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THE SEVEN FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Satta Bojjhanga

by

PIYADASSI THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

Kandy Ceylon

Second Impression : 1960

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THE SEVEN FACTORS OF ENLIGHTENMENT

THE Tipiṭaka, the Buddhist canon, is replete with references to the factors of enlightenment expounded by the Enlightened One on different occasions under different circumstances. In the Book of the Kindred Sayings, V (*Saṃyutta Nikāya, Mahā Vagga*) we find a special section under the title *Bojjhaṅga Saṃyutta* wherein the Buddha discourses on the *bojjhaṅgas* in diverse ways. In this section we read a series of three discourses or sermons recited by Buddhists since the time of the Buddha as a protection (*paritta* or *pirit*) against pain, disease and adversity.

The term *bojjhaṅga* is composed of *bodhi + aṅga*. *Bodhi* denotes enlightenment, to be exact, insight concerned with the realization of the four Noble Truths: namely: the Noble Truth of Suffering; the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering; the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering; and the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering. *Aṅga* means factors or limbs. *Bodhi + aṅga* (*bojjhaṅga*), therefore, means the factors of enlightenment or the factors of insight, wisdom.

"*Bojjhaṅga! bojjhaṅga!* is the saying, Lord. Pray, Lord, how far is this name applicable?" queried a monk of the Buddha. "*Bodhāya saṃvattantīti kho bhikkhu tasmā bhojjhaṅgā ti vuccanti.*" 'They conduce to enlightenment, monk, that is why they are so called,' was the succinct reply of the Master.[1]

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1. *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, V.p. 72 (P.T.S.)

Further says the Buddha, "Just as, monks, in a peaked house all rafters, whatsoever go together to the peak, slope to the peak, join in the peak, and of them all the peak is reckoned chief, even so, monks, the monk who cultivates and makes much of the seven factors of wisdom, slopes to *Nibbāna*, inclines to *Nibbāna*, tends to *Nibbāna*."[1]

The seven factors are :

1. Mindfulness (*sati*)
2. Keen investigation of the *dhamma* (*dhammavicaya*)[2]
3. Energy (*viriya*)
4. Rapture or happiness (*pīti*)
5. Calm (*passaddhi*)
6. Concentration (*samādhi*)
7. Equanimity (*upekkhā*).

One of the discourses on the *Bojjhaṅgas* may be mentioned here. It begins :

"Thus I heard : At one time the Buddha was living at Rājagaha, at Veluvana, bamboo grove, in the squirrels' feeding-ground. At that time the Venerable Mahā Kassapa who was living in Pipphali Cave, was sick, stricken with a severe illness.

Then the Buddha rising from His solitude at eventide visited the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, took His seat, and spoke to the Venerable Mahā Kassapa in this wise :

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1. *Kindred Sayings*, V. p. 63.
2. *Dhamma* is a multisignificant term. Here it means mind and matter (*nāma-rupa*); *dhammavicaya* is the investigation or analysis of this conflux of mind and body, and all component and conditioned things.

"Well, Kassapa, how is it with you? Are you bearing up; are you enduring? Do your pains lessen or increase? Are there signs of your pains lessening and not increasing?"

"No, Lord, I am not bearing up, I am not enduring. The pain is very great. There is a sign not of the pains lessening, but of their increasing."

"Kassapa, these seven factors of enlightenment are well expounded by me, cultivated and much developed by me, and when cultivated and much developed they conduce to full realization, perfect wisdom, to *Nibbāna*. What are the seven?

1. Mindfulness. This, O Kassapa, is well expounded by me, cultivated and much developed by me, and when cultivated and much developed, it conduces to full realization, perfect wisdom, to *Nibbāna*.

2. Investigation of the *dhamma*. . . . . .
3. Energy. . . . . .
4. Rapture. . . . .
5. Calm. . . . . .
6. Concentration. . . . . .
7. Equanimity. O Kassapa, is well expounded by me. . . . .

These seven factors of enlightenment, verily, Kassapa, are well expounded, by me, cultivated and much developed by me, and when cultivated and much developed they conduce to full realization, perfect wisdom, to *Nibbāna*."—

"Verily, O Blessed One, they are factors of enlightenment! Verily, O Welcome One, they are factors of enlightenment!" uttered Mahā Kassapa. Thus spake the Buddha, and the Venerable Mahā Kassapa rejoicing welcomed the utterances of the Worthy One. And the Venerable Mahā Kassapa rose

from that illness. There and then that ailment of the Venerable Mahā Kassapa vanished."[1]

Another discourse (*Mahā Cunda Bojjhaṅga Sutta*) of the three mentioned above reveals that once the Buddha Himself was ill, and the Venerable Mahā Cunda recited the *Bojjhaṅgas*, factors of enlightenment, and that the Buddha's grievous illness vanished.[2]

Man's mind tremendously and profoundly influences and affects the body. If allowed to function viciously and entertain unwholesome and harmful thoughts, mind can cause disaster, nay even kill a being; but mind also can cure a sick body. When concentrated on right thoughts with right understanding, the effects mind can produce are immense.

"Mind not only makes sick, it also cures. An optimistic patient has more chance of getting well than a patient who is worried and unhappy. The recorded instances of faith healing include cases in which even organic diseases were cured almost instantaneously."[3]

Buddhism (*Buddha - dhamma*) is the teaching of enlightenment. One who is keen on attaining enlightenment, should first know clearly the impediments that block the path to enlightenment.

Life according to the right understanding of a Buddha is suffering and that suffering is based on ignorance or *avijjā*. Ignorance is the experiencing of that which is unworthy of experiencing, namely evil. Further it is the non-perception of the conglomerate nature of the aggregates; non-perception

1. *Saṃyutta* N., V., p. 79
2. *Saṃyutta* N., V. p. 81
3. Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (London, 1946), p. 259

of sense-organ and object in their respective and objective natures; non-perception of the emptiness or the relativity of the elements, non-perception of the dominant nature of the sense-controlling faculties, non-perception of the thus-ness—the infallibility—of the four Truths. And the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇāni*) are the nutriment of (or condition for) this ignorance. They are called hindrances because they completely close in, cut off and obstruct. They hinder the understanding of the way to release from suffering. These five hindrances are; sensuality (*kāmacchanda*); ill-will (*vyāpāda*); obduracy of mind and mental factors (*thīnamiddha*); restlessness and flurry (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) and doubt (*vicikicchā*).

And what is the nutriment of these hindrances? The three evil modes of life (*tīni duccaritāni*), bodily, vocal and mental wrong-doing. This threefold nutriment is in turn nourished by non-restraint of the senses (*indriya asaṃvaro*) which is explained by the commentator as the admittance of lust and hate into the six sense organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind.

The nutriment of non-restraint is shown to be lack of mindfulness and of complete awareness (*asati asampajañña*): in the context of nutriment the drifting away of the object (*dhamma*)—the lapsing from the mind, of the knowledge of the *lakkhaṇas* or Characteristics of Existence (Impermanence, Suffering and Voidness of Self), and forgetfulness of the true nature of things is the reason for non-restraint. It is when one does not bear in mind the transiency and the other characteristics of things that one allows oneself all kinds of liberties in speech and deed, and gives rein to full thought imagery of an unskilful kind. Lack of complete awareness is lack of these four: complete awareness of purpose (*sāttha sampajañña*); of suitability (*sappāya sampajañña*); of resort (*gocara-*

sampajañña) and of non-delusion (*asammoha sampajañña*). When one does a thing without a right purpose, when one looks at things or does actions which do not help the growth of the Good, when one does things inimical to improvement, when one forgets the *dhamma* which is the true resort of one who strives, when one deludedly lays hold of things believing them to be pleasant, beautiful, permanent and substantial, when one behaves thus, then too non-restraint is nourished.

And below this lack of mindfulness and complete awareness lies unsystematic reflection (*ayoniso manasikāra*). The books say unsystematic reflection is reflection that is off the right course; that is taking the impermanent as permanent, the painful as pleasure, the soulless as a soul, the bad as good. The constant rolling-on that is *saṃsāra*, is rooted in unsystematic thinking. When unsystematic thinking increases it fulfils two things: nescience and lust for becoming. Ignorance being present, the origination of the entire mass of suffering comes to be. Thus a person who is a shallow thinker, like a ship drifting at the wind's will, like a herd of cattle swept into the whirl pools of a river, like an ox yoked to a wheel-contraption, goes on revolving in the cycle of existence, *saṃsāra*.

And it is said that imperfect confidence (*assaddhiyaṃ*) in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha is the condition which develops unsystematic reflection, and imperfect confidence is due to non-hearing of the True Law, the *dhamma* (*asaddhamma savanaṃ*). Finally, one does not hear the *dhamma* through lack of contact with the wise, through not consorting with the good (*asappurisa sansevo*).

Thus want of *kalyāṇa mittatā*, good friendship, appears to be the basic reason for the ills of the world. And conversely the basis and nutriment of all good is shown to be good

friendship. That furnishes one with the food of the sublime dhamma which in turn produces confidence in the Triple Gem, *Tri Ratana*, the *Buddha*, *Dhamma* and the *Sangha*. When one has confidence in the Triple Gem there come into existence profound or systematic thinking, mindfulness and complete awareness, restraint of the senses, the three good modes of life, the four arousings of mindfulness, the seven factors of enlightenment and deliverance through wisdom, one after another in due order.[1]

I

Let us now deal with the enlightenment factors one by one. The first is *Sati*, Mindfulness. It is the instrument most efficacious in self-mastery, and whosoever practises it has found the path to deliverance. It is fourfold: Mindfulness consisting in contemplation of the body (*kāyānupassanā*); feeling (*vedanānupassanā*); mind (*cittānupassanā*); and mental objects (*dhammānupassanā*).[2]

The man lacking in this all-important quality of mindfulness cannot achieve anything worthwhile. The Buddha's final admonition to His disciples on His death bed is this: "Transient are all component things. Work out your deliverance with heedfulness!" (*Vaya-dhammā sankhārā, appamādena sampādetha*).[3] And the last words of the Venerable Sariputta, the foremost disciple of the Buddha who predeceased the Master, were this: "Strive on with heedfulness! This is my advice to you!" (*Sampādetha appamādena, ayam me anusāsanā*). In both these injunctions the most significant and

1. *Sammoha Vinodani.*

2. *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya*, 10 or *Dīgha Nikāya*, 22. See *The Wheel* No. 19 'The Foundations of Mindfulness.'

3. *Parinibbāna Sutta, Dīgha N.*, 16.

pregnant word is '*appamāda*' which literally means incessant heedfulness. Man cannot be heedful unless he is fully aware of his actions whether they are mental, verbal or physical at every moment of his waking life. Only when a man is fully awake to and mindful of his activities can he distinguish good from bad and right from wrong. It is in the light of mindfulness he will see the beauty or the ugliness of his deeds.

The word "*appamāda*," throughout the Tipitaka, is used to denote *sati*, mindfulness; "*pamāda*" is defined as absence of mindfulness. Says the Buddha in the *Anguttara Nikāya*: "Monks, I know not of any other single thing of such power to cause the arising of good thoughts if not yet arisen, or to cause the waning of evil thoughts if already arisen, as heedfulness. In him who is heedful, good thoughts not yet arisen, do arise, and evil thoughts, if arisen, do wane."

Constant mindfulness and vigilance are necessary to avoid ill and perform good. The man with presence of mind, who surrounds himself with watchfulness of mind (*satimā*), the man of courage and earnestness—gets ahead of the lethargic, the heedless (*pamatto*), as a racehorse outstrips a decrepit hack. The importance of *sati*, mindfulness, in all our dealings is clearly indicated by the following striking words of the Buddha: "Mindfulness, O disciples, I declare is essential in all things everywhere. It is as salt is to the curry."[1]

The Buddha's life is one integral picture of mindfulness. He is the *Sadā sato*, the ever mindful, the ever vigilant. He is the very embodiment of mindfulness. There was never an occasion when the Buddha manifested signs of sluggish inactivity or thoughtlessness.

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1. *Majjhima N., Satipaṭṭhāna Commentary.*

Right mindfulness or complete awareness, in a way, is superior to knowledge, because in the absence of mindfulness it is just impossible for a man to make the best of his learning. Intelligence void of mindfulness tends to lead man astray and entice him from the path of rectitude and duty. Even people who are well informed and intelligent fail to see a thing in its proper perspective when they lack this all-important quality of mindfulness. Men of good standing owing to deeds done and words spoken thoughtlessly and without due consideration to their consequences, are often subjected to severe and justifiable criticism. Mindfulness is the chief characteristic of all wholesome actions tending to one's own and other's profit.

Appamādo mahato atthāya sanvattati,[1] "Mindfulness is conducive to great profit," that is, highest mental development, and it is through such attainment that deliverance from the sufferings of *saṃsāra* is possible. "The man who delights in mindfulness and regards heedlessness with dread, is not liable to fall away. He is in the vicinity of *Nibbāna.*"[2]

II

The second enlightenment factor is *Dhammavicaya,* keen Investigation of the Dhamma. It is the sharp analytical knowledge of understanding the true nature of all constituent things animate or inanimate, human or divine. It is seeing things as they really are; seeing things in their proper perspective. It is the analysis of all component things into their fundamental elements, right down to their ultimates. Through keen investigation one understands that all compounded things

1. *Samyutta N., Sagāthaka Vagga.*
2. *Dhammapada,* 32.

pass through the inconceivably rapid moments of *uppāda*, *ṭhiti* and *bhaṅga*, or of arising, reaching a peak and ceasing, just as a river in flood sweeps to a climax and fades away. The whole universe is constantly changing, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments. All things in fact are subjected to causes, conditions and effects (*hetu*, *paccaya* and *phala*). Systematic reflection (*yoniso manasikāra*) comes naturally through right mindfulness, and it urges one to discriminate, to reason and investigate. Shallow thinking, unsystematic reflection (*ayoniso manasikāra*) makes men muddle-headed and then they fail to investigate the nature of things. Such people cannot see cause and effect, seed and fruit, the rise and fall of compounded things. Says the Buddha: "This doctrine is for the wise and not for the unwise."[1]

Buddhism is free from compulsion and coercion and does not demand of the follower blind faith. At the very outset the sceptic will be pleased to hear of its call for investigation. Buddhism from beginning to end, is open to all those who have eyes to see, and minds to understand. The Buddha never endeavoured to wring out of His followers blind and submissive faith in Him and His teaching. He tutors His disciples in the ways of discrimination and intelligent inquiry. To the inquiring *Kālāmas* the Buddha answered: "Right is it to doubt, right is it to question what is doubtful and what is not clear. In a doubtful matter wavering does arise."

We find this dialogue between the Master and His disciples:

"If, now knowing this and perceiving this, would you say: 'We honour our Master and through respect for Him we respect what He teaches?' "

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1. *Anguttara Nikaya, Aṭṭhaka Nipāta, Sutta No.* 30.

"Nay, Lord."

"That which you affirm, O disciples, is it not only that which you yourselves have recognized, seen and grasped?"

"Yes, Lord."[1]

And in conformity with this thoroughly correct attitude of true inquiry the philosophers of later times observed: "As the wise test the purity of gold by burning, cutting and examining it by means of a piece of touchstone, so should you accept my words after examining them and not merely out of regard and reverence for me".[2] Thus blind belief is condemned in the analytic teaching (*vibhajjavāda*) of the Buddha. The truth of the *dhamma* can be grasped only through calm concentrative thought and insight (*samatha* and *vipassanā)* and never through blind faith. One who goes in quest of truth is not satisfied with surface knowledge. He wants to delve deep and see what is beneath. That is the sort of search encouraged in Buddhism. That type of search yields right understanding.

We read in the texts the following story :

On one occasion Upāli, a fervent follower of Nigantha Nāthaputta, the Jain, visited the Buddha, thoughtfully listened to the *dhamma*, gained *saddhā* (confidence based on knowledge) and forthwith manifested his readiness to become a follower of the Master. Nevertheless the Master said: "Of a truth, Upāli, make thorough investigation," and thus discouraged him. This clearly shows that the Buddha was not keen on converting people to His way of thinking, and to His fold. He did not interfere with another

1. *Majjhima N.*, 38.
2. *Jñānasāra-Samuccaya*, p. 31.

man's freedom of thought; for freedom of thought is the birth right of every individual. It is wrong to force someone out of the way of life which accords with his outlook and character, spiritual inclinations and tendencies; compulsion in every form is bad. It is coercion of the blackest kind to make a man gulp down beliefs for which he has no relish. Such forced feeding cannot be good for anybody, anywhere.

He that cultivates *dhammavicaya*, Investigation of the dhamma, focusses his mind on the five aggregates of grasping, the *pañcupādānakkhandha*, and endeavours to realize the rise and fall or the arising and passing away (*udaya-vaya*) of this conglomeration of bare forces (*suddha saṅkhāra puñja*) this conflux of mind and matter (*nāma-rūpa santati*). It is only when he fully realizes the evanescent nature of his own mind and body that he experiences happiness, joyous anticipation. Therefore, it is said :

> '*Yato yato sammasati—khandhānam udayabbayaṃ*
> *Labhati pīti pāmojjaṃ—amataṃ taṃ vijānataṃ*'[1]

Whenever he reflects on the rise and fall of the aggregates, he experiences unalloyed joy and happiness. To the discerning one that (reflection) is deathless, *Nibbāna*.

What is impermanent and not lasting he sees as sorrow-fraught. What is impermanent and sorrow-fraught, he understands as void of a permanent and everlasting soul, self, or ego entity. It is this grasping, this realization of the three characteristics, or laws of transiency, sorrow and non-self (soullessness), *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*, that is known to Buddhists as *vipassanā-ñāṇa* or penetrative Insight, which, like the razor-edged sword, entirely eradicates all the latent

1. *Dhammapada*, 374.

tendencies (*anusaya*), and with it all the varied ramifications of sorrow's cause are finally destroyed. A man who ascends to this summit of vision is an *Arahat*, a Perfect One, whose clarity of vision, whose depth of insight, penetrates into the deepest recesses of life and cognizes the true nature that underlies all appearance. No more can he be swept off his feet by the glamour of things ephemeral. No more can he be confused by fearful and terrible appearances. No more is it possible for him to have a clouded view of phenomena; for he has transcended all capacity for error through the perfect immunity which penetrative insight alone can give.

III

The third enlightenment factor is *Viriya*, Energy. It is a mental property (*cetasika*) and the sixth limb of the Noble Eightfold Path, there called *sammā-vāyāma*, Right Effort.

The life of the Buddha clearly reveals that He was never subjected to moral or spiritual fatigue. From the hour of His enlightenment to the end of His life, He strove tirelessly to elevate mankind, regardless of the bodily fatigue involved, and oblivious to the many obstacles and handicaps that hampered His way. He never relaxed in His exertion for the common weal. Though physically He was not always fit, mentally He was ever vigilant and energetic. Of Him it is said :

Ah, wonderful is the Conqueror,
Who e'er untiring strives
For the blessing of all beings, for
the comfort of all lives.'

Buddhism is for the sincerely zealous, strong and firm in purpose, and not for the indolent (*āraddhviriyassāyaṃ dhammo nāyaṃ dhammo kusītassa.*)[1] The Buddha has not proclaimed Himself a saviour willing and able to take upon himself the evil of mankind. On the contrary, He declares that each person has to bear the burden of his own ill deeds. In the words of the Buddha, each individual has himself to put forth the necessary effort and work out his own deliverance with diligence. The Buddha is only a Path-Revealer and not a saviour who endeavours to save 'souls' by means of a revealed religion. The idea that another raises a man from lower to higher levels of life, and ultimatley rescues him, tends to make a man indolent and weak, supine and foolish. Others may lend us a helping hand indirectly, but deliverance from suffering must be wrought out and fashioned by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions. "Be ye islands unto yourselves, be ye your own refuge."[2] Thus did the Master exhort His followers to acquire self-reliance.

A follower of the Buddha should not under any circumstances relinquish hope and effort; for the Buddha was one who never gave up courage and effort even as a *Bodhisatta*. As an aspirant for Buddhahood, he had as his motto the following inspiring words: "*mā nivatta, abhikkhama*," "Falter not, advance." The man who is mindful (*satimā*) and cultivates keen investigation should next put forth the necessary effort to fight his way out.

The function of energy is four-fold. 1. The effort to eradicate evils that have arisen in the mind. 2. The effort to prevent the arising of unarisen evil. 3. The effort to develop

1. *Anguttara N., Aṭṭhaka Nipāta, Sutta No.* 30.
2. *Parinibbāna Sutta, Dīgha N.*, 16.

unarisen good. 4. The effort to promote the further growth of good already arisen.[1]

"Just," says the *Vitakka Saṇṭhāna Suttanta* of the Majjhima Nikāya (No. 20), "as a competent carpenter or a carpenter's apprentice with a slender pin will knock out, remove and dispose of a thicker one, so also, when through dwelling on some idea that has come to him, evil, unsalutary considerations connected with desire, hate and delusion arise in the monk, then he should engender in his mind an idea other than that former idea and connected with salutary things' whereupon the evil unsalutary considerations will disappear, and with their disappearing his mind will become settled, subdued, unified, concentrated."[2]

Thus the path of purification is impossible for an indolent person. The aspirant for enlightenment (*bodhi*) should possess unflinching energy coupled with fixed determination. Enlightenment and deliverance lie absolutely and entirely in his own hands. 'Man must himself by his own resolute efforts rise and make his way to the portals of liberty, and it is always, at every moment, in his power so to do. Neither are those portals locked and the key in possession of someone else from whom it must be obtained by prayer and entreaty. That door is free of all bolts and bars save those the man himself has made.'

