there is no reversibility of the process. We have to make this qualified statement because, according to Buddhism, only transformations based on ultimate truth are absolutely irreversible, while those based on mundane truths are sometimes reversible: it is a well-known fact that during hypnotic trance regression to earlier states is possible.

Psycho-analysts are aware that many of the neuroses arise out of the inability to transcend certain childish attitudes, and the attempt of the analyst is to make the patient realise this fact. But very often, a mere realisation, in the sense of a purely intellectual acceptance of the truth does not effect the cure. It must come not as a realisation but as a revelation — a flash —; the truth, in other words, must be experienced. But the psycho-analyst stops as soon as the patient is transformed from an immature adult into a mature one without realising that an adult, with his hates and lusts and above all with that sense of sin, is still a child.

A study of the characteristics of transcendence reveals some remarkable facts. A few years ago we would have found it easy to declare in what sense man transcended the machine. But since the growth of cybernetical

science and the construction of life-imitating machines, even scientists, in fact scientists more than others, have insisted that there is no clear-cut line dividing man from the machine. It is feed-back that works in man—both are equally pseudo-purposive. Yet was it not Engels who pointed out that "to know one is bound is to be free"? The Buddha pointed out this very truth when He was speaking of the sectarian view that everything one experiences is due to one's past actions. "To those who fall back on something done previously as the essential reason, there comes to be no desire or exertion connected with the idea that this is to be done or this is not to be done".* What the Blessed One wished to point out was that the sectarians held the deterministic view of actions and their results because they thought that thereby they could shut their eyes to the need to have to make choices in this world. The inevitable result of self-awareness is that we see ourselves in relation to the rest of the universe and the first result of this is the realisation that we are bound; to be aware that one is bound is to realise the existence of an infinite number of problems to be solved; to realise the existence of problems is to have to put forth effort to solve them — this is to engage in the truly purposeful activity of solving the problems. The machine, on the other hand, has no self-awareness, has no realisation that it is bound and therefore *has* no problems though it may be able to *solve* them faster than man. The machine solves the problems provided by man with the help of the pseudo-purposive machinery built into it by man. It is because of his self-awareness that he is an economic animal, an ethical animal, a political animal, an animal aware of the meaning of history, and

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* Anguttara Nikāya, 3-7-1.

an animal capable of creating newer and ever newer sciences. Perhaps it is a measure of the nescience implicit in science that scientists have ignored the key role played by self-awareness in providing man with real purposiveness.

With the insight we have gained into the meaning of transcendence — that it is not a contradiction or suppression of an existent state but is the attainment of a new dimension which cannot be explained in terms of the conditions within that state — we can say that to realise that we are bound is to transcend the mere machine, to recognise the existence of the problem of sin is to transcend the mere animal, to experience the truth of Dukkha (i.e., of the unsatisfactoriness of the world of experience) is to transcend mere man.

Thus the solution to the problem of sin is its transcendence. The supreme importance of direct experience in Buddhism is to be seen from the preponderance of the many words in it related to the word "*passati*" or "to see". Direct experience is always described as a "seeing", perhaps because visual experience is the highest form of direct sense-experience and perhaps also because most of our knowledge of the world is acquired through it. The Buddha Himself is called *Samanta Cakkhu* (All-seeing), the Dhamma is *Ehi Passika* (Come and see), the first flash of insight into the truth is called *Dhamma Cakkhu* (The Eye of Truth), the contemplation on the impermanence, unsatisfactoriness, and not-self-ness of worldly things is described as *anupassanā* (Observing), spiritual insight is called *Vipassanā* (Seeing clearly), and the final act directly leading to Arahantship is "*Jānāti passati*" (to know and to see) :

"He realises as absolute truth: 'This is Dukkha, this is the arising of Dukkha, this is the cessation of

Dukkha and this is the Way to the cessation of Dukkha.' He realises as absolute truth — 'These are the āsavas, this is the arising of the āsavas, this is the cessation of the āsavas and this is the Way to the cessation of the āsavas.' From *knowing and seeing thus*, his mind is freed from the āsava of sense-desires, from the āsava of love of continued existence, from the āsava of ignorance — and from beeing freed arises the knowledge that he is free." (D I 2-5-1C0)

The purpose of this knowing and seeing, of "the experiencing of truth" as we have called it, is to transcend the latent tendencies known in the Pāli language as Anusayas, which form the non–rational inner core of our being. The various expedients we think up, in order to escape from having to face the Truth of Dukkha that our rational faculty tries to make us realise, have their origin in these anusayas: our love for metaphysical theories from Diṭṭhānusaya, love for scepticism from Vicikicchā-nusaya, the desire for sense-enjoyment from Kāmarāgā-nusaya, taking delight in hurting others from Paṭighā-nusaya, pride and self-righteousness from Mānānusaya, all activities undertaken for sheer love and attachment for continued existence from Bhavarāgānusaya, and all the other activities that we undertake through ignorance and confused thinking from Avijjānusaya.

The way of transcendence is known in the scriptures as Lokuttara Magga (Supramundane Path) and its purpose is only to transcend the anusayas. The non-transcenden-tal way for overcoming our acquired sinful tendencies is known as Lokiya Magga (Mundane Path). Transcending all the anusayas may not be possible at one time and hence four stages of transcendence have been described in the Dhamma. The first two anusayas are transcended by the

Sotāpanna, the next two are attenuated by the Sakadāgāmi and transcended by the Anāgāmi, and the last three are transcended by the Arahat.

To know how transcendence takes place is not enough. There are certain dangers and difficulties inherent in the practical application of the method. This can be illustrated from the examples already quoted of the character transformation of the hunter and the Bodhisatta's victory over irrational fears. In the former, the hunter's friends and relatives had constantly been telling him of the wickedness of his ways and this was probably at the back of his mind when he had the experience. Similarly, when the Bodhisatta exposed himself deliberately to the fears in the lonesome forest he was already intellectually convinced of the irrational basis of his fears. Both had the right mental atmosphere at the moment of experience; if the wrong mental atmosphere had been present the results might have been disastrous. Even if one had the right mental atmosphere it might not be possible, always, to arrange for an experience of the right intensity and at the right moment; or the morbid aspect of the experience might overcome one and unbalance the mind.

The Noble Eightfold Path has taken care of all these contingencies: the very first step is to have the Fourfold Truth of Dukkha impressed on the mind; and the next step is to remove all those unwholesome tendencies of character that have been acquired by us, one way or another, throughout our life. The method of this removal is described in the Sabbāsava Sutta (Majjh. 2): Those acquired by allowing the mind to dwell upon attractive and repulsive objects are to be removed by self-restraint, those developed through attachment to articles of daily use such as food and clothing are to be removed by using them solely for supporting or protecting the body, those

acquired by allowing oneself to be overcome by physical discomforts are to be removed by bearing them with patience, those acquired through evil company are to be removed through shunning it, and those acquired by failure in watching over one's thoughts are to be removed by constant watch over them. This removal of unwholesome tendencies creates in us an atmosphere of deep satisfaction known as *Avippaṭisāra* (absence of regret or remorse). This atmosphere is to be deepened by the development of wholesome qualities like loving-kindness, compassion, joy in the happiness of others and equanimity in all circumstances.

Next we come to a step that is specifically Buddhist. This is the development of awareness in all its aspects. We have emphasised that it is in self-awareness that we transcend the mere animal and that it is self-awareness coupled with our rational faculty that makes us realise the truth of Dukkha. Special exercises, therefore, have been worked out for the development of self-awareness in all our daily activities.

It was pointed out, however, that if an intense experience is encountered, there was the possibility of being overcome by the morbid aspect of the situation. The exercise of watching one's breath calms the mind and helps one to maintain one's equanimity in all circumstances.

At this point it is possible to undertake, straightaway, the practice of Vipassanā or the attempt to experience the truth of Dukkha by means of meditations on the corruptibility of all conditioned things. This can be carried out by the contemplation on the loathsomeness of one's own bodily constituents or, if necessary, by contemplation on the various stages of corruption of a

corpse in a cemetery. If, however, one has a special aptitude for what are known as Jhānas one may develop a subtle state of the mind with which one may attain *Yathābhūta Ñāṇa Dassana* (the ability to see things as they are) — with the help of this ability one can see the Truth of Dukkha in the ordinary events of life and thus dispense with the need for intensity of experience.

Such in brief is the Way of Transcendence. To close this essay we can do no better than quote from the scriptures and demonstrate two of the most essential points of the Path — 1. the proper frame of mind and 2. the Fourfold Truth of Dukkha which alone is capable of effecting absolutely irreversible transcendence :

"And the Exalted One saw Suppabuddha, the leper, sitting in that assembly, and at the sight he thought : This one here is of growth to understand dhamma. So for the sake of Suppabuddha, the leper, he gave a talk dealing in due order with these topics: on almsgiving, virtue, the heaven world, of the danger, meanness and corruption of sense-desires, and the profit of getting free from them.

"And when the Exalted One knew that the heart of Suppabuddha, the leper, was ready, softened, unbiassed, elated and believing, then he unfolded those dhamma-teachings which the awakened ones have themselves discovered, namely : Ill, arising, ending, the Way.

"Then just as a white cloth, free from stain, is ready to receive the dye, even so in Suppabuddha, the leper, as he sat there in that very seat, arose the pure, stainless dhamma-sight, the knowledge that whatsoever

is of nature to arise, that also is of nature to end." (Udāna 5 - 3, translation by F. L. Woodward).

This essay is an attempt to try and understand the meaning of the verse from the Dhammapada :

"Abstaining from all sin, cultivating only the good,
And the purifying of one's heart, this is the teaching
of the Buddhas."

(Dhammapada 183)

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The Buddhist Wheel Symbol

All ancient religions have in the course of time developed many symbols to express various doctrinal concepts visually. Buddhism does not lag behind in this sphere, but in fact has given rise to many new symbols, in addition to what it has derived from the common Indian heritage. To these symbols which were adopted from pre-Buddhistic India, Buddhism has given new interpretations to suit its own purpose. Of these, *Dhamma Cakka*, the ever - moving Wheel of Law, is the most prominent symbol of the Buddhists.

The Pāli commentaries of Ceylon refer to a number of wheels recognised by the Buddhists. Buddhaghosa mentions *Sampatti Cakka*, the wheel of happiness, *Lakkhaṇa Cakka*, the wheel symbol on the soles of the Buddha's feet, *Rathanga Cakka*, the chariot wheel, *Iriyāpatha Cakka*, the wheel of movement or postures, *Dāna Cakka*, the wheel of liberality, *Ratana Cakka*, the Ideal Wheel of a Universal Monarch, *Dhamma Cakka*, the Wheel of Law of the Buddha, and *Urasi Cakka*, the wheel of torture.[1] To this list Gurulugomi[2] adds *Praharaṇa Cakra*, the discus, *Asani Cakka*, the wheel of thunderbolt, *Dāru Cakka*, the wheel-right's wooden wheel, and *Saṁsāra Cakka*, the Wheel of Life. The last-mentioned wheel is also known as *Bhava Cakka*, the Wheel of Becoming. In our discussion on the iconography of the wheel, universally accepted as the distinctive symbol of the Buddhists from very early times, we are concerned mainly with the Ratana Cakka, the Dhamma Cakka, the Lakkhaṇa Cakka and the Saṁsāra Cakka or the Bhava Cakka. The Ratana, Dhamma, and

Lakkhaṇa Cakkas in their unadorned forms are identical, and are represented in art in the likeness of a chariot wheel (*Rathanga Cakka*), whereas in their elaborate or Perfect Forms (*Sabbākāraparipūram*) the Ratana Cakka and the Dhamma Cakka assume the same form, while the Lakkhaṇa Cakka differs from the former in detail The Samsāra or Bhava Cakka, differing in form as well as in significance, is a later development (see here Chapter IV).

I. The Ratana Cakka

The Ratana Cakka, the Ideal Wheel, is described as the divine wheel that appears to one who is destined to be a *Cakkavatti Rājā*, a Universal Monarch. In this connection, it must be mentioned, that the Buddha is considered the spiritual counterpart of a Universal Monarch. A Universal Monarch is the Ideal Layman (*āgārika ratana*). He is the highest among those who enjoy worldly pleasures (*kāmabhogīnam aggo*). On the other hand, the Buddha is the ideal recluse (*anāgārika ratana*), the highest among those who have removed the covering of defilements (*vivaṭṭacchadanānam aggo*). Both, the Buddha and the Universal Monarch, are possessed of *mahā purisa lakkhaṇas*, the auspicious marks of a Great Being. It is said that a person born with such marks is destined to be either a Universal Monarch or a Buddha, an Enlightened One, depending on the course of life each one prefers to pursue. A Universal Monarch is blessed with the seven unique possessions (*satta ratana*), namely the Ideal Wheel (*Cakka Ratana*), the Ideal Elephant (*Hatthi Ratana*), the Ideal Horse (*Assa Ratana*), the Ideal Gem (*Maṇi Ratana*), the Ideal Wife (*Itthi Ratana*), the Ideal Householder (*Gahapati Ratana*), and the Ideal Counsellor (*Parināyaka Ratana*).[3] Of these,

he Ideal Wheel is the most important, because the appearance of this is the first indication that the king has become a Universal Monarch.

It is stated that a king having perfected the ten virtues of a Universal Monarch observes the eight precepts on a full-moon day and then retires to the top-most floor of his mansion, when the Divine Wheel rises from the Eastern Ocean and comes through the sky like a second full moon. It circumambulates the mansion where the monarch awaits its arrival, and appears close to the window within his sight. When the monarch sees it he pays it due homage and sprinkles water over it from a golden vessel and wishes it to go forth. On the command of the monarch, the great wheel starts on its mission and the conquest of the world begins. From the time the Cakka Ratana appears, the monarch concerned is entitled to the designation *Rājā Cakkavatti* — the Sovereign Mover of the Wheel—and along with his retinue he follows it through the sky. Wherever the wheel goes, the kings of those regions pay homage to the wheel and accept the suzerainty of the Universal Monarch. Just as a Universal Monarch causes the Ideal Wheel to turn, the Buddha too sets the Wheel of Law (*Dhamma Cakka*) in motion.

The *Mahā Sudassana Suttanta* of Dīgha Nikāya describes the Ideal Wheel of a Universal Monarch as having a nave (*nābhi*), thousand spokes (*sahassārāni*) and a felly (*nemi*).[4] When the sculptors represented the wheel symbol on the Asokan capitals they seemed to have followed the description as given in Dīgha Nikāya (Pl. II, Fig. 2). This impression of the wheel set the pattern for later sculptors who elaborated on it. (Pl. II, Figs. 3, 4 and 5).

The elaborate or Perfect Form of Cakka Ratana which is identical with the Dhamma Cakka, is depicted in art with certain details that are normally not found in ordinary forms of the wheel symbol.[5] The component parts of an ordinary cakka are the nave, the spokes, the felly and *nemi maṇi*, the bubble-like features adhering to the rim, in-between the spokes. On the other hand, at Sāñchi, Bārhut and Amarāvati, there are representations of the Perfect Form of Ratana Cakka displaying certain features, of which the most characteristic, are the adornments round the felly of the wheel, which to my knowledge, no one has so far interpreted satisfactorily. In this respect Pāli and Sinhalese literary works of Ceylon give a vivid description of the Perfect Form of the Ratana Cakka explaining what these features are and what they signify. For example, in *Sumangalavilāsinī*, Buddhaghosa (5th cent. A. C.) describes the Perfect Form of the Ratana Cakka thus:-

"As this wheel is possessed of divine qualities it is described as '*dibbam*'; as it has thousand spokes it is said to be '*sahassāram*'; as it has a nave and a felly it is said to be '*sanābhikam, sanemikam,*' as it is perfect in every respect it is described as '*sabbākāra-paripūram*'.

"The nave, by reason of which the Cakka Ratana is described as having a nave, is entirely made of sapphire. In the centre of the nave, there is a hole lined with silver, and in it dentation, clean and shining appears like the teeth of a smiling face. The outer rim of the nave is made of silver and it has the resemblance of a full moon with a hole in its centre. Around the hole of the nave, decorative lines are shown clearly. Thus the nave of this Cakka Ratana is perfect in every respect.

"The spokes, by reason of which, the Cakka Ratana is described as having thousand spokes, are all made of seven kinds of precious jewels. They shine like the rays of the sun. The knobs and the decorative line work are well marked on them. Thus the spokes of the Cakka Ratana are perfect in every respect.

"The felly, by reason of which, the Cakka Ratana is described as having a felly, is made of pure and polished, deep-red coral The circular lines demarcating the joints of the felly, shine like a strip of pure *Jambunadi* gold reddish in hue. Thus the felly, of the Cakka Ratana is perfect in every respect

"Around the felly of the Cakka Ratana there are one hundred coral shafts—one shaft in-between every set of ten spokes. These coral shafts are hollow inside and have holes on the surface as in flutes. When the wind blows, these shafts produce notes as sweet as the music of the five musical instruments, played upon by a talented musician. These melodious notes are lovely, enticing, desirable and intoxicating. Surmounting these shafts are white umbrellas (*chatta*), and on either side of these there are two spears (*satti*) to which garlands are fastened. Thus surrounding the felly of the Cakka Ratana, there are one hundred white umbrellas and two hundred spears supporting garlands. Inside the two holes on either side of the hub of the Cakka Ratana, there are two faces of lions, from the mouths of which, issue forth a pair of pearl garlands, as thick as the trunks of two mature palm trees, and which are resplendent like the rays of the moon, surpassing in beauty the heavenly river. At the end of these pearl garlands there are two tussels woven of red fluff, resembling the early morning sun. When the Cakka Ratana, together with these two garlands, goes forth revolving in the sky it

appears as if three wheels are revolving together. Thus is the Ideal Wheel perfect in every respect."[6]

It must be mentioned that one of the key words in the text quoted above has been rendered incorrectly in the Pāli Text Society edition of *Sumangalavilāsinī*, as well as in *Mahā Bodhi Vaṁsa*. Describing the features that adorn the felly of the wheel, the P. T. S. texts run as follows :- "Tassa kho pana pavāla daṇḍassa upari setacchattam ubhosu passesu sammosarita *kusuma dāmānām dve pantiyo ti*; evam samosarita *kusuma dāma panti* satadvaya parivāra setacchatta dhārana pavāla daṇḍa satena . . . "[7] According to this reading, attending on the white umbrella there are *rows* (*panti*) of garlands, and altogether there are two hundered such rows. Evidently this conveys a wrong idea. Here the correct reading, as found in Siamese and Burmese script editions of the particular texts, is as follows :- "Tassa kho pana pavāla daṇḍassa upari setacchattam ubhosu passesu samosarita *kusuma dāma dve satiyo ti*; evam samosarita *kusuma-dāma-satti-satadvaya* parivāra setacchatta dhārana pavāla daṇḍa satena . . . "[8] *Kusuma dāma satti*, meaning a spear bearing garlands, as found in the latter editions, is correct for it conveys the correct sense. Moreover, the Sinhalese translation of *Mahā Bodhi Vamsa* known as '*Sinhala Bodhi Vamsaya*' (13th cent. A. C), translates the corresponding passage thus:- " *E pabalu daṇḍu mattehi dhavalcchatrayakä dälayehi elvanalada maldam äti aḍayaṭi dekekä dekekäyi mese elvana lada maldam äti aḍayaṭi desiyakin pirivarana lada dhavalacchatra siyayak darannāvu* . . . "[9] As evidenced by the above passage, the *Sinhala Bodhi Vamsaya* is clear on this point and renders the Pāli word '*satti*' as '*aḍayaṭi*' (Sk. *ardha-yasṭi*) meaning a short spear. The author of Pāli *Mahā Bodhi Vamsa* has incorporated in his work the passage directly

from *Sumangalavilāsinī* itself. The reading '*kusumadāma panti*' may have been a scribe's error which the editors of the P. T. S. texts have accepted as the correct form.[10] Moreover, as the ensuing pages will show, the iconographical features of the wheel symbols also prove the correctness of the Siamese and Burmese script editions of *Sumangalavilāsinī* and Pāli *Mahā Bodhi Vamsa.*

The description of the Cakka Ratana in *Sumangalavilāsinī* as well as in the Pāli *Mahā Bodhi Vamsa* and its Sinhalese version clearly indicate that a Perfect Form of the Cakka Ratana (in this case Dhamma Cakka is also implied) has one hundred white umbrellas attended by two hundred spears bearing garlands, right round its felly. Now let us focus our attention on some of the actual representations of the wheel and other relevant decorative elements depicted in the earliest specimens of of Buddhist art, which have a bearing on our discussion. Some of the elaborate wheel symbols from Sānchi, Bārhut and Amarāvati display certain decorative elements such as *Nandipāda*, or "*Triratana*" symbols and semi-circular features in alternating positions right round the felly of the wheel (Pl. II, Figs. 3, 4 and 5).

At the outset it must be mentioned that nowhere in Indian or Sinhalese art, has the umbrella (*chatta*) and spear (*satti*) been depicted in association with the wheel symbol exactly as described in the texts quoted above. But there are instances, where this motif in seperate form—i. e. umbrella attended by two spears (*satti*) bearing garlands or flags—is depicted. Bas reliefs from Sanchi and Ceylon show stupas surmounted by umbrellas attended by spears as described (Pl. III, Fig. 8 and 9). Sāñchi has reliefs where processions etc. are depicted showing people carrying spears, to which garlands are fastened exactly as described in *Sumangalavilāsinī* and

other texts (Pl. III, Fig. 11). Spears in all these instances invariably terminate in triple-pronged (*tris'ūla*) form commonly referred to as *Nandipāda* or *Triratana*. However, it must be mentioned that '*satti*' can mean a spear with a single blade (*s'ūla*) as well. In this connection umbrellas displaying two garlands hanging from either ends of the canopy are also important (Pl. III, Fig. 12. b). This form of the umbrellas can be interpreted as another mode of representing umbrella and spear motif. It is significant that such umbrellas are depicted as surmounting the wheel symbol at Sanchi and elsewhere (Pl. VI, Fig. 19). Bearing these facts in mind when we trace the evolution of the decorative motifs edging the felly of the wheel symbols under discussion, we can clearly see the connection between the literary tradition in Ceylon and the earliest specimens of Buddhist art of India.

In depicting an umbrella on the felly of a wheel, it has in course of time degenerated in form as usual in art. The umbrella even in its most elaborate form has been already highly stylised when depicted in early sculpture at Sāñchi and Bārhut (Pl. III, Fig. 12. a and b). It is usually flat and wheel like in shape and clearly shows the spokes that support the ribs of the umbrella. Two garlands are shown as hanging from either side. Pl. III, Fig. 12 c, shows an umbrella from a coin where the garlands have apparently merged with the umbrella proper, thus giving it the resemblance of an arrow head. The spokes and the shaft too have lost their distinctive features and have become a support of the canopy tapering downwards. Pl. III, Fig. 12. d, shows that the height of the shaft has been further diminished and the umbrella is reduced to a mere semi-circle. All that remains of the spokes and the shaft of the umbrella are

the two arches within the semi-circle. Pl. III, Fig. 12. e, shows a further development where the umbrella has lost all its significance and has been depicted as a leaf motif. Pl. III, Fig. 12 f, is a similar conventionalised umbrella from a Tibetan Dhamma Cakka. Here the shaft and the spokes are represented by three short lines radiating from the centre. Pl. III, Fig. 12. g, shows a modern adoptation of the same. It has lost all vestiges of an umbrella and is merely a semi-circle.

Just as the umbrella in this position gradually diminished in height and ultimately lost all vestiges of the shaft leaving a semi-circular bubble or a leaf ornament to represent the chatra (umbrella), it can be explained that the spear which originally bore garlands, also lost both the garlands and the shaft leaving the characteristic symbol *satti*, single *s'ūla* or *tris'ūla* (*Nandi-pāda* or *Triratana*), to represent the spear (Pl. III, Fig. 12, a, b, c, d and e).

This brief introduction explaining the conjectural evolution of the umbrella and spear motif will be of assistance in understanding how the elaborate umbrellas and spears, the latter bearing garlands, around the felly of the Ratana Cakka gradually lost their original forms and were reduced to more or less geometric patterns. Thus, we see that the bubble and the triangle (*s'ūla*) or three-pronged spear (*tris'ūla*) pattern edging the felly of the wheel, is in fact the conventionalised umbrella and spear motif described in *Sumangalavilāsinī*. Hence these symbols can be described as Perfect Forms of the Ratana Cakka, here used to represent the Dhamma Cakka, the Wheel of the Law. F. C. Maisey, A. Foucher, Sir John Marshall and other reputed scholars have identified these features as umbrellas and *Nandipādas* [11]. But as I have

pointed out it is in the light of *Sumangalavilâsinî* and other literary works preserved in Ceylon, that their exact nature and the significance can be satisfactorily interpreted.

The following examples of wheel symbols, each bearing a circle of highly stylised umbrellas and spears edging the felly of the wheel, clearly show various ways in which the elaborate or Perfect Forms of the wheel have been depicted in art. A. Foucher in 'The Beginnings of Buddhist Art' has cited a number of wheel symbols from ancient Indian coins, of which one shows knob - like external features right round the felly (Pl. IV. Fig. 14).[12] He identifies these features as umbrellas. Here the umbrella being the more prominent symbol stands alone unaccompanied by spears. Pl. II, Fig. 6, shows a Tibetan Dharma Cakra where the umbrellas have been reduced to semi-circular features with three short lines radiating from the centre, reminiscent of the ribs and the shaft of the umbrella.

The recent adaptations of this type of Dharma Cakras have done away with this last vestige, and have retained only the semi circle which is more or less like the knob-shaped end of the spokes projecting through the felly of the wheel (Pl. II; Fig. 7). In spite of the fact that these semi-circular features bear no resemblance to umbrellas, there is no doubt that they are derived from the original chatra symbols. However, any further distortion, for example the elongation of the chatra symbol to look more like a rod is undesirable as it will definitely interfere with the significance of the wheel as a symbol.

Pl. II, Fig. 4, shows a wheel from Sāñchi displaying *chatta* (umbrella) symbols alternating with *Nandipādas* or the so-called '*Triratana*' symbols. Here the *Nandipāda*

occupies exactly the same position, in which, according to the *Sumangalavilāsinī* account of the Ratana Cakka, spears (*satti*) bearing garlands are to be depicted. In some wheels, instead of a *Nandipāda*, a triangular member is shown (Pl. II, Fig. 3). Just as *Nandipāda* stands for a spear (*satti*) terminating in a three-pronged member (*tris'ūla*), the triangular feature too stands for a spear terminating in a single *s'ūla*. In short, the spear (*satti*) is represented by either a *s'ūla* or *tris'ūla*. It appears that Buddhists referred to *Nandipāda* or *Triratana* by the term *satti* (Sk. *s'akti*). Sir John Marshall maintains that the detail of umbrellas edging the felly was directly copied from the original wheel from Sarnath.[13] Sir Arthur Cunningham too in his conjectural reconstruction of the wheel that once crowned the arch (*torana*) of the Bārhut stupa, depicts it incorrectly as a bubble in between the umbrellas.[14] Evidently both these scholars have treated it as a meaningless piece of decoration. According to the texts cited in this connection, the number of spears should be twice the number of umbrellas. To be exact, there should be one hundred umbrellas and two hundred spears (*satti*) bearing garlands. But unlike in a literary description, in art if two spears are depicted side by side it would interfere with the artistic rendering of the design. Hence, on aesthetic grounds, it is permissible to depict one spear in place of two mentioned in the texts. Thus these wheels with an edging of umbrellas and spears on the felly, actually represent the Perfect Form of the Wheel (*sabbākāra-paripūra ratana cakka*) of the Universal monarch. At Sāñchi, Bārhut and Amarāvati they are used to represent the Dhamma Cakka.

In later representations of wheels, both the pattern as well as the emphasis on the symbols, show a marked change. In the examples mentioned earlier, the spear

(*satti*) whether as single - pointed (*sūla*) or three pronged (*trisūla* or *Nandipāda*) weapon, is represented on a smaller scale when compared with the umbrella, to show that it occupies a subordinate position. On the other hand there are wheels especially from Amarāvati displaying *satti* symbols very prominently, whereas the umbrella has been reduced to a very insignificant and stylised semi - circular feature, cramped between the former symbols (Pl. II. Fig. 5). In another wheel the umbrella has been totally converted into a leaf pattern, which clearly shows that by the 2nd century A. C. some sculptors in India had already forgotten the original significance of these features. By this time it appears that the spear (*satti*) as a symbol has grown in importance and even superseded the umbrella. Just as there are wheels with an edging of umbrellas around the felly, there are also wheels which display spear heads (*satti*) in place of umbrellas (Pl. IV, Fig. 16). *Satti* (spear-head) has been used here in its truly symbolic form.