By precept and example, the Buddha was an exponent of the strenuous life. Hear these words of the Buddha: "The idler who does not strive, who, though young and strong, is

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1. *Anguttara, Catukka Nipāta, Sutta No.* 13.
2. Adapted from Silācarā, *Discourses of Gotama the Buddha.* A translation of this Discourse has been published in *The Wheel No.* 21.

full of sloth, who is weak in resolution and thought, that lazy and idle man will not find the way to wisdom, the way to enlightenment."[1]

Following in the footsteps of the Buddha the disciple thinks: "Though only my skin, sinews and bones remain, and my blood and flesh dry up and wither away, yet never will I give up my quest and swerve from the path of rectitude and enlightenment."

IV

The fourth enlightenment factor is *Pīti*, Rapture or Happiness. This, too, is a mental property (*cetasika*) and is a quality which suffuses both the body and mind. The man lacking in this quality cannot proceed along the path to enlightenment. There will arise in him sullen indifference to the *dhamma*, an aversion to the practice of meditation, and morbid manifestations. It is, therefore very necessary that a man striving to attain enlightenment and final deliverance from the fetters of *saṁsāra*, that repeated wandering, should endeavour to cultivate the all-important factor of happiness. No one can bestow on another the gift of happiness; each one has to build it up by effort, reflection and concentrated activity. As happiness is a thing of the mind it should be sought not in external and material things though they may in a small way be instrumental.

Contentment is a characteristic of the really happy individual. The ordinary worldling seems to think that it is difficult to cultivate and develop contentment; but by dint of courage, determination, systematic attention and thought about the things that one meets with in everyday life, by controlling one's

1. *Dhammapada* 280.

evil inclinations, and by curbing the impulses—the sudden tendencies to act without reflection—one can keep the mind from being soiled and experience happiness through contentment.

In man's mind arise conflicts of diverse kinds, and if these conflicts are to be controlled, while still not eliminated, man must give less rein to inclinations and longings, in other words, he must cultivate contentment. Hard it is to give up what lures and holds us in thrall; and hard it is to exorcise the evil spirits that haunt the human heart in the shape of ugly and unwholesome thoughts. These evils are the manifestations of lust, hate and delusion (*lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*). Until one attains to the very crest of purity and peace by constant training of the mind one cannot defeat these hosts completely. The mere abandoning of outward things, fasting, bathing in rivers and at hot springs, and so forth, these do not tend to purify a man, these things do not make a man happy, holy and harmless. Hence the need to develop the Buddha's path of purification: morality, meditation and insight (*sīla*, *samādhi* and *paññā*).

When discussing happiness, in the context of *sambojjhangas*, we must bear in mind the vast difference between pleasure and happiness. Pleasure—pleasant feeling—is something very momentary and fleeting. Is it wrong to say that pleasant feelings are the prelude to pain? What people hug in great glee this moment, turns to be a source of pain the next moment. 'The desired is no more there when the outstretched hand would grasp it, or, being there and grasped, it vanishes like a flake of snow.'

In the words of Robert Burns :

> "*Pleasures are like poppies spread,*
> *You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;*
> *Or, like the snow-fall in the river,*
> *A moment white, then melts for ever.*"

Seeing a form, hearing a sound, perceiving an odour, tasting a flavour, feeling some tangible thing, cognising an idea, people are moved, and from those sense objects and mental objects they experience a certain degree of pleasure, but it is all a passing show of phenomena. Unlike the animal whose sole purpose is to derive a feeling of pleasure from any source, at any cost, man should endeavour to gain real *pīti* or happiness. Real happiness or rapture comes not through grasping or clinging to things animate or inanimate but by giving up (*nekkhamma*). It is the detached attitude toward the world that brings about true happiness. The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness, speaks of pleasant worldly feeling (*sāmisa sukha*) and pleasant unworldly feeling (*nirāmisa sukha*). *Nirāmisa sukha* is far superior to *sāmisasukha*.

Once the Buddha did not receive even a single morsel of food when He went on His alms round, and an intruder remarked that the Master was apparently afflicted with hunger. Thereupon the Supreme Buddha breathed forth the following verse:[1]

> "*Ah, happily do we dwell—we who have no impediments!*
> *Feeders on joy shall we be—even as the radiant devas*"![2]

Unalloyed joy comes to a man who ponders thus: "Others may harm, but I will become harmless; others may slay living beings, but I will become a non-slayer; others may live unchaste, but I will live pure; others may utter falsehood, I, however, will speak the truth; others may slander, talk harshly, indulge in gossip, but I will talk only words that promote concord, harmless words agreeable to the ear, full

1. Dhammapada, 200.
2. Devas are deities.

of love, heart-pleasing, courteous, worthy of being borne in mind, timely, fit and to the point. Others may be covetous, I will not covet. Energetic, steeped in modesty of heart, unswerving as regards truth and rectitude, peaceful, honest, contented, generous and truthful in all things will I be." Thus conducive to full realization, perfect wisdom, to *Nibbana* is this fourth enlightenment factor *pīti*, happiness.

V

Passaddhi, Calm or Tranquillity, is the fifth factor of enlightenment. *Passaddhi* it two-fold. *Kāya passadhi* is calm of body. *Kāya* here means all the mental properties rather than the physical body; in other words, calm of the aggregates of feeling (*vedanākkhandha*), perception (*saññākkhandha*) and the volitional activities or conformations (*saṃkhārakkhandha*). *Citta passaddhi* is the calm of the mind, that is the aggregate of consciousness (*viññāṇakkhandha*).

Passaddhi is compared to the happy experience of a weary walker who sits down under a tree in the shade, or the cooling of a hot place by rain. Hard it is to tranquillize the mind; it trembles and it is unsteady, difficult to guard and hold back; it quivers like a fish taken from its watery home and thrown on the dry ground. It wanders at will.[1] Such is the nature of this ultra-subtle mind. It is systematic reflexion (*yoniso manasikāra*) that helps the aspirant for enlightenment to quieten the fickle mind. Unless a man cultivates tranquillity of mind, concentration cannot be successfully developed. A tranquillized mind keeps away all superficialities and futilities.

Many a man today thinks that freedom and unrestraint are synonyms and that the taming of the self is a hindrance to

1. *Dhammapada, Citta Vagga.*

self-development. In the teaching of the Buddha, however, it is quite different. The self must be subdued and tamed on right lines if it is to become truly well. The Tathāgata, the Tamed, teaches the *Dhamma* for the purpose of taming the human heart (*danto so Bhagavā damatāya dhammaṁ deseti*).[1]

It is only when the mind is tranquillised and is kept to the right road of orderly progress that it becomes useful for the individual possessor of it and for society. A disorderly mind is a liability both to the owner of it and for others. All the havoc wrought in the world is wrought by men who have not learned the way of mental calm, balance and poise. Calmness is not weakness. The calm attitude at all times show a man of culture. It is not too hard a task for a man to be calm when all things round him are favourable. But to be composed in mind in the midst of unfavourable circumstances is hard indeed, and it is this difficult quality that is worth achieving; for by such control one builds up strength of character. The most deceptive thing in the world is to imagine that they alone are strong who are noisy, or that they alone possess power who are fussily busy.

The man who cultivates calm of the mind does not get upset, confused or excited when confronted with the eight vicissitudes of the world (*aṭṭhaloka dhamma*). He endeavurs to see the rise and fall of all things conditioned, how things come into being and pass away. Free from anxiety and restlessness he will see the fragility of the fragile.

A story in our books tells us how when a mother was asked why she did not lament and feel pain over the death of her beloved son, said: "Uninvited he came, uninvited he passed away, as he came so he went, what use is there in lamenting,

weeping and wailing?[1]' Such is the advantage of a tranquillized mind. It is unshaken by loss and gain, blame and praise, and undisturbed by adversity. This frame of mind is brought about by viewing the sentient world in its proper perspective. Thus calm or *passaddhi* leads man to enlightenment and deliverance from suffering.

VI

The sixth enlightenment factor is *Samādhi*, Concentration. It is only the tranquillized mind that can easily concentrate on a subject of meditation. The calm concentrated mind sees things as they really are (*samāhito yathā bhūtam pajānāti*). The unified mind brings the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaranāni*) under subjugation.

Concentration is the intensified steadiness of the mind comparable to an unflickering flame of a lamp in a windless place. It is concentration that fixes the mind aright and causes it to be unmoved and undisturbed. Correct practice of *samādhi* maintains the mind and the mental properties in a state of balance like a steady hand holding a pair of scales. Right concentration dispels passions that disturb the mind, and brings purity and placidity of mind. The concentrated mind is not distracted by sense objects; concentration of the highest type cannot be disturbed under the most adverse conditions.

One who is intent on *samādhi* should develop a love of virtue, *sīla*, for it is virtue that nourishes mental life, and makes it coherent and calm, equable and full of rich content. The unrestrained mind dissipates itself in frivolous activity.

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1. *Uraga Jataka*, 354. 10 [redacted]

Many are the impediments that confront a *yogi*, an aspirant for enlightenment, but there are five particular hindrances that hinder concentrative thought, *samādhi*, and obstruct the way to deliverance. In the teaching of the Buddha they are known as *pañca nīvarana*, the five hindrances. The Pali term *nīvarana* denotes that which hinders or obstructs mental development (*bhāvanā*). They are called hindrances because they completely close in, cut off and obstruct. They close the doors to deliverance. The five hindrances are:

i. *Kāmacchanda* . . . . . .Sensual desires.
ii. *Vyāpāda* . . . . . .Ill-will.
iii. *Thīnamiddha* . . . . . .Obduracy of mind and mental factors.
iv. *Uddhaccakukkucca* . . .Restlessness and worry.
v. *Vicikicchā* . . . . . .Doubt.

Kāmacchanda or sensual desires or intense thirst for either possessions or the satisfaction of base desires, is the first thar binds man to *sansara*, repeated wandering, and closes the door to final deliverance.

What is sensuality? Where does this craving (*taṇhā*) arise and take root? According to the Discourse on the Foundations of Mindfulness (*Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*), 'where there is the delightful and the pleasurable, there this craving arises and takes root.' Forms, sounds, smell, taste, bodily contacts and ideas are delightful and pleasurable; there this craving arises and takes root. Craving when obstructed by some cause is transformed to frustration and wrath.

As the *Dhammapada* says:

Taṇhāya jāyati soko—taṇhāya jāyati bhayaṁ
Taṇhāya vippamuttassa—natthi soko kuto bhayaṁ[1]

1. *Dhammapada*, 216.

From craving arises grief, from craving arises fear;
To one who is free from craving there is no grief, whence fear.

The next hindrance is *vyāpāda*, ill-will, hatred or aversion. Man naturally revolts against the unpleasant and the disagreeable, and also is depressed by them. To be separated from the loved is painful, and equally painful is the union with the loathed. Even a disagreeable dish, an unpleasant drink, an unlovely demeanour, and a hundred other trifles, may cause indignation. It is wrong thinking, unsystematic reflexion, that brings about hatred. Hatred on the other hand breeds hatred and clouds the vision; it distorts the entire mind and its properties and thus hinders awakening to truth, blocks the way to freedom. This lust and hatred based on ignorance, the crowning corruption of all our madness (*avijjā pāramam malam*), indeed are the root causes of strife and dissension between man and man and nation and nation.

The third hindrance consists of a pair of evils; *thīna* and *middha*. *Thīna* is lassitude or morbid state of the mind, and *middha* is a morbid state of the mental properties. *Thīna-middha*, as some are inclined to think, is certainly not sluggishness of the body; for even the *Arahats*, the Perfect Ones, who are free from this pair of evils, also experience bodily fatigue. *Thīna-middha* retards mental development; under its influence mind is inert like butter too stiff to spread or like molasses sticking to a spoon.

Laxity is a dangerous enemy of mental development. Laxity leads to greater laxity until finally there arises a state of callous indifference. This flabbiness of character is a fatal block to righteousness and fredom. It is through *viriya* or mental effort that one overcomes this pair of evils.

The fourth hindrance also comprises twin drawbacks: *Uddhacca* and *kukkucca*, restlessness and brooding or flurry and worry. As a rule anyone who commits evil is mentally excited and restless; the guilty and the impatient suffer from this hindrance. The minds of men who are restless and unstable are like flustered bees in a shaken hive. This mental agitation impedes meditation and blocks the upward path. Equally baneful is mental worry. Often people repent over the evil actions they have committed. This is not praised by the Buddha; for it is useless to cry over spilt milk. Instead of brooding over such shortcomings one should endeavour not to repeat such unwholesome deeds. There are others who worry over the good deeds omitted and duties left undone. This, too, serves no purpose. It is as futile as to ask the further bank of a river to come over that we may get to the other side. Instead of uselessly worrying over what good one has failed to do, one should endeavour to perform wholesome deeds. This mental unsteadiness (*kukkucca*) also hinders mental progress.

The fifth and the last hindrance is *vicikicchā*, doubt. The Pāli term *vi + cikicchā* literally means medicineless. One who suffers from perplexity is really suffering from a dire disease, and until and unless one sheds one's doubts one will continue to suffer from it. So long as man is subject to this mental itching, so long will he continue to take a cynical view of things which is most detrimental to mental development. The commentators explain this hindrance as the inability to decide anything definitely; it also comprises doubt with regard to the possibility of attaining the *jhānas*, concentrative thought. In this connection, one may add that even non, Buddhists and yogis who are not concerned with the *Buddha-Dhamma* and the *Sangha* at all, can inhibit doubt (*vicikicchā nīvarana*) and gain the *jhānas*.

The yogi who attains the *jhānas* inhibits all five hindrances by the five *jhānangas*, characteristics or factors of *jhāna; Kāmacchanda* is inhibited by *ekaggatā* (one-pointedness or unification of the mind); *vyāpāda* by *pīti* (joy); *thīnamiddha* by *vitakka* (applied-thought); *uddhacca-kukkucca* by *sukha* (happiness) and *vicikicchā* by *vicāra* (sustained thought). The attainment of *jhānas*, however, is not the end aimed at. *Jhānas* should be made to lead to *vipassanā*, intuitional insight. It is through insight that the yogi eradicates the latent corruptions (*anusaya kilesas*) and attains perfect purity.

So long as impurities or taints (*kilesas*) exist in man's mind latent, so long will the arising of *pāpa* (evil) in him continue. The practiser of *jhāna* whose purpose is to attain *vipassanā*, commits no ill action because the hindrances are inhibited, but he has the impurities latent in his make-up and, therefore, he is not yet in a state of absolute security. But the *Arahat*, the Perfect One, wipes out all the latent impurities with their rootlets and brings this repetitive wandering, *sansāra*, to a standstill. He is one whose *sansāra* is indubitably ended; for by him the noble life has been perfected and the task done. For him there is no more rebirth.[1]

A sincere student, who is bent on deep study, cuts himself off from sense attractions, and retiring to a congenial atmosphere, holds fast to his studies, and thus steering through all disturbing factors, attains success in his examinations. In the same way, seated in a cloister-cell or some other suitable place 'far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,' the yogi, the meditator, fixes his mind on a subject of meditation (*kammaṭṭhāna*) and by struggle and unceasing effort inhibits the five hindrances, and washing out the impurities of his mind-flux, gradually reaches the first, the second, the third

1. *Majjhima N.*, 27.

and the fourth *jhāna*. Then by the power of *sāmadhi*, concentrative thought, thus won, he turns his mind to the understanding of reality in the highest sense. It is at this stage that the yogi cultivates *vipassanā*, intuitional insight. It is through *vippassanā* that one understands the real nature of all component and conditioned things. *Vipassanā* aids one to see things as they truly are. One sees truth face to face and comprehends that all tones are just variations struck on the one chord that runs through all life—the chord which is made up of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*,—impermanence, sorrow and soullessness.

The *yogi* gains insight into the true nature of the world he has clung to for so long. He breaks through the egg shell of ignorance to the Hypercosmic. With that final catharsis he reaches the state where dawns for him the *Light of Nibbāna*, the Calm beyond words, the unshakeable Deliverance of the mind (*akuppā cetovimutti*),[1] and the world holds nothing more for him.

Says the *Dhammapada* (373), 'To the *Bhikkhu* who has retired to a secluded spot, whose mind is calmed, and who clearly discerns the *dhamma*, there comes unalloyed joy and happiness transcending that of humans.'

VII

The seventh and the last factor of enlightenment is *upekkhā*, Equanimity. In the Abhidhamma, *upekkhā* is indicated by the term *tatramajjhattatā*, neutrality. It is mental equipoise and not hedonic indifference. Equanimity is the result of a calm concentrative mind. It is hard, indeed, to be undisturbed when touched by the vicissitudes of life, but the man who cultivates this difficult quality of equanimity is not upset:

1. *Majjhima N.*, 30.

Amidst the welter of experience (*aṭṭha loka dhamma*),—gain and loss, good-repute and ill-repute, praise and censure, pain and happiness—he never wavers. He is firm as a solid rock. Of course, this is the attitude of the *Arahat*, the Perfect One. Of him it is said: "Truly the good give up longing for everything. The good prattle not with thoughts of craving Touched by happiness or by pain, the wise show neither elation nor depression."[1]

Refraining from intoxicants and becoming heedful, establishing themselves in patience and purity, the wise train their minds and it is through such training that a quiet mind is achieved. Can we also achieve it? Lord Horder answers the question thus: " 'Yes'. But how? Well, not by doing ‚some great thing.' 'Why were the saints saints?' someone asked. And the answer came: 'Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful and patient when it was difficult to be patient. They pushed on when they wanted to stand still, and kept silent when they wanted to talk.' That was all. So simple, but so difficult. A matter of mental hygiene. . . . ."

The poet says:

"*It is easy enough to be pleasant,*
When life flows along like a song,
But the man worthwhile
Is the man who can smile
When everything goes dead wrong."

Mention is made in our books of four wrong paths (*cattāro agati*). The path of greed (*chanda*), of hate (*dosa*), of cowardice (*bhaya*), of delusion (*moha*). People commit evil being enticed along one or more of these wrong paths, but the man who has reached perfect neutrality through the cultivation of

2. *Dhammapada*, 83.

equanimity, always avoids such wrong paths. His serene neutrality enables him to see all beings impartially.

A certain understanding of the working of *kamma* (actions), and how *kamma* comes into fruition (*kamma-vipāka*) is very necessary for one who is genuinely bent on cultivating equanimity. In the light of *kamma* one will be able to have a detached attitude toward all beings, nay even inanimate things. The proximate cause of equanimity is the understanding that all beings are the result of their actions (*kamma*).

Santideva writes in *Bodhicaryāvatāra* :

> "*Some there be that loathe me; then why*
> *Shall I, in being praised, rejoice?*
> *Some there be that praise me; then why*
> *Shall I brood over blaming voice?*
>
> *Who master is of self, will ever bear*
> *A smiling face; he puts away all frowns*
> *Is first to great another, and to share*
> *His all. This friend of all the world, Truth crowns.*"[1]

I have here made an attempt to give a glimpse of the seven enlightenment factors, expounded over 2500 years ago by the Supreme Buddha, for the attaining of full realization and perfect wisdom, of Nibbana, the Deathless. The cultivation or the neglect of these factors of enlightenment is left to each one of us. With the aid of the teaching of the Buddha each one of us has the power to detect and destroy the cause of suffering. Each one individually can put forth the necessary effort to work out his deliverance.

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1. Translation by Kassapa Thera.

The Buddha has taught us the way to know life as it is, and has furnished the directions for such a research by each of us individually. Therefore, we owe it to ourselves to find out for ourselves the truth about life and to make the best of it. We cannot say justifiably that we do not know how to proceed. There is nothing vague in the teaching of the Buddha. All the necessary indications are clear as clear could be. Buddhism from beginning to end is open to all those who have eyes to see, and minds to understand. 'So clear is His teaching that it can never be misunderstood.'[1] The only thing necessary on our part for the full realization of the truth is firm determination, endeavour and earnestness to study and apply the teaching, each working it out for himself, to the best of his ability. The *dhamma* yet beckons the weary pilgrim to the happy haven of *Nibbana's* Security and Peace. Let us, therefore, cultivate the seven enlightenment factors with zest and unflagging devotion, and advance :

> "*Remembering the Saints of other days,*
> *And recollecting how it was they lived,*
> *Even though today be but the after-time—*
> *One yet may win the Ambrosial Path of Peace.*"[2]

May All Living Beings Be Well and Happy!

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1. Fielding Hall, *The Soul of a People.*
2. Psalms of the Brethern (*Theragatha*), 947.

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VEDANTA AND BUDDHISM

BY

HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP
Professor of Indology
University of Tuebingen, Germany.

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
KANDY 1960 CEYLON

First impression: January 1958
Second impression: July 1958
Third impression: July 1960

PREFACE

The present treatise by Prof. Dr. H. v. Glasenapp has been selected for a reprint particularly in view of the excellent elucidation of the Anatta doctrine which it contains. The treatise, in its German original, appeared in 1950 in the Proceeding of the "Akademie der Wissenschaften and Literatur" (Academy of Sciences and Liturature). The present selection from that original is based on the abridged translations published in "The Buddhist," Vol. XXI, No. 12 (Colombo 1951). Partial use has also been made of a different selection and translation which appeared in "The Middle Way," Vol. XXXI, No 4 (London 1957).

The author of this treatise is an eminent Indologist of Western Germany, formerly of the University of Koenigsberg, now occupying the indological chair of the University of Tuebingen. Among his many scholarly publications are books on Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism and on comparative religion.

Buddhist Publication Society.

VEDANTA AND BUDDHISM

Vedanta and Buddhism are the high-lights of Indian philosophical thought. Since both have grown in the same spiritual soil, they share many basic ideas: both of them assert that the universe shows a periodical succession of arising, existing and vanishing, and that this process is without beginning and end. They believe in the causality which binds the result of an action to its cause (karma), and in rebirth conditioned by that nexus. Both are convinced of the transitory, and therefore sorrowful character, of individual existence in the world; they hope to attain gradually to a redeeming knowledge through renunciation and meditation, and they assume the possibility of a blissful and serene state, in which all worldly imperfections have vanished for ever. The original form of these two doctrines shows however strong contrasts. The early Vedanta, formulated in most of the older and middle Upanishads, in some passages of the Mahabharata and the Purāṇas, and still alive today (though greatly changed) as the basis of several Hinduistic systems, teaches an *ens realissimum* (an entity of highest reality) as the primordial cause of all existence, from which everything has arisen and with which it again merges, either temporarily or for ever.

With the monistic metaphysics of the Vedanta contrasts the pluralistic Philosophy of Flux of the early Buddhism of the Pali texts which up to the present time flourishes in Ceylon, Burma and Siam. It teaches that in the whole empirical reality there is nowhere anything that persists; neither material nor mental substances exist independently by themselves; there is no original entity or primordial Being in whatsoever form it may be imagined, from which these

substances might have developed. On the contrary, the manifold world of mental and material elements arises solely through the causal co-operation of transitory factors of existence (dharma) which depend functionally upon each other, that is, the material and mental universe arises through th concurrence of forces that, according to the Buddhists, are not reducible to something else. It is therefore obvious that deliverance from the Samsara, i.e. the sorrow-laden round of existence, cannot consist in the re-absorption into an eternal Absolute which is at the root of all manifoldness, but can only be achieved by a complete extinguishing of all factors which condition the processes constituting life and world. The Buddhist Nirvana is, therefore, not the primordial ground, the eternal essence, which is at the basis of everything, and from which the whole world has arisen (the Brahman of the Upanishads) but the reverse of all that we know, something altogether different which must be characterized as a nothing in relation to the world, but which is experienced as highest bliss by those who have attained to it (Anguttara Nikāya, Navaka-nipāta 34). Vedantists and Buddhists have been fully aware of the gulf between their doctrines, a gulf that cannot be bridged over. According to Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 22, a doctrine that proclaims "The same is the world and the self. This I shall be after death; imperishable, permanent, eternal!" (see Brh. Up. 4, 4, 13), was styled by the Buddha a perfectly foolish doctrine. On the other side, the Katha-Upanishad (2,1,14) does not see a way to deliverance in the Buddhist theory of dharmas (impersonal processes): He who supposes a profusion of particulars gets lost like rain water on a mountain slope; the truly wise man, however, must realise that his Atman is at one with the Universal Atman, and that the former, if purified from dross, is being absorbed by the latter, "just, as clear water poured into clear water becomes one with it, indistinguishably."

Vedanta and Buddhism have lived side by side for such a long time that obviously they must have influenced each other. The strong predilection of the Indian mind for a doctrine of universal unity (monism) has led the representatives of Mahayana to conceive Samsara and Nirvana as two aspects of the same and single true reality; for Nagarjuna the empirical world is a mere appearance, as all dharmas, manifest in it, are perishable and conditioned by other dharmas, without having any independent existence of their own. Only the undefinable "Voidness" (*sūnyatā*) to be grasped in meditation, and realized in Nirvana, has true reality.

This so-called Middle Doctrine of Nagarjuna remains true to the Buddhist principle that there can be nowhere a substance, in so far as Nagarjuna sees the last unity as a kind of abyss, characterized only negatively, which has no genetic relation to the world. Asanga and Vasubandhu, however, in their doctrine of Consciousness Only, have abandoned the Buddhist principle of denying a positive reality which is at the root all phenomena, and in doing so, they have made a further approach to Vedanta. To that mahayanistic school of Yogācāras, the highest reality is a pure and undifferentiated spiritual element that represents the non-relative substratum of all phenomena. To be sure, they thereby do not assert, as the (older) Vedanta does, that the *ens realissimum* (the highest essence) is identical with the universe; the relation between the two is rather being defined as "being neither different nor not different." It is only in the later Buddhist systems of the Far East that the undivided, absolute consciousness is taken to be the basis of the manifold world of phenomena. But in contrast to the older Vedanta, it is never maintained that the world is an unfoldment from the unchangeable, eternal, blissful Absolute; suffering and passions, manifest in the world of plurality, are rather traced back to worldly delusion.

On the other hand, the doctrines of later Buddhist philosophy had a far-reaching influence on Vedanta. It is well known that Gaudapada, and other representatives of later Vedanta, taught an illusionistic acosmism, for which true Reality is only "the eternally pure, eternally awakened, eternally redeemed" universal spirit whilst all manifoldness is only delusion; the Brahma has therefore not developed into the world, as asserted by the older Vedanta, but it forms only the world's unchangeable background, comparable to the white screen on which appear the changing images of an unreal shadow play.

In my opinion, there was in later times, especially since the Christian era, much mutual influence of Vedanta and Buddhism, but originally the systems are diametrically opposed to each other. The Atman doctrine of the Vedanta and the Dharma theory of Buddhism exclude each other. The Vedanta tries to establish an Atman as the basis of everything, whilst Buddhism maintains that everything in the empirical world is only a stream of passing Dharmas (impersonal and evanescent processes) which therefore has to be characterized as Anattā, i.e. being without a persisting self, without independent existence.

Again and again scholars have tried to prove a closer connection between the early Buddhism of the Pali texts, and the Vedanta of the Upanishads; they have even tried to interpret Buddhism as a further development of the Atman doctrine. There are e.g., two books which show that tendency: *The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha*, by J. G. Jennings (Oxford University Press, 1947), and in German language, *The Soul Problem of Early Buddhism*, by Herbert Guenther (Konstanz 1949).

The essential difference between the conception of deliverance in Vedanta and in Pali Buddhism lies in the

following ideas: Vedanta sees deliverance as the manifestation of a state which, though obscured, has been existing from time immemorial; for the Buddhist, however, Nirvana is a reality which differs entirely from all dharmas as manifested in Saṁsara, and which only becomes effective, if they are abolished. To sum up: the Vedantin wishes to penetrate to the last reality which dwells within him as an immortal essence, or seed, out of which everything has arisen. The follower of Pali Buddhism, however, hopes by complete abandoning of all corporeality, all sensations, all perceptions, all volitions, and acts of consciousness, to realize a state of bliss which is entirely different from all that exists in the Samsara.

After these introductory remarks we shall now discuss systematically the relation of original Buddhism and Vedanta.

1. First of all we have to clarify to what extent a knowledge of Upanishadic texts may be assumed for the canonical Pali scriptures. The five old prose Upanishads are, on reasons of contents and language, generally held to be pre-Buddhistic. The younger Upanishads, in any case those beginning from *Maitrāyaṇa*, were certainly written at a time when Buddhism already existed.

The number of passages in the Pali Canon dealing with Upanishadic doctrines, is very small. It is true that early Buddhism shares many doctrines with the Upanishads (Karma, rebirth, liberation through insight), but these tenets were so widely held in philosophical circles of those times that we can no longer regard the Upanishads as the direct source from which the Buddha has drawn. The special metaphysical concern of the Upanishads, the identity of the individual and the universal Ātman, has been mentioned and rejected only in a few passages in the early Buddhist texts, for instance in the saying of the Buddha quoted earlier.

Nothing shows better the great distance that separates the Vedanta and the teachings of the Buddha, than the fact that the two principal concepts of Upanishadic wisdom, Atman and Brahman, do not appear anywhere in the Buddhist texts, with the clear and distinct meaning of a "primordial ground of the world, core of existence, *ens realissimum* (true substance)," or similarly. As this holds likewise true for the early Jaina literature, one must assume that early Vedanta was of no great importance in Magadha, at the time of the Buddha and the Mahavira; otherwise the opposition against if would have left more distinct traces in the texts of these two doctrines.

2. It is of decisive importance for examining the relation between Vedanta and Buddhism, clearly to establish the meaning of the words *attā* and *anattā* in Buddhist literature.

The meaning of the word *attan* (nominative: *attā*, Sanskrit: *ātman*, nominative: *ātmā*) divides into two groups: (1) in daily usage, *attan* ("self") serves for denoting one's own person, and has the function of a reflexive pronoun. This usage is, for instance, illustrated in the 12th Chapter of the Dhammapada. As a philosophical term *attan* denotes the individual soul as assumed by the Jainas and other schools, but rejected by the Buddhists. This individual soul was held to be an eternal unchangeable spiritual monad, perfect and blissful by nature, although its qualities may be temporarily obscured through its connection with matter. Starting from this view held by the heretics, the Buddhists further understand by the term "self" (*ātman*) any eternal, unchangeable individual entity, in other words, that what Western metaphysics calls a "substance": "something existing through and in itself, and not through something else; nor existing attached to, or inhereut in, something else."

In the philosophical usage of the the Buddhists, *attan* is, therefore, any entity of which the heretics wrongly assume that it exists independently of everything else, and that it has existence on its own strength.

The word *anattan* (nominative: *anattā*) is a noun (Sanskrit: *anātma*) and means "not-self" in the sense of an entity that is not independent. The word *anātman* is found in its meaning of "what is not the Soul (or Spirit)," also in brahmanical Sanskrit sources (*Bhagavadgīta*, 6, 6; Shankara to *Brahma Sūtra* I, 1, 1, Bibl, Indica, p. 16; Vedāntasāra § 158). Its frequent use in Buddhism is accounted for by the Buddhist' characteristic preference for negative nouns. Phrases like *rūpaṁ anattā* are therefore to be translated "corporeality is a not-self," or "corporeality is not not an independent entity," or similarly.

As an adjective, the word *anattan* (as occasionally *attan* too; see Dhammapada 379; Geiger, *Pali Lit.*, § 92) changes from the consonantal to the *a*-declension; *anatta* (see Sanskrit *anātmaka*, *anātmya*), e. g., *Saṁyutta* 22, 55, 7 (PTS III. p. 56), *anattaṁ rūpaṁ . . . anatte saṅkhāre . . . . na pajānāti* ("he does not know that corporeality is without self, . . . that the mental formations are without self"). The word *anatta* is, therefore, to be translated here by "not having the nature of a self, not independent, without a (persisting) self, without an (eternal) substance," etc. The passage *anattam rūpam 'anattā rupan ti yathābhūtam na pajānāti* has to be rendered: "With regard to corporeality having not the nature of a self, he does not know according to truth 'Corporeality is a not-self (not an independent entity.)" The noun *attan* and the adjective *anatta* can both be rendered by "without a self, without an independent essence, without a persisting core," since the Buddhists themselves do not make any difference in the use of these two grammatical forms. This becomes

particulary evident in the case of the word *anattā*, which may be either a singular or a plural noun. In the well-known phrase *sabbe sankhārā aniccā .... sabbe dhammā anattā* (Dhp. 279), "all conditioned factors of existence are transitory .... all factors existence whatever (Nirvana included) are without a self," it is undoubtedly a plural noun, for the Sanskrit version has *sarve dharmā anātmānāh*.

The fact that the Anattā doctrine only purports to state that a *dharma* is "void of a self," is evident from the passage in the *Samyutta Nikāya* (35, 85; PTS IV, p. 54) where it is said *rūpā suññā attena vā attaniyena vā*, "forms are void of a self (an independent essence) and of anything pertaining to a self (or "self-like")."

Where Guenther has translated *anattan* or *anatta* as "not *the* self," one should use "*a* self" instead of "*the* self," because in the Pali Canon the word *ātman* does not occur in the sense of "universal soul."

(3) It is not necessary to assume that the existence of indestructible monads is a necessary condition for a belief in life after death. The view that an eternal, immortal, persisting soul substance is the *conditio sine qua non* of rebirth can be refuted by the mere fact that not only in the older Upanishads, but also in Pythagoras and Empedocles, rebirth is taught without the assumption of an imperishable soul substance.

(4) Guenther can substantiate his view only through arbitrary translations which contradict the whole of Buddhist tradition. This is particularly evident in those passages where Guenther asserts that "the Buddha meant the same by Nirvana and ātman" and that "Nirvana is the true nature of man." For in *Udāna* 8, 2, Nirvana is expressly

described as *anattam* which is rightly rendered by Dhammapāla's commentary (p. 21) as *atta-virahita* (without a self), and in *Vinaya V, p.* 86, Nirvana is said to be, just as the conditioned factors of existence (*saṅkhatā*), "without a self" (p. 151). Neither can the equation ātman=nirvāṇa be proved by the well-known phrase *attadīpā viharatha, dhammadīpā*, for, whether *dīpa* here means "lamp" or "island of deliverance," this passage can, after all, only refer to the monks taking refuge in themselves and in the doctrine *(dhamma)*, and *attan* and *dhamma* cannot possibly be interpreted as Nirvana. In the same way, too, it is quite preposterous to translate *Dhammapada* 160, *attā hi attano nātho* as "Nirvana is for a man the leader" (p. 155); for the chapter is concerned only with the idea that we should strive hard and purify ourselves. Otherwise Guenther would have to translate in the following verse 161, *attanā va kataṁ pāpaṁ attajaṁ attasambhavaṁ*: 'By Nirvana evil is done, it arises out of Nirvana, it has its origin in Nirvana." It is obvious that this kind of interpretation must lead to manifestly absurd consequences.

(5) As far as I can see there is not a single passage in the Pali Canon where the word attā is used in the sense of the Upanishadic Ātman. *This is not surprising, since the word *ātman*, current in all Indian philosophical systems, has the meaning of "universal soul, *ens realissimum*, the Absolute," exclusively in the pan-en-theistic and theopantistic Vedanta, but, in that sense, it is alien to all other brahmanical and non-Buddhist doctrines. Why, then, should it have

*Except in a few passages rejecting it, as the one quoted by the author: "The same is the world and the self"; see also *Sutta-nipāta*, v 477; And one of the six Ego-beliefs rejected in Majjh. 2: 'Even by the self I perceive the self: this view occurs to him as being true and correct' (*attanā va attānaṁ saṅjānāmīt'tit:-*). Cf. Bhagavadgita VI. 19 *Yatra caiv' ātmanā ātmānām paśyaṁ-ātmani tuśyati.* (The Editor)

a Vedantic meaning in Buddhism? As far as I know. no one has ever conceived the idea of giving to the term *ātman* a Vedantic interpretation, in the case of Nyaya, Vaisesika, classical Sankhya, Yoga, Mimamsa, or Jainism.

(6) The fact that in the Pali Canon all worldly phenomena are said to be *anattā* has induced some scholars of the West to look for an Ātman in Buddhism. For instance, the following "great syllogism" was formulated by *George Grimm*: "What I perceive to arise and to cease, and to cause suffering to me, on account of that impermanence, cannot be my ego. Now I perceive that everything cognizable in me and around me, arises and ceases, and causes me suffering, on account of its impermanence. Therefore nothing cognizable is my ego." From that Grimm concludes that there must be an eternal ego-substance that is free from all suffering, and above all cognizability. This is a rash conclusion. By teaching that there is nowhere in the world a persisting Atman, the Buddha has not asserted that there must be a transcendental Atman (i. e., a self beyond the world). This kind of logic resembles that of a certain Christian sect which worships its masters as "Christs on earth,' and tries to prove the simultaneous existence of several Christs from Mark 13, 22, where it is said: "False Christs and false prophets shall arise"; for, if there are false Christs, there must also be genuine Christs!

The denial of an imperishable Atman is common ground for all systems of Hinayana as well as Mahayana, and there is, therefore, no reason for the assumption that Buddhist tradition, unanimous on that point, has deviated from the original doctrine of the Buddha. If the Buddha, contrary to the Buddhist tradition. had actually proclaimed a transcendental Atman, a reminiscence of it would have been preserved somehow by one of the older sects. It is remarkable

that even the Pudgalavādins, who assume a kind of individual soul, never appeal to texts in which an Atman in this sense is proclaimed. He who advocates such a revolutionary conception of the Buddha's teachings, has also the duty to show evidence how such a complete transformation started and grew, suddenly or gradually. But none of those who advocate the Attā-theory has taken pains to comply with that demand which is indispensable to a historian.

(7) In addition to the aforementioned reasons, there are other grounds too, which speak against the supposition that the Buddha has identified Ātman and Nirvana. It remains quite incomprehensible why the Buddha should have used this expression which is quite unsuitable for Nirvana and would have aroused only wrong associations in his listeners. Though it is true that Nirvana shares with the Vedantic conception of Atman the qualification of eternal peace into which the liberated ones enter for ever, but on the other hand, the Atman is in brahmanical opinion, something mental and conscious, a description which does not hold true for Nirvana. Furthermore, Nirvana is not, like the Atman, the primordial ground or the divine principle of the world (Aitareya Up. 1, 1), nor is it that which preserves order in the world (Brhadar. Up. 3, 8, 9); it is also not the substance from which everything evolves, nor the core of all material elements.

(8) Since the scholarly researches made by Otto Rosenberg (published in Russian 1918, in German trs. 1924), Th. Stcherbatsky (1932), and the great work of translation done by Louis de la Vallée Poussin *Abhidharmakosa.* 1923—31) there cannot be any doubt about the basic principle of Buddhist philosophy. In the light of these researches, all attempts to give to the Atman a place in the Buddhist doctrine, appear to be quite antiquated. We know now that

all Hinayana and Mahayana schools are based on the *anātma-dharma* theory. This theory explains the world through the causal co-operation of a multitude of transitory factors (*dharma*), arising in mutual functional dependence. This theory maintains that the entire process of liberation consists in the tranquillization of these incessantly arising and disappearing factors. For that process of liberation, however, is required, apart from moral restraint (*sīla*) and meditative concentration (*samādhi*), the insight (*prajñā*) that all conditioned factors of existence (*saṁskāra*) are transitory, without a permanent independent existence, and therefore subject to grief and suffering. The Nirvana which the saint experiences already in this life, and which he enters for ever after death, is certainly a reality (*dharma*), but as it neither arises nor vanishes, it is not subject to suffering, and is thereby distinguished from all conditioned realities. Nirvana being a *dharma*, is likewise *anattā*, just as the transitory, conditioned dharmas of the Samsara which, as caused by volitions, that is karma-producing energies (*saṁskāra*), are themselves also called *saṃskāra*. Like them, Nirvana is no individual entity which could will or act independently. For it is the basic idea of the entire system that all dharmas are devoid of Atman, and without cogent reasons we cannot assume that the Buddha himself has thought something different from that what. since more than two thousand years, his followers have considered to be the quintessence of their doctrine.

BUDDHISM and SCIENCE

Collected Essays

by

K. N. JAYATILLEKE

ROBERT F. SPENCER

WU SHU

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY,

KANDY, CEYLON.

First Impression: *April* *1958*
Second Impression: *September* *1959*
Third Impression: *June* *1967*

The Wheel Publication No. 3

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BUDDHISM AND THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

Prof: K. N. JAYATILLEKE, B. A. (Lond.,) B. A., (Ceylon) M. A. (Cantab)., Ph. D. (Lond.)

It is an historical fact that the scientific revolution which took its rise in the seventeenth century in the West was largely responsible for upsetting the earlier religious conception of the universe. Not only did science controvert the specific dogmas of Western religion, but it seemed to have undermined the foundations as well as the fundamental concepts implicit in the religious outlook on things.

The new cosmology of Copernicus, Galileo, and their successors altered the geocentric picture of the universe although it was pronounced to be "contrary to the Holy Scriptures." The new biology (the theory of evolution) upset the doctrines of the special creation and the fall of man. And the new psychology seemed to show that man's mind like his physical body worked on a pattern of causal law and that however deep one plumbed into its depths there was not discoverable in it an unchanging soul which governed its activities entire.

But much more serious was the effect of the scientific outlook on the general religious attitude which involved a belief in a Personal God, in purpose and in the objectivity of moral values. Science made its discoveries and progressed quite comfortably on the assumption of universal causation without the necessity for teleological explanations or divine intervention. It dealt with an amoral universe indifferent to the aspirations of men. As among men, moral values like economic values were subjective since they were dependent on the needs and desires of

men, and an ethical humanism was the best that could be hoped for. Even such an ethics need not be universal for, as anthropologists discovered, different societies seem to have followed different moral codes which suited them and ethical relativism was the scientific truth about the nature of moral values.