The umbrella and the spear head in alternating positions around a circle is found in the earliest specimens of Indian art, as is proved by the impressions on ancient coins, where this feature is very clearly represented (Pl. IV, Fig. 15).[15] Here the umbrella and the spear-head (*satti*, *taurus*, *Nandipāda*) although highly conventionalised are prominently shown, while the wheel, a mere disc without spokes, is comparatively very insignificant. Nevertheless, the transition from this form to the more elaborate form of the Dhamma Cakka is not difficult to trace.

It is well known that the umbrella is a symbol of sovereignty. Thus in the Ratana Cakka of a Universal Monarch it signifies his sovereignty. Spears (*satti*)

bearing garlands stand in attendance (*parivāra*) on an umbrella emphasising its importance as a symbol. In this respect it must be mentioned that *satti* (Sk. *s'akti*), also signifies regal splendour and power. It is said that a Universal Monarch with the assistance of his Ratana Cakka conquers the universe (*ajitan jināti*),[16] thus bringing into subjugation other monarchs. The circle of umbrellas attended by *sattis* (spear-heads) edging the felly of the wheel symbols just described, signifies this subjugation of the universe by the Universal Monarch. Here, the number hundred as mentioned in *Sumangala-vilāsinī* is important, for ancient writers usually refer to hundred kings ruling India. The Hundred kings here symbolised by hundred umbrellas, generally stand for all the kings of the universe. When Buddhists adopted the umbrella symbol they took for granted the symbolism it originally possessed and added something more—a specific Buddhist significance. Buddhists generally recognise three kinds of umbrellas, namely, the human (*mānusī*), divine (*dibba*) and spiritual emancipation (*vimutti*). Thus the umbrella depicted in association with Dhamma Cakka actually signifies *vimutti-chatta*. The umbrella and the spear-head (*satti*) motif on the felly of of the Dhamma Cakka signifies that the Buddha as *Saddharma Cakravarti*, the Universal Monarch of the Norm, has conquered the world and established a spiritual over-lordship of the world. In brief, the Perfect Form of the Wheel (*Ratana Cakka*) signifies the Universal Monarch's sovereignty over the Universe, and the Buddhists adopted the same form of the wheel to signify the Wheel of the Law of the Buddha. Although, the wheel symbols discussed in the previous pages conform to the description of the Ideal

Wheel of a Universal Monarch, in art they have been used to depict the Dhamma Cakka.

The above discussion on the iconographical features of the wheel symbol, I suppose, proves that it is quite in conformity with the tradition to depict umbrellas and spear-heads (*satti*) on the felly of the Dhamma Cakka, although in Ceylon this type of wheel has not been discovered so far. The modern designs of the wheel symbol with a trace of encircling umbrellas, are recent adoptations most probably based on Tibetan Dharma Cakras. Apparently those who designed them were unaware of the significance of the knob-like projections which are really the highly stylised umbrella symbols edging the fellies of the wheels. Next the question arises whether it interferes with the idea of motion (*pravartana*) of the wheel to depict the umbrellas and spear-heads (*satti*) on the felly of the wheel. Although the wheel symbol has been created after the cart wheel (*Rathanga Cakka*), according to the texts, it is supposed to go revolving through the sky. Buddhaghosa describes this in detail thus :- [17] "This Cakka Ratana proceeds through the sky, not very high, but just above the summit of trees, so that those who accompany the Cakka Ratana (through the sky), are able to enjoy the fruits, flowers and tender leaves of the trees, at their pleasure. Also the Cakka Ratana moves at a height that is neither too high nor too low, so that people on earth are able to point out and say, 'That is the king; that is his deputy and that is his commander in chief!". Both the writers who described the Cakka Ratana in literature and the artists who depicted it in art, considered it as a wheel that is supposed to move through the sky and the umbrellas and the spears

(*satti*) bearing garlands that adorn the felly were not considered an impediment to its revolving movement (*pravartana*).

The felly of an Ideal Wheel is also described as studded with gems (*nemi maṇi*).[18] Elsewhere they are referred to as '*maṇika*' meaning a bowl-shaped gem. On the Asokan wheels these are represented as bubble-shaped ornaments attached to the inner side of the rim of the wheel, in between the spokes. *Samantakūṭa-Vaṇṇanā* refers to spokes adorned with pot-and bubble-shaped ornaments (*ghaṭika-maṇikāvalīhi susanṭhitā*).[19] In Indian architecture, sometimes, pillars are depicted as springing from or terminating in vases (*pūrṇa-ghaṭa*) symbolic of abundance. Here it is implied that the spokes of a wheel symbol are depicted as pillars which terminate in pot ornaments.

In describing the Perfect Form of the Cakka Ratana, *Sumangalavilāsinī* states, that in addition to other features, the holes in the nave of the wheel have two lion faces from the mouths of which issue forth two pearl garlands.[20] The lion face in this position has been actually depicted in an arch surmounting a stupa. The dentation on the inner side of the rim of the arch around the lion face is clearly represented. (Pl. IV, Fig. 17).

Dhamma Cakkas which display garlands hanging from the wheel are also met with. Pl. VI, Fig 19, shows a Dhamma Cakka shrine in which the garlands hanging from the nave are prominently displayed. Another Dhamma Cakka from Sāñchi shows that garlands form an important feature in the scheme of decorations (Pl. V, Fig. 18). Four garlands are shown as hanging from two pegs (*nāga danta*) above the Dhamma Cakka and two others from the stems of two lotus buds acting as pegs.

The wheel is depicted as surmounted on a seat of three lions and from the mouths of two of the flanking lions a pair of garlands issue forth thus bringing to one's mind the description in *Sumangalavilāsinī*, which says that two pearl garlands issue from the mouths of two lion heads that are set in the holes on either side of the nave of the wheel.

It is said that the nave of the Cakka Ratana is constructed of sapphire (*indra-nīla-māṇikya*). Dīgha Nikāya also refers to gems adorning the rim of the wheel. Benjamin Rowland states that the naves of the wheels on Asokan capitals were originally set with gems of various colours.[21] *Sumangalavilāsinī* describes the wheel as constructed of precious jewels, stones and metals of various colours.[22] It is stated that the hole in the nave of the Cakka Ratana is lined with silver, the spokes are constructed of seven kinds of precious jewels and the felly of the wheel is made of red coral. Thus red, blue, white and yellow are prominently displayed in the scheme of colours employed in the wheel. These colours which are symbolical in purpose have been intentionally employed thus enhancing the magical qualities of the wheel.

Although, no single wheel symbol has been depicted exactly as the Perfect Form of the Cakka Ratana described in *Sumangalavilāsinī*, the instances of pearl garlands hanging from the hub of the wheel, garlands issuing from the mouths of lions forming the seat on which the wheel is placed in position and the front view of the wheel with garlands issuing from either side of the hub, as well as the lion face that is framed within the dented rim of the nave, are clear indications that the artists of

ancient India have depicted various aspects of the Perfect Form of the Ratana Cakka conforming to a certain accepted scheme as reflected in literature. This clearly proves that *Sumangalavilāsinī* has preserved a tradition that was well known in India as early as the 1st Cent. A. C. or even earlier.

II. The Dhamma Cakka

The iconographical features of the wheel described above are that of the Ideal Wheel (*Ratana Cakka*) of the Universal Monarch. Nevertheless the representations of the Perfect forms of the wheel symbol in Buddhist art that conform to the description of the Ratana Cakka, actually depict the Dhamma Cakka, the Wheel of Law of the Buddha. Nowhere in Indian art has the Perfect Form of the Ratana Cakka (i.e. that of the Universal Monarch) been depicted, although a number of bas-reliefs showing the Universal Monarch with his seven Ideal Possessions (*satta ratana*) are found in India as well as in Ceylon. In these illustrations the wheel symbol is depicted in its unadorned form.[23]

The earliest Buddhist monuments that have the Dhamma Cakka symbols are the Asokan Pillars. Of these the most important one is from Sārnāth, the fragments of which are preserved in an archaeological museum. However, a bas-relief from Sāñchi shows exactly how this Asokan pillar would have looked like (Pl. V. Fig. 18). The Wheel is mounted on a seat of three addorsed lions which in turn stand on a circular plinth adorned with four animals, lion, elephant, bull and horse. In between the animals four smaller wheels are depicted. The plinth is mounted on a lotiform bell. In later examples, the

Dhamma Cakka is depicted as mounted on a *satti* (*Nandipāda*) (Pl. I; Fig. 1), and the lotiform bell assumed the shape of a *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa*. This elaborate capital is placed on a tall, slightly tapering pillar Commenting on the symbolism of the Sārnāth pillar, Dr. Benjamin Rowland says, "The Sārnāth column may be interpreted, therefore, not only as a glorification of the Buddha's preaching, symbolized by the crowning wheel, but also, through the cosmological implications of the whole pillar, as a symbol of the universal extension of the power of the Buddha's Law, as typified by the sun that dominates all space and all time, and simultaneously an emblem of the universal extension of Maurya imperialism through the Dharma. The whole structure is, then, a translation of age-old Indian and Asiatic cosmology into artistic terms of essentially foreign origin, and dedicated like all Asoka's monuments, to the glory of Buddhism and the royal house." [24]

Although the Dhamma Cakka was used to depict the doctrine in general, it primarily stood for the first sermon of the Buddha. It is stated that the Buddha delivered the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta* to the group of five monks at the Deer Park at Bārānasi. In early art, this incident is illustrated by a wheel flanked by a pair of deer. The Buddha as well as the group of five monks were not shown, in conformity with the then prevalent tradition. But later when the Buddha images came to be used, whenever this incident of the first sermon was depicted, the Dhamma Cakka, with or without the deer, was depicted on the seat of the Buddha. In most of the Gupta and Mathura Buddha images this motif is represented. Later with the development of the Buddhalogy this simple motif developed into a highly complicated form, where the Dhamma Cakka is shown

as surmounted on a pillar of which the base is in the world of divine serpents, where the male and female serpents are shown as paying homage to it. Two divine serpents are shown in the act of holding the pillar in position. The wheel is shown in front view with two garlands hanging from either side of the hub. The pillar rises through a cavity in the earth's crust and its upper portion is shown as appearing in the human sphere; two devotees and a pair of deer are seen paying homage to the wheel. Just above the wheel, the Buddha is depicted in heroic dimensions seated on a throne attended by divine beings. Here too the group of five monks are not represented. Two additional Dhamma Cakkas are seen at the background on either side of the Buddha image. [25]

At Amaravati, a number of bas-reliefs show elaborately carved Dhamma Cakkas surmounted on pillars at the foot of which an empty seat is prominently depicted. On the footstool, the foot prints of the Buddha are displayed. These pillars in complete form, signify the Buddha and are iconographically related to the fiery pillars depicting the Buddha Human as well as divine beings are shown as paying homage to the monument which is an elaborately carved pillar on which the Dhamma Cakka is prominently displayed. [26]

A number of bas-reliefs from Sāñchi and Bārhut show the Dhamma Cakka in a shrine. In Pl. VI. Fig. 19, the Dhamma Cakka is placed on a flat seat and a royal umbrella is raised above it. Inside the shrine two men are shown in the attitude of worshipping the wheel, while just outside the shrine pedestrians as well as people on elephants, horses and chariots are seen circumambulating the shrine. Evidently, they form the fourfold army—namely the elephants, cavalry, chariots

and the infantry—of the king who is depicted as visiting the shrine in a chariot.

Sir Arthur Cunningham, on inscriptional evidence, describes this bas-relief as illustrating the visit of King Pasenadi Kosala, a contemporary of the Buddha. It is believed that the shrine is an illustration of the *punyasālā* he is supposed to have built for the use of the Buddha.[27] However, this illustration and other similar ones bring to one's mind the description of how the Universal Monarch, accompanied by the four-fold army and his retinue, followed the Cakka Ratana on its voyage of conquest.

Although the Dhamma Cakka primarily symbolised the preaching of the first sermon, and thereby the doctrine in its wider sense, it was also used to represent the Buddha himself. It is well known that during the earliest phase of Buddhist art, the Buddha or the Bodhisatta in his last life on earth was never represented in human form, but by a symbol such as the Wisdom Tree (*Bodhi*), the Wheel of the Law (*Dhamma Cakka*), the stūpa or the Foot Print (*Pāduka*). Thus among the representations of the Dhamma Cakka in art, there are a few that can be interpreted as aniconic representations of the Buddha. For instance many of the wheel symbols depicted as placed on a pedestal or housed in a shrine, actually represent the Buddha (Pl. VI, Figs. 19). Here the Dhamma Cakka can be interpreted as *Dhammakāya* of the *Trikāya* doctrine of Mahāyāna Buddhism Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy has pointed out that although in the Pali canon the *Trikāya* doctrine had not yet devoloped, there are occasional references in Dīgha Nikāya and Sutta Nipāta to the concept of *Dhammakāya.* In Dīgha Nikāya the Blessed One is spoken of as *Dhammakāya* or *Brahmakāya*,[28] and

in Saṁyutta Nikāya the Buddha says "He who sees Dhamma sees me, who sees me sees the Dhamma".[29]

III. The Lakkhana Cakka

The Lakkhaṇa Cakka is described as the auspicious mark on the soles of the feet of the Buddha. It is said that Buddha's palms are also marked with the wheel symbol. In its unadorned form the Lakkhaṇa Cakka is identical with the ordinary form of the Ratana Cakka and Dhamma Cakka (Pl, VII, Fig. 20). But in its Perfect Form, it is a highly elaborate symbol, surpassing in detail even the Perfect Form of the Ratana Cakka of the Universal Monarch.

Buddhaghosa describes the Lakkhaṇa Cakka thus:- "'*Cakka*' means the wheels on the soles of the feet of the Buddha; the spokes and the felly are mentioned in the canonical texts (i.e. Pali); by '*sabbākāraparipūrāṇi*', these special features are intended; in the centre of the wheel, that is in the middle of the sole, there is the nave; surrounding the nave there are the circular lines; at the opening of the nave there is the covering sheath; the hole of the nave is seen; also there are the spokes, and the circular lines round the spokes; the felly is seen; the bowl-shaped gems on the nave are seen; all these are mentioned in the canonical texts. Further details are not given there; these should be known as follows :- attending on the wheel there are the spear (*satti*), śrīvatsa (*sirivaccha*), conch (?) (*nandi*), svastika (*sovatthi*), ear-rings (*vaṭansaka*), powder box (*vaḍḍhamānaka*), pair of fish (*maccha yugala*), auspicious seat (*bhaddapīṭha*), elephant goad (*ankusa*), mansion (*pāsāda*), triumphal arch (*torana*), white umbrella (*setacchattu*), sword (*khagga*),

palm-leaf-fan (*tālavaṇṭhaka*), cluster of peacock feathers (*mora-hattha*), fly whisk (*vāla vījanī*), diadem (*uṇhīsa*), cluster of gems (*maṇipaṭṭa*), garland of flowers (*sumana-dāma*), blue water lilies (*nīluppala*), red water lilies (*rattuppala*), white water lilies (*setuppala*), red lotus (*paduma*) white lotus (*puṇḍarīka*), filled vessel (*puṇṇa-ghaṭa*), filled bowl (*puṇṇa pāti*), ocean (*samudda*), cakra-vāṭa mountain range (*cakkavāḷa*), Himalaya forest (*Himavā*), Mount Meru (*Sineru*), moon (*candimā*), sun (*suriya*), stars (*nakkhatta*), four great continents (*cattāro mahā dīpā*) two thousand islands that surround them (*dve paritta dīpa sahassāni*), and the Universal Monarch together with his retinue (*Rājā Cakkavatti saseno*); all these are attending on the wheel." [30] In later texts more signs, generally referred to as 108 in number, are added. For example, in addition to those enumerated by Buddhaghosa in *Sumangalavilāsinī*, Gurulugomi in *Dharmapradīpikāva* mentions as auspicious marks, animals such as lions, tigers, bulls, as well as mythical creatures like kinnaras, makaras, garuḍas, various kinds of birds and divine beings like gods of the six heavens, Brahmas of the sixteen Brahma worlds.[31]

The perfect form of the Ratana Cakka has only a few of these auspicious signs such as the umbrella, spear (*satti*), and garlands attending on it, whereas this definition of the Lakkhaṇa Cakka shows that all that is representative of this Universe, the auspicious symbols, the earth with its flora and fauna, the Universal Monarch together with his seven ideal possessions, the heavenly bodies such as the sun, moon and the stars, and finally the heavens and the Brahma worlds themselves, are depicted as attending on the wheel symbols on the soles of the feet of the Buddha.

The Lakkhaṇa Cakka is symbolic of the supremacy of the Buddha. Buddhaghosa, in describing the quality of '*asādhāraṇaratana*' - extraordinary gem - with reference to the Buddha, says, that between the animate and inanimate objects of value (*ratana*), the animate ones are superior; among the animate the human beings are superior; of the human beings, the men are superior to women, for the latter attend on men; of the men the recluses (*anāgārika ratana*) are superior to the laymen, because Rājā Cakkavatti, the highest among the laymen (*āgārika ratana*), pays obeisance to the recluses; among various grades of recluses, Buddha is the highest. The Lakkhaṇa Cakka depicts this supremacy of the Buddha, for, from the inanimate objects of value (*aviññāṇaka ratana*) to the highest of the divine beings the Brahmas, are depicted as attending on the Lakkhaṇa Cakka on the soles of the feet of the Buddha.[32]

In art the Lakkhaṇa Cakka has been depicted from very early times in association with Foot Prints (*Pādukā*) of the Buddha, which have been used to signify the Blessed One. In these the wheel is identical with the ordinary form of the Ratana Cakka or Dhamma Cakka. However, in the later phase of Sāñchi and at Amaravati and Mathura elaborate forms of the Lakkhaṇa Cakka are met with. Pl. VII, Fig. 20 shows *Pāduka* marked with the Lakkhaṇa Cakka attended by spear (*satti*), svastika (*sovatthika*), auspicious seat (*bhadrapīṭha*). One of the most elaborate of the earliest Lakkhaṇa Cakkas is from Ceylon (Pl. VI, Fig. 22). It displays spear-head (*satti*), umbrella (*chatta*), srīvatsa (*sirivaccha*), auspicious seat (*bhadrapīṭha*), conch (*sankha*), cluster of peacock feathers (*mora-hatta*) or palm leaf fan (*tālavnaṭa*), standards and banners (*dhaja patāka*), elephant goad (*ankusa*), filled vase (*puṇṇa ghaṭa*), and pair of fish (*maccha yugala*),

surrounding the wheel which is in the centre of the sole, while the svastika is repeated on the tips of the five toes. However, the most complete form of the Lakkhaṇa Cakka are found in the Far Eastern countries such as Siam and Cambodia.[33] An elaborately carved specimen of the Buddha's Foot Print from Ankor Wat in Cambodia shows practically all the 108 auspicious signs that attend on the Lakkhaṇa Cakka.

IV. The Bhava Cakka

In the Rigveda the wheel of Surya, the sun, has 12 or 5 or 360 spokes, signifying the months, seasons or days of the year respectively [34] Thus it signifies the year as measured by the sun in its course. When the wheel was first used as a Buddhist symbol, it was not known whether the component parts of the wheel signified any particular aspect of the doctrine. It appears that it originally represented broadly the entire doctrine and particularly the First Sermon which is really a synopsis of the Teaching. Its thousand spokes referred to in the the texts, actually depicted the rays of the sun, and the earliest wheel symbols have proportionately a large number of spokes to depict this particular feature. In later wheel symbols the number of spokes is generally reduced, but apparently they do not signify any particular aspect of the doctrine. However, the Tibetan Wheel symbols have eight spokes which most probably signify the Eightfold Path (*Ariya Aṭṭhangika Magga*), and the modern wheel symbols generally have the same number of spokes.

The Tibetan *Bhava-Cakka* or *Saṁsāra Cakka*, the Wheel of Becoming or Wheel of Life, illustrates a particular aspect of the Dhamma, namely the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) and thereby the doctrine of Rebirth. The Tibetan version of the Wheel of Life conforms to the description given of it in the Divyāvadāna[35], a Buddhist Sanskrit work of the Sarvāstivāda school. This work describes the origin of the Bhava Cakka and the manner in which the picture is to be made. The Wheel is shown as being in the grip of a three-eyed demon wearing a tiger's skin, who symbolises Impermanence (*aniccatā*). The wheel consists of three concentric circles of which the innermost corresponding to the nave of the wheel, depicts three animals, a bird (dove or cock), a snake and a pig, each catching the tail of the animal in front, symbolising lust, hatred and delusion respectively. The next circle which is the largest of the three, corresponding to the area occupied by the spokes of a wheel, is divided into five or six segments in which the destinies (*gati*) of living beings, i. e. the realms of their rebirth, are shown in detail. The last circle which is the felly of the wheel, is divided into twelve sections depicting the twelve links of Dependent Origination.[36]

Though, in Theravāda literature, there is no mention of an actual pictorial execution of a "Wheel of Life", yet the concept of comparing "Dependent Origination" to a wheel is not unknown. In the "Path of Purification" (*Visudahi Magga*), the famous commentator Buddhaghosa Acariya says:

"It is the beginningless round of rebirths that is called the "Wheel of the round of rebirths" (*saṁsāracakka*). Ignorance (*avijjā*) is its hub (or nave) because

it is its root. Ageing-and-death (*jarā-maraṇa*) is its rim (or felly) because it terminates it. The remaining ten links (of the Dependent Origination) are its spokes (i. e. Karma Formations [*saṅkhāra*] up to Process of Becoming [*bhava*]).” [37]

In another passage of the same work, the components of the wheel are associated with the twelve links of Dependent Originaton in a slightly different way :

“Its hub is made of Ignorance and Craving for Becoming (*bhavataṇhā*); its spokes consist of Formations of merit, etc. (*puññādi-abhisaṅkhāra*); its rim is Ageing-and-death; it is joined to the chariot of triple existence (*ti-bhava*) by piercing it with the axle made of the origin of Cankers (*āsava-samudaya*).[38] This Wheel of the Round of Rebirths has been revolving throughout time that has no beginning.” [39]

Elsewhere in the same work it is said.

“Becoming’s Wheel reveals no known beginning;
No maker, no experiencer is there;
Void with a twelvefold voidness, and nowhere
It ever halts; for ever it is spinning.”[40]

As it has been rolling on from time immemorial, “its times are three, i. e. past, present and future. The first two (of the twelve) factors, as given in the Pāli text, namely Ignorance and Formations, belong to the past time; the following eight, beginning with Consciousness and ending with Becoming, belong to the present time; the last two, birth and ageing - and - death, belong to the future time.” [41]

V. The Significance of the Wheel

In order to understand the significance of the wheel it must be remembered that it was in some form or other originally connected with the solar disc. In Rigveda, Surya is described as a chariot having one wheel.[42] It is this solar symbol conceived as a chariot wheel that later became the weapon of Viṣṇū, the deified form of Sūrya, the world-conquering divine wheel of the Universal Monarch, and the Wheel of Law of the Buddha. Further, in Rigveda, Mitra (another form of Sūrya) is described as the eye of the world. Thus the sun traversing through space is conceived as the eye that watches and illuminates the entire world.[43] Hence in one sense wheel (*cakka*) as well as the eye (*caksus*; Pali: *cakkhu*) are synonymous. In this connection it is interesting to note that the realisation of the Truth is very often described as '*cakkhum udapādi*'—the eye of wisdom dawned. Here the eye is the wisdom (*paṭivedha ñāṇa*)

In this connection, the interpretation of the term 'turning of the wheel of Dhamma' in the commentaries of Buddhaghosa, is of significance Here the wheel is conceived as intellect, knowledge, wisdom, insight (*ñāṇa*) which is twofold—*Pativedha ñāṇa*, the wisdom of self-realisation of the Truth, and *Desanā ñāṇa*, the wisdom of proclamation of the Truth—both of which are a prerogative of the Buddha. *Paṭivedha ñāṇa* is further explained as born of intellect (*paññā bhāvitam*) and bringing the fruit of Holiness (*ariyaphalāvaham*) to oneself. On the other hand, *Desanā ñāṇa* the wisdom of proclamation of the Truth, is born of compassion and brings forth the fruit of Holiness in the disciples (*karuṇāphala bhāvitam sāvakānam ariyaphalāvaham*). The

former is supermundane (*lokuttara*) and the latter mundane (*lokiya*).[44]

Paṭivedha ñāṇa is further explained as that which is in the course of being realised (*uppajjamānam*) and that which is realised (*uppannam*)[45] From the time when the Bodhisatta, as the hermit Sumedha at the feet of the former Buddha Dīpankara, resolved to achieve Perfection, up to the time of realisation of the Path of Arahatship (*arahatta magga*) the Dhamma Cakka is described as being in the course of realisation. The moment when he finally realised the fruit of Arahatship (*arahatta phala*) at the Bodhi-maṇḍala, the Dhamma Cakka was realised. Similarly, *desanā ñāṇa* too is twofold It is described as being proclaimed up to the time Aññākoṇḍañña, one of the group of five monks to whom the Buddha preached the First Sermon, reached the fruit of Arahatship. The moment when he obtained the fruit of Arahatship the *Dhamma Cakka* is described as proclaimed (*pavattitam*). Thus the turning of the wheel of law in Buddhism has the sense of realising (*paṭivedha ñāṇa*) and proclaiming the truth (*Desanā ñāṇa*).

Now it is clear that the wheel symbol is used to signify the doctrine as well as many other concepts associated with Buddhism. As the Ideal Wheel of the Universal Monarch, it assists him to conquer the world by righteous means. It is his symbol of power (*ājñā cakra*). In Buddhist doctrine it symbolises the doctrine as well as the Buddha as *Dhammakāya*. Then it signifies various other concepts such as the cycle of births (*samsāra* or *bhava*) in close association with the doctrine of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*). Thus the wheel symbol came to be acccepted as the most appropriate symbol of the Buddhists, both in physical

as well as metaphysical spheres. Hence the ancients described the wheel—both in the sense of Ratana Cakka as well as Dhamma Cakka—as

> "Rich in ornamentation, incalculable in value,
> Unparalleled, a sight rarely seen,
> Associated solely with supreme beings,
> It's aptly called '*Ratana*', a gem supreme."

> "*Cittīkatam mahagghañca - atulam dullabha dassanam,*
> *Anomasattaparibhogam - Ratanam tena pavuccati.*" [46]

NOTES

1. *Papañcasūdanī*, Part 2, p. 27 ff. (P. T. S.).

   'Sampattiyam lakkhaṇañca - rathange iriyāpathe
   Dāne ratana dhammūra - cakkādīsu ca dissati.'

2. *Dharmapradīpikāwa*, edited by Ven. Weliwitiye Soratha Mahā Thera, p. 186.
3. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Vol. II, p. 172. (P. T. S.).
4. Ibid, p. 172.
5. Sir John Marshall and A. Foucher, *The Monuments of Sāñchi*, Vol. 3. Plate LXXIV. Fig 3. a.
6. *Sumangalavilāsinī*, Part 2, p. 617 ff. (P. T. S.), (Commentary to the Mahāpadāna Sutta).
7. *Mahā Bodhi Vamsa*, (P. T. S.), edited by S. Arthur Strong, p. 68.
8. *Mahā Bodhi Vamsa*, Sinhalese script edition by Ven. P. Sārānanda Thero, 1898, p. 206.
9. *Sinhala Bodhi Vamsaya*, edited by Ven. Baddegama Dhammaratana Thero, pp. 204—205.
10. *Mahā Bodhi Vamsa*, (P. T. S.), p. 67 ff. In a foot note *'satti'* is given as a variant reading.
11. Sir John Marshall and A. Foucher, *The Monuments of Sāñchi*, Vol. I, p. 189.
12. A. Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, Plate I.
13. Sir John Marshall and A. Foucher, *The Monuments of Sāñchi*, Vol. I, p. 109.
14. Sir Arthur Cunningham, *The Stupa of Bārhut*, Plate XVII.
15. A. Foucher, *The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, Plate I.
16. *Papañcasūdanī*, Part III, p. 365. (P. T. S.).