Of course there are those who still cling to the dogmas in the face of science or believe in them in a non-literal sense. But the positon remains very much the same although people are no longer optimistic (after two world wars and in the throes of a third) about the ability of science to usher in a brave new world of peace and plenty. It has also been granted that mechanistic explanations of the universe need not necessarily rule out teleological ones. Science too has given up the crude materialism of the eighteenth century and scientists no longer attempt to explain the universe on machine models, while some scientists have denied that strict determination holds in the sphere of the atom. But all this is still a far cry from religion.

What place would Buddhism occupy in such a context? Are its dogmas and attitudes no better or no worse than those of any other religion? Some Western writers on religion seem to have assumed that this was so, but if one reads through the Buddhist texts, one begins to wonder whether the scientific revolution would have at all affected religion adversely if it had taken place in the context of Early Buddhism.

I say this because I find that Early Buddhism emphasises the importance of the scientific outlook in dealing with the problems of morality and religion. Its specific

'dogmas' are said to be capable of verification. And its general account of the nature of man and the universe is one that accords with the findings of science rather than being at variance with them.

To take this last point first, we find for instance that the Early Buddhist conception of the cosmos is in essence similar to the modern conception of the universe. In the Pāli texts that have come down to us we are literally told that hundreds and thousands of suns and moons, earths, and higher worlds, constitute the minor world system, that a hundred thousand times this is the middling world system, and a hundred thousand times the middling world system is the major world system. In modern terminology it would seem as if a minor world system (culanikā-loka-dhātu) is a galaxy of which we observe about a hundred million through our best telescopes. The Buddhist conception of time is equally immense.

There is, of course no theory of biological evolution as such mentioned in the Buddhist texts, but man and society as well as worlds are pictured as changing and evolving in accordance with causal laws.

Then in psychology we find Early Buddhism regarding man as a psycho-physical unit whose 'psyche' is not a changeless soul but a dynamic continuum composed of a conscious mind as well as an unconscious in which is stored the residua of emotionally charged memories going back to childhood as well as into past lives. Such a mind is said to be impelled to act under the influence of three types of desires — the desire for sense-gratification (kāma-taṇhā), the desire for self-preservation (bhava-taṇhā) and the desire for destruction (vibahava-taṇhā). Except for the

belief in rebirth, this conception of the mind sounds very modern, and one cannot also fail to observe the parallel between the threefold desire in Buddhism and the Freudian conceptions of the eros, libido, and thanatos.

I have brought out these similarities not with the intention of showing that Buddhism teaches modern science but that the scientific revolution does not have the same adverse effect on Buddhism as it had on another religious tradition.

Now let us turn to the content of Buddhism as a theory about the nature and destiny of man. First of all it holds that the honest impartial search for truth even in matters moral and religious is no bar to one's spiritual progress. On more than one occasion the Buddha has admonished honest seekers after the truth in the following words: "You have raised a doubt in a situation in which you ought to suspend your judgement. Do not accept anything because it is rumoured so, because it is the traditional belief, because the majority hold to it, because it is found in the scriptures, because it is the product of metaphysical argument and speculation, or after a superficial investigation of facts, or because it conforms with one's inclinations, because it is authoritative or because of the prestige value of your teacher". Critical investigation and personal verification was to be the guide to true morality and religion. "If anyone were to speak ill of me, my doctrine and my order", says the Buddha, "do not bear any ill-will towards him, be upset or perturbed at heart, for if you were to be so it will only cause you harm. If on the other hand anyone were to speak well of me, my doctrine and my order, do not be overjoyed, thrilled or elated at heart, for if so it will only be an

obstacle in your way of forming a correct judgement as to whether the qualities praised in us are real and actually found in us." A scientific outlook was thus considered necessary not only for discovering the truly moral and religious life but even for the continual self-examination which such a life demands.

The field of moral and religious phenomena is, again, not a realm of mystery but one in which the law of cause and effect holds. The principle of causal determination, namely, that A is the cause of B if "whenever an event A occurs an event B occurs, and B does not occur unless A has occured" is laid down by the Buddha in these very terms, and he further states that "he speaks only of causes and of things which arise from causes". Thus all phenomena, including moral and spiritual experience (with the sole exception of Nirvāṇa which is not a conditioned phenomenon) are said to be conditioned by causal laws. Such laws are classified according to their sphere of operation as physical laws (utuniyāma), biological laws (bījaniyāma), psychological laws (cittaniyāma) and moral and spiritual laws (dhammaniyāma).

Now there are three laws which are said to govern the life and destiny of the individual. They are the law of continuity which makes for the persistence of individuality (bhava), the law of moral retribution (karma) whereby morally good acts tend to result in pleasant consequences for the individual and morally evil acts in unpleasant consequences, and finally, the law of causal genesis (paṭiccasamuppāda) which is intended to explain the above two laws.

The law of continuity, popularly known as rebirth, ensures the persistence of the dynamic unconscious of the

individual with the death of the physical body. If this unconscious is not attuned to higher worlds by the moral and spiritual development of the individual, it is said generally to persist in the spirit-sphere (petti-visaya) as a discarnate spirit, and subsequently get reborn as a human. Critics of Buddhism often suggest that this theory of rebirth is dogmatically accepted or taken for granted in Buddhism but a careful study of the texts would show that this is not the case·

Buddhism arose at a time when there was intense speculation on the problem of survival. There were also several schools of materialism all of which denied survival altogether and there were the sceptics who merely doubted the possibility of survival. Even experiments such as the weighing of the body immediately before and after death were performed in order to discover any evidence of survival. One of the materialist theories mentioned and dismissed by the Buddha was that consciousness was a by-product of the material elements being mixed up in certain proportions to form the organic body "in the same way in which the red colour is produced by suitable mixtures of betel, arecanut and lime" (none of which is red). Several such materialisitic theories as well as a number of one-life-after-death-theories, some of which held that the soul was conscious after death, others that it was unconscious (but existing), and yet others that it was super-conscious after death, are examined and disposed of by the Buddha. The theory of rebirth is offered as one capable of being verified by developing the faculty of seeing our former births, a potentiality which is said to be within the reach of all of us.

Rebirth is therefore not a dogma to be accepted on faith but an hypothesis capable of being scientifically verified. The available evidence for rebirth today is roughly of two sorts.

There is the spontaneous evidence of numerous people from both East and West who have claimed to remember their past lives, in some cases of which the memories have been confirmed by further investigation (e.g., the case of Shanti Devi, Illustrated Weekly of India, December 15, 1935. The case of Nellie Horster, Milwaukee Sentinel, September 25, 1892). There is also the more reliable and more abundant evidence of psychiatrists and psychologists who have discovered that under hypnotic trance the subject's memories can be traced back not only to childhood but to prior earth lives as well, in some cases of which the facts have been verified (*e.g.* A. de Rochas, Les Vies Successives, Bibliotheque Charcomac, Paris; Ralph Shirley, The Problem of Rebirth, Rider & Co., London; Professor Theodore Flournoy, Des Inde a la planete Mars: Professor Charles E. Cory, "A Divided Self"; Article in Journal of Abnormal Psychology, Vol. XIV, 1919).

The law of moral retribution or karma as taught in Buddhism has also been criticised on the grounds that it amounts to fatalism. This again is due to ignorance of the Buddhist teaching. Causation in Buddhism is carefully distinguished by the Buddha on the one hand from Strict Determinism and on the other from Indeterminism. The Buddha argues that if everything was determined, then there would be no free will and no moral or spiritual life would be possible and we would be slaves of the past; and on the other hand if everything was indetermined (adhicca-samuppanna) or fortuitous, then again the moral and spiritual life would not be possible, for the cultivation of moral and spiritual values would not result in moral and spiritual growth. It is because the world is so constituted that everything is not strictly determined or completely indetermined that the religious life is possible and desirable, according to the Buddha.

In order to explain rebirth and karma, some of the Upanishadic thinkers who accepted these doctrines had recourse to the concept of ātman or a changeless soul. The individual continued to be the same because he had a permanent soul which was the agent of all the actions of the individual as well as the experiencer of their fruits. The Buddha was quick to see that such metaphysical entities explained nothing and that it was meaningless to assert or deny an unverifiable entity. He therefore rejected the concept of soul while maintaining the doctrine of the observable continuity of the individuality, and explained the above two laws of continuity and moral retribution in terms of all the verifiable phenomenal factors which determine the continued genesis and growth of the individual. This is too elaborate to be set out in detail. In brief, it describes how the individual is conditioned by his psychological past (going back to past lives which set the general tone of his character) and the genetical constitution of his body derived from his parents, and continues to act in and react with his environment accumulating the experiences of this life in his evolving consciousness (samvattanika-viññāṇa) which continues after the death of the body if the threefold desires in it be still active.

Personal and direct knowledge of the operation of these three laws constitutes the threefold knowledge' (tisso vijja) which the Buddha and his disciples claimed to have. The awareness of the fact that and the way in which one is being conditioned is said to result in one ceasing to be conditioned, a state which corresponds to the attainment of the unconditioned and supreme felicity of Nirvāna. This is salvation in Buddhism which is literally salvation from the bondage of finite conditioned existence.

Strictly, Nirvāna is said to be beyond description or conception, the reason given being that it is a state so radically different from the type of existent things which we can conceive of that no meaningful description or definition of it can be given in conceptual terms. It is said that to say that one 'exists' in Nirvāna is wrong, for existence is a concept that applies to phenomenal things and has reference to space and time, for Nirvāna is "timeless, in that one cannot speak of it as being in the past, present or future", is not located in space and is not causally conditioned unlike all phenomenal things: but it is also said to be equally wrong to say that one "does not exist" in Nirvāna since this implies a state of oblivion and annihilation. Nevertheless both positive as well as negative descriptions are given though they are not to be taken as exact definitions, as Nirvāna is "beyond the scope of logic".

Negatively it is the absence of all unhappiness, and all phenomenal existence is said to be infected with unhappiness; we are unhappy either because we experience mental or physical pain and have forebodings for the future, or because the pleasant experiences that we have are insecure and never lasting, This is to take a realistic view of life even in the face of the fact that as the Buddha says "human beings enjoy on the whole more pleasant experiences than unpleasant ones", and therefore it would not be correct to call it pessimism since it has nothing to do with wishful thinking. Positively Nirvāna is described as a state of "supreme felicity" (paramam sukham).

The way of salvation is described as an eightfold path in which the first step is that of right understanding and living in accordance with the true philosophy of life, and as a result having right aspirations, right speech, right actions,

right mode of living, and right mindfulness, culminating in the growth of religious joy and the spiritual and intuitive awareness of right meditation or contemplation. The full fruit of right contemplation, however, can be reaped by those giving up the active social life for the contemplative life. This meditative life is characterised by the stages of personal mystical consciousness (rūpa-jhāna) and impersonal mystical consciousness (arupa jhāna) culminating in the attainment of Nirvāna. With the growth of his mind and spirit there are said to emerge certain faculties latent in him such as telepathy and clairvoyance and the ability to see his past lives. These cognitive faculties, as explained earlier, make it possible for the individual to realise the conditioned state in which he is, and thereby to attain the Unconditioned. Considering the requirements of the path, the Way to Nirvāna is therefore described as the culmination of a person's moral development (sīla), intuitional or spiritual development (samādhi) as well as his intellectual or cognitive development (paññā). The Buddha was once asked "whether he hoped to save one-third of the world, one-half of the world or the whole world by offering this Way of Salvation", to which he replied that he does not claim to save one-third of humanity, but that just as a skilful doorkeeper guarding the only entrance to the palace knows that all those who seek the haven of this palace must enter by this door, even so all those in the past who were saved, who in the present are being saved and who in future will be saved, have entered, are entering and will enter by this door.

Such is the teaching of Early Buddhism which is offered as a self-consistent scientific hypothesis touching the matters of religion and morality which each person can verify for himself. In fact, not being based on revelation, the fact that it has been verified by him and hundreds of his disciples and

is capable of being verified by every earnest seeker is put forward as the criterion of its truth by the Buddha. The empirical and pragmatic test of science is for the Buddha the test of true religion. The faith that he requires is the trust that is required to put to the test a certain philosophy of life by devoting one's entire being to living it every moment of one's life. And its worth is to be realised by its fruits by each person for himself. Like the scientists working in other fields, the Buddhas or the Perfect Ones have merely discovered these truths which are there for all time and have preached them for the good of the world. Each one has to seek and work out his own salvation; no one can save another and the Perfect Ones do merely point the way.

It would be seen that such a religion is in accord with the temper and the findings of science so that Buddhism is not likely to be at variance with science so long as scientists confine themselves to their methodology and their respective fields without making a dogma of materialism.

As for purpose, the Buddhist view is that the world as such has no purpose to accomplish though individuals in it may choose their own ends and thus make their lives purposeful; the end recommended by Buddhism being Nirvāna. The Buddha would argue that if the world had a purpose to be attained in a final consummation, then either salvation would be assured for all or some would be foredoomed and damned for eternity; but according to the Buddha there is no necessity or inevitability in progress; no one is destined to attain Nirvāna unless he wishes to. But as for moral values Buddhism upholds their objectivity, for according to the Law of karma, a drunkard, for instance, unless he repents (i. e. changes his ways) tends to be reborn as a moron whatever the opinions or wishes of the drunkard or the members of his society may be.

THE RELATION OF BUDDHISM TO MODERN SCIENCE

ROBERT F. SPENCER. M.A.,Ph.D.

There can be no question that Buddhism is the one system, excepting perhaps science itself, which achieves an objective and detached view toward the nature and destiny of man. This striking objectivity divorces the Buddhist system from the realm of religion and allies it at once with the kind of scientific search for truth which characterized India in the Gupta and other early periods of its civilization and which affords a major pre-occupation to most of the intellectual world — both east and west — of today. Buddhism, this writer contends, is not properly a religion; it is a system for life and living in a world which is circumscribed with difficulty and beset with suffering. Buddhism is not a religion, if, in scientific terms, we define religion as the mystic experience, the psychic thrill. It is not a religion because it de-emphasizes faith in the unknown and unknowable and it rejects dogmatism. However much these latter features may obtrude themselves in Buddhist lands, no serious student can regard them as other than superfluous growths, digressions from the scientifically conceived Dharma of the Founder. This paper holds that in the strictest sense, Buddhism as a system and scientific endeavour as a comparable system are one.

But there is also a difference: the Buddhist thinker is clear as to his aims; if he uses science and its methods, he does so with the realization that science is a means to an end and not an end in itself. In other words, the Buddhist sees in science reflections of principles expressed and reiterated by the Lord Buddha at a time when there was no absolute

methodology of science as such. Since today the world is wedded to the methods of science, we have only to note how wholly compatible with science is the system founded in India 2,500 years ago. Modern scientific achievement serves merely to lend added perspective to the concepts of impermanence, of the illusory quality, and of *anātman* which were put forth so long ago. As an end in itself, science may solve immediate problems; it feeds more people so that there are more people to feed; it prolongs life and finds more effective means of destroying life. Science as viewed today, is a method, no more, and to make a cult of it, to find in it the answer to problems and questions of the ultimate forms of human destiny is rank error. It is making a dogma of science where no religious emotion or attitude are ever intended. This indeed was the fallacy of some of the sectarian forms of ancient Hinduism; in seeking to explain the universe by means of an atomic theory, however correctly conceived, the Brahmins of India of the past stopped dead and found human salvation, if such it may be called, in science and sciencing. Nor is the contemporary world too different despite the fact that the scientific goal is material rather than spiritual.

The method of science admits primarily the formulation of an hypothesis, the testing of that hypothesis, and the stating of new hypothesis, predicated on knowledge obtained by such experimentation. The Lord Buddha experimented with ideas, not with things — he employed the crucible of life in which to measure human experience and he came up with a detached and tested answer.

Science is characterized by its "tough-mindedness". The search for truth is not always easy, nor indeed, always pleasant. It has been said that the truth may hurt. It does but it remains truth for all that. Pristine Buddhism offers

an attempt, a successful one, it may be added, to come to grips with truth in an objective way. To those of us who, now living, are seeking a few moments of respite, of surcease from worry, in short, of what might be called happiness, the Buddha says in effect: "All right, just remember, it doesn't last; it may be here today but it is never permanent". Just as science seeks to define its answers, objectively, without emotion, so also does Buddhism hit squarely at the target and, free from emotional stress informs us concisely what is what. We may not like it and we may have to toughen ourselves to take it, but it is proven to be.

An example of the kind of scientific "tough-mindedness" which the Buddhist has to take is seen in the concept of *karma*. What indeed could be simpler and yet what could be more scientifically conceived? If one chooses, one may take on faith, to be sure, the *samsara* principle. Objectively, however, previous existences, however envisioned in time or space, remain a matter of complete indifference. What is significant is that "I" am not the same individual that "I" was yesterday, a year ago, or even a moment ago. Ego has changed, physical form has changed, however imperceptibly. Moreover, the "I" of the individual, having volition, free will, can and does act. Acts, however, are pre-conditioned by foregoing acts. A deed of to-day begets its effects of tomorrow, effects of future action and thought. To the view of this writer, this is the karmic principle with meaning and application. It is scientific; there is nothing esoteric about it.

So much has been said regarding the relations between Buddhism and the natural sciences that it is scarcely worth belaboring the point further here. The nature of matter, the nature of physical reality, problems of space and time are all implicit in Buddhist teachings. This writer must confess that

he cannot care less about such mystical relationships as are conceived as between mind and matter. His interests lie in the connections between Buddhism and the social sciences, that wide area which seeks to understand the relation between man and man, not that between atom and unpopulated universe.

In such of the social sciences as anthropology and sociology, an attempt is made to understand how men behave in groups and why they act as they do. A related aspect is seen in economics and in its handmaiden, political science. Still further, may be added the discipline which seeks to evaluate the individual, psychology. In all of these fields, one thought becomes paramount: human beings act because of their conditioning — the anthropologist would say because of their cultural heritage. We come to realize that what one people regards as right, another may view as wholly wrong. The social sciences teach the relativism of human behaviour.

Granted that human behaviour be relative, it follows that there are no absolutes of good or evil. Indeed, good and evil, as concepts, are likewise wholly relative. As a trained social scientist, one who has information regarding the differing ways of the peoples of the world, the writer believes this. Only in Buddhism is some order restored from the resulting chaos. Note that the Buddha does not say — "Thou shalt not.....". He does say that it is a good idea to avoid certain kinds of behaviour and he issues a series of wholly positive injunctions on his followers. Regardless of background, regardless of belief, regardless of economic or political systems, Buddhism has application. It makes sense as nothing else can to restore balance to men. Not that it is even desirable to effect a balance from the Buddhist point of

view. To realize the concept of *anicca* is unquestionably for all men enough.

But the Buddhist could assist his own goals by a realization of the objectivity of the social scientist. Here the scientist takes the view of detachment toward his fellow man. He does not seek amelioration. The Buddhist can and should do the same; by so doing, he may achieve by indirection solutions to the problem of human suffering. The Lord Buddha realized that the man who helped himself would inevitably help others. He comes concretely to grips with problems of society and personality. Psycho-analysis may in some measure be compared with enlightenment but the enlightened man does not need to be told how to live with his fellows. The nature of enlightenment brings this inevitably about. The Buddhist can adopt the contemplative detachment of the scientist. In so doing, he makes himself a better Buddhist and follows infinitely more closely the basic precepts. Objectivity in human affairs remains his watchword.

SCIENCE AND BUDDHISM

UPASAKA WU SHU

(Loo Yung Tsung)

New theories in physics reveal the following facts:—

The simplest part of matter is, at present, supposed to consist of protons and electrons. Around the electrons there are lines of magnetic force. The influence of these lines is theoretically universal. This may be expressed in another way: the constituents of the universe interact on one another and are inseparable. Thus, the concept of the individual existence of any single object is based on illusion. This is the first fact.

In 'reality' things do not exist in a 3-dimensional state, as the majority including some scientists believe. Rather, things exists in a 4-dimensional state where to the side of *space* is introduced *time*, an important element. **Continuum** is a new unit of measurement in *reality:* Even *space* and *time* are interdependent! This is the second fact.

From these facts one can see straightway that the properties of nature, *reality*, are definitely beyond our imagination.

In spite of these facts scientists and philosophers, are still trying unabatedly to solve the problem of *reality* with their same old instrument: the power of imagination and reasoning. It is certain that they will be disappointed. The only success possible to them is the putting of those conceptual properties of *reality* into mathematical expressions.

Let us consider the source of our knowledge. It can be shown that the knowledge obtained through the process of

thinking or reasoning is *relative* and *indirect*. One can only think of *space* and *time* being independent and not interdependent. Thus one is unable to get rid of one's unreal 3-dimensional universe, that is, one's conflict with the properties of *reality*.

The writer believes that the 3-dimensional universe is actually the projection or projections of *reality*, the 4-dimensional state, viewed by different observers from different angles, and is analogous to a 2-dimensional plan or elevation which is a projection of a 3-dimensional building.

Scientists and philosophers are only modifying the projections in order to minimize the error and get nearer to the profiles of *reality*. They are only designing but not constructing the building. It is obvious that no matter however full of details and however accurate their designs may be the building cannot become actual without construction.

It is equally obvious that to a seeker of truth the theories of scientists and philosophers are only helpful to a certain extent but are not at all vital. What is more important to him than all theories of science and philosophy is to construct the building of *reality*, with material and labour, so that he could live happily in this building and then see every part clearly.

If one should turn one's direction of observation a hundred and eighty degrees, that is, look back at the *direct* source of knowledge—consciousness—one would find a lot of data of an invaluable kind concerning *reality*. But the process of introspection is difficult to master. In order to minimize erroneous and false 'intuition', preparatory training, moral and mental, is essential.

Things are cognised in the process of experiencing them. Experience is preserved in the deepest part of our mind. The function of this part of the mind is so fine and subtle that it is scarcely perceptible to ordinary people. Experience undergoes modification little by little from moment to moment. The principle of causality rules these modifications.

In all experience with oneself, the ego, as centre, and material and spiritual elements taken wrongly as individual objects, as environment, a 3-dimensional universe is suggested. This false concept produces a centripetal tendency drawing one's attention to the self and individuality. It resembles a free moving element, with initial stress, in a structure. Although there is no external stress yet the element itself is always under strain. The initial stress represents the force of karma. The strain, the illusive life with suffering. Should this centripetal tendency be properly removed, one would readily be in a universe of 4-dimensions.

This is actually the Buddhist way of interpreting *reality*. It agrees with modern scientific theories and gives light to the truth-seeker to attain *true knowledge*. The Buddha, the Sakyamuni, is the first Saint in this world who was able to gain insight into the TRUTH. He termed the REAL UNIVERSE, NIRVANA, the 4-dimensional state of *reality*. NIRVANA though it has been explained in many ways is itself beyond the reach of our speculation.

Using the same parable, one finds that the Teaching of the Buddha is a workable or practical design of *reality*, drawn on a transitory map. The details of moral and mental training have incomparable value. They are of greater importance than the philosophic side of the Teaching.

The Sakyamuni assures that every living being, and above all the human being, has the chance and a sufficiency of material to obtain NIRVANA. The way of attainment is through moral training and psychological reform.

The PRINCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA lead one to the way of right living, the way that is without contradictions of thought, fallacies of reason and suffering of any kind. This very way may be called GENUINE LIVING. By treading that way one truly lives and denies death.

The foregoing paragraphs may be summarized as follows:

1. Things exist in a state of relation to one another and not independently.

2. Things interact on one another and are changing every instant.

3. 1 and 2 show that the state of *reality* is 4-dimensional and that its properties are beyond our imagination.

4. Scientific and philosophical theories give us only projections of *reality*.

5. The *direct* source of knowledge is experience. Subjective experience with the ego as centre of observation gives us a false conception of *reality*. The motive force which causes this seemingly irresistible tendency to misunderstand is called karma in Buddhism.

6. The illusive perception of the universe and especially of a self that is independent causes suffering to every creature. The variation of suffering is governed by the law of cause and effect, and works naturally, as

a matter of course. The belief in a God or any supernatural being who governs this world, all anthropomorphizing, is just phantasmic.

7. The way to get rid of karmical disturbance is the "PATH TO NIRVANA" which consists of moral training: observance of precepts etc., and psychological training: concentration, meditation, contemplation etc. as taught in Buddhism.

8. *True knowledge*, the aim of philosphy, and *virtuous conduct*, the aim of ethics, are merely two branches of the one tree of *reality*. Or they may be compared to the two wheels of the chariot that takes a man to NIRVANA.

9. To the truth-seeker right knowledge is the microscope, training is the experiment, and the whole universe the perfect laboratory.

10. The teaching of the Buddha furnishes all that a seeker of truth needs to learn and to follow.

ATOM AND ANATTA

UPASAKA WU SHU
(Loo Yung Tsung)

Everybody should agree in saying that science is the leading factor that creates modern civilization. The recent discovery of the release of nuclear energy brings mankind to a new age —the so called Atomic Age. But unfortunately the first sign that served as an announcement of the opening of this new era was the explosion of a new lethal weapon called the Atomic bomb. Men began to worry that they are living in an Atomic Age where total annihilation of the whole civilised races is actually possible. They generally cannot but think that men are going along the wrong track, and feel that it would be better to give up the deadly energy and enjoy a peaceful though simpler life like their ancestors'. But history does not allow events to go backwards. As Mr. Arthur H. Compton, authoritative American scientist, said, in "One World or None", "No group of men had the power to prevent the coming of the atomic age". So the only right thing for men to do is to be aware of the serious position where mankind now stands and adjust their thinking and their mode of living in such a way so that they may make the best possible use of this new force that has been put into their hands. As a matter of fact there is nothing wrong with the bomb; what's wrong is with man himself. Furthermore the truth revealed as to the inside nature of the atom has undoubtedly invaluable influence not only upon the field of science itself but upon all other branches of knowledge: psychology, philosophy and even theology. It is the aim of this talk to introduce the important facts and new conceptions disclosed by the scientists of today and to compare these

analogically with the fundamental principles of reality unveiled and preached by Sakyamuni, the Buddha, some two thousand five hundred years ago.

In 1808 John Dalton propounded the atomic theory. He believed that an element actually consisted of separate invisible and indivisible atoms. He thought of atoms as things having the properties of a billiard ball. In the later part of that century great scientists like Michael Faraday, James Maxwell and Lord Kelvin began their work in the development of electrical science. The electric nature of an atom was partly disclosed. In 1913 Niels Bohr of Copenhagen produced a theory stating that an atom consisted of two parts, a small heavy nucleus surrounded by a large empty region in which electrons move somewhat like planets about the sun. Around the electrons there are lines of magnetic force; the influence of these lines is theoretically universal. Faraday symbolised an atom as a star-fish with a small body and comparatively long limbs which entangle things the limbs contact. This might be put thus: the constituents of the material universe interact with one another and are really inseparable. This concept of the atom has important philosophical significance. Things do not exist individually. The existence of a single object is therefore nothing more than a mental illusion. The universe is simply a process, a system of interconnected activities in which nothing moves independently of the rest and where all is in ceaseless motion. This is exactly same in principle, though different in words, as the Buddha's preaching of 'Anicca' which means the impermanent or transient nature of things.

Until the release of nuclear energy men still had a shady belief in the existence of ninety-four elements, whose atoms were visualized to be indestructible. Yet as early as 1905 scientist Albert Einstein had already foreseen the fact that

mass and energy were convertible, and he gave the neat equation: $E = mc^2$ where E= energy, c = the velocity of light, m = mass. It is apparent from the equation that a small piece of matter, if converted entirely into energy, would give an enormous amount of energy. And this equation has been verified to be principally correct by the atomic bombs which exploded over New Mexico, Hiroshima. Nagasaki, and near Bikini Atoll in the Pacific. Thus matter or the atom can be described as a highly concentrated form of energy. The reaction which occurs in an exploding atomic bomb can be expressed in the following:

U-235 + neutron = I = Y = N neutrons (U = Uranium, I = Iodine, Y = Yttrium, N = a number); thus a uranium atom breaks up and transforms into atoms of iodine and yttrium. Atom, the original meaning of which is "indivisible" had been finally proven to be divisible. But in ordinary chemistry the conventional theory of the atom still holds good for most practical purposes. Paradoxically it might be put in the following way: An atom is not (really) an atom; it is called an atom for the sake of convenience. One might notice the startling resemblance here of science with Buddhism if one ever had read the Diamond Sutta in which it is said 'When the Tathagata speaks of universes he does not mean really universes; he calls them universes only nominally'.

Let us now turn to a field to which scientists pay comparatively little attention, that is, to our mental faculties. Though the psychic functions are much more complicated and subtle than physical phenomena, yet every sentient being has enough instruments, and material of his own if he only cares to observe and to do his experiment on himself. Our mental or psychic faculties can be divided into two fields: those which function within the field of consciousness and those beyond the field of consciousness. Different

psychologists give different terms and definitions to the latter, some called it subconsciousness, while others called it unconsciousness, yet they generally agree to mean that part of our psychic activities which is beyond the perception and control of our conscious mind. As to the content of this field of subconsciousness or unconsciousness, psychologists suggested various terms as primitive inherited impulse and desire, original nature, impulse, drive, urge, instinct, etc. As a matter of fact science in this particular branch is still in its infancy.

It is a strange fact that the field of subconsciousness which is in a large part obscure to the men of the atomic age can be found clearly and repeatedly in various Buddhist writings. In these writings not only is the theory of mind given but also the physical and mental trainings are shown for getting hold of the seemingly uncontrollable impulse and desires, for uprooting them entirely, and for attaining to the state called Enlightenment where one experiences things as they really are, and finally proves the principle of Anattā which means that there is nothing called a personal ego. It is not possible to mention here with any detail the Buddhist philosophy and training of mind but it might be of interest to you perhaps if I explain briefly the philosophy of the Dharmalakshana school (the consciousness only or perception only school). According to the philosophy of this school, the constituents of the universe are divided into eight faculties (or eight consciousnesses). The first five are the five sensual faculties, *i.e.*, the faculty to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, and to feel. The sixth faculty is the most active one. It consists of practically all the mental functions within the field of consciousness. The seventh faculty is the instinctive grasp or attachment of ego. And the eighth one is the most important

of all. It is sometimes termed the Reservoir Faculty[1], Where the tendencies and energies of all our previous actions and experiences are kept. The seventh and eighth faculties function continuously as the centre of the psychic system no matter whether a man is in the state of awareness or of sleep or is even in the state we commonly call death. When all the abovementioned six faculties cease to function the force of the seventh faculty or attachment of ego is tremendous; it is like the nuclear binding energy of an atom. It causes the arising of the superficial layer, in different forms, in the instinctive desire to live, to propagate, to possess, etc. As a matter of fact the ego-instinct originates and directs almost all the superficial functions such as volition; emotion, etc., and even effects our system of reasoning. It distorts our conscious mind and hence creates the illusory picture of the individual existence of "I", "Being", "Things", etc., thus overshadowing the real nature of impermanence and egolessness. Since all the faculties of the conscious mind are more or less effected by the blind attachment of the ego, it might be said, figuratively, that the field of subconsciousness is the nucleus in which the ego-attachment is the binding force. The other mental faculties move around it like the electrons revolving round the nucleus of an atom. The arrangement of electrons in the orbits of an atom determines its chemical properties, so do the conscious faculties like volution, emotion, intellect, etc., of a certain individual determine his personality or character. It is worthwhile to mention especially the intellectual power of a human being. It has the power of reasoning, understanding and generalising all the events occuring in experience; thus through this faculty men are able to transmit and interchange their ideas and thoughts, just as the electrons in the outermost orbit make possible the flow of electric current. Another important feature of the intellect is that it is the least affected

[1] Ālaya vijñana—a Mahāyāna concept *(Editor)*,

by the influence of the ego-instinct. On the contrary through reasoning and contemplation it even possesses the power of self-realising the truth of egolessness. It is actually by means of this delicate faculty that the detachment of the ego, figuratively speaking the breaking of a psychic atom, is possible.

Induced, perhaps, by the newly disclosed scientific ideas and theories, a scientist and philosopher like William James declared that consciousness was only a function, and one like Bertrand Russell said that such a term as 'mental' does not belong to a single entity in its own right (that is, the imaginary ego), but only to a system of entities. The revival of egolessness foreshadows the possible recovery of their faith in reality which is built upon a rational philosophy closely related to modern science.

But to understand the emptiness of the ego is one thing; to practise, to realise and to live an egoless life is quite another. Einstein visualized the probable release of nuclear energy but the actual bomb came into existence some forty years later. There were people like Sakyamuni and his arahat-followers, though with aim quite different from the scientists, who declared their attainment to the state of full enlightenment and annihilation of the ego, yet compared with billions of sentient beings they are just as rare as the self-radiating elements: uranium, radium. actinium and thorium, on this earth. It is also interesting to notice that in the Buddhist teaching, everywhere, the principle of the so-called 'Middle Path' or 'Middle Way' can be seen. This principle essentially teaches one to refrain from going to extremes in both physical and mental practices. And it is believed that this principle effectively leads one to penetration and enlightenment. In the process of penetrating into the nature of an atom, scientists found that an atom consisted of a complex

system of negatively charged electrons widely spaced around a positively charged nucleus. Charged particles (such as protons, electrons, or alpha particles) and electromagnetic radiations (such as gamma rays) lose energy and thus slow down in passing through that field. They discovered finally a new particle called neutron, a particle having no electric extremities, able to penetrate through the orbits and go its way unchecked until it makes a 'head on' collision with an atomic nucleus. Though, atomic science and Buddhism seem to be entirely different yet they are really tackling the same problem of energy and release of energy by breaking the highly concentrated form of energy the so-called atom in one case, and the ego in the other. And their direction is the same, namely, 'Inward'. Therefore we should not be astonished by the close resemblance between the two. The energy released through the breaking of an ego is not so evident as in the atomic bomb yet the Buddha's highest wisdom and infinite compassion, are very much like the light and heat released from the natural source of atomic energy—the sun.

Briefly I have mentioned two of the three fundamental principles of Buddhism namely Anicca (impermanence) and Anattā (egolessness). The other important principle is called Dukkha (suffering) or the consequence of an egoistic life. These three principles are so important that they are actually considered as the testing-stone of Buddhism; any theory or philosophy which is completely in accordance with these three principles is justified to be called Buddhistic; and anything not in accordance with the three is non-Buddhistic. From this fact the rational character of Buddhism can be easily felt.

An Extract from

"SCIENCE AND THE COMMON UNDERSTANDING"

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER
(New York 1954)

"If we ask, for instance, whether the position of the electron remains the same, we must say 'no'; if we ask whether the electron's position changes with time, we must say 'no'; if we ask whether the electron is at rest, we must say 'no'; if we ask whether it is in motion, we must say 'no'. The Buddha has given such answers when interrogated as to the conditions of a man's self after his death; but they are not familier answers for the tradition of seventeenth and eighteenth century science".

Editor's Note:

The statement of the Buddha mentioned by Oppenheimer, is frequently met with in the Buddhist scriptures, for instance in the following passage from the 72nd Discourse of the Majjhima-Nikāya ("Middle Length Discourses"):

"To think that 'the Perfect One[1] exists after death'; that 'the Perfect One does not exist after death'; that 'the Perfect One both exists and does not exist after death'; that 'the Perfect One neither exists nor does not exist after Death'— this, Vaccha, is the assumption of a speculative view; it is a jungle of views, a wilderness of views, a juggling of views, a writhing of views, a fetter of views; it is coupled with misery,

[1] These statements apply not only to the concept of a Perfect One (tathāgata, i.e. a Buddha) and a Saint (arahant), but, according to the commentaries, also to the concept of a being (satta) in general.

distress, despair and agony; it does not conduce to turning away, to dispassion, cessation, quiescence, direct knowledge, awakening, nor to Nibbāna. Perceiving this as a peril, Vaccha, I did not approach any of these speculative views.

"As to the assumption of theories, Vaccha, the Perfect One has discarded it. But this has been seen by the Perfect One: Such is corporeality, such is the arising of corporeality, such is the disappearing of corporeality; such is feeling...such is perception...such are mental formations...such is consciousness, such is the arising of consciousness, such is the disappearing of consciousness'. Therefore I say that the Perfect One is free without clinging from all imaginings, all confusions, all assertive tendencies concerning 'I' and 'Mine' ".

THE GREATEST ADVENTURE

A Presentation of the Buddha's
Teaching to the Youth
of the World

by

DAVID MAURICE

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
KANDY — CEYLON
1961

CHAPTER I

Adventure

Men have always sought adventure and some look for it in very curious ways. Sometimes adventure comes to men when they are not seeking it and most of us have had thrilling adventures of this kind that have been pleasant or very much the reverse.

In the early days before history, men lived together in large families, each family related to the other and forming a small tribe and it was man who was the hunter and therefore the adventurer and woman's place was to guard the camp and to make secure what the men had won. That was also an adventurous life for women in those days, but while men went out after adventure and so made adventure part of their lives, women for the most part feared adventure as something likely to destroy the security necessary for building a home and rearing a family.

In those early days of civilisation, men ventured from the small patches of forest-land which they lived in, to explore wider areas of the country. They met with hostile tribes and animals and with fire and flood and famine, and overcame these enemies or were overcome by them. They learned which fruits were edible and which were poisonous and they learned better ways of tilling the soil to produce more food, and better ways of building houses, villages, towns and, finally, cities.

They conquered the land and in time they began to conquer the rivers, using logs of wood which they later learned to hollow out, and finally they found out how to build ships. Then they began to conquer the sea and to sail to far-off places on great adventure. Later they began to conquer the air and now we find men attempting to conquer space, to fly to other worlds that are millions of miles away.

Now notice that word 'conquer'. It means to vanquish or to overcome and is used in warfare between nations. The word is associated with adventure and unfortunately many adventures have been attempts to overcome other people in warfare. Sometimes that has seemed very necessary to the fighters, they have thought that they could live better if they took more land and more cattle from others. On the other hand this has not always been the case. Some wars have been fought by adventurous men just for the thrill of the adventure itself.

There is something exciting in adventure that appeals to men and that quite often brings out the best in men and incites them to great deeds. Courage and determination, selflessness and fortitude are virtues that are part of the spirit of adventure, but they are virtues only when they are combined with the greatest of virtues, with loving-kindness.

In the modern world much of the adventure has gone out of life and only a few people can set out to climb high mountains or to explore deep caves or to fit themselves to travel in space-ships. There are cinemas and story-books and the football-field to give some sense of adventure to the others.

There is a greater adventure than any we have mentioned and that is also a conquest, the adventure found in the pursuit of science. There is as much a thrill in finding a new breed of plant, especially if a man has created that plant, as there is in finding a new country. There is a wonderful thrill in conquering disease and bringing health to one's country and to the world.

In fighting death and disease there is all the thrill of battle and all the excitement of war and some of the risks as well. In the development of X-rays, for instance, many a scientist has lost a limb and some have lost their lives due to these rays. When the flesh is exposed repeatedly for a long period to X-rays the exposed part is destroyed and affects neighbouring parts and the only remedy is to amputate the limb. When the case is such that the part cannot be amputated, the man dies. Knowing this, many brave men and women have taken great risks to make ray treatment possible, and the work of making it more safe still goes on.

In other fields of medicine and science similar risks are taken daily. They are taken not in order to kill but in order to cure. In this is greater adventure and higher service to the world.

CHAPTER II

The Supreme Scientist

We have just read of the realms of adventure where there is still room for adventurers who can give great service to the world. It is very interesting to note the word 'adventurer' because that is a good example of how words

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The Supreme Scientist

We have just read of the realms of adventure where there is still room for adventurers who can give great service to the world. It is very interesting to note the word 'adventurer' because that is a good example of how words

can change their meaning. The word is still used in praise of a man and we may say of Tensing and Hillary, who conquered Mt. Everest, 'they were great adventurers'.

Four hundred years ago the peoples of Europe began to explore the world and to travel to far countries and they greatly praised the brave men who endured many perils in such adventures. Then they began looking for countries which they could conquer and from which they could get gold and raw materials for manufacture as they began to invent machines. Using superior weapons they took many countries and then in their greed they began to fight among themselves and to rob each other's ships. The successful men who fought against other countries and against the pirates who lay in wait for their ships carrying the wealth of Asia and America back to Europe, were called great adventurers. But since many of these men were no better than pirates themselves and used force and fraud to gain their fortunes the word began to acquire a bad meaning. Today the word may be used either in praise or blame In business when a man does not follow the rules but takes great risks, sometimes with the money of other people, he may be called 'just an adventurer'.

But if we take the the word in its best and highest sense, meaning one who has courage, determination, fortitude and selflessness, we can see that some of the medical workers and scientists have been high adventurers.

Of all such scientists, he who renounced the whole world and gave up everything to undertake the greatest adventure of all was the supreme scientist.

He was born in India nearly two thousand six hundred years ago, the son of Suddhodana, head of the Sakya clan and ruler of Kapilavatthu and his queen Mahā Māyā, and was named, Siddhattha Gotama. Twenty-nine years later he gave up all his sheltered life, all the luxuries which his father had surrounded him with, to enter on the most difficult search that man has undertaken. That might seem to the unthinking man just the beginning of the adventure that was to last six years until he attained Buddhahood, Supreme Enlightenment. Actually this greatest of adventures had begun many millions of years before, with the vow of a determined man to find a way out of all Suffering.

That you may read about elsewhere. This is not so much to tell you of the beginning of the adventure, but of the last stages and of the end of it, and of the result that opens the way for you to undertake the greatest of all adventures. But where Siddhattha Gotama had to find a way for himself with no one to guide him, you may start off with a well-marked map and a way that has been well pointed out. Even so it is still the greatest adventure that you can undertake.

Before his birth his mother had a strange dream; she dreamt that a small white elephant had entered into her body. Since the white elephant has always been the symbol of power and leadership, this dream was interpreted, by those men who were skilled in such things, as a favourable omen. The child, they said, would be a great man of outstanding ability. When he was born he had also all the signs of health and vigour and intelligence above the ordinary. The wise men predicted that he would be a conqueror and that there were two courses open to him: either he would conquer the world in battle or

he would conquer the world in an entirely different way, the peaceful way of giving up the material world in order to find that which is beyond the world.

His mother died when he was a few days old and his aunt Pajāpati cared for him and brought him up.

The Sākyas were brave warriors, and their clan was of the Khattiya caste. In those days there were four castes in India. The Khattiyas were the leading class, the rulers and great warriors; the Brahmins or priestly class were the teachers and religious men; the Vessas were the trading class and the Sudda caste provided the workmen. People were proud of their caste, especially those who could claim to be Khattiyas, the highest caste, so King Suddhodana determined that his son should not become a mere religious man but should be a great warrior, leader of the clan, conqueror of other clans and finally ruler of the world.