17. *Sumangalavilāsinī*, Part II, p 617 ff.
18. *Sumangalavilāsinī*, (P. T. S.), Vol. 2, p. 447.
19. *Mahā Bodhi Vamsa*, (P.T.S), ed. by Arthur Strong p. 67. Also see *Samantakūṭa Vaṇṇanā*, edited by Ven. M. Ñāṇissara Thera, p. 765.
20. *Sumangalavilāsinī*, (P.T.S.), Part. II, p. 618.
21. Sir Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 41.
22. *Sumangalavilāsinī*, (P. T. S.), Part II, p. 618.
23. Heinrich Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia*, Vol. 2, Pl. 37.
24. Sir Benjamin Rowland, *The art and architecture of India*, p. 42.
25. Heinrich Zimmer, *Indian Asia*, Vol. 2, Pl. 80.
26. Ibid, Vol. 2, Pl. 96.
27. Sir Arthur Cunningham, *The Stupa of Bārhut*, p. 110.
28. *Dīgha Nikāya*, (P.T.S.), Vol. III, p. 84.
29. *Samyutta Nikāya*, (P.T.S.), Vol. III, p. 120.
30. *Sumangalavilāsinī* (P. T. S.). Part. II, p. 445.
31. *Dharmapradīpikāwa*, edited by Ven. Weliwitiye Soratha Mahā Thera, p. 5.
32. *Paramatthajotikā*, p. 216. (Sinhala script edition).
33. *J. R. A. S. (C. B.)*, Vol. XXXI, pp. 384 - 387. Also see foot note.
34. A. K. Coomaraswamy, *The Elements of Buddhist Iconography*.
35. *Divyāvadāna*, edited by E. B. Cowell and R. A. Neill, (1886), p. 300.
36. *Mary*, Vol. XVI, No. 4, pp. 19 ff. Plate facing p. 25.
37. *Visuddhi Magga* (text ed., P. T. S.), Vol. I, p. 198. ("The Path of Purification", tr. by Ñāṇamoli, ch. VII, §8).

38. See Majjhima Nikāya, sutta 2: "With the arising of cankers there is the arising of Ignorance"
39. *Visuddhi Magga*, vol. I, p. 198. (Translation: ch. VII, §7).
40. l. c., vol. II, p. 576. (Translation: ch. XVII. § 273).
41. l. c., vol. II, p. 578. (Translation: ch. XVII, § 287).
42. A. A. Macdonell, *The Vedic Mythology*, p. 31 and 38.
43. *Ibid*, p. 30.
44. *Manorathapūraṇī*, (P. T. S.), Vol, I. p. 120.
45. *Papañcasūdanī*, (P. T. S.), Vol. 2, p. 26.
46. *Sāratthapakāsinī*, (P. T. S.), Vol. 3, p. 152. (Commentray on Samyutta Nikâya).

EXPLANATION OF PLATES

PLATE I. Fig. 1. A Perfect Form of the Wheel sustained by a *Satti* (*Nandipāda*), Sāñchi; 1st c. A. C.

PLATE II. Fig. 2. Asoka Wheel, Sārnāth; 3rd c. B. C.

Fig. 3. A wheel adorned with *chatta* and *satti* motif, Sāñchi; 1st c . A. C.

Fig. 4. Eight-spoked wheel, adorned with *chatta* and *satti* motif, Sāñchi; 1st c. A. C.

Fig. 5. Wheel adorned with *chatta* and *satti* motif, Amarāvati; 2nd c. A. C.

Fig. 6. Tibetan Dharma Cakra.

Fig. 7. A modern wheel symbol.

PLATE III. Fig. 8. Stupa surmounted with *chatta* and *satti*, the latter bearing flags, Sāñchi; 1st c. A. C.

Fig. 9. Stupa surmounted with *chatta* and *Kusumadāma-satti*, Sāñchi; 1st c. A. C.

Fig. 10. *Satti* bearing a flag—detail from a bas-relief, Sāñchi; 1st c. A. C.

Fig. 11. *Kusumadāma-satti*; detail from a bas-relief, Sāñchi; 1st c. A. C.

Fig. 12. A diagram showing the evolution of the *chatta* and *satti* motif.

PLATE IV. Fig. 13. Solar symbol from a coin; 3rd c. B.C.

Fig. 14. Wheel adorned with a circle of *Chattas*, from a coin; 3rd c. B C.

Fig. 15. *Chatta* and *satti* motif from a coin; 3rd c. B. C.

Fig. 16. Wheel adorned with *satti*; 1st c. A.C.

Fig. 17. Lion face within an arch—a detail from a bas-relief, Amarāvati; 2nd c. A.C.

PLATE V. Fig. 13. Wheel on a lion pillar adorned with garlands, Sāñchi; 1st c. A. C.

PLATE VI. Fig. 19. Dhamma cakka shrine—a bas-relief from Bārhut; 2nd c. A. C.

PLATE VII. Fig. 20. Foot Print, Amarāvati; 2nd c. A. C.

Fig. 21. Foot Print, Amarāvati; 2nd c. A. C.

Fig. 22. Foot Print, Anurādhapura; 2nd c. A.C.

N. B. Figs. 13, 14 and 15 are drawn after Figs. 5, 6 and 13 of Plate I, of '*The Beginnings of Buddhist Art*' by Alfred Foucher.

All illustrations from Sāñchi are drawn from photographs appearing in '*The Monuments of Sāñchi*' by Sir John Marshall and Alfred Foucher.

For the originals of Figs. 20 and 21 see '*Sculpture from Amarāvati in British Museum*' by Douglas Barrette and '*The Buddhist stupa at Amarāvati and Jaggeyyapeṭa*' by J. Burgess.

Fig. 19 is after an illustration from '*The art of Indian Asia*' by Hienrich Zimmer.

Fig. 22 is a freehand drawing after a piece of sculpture from the National Museum of Ceylon, Colombo.

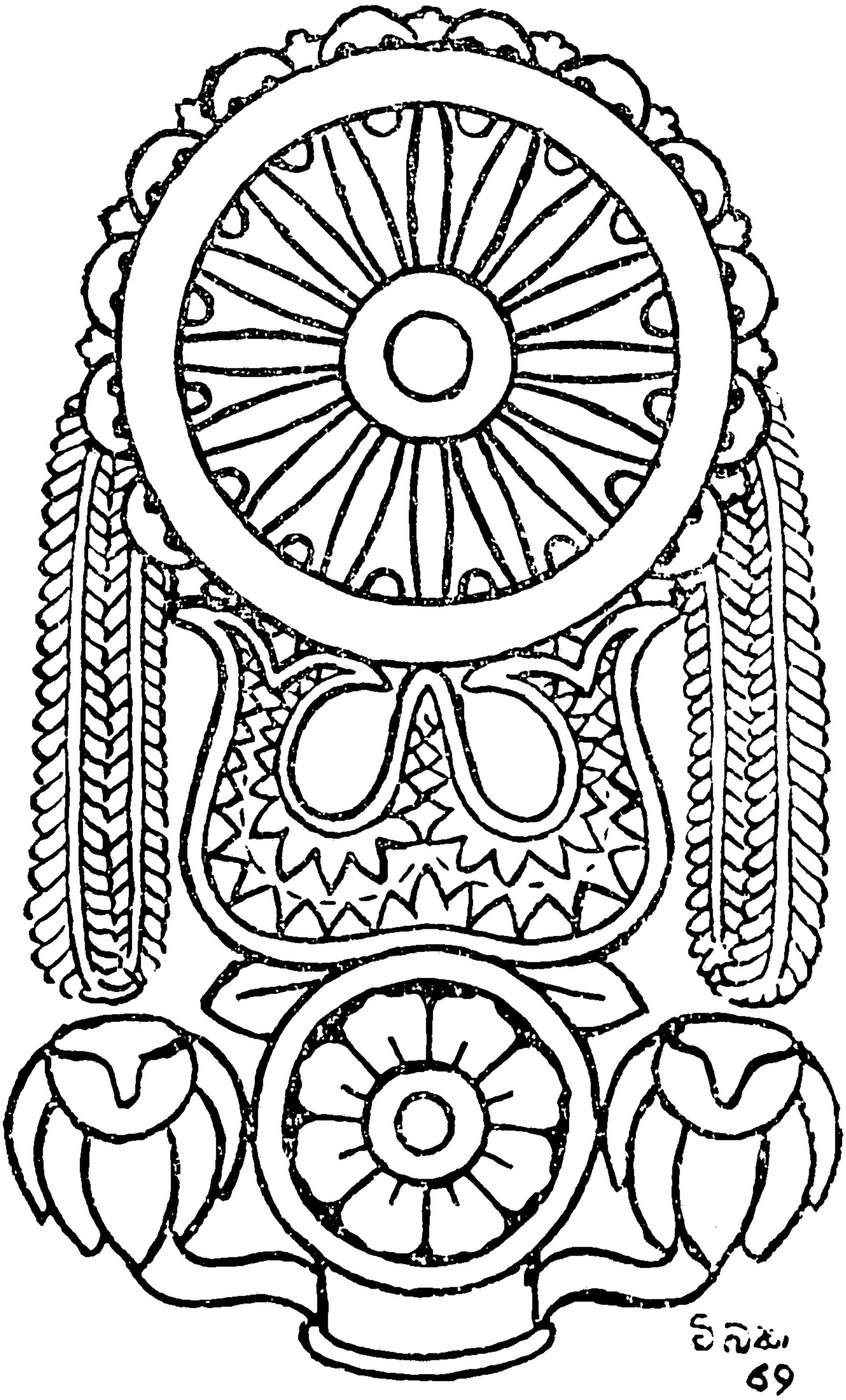


Fig. 1

Plate 1

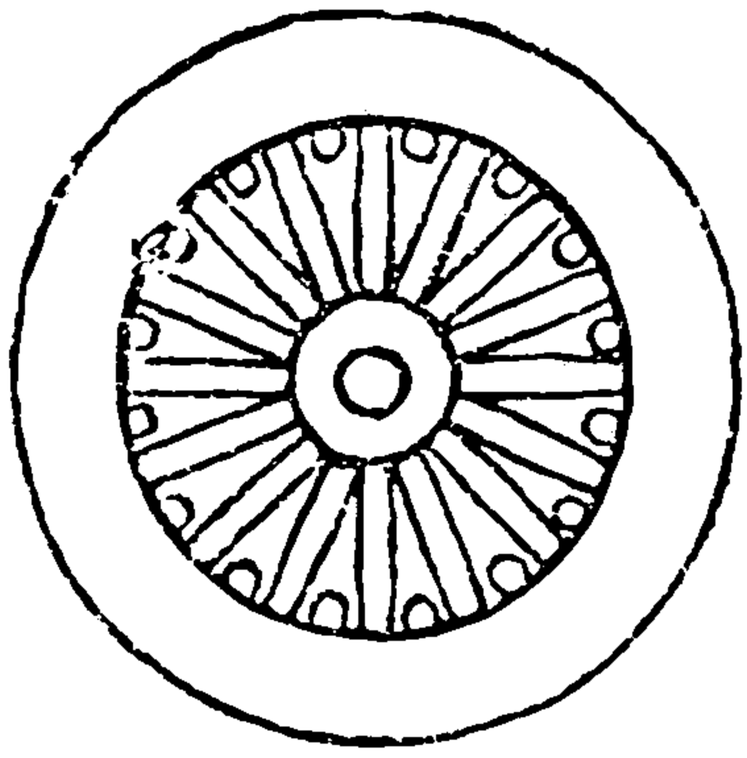


Fig. 2

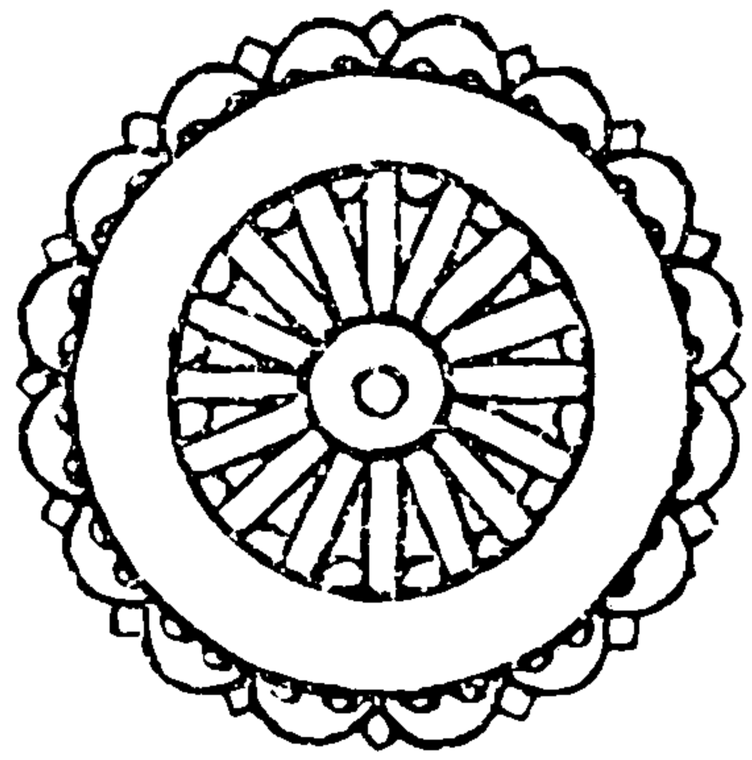


Fig. 3

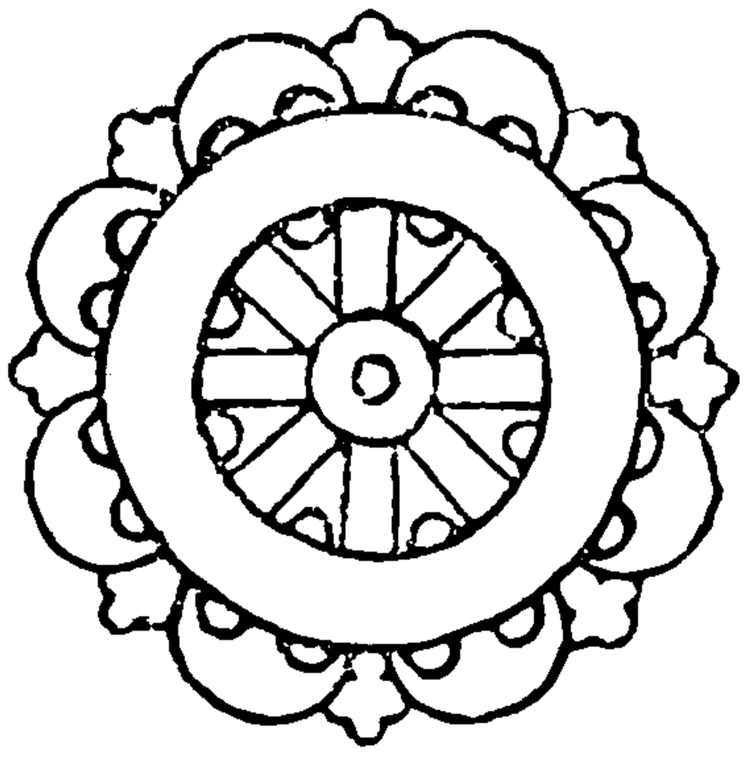


Fig 4

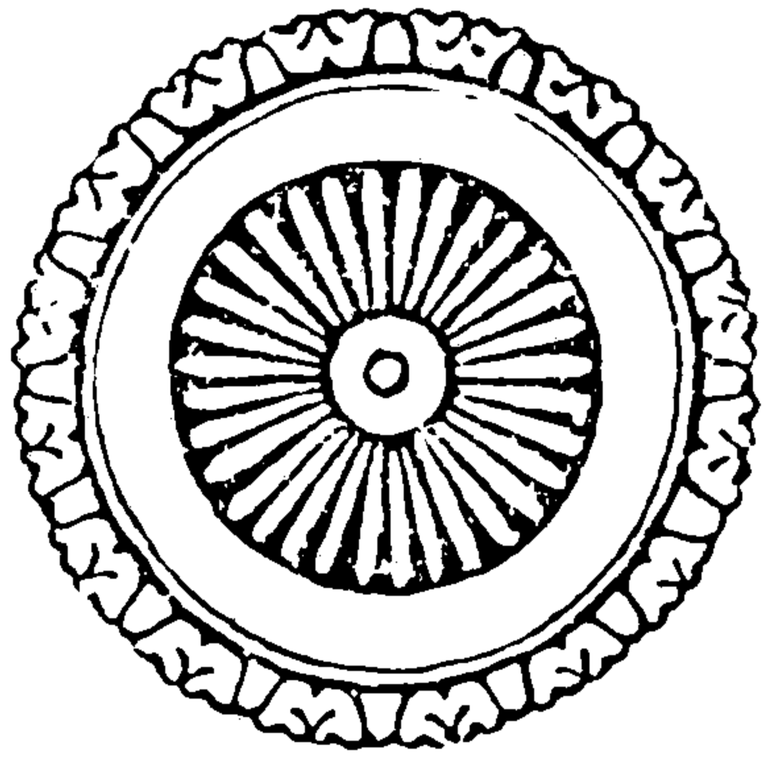


Fig. 5

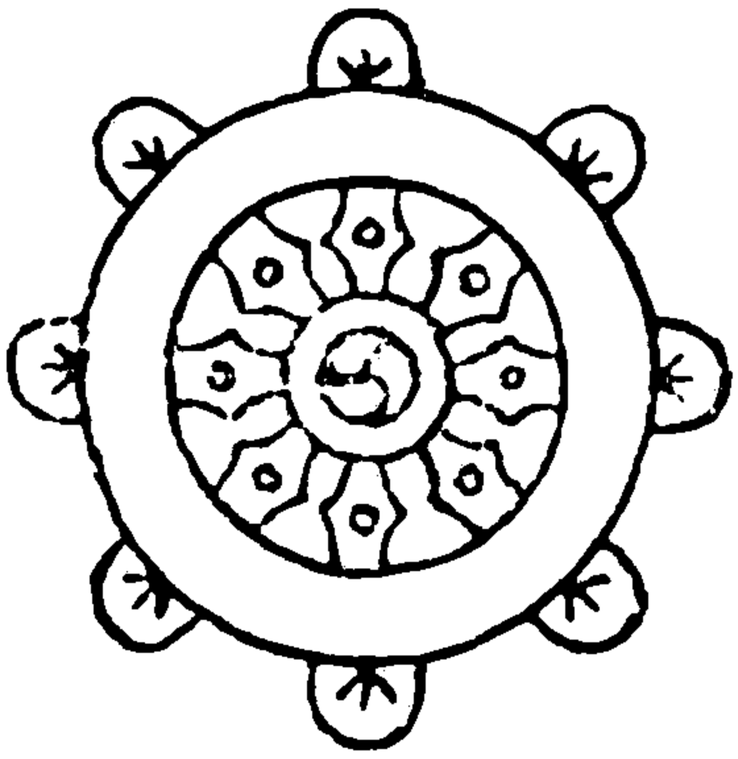


Fig. 6

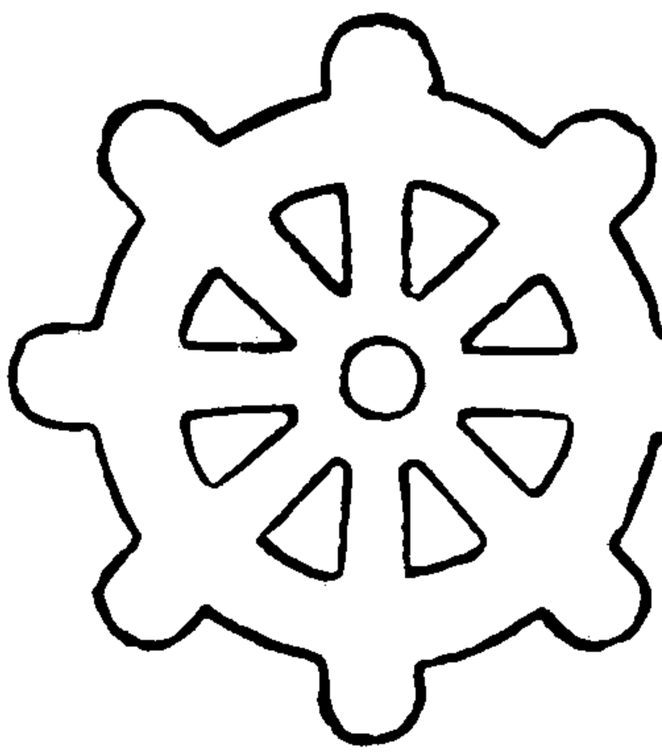


Fig. 7

Plate II

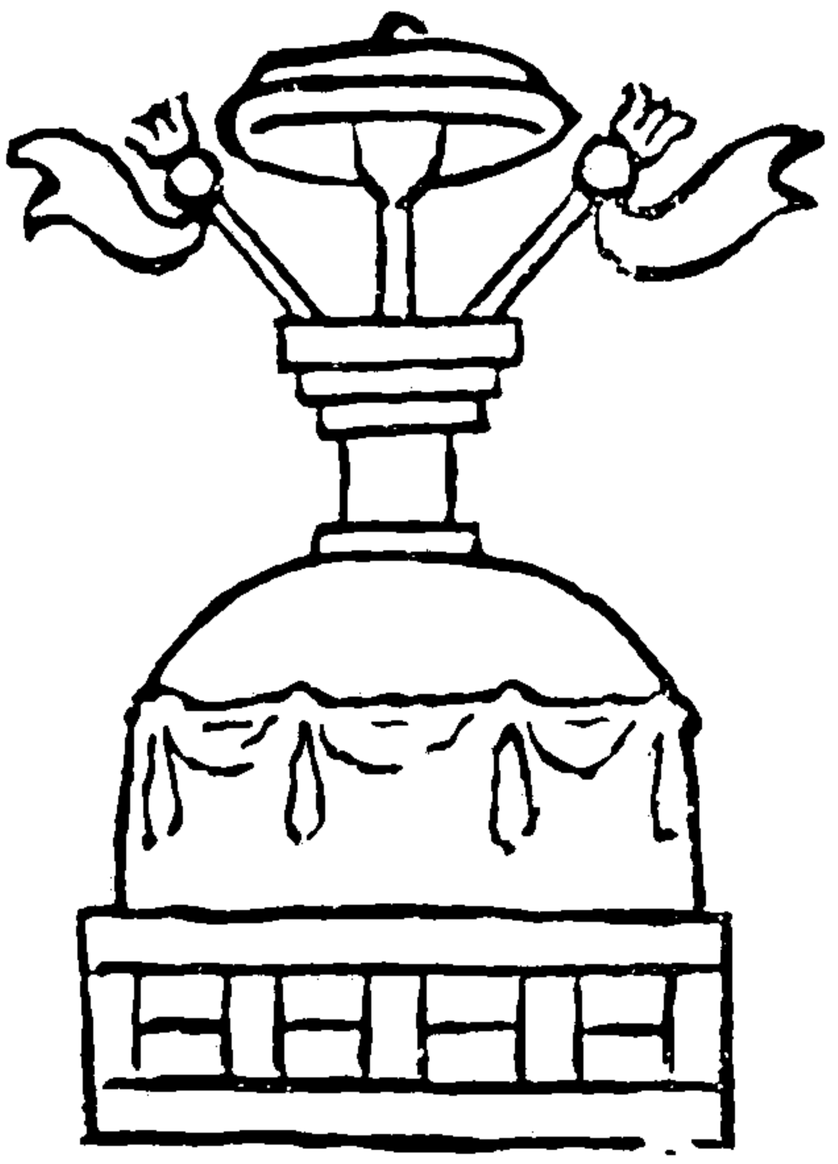


Fig. 8

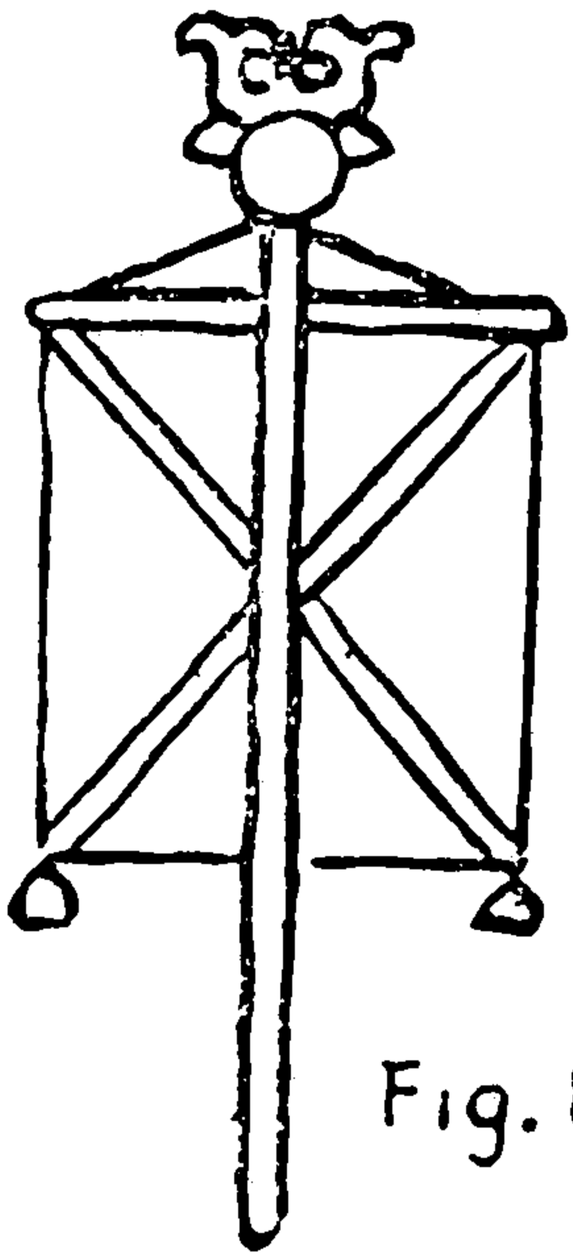
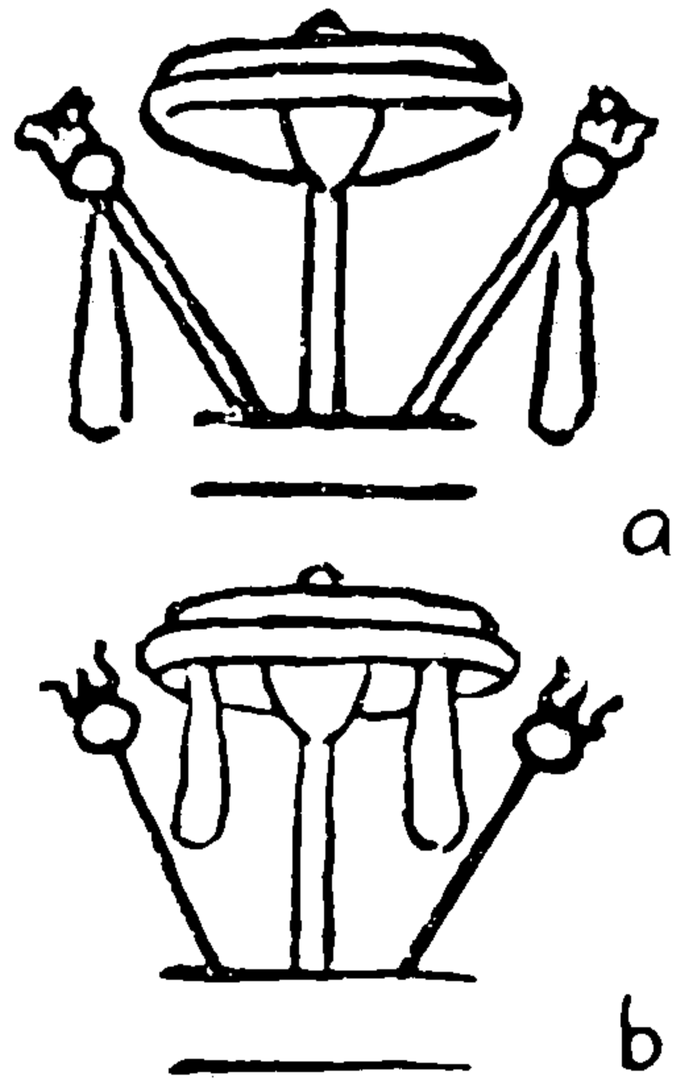
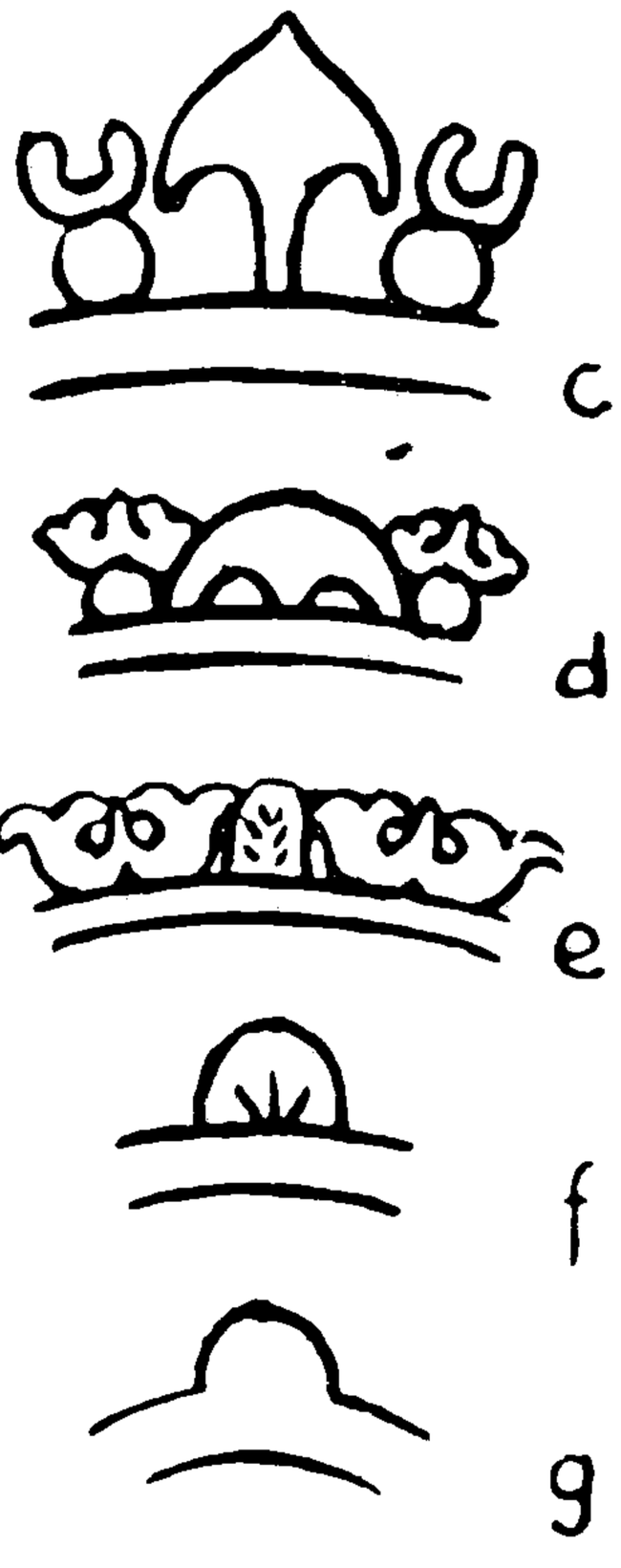


Fig. 10





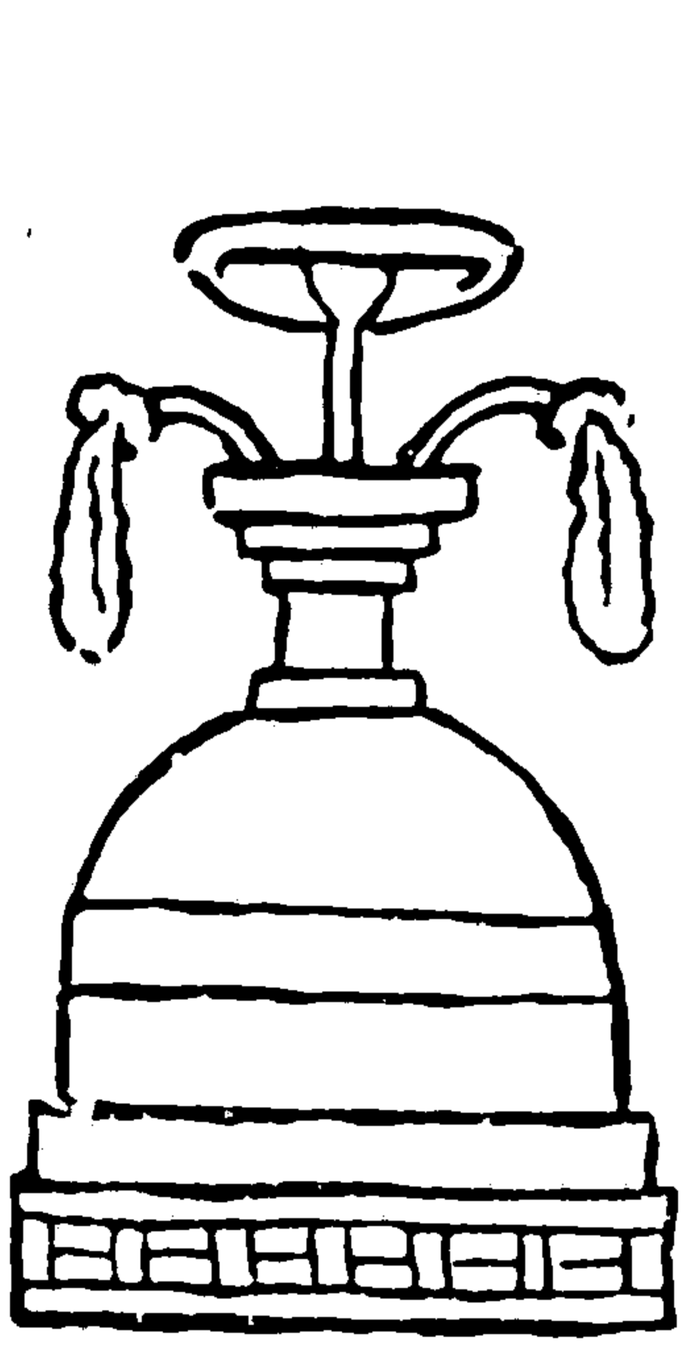


Fig. 9

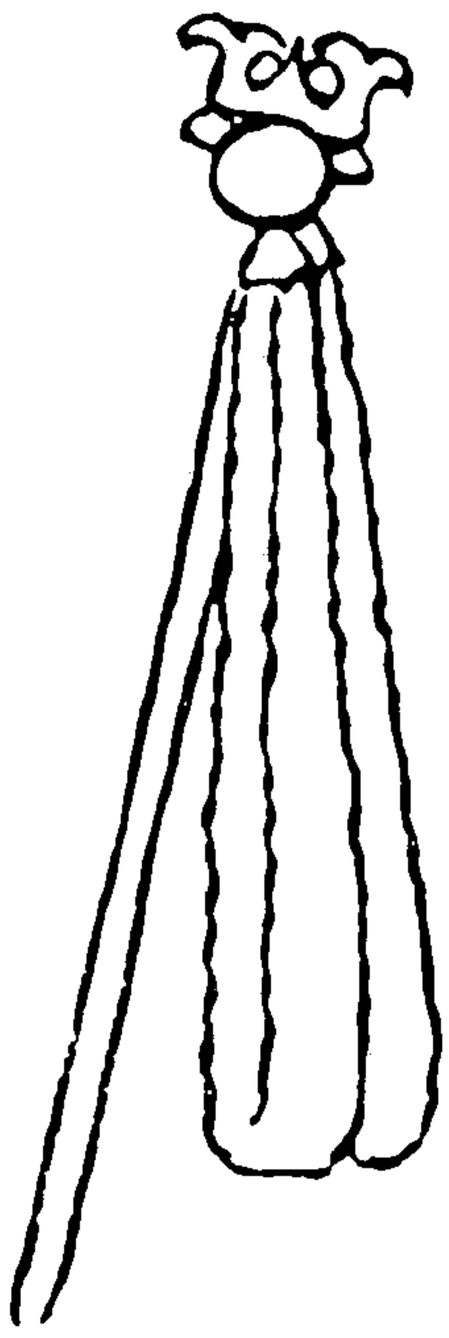


Fig. 11

Fig. 12

Plate III

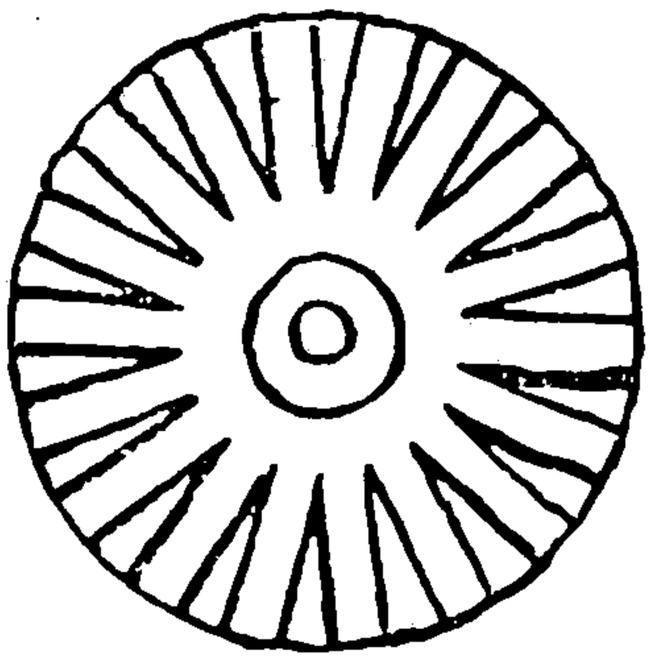


Fig. 13

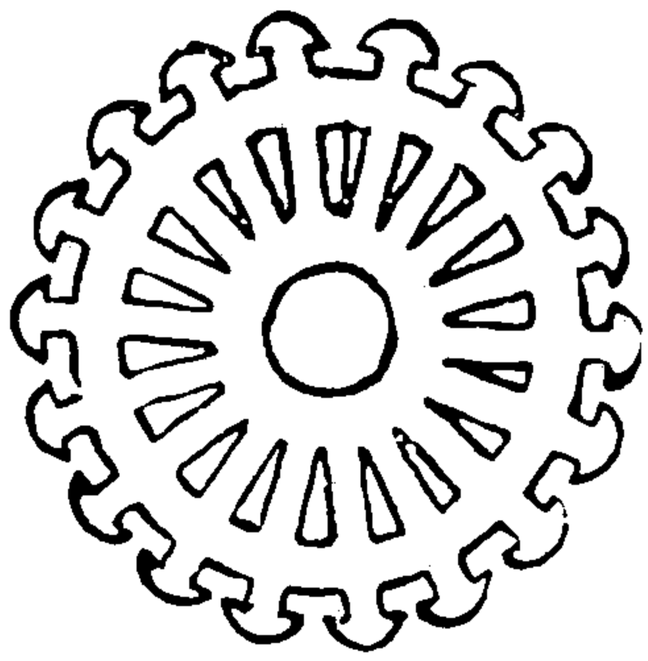


Fig. 14

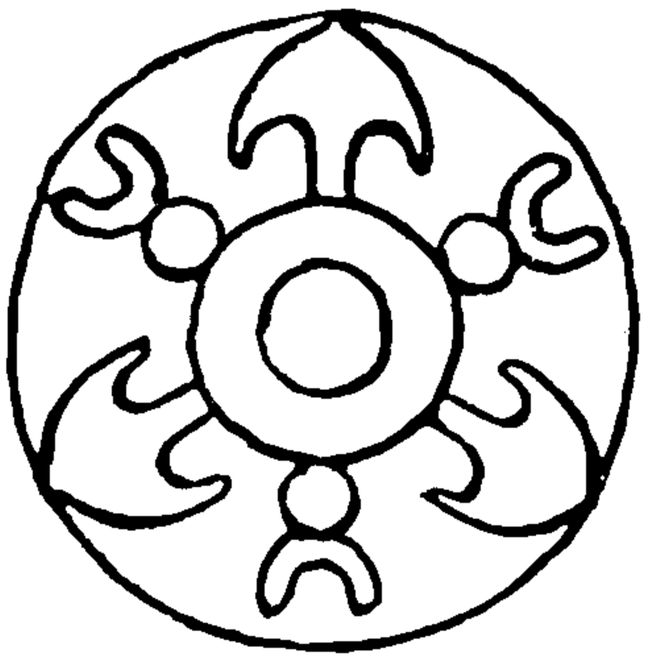


Fig. 15

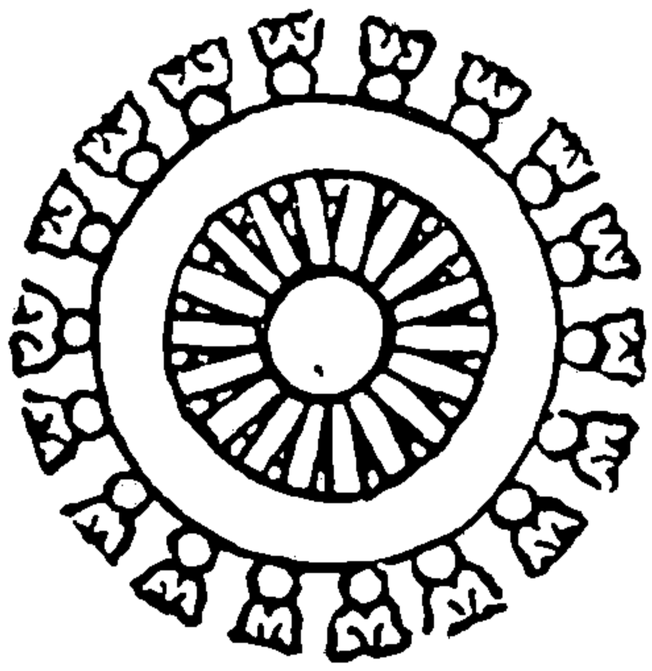


Fig. 16

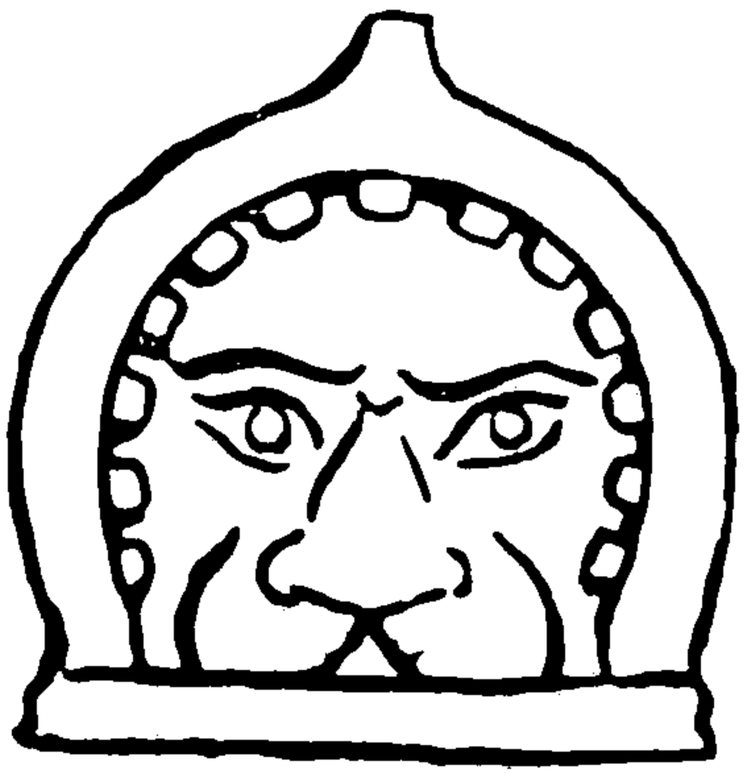


Fig 17

Plate IV

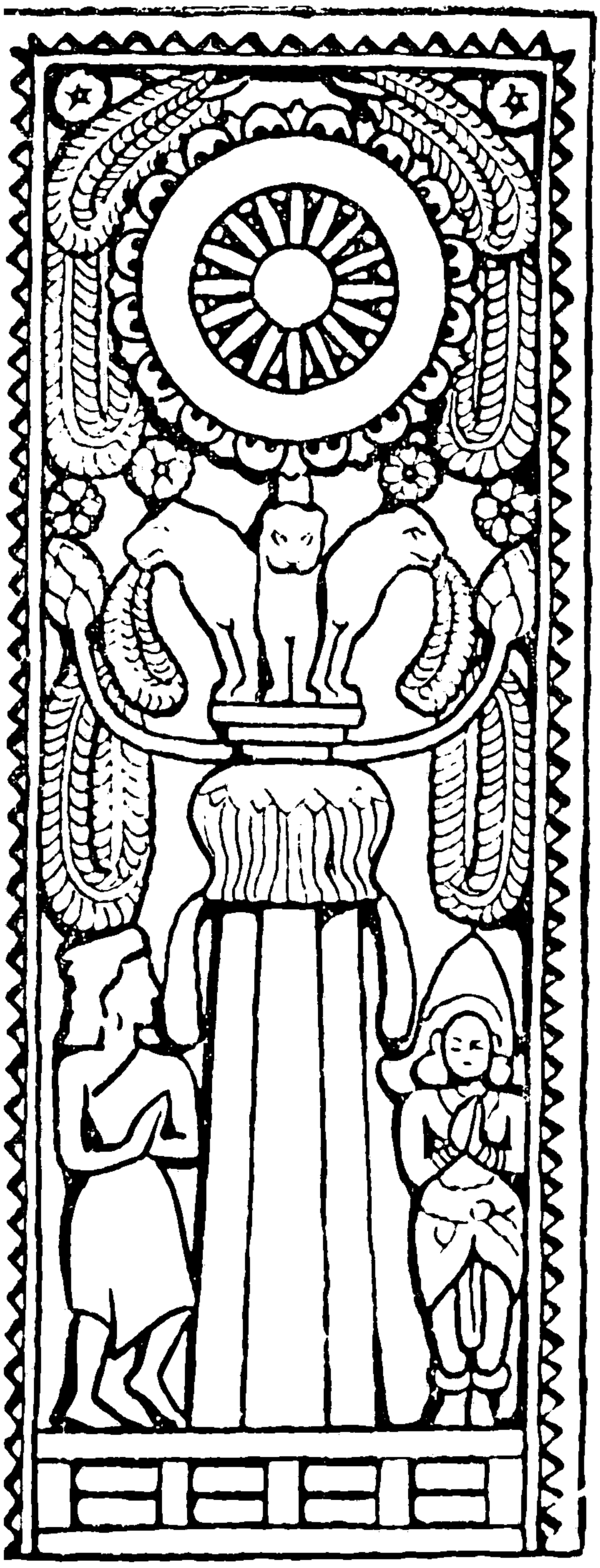


Fig. 18

Plate V

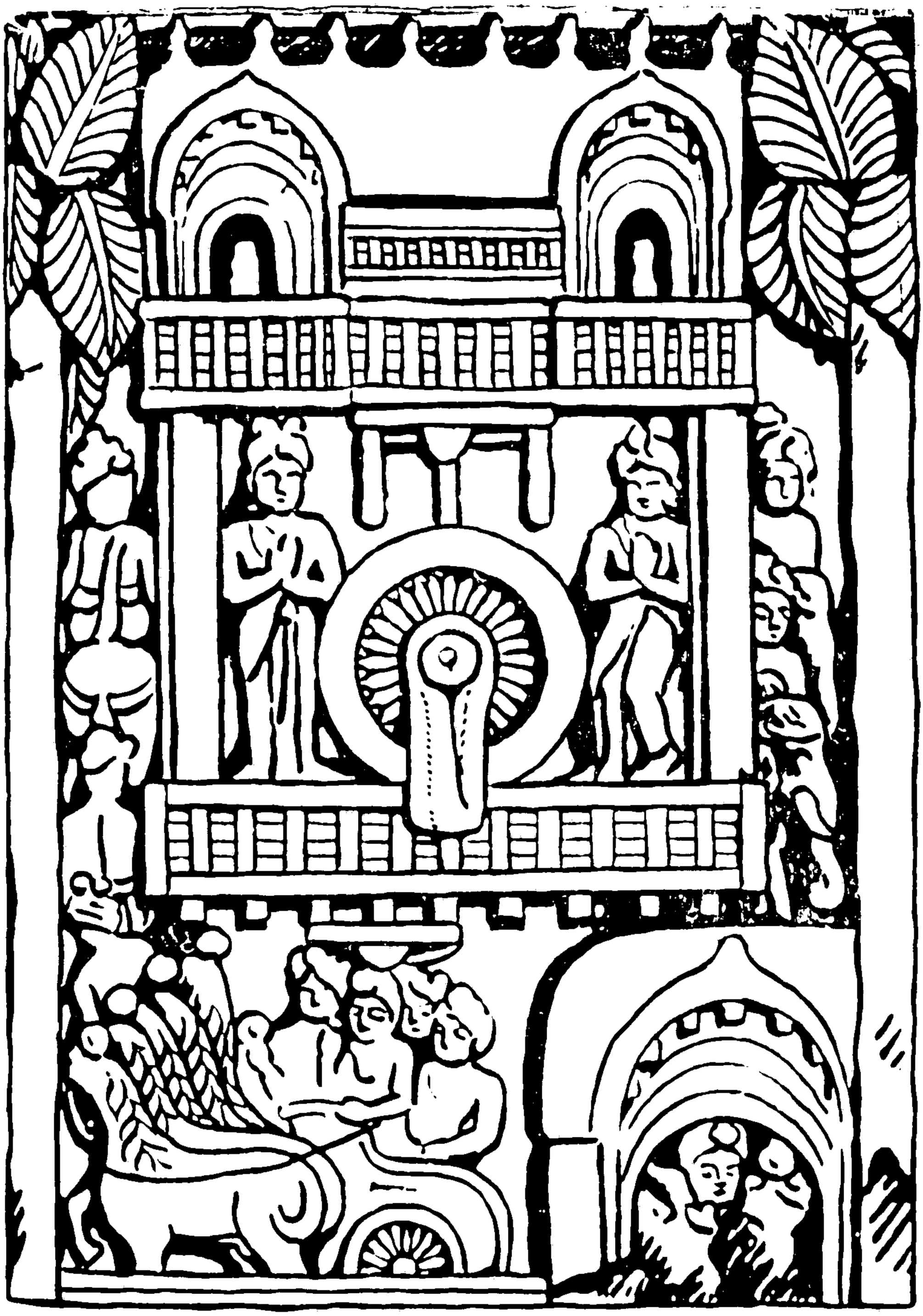


Fig. 19

Plate VI

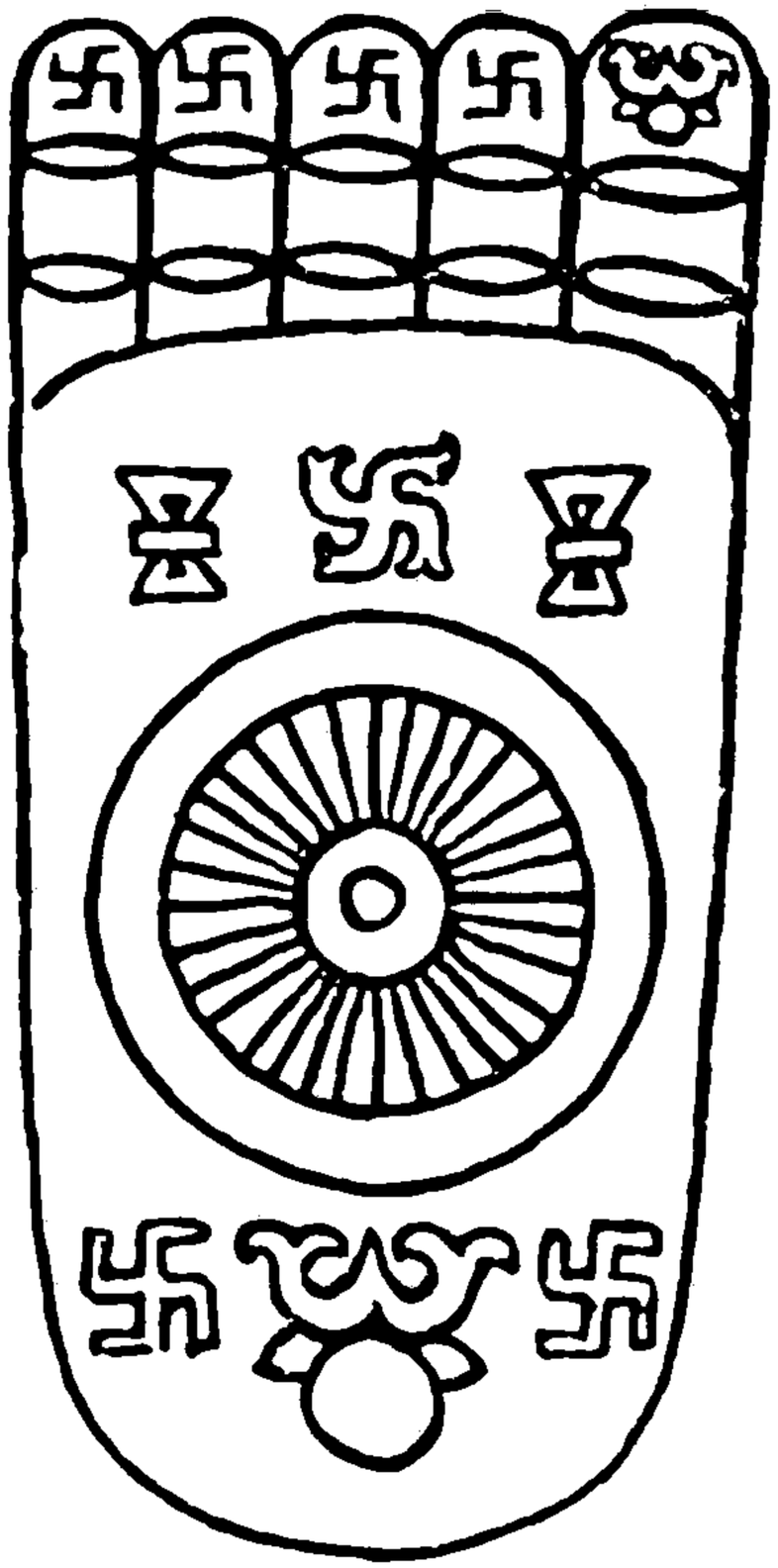


Fig. 20

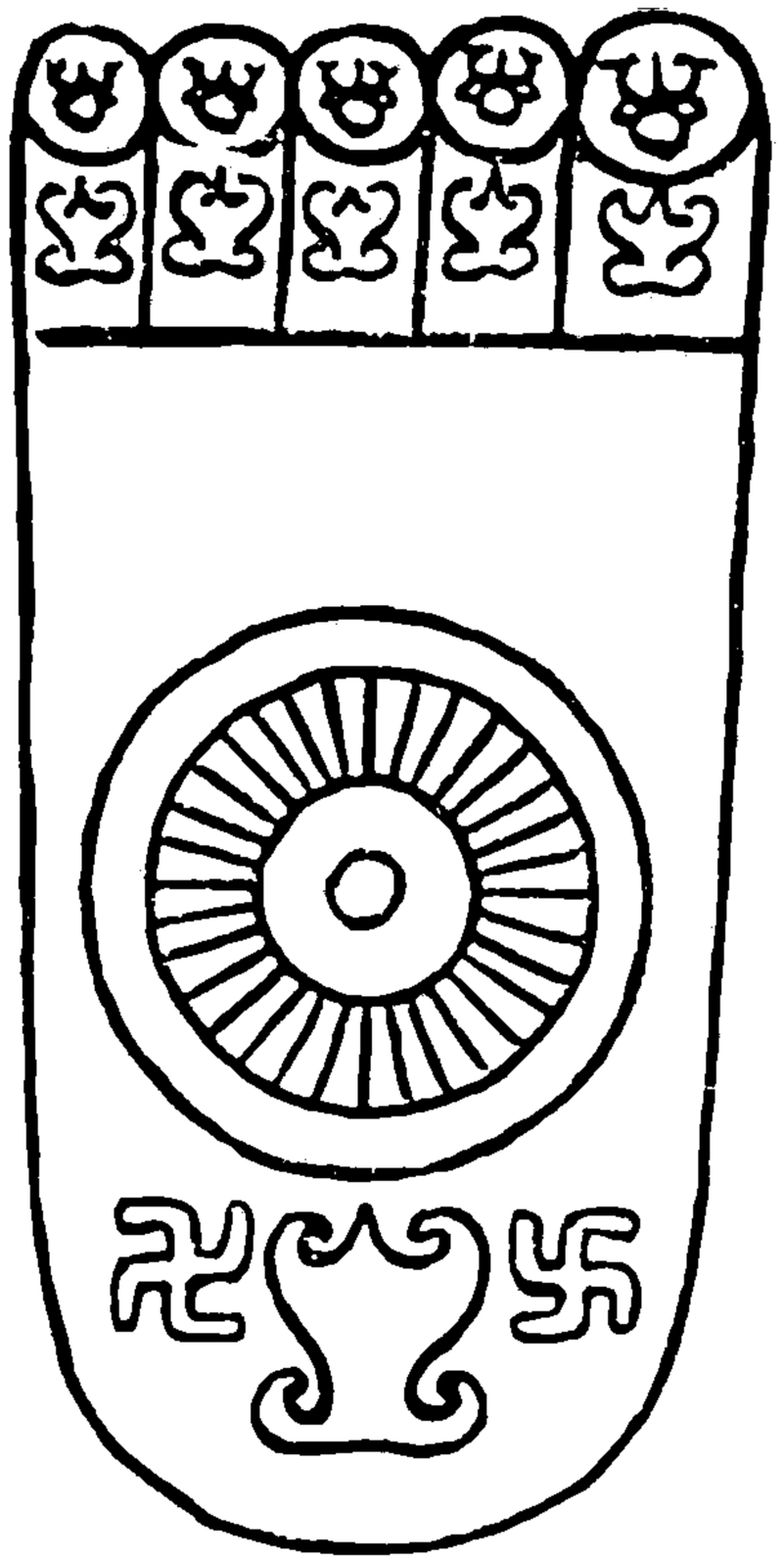


Fig. 21

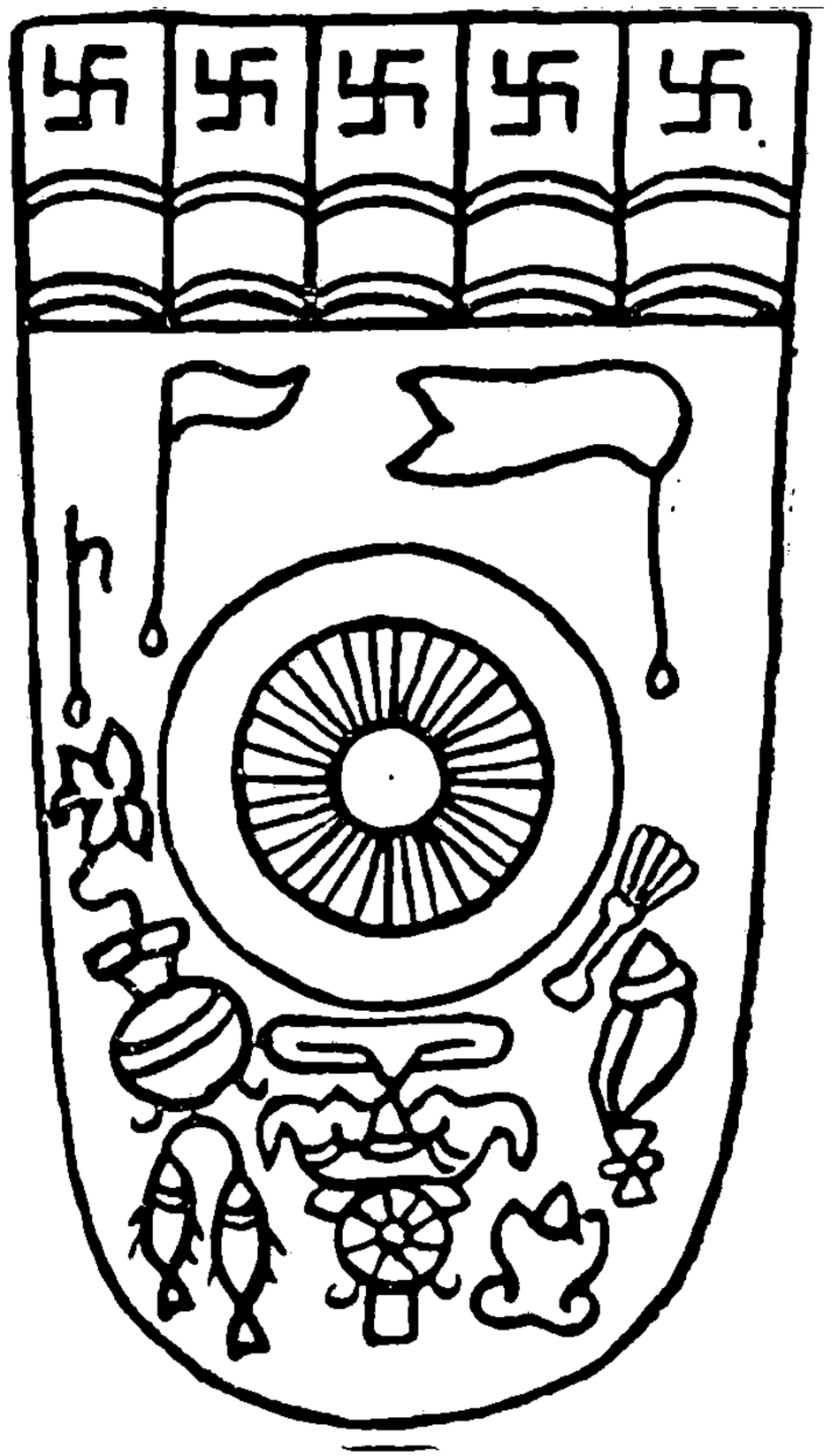


Fig 22

Plate VII

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

FRANCIS STORY

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PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Once when the Buddha was talking to the prominent lay-disciple Anāthapiṇḍika, he made the following comment on the uses of prayer:

'There are, O householder, five desirable, pleasant and agreeable things which are rare in the world. What are those five? They are long life, beauty, happiness, fame and (rebirth in) the heavens. But of these five things, O householder, I do not teach that they are to be obtained by prayer[1] or by vows.[2] If one could obtain them by prayer or vows, who would not do it?

'For a noble disciple, O householder, who wishes to have long life, it is not befitting that he should pray for long life or take delight in so doing. He should rather follow a path[3] of life that is conducive to longevity. By following such a path he will obtain long life, be it divine or human.

'For a noble disciple who wishes to have beauty..... happiness..... fame..... (rebirth in) the heavens, it is not befitting that he should

---

1 Prayer - *āyācanā-hetu*

2 Vows - *Patthanā-hetu*

3 Comy.: Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā

pray for (them) or take delight in so doing. He should rather follow a path of life that is conducive to beauty..... happiness..... fame..... (rebirth in) the heavens. By foliowing such a path he will obtaia (rebirth in) the heavens.'

Anguttara Nikāya, Pañcaka Nipāta (The Fives) No. 43.

* * * * *

Among the Teachers of his time the Buddha was known as a *Kamma-vādin*,[1] one who taught the efficacy and importance of actions. In his doctrine and discipline it is not through supplicating unseen powers by traditional religious ceremonies that man obtains the benefits he desires; they have to be earned by living the good life in thought, word and deed. This indeed is the basis of Buddhist ethical teaching. The law .of moral compensation and retribution inherent in the causal structure of events is the principle which alone can lift rules of conduct out of the sphere of the purely man-made and arbitrary, and place them on a universal basis. Without that, they are subject everywhere to the exigencies of situation and fashion, and people of intelligence are bound to query their validity. All the various symptoms of present-day moral doubt and disintegration are basically due to the lack of understanding of this principle of moral cause and effect.[2]

---

1 Not the *Karma-yoga* of the Bhagavad Gita, which consists in observing religious ritual and caste duties.

2 In Buddhism, *kamma* (volitional act, involving choice between wholesome and unwholesome action) and *vipāka* (result of such action, in the present life or a subsequent one).

The third of the Ten Fetters to be broken before *sotāpatti-magga*, the first stage of deliverance, can be reached, is *sīlabbataparāmāsa*, the belief in and clinging to empty ritual. In the time of the Buddha this meant the rituals of the Brahmins, such as tending the sacred fire (mentioned as a useless practice in the Dhammapada), and the vows of extreme asceticism taken by naked recluses of the Nigantha school, and others who lived like dogs or cows. *Sīlabbataparāmāsa* also embraced offerings and sacrifices to the gods; in fact, all the elaborate formalism of Vedic religion. The Rig Veda, which was old before the Buddha's birth, was a collection of hymns and prayers. The Buddha, who declared himself 'also a knower of the Vedas', was familiar with them and had found them to be useless as aids to Enlightenment. In the text quoted above he even rejects them as a means of obtaining mundane benefits. To understand this position taken by the Buddha it is necessary to examine the nature of prayer and worship in general.

It seems to be a fundamental instinct in human nature to turn to prayer in times of need or perplexity. Prayer is an appeal to a higher power, either for guidance or to intervene in a situation which the individual feels himself unable to ameliorate by any effort of his own. The external power whose benevolence he invokes may be real or imaginary, but whichever it is, cases are cited which seem to show that this kind of prayer is sometimes followed by the desired result. It may be that this was what Voltaire had in mind when he wrote that if God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him. The aphorism does not at all imply that God does exist, for clearly

Voltaire held other views. What it does suggest, rather strongly, is that he recognised the existence of a common need, the wish to believe that there is an invisible power, stronger than those acting within the familiar framework of causality; a power, moreover, that is intelligently interested in human affairs and is willing to mould events to our satisfaction.

How primeval this instinct is can be seen from the earliest records of prehistoric man, which date from a time when prayer, or something like it, was conceived in terms of sympathetic magic. The first evidences of human pictorial art are the drawings of deer and buffaloes transfixed by hunters' arrows, left to us by the early cave-dwellers, and they were most likely intended to serve magical purpose. By picturing in anticipation the slaying of these animals, primitive man believed that he could ensure the success of his hunting expeditions. He supposed that by depicting the situation he desired he could bring it about. From this belief that by willing an event, and giving it concrete and visible form, it could be made an actuality, must have come the idea of prayer. We do not know what strange ceremonies may have accompanied the execution of these cave drawings to give them magical potency, nor whether they did indeed bring results. All we know is that they are there, and from magical usages still to be found in many parts of the world we are able to divine their purpose. They are functional, not decorative, art.

Since we have been led so far back into man's obscure past it is tempting to speculate that the notion of worship, which is linked with that of prayer,

may be present in a crude form at an even lower stage, perhaps among other primates. Tales have been told of travellers seeing apes at the time of the full moon performing something like ritual dances while gazing at the lunar disc, clasping their hands and bending their bodies in an equivalent to the human posture of genuflexion. Such tales are naturally dubious, but there is no really conclusive reason for disbelieving them. The instinct to worship is clearly of such antiquity that it may well be present at this level. The higher apes show so many human characteristics that it would be strange rather than otherwise if this one very universal element were absent from their behaviour when in their natural state. It has not been observed among chimpanzees or ourang-outangs in captivity, so far as I am aware; but it may be that the animals, seeing the inability of their lunar god to release them, lose their faith; or, since all their needs are provided by man, neglect their religious duties.

It would be fruitless to enter here into a discussion regarding the existence of a God or gods able to answer prayer. A more profitable line of inquiry is to ask whether man's thought itself is capable of interfering with the natural progress of events which lie outside his direct control. As I have already remarked, it sometimes seems as though prayers can produce results. But is this really so? It is rather more probable that the cases in which prayer seems to have been 'answered' are far outnumbered by those in which it is not, but that it is the cases of seeming success that are noted and recalled, while the fruitless examples are forgotten. When a positive response appears to have

been made to the prayer it may be due to chance (that is to say, to other, unknown causes), for among a great number of petitions chance average will ensure that some prayers must be followed by the result prayed for. It is only where the chances against the occurrence of a particular event that has been prayed for are very much above average, yet the event takes place, that we are justified in looking for another element besides chance in the situation.

And here we cannot but take notice of the peculiar pattern of events to which Carl G. Jung has given the name "acausal synchronicity". This denotes, for want of a better term, the occurrence of a series of apparently chance events, all belonging to the same order of things or having reference to the same object, where no causal connection between one event and the others can be discerned. To give what is perhaps the commonest example of this, one may light upon an interesting item of information which has never come to one's notice before, although it is within the ambit of one's normal interests. Shortly afterwards one finds a reference to the same item in a book, newspaper or magazine; and this reference may be followed by others in quick succession, as though a source connected with that particular subject had been tapped, while it is impossible to trace any connection between the random events which are bringing it to one's attention. The whole series of events is seemingly haphazard, yet it carries a suggestion that each may be a part of some structure of relationships that underlies the causality of the sensible world, or which projects our familiar system of causal relationships into other dimensions where we cannot follow it. What we are observing is

the penetration of one level of reality by outcroppings from another. Every event of which we are conscious has a genealogy in time, but it is not at all certain that an event in its totality conforms to its measurable aspect as that is known to us and as it can be stated in terms of temporal sequence. To grasp its organisation we are compelled to think in terms of mutual and coincidental dependence *as well as* in terms of sequential causality, just as we are when considering *Paṭicca-samuppāda*, the Buddhist doctrine of Dependent Origination.

Seen in this context, the praying for a certain thing to happen, and its subsequent happening, may not be events related to one another in the temporal order with which we are familiar: both events may be dependent upon a substructure which is extra-spatial and extra-temporal, a *total event* of which we are conscious only in those parts of it which project into our world-structure and are spatially and temporally limited. Thus a constellation of unrelated events may enter into our experience without our realising that each event belongs categorically to one total event that lies outside our time- and space-conditioned awareness. They are outflowings from another level of causality of which we have no sensory information, but which stands in relation to our normal area of awareness much as the world of nuclear physics stands in relation to the Newtonian world It is becoming more and more evident that time on the sub-atomic level is not the time that we know. Its freakish behaviour is causing scientists to revise many of their ideas in the attempt to reconcile it with the concept of causality in conventional physics; and this is hardly surprising

when they have stumbled upon an order of time which apparently admits of movement in both directions, or; in popular parlance, a time that moves backwards.

But that is perhaps stating the case too crudely. The situation as it stands at the time of writing is that the behaviour of neutrinos and other elementary particles with a life-span of one billionth of a second in the sub-atomic world does not adhere rigidly to the Parity and Time Reversal Invariance principles, which are fundamental to the principle of causality in physics It seems also that some particles found in super-dense stars can travel faster than light; which gives rise to the inference that signals sent out by these particles travel backwards in time and reach their destination before they are emitted from their source. But it is notoriously unsafe to base any philosophical conjecture on the ever-shifting sands of science. The universe of concepts is a closed system, and although it may expand into incredible realms, the conceptual mind can travel only around its inner circumference, to reach no final resting place. It is not by journeying to the world's end that the real nature of things can be discerned, but only by making a breakthrough into other levels of consciousness. This has always been axiomatic in Buddhism. All that science can contribute to ultimate knowledge is the negative demonstration of the conditioned and relative nature of the world, which is only the starting-point of Buddhism's venture into reality.

A further hint of the paradoxical state of affairs that science appears to have disclosed in the world-structure may be found in the numerous cases of well-authenticated precognition. If precognition, as distinct from mere

prediction, is a fact, it means that our accepted view that cause must precede effect is not valid in all circumstances. Normally, an event which we perceive takes place before our perception of it, if only by a split second. This agrees nicely with our belief that the event represents cause and our perception of it is its effect. But if an event is actually seen occurring before it takes place, the effect has come about before the cause, and the relationship in sequence between them has been reversed. This points to a state of things in which, using a different mode of apprehension, it could be seen that our willing an event to occur is not the cause, but could be the result, of its subsequent occurrence. If this is so, belief in the efficacy of prayer founded upon instances in which it seems to have brought results may be due to nothing but a misunderstanding of extra-temporal causality, or what Jung called acausal synchronicity. Altered states of consciousness experienced under special conditions are themselves sufficient proof that the time which is dominated by events and space-relationships is by no means the only order of time, nor, is our world the only plane on which the mind can function. Consciousness is confined to this sphere just so long as it depends solely upon the sensory contacts possible to the human body for its support. For these, the space-time continuum is the framework necessary to give them definition and meaningfulness. There is more than a symbiotic relationship between space, time and events; they are all aspects of the same conceptual reality that forms the structure of relative or conventional truth, and which Buddhism calls *sammuti-sacca*. All phenomena that we apprehend through the senses are made up of mutually-conditioned factors belonging to the same order