He taught his son archery and all the war-like sports and the young Siddhattha excelled in all of these. His father surrounded him with luxury and comfort and tried to shield him from even the sight of sorrow and suffering. Already, however, there were signs in the young prince of loving-kindness and compassion and freedom from the things of the world. At an early age, we are told, while watching his father perform the ceremonial ploughing of the fields, a custom of that time requiring the king to do the first ploughing so that the fields would be fertile, Siddhattha went apart and meditated. He had a glimpse of another world and of higher things and never really forgot this.

Siddhattha was married at an early age to his beautiful and charming cousin Yasodharā and although for some years they had no children they were very happy together. Finally a son was born to them. He loved his wife very dearly and and in those days every man looked forward eagerly to having a son to love also, and in the eyes of the world a woman was counted as nothing unless she had borne a son. A woman with no children was never completely happy.

Siddhattha now realised that he could not easily leave his home and family, but on the other hand he had no wish to live the luxurious life of a household man. Neither did he wish to make himself a great man by killing others as a conqueror in battle. Later, after he had become the Buddha, when he was asked why the Sākyans were called warriors, though so many were His followers, the Buddha answered: 'Warriors are we called, and wherefore warriors? For lofty endeavour'. And He also said: 'Though he should conquer a thousand times a thousand men in the field of battle, yet he who conquers himself is the noblest victor'.

His preparation during previous lives had given him extraordinary powers of intelligence and made him a deep thinker. Although he had led a protected life and had never seen sickness, old age and death, yet he felt behind all the gay court life an unsatisfactoriness. His father had planned for him a sheltered, luxurious life with the thought that only pleasant things should meet the eye of the young prince; no sign of sickness, suffering or death should be visible. He had three palaces, one for each season of the Indian year, and the king had ordered that when the young prince went out, the roads should be cleared and that nothing unpleasant was to be allowed to disturb Siddhattha.

However, the prince went out one day accompanied only by his faithful charioteer and saw a sick man, weak and pale. It was the first time he had seen such sickness and he was shocked to realise that this was the common lot of all men. After that he saw an old man, shaking and withered and with eyes dim and teeth missing. He then understood that this, too, was to be his fate and that of all his friends. Then he saw a dead man, something also that was new to him. This was something else that was a misfortune all men must meet. Finally he saw a calm person in the robes of a monk, an ascetic who had given up the pleasures of the world. His charioteer explained that there were such men who sought the way out of suffering that none had yet found.

He felt that death was not the end of everything but that there was continual rebirth, life after life. That was the general belief and there were those who knew it for certain, just as there are today some who know it for certain. What nobody knew was the way to prove it; and nobody knew for certain the way out of this continual circle of rebirth. Most people believed either that there was no way out or that by 'uniting with God' as they thought of it, they would end their long struggle. Siddhattha Gotama wanted to discover if there were really a way out and, if so, how to show that way to others, so that all who wished could win freedom from suffering. He and his beloved wife and son and his father, his aunt and his close friends could not stay together for ever, that he knew well. One by one they would be snatched away by death. Maybe they would be reborn in states of greater suffering.

Siddhattha pondered all this and now that a son was born he saw that to seek this ending of sorrow and to find the remedy was the greatest gift he could give to his wife, to his child and to the world. His mind was made up and he renounced all the years of comfort and happiness with wife and child and friends, to set out to find the deathless.

With one last, lingering look at his sleeping wife and child he left the palace and mounted his great horse Kanthaka and with his charioteer Channa went outside the city gates. There he cut off his hair and changed from his rich dress to the robes of an ascetic and, sending back his faithful friend and follower, left on his great quest.

In those days the world was very different from the world you are used to. There was no steam or electricity and the only machinery was the primitive spinning wheel turned by hand or the wood-working tools operated by hand. The only way of travelling on land was by ox-cart or chariot or on horseback, although there were sailing ships which went to far countries. There were no books, only stone slabs with writing sculptured on them or clay plates on which people wrote with sticks and then baked in a kiln or oven. That made it difficult to write and difficult to read, so writing was used for the sake of keeping records and there was no reading for pleasure, and no education by book. Most of the teaching was by word of mouth and most of the learning by heart. There were two great and famous teachers who claimed to have a method of teaching which would lead a man to union with God. That, they said, was the final end which men should seek. To these in turn the Bodhisatta (the Buddha-to-be) went for study and he quickly mastered their systems.

Each in turn begged him to stay as a teacher but he saw that these systems did not lead to the deathless.

He set out anew with five companions who acknowledged him as their leader. In those days there were people who believed that there was a way out of the constant round of rebirth. They believed that the way was to conquer the body by inflicting suffering on it and so they tortured themselves. They lived on as little food as they possibly could and endured great hardships. Siddhattha and his companions tried this way for some years and he starved himself until he almost died. Eventually he realised that to follow his present course was to die with the goal not yet won. Then he remembered the experience of his early boyhood when he had had a glimpse of higher things. At that time, he remembered, his body was comfortable and his mind free. He decided to try this way and sat under a tree, now known as the Bodhi tree or tree of enlightenment, determined not to rise until he had attained full enlightenment. He succeeded and when He did rise up from His seat next morning it was as an Omniscient Buddha.

CHAPTER III

The Teaching

In attaining full enlightenment the Buddha attained omniscience. The word means 'knowledge of everything'. He knew all the past and all the present and had only to turn His mind towards a thing to see and understand it. He had become a different being, a Buddha, greater than any man and greater than the highest god, with powers far surpassing

those of any other being, man or god, whatsoever. Looking round with this superior power, He saw men lost in greed and craving (Lobha), in hate and dislike (Dosa) and in dullness and delusion (Moha). There, He saw, are the roots of all action. Although they have their opposites: disinterestedness (Alobha), amity (Adosa) and wisdom (Amoha or Paññā), the latter three were, and still are, very rare in the world. He hesitated to give so deep a teaching to the ordinary men of the world who were bent only on pleasure, but on looking over the world with His superior understanding He realised that there were some men 'whose eyes were only lightly covered with dust' who would awaken and understand. Such men, with more intelligence and more kindness than their fellow human beings, would accept the Teaching and follow it.

It is interesting to note that it was not always the learned men who understood the Teaching quickly. Learning is, at times, a great help to understanding, but it is simplicity and and earnestness and clearness of mind that are required above all for understanding. The Buddha then set out to teach those in the world who would listen to His teaching, and could understand it. He knew that His former teachers, under whom He had studied, would be most likely to understand the teaching. Then He saw by His superior powers that they had already died. So He decided to teach first His former companions who had practised with Him a life of asceticism.

In gaining enlightement He had gained an appearance of great calmness and majesty and appeared as truly splendid as only a Buddha can appear. On the way to these former companions He met a wandering ascetic who was surprised

at the wonderful appearance of the Buddha and asked: 'Friend, who is your teacher?' The Buddha replied that He was a Buddha, a fully enlightened one, conqueror of the world and teacher of gods and men, and that there was no-one among men or gods whom He could regard as a teacher. There was at that time in India a sect of ascetics who had the strange belief that by owning nothing at all, not even clothes, they would be nearer to some supposed god. Therefore they went about quite naked and dirty. There are still a very few of such people in India even today. This ascetic was one of that sect and he was not able to grasp such a teaching as that of the Buddha. He said: 'Maybe!' and nodded his head and and went on his way.

When the Buddha arrived at the place where His former companions were, they saw Him coming and determined not to accept Him as a friend and teacher. They thought that He had betrayed all their ideas by giving up the strict ascetic life of torture and living what was, to them, a comparatively luxurious life. As He approached nearer they were struck by His majestic and calm presence just as had been the naked ascetic, and their resolution to treat Him coldly could not be kept up. They could not at first accept His Teaching but when He had spoken for some time they saw part of the truth and then, one by one, they perceived the full truth and became Arahats

What is the difference between an Arahat and a Buddha? In one way there is none, since both on the death of the body attain full Nibbāna, never to be reborn in any of the worlds again. However, a Sammāsambuddha (a Fully Enlightened Buddha) has, by His long preparation through many lives,

superior powers; and while still living in the world is able to find out the Truth as no-one else can and is able to teach this Truth as no one else can.

You may read elsewhere the story of the forty-five years of life of the Buddha, how all sorts of men became His followers. Many of these became Arahats, some from rich families of high caste and some from the families of the poorest people and the lowest caste, and even those "out-castes" who were regarded by others as the lowest of men; some were mere children and others old men. Here we shall read of the Teaching of the Buddha.

Today men of science are beginning to make wonderful discoveries. They are now beginning to understand much of the truth taught by the Buddha so many centuries ago. The Buddha was omniscient and knew everything that ordinary men were able to do. He knew all the natural laws, those known to ordinary men and those unknown to the ordinary man. In His teachings you will find that He knew all about atoms, for instance. But He did not teach how to use atomic power. He said that the truths He had taught His followers were like a handful of leaves in number while the truths that could be known were like the leaves in a great forest. 'Why' He asked, 'have I not taught you the other truths? Because they would not be helpful to you Only those truths which will help you to attain calm and happiness and freedom from this round of rebirth have I taught you'.

He taught the six roots of action of which we read in the last chapter and He taught also the Three Signs of Being.

That means the three conditions which govern everything that exists in the world To put it more simply, everything is subject to Anicca, Dukkha and Anattā. These three Pāli words may be translated into English as follows: Anicca is Impermanence, that is, everything is continually changing and is in what we call a state of flux. From moment to moment nothing is the same. Things may appear to be the same, just as a river flowing towards the sea may seem to keep the same form. The river, however, is not composed of the same drops of water at one moment as it was the moment before or will be next moment In addition the river is slowly eating out its banks at some places and building them up at other places. Similarly your body and your mind are changing all the time, every part of your mind. Even such seemingly solid things as chairs and tables and houses and stones are all the time in motion. This was shown by the Buddha more than 2500 years ago and in the last fifty years western science has at last found this to be true.

Dukkha is sorrow and suffering. Whether it is deep sorrow and great suffering or just an uneasy feeling or a feeling of unsatisfactoriness, it is all comprised in the word Dukkha. If you think deeply you will see that even in what we think are happy moments, the shadow of sorrow is always present. Since we cannot stay with our happy friends always and since we are always changing and always having to leave happiness behind, nothing is permanently happy and so happiness itself changes to sorrow. The third fact of being is Anattā, absence of any permanent unchanging self or soul. When yon say 'I' you are speaking of something that has already changed and is still changing, It is impossible that such an unsatisfactory compound or mixture, a bundle of

feelings, changing from moment to moment, can be thought of as a 'Soul' which doesn't change. Take away from yourself all thoughts and all feelings and what is left? Nothing is left at all that is able to be recognised as yourself or part of yourself or anything to do with yourself.

So having in mind these facts that can be proved, the Buddha gave the further Teaching, of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path.

CHAPTER IV

The Four Noble Truths and the Precepts

All of the Buddha's Teachings is true and one part follows another very clearly. Following on the teaching of the Three Signs of Being, are the Four Noble Truths. These are: 1. That all in the world is, in its inner essence, suffering. 2. That there is a cause of suffering and that cause is desire or craving. 3. That if we can get rid of our craving and ignorance we can get rid of suffering. 4. That there is a way to get rid of ignorance and craving and that way is the Noble Eightfold Path

It is put in the Scriptures in a longer way. 'This is the Noble Truth of Suffering. Birth is suffering. Growth and decay is suffering. Death is suffering. To be bound to what we do not love is suffering. To be parted from what we love is suffering. Not to obtain that for which we long is suffering. All the Elements of Being are suffering.

'This is the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering. It is that craving which leads from birth to birth, joined with

lusts and longings which, now here, now there, continually seek satisfaction. It is the desire for the gratification of passion; it is craving for eternal life; it is longing for enjoyment here in this present life.

'This is the Noble Truth of the Ceasing of Suffering It is the utter and complete annihilation of this craving (Taṇhā); separation from it, freedom from it, deliverance from it.

'This is the Noble Truth of the Way that leads to the Ceasing of Suffering. It is that Noble Eightfold Path which consists of 1. Right Understanding. 2. Right Thought. 3. Right Speech. 4. Right Bodily Action 5. Right Livelihood. 6. Right Effort 7. Right Attentiveness. 8. Right Concentration'.

We call it an 'Eightfold' path because each part is not separate. The whole eight parts of the path have to be followed at the one time and not one after the other. It can be seen that, as we follow this path, the path itself will become clearer to us the farther we go. Thus the first step 'Right Understanding' is, at the beginning, the right understanding of all we have learnt about the Four Noble Truths. Later on we get right understanding of these Noble Truths in a fuller and deeper sense. Right Thought means a mind free from selfish desire, from ill-will and from cruelty. At the beginning we can only commence to make our minds clean and good. Later we can make them ever cleaner and clearer.

Right Speech is speaking only what is good and useful and kind. It is refraining from saying harsh and rough things and from telling lies, tale-bearing and from speaking foolishly. Right Bodily Action is abstaining from taking life, from

killing and from stealing and from dirty and immoral sexual acts. Right Livelihood is to make a living in ways that do not harm others. Right Effort is putting forth energy to make evil and nasty thoughts leave the mind and to put forth energy to keep the mind on good and wholesome things. It is right effort to follow the good and right effort to stay away from the bad. It takes a good deal of effort to be attentive and to concentrate and this is right effort.

Right Attentiveness is being aware of the body, the feelings, the mind and of mental objects; and Right Concentration is keeping the mind firmly fixed on an object. This we shall mention fully in Chapter VI.

The Teaching of the Buddha is something to be and something to do. The something to do is our great adventure and we shall deal with it in Chapter VI also. The something to be is just to be good and decent It is to follow at least the Five Precepts and, when and where possible, the Eight or the Ten.

Most Buddhists take Five Precepts in Pāli and so we give them here in Pāli with the English translation.

Pāṇātipāṭā veramaṇī - sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from taking life.

Adinnādānā veramaṇī - sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from taking that which is not given.

Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī - sikkhāpadaṁ sāmādiyāmi.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from sexual immorality.

Musāvādā veramaṇī - sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from telling lies.

Surāmeraya - majja - pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī - sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from all intoxicants.

There are three further rules to make the eight precepts. They are:—

> I undertake the rule of training to refrain from eating after midday.
>
> I undertake the rule of training to refrain from attending dancing, singing, music and shows and from the use of garlands, scents, cosmetics and adornments.
>
> I undertake the rule of training to refrain from using luxurious beds.

For the Ten Precepts, the first five rules are used and the next are very like the last three of the Eight. They are:—

> I undertake the rule of training to refrain from eating after midday.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from attending dancing, singing, music and shows.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from the use of garlands, scents, cosmetics and adornments.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from the use of luxurious beds.

I undertake the rule of training to refrain from accepting gold and silver.

The layman who undertakes the eight or the ten rules of training should follow them very seriously and very strictly. For instance he must preserve absolute chastity as the third rule.

Only monks can follow the Ten Precepts all the time but laymen can follow them on special days when they have no work or classes. Monks must follow all the above rules very strictly and further rules as well. Monks have in all 227 rules to follow and that is why we should respect monks, since a true monk follows all the rules very strictly.

Now there is a question that an intelligent man may ask. That is: 'Why should I keep all these rules?' He may think that there should be a reason, and there is indeed a reason. The Buddha gave a very good reason for His Teaching.

The first five Precepts are plain to everyone. They are just the basic morality that all should follow. It requires very little common sense to understand that by keeping these simple

rules you will earn a good name in this world as well as building a character that will be to your benefit after death. But the question may occur to you, 'Why should a layman, especially a young man, keep the other five rules of training for a time?' You might also ask: 'What harm am I doing to others if I never keep them?' You are not doing harm if you do not keep them, but you can gain a lot of good for yourself if you do keep them sometimes. The Buddha said that it is better for a layman to keep them on special Fast-days as it will help him to think of the Arahats who keep them always, and it will improve his mind. By undertaking this voluntary discipline, your mind will be clean and clear and united. Many people have divided minds. A man wants to do a thing with part of his mind and wants to do something else, may be the opposite, with another part of his mind. His mind is not steady and in a way is fighting itself. Just as in a country if the citizens are fighting among themselves that country becomes poor and weak, so a man's mind if it is not united, becomes poor and weak. You do not have to believe that without thinking about it, but if you think about it, then you will see for yourself that it is true. The Buddha taught that men should think for themselves. They should consider what they see or hear or are taught and neither believe it blindly nor disbelieve it blindly. Only after thinking over it deeply should they believe or disbelieve. When they see that a thing is not good and not reasonable they should reject it. When they see that a thing is good and in accord with reason, then they should accept it.

The Teaching of the Buddha has been preserved and enshrined in the Pāli language. In the days of the Buddha there were monks who knew His Teachings by heart and

could recite them. There are still some who can do this. After the Buddha died and thus attained Mahāparinibbāna (complete Nibbāna without any reminder) a Great Council was called and Reciting Monks were appointed who, in groups, recited the Teachings to each other daily. As new members came into the Sangha, which is the name for the Noble Order of Monks, they took 'the Yoke of Learning or the Yoke of Development', that is, they decided to specialise on Development of Insight or on learning the Teachings so that the Teachings could be handed down exactly as the Buddha gave them.

Those who learnt the Teachings joined one of the groups of Reciting Monks and so though individuals have died, the groups remain as living bodies right through the centuries to the present day. That is why we can rely on the Pāli Canon, or Collection of Teachings as being true. They are divided into three sections, called Piṭakas, and the whole is called the Tipiṭaka.

There is the Vinaya Piṭaka, or Collection of Rules for monks with the stories of how those rules came to be promulgated; there is the Sutta Piṭaka or Sermons to monks and laymen, and there is the Abhidhamma Piṭaka or philosophical collection.

The Buddha did not teach a dogma, that is something that must be believed merely because some person in authority has said it. In the Kālāma Sutta or Sermon to the people of the clan of Kālāma, He said: 'Do not accept views merely from hearsay or from what you have been told. Do not accept them merely because they are mentioned in scriptures,

or merely because of argument or because the reasoning seems to be plausible. Do not believe because the speculations about a thing appear possible, and do not believe merely because your teacher is venerable'.

'When you realise by yourself that these views are unwholesome, faulty, censured by the wise and they lead to harm and misery, when practised, you should reject them. When you realise by yourselves that these views are good, faultless, praised by the wise and when carried out and practised lead to good and happiness, then after acquiring them you should abide in them'. The Buddha then questioned the Kālāmas: 'What do you think, Kālāmas? When generosity (alobha) arises in a man, does it arise for his good or his harm?' 'For his good, Lord'. 'This person free from greed, O Kālāmas, not being overcome by covetousness, with his mind totally uninfluenced by it, does not take life, does not commit theft and adultery, does not tell lies, and does not urge others to do so, and this leads him to good and happiness for a long time'. 'Quite so, Lord'.

'What do you think, Kālāmas? When goodwill arises in a person, does it arise for his good or harm?' 'For his good, Lord.'

'O Kālāmas, a man who is free from ill-will, not being overcome by it, and his mind not being under its influence does not take life, does not commit theft and adultery, does not tell lies, and does not urge others to do so, and this leads him to good and happiness for a long time'. 'Quite so, Lord.'

'What do you think, O Kālāmas? When knowledge arises in a man, does it arise for his good or for his harm?' 'For his good, Lord'. 'O, Kālāmas, this person who is free from delusion, not being overcome by it, and his mind not being under its influence, does not take life, does not commit theft and adultery, does not tell lies, and does not urge others to do so, and this leads him to good and happiness for a long time'. 'Quite so, Lord'.

The Buddha thus showed the people of the Kālāma clan what is true virtue and that nothing is to be believed unless it is investigated and seen by reason to be good and true.

Buddhism and other Teachings.

The Buddha taught that we should rely on ourselves and that we should live a life of virtue and that by our own efforts we can and should attain Nibbāna. He also said, however, that if a teacher of another sect speaks that which is Dhamma (truth and purity) we should salute him with joined hands. A Buddhist respects all truth and all good and realises that many great Teachers have taught this Therefore a good Buddhist respects other Teachings while holding fast to the truth and respects all who live a life of purity and loving-kindness. There is no competition between Buddhism and other sects.

CHAPTER V

Mind and Body and the Roots of Action

The Buddha taught Loving-kindness and Compassion, and Reason. That we have seen in the previous chapters.

He did not teach something to be believed in without reason. He taught that we should be good and He gave good reasons for being good. That is not His greatest teaching, however. As well as teaching something to be, He taught something to do: 'Who sees the Dhamma (the good law)' He said 'sees me'. He was not a God to be worshipped merely, but a man who became greater than any God, a Being to be followed.

The evil caste system was beginning to rise in India and He taught:

> 'Not by birth is one an outcaste,
> Not by birth is one a noble;
> But by deeds is one an outcaste,
> And by deeds is one a noble.'

He also said on another occasion:

> 'This two-footed dirty body
> Which carries about a bad odour
> And which is full of impurities
> Which pour out from different places;
> With a body of this sort
> If one thinks highly of oneself
> And looks down upon others
> Due to what can it be except ignorance?'

This was to show that what we call the 'self' is not important and we cannot think of ourselves as being great and wonderful.