of interdependence, and this state of things holds good throughout the material universe. But matter itself is now known to exist in unfamiliar states, in which different orders of casuality obtain, so that it is clear that none of these states represents an absolute, rockbed foundation to the edifice of our cognitive experience.

Many people, among them Balzac, who made much of it in his novels, have held the belief that the human will can be concentrated into a force, quasi-material, which is capable of acting upon the flow of events and of altering its direction. This is an attractive and not altogether impossible idea, but to do justice to it a rather oblique approach is needed. We have seen that modern physics is tending to become somewhat mystical, if by that word is understood the entertaining of concepts that lie outside direct observation. But biology, which claims to hold the key of life, or at least of living organisms, is still firmly entrenched in materialism. Therefore to speak of 'science' as though it were a homogeneous system that presents a solid front against everything metaphysical is very deceptive, to say the least. Whether the various scientific disciplines will ever form a unified body is doubtful. Between them there still lies a lot of untrodden ground, and those who are attempting to explore it, the para-psychologists, are not receiving much encouragement. Among parapsychologists, too, many are not interested in physical phenomena. Beyond a few experiments in psycho-kinesis and some, by amateurs, in trying to promote the growth of plants by prayer, not much has been done to test the potency of thought when it is directed towards influencing external objects without physical contact.

The most impressive of such experiments to date have been conducted in Russia. In January 1969 I saw a film, brought from Russia by American parapsychologists, of tests that were carried out on a Russian woman who it is claimed has the ability to move objects by mental concentration. Some small articles were placed on a stand in front of her, under a glass dome. Pictures were taken from various angles to show that there was no physical contact between the woman and the objects, the stand and the dome. She appeared to be concentrating intensely, moving her body from side to side and forward and backward. The objects under the glass certainly moved, always towards her. It seemed rather unlikely that fraud was involved since the experiments, or at least the exhibiting of the film, had not been approved by the Russian authorities. It had been shown to the American parapsychologists clandestinely, and brought from Russia in secret. It may be presumed that the experiment was scientifically controlled, but one defect in its presentation by motion pictures lay in the fact that there was no means of ensuring that the objects were not of metal or contained metal, and could not be influenced by magnets.

Whether there is any power in prayer to influence events, and if there is, whether it resides in an external agency or is an unknown faculty of the mind, must rest undecided. Rather than trying to settle the issue on the basis of observed facts it is more instructive to examine the rationale of worship. By this I mean the worship of deities for specific ends, for it was this that gave the first impulse to religion and which still provides the chief motivation in theistic worship for the majority of people.

Most prayer is for gain, although today it has become rather unfashionable to admit that self-interest enters into religion at all, The best-known prayer in the world makes the appeal, 'Give us our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses.....' The point to be noted is that the idea that man should not expect rewards from his religion, and that to do so is in some way unworthy, is only of very recent origin. It has come from the growing tendency to make religion conform to the ideas of humanism, which itself has nothing more to offer as the result of living the good life than the bare satisfaction of doing so. According to the bleak ethics of this school, an honest tradesman whose business is being crushed out of existence by an unscrupulous competitor must be happy in the knowledge that his own moral life is sound. That is the only recompense he will ever get for suffering for his principles. What is to become of the poor man's happiness, in the midst of the ruin brought about by his dishonest competitor, if he ever questions the validity of 'natural law', or whether ethics exist in nature at all, is best left to the imagination. If he does, he will feel cheated; for as P. M. Rao has pointed out in a penetrative essay, 'The Problem of Sin,'[1] 'No amount of rational thinking and the doing of good deeds can in any way modify or even affect our inner core. It is like arguing with an idiot or an insane person.' The concept of doing good solely for its own sake and without any belief in an adjustment of the moral balance is an invention of humanism; it can scarcely be found in the original form of any religion. It is assumed, *a priori*, in religious thought that there are transcen-

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1 The Wheel Publication No. 136, p. 24.

dental rewards for living righteously, and evil consequences for violating the sacred laws. This element is as strong in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as it is in any other religious exhortation, as an unbiased reading of it will testify. On one occasion the Buddha suggested, for the sake of sceptics who could not believe in a continuation of life after the dissolution of the body, that to obey the moral law was an end in itself, leading to an untroubled mind and an unblemished reputation in the world; but so far as I am aware this passage is the only one of its kind.[1] In many other texts the Buddha condemns the theory that there are no heavens and no hells, and no consequences of good and bad deeds in an after state, as being beliefs that make the good life almost impossible.

Regarding the Bhikkhu life itself the Buddha said, 'A man will not give up an inferior pleasure except with the prospect of gaining one that is superior.' By this he meant the surrender of sensual, worldly joys for the higher and more secure happiness to be found in the Jhānas, and ultimately in Nibbāna.

So it is as well to recognise that most men worship as they trade — for gain of some kind. Their prayer is a respectful attempt to strike a bargain with some deity in which they tender so much faith, or so much self-denial in mild forms of asceticism, in the hope of receiving substantial benefits, here or hereafter. Prayer and fasting, the burning of votive candles and the observance of holy days all belong to this aspect of religion.

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1 The Kālāma Sutta (The Wheel No. 8).

In principle there is nothing discreditable in this; but its practice gives rise to some anomalous situations, of which most people today have become aware. For example, when two countries professing the same faith are at war with one another, each will pray to the same God for victory, and ecclesiastics will bless the regiments and weapons of destruction before they go into action. But if God is certain to grant victory to the more righteous of the two powers, to ask him to do so seems superfluous. If both sides are equally in the right (or equally in the wrong, which is more likely) the deity is placed in an awkward quandary, which can be resolved only by giving victory to the side that has pleased him most or displeased him least. Again, it is to be presumed he would do that in any case, even if it is only a pyrrhic victory. Or is it believed that he can be persuaded to overlook faults if sufficient praise and flattery is lavished upon him, and give the victory to the unworthy? Expressed thus crudely, the theist would doubtless call this a blasphemous idea; but it is hard to find any alternative possibility. In the human mind, of course, the difficulty is readily overcome by the naive tendency of each side to believe that it is in the right. Which again brings us back to square one: for if a nation believes it is in the right, it should also believe that God will automatically grant it the victory.

Again, it is generally held that an omnipotent God, who is benevolently disposed towards his devotees, will ensure that they get whatever is best for them. He may be assumed to have made up his mind as to what he will grant and what he will withold; and that whatever he decides will be for their greatest advantage.

If that is so, a prayer can only be an attempt to make God's decision for him, or to persuade him to change his mind, as though it is the petitioner, not God, who knows best. Even if the prayer is followed by the formula 'Yet not my will but thine, O Lord, be done,' the situation is not materially altered. The addition merely transforms the request into a reminder that this is what the devotee would like God to do for him. And if God possesses the attribute of omniscience he must know what is desired before the prayer is uttered. Omniscience also implies that God knows whether the prayer will be granted or not, before it is made. Whichever way one looks at it, the idea of praying for some specific end is difficult to justify logically. If prayer *is* effective in any circumstances it must be because some principle entirely different from that of divine intervention is brought into play.

What has been said applies, of course, only to strictly monotheistic systems. Under a polytheism such as that of ancient Greece or of popular Hinduism, where no god is omnipotent but all have varying degrees of power in relation to one another, or special areas of jurisdiction, praying to any one of them is like applying to a superior in worldly rank, who by exerting himself on one's behalf *may* be able to accomplish what is required of him, and will do so if one can gain his favour, even if the devotee is morally unworthy or if the granting of the request is not to his best advantage in the long run. For this to be the case it requires gods who have human characteristics, who are limited in power and who are not too exacting in ethics. Precisely such are the gods worshipped in popular Hinduism If this point should be challenged, the legendary accounts of

the gods in the Purānas may be consulted for verification. These bear many similarities to the Graeco-Roman myths. Aside from whether prayer to such gods is effective or not, it can be more reasonbly justified than can prayer to a sole, omniscient and omnipotent deity. This is but one of many advantages that polytheism has over monotheism when it is necessary to give a rational account of the belief in supernatural intervention in human affairs.

The concept of one omnipotent God raises many problems besides those connected with prayer. Formerly the difficulties were glossed over by theologians, but for practical purposes every monotheism has had to be in effect a dualism not unlike that of the Manichees, with a principle of evil opposed to that of good. A system with only one Cause and Mover cannot be made to work.

Though the general purpose of prayer may be the same wherever it is resorted to, the things for which individual men pray have always shown a rich variety. The unspiritual man tends to pray for material profit or victory over his rivals, for success in business, or to gain the bubble reputation at the shrine rather than the cannon's mouth. The more devoutly inclined pray for higher wisdom, for communion with their God, for forgiveness of their sins or for the welfare of humanity. This higher type of religious impulse is found among some comparatively rare followers of every creed, and the form and content of their prayer is more akin to the Buddhist discursive meditations (on Mettā, for example) than are the petitions of those who crave material benefits. All the same, behind the prayer there usually lurks a personal wish, the longing for salvation and immortality. And it is in this regard that Buddhism takes an altogether different position.

In Buddhism there can be no question of calling upon a deity for aid so far as ultimate liberation, the attainment of Nibbāna, is concerned, for it is recognised as being something that no external power can bestow. On the lower level, Buddhism is not intent upon the kind of benefits that deities may be assumed to confer. Except insofar as it is the field of moral choice where alone striving for Nibbāna is possible, the life of this world is not the concern of Buddhism in the same way as it is to to the creeds which teach the existence of a Creator–God who is thought to be actively interested in the welfare of his creatures and responsible for it. The Buddhist knows that he himself is the sole author of his being, or rather that he is the product of Ignorance conjoined with Craving, and that the Dhamma is not a vehicle for the increase of mundane pleasures and attachments, but a means of gaining release from the suffering they bring. Since the gods themselves are involved in Samsāric conditions, they cannot help. The Noble Eightfold Path is a way that each has to tread by his own effort: '*Appamādena sampādetha*'—'Strive with earnestness,' was the Buddha's final exhortation. Neither liberation nor even the courage and determination to strive for it are things that prayer can bring.

And if it is useless to pray to any gods, it is equally so to pray to the Buddha. He is not a creator, preserver or destroyer of the universe; neither is he a dispenser of favours nor a supreme punitive power. The principle of Buddhahood is not attached to an entity. When the Buddha is worshiped it is as a teacher, the greatest Teacher of all beings, and such devotion is a spiritual exercise; the Great Wisdom (Bodhi), last personified in the Master, is the true object of veneration.

The Pūjā offered by Buddhists therefore cannot be called prayer, since it contains none of the elements usually present in the attitude denoted by that word. The Buddha image is a cenotaph, enshrining nothing more than the idea of the Master who once lived, the symbol of his presence—which, all the same, is more immediately felt in the Dhamma he taught and becomes ever more so as it is penetrated with understanding. The outward aspect of Pūjā, the offering of flowers, lights and incense, is not only a token gesture of homage; it also carries a deep symbolism, which is expressed in the Pāli formulas that are recited at the time. The transient beauty of the flowers, so soon to lie withered on the tray, reminds the devotee of the impermanence of all composite things: 'Even as these flowers must soon wither, so shall my body lie crumbling in decay.[1] The candles or lamps recall the Great Teacher whose Bodhi dispels the darkness of ignorance: 'These lights I offer to the Teacher who is the Light of the Three Worlds.' The incense symbolises the sweet and cleansing fragrance of the Dhamma which permeates the mind; it also stands for the pleasing odour of good deeds which, like the scent of Tagara blossoms, can be recognised from afar. (Dhammapada, v. 11 - 12)

For the rest, Buddhist devotion is the mental or vocal recitation of the supreme qualities of Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, followed by homage to the Buddhas of the past and future (for homage in anticipation is perfectly reasonable), and the recitation of the Mettā, Mahā Mangala and other Suttas, especially any Sutta which is particularly appropriate to the occasion. It is, in short, an act of mental purification and is carried out with that intent alone.

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1 See "Flower Offering" by Kassapa Thera, in "Devotion in Buddhism" (The Wheel No. 18)

In Buddhism the cult of devotion (*Bhakti*) is certainly not absent; but it is restrained, and emotional transports are not encouraged. Particularly is this so on the levels of the highest endeavour. The Buddha rebuked a monk who showed an excessive attachment to his person which was interfering with the monk's progress, and on his death-bed he praised a Bhikkhu who had retired to practise Bhāvanā instead of watching beside him to the end. (Mahā parinibbāna Sutta).[1]

There is a story of a Christian missionary who found a Chinese priest chanting in a temple. When the Chinese had finished the missionary asked him: 'To whom were you praying?' The Chinese looked faintly surprised. 'To no one,' he replied. 'Well, what were you praying *for* ?' The missionary insisted. 'Nothing.' said the Chinese. The missionary turned away, baffled. As he was leaving the temple, the Chinese added, kindly, 'And there was no one praying, you know.'

The Chinese in that story understood perfectly the psychology of prayer as an instrument of mental purification. If it were understood in this sense by people who can no longer believe in any god to pray to, they might still be able to contact sources of power within themselves that have become closed to them by reason of their scepticism. Prayer of this kind, which is not really prayer at all, can be an instrument of potency in itself, irrespective of whether it invokes any external agency or not. When it takes the form of an interior dialogue, or approaches abstract contemplation, it has a real therapeutic value that is entirely lacking in prayer for the fulfilment of desires or for supernatural intervention.

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1 "Last Days of the Buddha-" The Wheel No. 67/69.

To pray for the welfare of others, when the prayer is untainted by thoughts of self, is another action that brings into play the higher mental impulses (*adhicitta*), and one that, whatever invisible power it may seek to invoke, makes for spiritual growth. This kind of prayer, even though it may be the outcome of wrong assumptions, such as the belief that it will be heard by a Heavenly Father or transmitted to him by one of his angelic emissaries, has its own value, a value that cannot be assessed in any way except by reference to the internal experience that accompanies it and leaves its stamp upon the mind. It may be called the first approach to the Divine Abidings (*brahma-vihāra*) by way of mental purification through Mettā (loving-kindness) and Karuṇā (compassion). Such prayer. when it is accompanied by erroneous views, may have in it too much of emotion to achieve *Upekkhā* (equanimity or detachment), and may be too narrowly restricted to concern for those who are in a pitiful plight to include Muditā (joy in the happiness of others), but nevertheless it opens up the heart and prepares it for a more comprehensive understanding of the truths which, thoroughly penetrated, bring wisdom and insight. An example of this may be seen in the case of Kisa Gotami, whose distracted prayers for the revival of her dead child were the prelude to the dawn of higher knowledge. In a sense it may be likened to those moral principles found in all religions which, although they are grounded on false views (*diṭṭhi-nissita-sīla*), are good in themselves, and the observance of which is karmically wholesome.

There is another kind of prayer, also, which takes effect, if not in outward circumstances in the individual's subjective experience. It is that which is wrung from a man in the last extreme of anxiety, anguish, perplexity or

remorse for a wrong deed that he cannot undo, when he is more concerned for the harm it has caused someone else than he is for any punishment it may bring upon himself. In crises such as these, the spontaneous and irrepressible cry from the heart is an emotional and spiritual catharsis, and it often brings relief from internal tensions that can neither be relaxed nor any longer endured. Remorse in itself is a purely negative emotion and Buddhists do not usually surrender themselves to it, knowing it to be an unwholesome and unprofitable state of mind. If it does arise, it should be translated into beneficial action. The best way of dealing with a situation of this kind, should it occur, is to determine to avoid actions likely to cause it in future, and then to counteract the unwholesome *citta* that has arisen by some deed, or some positive thought, of a wholesome nature. But for those not trained in the Buddhist discipline, prayer is often the only means of finding relief in unbearable situations, and it is not without benefit. If it is a question of some moral problem to solved, the release of tension brought about by praying restores the balanced calm necessary to view the problem in its true light and come to a decision. But in the resort to prayer for escape from remorse there lies an insidious danger. It is that the prayer, and the resulting sensation of relief from the burden of guilt, may lead to a belief that the wrong deed has been forgiven and washed out, though not expiated, and that there is no need to take any further action. Unless the penitential prayer is accompanied by a genuine resolve to make whatever restitution may be possible, and to exert oneself to do better in future, the release from anxiety it has brought will be a delusion, and possibly a very harmful one, like putting a soothing dressing on a wound that is turning gangrenous. It is a

device for suppressing the guilt feeling instead of removing it altogether. Past unwholesome kamma cannot be undone or blotted out by wishful thinking, but it can be counterbalanced, and in part at least mitigated, by good kamma of the present and future. If the prayer leads to this insight, in however vague a way, and inspires wholesome action, it is good. If not, it is altogether useless. It has given temporary relief without correcting the fault, which will continue to appear, again and again, in recurring situations of a like nature.

Certain Christian sects, taking an extreme view of man's helplessness in the grip of an incurable corruption and of the doctrine that salvation can come only through grace from without, have taught that the devotee must yield himself to the utmost depravity before he can enter into communion with God,* in the belief that 'the greater the sin, the greater the forgiveness.' Heretical though these sects may have been, the germs of their error are to be found in orthodox Christianity itself, from the Old Testament doctrine of Original Sin down to its New Testament corollary of vicarious atonement and the preference Jesus seems to have shown for sinners over the righteous. This has helped to form ambivalent attitudes towards sin and redemption in the Western mind; attitudes which often bring confusion, and consequent anxiety, to problems of moral responsibility. It has also, in an indirect way, been the cause of an exaggerated concern over the actions of others. In recent times this has shown itself in feelings of guilt arising through an acute sense of personal identification with the societal group and its collective acts of

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* *Histoire du pantheisme populaire au moyen age at au seizieme siecle.* Auguste Jundt.

the past, extending to cases where the individual had neither taken part in the group activities he condemns, nor even approved of them, and where, consequently, Buddhism would see no personal guilt involved. Since a mistaken sense of guilt is almost as unhealthy a state of mind as one based upon reality, it might be supposed to be also an uncomfortable one; but there is in fact some reason to believe that the Western mind finds feelings of *collective* guilt easier to support than the sense of an individual rightness which it has been taught to regard as Pharasaic. The current tendency to level off distinctions may also have something to do with this, making it more comfortable to be a sinner in company, or to imagine oneself one, than to be a good man alone. The idea of the church congregation, the flock, is the spiritual father of 'togetherness,' and while it may be a good thing in certain respects it has disadvantages in others. One man may be tempted to throw the entire burden of his moral responsibily upon the group, while another, more conscientious, may tend to take the weight of collective guilt onto his own shoulders and become a victim to feelings of personal involvement that are entirely unwarranted. In the circumstances the good but worldly-minded man tries to interfere. He becomes a reformist—that is to to say, if he goes far enough, an executioner.* The more spiritual retires to solitude and prayer.

The religious background to this state of affairs is further complicated by the fact that there are two streams

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* Some of the great criminals of history - the Cromwells, the Robespierres, the Marats - were not the less criminal because they were necessary. But others have been criminals without being necessary.

of thought in Christianity, due to its electic origins: one is predeterministic, the other is dynamic and more akin to the *kamma-vāda* of Buddhism, and since the conflict between them has never been satisfactorily resolved it has been left for sectarians to place the emphasis on whichever reading they prefer. Jansenism, with its theory that some are chosen for salvation from the beginning, and Calvinism with its similarly pre-elective view, are typical examples of the attitudes that must result from belief in an omnipotent and omniscient diety; other churches attempt, with varying degrees of success, to hold a balance between doctrines that are not easy to reconcile. Whether the new 'God is dead' theology will eventually remove the difficulties, or whether it makes a crack in the fabric which must quickly lead to its collapse, remains to be seen What will most surely be affected by it is the attitude towards prayer, and especially towards prayer that calls upon a personal deity for intervention in mundane affairs. In the absence of such a deity there are, however, some alternative possibilities that are not entirely without support in actual experience. We may glance at them, although it is not practicable to discuss them in detail here.

Elsewhere[1] I have mentioned some evidence which seems to suggest that intelligences from other planes of being do occasionally intervene in the affairs of the living, and I am far from discounting this possibility. But in those cases that have come to my notice and which appear to me most worthy of credence, help seems to have come not from any of the gods recognised by theistic systems but from beings now in one of the lower heavenly

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1 The Case for Rebirth. The Wheel No. 12/13.

states who were formerly connected by ties of relation ship or friendship with the person who receives the help. In these cases it seldom, if ever, takes the form of material assistance, but rather that of guidance in times of perplexity, comfort in times of stress and warnings of impending danger. It also seems to come spontaneously rather than in answer to any prayerful demand, unless an unspoken call for help constitutes a prayer. Moreover, it appears to have come in a number of cases when the person concerned was quite unaware that he was in need of help. One such case is that of a European Buddhist monk who affirms that he has several times been saved from a totally unsuspected danger by what he calls his 'Protecting Hand.' This sometimes manifested to him as an internal voice, sometimes in the form of physical restraint. On one occasion it took the second form when, running from pursuers in pitch darkness he was suddenly arrested, as though by an invisible barrier, to find that he had been heading straight for a precipice. Again, the explanation could lie in a psychic faculty of the person concerned, which precognises the peril and alerts the conscious mind to its presence. Relatively few people who have known such experiences, however, are willing to accept this explanation. To them it always appears as though some external agency had been at work, and it would be altogether arbitrary to dismiss their conviction as groundless. Many examples of this type of experience are to be found in the literature of psychical research, and they have not yet been given a satisfactory explanation that rules out the external agency hypothesis. Some of the recorded cases, taken at their face value, point as definitely to some kind of intercommunication between the human world and other planes of existence as do similar accounts given in Buddhist texts. In this connec-

tion it is worth noting that the present-day positivist tendency to regard Buddhism as being 'only a philosophy' could easily be corrected if its advocates would study the material on this subject to be found in the earliest Buddhist canonical texts, and make an unbiased attempt to interpret it in the light of contemporary research in parapsychology.

We have seen that Buddhist Pūja has nothing in common with the offerings made to gods who are believed to be mystically present in their images, and that Buddhism is little concerned with the eight worldly conditions,[1] except in relation to the truth of Dukkha. But Buddhists are human, their lives filled with ordinary preoccupations and anxieties, for themselves and for those dependent upon them. Buddhism, which starts as a very realistic system of ethico-psychology, recognises two forms of aspiration, the worldly and the transcendental, *lokiya* and *lokuttara*. He who wishes to be wholly world-transcending in his aims must of necessity give up mundane attachments. Ultimately there is no avoiding the choice between one and the other. Yet this does not mean that one still remaining in the world rejects the higher life completely. The path of renunciation lies through actions that bear good results (*kusala kamma*) to the abandoning of all result-bearing actions, the good equally with the bad, when Arhatship is reached. And so the ordinary lay Buddhist, just as much as the Christian, Hindu and Muslim, sometimes feels the need of help from a higher source in his everyday affairs.

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1 *Aṭṭha-loka-dhamma*: Gain and loss, honour and dishonour, happiness and misery, praise and blame.

The Mahāyāha did not have to invent a god for this purpose; it has the Bodhisattvas who, unlike the Buddha, are still benevolently active in Samsāra. But the very early Buddhists, before the advent of the Mahāyāna, evidently had to be advised against resorting to the gods of the Vedic pantheon for the fulfilment of their wishes. The Buddha was particularly emphatic against Vedic worship when it involved costly and inhumane sacrifices, and when it was mistakenly believed to confer Moksha (deliverance). It was one of the Devas themselves who asked the Buddha what was the highest (most effective) of the propitious observances to bring about happy results. The Commentary to the Mangala Sutta tells us that the propitious observances (*Mangala*) in dispute were the Brahmanical ceremonies at birth, name-giving, marriage and so on, at different stages of life. The Buddha's reply was that the observance most certain to bring felicity was to live in accordance with Dhamma. By this he meant that a man's good *kamma* is his only certain protection from the ills of the world, not the observance of religious ceremonies, smearing one's forehead and that of others with ashes, interpreting good and bad omens and lucky or unlucky hours of the day, and offering food to gods who were unable to eat it, or, if they really were gods, had no need of it. According to Buddhism—and not merely commentarial Buddhism, but the Buddhism of the oldest texts—what the Devas need and welcome is a share of the merit that only human beings can gain, through deeds of charity, compassion and duty towards the Sangha. The right living of a householder is fully set out in the Sigālovāda Sutta,[1] where the Buddha resourcefully takes advantage of the erroneous views of the young layman, Sigāla, to show him the right path to

1 Included in "Everyman's Ethics", THE WHEEL No. 14.

peace of mind and prosperity. The teaching given in the Sigālovāda Sutta sets forth in detail the moral code (*sīla*)of a householder, and is the same as that summarised in the quotation at the beginning of this essay. It emphasises man's ability to enrich his own life with meaning and value, without dependence upon supernatural aid.

Yet despite this, the practice of appealing to gods for *lokiya* benefits persists among Buddhists. and to give a clear idea of what is meant by this, some explanation of the two terms *lokiya* and *lokuttara* must be given. Buddhism recognises *lokiya* experience as well as *lokiya* aspiration, and *lokuttara* experience as well as *lokuttara* aspiration. But *lokiya* aspiration and experience bear a wider connotation than does the word 'mundane.' As a descriptive and defining term *lokiya* relates to all forms of consciousness and of existence within the Thirty One Abodes of Samsāra. Even the heavenly states are included in that which is *lokiya*, 'worldly' or 'mundane.' The 'world' in Buddhism is not only the sensible world of ordinary consciousness, it is the unseen environment of that world as well, comprising many planes of existence related to consciousness, and one to unconsciousness. As corollary to this, the definition of *lokuttara*, the 'supra-mundane', is narrower; it relates solely to the state outside of conditioned phenomena; that is, Nibbāna. Therefore in Buddhism the desire to be reborn in a heavenly state is just as much a *lokiya* aspiration as would be, for example, to wish for promotion in one's job or success in a business venture. There is thus a displacement of values when a comparison is made between the Buddhist terms *lokiya* and *lokuttara*. and what they denote, and the English words used to translate them. In Western thinking, heavenly existence is considered to be supra-mundane,

and the mundane is only life as experienced on this earth, the world known to us through the senses.

It follows, then, that the Devas to whom Buddhists sometimes pray in the Devalas and Hindu kovils in Ceylon, and the *Nats* similarly worshipped in Burma, are worldly powers. Among the thirty-seven *Nats* of Burma, some were semi-legendary, semi-historical persons; they are indigenous local deities who have no connection with the Hindu gods. One of them, indeed, was a Muslim in his life on earth, and is still considered to be a follower of that faith. His cult-devotees, although themselves Buddhists, abstain from eating pork, just as the Buddhist followers of Hindu gods in Ceylon avoid meat, fish and eggs, the sole object being to keep in the good graces of their patrons. These godlings (*devatā*) are approached with homage and suitable offerings to win their favour exactly as a king's minister or the head of a business corporation might be waited upon, flattered and offered services with the same end in view. This practice, although it is found in all Buddhist countries, with variations, has nothing whatever to do with the Buddha's teaching of the Way to bring Suffering to an end. It caters for a human weakness which Buddhism in its purest form exhorts man to transcend. Even though the aspiration to be reborn in a heavenly state is a *lokiya* aspiration, the *lokiya* deities are no more capable of granting it to a human being than is his works manager or the chairman of his board of directors.

But there is another way offered by Buddhism to those who have worldly ambitions for wealth, fame and pleasure. This is the forming of a wish accompanied by a good action (*kusala kamma*); it is the 'meritorious deed'

which, unless it is obstructed by some heavier kamma of an unwholesome kind, brings the desired result in the present life, and if delayed, bears fruit in a subsequent one. The wholesome kamma linked to the wish reinforces it by rendering the person who makes the wish worthy to have it fulfilled. This makes use of the principle of *kamma* and *vipāka*, and it is effective; but it is not to be used for an evil purpose, such as doing harm to an enemy or gaining unlawful advantages over others. To try to make use of the law of moral causality in such a way would be demeritorious in the last degree, since it could not fail to rebound on its source, the misguided person who had generated the unwholesome intention. One in whom wisdom is developed will never resort to any device for causing harm to an enemy, be it in the natural way or by invoking the aid of inferior deities. So far as protection from injury to himself by an enemy is concerned, he knows that so long as his own *kamma* is good, no hostile power, human or superhuman, can seriously affect him. He may be wounded, as the Buddha was by the stone hurled at him by Devadatta, but eventually more ill will come to the aggressor than to his intended victim.

There can be no doubt that prayer on the higher level, where it approaches meditation, can be instrumental in bringing about alterations in mental attitudes and consequent behaviour; whether it can cause lasting alterations in the structure of personality must depend upon the degree to which its influence penetrates to the unconscious strata. For this to happen, another mode of consciousness must be brought into play, and it is here that prayer, which by its nature is discursive, has to give

way to the technique of Bare Attention or Mindfulness (Satipaṭṭhāna), which rigorously excludes conceptualisation. It is not with this that we are concerned at present, but with prayer as a means of gaining specific ends.

Prayer which is *for* something is an expression of desire, and desire is only a weaker word, and so less pejorative, for craving. A desire that is strong enough to seek expression in prayer can scarcely fall short of craving, though it may be far from the craving for drink or drugs which has given the word its objectionable colouring. Now Craving (or Thirst - *Taṇhā*) is the factor which supports and promotes Grasping (*Upādāna*); that is, attachment to the components of personality. This grasping supports the process of Becoming (Bhava, the life-continuum), and the life-process in turn brings about Arising (Jati), which is *both* the arising of the successive moments of existence in the psycho-physical order that constitutes the ordinary life-continuum *and* the arising of the first consciousness-moment in a new series after death; in other words, Arising in a new birth. Thus Craving is the king-pin of the mechanism, or the *elan vital* which keeps it going.

It is a psychic energy which manifests itself in the will-to-be and the will-to-do and the will-to-possess. In another guise it is the will-not-to-be; the death-wish, the Craving for Annihilation (*Vibhava-taṇhā*).

Prayer for something that is desired must necessarily be an expression of one or other of these cravings. People have even prayed for oblivion in death. Therefore a prayer of great intensity is a method of concentrating and harnessing craving. And since craving is the base of the life process and an extremely powerful psychic force, prayer of this kind may be effective to some degreee.

The dynamism inherent in a single-minded wish might indeed act upon the inert factors of a situation much as Balzac supposed it to do.

To express a wish is to bring oneself a step nearer its fulfilment. To concentrate upon it to the exclusion of all extraneous desires is to give it the driving force of the psychic component that sustains life itself.

And that is a dangerous undertaking. Someone once wrote: 'Take care what you desire before you are twenty—for you will surely get it.' In youth the desires are strongest; they are also the most deeply felt. But how many people, having obtained what they wished for most when they were young, have found that they no longer want it; that their desires have taken a different turn, have fastened themselves onto new objects. How many more have spent themselves in many years of striving and scheming for wealth, voluntarily stripping themselves of all other interests, only to find when at last they possess the riches they craved for in their youth of poverty, that they have so robbed and depleted themselves of all capacity for happiness that they cannot enjoy any of the advantages that money brings, and that alone make it desirable. The sad fact is that most men, when they wish, wish for the wrong thing; or, like Midas in the Greek myth, wish for it in the wrong way.

To desire and work for the acquisition of a special skill is more sensible, for at least there is a good chance that it may become woven into the texture of the *sankhāras* and manifest anew in subsequent lives. Unlike the self-made millionaire, the man who sets his mind upon becoming a great musician, artist or writer does not have to leave behind him all the fruits of a lifetime's

labour when he goes to the grave. No reckless hand will carelessly throw to waste everything he so painfully amassed, after he is gone, and no one else's life will be ruined in the process. On the contrary, he will carry with him into his next life something—and perhaps a great deal—of the art or science that he loved and strove to perfect; and another genius will enrich the world.

But in the final reckoning, any form of desire is prone to cheat him who harbours it. Prayer is a vehicle of desire, and desire is wedded to the deceptive idea of selfhood. The only safe wish is the wish to attain Nibhāna, the wish to strip away all desire and all delusion connected with desire. When that wish is fulfilled there is nothing left to wish for, and the weary round is over. And because prayer, whether it is effective or not, does not tend towards the attrition of desire nor to the uprooting of the delusion of self, it has no importance in the Aryan Discipline of the Buddha.

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The Significance of Dependent Origination in Theravāda Buddhism

Nyanatiloka Mahathera

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Preface

The author of this essay, the late Venerable Nyanatiloka Mahathera (1878 - 1957), founder of The Island Hermitage, Dodanduwa (Ceylon), is widely known for his profound scholarship and hardly needs an introduction to students of Buddhist literature.

When, in the year 1937, the present instructive treatise was written, the venerable author had been in the Sangha for 33 years. The essay is the product not only of his extensive and deep study of the Pāli texts but also of his own insights developed by mature thought and meditation. Those who had the benefit of meeting him know that his was a mind by no means shackled by commentarial or any other tradition, but, in the essential features of the Dhamma, his penetrative mind confirmed the understanding embedded in those ancient sources. This applies, in particular, to the subject of this treatise, the doctrine of Dependent Origination, the profundity of which the Master himself had stressed. The author found support for the commentarial interpretation of it in the oldest Sutta texts, which are quoted in this treatise.

In this essay, reference is made to the interpretation of Dependent Origination put forward by Dr. Paul Dahlke. As the views of the latter have recently been revived by some contemporary writers, it was felt opportune to present this essay again. It should be mentioned that, in other respects, the writings of Dr. Dahlke were held in high esteem by the venerable author.

There always have been those who, in a rather sweeping manner, have questioned the value of the ancient Pāli Commentaries, and this hyper-critical attitude seems to be gaining popularity again in certain quarters. Regarding this, the Venerable Nyanatiloka once remarked that there are those who reject the Commentaries because they prefer to make their own.

This essay was first published in Ceylon for Vesak 1937, by The Buddhist Brotherhood of Kandy, under the title *Paṭicca Samuppāda. The Law of Dependent Origination. Explained in accordance with the Pāli Tradition.* In the present publication has been incorporated some additional matter taken from a later version appearing as an Appendix to the author's "Guide through the Abhidhamma Piṭaka" (First Ed., Colombo 1938). The original title has been changed in this new edition.

Nyanaponika Thera

Kandy
July 1969

Introduction

None of all the teachings of Buddhism has given rise to greater misunderstandings, to more contradictory and absurd interpretations than the doctrine of Dependent Origination (Paṭicca-Samuppāda). This is especially true with regard to some Western writers and scholars who too often did not possess even the rudiments of knowledge required for treating such a difficult subject. Obviously some of them did not even understand the correct meaning of the twelve basic terms of the formula, and, instead, based their interpretations on their own imagination.

In many cases (especially in the older Western literature on Buddhism), there was the attempt to present the Dependent Origination as an explanation of the primeval beginning of all things; and one saw in "Ignorance" (*avijjā*, Sanskrit: *avidyā*) the causeless first principle out of which in the course of time all conscious and physical life had evolved. All that in spite of the Buddha's repeated and definite declaration that an absolute first beginning of existence is something unthinkable (Anamatagga Saṁyutta) and that all such speculations may lead to insanity (Anguttara Nikāya IV, 77); and that one could never imagine a time when there was no Ignorance and no Craving for existence (ib. X, 61; quoted in Visuddhi Magga, ch. XVII, and similarly in Milinda Pañhā, ch. 2).

In the Prajñāpāramitā, according to Burnouf, *Introduction a l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (p. 473), we find, for example, the following statement: "Et comme elles (les conditions) n'existent pas (sic!), a cause de cel on les appelle Avidyā, c'est a dire ce qui n'existe pas(!), ou

l'ignorance." And in Kern, *Indian Buddhism*, we read: "Avijjā, ignorance, is the state of not knowing, of sleep. Man at first awaking enters into a state of half-consciousness; his mind is affected by vague impressions (Sankhārā) before he has reached the state of clear consciousness. Then the phenomena appear to him, and the activity of of his organs of sense commences, etc." And, again, in Burnouf, *Le Lotus de la Bonne Loi:* "De l'ignorance proceda la faculte de la reflexion (sankhārā); de la faculte de la reflexion proceda la connaissance (viññāṇa); de la connaissance proceda l'union de l'esprit et de la matiere (nāma-rūpa), etc.".

In more recent times, again, quite a number of authors, chiefly Germans, led by Dr. Dahlke, call the Paṭicca Samuppāda a "Simultaneous" Dependent Origination and even go so far to assert that "the whole chain of the (twelve) conditions of origination represents one single karmic(!) moment of personal experience *(karmisches Erlebnismoment)*"! Now does this not really amount to the senseless assertion that Cause and Effect, i. e. the Karmic Process of Becoming (X=II)* and Rebirth (XI=III), Birth (XI) and Death (XII), the wholesome and unwholesome Karma-formations (II), the physical Sense Organs (V) and the (conscious) Impression (VI) — that all these things arise together at the very same moment, and that thus the Karma (i.e. action) of the preceding birth takes place simultaneously with its effect (vipāka) in the succeeding birth? — Now let me state that simultaneity, in fact, plays an important part in the Paṭicca-Samuppāda, as we shall see later on, but that it is only one of the 24 modes of conditioning that come into operation here.

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* The Roman numerals refer to the formula of the Dependent Origination, as reproduced in the following.

Truly, not one of all these authors ever seems to have put to himself the question, for what earthly reason the Buddha should have thought it necessary to teach such a doctrine. It was surely not for the sake of mere mental gymnastics! It was to show, through which causes and conditions suffering comes into being, now and hereafter. For the Buddha shows in the formula of the Dependent Origination that it is through our life-affirming wholesome and unwholesome volitions, i. e. Karma-formations (II), performed through Ignorance (I), Craving (VIII) and Clinging (IX) in the past birth, that this present conscious existence (III, etc.), with all its woe and suffering, has been caused; and that our present Karmic Process of Becoming (X) is the cause for future Rebirth (XI) and suffering; and that after the extinction of all Ignorance (I), Craving (VIII) and Clinging (IX), no further life affirming Karma (II=X) is produced, and therefore no future Birth and Suffering will arise again. In order to demonstrate this, it is indeed necessary—against those aforementioned interpreters—to speak of three successive lives, of past, present, and future life. And this is not "merely a commentarial interpretation", but it is also clearly, in a most unambiguous manner, supported by canonical Sutta texts, e.g., the Mahā-Nidāna Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya, where it is said :

"Once all Ignorance (I) and Clinging (IX) are extinguished, neither karmically meritorious, nor imperturbable Karma-formations (II=X) are produced, and thus no Consciousness (III=IX) will spring up again in a new mother's womb."

And, *"For if Consciousness were not to appear in the mother's womb, would in that case Mentality and Corporeality (IV) arise?"* —

Now, let it here be said, once for all, that the Paṭicca-Samuppāda is nothing but the teaching of conditionality and interdependence of all the manifold phenomena of existence, that is, of everything that happens, be it in the realm of the physical, or the psychical. It shows how that combination of phenomena known by the 'conventional name' of 'I', 'person', etc., is not at all a mere play of blind chance, but how each phenomenon in this process of existence is entirely dependent upon other phenomena as its conditions, so that with the removal of those phenomena that form the conditions of rebirth and suffering, rebirth, and therewith also all suffering, will perforce cease and not arise again. And this is the vital point, the goal of the Buddha's teaching: deliverance from the cycle of rebirths with all its woe and suffering. Thus, the Dependent Origination serves to elucidate the second and third Noble Truth regarding the Origin and Extinction of Suffering, by explaining them from their very foundations upwards, and giving them a definite philosophical form.