Do you ever look at yourself in a mirror? You will not see there exactly what other people see when they look at you.

You will see an image of your body but it will be changed by your mind at the very moment the image reaches your mind. You cannot see anything at all exactly as it is and, as the Buddha said: 'Self is dear to self', your idea of yourself will be made grander than it is by your wishes for yourself, so you do not see yourself clearly and truly. This self that is changing like a flowing river, this mind that is jumping about like a fish that has just been pulled out of the water, cannot be clearly perceived, cannot be fully understood Only when the mind becomes completely clear and calm can it see itself. Only then can you really see yourself.

The Buddha, shortly after attaining Full Enlightenment, met a party of thirty young men who were in a very disturbed state. They had gone out on a picnic with their wives, and one young man, having no wife, had taken along a girl he had met by chance. This young woman was a cheat and a swindler and she had pretended to be very tired and had suggested that the young people should keep their valuable jewels and ornaments with her, where she sat at the foot of a tree, while they enjoyed themselves by running races. When they agreed, she had taken charge of all the valuables, but stole away with them when the friends were busy with their games.

Now the young men were running here and there looking for the thief, and they told the Buddha that they were looking for a woman who had stolen their property. 'Is it more important to find this woman or to find yourself?' asked the Buddha.

The intelligent young men realised the deep truth behind the Buddha's question and agreed that the most important thing in life is to seek for one's self, for unless and until one

begins to search for and to find and to understand this changing 'Self', one cannot gain that freedom, the only freedom worth having, which we call Nibbāna.

What is the thing that is closest to you? The 'Self' is closest to you, since, in a sense, it *is* 'you', and yet you are not a single indivisible whole. Sometimes you laugh at yourself and sometimes you blame yourself. Do you ever try to think what it is that blames 'itself'; or what the 'self' blames? If you do that for one minute you will realise that what you call the 'Self' is a changing bundle of feelings, never for one moment quite the same.

To find your 'Self' and to know your 'Self' is the most important thing in the world for you and it is certainly the greatest adventure you can undertake.

How are we to set about this search for that which is so near and yet so far? Men have been trying and failing since the beginning of civilisation, since the very earliest times. No god or spirit can help one and yet alone and unaided the task is almost an impossible one, though it may seem simple at first glance.

Along and unaided the Buddha solved this great problem of existence, of life and death and of what lies beyond both life and death. Luckily for us He left a way which we can follow clearly. He called it 'Ekāyano', 'the only way'. This way is open to all men and the chart is clearly drawn, but it is not a way to be followed by fools or by sots or by cowards; it is a way for the brave, the resolute and the good.

It is a way that can be followed by the learned and by the uneducated and although the educated man has something

of an advantage in all things, if learning causes pride that can be a handicap.

The story is told of the very learned monk, Poṭhila, who was the teacher of other monks but had never found the way himself because he was too proud of his learning to follow the path. When the Buddha called him 'Poṭhila the Empty-head', he realised that it was because he had not practised Development of Insight and had not really understood the changing self.

He went to a company of monks who had reached the end of the Path and had become Arahats and asked for instruction. They, in order to humble his pride, sent him successively to younger and younger members of their community until he reached the youngest, a mere child. This youngster told Pothila: 'You, Sir, are a great teacher of the Three Piṭakas, all of the Buddha's teachings. I have something to learn from you'. Poṭhila was now humble and promised to do anything the young boy commanded if he would only show him the way. Finally the lad said to him: 'Venerable Sir, if there are six holes in a certain ant-hill and a lizard enters the ant-hill by one of these holes, if you wish to catch the lizard you must stop up five of the six holes, leaving the sixth hole open, and catch the lizard in the hole by which he entered. Just so you must deal with the six doors of the senses; close five of the six doors, and devote your attention to the door of the mind'. There, and there only can you seize and understand the "Self." The method will be explained in the next chapter.

When you perform any action you are moved by one or more of the six roots or springs of action. These are Lobha.

Dosa, Moha, and Alobha, Adosa and Amoha which we mentioned in Chapter III. It is important for you to know and understand when and how these six roots of action play in your mind. When you are lustful or greedy or desirous, you should be truthful with yourself and aware that you are lustful, greedy and desirous. When you are angry or irritable or feel even a slight aversion to anything, you should be fully aware of the feeling When your mind is 'dark' and perplexed and ignorant, you should be fully aware of that. Similarly when your mind is full of loving-kindness and well-wishing to all, when your mind is keen and alert but peaceful and poised, you should be fully aware of these states.

CHAPTER VI

Something To Do

Now, then, we come to the greatest adventure, which you are ready to set out on It is a discipline, but a discipline that you impose on yourself, not one imposed on you by others. It is a training, and you are the trainer. If you can find a teacher to help you, you are more sure of success and success will come the more quickly

You may take some preliminary exercises, just as a man who intends to climb mountains, first practises by walking long distances, and by climbing hills, or just as a man who intends to conquer some disease that endangers humanity, first fits himself by study and laboratory work. Something of this preliminary training has been mentioned earlier. You must take a few exercises in knowing your mind, in practising awareness. You watch for the arising of feelings of anger or of kindness or joy or sorrow and are aware that they are rising, that they are there and that they are dying away. Then

you think to yourself: 'These feelings change my mind and they are not permanent it seems, nor is my mind always the same. These feelings arise without my will and against my will. How would it be it I could become complete master of my feelings and make them arise when I will and vanish when I will?'

A thought of lust or hate or just black dullness comes to your mind. You think: 'I did not call you, get out'. But sometimes the thought stays and grows even as you think this and if you have not practised being aware of your thoughts and feelings, you will be overwhelmed like a weak swimmer in a stormy sea. Struggling is sure to end in disaster. You remain calm and cool. You do not struggle negatively. You are positive. You have a plan and you put that plan into operation. Just as a general in battle makes his plans beforehand, as an inventor or scientist makes his plans beforehand, so do you. Here is your plan, one given by the Buddha:

This practice has been given by the Buddha in the Vitakka-Saṇṭhāna Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya. *It consists in taking one's mind from the evil thought to an associated thought which is not evil. The modern psychologists call it 'sublimation'. If that is not successful there is a second step, the consideration of the wretchedness of such evil thoughts. Then, if the thoughts are not by this means driven away there is a third step, the turning of the mind away to other thoughts that are not associated at all with the evil thoughts, but are thoughts good in themselves. If they still persist, the evil

*'The Removal of Distracting Thoughts' (Vitakka Saṇṭhana Suṭṭa). Translation by Soma Thera.

thoughts may be lessened by degrees, by taking thought that they may be made less violent: 'Just as a man running swiftly might say to himself: 'But what am I going so hurriedly for? How if I were to go more gently...' and thus as a man might slow down from more vigorous postures until he finally stopped, then sat, then lay down, so evil, unsalutary thoughts that arise may be gradually slowed down if the other methods of banishing such thoughts fail altogether'.

'But if', said the Omniscient Buddha, 'O disciples, bringing these considerations to subsidence by degrees, evil unsalutary considerations connected with Desire and Hate and Delusion should still persist in arising, then with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against palate, the monk by main force must constrain his mind and coerce it; and thus with clenched teeth and taut tongue, constraining and coercing his mind, those evil, unsalutary considerations will disappear and go to decay: and with their dissapearing, the mind of the disciple within him will become settled, subdued, unified, concentrated'.

Then there is the positive practice of Mettā Bhāvanā. This is an actual, intense, creative force which is a protecting tenderness that vibrates long after it is sent forth. It is a sort of mental electrical impulse.

This is a Buddhist practice laid down by the Buddha in very many of His sermons as something that can be done by both laymen and *bhikkhus* alike.

While its practice, which can be undertaken for a few minutes each night and morning by anyone at all, has the effect of 'loosening the heart', improving the health, guarding against the worries and ulcers of modern men, improving the concentration and mental ability generally, the practice is not laid down for those reasons of self.

The force released, depending on its increasing purity and intensity, is able to build a new world, to change oneself and to change others for the better and to bring peace and tranquillity and calm happiness to a distracted universe. The practice is a positive radiation of loving-kindness to every being, whether insect or reptile or bird or animal or man or ghost or demon; to those who are unfriendly to us and attack us as well as to those who are friendly to us and help us.

The practice is as follows :—

The practiser prepares himself by putting away, taking out of the mind, all thoughts of temper, enmity, envy, grudging, cunning and other evil thoughts. He takes up a suitable sitting position, comfortable but not too relaxed, keeping the body erect and the intelligence alert and intent. Then putting away the canker of ill-will, he abides with heart free from enmity, benevolent and compassionate towards every living thing, and purifies his mind of malevolence. Putting away sloth and torpor, he abides clear of both; conscious of light, mindful and self-possessed, he purifies his mind of sloth and torpor. Putting away flurry and worry, he abides free from excitement; with heart serene within, he purifies his mind of flurry and worry. Putting away doubt, he abides as one who has passed beyond perplexity; no longer in suspense as to what is good, he purifies his mind of doubt.

He, having put away these Five Hindrances, and to weaken by insight the strength of the things that defile the heart, abides letting his mind, fraught with loving-kindness, pervade one quarter of the world, that in front of him, and so too, the second quarter, to his right, and so the third, behind him, and so the fourth, to his left. Then he so pervades all

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below him and lastly all above him. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around and everywhere, and altogether does he continue to pervade with love-burdened thought, abounding, sublime, and beyond measure, free from hatred and ill-will. Then he lets his mind, fraught with compassion, pervade the world, and he lets his mind, fraught with sympathetic joy in the achievement of others, pervade the world. And he lets his mind, fraught with equanimity, pervade one quarter of the world, and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world—above, below, around, and everywhere, and altogether does he continue to pervade with heart fraught with equanimity, abounding, sublime, and beyond measure, free from hatred and ill-will.

This practice will help to change the world and it will certainly help to change you and help you to know yourself, but it is only the beginning; just as in climbing a high mountain, the more easy ascent of the foothills takes you part of the way and fits you better for the steep climb before you.

The real ascent now begins. Just as in climbing a high mountain, difficulties and dangers may be met and only a brave and resolute man can complete his task, so also in this practice. One may meet obstacles and seem at times to be losing ground, but the determined man is not defeated, he begins again and again with confidence that as the way has been followed by others. he, too, can follow it if he summons up all his energies and turns temporary defeat into future victory. Even his defeats, since they have been preceded by struggles, have firmed his muscles and his mind for the next assault, if he realises it.

In mountaineering, a capable and experienced guide is necessary, so is it necessary in following this Path to have a capable and experienced guide who has himself trodden the path, who knows the surest trails and how to avoid the dangers.

If you have practised all that has been mentioned above, you are better in morals and more poised and intelligent already. You are like a man who has climbed above the malarial swamps and jungle to higher and more healthy ground. You have accomplished a great thing and you are all the better for it in every way, but still you have not found the 'Self', and still you are not entirely out of danger. You are more ready for the great adventure, but it is at this point that many stop. They have gained something with no very great effort and what lies ahead is to be gained only by the expenditure of a great deal of effort.

The ascent to the heights, to complete freedom, to complete liberation, to the position where one can help others is by that Right Concentration taught in the Noble Eightfold Path.

The method sounds very simple, and you may think it is easier than it is in reality. Later, when you find it dfficult you may think it is harder than it is in reality. We have to try to avoid both feelings of elation and feelings of depression and go ahead with the practice.

Try this exercise first. Think of some one thing, may be a book in front of you. Think just of the idea of the book, not all about its size and colour, just of the idea 'book'. Keep your mind on this idea and do not let any other idea enter your mind. After a minute you will find that you are

no longer thinking of the book, you have probably thought of twenty or even a hundred other things meantime. The mind is not under your control very well, is it? The reason is that although you have had some practice in concentration, more than the ordinary individual if you are a real student, your mind is far from being a fully concentrated mind.

In the special practice you have to take a subject for concentration and practise holding it in the mind with just bare attention That means that you are to keep your mind on that particular subject and not let the mind wander. You do not think *about* the subject but actually *of* the subject. Naturally your mind will wander. The Buddha said that it was like a wild calf that was caught in the jungle and tied to a post. The calf struggles to get free and wanders as far as it can. But if it is tied firmly to the post it will be brought back every time and finally will lie down quietly. The calf is like the mind, the rope is attention or mindfulness and the post is the subject of concentration you have chosen. If without flurry and worry you bring your mind back every time to the subject of concentration, gradually you will discipline the mind and you will be your own master.

The Omniscient Buddha gave forty different subjects of concentration, some suitable for certain types of men and others suitable for others, while some are suitable for any kind of man, for the dull as well as for the bright, for the irritable as well as for the calm.

This is often called 'Meditation' and in our thinking and speaking and writing, we must always remember that a word may mean different things to different people. 'Meditation' means to some people, 'reflecting upon, thinking about and

pondering, *i. e.* weighing in the mind'. To others it means 'observing with alertness'. Our concentration pratice is something more than this, it is exactly the opposite of 'pondering'; it is keeping the attention strictly on the subject and holding the attention there so that the mind does not wander.

Here we shall not discuss the forty subjects of concentration but shall mention only one that is suitable to all persons. That is concentration on in-breathing and out-breathing. This calms the body and the mind, by regular breathing, and focusses the mind-power just as a magnifying-glass can focus the rays of the sun so that they are gathered into one point where they are then strong enough to set fire to paper or leaves.

The state of mind is then exactly the opposite of hypnosis. In hypnotism, part of the mind is lulled to sleep, leaving another part free to work. Sometimes, especially in the case of a mind that is fighting against itself, this makes the free part of the mind stronger and, in the absence of opposition, better able to do its work. Indeed the part of the mind, since it is not fighting against itself, can do exceedingly more than the whole mind if that whole mind is disunited. Nevertheless there is still only a portion of the mind at work when a person is hypnotised. On the other hand, in the practice of Buddhist concentration the whole mind is awake, aware, alert and alive and working in unity, once it has gained the mastery that is given by this practice.

The practice can be very dangerous if one attempts it with an impure mind. Virtue is the necessary beginning of the practice. The highest virtue is not just the repeating of precepts nor even the keeping of precepts. It is the mental

attitude of an absence of greed, of a mind full of loving-kindness and of alertness and knowledge.

Concentration to the point of clear insight is the peak of Buddhist endeavour and sets Buddhism apart from all other Teachings. If you learn more about Buddhist concentration and practise it, you will really know yourself.

You will know yourself and you will master yourself, if you persist and if you have a wise guide.

This is the greatest adventure that you can imagine. It is also the most interesting adventure that you can think of. You are, to yourself, the most important being in the whole universe. Yet you do not know who or what you are in reality. In finding out the fact you will find out the truth about the world and the beginning of the world and the end of the world. You will win to serene and unshakable happiness if you succeed.

No-one can carry you on the adventure, 'you yourself must make the effort, even Buddhas only point out the way'.

As the Buddha said with His last breath: 'Decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your own salvation with diligence'.

It is possible that you may live to a great age or die in middle age or die tonight, but die, some day, you must. If you die while on the great adventure, the supreme quest, it is certain that the new being which will arise because of you, will be happier and stronger. If you win to the end of your adventure before you die, then you will have attained to 'the deathless' and there will be no more death for you.

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THE BUDDHA

Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā-sam-Buddhassa!

"The ages roll by and the Buddha seems not so far away after all; his voice whispers in our ears and tells us not to run away from the struggle but, calm-eyed, to face it, and to see in life ever greater opportunities for growth and advancement. Personality counts today as ever, and a person who has impressed himself on the thought of mankind as Buddha has, so that even today there is something living and vibrant about the thought of him, must have been a wonderful man — a man who was, as Barth says, 'the finished model of calm and sweet majesty, of infinite tenderness for all that breathes and compassion for all that suffers, of perfect moral freedom and exemption from every prejudice."[1]

"His message old and yet very new and original for those immersed in metaphysical subtleties, captured the imagination of the intellectuals; it went deep down into the hearts of the people". [2]

Buddhism had its birth at Sarnath near the city of Vārānasi (Benares), India. With only five followers at the beginning, it penetrated into many a land, and is today the 'religion' of more than 600 millions. Buddhism made such rapid strides chiefly due to its intrinsic worth and its appeal to the reasoning mind. But there were other factors that aided its progress: never did the *dhammadūtas*, the messengers of the dhamma, the teaching, use any iniquitous methods in spreading the dhamma, the only weapon they wielded was that of universal love and compassion.

Furthermore, Buddhism penetrated to these countries peaceably, without disturbing the creeds that were already

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India, Calcutta,* p. 143.
2. Ibid, p. 137.

there. Buddhist missions to which the annals of religious history scarcely afford a parallel were carried on neither by force of arms nor by the use of any coercive or reprehensible methods. Conversion by compulsion was unknown amongst the Buddhists, and repugnant to the Buddha and his disciples. No decrying of other creeds has ever existed in Buddhism. Buddhism was thus able to diffuse itself through a great variety of cultures throughout the civilized world.

"There is no record', says Dr. T. W. Rhys Davids, 'known to me in the whole of the long history of Buddhism throughout the many centuries where his followers have been for such lengthened periods supreme, of any persecution by the Buddhists of the followers of any faith'.

The Birth

The Buddha, the founder of this great religion Buddhism (the term religion is used here in the sense of a 'Way of Life' and not in the sense in which it is commonly understood), lived over 2500 years ago and is known as Siddhattha Gotama.[1] His father, Suddhodana, the Kshatriya[2] King, ruled over the land of the Sākyans at Kapilavatthu on the Nepalese frontier. As he came from the Gotama family he was known as Suddhodana Gotama. Mahāmāya, princess of the Koliyas, was Suddhodana's queen.

On a full-moon day of May—Vasanta-tide, when in India the trees were laden with leaf, flower and fruit, and man, bird and beast were in joyous mood, Queen Mahamaya was travelling in state from Kapilavatthu to Devadaha, her parental home, according to the custom of the times, to give birth to her child. But that was not to be, for half way between the two cities, in the beautiful Lumbini Grove, under the shade of a flowering Sal tree, she brought forth a son.

Lumbini, or Rummindei, the name by which it is now known, is one hundred miles north of Vārānasi and within sight of the snow-capped Himālayas. At this memorable spot where Prince Siddhaṭṭha, the future Buddha, was born,

1. In Sanskrit *Siddhartha* (personal name), *Gautama* (family name)
2. Warrior Class.

Emperor Asoka, 316 years after the event, erected a mighty stone pillar to mark the holy spot. The inscription engraved on the pillar in five lines consists of ninety three Asokan characters, amongst which occurs the following: '*hida budhe jāte sākyamuni*', 'Here was born the Buddha, the sage of the Sākyans'.

The mighty column is still to be seen. The pillar, 'as crisp as the day it was cut', had been struck by lightening even when Hiuen Tsiang, the Chinese pilgrim, saw it towards the middle of the seventh century after Christ. The discovery and identification of the Lumbini park in 1896 is attributed to the renowned archaeologist, General Cunningham.

On the fifth day after the birth of the prince, the king summoned eight wise men to choose a name for the child and to speak of the royal babe's future. He was named Siddhattha which means one whose purpose has been achieved. The Brahmins deliberated and seven of them held up two fingers each and declared: "O King, this prince will become a *Cakravarti*, universal monarch, should he deign to rule, but should he renounce the world, he will become a *Sammā-sam-buddha*, a Supremely Englightened One, and deliver men from ignorance". But Kondaññ*a*, the wisest and the youngest, after watching the prince, held up only one finger and said: "O King, this prince will one day go in search of Truth and become a Supremely Enlightened Buddha."

Queen Mahamaya, the mother, passed away on the seventh day after the birth of her child, and the babe was nursed by his mother's sister Pajāpati Gotami. Though the child was nurtured till manhood in refinement amidst an abundance of material luxury, the father did not fail to give his son the education that a prince ought to receive. He became skilled in many a branch of knowledge, and in the arts of war easily excelled all others. Nevertheless from his childhood the prince was given to serious contemplation.

The Four Significant Visions

When the prince grew up the father's fervent wish was that his son should marry, bring up a family, and be his worthy successor; for he often recalled to mind with dread

the prediction of the sage Kondañña, and feared that the prince would one day give up home for the homeless life of an ascetic. According to the custom of the time, at the early age of sixteen the prince was married to his cousin, the beautiful Princess Yasodharā, the only daughter of King Suppabuddha and Queen Pamita of the Koliyas. The princess was of the same age as the prince.

His father provided him with the greatest comforts. He had, so the story tells, three palaces, one for each of the Indian year's three seasons. Lacking nothing of the earthly joys of life, he lived amidst song and dance, in luxury and pleasure, knowing naught of sorrow. Yet all the efforts of the father to hold his son a prisoner to the senses and make him worldly-minded, were of no avail. King Suddhodana's endeavours to keep off life's miseries from his son's inquiring eyes only heightened Prince Siddhattha's curiosity and his resolute search for Truth and Enlightenment. With the advance of age and maturity, the prince began to glimpse the woes of the world.