Of the Sutta Piṭaka, it is the Nidāna Saṁyutta of SaṁyuttaNikāya (Nid.Samy.), and the Mahā Nidāna Sutta of Dīgha Nikāya (Nid. Sutta), which provide most details for an explanation of the Dependent Origination.

Of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, it is the Paccayākāra Vibhanga, and above all, the Paṭṭhāna, that come here into consideration. In the latter work, however, there is no express reference to the Paṭicca Samuppāda formula, but all conditioned phenomena are arranged there from a quite different point of view, that is, with reference to the 24 conditions (see below, First Chapter).

The most detailed, and coherent systematical exposition of the Dependent Origination is given in Visuddhi

Magga (The Path of Purification), Ch. XVII, on which, to a great part, the present essay has been based, whilst, at the same time, also the afore-mentioned, and other, canonical sources have been used. Moreover, I have consulted the commentaries on the Abhidhamma and the Visuddhi Magga, as well as Sinhalese treatises, as Dharmaratna's *Vishesa-vistarārtha-sahita-paṭicca-samuppādaya* and *Sattvotpatti-Viniscaya*, and others.

Hence, this short essay, being entirely based on authentic Pali texts and Commentaries, reflects the true position of Theravāda Buddhism in its canonical sources and in its well-tested exegetical works.

For the sake of brevity, often a terse diction has been adopted in this treatise. But a careful study and a growing familiarity with the true significance of the terms here employed, will finally make the subject matter quite intelligible and self-evident.

PATICCA—SAMUPPADA

The Dependent Origination

I-II. Avijjā-paccayā saṅkhārā
II-III. Saṅkhāra-paccayā viññāṇaṁ
III-I. Viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṁ
IV-V. Nāma-rūpa-paccayā saḷāyatanaṁ
V-VI. Saḷāyatana-paccayā phasso
VI-VII. Phassa-paccayā vedanā
VII-VIII. Vedanā-paccayā taṇhā
VIII-IX. Taṇhā-paccayā upādānaṁ
IX-X. Upādāna-paccayā bhavo
X-XI. Bhava-paccayā jāti
XI-XII. Jāti-paccayā maranaṁ

soka-parideva-dukkkha-domanassūpāyāsā sambhavanti.

Evaṃ-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.

Avijjāya tveva asesa-virāga-nirodhā saṅkhāra-nirodho, saṅkhāra-nirodhā viññāṇa-nirodho, viññāṇa-nirodhā nāmarūpa-nirodhā saḷāyatana-nirodho, saḷāyatana-nirodhā phassa-nirodho, phassa-nirodhā vedanā-nirodho, vedanā-nirodhā taṇhā-nirodho, taṇhā-nirodhā upādāna-nirodho, upādāna-nirodhā bhava-nirodho, bhava-nirodhā jāti-nirodho, jāti-nirodhā jarā-maraṇaṁ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassūpāyāsā nirujjhanti.

Evam-etassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hoti.

Translation

I - II. Through Ignorance (avijjā) conditioned are the Karma-Formations (saṅkhāra).

II - III. Through the Karma-Formations (saṅkhāra) conditioned is Consciousness (viññāṇa; in a new birth).

III - IV. Through Consciousness (viññāṇa) conditioned are Mentality and Corporeality (nāma-rūpa).

IV - V. Through Mentality and Corporeality (nāma-rūpa) conditioned are the six Sense-Bases (saḷāyatana).

V - VI. Through the six Sense-Bases (saḷāyatana) conditioned is Sense-Impression (phassa).

VI - VII. Through Sense-Impression (phassa) conditioned is Feeling (vedanā).

VII - VIII. Through Feeling (vedanā) conditioned is Craving (taṇhā).

VIII - IX. Through Craving (taṇhā) conditioned is Clinging (upādāna).

IX - X. Through Clinging (upādāna) conditioned is the Process of Becoming (bhava).

X - XI. Through the (karmic) Process of Becoming (bhava) conditioned is Rebirth (jāti).

XI - XII. Through Rebirth (jāti) conditioned are Decay and Death (jarā-maraṇa), sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

Thus arises this whole mass of suffering.

Through the entire fading away and extinction of this Ignorance, however, the Karma-formations become extinguished. Through extinction of the Karma-formations, Consciousness becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Consciousness, Mentality and Corporeality become extinguished. Through extinction of Mentality and Corporeality, the six Sense-Bases become extinguished. Through extinction of the six Sense-Bases, Sense-Impression becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Sense-Impression, Feeling becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Feeling, Craving becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Craving, Clinging becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Clinging, the Process of Becoming becomes extinguished. Through extinction of the Process of Becoming, Rebirth becomes extinguished. Through extinction of Rebirth, Decay and Death become extinguished, as well as sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.

Thus takes place the extinction of this whole mass of suffering.

CHAPTER I

In the 'Path of Purification' (Visuddhi Magga), ch. XVII, it is pointed out that, and the reason why, the Buddha employed various methods in dealing with the Paṭicca-Samuppāda. Four such methods are exemplified in that work.

The 1st and usual method leads in progressive order from I - XII; the 2nd, in progressive order from VII - XII; the 3rd, in retrogressive order from XII - I; the 4th, in retrogressive order from VIII - I. Besides these four, there are however, still other methods to be found in the

Sutta Piṭaka, e. g., one leading from III-XII (Nid. Samy. 49) and one from III-XII (ib. 43). In the Vibhanga of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, even 12 different methods are given. In the following, examples are quoted for the four first-mentioned methods.

(1st method). This is the usual twelve-link formula preceding this chapter.

(2nd method). "And whilst approving of the Feeling (VII) and cherishing it Craving springs up. But craving for Feelings means Clinging, and through Clinging conditioned is the Process of Becoming, through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth, and through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (XII), sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus arises this whole mass of suffering" (Majjh. No. 38).

(3rd method). "Through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (XII) : thus it was said. But are, O monks, Decay and Death really conditioned through Rebirth, or not? Or how is it?"—"Decay and Death, O Lord, are conditioned through Rebirth. Thus we think."—"Through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth: thus it was said. ..... Through Ignorance (I) conditioned are the Karma-Formations: thus it was said .... (etc.). (ib.)

(4th method). "Through what, O monks, are those four nutriments — material food, sense-impression, mental volition, consciousness—conditioned, what is their origin, how are they produced, how do they arise? Through Craving (VIII) are these four nutriments conditioned. ... Through what, O monks, is Craving conditioned.....? Through Feeling..... Through what is Feeling conditioned .....etc. ..... are the Karma-Formations conditioned.....? Through Ignorance (I) ....." (Nid. Samy. No. 11).

Before explaining the 11 propositions in the basic formula of Dependent Origination, it will be necessary for a full understanding of the relationship and interdependence of its 12 constituent links to give the reader an idea of the various ways, in which they are conditioned, i. e., of the 24 modes of conditionality (or, for short, Conditions), which are enumerated and described in the last book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, the Paṭṭhāna, the Book of Origination.

The 24 Conditions (Paccaya)

1. Root Condition		. . . Hetu-paccaya
2. Object	,,	. . . Ārammaṇa-paccaya
3. Predominance condition		. . . Adhipati ,,
4. Proximity	,,	. . . Anantara ,,
5. Contiguity	,;	. . . Samanantara ,,
6. Co-nascence	,,	. . . Sahajāta ,,
7. Mutuality	,,	. . . Aññamaññā ,,
8. Support	,,	. . . Nissaya ,,
9. Decisive Support	,,	. . . Upanissaya ,,
10. Pre-nascence	,,	. . . Purejāta ,,
11. Post-nascence	,,	. . . Pacchājāta ,,
12. Frequency	,,	. . . Āsevana ,,
13. Karma	,,	. . . Kamma ,,
14. Karma-result	,,	. . . Vipāka ,,
15. Nutriment	,,	. . . Āhāra ,,
16. Faculty	,,	. . . Indriya ,,
17. Jhäna	,,	. . . Jhāna ,,
18. Path	,,	. . . Magga ,,

19.	Association	„	. . .	Sampayutta	„
20.	Dissociation	„	. . .	Vippayutta	„
21.	Presence	„	. . .	Atthi	„
22.	Absence	„	. . .	Natthi	„
23.	Disappearance	„	. . .	Vigata	„
24.	Non-disappearance	„	. . .	Avigata	„

These 24 conditions do not necessarily exclude one another, as we shall see later on. Some are even fully identical with each other. All these 24 conditions, according to the Abhidhammattha-Sangaha, may be reduced to only four, namely: Object (2), Decisive Support (9), Karma (13), and Presence (21).

1. Root-condition: *Hetu-paccaya.*

Just as a tree rests on its roots and cannot exist without them, so are all karmically wholesome (*kusala*) phenomena dependent on the presence of three wholesome motives, or Roots (*hetu*, or *mula*): Greedlessness (unselfishness), Hatelessness (*good-will*), or undeludedness (wisdom), and the 3 karmically unwholesome phenomena on the presence of unwholesome motives, or Roots: Greed, Hatred, or Delusion (*lobha, dosa, moha*).

Thus, to the associated wholesome or unwholesome mental phenomena as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced by them, these 6 phenomena are said to be a condition by way of Root.

2. Object-condition: *Ārammaṇa-paccaya.*

Just as a weak man must lean upon his crutches to be able to walk, so do the 6 sense-objects (*ārammaṇa*, lit. 'props' or 'supports')—i.e. the visible object, sound, odour, taste, tangible object, and mind-object, be they past,

present, or future—form the props or supports to the corresponding 6 kinds of consciousness and the mental phenomena associated therewith.

Thus they are said to be to consciousness a condition by way of Object.

3. Predominance-condition: *Adhipati-paccaya.*

The 4 predominant factors are: concentrated Intention, concentrated Consciousness, concentrated Energy, concentrated Investigation *(chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṁsa).* Whenever through the predominance of one of these factors a state of consciousness comes to arise, then this factor forms to consciousness and its concomitant mental phenomena an aid, or a condition, by way of Predominance.

4. Proximity-condition: *Anantara-paccaya.*

Immediately upon eye-consciousness *(cakkhu-viññāṇa)* there follows the mind-element (*mano-dhātu),* and immediately upon the mind element there follows the mind-consciousness-element *(mano-viññāṇa-dhātu)* etc. (s.Second Chapter, section II). Just so it is with ear-consciousness etc.

Thus, eye-consciousness and its concomitant phenomena are to the mind-element etc.—and in the same way, the mind-element to the mind-consciousness-element, and all the preceding phenomena to all the immediately succeeding phenomena,—a condition by way of proximity. Therefore, whenever in proximity to wholesome or unwholesome phenomena, other phenomena do arise, then the former phenomena are to the latter phenomena said to be a condition by way of proximity, without which the latter phenomena cannot arise.

5. Contiguity-condition: *Samanantara-paccaya.*

This condition is identical with the foregoing and only different in name.

6. Co-nascence condition: *Sahajāta-paccaya.*

Just as the burning lamp is a condition for light, so are the 4 mental groups (feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness) one to another a condition by way of their Co-nascence or simultaneous arising.

That means, none of these phenomena can arise alone. If any of them arises, the others also do so simultaneously, so that the arising of any of them is conditioned through the simultaneous arising of the others. The same relationship exists between the 4 elements (solid, liquid, heat, motion), and—but only at the moment of conception—also between corporeality (*rūpa*) and mentality (*nāma*).

7. Mutuality-condition: *Aññamaññapaccaya.*

All afore-mentioned co-nascent phenomena (No. 6) are, as a matter of course, also conditioned by way of Mutuality.

8. Support-condition: *Nissaya-paccaya.*

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena in the sense of a foundation or support, just as the trees have the earth as their foundation, or as an oilpainting rests on the canvas.

Thus, all the above co-nascent (No. 6) and mutually (No. 7) conditioned phenomena are one to another also a condition by way of Support. Also the 6 physical bases of consciousness (eye, ear, nose, tongue. body, and the physical organ of the mind) are to the 6 kinds of consciousness (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness etc.) a condition by way of Support.

9. Decisive Support condition: *Upanissaya-paccaya.*

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena as a powerful and decisive support or

inducement. It is of 3 kinds: Decisive Support (1) by way of Object (*ārammaṇupanissaya*), (2) by way of Proximity (*anantarupanissaya*), (3) by way of Natural Condition (*pakaṭupanissaya*).

(1) If, e.g, after having performed a wholesome or an unwholesome deed, one is intensively reflecting on this deed as object, it becomes a strong and decisive support by way of Object (s. 2).

(2) Any preceding wholesome phenomenon is to any succeeding wholesome phenomenon.....to some of the succeeding unwholesome phenomena.....to any succeeding neutral phenomenon etc., etc., a Decisive Support by way of Proximity (s. 4.)

(3) Good or bad qualities, as faith, morality, learnedness, deludedness, etc., are a Decisive Support by way of Natural Condition. Moreover, anything whatever—past, present or future, real or imaginary—may become a decisive condition to our mind and body, e. g. the desired future health or wealth, or even Nirvana, may become a decisive condition to our present exertions.

10. Pre-Nascence-condition: *Purejāta-paccaya*.

The 6 physical sense-organs (s. 8), as well as the 5 physical sense-objects (visible object, sound etc), are to the corresponding kinds of consciousness (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, etc.) a condition by way of Pre-Nascence. In other words, eye-consciousness etc. cannot arise without the pre-arising, or pre-existence, of the physical organs and physical objects. At the moment of conception of a being, hower, mind-consciousness is co-nascent with the physical organ of mind, as mind-consciousness arises at the very moment of conception.

11. Post-Nascence-condition: *Pacchā-jāta-paccaya.*

Consciousness and its concomitant mental phenomena are to this already-born body a condition by way of Post-Nascene, aiding the body in the sense of a prop, or support.

12. Frequency-condition: *Āsevana-paccaya.*

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is helping towards the competency and strength of the contiguous phenomena by way of Frequency, just as in reading a book, all the preceding applications to books, etc., do. It is threefold: by way of wholesome, unwholesome, or mere functional 'impulsive moments' (*javana*, s. Second Chapter, II-III, note). As it is said in Tika-Paṭṭhāna: "All the preceding wholesome phenomena are to all the succeeding wholesome phenomena a condition by way of Frequency, etc."

13. Karma-condition : *Kamma-paccaya.*

Volition (*cetanā*)—manifested in wholesome or unwholesome bodily, verbal, or purely mental Action (Pāli *kamma*)—is to the karma-resultant (*vipāka*) 4 mental groups (s. 6), as well as to those corporeal phenomena due to Residual karma (*kaṭattā*), a condition by way of Karma.

Kaṭattā = katassa bhāvena, lit. "through having been done," refers to such minor wholesome or unwholesome acts as have not yet produced results.

14. Karma-Result-condition. *Vipāka-paccaya.*

Karma-result (vipāka) is a condition which, by its passive nature, is supporting the other karma-resultant phenomena in their passivity (effortless calmness' says Paṭṭhāna). As it is said (ib.): "The 4 mental groups, in so far as they as Karma-results, are one to another a condition by way of Karma-result."

15. Nutriment-condition : *āhāra-paccaya.*

There are 4 nutriments— (1) material food, (2) sense-impression (*phassa*), (3) mind-volition (*mano-sañcetanā*), (4) consciousness (*viññāṇa*)—which are aiding the corporeal and uncorporeal phenomena in the sense of a support, or prop. Material food is the necessary condition for the support of this body, whilst 2-4 are the nutrient conditions to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena (e.g. bodily and verbal intimation) produced thereby (Tika-Paṭṭhāna.)

By the 3rd nutriment 'Mind-volition', according to the Commentary to Abhidhammattha-Sangha VII, we have to understand wholesome and unwholesome Karma; whilst the 4th nutriment 'Consciousness' refers to Rebirth-consciousness, i.e. that state of consciousness that arises at the moment of conception of a being.

16. Faculty-condition : *Indriya-paccaya.*

There are 20 Faculties—physical, mental or moral—which are a condition in helping or influencing other phenomena in the sense of Predominance (s. 3). They are:— the 6 sense faculties: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; vitality (either physical or mental); the 5 faculties of feeling: bodily pleasant and painful feeling, gladness, sadness, indifferent feeling; the 5 ethical faculties: faith, energy, attentiveness, concentration, wisdom; further, 3 supramundane faculties possessed by the 4 kinds of Holy Men (see my Guide through the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka, II 5).

The five physical sense-faculties (eye, ear, etc.) are a condition only to mental phenomena (eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness etc.), whilst the remaining faculties may be sometimes a condition to physical phenomena as well.

So is, e.g., the physical vitality to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (s. 13) a condition by way of faculty, without which those corporeal phenomena would not arise. The mental and moral faculties are a condition to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced thereby.

17. Jhāna-condition: *Jhāna-paccaya*

Jhāna is here to be understood in its widest sense as a combination of certain mental constituents due to that concentration of mind which is an indispensable factor in any state of consciousness, be it karmically wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral; the karmically-neutral Jhāna is either a Karma-result (*vipāka*), or a mere functional state as in the case of the Arahat. There are altogether 7 Jhāna-constitutents: Thought-conception, Discursive Thinking, Interest, Joy, Sadness, Indifference, Concentration. In joyful consciousness of the sense-phere (*kāmāvacara*), as well as in the first Jhāna of the form-sphere (*rūpāvacara*), 5 Jhäna-constitutents are present, to wit:—Thought-Conception, Discursive Thinking, Rapture, J oy, One-pointedness of mind (*vitakka, vicāra, pīti, sukha, citt'ekaggatā=samādhi*).

These phenomena are to their concomitant mental groups, as well as to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (s. 13), a condition by way of Jhāna.

18. Path-condition: *Magga-paccaya.*

The 12 constitutents, of which some belong to the right, some to the wrong path, are:—wisdom, thought-conception, right speech, right bodily action, right livelihood; energy, attentiveness, concentration; wrong views, wrong speech, wrong bodily action, wrong livelihood.

Thought-conception, energy, attentiveness and concentration may be either karmically wholesome (right), unwholesome (wrong), or neutral (as in the case of the Arahat).

These constituents, be they karmically wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral, are to their concomitant mental phenomena, as well as to the corporeal phenomena produced thereby, a condition by helping them in the sense of a release from this or that.

Within the above corporeal phenomena are, according to the Paṅha-vära of Kusalattika-Paṭṭhāna, also included the corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (s. 13).

19. Association-condition: *Sampayutta-paccaya.*

A phenomenon which by its association is aiding other phenomena is called an Association-condition. Thus, the 4 mental groups which are arising simultaneously are one to another a condition by way of Association. Cp. 6, 7.

20. Dissociation-condition: *Vippayutta-paccaya.*

This condition refers to a phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena by not having the same base (eye, ear etc.) and object (visible object, sound etc.) Hence; the corporeal phenomena are to the mental phenomena, and the mental phenomena to the corporeal phenomena, a condition by way of Dissociation. It is threefold: co-nascent, post-nascent, or pre-nascent. As it is said in Paṭṭhāna:

"The 'co-nascent' wholesome (mental) groups are to the corporeal phenomena produced by mind a condition by way of Dissociation. So are the 'post-nascent' wholesome groups to this pre-nascent body."

In the Saha-jāta-Vibhanga it is said: "The karma-resultant *(vipāka)* neutral groups at the moment of conception are to those corporeal phenomena due to residual Karma (s. 13) a condition by way of Dissociation. And the (mental) groups are to the physical base (of mind), just as the latter is to the (mental) groups, a condition by way of Dissociation."

Further it is said in the Paṅha-vāra of Kusala-ttika-Patthana: "The 'pre-nascent' physical eye-base etc. is to eye-consciousness etc. a condition by way of Dissociation."

21. Presence-condition: *Atthi-paccaya.*

This condition refers to a phenomenon which by its presence—being either pre-nascent, or co-nascent–is aiding certain other phenomena as a support.

For example, the 4 simultaneously arising mental groups are one to another a condition by way of presence, i. e. the existence of any of the groups is dependent on the presence of the other groups. The same applies to the 4 primary physical elements, whilst the presence of corporeality is a condition to mentality. Also consciousness and the mental phenomena are to the corporeal phenomena produced by mind a condition by way of presence. So are the 4 physical elements to the derived corporeal phenomena, the 5 sense-organs and objects ('pre-nascent') to the five kinds of sense-consciousness (eye-consciousness etc.), and the physical organ of mind to mind-consciousness.

22. Absence-condition: *Natthi-paccaya.*

This condition refers to just passed (*samanantara*) mental phenomena, which through their absence are aiding the mental phenomena immediately following after them, by giving them an opportunity to arise.

Thus, the consciousness and mental phenomena which have just passed, are to the presently arisen consciousness and mental phenomena a condition through their absence. That means, the present consciousness is conditioned through the absence of the past consciousness.

23. Disappearance-condition: *Vigata-paccaya.*

In as much as those last mentioned phenomena are by their disappearance giving other phenomena the opportunity to arise, they are called also a condition by way of Disappearance.

24. Non-Disappearance-condition: *A-Vigata-paccaya.*

This condition ts identical with the Presence-condition (s. 21), and refers to the same phenomena.

CHAPTER II

Explanation of the formula of Dependent Origination.

I-II. Through Ignorance conditioned are the Karma-Formations *(Avijjā-paccayāsankhārā).*

'IGNORANCE' *(avijjā)* is in the Sutta-piṭaka explained as not understanding the 4 Noble Truths regarding suffering, its origin, its extinction, and the path leading to its extinction; and in the Abhidhamma-piṭaka, further, as not understanding the past, future and both the past and future existence, and as not understanding the Dependent Origination of all the phenomena of existence.

By 'FORMATIONS' (*sankhārā*) are here meant the Karma-Formations, i. e. the rebirth-producing volitions *(cetanā)* manifested in bodily, verbal, or purely mental actions (Pāli *kamma*, Sanskrit *karma*). They are either: (1) meritorious (*puññābhisankhāra*), as such appertaining either to the sense sphere, or to the Jhānas of the form-sphere; (2) demeritorious (*apuññābhisankhāra*), appertaining only to the sense-sphere; or (3) imperturbab'e (*āneñjābhisankhāra*), appertaining to the four Jhānas of the formless-sphere. (1) and (3) are worldly wholesome (*lokiya-kusala*), and (2) karmically unwholesome (*akusala*). Karmically neutral, as well as supramundane wholesome *lokuttara-kusala)* states, do not come into consideration) here, as they are no condition for rebirth.

(Meritorious Karma-Formations). Ignorance may be to the meritorious Karma-formations a condition (a) by way of Object (s.2), or (b) by way of Decisive Support (s.9(1)).

(a) For example, if we take our own, or another person's Ignorance, as Object of our contemplation, considering it as something evil and rejectable, then we thereby produce meritorious volitions, meritorious Karma-Formations. In this case Ignorance is to these meritorious Karma-Formations—belonging to this sense-sphere—a condition through being the 'Object' of our contemplation.

Or, when with Jhāna-vision (in the form-sphere) we recognize Ignorance in another person's mind, at that time the thus produced meritorious Karma-Formations in the form sphere are dependent on Ignorance as their 'Object.'

(b) But if, in order to overcome Ignorance, we are induced to perform meritorious deeds or practise self-control—belonging to the sense-sphere—or attain the

Jhānas of the form sphere, in that case all these meritorious Karma-Formations produced thereby are dependent on Ignorance as their 'Decisive Support' (*upanissaya*).

(Demeritorious Karma-Formations). If, however, through thinking on a state of Ignorance, greed or any other demeritorious phenomena are springing up, then these demeritorious Karma-Formations are dependent on Ignorance, are conditioned through Ignorance by way of 'Object' (*ārammaṇa*).

Or, if we pay great attention to that state of Ignorance as object, concentrate our mind on it, and enjoy it by way of greed, etc., then 'Ignorance is to these demeritorious Karma-Formations a condition by way of 'Predominating Object (*ārammaṇādhipati*; s, 2 and 3), and by way of 'Decisive Support through Object' (*ārammaṇupanissaya*; s. 9 (1)).

Or if, blinded and impelled by Ignorance, one commits crimes, or any other demeritorious actions, then these demeritorious Karma-formations are conditioned through Ignorance by being their 'Decisive Support.'

The Ignorance bound up with each immediately Impulsive moment, is to the demeritorious Karma-Formations of each immediately following Impulsive moment (*javana*; s. II) a condition by way of Proximity, Contiguity, by way of Decisive Support through Contiguity (s. 9 (12)), by way of Frequency (s. 12), Absence (s. 22), and Disappearance (s. 23).

Whilst doing any demeritorious action, at that moment Ignorance is to the *associated* demeritorious Karma-Formations a condition by way of Root, Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presencc and Non-Disappearance.

(Imperturbable Karma-Formations). To the imperturbable Karma-Formations Ignorance may be a condition only by way of Decisive Support. If namely for the purpose of overcoming Ignorance, we produce the 4 *Jhānas* of the Formless sphere, then these Imperturbable Karma-Formations of the formless sphere depend on Ignorance as their 'Decisive Support.'

Here I wish to call attention to the fact that Ignorance, though being the main condition, is in no way the only condition to the Karma-Formations, and so it is in all other cases. Each of the 12 conditionally arising phenomena of the Paticca-Samuppada is dependent on various conditions besides that given in the formula, and all are inter-related and interdependent in manifold ways.

II - III. Through the Karma-Formations conditioned is Consciousness *(Sankhāra-paccayā Viññāṇam)*

Here, by CONSCIOUSNESS (*viññāṇa*) are meant only those classes of consciousness which are the results (*vipāka*) of wholsesome or unwholesome Karma done in a former existence, namely:— eye-, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-consciousness (i.e. visible sensation, audible sensation, etc.) with either desirable, or undesirable objects, according to whether they are the results of wholesome or of unwholesome Karma; further the Mind-element (*mano-dhātu*), i. e., Recipient Consciousness (*sampaṭicchana*), receiving the sense-object and being either the result of wholesome or unwholesome Karma-; further, the *Investigating* (*santīrana*) and *Registering (tad ārammaṇa)* Mind-Consciousness-Element *(mano-viññāṇa-dhātu)* being unaccompanied by moral Roots, which, as result of wholesome Karma, is accompanied either by gladness or indifference, and, as

result of unwholesome Karma, is accompanied by indifference-; further those 8 karma-resultant lofty states of Registering-, Rebirth-, Death-, and Sub-Consciousness which are accompanied by moral roots, greedlessness and hatelessness (*alobha*, *adosa*), and either associated with knowledge or not, accompanied by gladness or indifference, premeditated or not; further the karma-resultant consciousness in the form-sphere and formless sphere of existence due to the Jhanas practised in a previous birth (s. Dhamma-Sangani, or my Guide through the Abhidhamma-Pitaka, I).

In the preceding para, reference has been made to the momentary stages within the process of a single unit of cognition (*citta-vithi*; cognitive seriss). Though these stages are already indicated in the canonical Dhamma Sangani, they have received nemenclature and detailed treatment only in the commentarial Abhidhamma literature. In a single process of sense experience, taking visual consciousness as an example, the following stages, or phases, are distinguished :

As soon as the visible object enters the field of presentation, there occurs in (1) Subconsciousness (*bhavanga*) (2) a Perturbation (*bhavanga-calana*) and (3) a Breaking-off of Subconsciousness (*bhavangupaccheda*), which in rapid succession is followed by (4) Advertance to the threshold of the sense stimulus (*pancadvaravajjana*), (5) Eye-consciousness (*cakkhu-vinnana*), (6) Recipient consciousness (*sampaticchana-citta*), (7) Investigating consciousness (*santirana-citta*), (8) Determining consciousness (*votthapana-citta*), (9) the Impulsive moments (*javana-citta*), and finally (10) the Registering consciousness (*tadarammana*, lit. 'that object'), after which the whole sinks again below the threshold of full consciousness, and gets immerged in Sub-consciousness — 6 is called Mind-element (*mano-dhatu*), 7 -10 Mind-Consciousness-element (*mano-vinnana-dhatu*).

Hence the Karma-Formations are to all the afore-mentioned karma-resultant classes of consciousness (which include Rebirth-Consciousness, *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*) a condition by way of Karma (s. 13), and thus also a condition by way of

Decisive Support. For it is said in the Tika-Paṭṭhāna: "Wholesome and Unwholesome Karma (*kamma*) is to its result (*vipāka*) a condition by way of Decisive Support."

Thus, the Karma-Formations are to Rebirth-consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*), too, a condition by way of Decisive Support.

Rebirth-consciousness, which of course is a mind-consciousness (*mano-vinnana*) arises at the very moment of conception.

In the Sutta it is said : "Once all (I) Ignorance and Clinging is extinguished, neither karmically meritorious, nor demeritorious, nor imperturbable (II) Karma-Formations are produced, and thus no (III) Consciousness will spring up again in a new mother's womb" (Nid. Samy. No. 51).

III - IV. Through Consciousness conditioned are Mentality and Corporeality (*Viññāṇa-paccayā Nāma-rūpam*).

"For, if Consciousness were not to appear in the mother's womb, would in that case Mentality and Corporeality arise?" (Nid. Sutta). "Just as two bundles of reed leaning one against the other, so are Mentality and Corporeality dependent on Consciousness." (Nid. Samy. No. 67).

'Mentality' (*nāma*) refers here only to 3 of the mental groups, i.e. feeling, perception and mental formations, for the 4th, the consciousness-group, has already been mentioned as the condition to the 3 other groups and corporeality. (Apart from the Paṭicca-samuppāda formula, Mentality, or *nāma*, is a name for all 4 mental groups).

'Corporeality' *(rūpa)* comprises the 4 primary physical elements—solid, liquid, heat, motion—and all the corporeal phenomena derived therefrom.

In the Sutta it is said :

"Feeling, perception, volition, sense-impression, mental reflection: these are called Mentality. The 4 primary elements and the corporeality derived therefrom: this is called corporeality" (Majjhima-Nikāya 9).

(Consciousness and Mentality). At conception, or during life-continuity, Rebirth-Consciousness or some other karma-resultant class of consciousness, are to the simultaneously arising 3 mental groups ('Mentality') a condition by way of Co-Nascence (s. 6), Mutuality (s. 7), Support (s. 8), Association (s. 19), Karma-Result (s. 14), Nutriment (here consciousness; s. 15), Faculty (mind-faculty; s. 16), Presence (s. 21), and Non-Disappearance (s. 24).

(Consciousness and Corporeality). Consciousness is to the 6 physical sense-organs (corporeality), only when they first arise, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Karma-Result, Nutriment, Faculty (mind-faculty), Dissociation (s. 20), Presence, Non-Disappearance, and Mutuality. To the remaining corporeal phenomena it is a condition in the same ways, excepting only Mutuality.

Karmic Consciousness, i.e. consciousness accompanied by rebirth-producing wholesome or unwholesome volitions, — at the stage of Impulsive moments; s. II-III — is to the karma-produced Corporeality (i.e. the physical changes arising from moment to moment during life-continuity) a condition by way of Decisive Support (s. 9).

There are many more ways, in which the numerous Corporeal and Mental phenomena are dependent on the

various kinds of karma-resultant Consciousness. A detailed explanation is given in Paṭṭhāna.

IV - V. Through Mentality and Corporeality conditioned are the 6 Sense Bases (*Nāma-Rūpa-paccayā Saḷāyatanam*).

The 6 Sense Bases (*āyatana*) are a name for the 5 physical sense-organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body) and the Mind-Base (*manāyatana*), the latter being a collective term for the 5 kinds of sense consciousness (eye-consciousness etc.), the mind-element (*mano-dhātu*) and the mind-consciousness-element (*mano-viññāṇa-dhātu*). Cf. II - III.

As condition to the Sense Bases, Mentality (*nāma*) again refers to the above mentioned 3 mental groups, whilst Corporeality (*rūpa*) refers to the 4 primary physical elements, the 6 physical seats (*vatthu*) of consciousness (i. e. eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and physical seat of mind) and the physical life-faculty.*

(Mentality and Mind-Base). The 3 mental groups ('Mentality') are a condition only to the 6th Base, the Mind-Base (*manāyatana*), as it is said in Vibhanga: "Through Mentality (*nāma*) conditioned is the sixth Base (*ṇāma-paccayā chaṭṭhāyatanaṁ.*)"

At the moment of conception the 3 mental groups ('Mentality') are to the mind-Base a condition in at last 7 ways, i. e. by way of Co-Nascence (6), Mutuality (7), Support (8), Association (19), Karma-Result (14; s. II), Presence (21), and Non-Disappearance (24); some mental

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* The physical seat of mind must not be confounded with the Mind-base (*manāyatana*); cf preceding paragraph.

phenomena ('Mentality') also by way of Root (e. g. karmically neutral greedlessness, etc. included in the group of Mental Formations), or by way of Nutriment (e. g. Mind-Volition and Mind-Impression; s. 15).

Also during life-continuity, karma-resultant Mentality is to the Mind-Base a condition in the above ways, whilst the meritorious and demeritorious Mentality is to it a condition in the same ways, excepting only Karma-result; some non-resultant (meritorious, etc.) mental phenomena may be to the Mind-Base a condition by way of Root, some by way of Nutriment.

(Mentality and 5 physical Bases). Karma-resultant Mentality dependent on the 5 sensitive organs (e.g. Feeling or Perception produced through eye-impression, ear-impression, etc.) is during life-continuity, to the 5 physical sense-organs ('Bases') a condition by way of Post-Nascence (11), Dissociation (20), Presence (21), and Non-Disappearance (23).

Also karmically wholesome and unwholesome Mentality is to the 5 physical sense-organs ('Bases') a condition in the above four ways.

(Corporeality and Mind Base). The physical seat of mind (included in 'Corporeality') is, at the moment of conception, to the Mind-Base a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. The mind namely is functioning from the very first moment of conception of a being. Hence, at conception, and only at conception, does the physical organ of the mind arise simultaneously with mind-consciousness ('Co-Nascence') both being conditions one to another, whilst the physical organ of the mind is a Support (or foundation) to the Mind-base by its Presence and Non-Disappearance.

(Corporeality and 5 physical Bases). The 4 primary physical elements, i. e. the solid, liquid, heat and motion (included in 'Corporeality'), are to any of the 5 physical sense-organ Bases (i. e. eye, ear, etc.), only when they first arise, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. Of the 5 sentient organs only the body-sensitivity appears at conception, hence simultaneously with the four elements ('Co-Nascence'), whilst the other organs appear later. The existence of all these 5 physical Bases, however, is dependent on the Support, Presence and Non-Disappearance of the 4 primary physical elements.

The physical Life-Faculty (included in 'Corporeality') is, at conception and during life-continuity, to the 5 physical sense-organ Bases (eye, ear, etc.) a condition by way of Presence, Non-Disappearance and Faculty. In other words, the 5 sense-organs are dependent on the Faculty of physical life, on its Presence and Non-Disappearance.

Bodily Nutriment (included in 'Corporeality') is to the 5 sense-organ Bases, during life-continuity, a condition by way of Presence, Non-Disappearance and Nutriment. In other words, the 5 sense-organs can exist only as long as the material nutriment is present.

(The 6 sense organs and Mind Base). The 5 physical sense-organs (included in 'Corporeality') are, during life-continuity, to the 5 kinds of sense-consciousness, as eye-consciousness, etc. (included in the Mind-Base), a condition by way of Support, Pre-Nascence, Faculty, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. In other words, these five kinds of consciousness cannot arise without the Support, the Pre-Arising, the Presence, and the Faculty of the 5 physical sense-organs.

The physical organ of mind (included in 'Corporeallty') is, during life-continuity, to Recipient consciousness and mind-consciousness (included in the 'Mind-Base'; s. above) a condition by way of Support, Pre Nascence, Dissociation, Presence, and Non-Disappearance, i. e. the arising of these two kinds of consciousness depends—during life-continuity —on the Support, Pre-arising and Presence of the physical organ of the mind.

V - VI. Through the 6 Sense Bases conditioned is Sense-Impression. *(Saḷāyatana-paccayā Phasso).*

The 6 kinds of Sense Impression (*phassa*) are: eye-impression (visual contact), ear-impression, nose-impression tongue-impression, body-impression, mind-impression, being either the results of wholesome or unwholesome Karma. They are associated with all the above-mentioned kinds of karma-resultant consciousness (s. II - III).

(5 sense-organ Bases) The 5 physical sense-organ Bases (eye, ear, etc.) are to the corresponding 5 kinds of sense-impression (eye-impression, etc.) a condition by way of Support, Pre-Nascence, Faculty, Dissociation, Presence, aud Non-Disappearance. Here it should be remembered that the sense-organ Bases are included also in the 20 'Faculties' (s. 16). Sense-Impression cannot take place without the physical organs having already arisen (Pre-Nascence), without their being 'present' etc.

(Mind-Base) The 5 classes of sense-consciousness, visual, etc. (included in the 'Mind-Base'), are to the corresponding karma-resultant Sense-Impressions a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Karma-Result, Nutriment, Faculty, Association, Presence, and Non-Disappearance.

Here again we have to remember that consciousness and its mental concomitants, hence also Sense-Impression, are all 'simultaneously arising' (Co-Nascence), 'mutually conditioned' and inseparably 'associated' with each other, and that the 5 kinds of sense-consciousness are all 'Karma-Results' and considered as 'Nutriment' (consciousness) and 'Faculties' (s. 16).

(5 physical object-Bases). The 5 physical sense-object Bases, as visible object, sound etc., are to the corresponding 5 Sense-Impressions a condition by way of Object, Pre-Nascence, and Non-Disappearance. That means, the existence of the 5 Sense-Impressions depends on the existence of the 5 physical Objects, on their having 'already arisen' (Pre-Nascence), on their 'not having disappeared'. For, if the 5 physical Objects have not already arisen, no corresponding Sense-Impressions will take place.

(6 object-Bases). The 6 objects, i.e. the physical objects, and the mind-object (which latter may be sometimes also a corporeal phenomenon), are to Mind-Impression a condition merely by way of Object, i.e. through their being its objects.

VI - VII. Through Sense-Impression conditioned is Feeling (*Phassa-paccayā Vedanā*).

There are 6 kinds of Feeling (*vedanā*): born of eye-impression, ear-impression, nose-impression, tongue-impression, body-impression, and mind-impression. With every kind of consciousness, Feeling is inseparably associated. Here, however, only the karma-resultant Feelings come into consideration, i.e. those Feelings which are associated with the above mentioned classes of karma-resultant consciousness (s. II-III) and karma-resultant sense-impressions (s. V-VI).

The 5 Sense-Impressions (i.e. eye-impression etc.) are to the corresponding 5 kinds of Feeling (i.e. born of eye-impression etc.) a condition in 8 ways, i.e. by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Karma-Result, Nutriment, Association, Presence, and Non-Disappearance. Here again the reader has to remember, that all the mental phenomena in one and the same state of consciousness, hence also the above Sense-Impressions and the corresponding five kinds of Feeling, are necessarily dependent one upon the other by their 'simultaneous arising' (Co-Nascence), their Presence, their Association etc.

To those karma- resultant Feelings, however, which arise along with the Recipient, Investigating, and Registering stages of consciousness, the 5 Sense-Impressions are a condition by way of Decisive Support. To Recipient Consciousness, however, they are a condition also by way of Contiguity.

Mind-Impression (*mano-samphassa*) is to the simultaneously arising karma-resultant Feelings of the sensuous sphere associated with Registering consclousness, a condition in the above 8 ways (i.e. by Co-Nascence etc.).

To those karma-resultant Feelings of the 3 spheres (the sensuous, form-and formless-sphere) that arise at conception, in sub-consciousness, and at death, as well as to those Feelings that arise along with the Registering consciousness at the mind-gate, to all those does Mind-Impression associated with the 'Advertence to the threshold of the mind' *(mano-dvārāvajjana)* constitute a condition by way of Decisive Support.

VII - VIII. Through Feeling conditioned is Craving

(Vedanā-paccayā Taṇhā)

With regard to the 6 objects, there are 6 kinds of Craving, i. e. craving, with regard to visible objects, sounds, odours, tastes, bodily sensations, and mind objects.

If, with regard to any of these objects Craving arises with the desire for sensual enjoyment, it is called 'Sensuous Craving' *(kāma-taṇhā)*. If it is connected with the belief in eternal personal existence, it is called 'Craving for Existence' *(bhava-taṇhā)*. If it is connected with the belief in annihilation of personal existence, it is called 'Craving for Annihilation' *(vibhava taṇhā)*.

Any Feeling associated with any karma-resultant consciousness is to Craving a condition by way of Decisive Support, irrespectively whether the feeling be agreeable, painful or indifferent. For even painful Feeling may be a condition to Craving, as dependent on painful Feeling there may arise the desire and craving for happiness.

VIII-IX. Through Craving conditioned is Clinging (*Taṇhā-paccayā Upādānaṁ*).

The 4 kinds of Clinging *(upādāna)* are: sensuous clinging *(kāmūpādāna)*, clinging to erroneous opinions *(diṭṭhūpādāna)*, clinging to mere rules and ritual *(sīlabbatūpādāna)*, clinging to the Ego belief *(attavādūpadāna)*.

Sensuous Craving *(kāma-taṇhā)* is to Sensuous Clinging *(kāmūpādāna)* a condition by way of Decisive Support. To the other 3 kinds of Clinging—if associated with it—it is a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presence, Non-Disappearance, and Root (greed); further, Craving may be to them a condition by way of Decisive Support, in which case, of course, it cannot be co-nascent etc.

IX-X. Through Craving conditioned is the Process of Existence (*Upādāna-paccayā Bhavo*).

The Process of Becoming *(bhava)* is of two kinds:—
(1) Karma-Process *(kamma-bhava)*, being the active side

of existence; (2) Rebirth-Process *(uppatti-bhava)*, being the passive (re-active), karma-resultant side of existence.

"(1) The Karma-Process consists of rebirth-producing volitions *(cetanā)* and the mental phenomena associated therewith, which all, combined together, are to be considered as Karma, or action (Pāli: *kamma*). As it is said in Vibhanga:—"What at that occasion is the Karma-Process? It is the meritorious, demeritorious, and imperturbable karma-formation (s. I-II). This is called the Karma-Process. Moreover, all action leading to rebirth is called Karma-Process."

Hence, 'Karma-Process' *(kamma-bhava)* is a collective name for rebirth-producing Volition *(cetanā)* and all the mental phenomena associated therewith, whilst the 2nd link of the formula, the Karma-Formations *(sankhāra)*, according to the Paṭisambhidā-Magga (Ñāṇakathā No. 4), designates the rebirth-producing Volitions *(āyuhana-sankhāra)* only.

(2) The Rebirth-Process, in short, comprises the karma-resultant *(vipāka)* groups of existence. In Vibhanga VI it is said:— "What on that occasion is the Rebirth-Process? There is the process of existence in the sensuous sphere, in the form-sphere, the formless sphere, the perception-sphere, the non-pereeption-sphere, the neither-perception-nor-non-perception-sphere, the one-group sphere (i.e. of the unconscious beings, possessing only one group, the Corporeality-group) the 5-group sphere (i. e. the sense-sphere and form-sphere): this is called the Rebirth-Process of Existence."

Now, impelled by 'Sensuous Clinging' *(kāmūpādāna)* one may produce a meritorious or demeritorious Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in the sensuous sphere. Or,

through sensuous clinging to happiness and joy (which one hopes to find in the form- or formless-sphere) one might practise the Jhanas of the form- or formless-sphere,' and thus be reborn in that special sphere. In that case, Sensuous Clinging would be a condition of that meritorious Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in one of these spheres.

Or, impelled by 'Clinging to Erroneous Oplnions' *(diṭṭhūpādāna)*, e.g. to belief that the Ego reaches extinction in one of the three spheres, one may produce a Karma-Process, that causes Rebirth in that special sphere. Thus, the Clinging to Erroneous Opinions is a condition to that Karma-Process, that causes Rebirth in one of these 3 spheres.

In a similar way, also 'Clinging to Rules and Ritual *(sīlabbatūpādāna)* and 'Clinging to the Ego Belief' (*attavādūpādāna*) may be a condition of such a Karma-Process that causes Rebirth in one of these 3 spheres.

To the existence in the form- and the formless-sphere, as well as to the wholesome Karma-Process and the Rebirth-Process included in the sensuous sphere, this fourfold Clinging is a condition only by way of Decisive Support.

In the Sensuous Existence these 4 kinds of Clinging are to the unwholesome Karma-Process, if associated therewith, a condition by way of Co-Nascence, Mutuality, Support, Association, Presence, Non-Disappearance and Root (greed); but if dissociated therewith, merely a condition by way of Decisive Support.

X-XI. Through the Process of Becoming conditioned is Rebirth *(Bhava-paccayā Jāti)*.

Birth (*jāti*) is here explained as the manifestation of the 5 groups of existence (corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness) at conception, which in thc world of men takes place in the mother's womb.

By the Process of Becoming (*bhava*) in this connection, i.e. as the condition to Rebirth, we have to understand the Karma-Process of Becoming (*kamma-bhava*).

This Karma-Process is to Rebirth a condition by way of Karma, and hence by way of Decisive Support (s. II-III).

To the question, how one could know whether the Karma-Process is really the condition of Rebirth, Visuddhi-Magga XVII gives the following answer:—

"Though the outward conditions may be absolutely the same, there still can be seen a difference in the beings with regard to the qualities, as wretched, noble, etc. Even though the outward conditions, such as sperma, and blood of father and mother, may be the same, there still can be seen that difference between the beings, even if they be twins. This difference cannot be without a cause, as it can be noticed at any time, and in any being. It can have no other cause than the Karma-Process. And, as in the own life-continuity of those reborn beings no other cause can be found, it must be due to the Karma-Process. Karma (action) namely is the cause for the difference amongst beings with regard to high and low, etc. Therefore the Buddha has said: "Karma divides the beings into high and low" (Majjhima Nikāya 135). In this sense we should understand that the Process of Becoming is the condition of Rebirth."

That in this ever-repeated process of Rebirth, in the absolute sense, no self, no Ego-entity is to be found besides these conditionally arising and passing phenomena, this truth is expressed by the Buddha in the following words:—

"To believe that the doer of the deed be the same as the one who experiences its result (in the next life): this is one extreme. To believe that the doer of the deed, and the

one who experiences its result, be two different persons: this is the other extreme. Both these extremes the Perfect One has avoided and taught the truth that lies in the middle of both, to wit: Through Ignorance conditioned are the Karma-Formations; through the Karma-Formations conditioned is Consciousness..... through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair" (Nid. Samy. No. 46).

"No doer of the deeds is found,
No one who ever reaps their fruits:
Empty phenomena roll on,
This view alone proves right and true.

"No god, no Brahma, can be found,
No maker of this wheel of life:
Empty phenomena roll on,
Dependent on conditions all."

(quoted in Visuddhi-Magga XIX).

XI-XII. Through Rebirth conditioned are Decay and Death (*Jāti-paccayā Jarā-maraṇam*).

Where there is no Rebirth, there is no Decay and Death, no sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. But where there is Rebirth, there also is Decay and Death. Thus Rebirth is to Decay and Death, etc., a condition by way of Decisive Support.

The following diagram shows at a glance the relationship of dependence existing between three successive lives :—

Past	1. Ignorance (*avijjā*) 2. Karma-Formations (*sankhāra*)	Karma-Process (*kamma-bhava*)
Present	3. Consciousness (*vinnāṇa*) 4. Mentality & Corporeality (*nāma-rūpa*) 5. The 6 Sense-Bases (*āyatana*) 6. Seuse-Impression (*phassa*) 7. Feeling (*vedanā*)	Rebirth-Process (*uppattl-bhava*)
	8. Craving (*taṇhā*) 9. Clinging (*upādāna*) 10. Process of Becoming (*bhava*)	Karma-Process (*kamma-bhava*)
Future	11. Rebirth (*jāti*) 12. Decay & Death (*jarā-maraṇa*)	Rebirth-Process (*uppatti-bhava*)

1-2 are identical with 8-10, as each of these 2 groups represents the Karma-Process, containing the 5 karmic causes of rebirth, to wit: 1. Ignorance, 2. Karma-Formations (rebirth-producing volitions), 8. Craving, 9. Clinging, and 10.Karma- Process (***avijjā, sankhāra, taṇhā, upādāna, kamma-bhava.***)

In the same way, 3-7 are identical with 11-12, as each of these two groups represents the Rebirth-Process, containing the 5 Karma-results, to wit: 3. Consciousness (rebirth, etc). 4. Mentality and Corporeality (conception),

5. the Bases, 6. Sense-Impression, 7. Feeling (*viññāṇa, nāma-rūpa, āyatana, phassa, vedanā*). Cf. Paṭisambhidā, Ñāṇakathā No. 4.

"Five causes were there in the past.
Five fruits we find in present life,
Five causes do we now produce,
Five fruits we reap in future life."

(*quoted in Vis. Magga* XVII).

In Nid. Samy. No. 34 there are given 77 kinds of knowledge regarding the Paṭicca-Samuppāda. They form 11 groups, corresponding to the 11 propositions of the formula, each with 7 kinds of knowledge. As all the 11 groups are in every respect throughout analoguous, I am giving here only the first group of seven kinds of knowledge, namely :

(1) that through Ignorance the Karma-Formations are conditioned ;

(2) that, if there is no Ignorance, there also are no Karma-Formations ;

(3) that also in the past the Karma-Formations were conditioned through Ignorance;

(4) that, if there had been no Ignorance, there also would have been no Karma-Formations;

(5) that also in the future the Karma-Formations will be conditioned through Ignorance;

(6) that, if there will be no Ignorance, there also will be no Karma-Formations;

(7) that even one's knowledge of the Fixity of this Law is subject to decay, disappearanee, waning and cessation.

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In the eleventh year of the Society's existence we have been gratified to note an appreciative response which assures us that not only the volume but also the quality of our output has kept well up to the standard of previous years. Here are a few extracts from the many letters received from abroad during the year :

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The total production since the inception of the Society in 1958 has been 1,079, 500 copies.

BOUND VOLUMES

The demand for the bound volumes of the Wheels and Bodhi Leaves and Selected Buddhist Texts greatly increased; and at times attention to requests had to be delayed owing to the pressure of work on our binders. These are valuable additions to home, public and institutional libraries. A reader in the U. S. A. remarked "I am naturally delighted with them. Thank you once again for the marvellous Treasure of Wisdom".

Translations

Ven. Piyadassi Thera's "Buddhism - A Living Message" - a special issue in the Bodhi Leaves series, was translated into Portuguese and published for free distribution in Brazil by the Buddhist Society. Our Society gave financial assistance towards this publication.

Ten titles of the WHEEL and BODHI LEAVES have been translated into French by Mme S. Stork, forming a volume of 221 pages under the title *Initiation au Bouddhisme* ('Introduction to Buddhism'). The book is issued by a leading French Publisher, Editions Albin Michel, Paris, and under the editorship of a famous writer, Jean Herbert. in a popular series of books on Eastern religion and philosophy, *Spiritualites Vivantes*. This publication is particularly welcome, as only a few books on Theravada Buddhism are available in the French language, as compared with those on Mahayana.

Several Bodhi Leaves and Wheels were translated and published in Indonesia at the 'Buddhis' Magazine Press.

Circulation

Our circulation figures have been greatly increased by a growing demand for our books from all over the world. To the readers in South America and the New African States where Buddhism is so little known, we are making an all-out effort to give the assistance they need in the study and practice of the Dhamma. It need hardly be mentioned that our service for answering questions on Buddhism by mail is open to them as it is to all, and we look forward to establishing friendly and helpful contacts with them through this medium.

Free Distribution Scheme

More literature was distributed under the Free Distribution Scheme in 1968. Liberal supplies were sent to Ceylon Embassies abroad, Buddhist Societies in foreign lands and to readers in countries with strict exchange controls.

Hospital Services conducted by the All Ceylon Buddhist Congress were furnished with ample supplies of our publications regularly as before.

Ceylon Hotels Corporation, the Kandy Hotels Co., Ltd., continue to be the recipients of our free literature for placing in their bed-rooms.

The Ceylon Tourist Board has made our books available to tourists interested in Buddhist Literature at its Information Centres in Colombo and Kandy.

We thank all these organizations for their kind assistance in the distribution.

Publicity

The advertisements for free Buddhist Literature continue to be inserted in the papers by our friend, Mr. B. P. Kirthisinghe, in U. S. A. and Mr. Vandariet in New Guinea; and now an enthusiastic new member, Mr. Bernard Long, advertises our Society for free literature in the 'Borneo Bulletin'. On requests received on the advertisements, liberal supplies of Wheels and Bodhi Leaves were sent. Our thanks to these friends.

We also wish to place on record our grateful thanks to the Editors of the "Middle Way" Buddhist Society, London and "Metta" Buddhist Society, New South Wales, for continuing to give free advertisements to the B.P.S.

Visitors

Many friends from England, Germany, Sweden, United States, Canada, Brazil, Japan, Austria, New Zealand and several other countries visited us. Among them were, Doctora Maria Das Dores Pereira of Brazil, Dr. Douglas M.C. Mac Ewan, Editor of 'Nexus, Ireland, Prof. John F. Kerr of Leicester University. Dr. G. C. Pande, Tagore Professor, Rajasthan University, India. Prof. John Lindsay Opie of Italy, Dr. John B. Carman of Harvard University, U.S.A., Dr. Heinz Bechert of Gottingen University, West Germany. Advocate Henning Sjostrom of Sweden.

Finance

The increase in Publication and Establishment Expenses resulting from the greater sctivity of the Society

was counterbalanced by increased subscriptions, donations and sales, and we closed the year with a favourable surplus.

Donations

The annual subsidy from the Department of Cultural Affairs has as in the previous years been our financial mainstay and we record our deep gratitude to the Government for this valuable support.

To the Presidents of the Rural Courts at Kuliyapitiya and Wariyapola who sent us a share of the Court fines awardable for charities, we now add the President of the Matugama Rural Courts. Sufficient quantities of Dhamma books are always made available to the Courts for distribution to the parties concerned.

We continue to receive the royalties on the "Heart of Buddhist Meditation" and the "Buddha's Ancient Path" so kindly turned over to us by the Venerable authors.

Subscriptions from members came in regularly and several special donations were received from friends both here in Ceylon and abroad. Among them may be mentioned Mrs. Somavati Meegama, Mr.N.Munasinghe, Mrs. Leela Jayatilaka, Mr. E. W. Balasuriya, Mrs. Snehalatha Amerasinghe, Mr. H. A. C. Wickremaratna, Mrs. G. A. Kingsley Perera, Mrs. Sita Wickremasuriya, Mr. Sumane Karunaratna (all of Ceylon) and Dr. Truong Nghia Hung (U.S.A.), Mr. George Murawski (Canada), Mrs. Maria Stolle (West Germany), Mr. John Booth (Canada), Mr. Lionel Hettihewa (Hongkong), Mrs. I. Koranyi (Switzerland), Mr. Larry M. Ray (U.S.A.), Miss Mary Mc Collum (U.S.A.).

To all of them and other donors we offer the merit of our service in spreading the Dhamma.

Acknowledgements

The editorial work continued to be in the masterly hands of the Venerable Nyanaponika Thera assisted by Mr. Francis Story (Anagarika Sugatananda), while the Sinhala publication 'Damsak' was edited by the Venerable Piyadassi Thera.

In October 1968, Mr. Francis Story began a lecture tour of the United States of America arranged for him by Dr. Ian Stevenson, Alumni Professor of Psychiatry, University of Virginia, with whom Mr. Story has collaborated in the study of claimed cases of rebirth in Asia. The lecture tour was sponsored by a number of organisations interested in comparative religion in that country. The tour lasting till December covered more than twenty cities of the United States and included lectures, Radio talks, and television interviews. Mr. Story met and renewed contact with a number of our friends and supporters.

Mr. T. B. Naranpanawe, retired Superintendent Investigation of the Post and Telecommunications Dept., very kindly responded to our request for his assistance in the work of the Society. We are happy to welcome him; and his help in the more responsible work has been invaluable.

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Puññānumodana

Again we have pleasure in thanking our Authors, our Staff, our Associate Members and donors, and all who have lent our Society their willing assistance during the past year. We share with them the merit of our work for the propagation of the Dhamma, and look forward to a long, friendly and fruitful association with them in the years to come.

R. Abeyasekera
P. B. Mudannayake
Honorary Secretaries.

P. O. Box 61, Kandy,
POSON. 1969.
(June)

To all of them and other donors we offer the merit of our service in spreading the Dhamma.

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