On one occasion when the Prince went driving with his charioteer Channa to the Royal Gardens, he saw to his amazement what his eyes never beheld before: a man weakened with age, and in the last stage of ageing, crying out in a mournful voice:

> "Help master! lift me to my feet; oh, help;
> Or I shall die before I reach my house".[1]

This was the first shock the prince received. The second was the sight of a man mere skin and bones, supremely unhappy and forlorn, "smitten with some pes... the strength gone from ham and loin, and neck, and all the grace and joy of manhood fled"[2] On a third occasion he saw a band of lamenting kinsmen bearing on their shoulders the corpse of one beloved for cremation. These woeful signs, seen for the first time in his life, deeply moved him. From the charioteer he learned that even he, his beloved Princess Yasodhara, and his kith and kin, nay all without exception, are subject to ageing, disease and death.

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1. *The Light of Asia.*
2. *The Light of Asia.*

Soon after this the prince saw a recluse moving with measured steps and down-cast eyes, calm and serene, aloof and independent. He was struck by the serene countenance of the man. He learned from Channa that this recluse was one who had abandoned his home to live a life of purity, to seek Truth and answer the riddle of life. Thoughts of renunciation flashed through the prince's mind and in deep contemplation he turned homeward. The heart throb of an agonised and ailing humanity found a responsive echo in his own heart. The more he came in contact with the world outside his palace walls, the more convinced he became that the world was lacking in true happiness. But before reaching the palace he was met by a messenger with the news that a son had been born to Yasodhara. 'A fetter (Rāhula) is set upon me,' uttered the prince and returned to the palace.

The Great Renunciation

In the silence of that moonlit night (it was the fullmoon day of July, Āsālha) such thoughts as these arose in him: 'Youth, the prime of life, ends in old age and man's senses fail him at a time when they are most needed. The hale and hearty lose their vigour and health when disease suddenly creeps in. Finally death comes, sudden perhaps and unexpected, and puts an end to this brief span of life. Surely there must be an escape from this unsatisfactoriness, from ageing and death'.

Thus the great intoxication of youth (*yobbana-mada*), of health (*ārogya-mada*) and of life (*jīvita-mada*) left him. Having seen the vanity and the danger of the three intoxications, he was overcome by a powerful urge to seek and win the Deathless, to strive for Deliverance from old age, illness, misery and death[1] to seek it for himself and for all beings (including his wife and child) that suffer. It was his deep compassion that led him to the quest ending in Enlightenment, in Buddhahood. It was compassion that now moved his heart towards the Great Renunciation and opened for him the doors of the golden cage of his home life. It was compassion that made his determination unshakable even by the last parting glance on his beloved wife asleep with the babe in her arms.

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1. *Anguttara Nikaya*, i. 146, sutta 38.

Thus at the age of twenty-nine, in the flower of youthful manhood, on the day his beautiful Yasodhara had given birth to his only son, Rahula, he tore himself away, renounced wife, child, father and a crown that held the promise of power and glory.

Now the *Bodhisatta*[1] (as he is known before he attained Enlightenment) in the garb of an ascetic retreated into forest solitude to seek a solution to those problems of life that had so deeply stirred his mind. His quest of the supreme security from bondage—*Nibbāna* (*nirvāna*) had begun. This was the great renunciation.

First he sought guidance from two famous sages, from *Ālāra Kālāma* and Uddaka Rāmaputta, hoping that they, being masters of meditation, would teach him all they knew, leading him to the heights of concentrative thought. He practised concentration and reached the highest meditative attainments possible thereby, but was not satisfied with anything short of Supreme Enlightenment. These teachers' range of knowledge, their ambit of mystical experience, however, was insufficient to grant him what he so earnestly sought, and he saw himself still far from his goal. Though both sages, in turn, asked him to stay and succeed them as the teacher of their following, the Ascetic Gotama, declined. Paying obeisance to them, he left them in search of the still unknown.

In his wanderings he finally reached Uruvela, by the river Neranjarā at Gayā. He was attracted by its quiet and dense groves and the clear waters of the river. Nearby was a village of simple folk where he could get his alms.

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1. A *Bodhisatta* (Skt. *Bodhisattva*) is one who adheres to or is bent on (*satta*) the ideal of enlightenment, or knowledge of the four noble Truths (*bodhi*). In this sense, the term may be applied to anyone who is bent on enlightenment. But it is specially applied to an aspirant for full enlightenment (*samma-sam-bodhi*). A Bodhisatta fully cultivates ten perfections or *parami* which are essential qualities of extremely high standard initiated by compassion, and ever tinged with understanding or quick wit, free from craving, pride and false views (*tanha*, *ditthi* and *mana*) that qualify an aspirant for Buddhahood. They are: *dana*, *sila*, *nekkhamma*, *panna*, *viriya*, *khanti*, *sacca*, *adhitthana*, *metta* and *upekkha*—generosity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, effort, forbearance, truthfulness, determination, lovingkindness and equanimity.

Finding that this was a suitable place to continue his quest for Enlightenment, he decided to stay. Soon five other ascetics who admired his determined effort joined him. They were *Kondañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma* and *Assaji.*

Self-mortification

There was, and still is, a belief in India among many of her ascetics that purification and final deliverance can be achieved by rigorous self-mortification, and the ascetic Gotama decided to test the truth of it. And so there at Uruvela he began a determined struggle to subdue his body, in the hope that his mind, set free from the shackles of the body, might be able to soar to the heights of liberation. Most zealous was he in these practices. He lived on leaves and roots, on a steadily reduced pittance of food; he wore rags from dust heaps; he slept among corpses or on beds of thorns. The utter paucity of nourishment left him a physical wreck. Says the Master: 'Rigorous have I been in my ascetic discipline. Rigorous have I been beyond all others. Like wasted, withered reeds became all my limbs...' In such words as these, in later years, having attained to full Enlightenment, did the Buddha give his disciples an awe-inspiring description of his early penances.[1]

Struggling thus for six long years, he came to death's very door, but he found himself no nearer to his goal. The utter futility of self-mortification became abundantly clear to him by his own experience. Undiscouraged, his still active mind searched for new paths to the aspired for goal. He felt however, that, with a body so utterly weakened as his, he could not follow that path with any chance of success. Thus he abandoned self-torture and extreme fasting and took normal food.

His emaciated body recovered its former health and his exhausted vigour soon returned. Now his five companions left him in their disappointment; for they thought that he had given up the effort and had resumed a life of abundance.

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1. For a detailed account see *Majjhima-Nikaya*, No. 36, translation by I. B. Horner in *the Middle Length Sayings*, vol. I. (Pali Text Society). See also Bodhi Leaves No. A7 *The Master's Quest for Light* by R. Abeysekera (Buddhist Publication Society).

Nevertheless with firm determination and complete faith in his own purity and strength, unaided by any teacher, accompanied by none, the Bodhisatta resolved to make his final effort in complete solitude.

On the forenoon of the day before his Enlightenment whilst the Bodhisatta was seated in meditation, Sujātā, the daughter of a rich householder, not knowing whether the ascetic was divine or human, offered milk rice to him saying: 'Lord, may your aspirations be crowned with success!' This was his last meal prior to his Enlightenment.

The Final Triumph

Crosslegged he sat under a tree, which later became known as the *Bodhi* tree, the 'Tree of Enlightenment' or 'Tree of Wisdom', on the bank of the river Neranjarā, at *Gayā* (now known as *Buddhagayā*), making the final effort with the inflexible resolution: 'Though only my skin, sinews and bones remain, and my blood and flesh dry up and wither away, yet will I never stir from this seat until I have attained full Enlightenment (*sammā-sam-bodhi*)'. So indefatigable in effort, so unflagging in his devotion was he, and so resolute to realize Truth and attain full Enlightenment.

Applying himself to the 'Mindfulness on in-and-out breathing' (*ānā-pāna sati*), the Bodhisatta entered upon and dwelt in the first meditative absorption (*jhāna*, skt. *dhyāna*, a term difficult to translate). By gradual stages he entered upon and dwelt in the second, third and the fourth *jhānas*. Thus cleansing his mind of impurities, with the mind thus composed, he directed it to the knowledge of recollecting past births (*pubbenivāsānussatiñāna*). This was the *first* knowledge attained by him in the first watch of the night (6 p.m. to 10 p.m.) Then the Bodhisatta directed his mind to the knowledge of the disappearing and reappearing of beings of varied forms, in good states of experience, and in states of woe, each faring according to his deeds (*cuti-upapātañāna*). This was the *second* knowledge attained by him in the middle watch of the night (10 p.m. to 2 a.m.). Next he directed his mind to the knowledge of the destruction of the taints (*āsavakkhayañāna*)[1]

He understood as it really is:

1. *Majjhima Nikaya*, No. 36: *Maha Saccaka Sutta.*

'This is suffering (*dukkha*), this is the arising of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, this is the path leading to the cessation of suffering. He understood as it really is: These are taints (*āsavas*); this is the arising of taints, this is the cessation of taints, this is the path leading to the cessation of taints.

Knowing thus, seeing thus, his mind was liberated from the taints: of sense pleasures (*kāmāsava*), of becoming (*bhavāsava*), and of ignorance (*avijjāsava*)[1]. When his mind was thus liberated, there came the knowledge: 'liberated' and he understood:

Destroyed is birth, the noble life (*brahma cariyam*) has been lived, done is what was to be done, there is no more of this to come (meaning, there is no more continuity of the mind and body, that is no more becoming, rebirth). This was the *third* knowledge attained by him in the last watch of the night (2 a.m. to 6 a.m.). This is known as *te-vijjā* (skt. *tri-vidyā*,) three-fold knowledge.[2]

Thereupon he spoke these words of victory:

'Seeking but not finding the House Builder,
I hurried through the round of many births:
Painful is birth ever and again.
O House Builder, you have been seen;
You shall not build the house again.
Your rafters have been broken up,
Your ridge pole is demolished too.
My mind has now attained the unformed Nibbana
And reached the end of every sort of craving.'[3]

Thus did the Bodhisatta Gotama on another full moon of May, at the age of thirty-five, attain Supreme Enlightenment, by comprehending in all their fulness, the Four Noble Truths, the Eternal Verities, and become the Buddha, the great Healer and Consummate Master-Physician who can cure the ills of beings.

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1. Elsewhere we see the taint of false view (*ditthasava*) added to these as the fourth taint.
2. *Majjhima* 36
3. Translation by Nanamoli Thera.

One of the noteworthy characteristics that distinguish the Buddha from all other religious teachers is that he was a human being having no connection whatsoever with a God or any other 'Supernatural' Being. He was neither God nor an incarnation of God, nor any mythological figure. He was a man, but a super-man, an extraordinary man (*acchariya manussa*). All his achievements and attainments he attributed to human effort and human intelligence. Through personal experience he understood the supremacy of man.

Depending on his own unremitting energy, unaided by any teacher, human or divine, he achieved the highest mental and intellectual attainments; reached the acme of purity, and was perfect in the best qualities of human nature. He was an embodiment of compassion and wisdom, which became the two guiding principles in his Dispensation (*sāsana*).

The Buddha never claimed to be a saviour who tried to save 'souls' by means of a revealed religion. Through his own perseverance and understanding he proved that infinite potentialities are latent in man and that it must be man's endeavour to develop and unfold these possibilities. He proved by his own experience that Enlightenment and Deliveverance lie fully within man's range of effort.

It was the Buddha who for the first time in the world's history taught that deliverance could be attained independently of an external agency, that deliverance from suffering must be wrought and fashioned by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions.

None can grant deliverance to another who merely begs for it. Others may lend us a helping hand by guidance and instruction and in other ways, but the highest freedom is attained only through self-realization and self-awakening to Truth and not through prayers and petitions to a Supreme Being, human or divine. The Buddha warns his desciples against shifting the burden to an external agency, directs fhem to the ways of discrimination and research, and urges them to g t busy with the real task of developing their inner torces and qualities.

Dependent Arising

For a week, immediately after the Enlightenment, the Buddha sat at the foot of the Bodhi Tree, experiencing the supreme bliss of Emancipation. At the end of the seven days he emerged from that concentration (*samādhi*) and in the first watch of that night thought over the Dependent Arising (*paṭicca samuppāda*) in direct order thus:

'When this is, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises; namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional or karma formations; dependent on volitional formations, (rebirth) consciousness; dependent on consciousness, mentality-materiality (mental and physical combination); dependent on mentality-materiality, the six-fold base (the five physical sense organs with consciousness as the sixth); dependent on six-fold base, contact; dependent on contact, feeling; dependent on feeling, craving; dependent on craving, clinging; dependent on clinging, process of becoming; dependent on the process of becoming, there come to be ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Thus does this whole mass of *dukkha* or suffering arise'.

In the second watch of the night, the Buddha thought over the Dependent Arising in reverse order thus: 'When this is not, that does not come to be, with the cessation of this, that ceases; namely: with the utter cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional formations; with the cessation of formations, the cessation of consciousness... (and so on). Thus does this whole mass of suffering cease'.

In the third watch of the night, the Buddha thought over the Dependent Arising both in direct order and reverse order thus:

'When this is that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises; when this is not, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases; namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional formations... (and so on). Thus does this whole mass of suffering arise. With the utter cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional formations... (and so on). Thus does this whole mass of suffering cease'.[1]

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1. *Udana*, p. 1. See Wheel No. 15: *Dependent Origination* — Piyadassi Thera.

The Buddha now spent six more weeks in lonely retreat at six different spots in the vicinity of the Bodhi Tree. At the end of this period two merchants, Tapassu and Bhallika, who were passing that way, offered rice cake and honey to the Master, and said: 'We go for refuge to the Buddha and to the Dhamma.[1] Let the Blessed One receive us as his followers'.[2] They became his first lay followers(*upāsakas*).

The First Sermon

Now while the Blessed One dwelt in solitude this thought occurred to him:

'The dhamma I have realized is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful and sublime, beyond mere reasoning, subtle, and intelligible to the wise. But this generation delights, revels and rejoices in sensual pleasures. It is hard for such a generation to see this Conditionality this Dependent Arising. Hard too, is it to see this calming of all conditioned things, the giving up of all substance of becoming, the extinction of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbana. And if I were to teach the Dhamma and others were not to understand me, that would be a weariness, a vexation for me'.[3]

Pondering thus he was first reluctant to teach the dhamma, but on surveying the world, with his mental eye he saw beings with little dust on their eyes, and with much dust on their eyes, with keen faculties and dull faculties, with good qualities and bad qualities, easy to teach and hard to teach, some who are alive to the perils hereafter of present wrong-doings, and some who are not. The Master then declared his readiness to proclaim the Dhamma in this solemn utterance:

'*Apārutā tesam amatassa dvārā*
Ye sotavanto pamuncantu saddham.'

'Open are the doors of the Deathless.
Let them that have ears repose trust'.[4]

When considering to whom he should teach the dhamma first, he thought of Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta, his teachers of old; for he knew that they were wise and

1. At this time, there was yet no Order (*Sangha*).
2. *Mahavagga* (*Vinaya*).
3. *Majjhima-Nikaya*, No. 26.
4. Ibid.

discerning. But that was not to be; they had passed away. Then the Blessed One made up his mind to make known the Truth to those five ascetics, his former friends, still steeped in the fruitless rigours of extreme asceticism. Knowing that they were living at Benares in the deer Park at Isipatana, the Resort of Seers (modern Sarnath), the Blessed One left Gaya for distant Benares walking by stages, some 150 miles. On the way not far from Gaya the Buddha was met by Upaka, an ascetic who, struck by the serene appearance of the Master, inquired: 'Who is thy teacher? Whose teaching do you profess?'

The Buddha replied: 'I have no teacher, one like me does not exist in all the world. For I am the peerless teacher, the Arahat, I alone am supremely enlightened. Quenching all cankers, Nibbana's calm have I attained. I go to the city of Kāsi (Benares) to set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma. In a world where blindness reigns I shall beat the Deathless Drum'.

'Friend, you then claim you are a universal victor', said Upaka. The Buddha replied; 'Those who have attained the cessation of cankers, they are, indeed, victors like me. All evil have I vanquished. Hence I am a victor'.

Upaka shook his head, remarking sarcastically, 'It may be so, friend', and took a by-path. The Buddha continued his journey, and in gradual stages reached the deer sanctuary at Isipatana. The five ascetics seeing the Buddha from afar discussed among themselves: 'Friends, here comes the ascetic Gotama who gave up the struggle and turned to a life of abundance and luxury. Let us make no kind of salutation to him'. But when the Buddha approached them, they were struck by his dignified presence and they failed in their resolve. One went to meet him and took his alms bowl and robe; another prepared a seat, still another brought him water. The Buddha sat on the seat prepared for him, and the five ascetics then addressed him by name and greeted him as an equal, saying, '*āvuso*' (friend).

The Buddha said, 'Address not the Perfect One (Tathāgata) by the word '*āvuso*'. The Tathāgata, monks, is an Accomplished One (*Arahat*), a Supremely Enli-

ghtened One is he. Give ear, monks, the Deathless has been attained. I shall instruct you, I shall teach you the dhamma; following my teaching you will know and realize for yourselves even in this life time that supreme goal of purity for the sake of which clansmen retire from home to follow the homeless life'. Thereupon the five monks said: 'Friend Gotama, even with the stern austerities, penances and self-torture you practised, you failed to attain the superhuman vision and insight. Now that you are living a life of luxury, self-indulgence, and have given up the struggle, how could you have reached superhuman vision and insight?'.

Then replied the Buddha: 'The Tathāgata has not ceased from effort and reverted to a life of luxury and abundance. The Tathāgata is a Supremely Enlightened One. Give ear, monks, the Deathless has been attained. I shall instruct you. I shall teach you the dhamma.'

A second time the monks said the same thing to the Buddha who gave the same answer a second time. A third time did they repeat the same question. In spite of the assurance given by the Master, they did not change their attitude. Then the Buddha spoke to them thus: '*Confess, O monks, did ever I speak to you in this wise before*?' Touched by this appeal of the Blessed One, the five ascetics submitted and acknowledged and said: 'Nay, indeed, Lord'. Thus did the Supreme Sage, the Tamed One, tame the hearts of the five ascetics with patience and kindness, with wisdom and skill. Overcome and convinced by his utterances the monks indicated their readiness to listen to him.

The Middle Path

Now on a full moon day of July, 528 years before Christ, in the evening, at the moment the sun was setting, and the full moon was simultaneously rising, in the shady deer park at Isipatana (modern Sarnath), the Buddha addressed them:

'Monks, these two extremes ought not to be cultivated by the recluse. What two? Sensual indulgence which is low, vulgar, worldly, ignoble, and conducive to harm; and self-mortification, which is painful, ignoble, and conducive to harm. The Middle Path, monks, understood by the Tathāgata, avoiding the extremes, gives vision and

knowledge, and leads to calm, realisation, enlightenment and Nibbana. And what, monks, is that Middle Path? It is this Noble Eightfold Path, namely:

Right Understanding
Right Thoughts
Right Speech
Right Action
Right Livelihood
Right Effort
Right Mindfulness
Right Concentration

Then the Buddha explained to them the Four Noble Truths: The Noble Truth of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering and the Noble Truth of the Way leading to the Cessation of Suffering.[1]

Thus did the Supreme Buddha proclaim the Truth and set in motion the Wheel of the Dhamma (*dhamma-cakka-pavattana*). This first discourse, this Message of the Deer Park, is the core of the Buddha's Teaching. As the foot print of every creature that walks the earth could be included in the elephant's foot print which is pre-eminent for size, so does the doctrine of the Four Noble Truths embrace the entire teaching of the Buddha.

Explaining each of the Four Noble Truths, the Master said, 'Such, monks, was the vision, the knowledge, the wisdom. the science, the light that arose in me, that I gained about things not heard before. As long as, monks, my intuitive knowledge, my vision in regard to these four Noble Truths was not absolutely clear to me, I did not claim that I had gained the incomparable supreme enlightenment. But when, monks, my intuitive knowledge, my vision, in regard to these four Noble Truths was absolutely clear to me, then only did I claim that I had gained the incomparable Supreme Enlightenment. And there arose in me insight and vision:

1. For a very comprehensive explanation of these Truths see *The Buddha's Ancient Path* by the present writer, (Rider & Co. London); further The Wheel No. 17: *Three Cardinal Discourses* by Nanamoli Thera; Nos. 34/35, *The Four Noble Truths* by Francis Story; Nyanatiloka, *The Word of the Buddha.*

unshakable is the deliverance of my mind (*akuppā me ceto vimutti*) this is my last birth, there is no more becoming (rebirth)'[1]

Thus spoke the Buddha, and the five monks, glad at heart, applauded the words of the Blessed One.

The Sinsapa Grove

The supremacy of the four Noble Truths in the teaching of the Buddha is abundantly clear from the message of the sinsapa grove as from the message of the deer park:

Once the Blessed One was living at Kosambi (near Allahabad) in the sinsapa grove. Then gathering a few sinsapa leaves in his hand, the Blessed One addressed the monks:

— What do you think, monks, which is greater in quantity, the handful of sinsapa leaves gathered by me or what is in the forest overhead?

— Not many, trifling, Venerable Sir, are the leaves in the handful gathered by the Blessed One, many are the leaves in the forest overhead.

— Even so, monks, many are those things I have fully realized, but not declared unto you; few are the things I have declared unto you. And why, monks, have I not declared them? They, monks, are not useful, are not essential to the life of purity, they do not lead to disgust, to dispassion, to cessation, to tranquillity, to full understanding, to full enlightenment, to Nibbana. That is why, monks, they are not declared by me.

And what is it, monks, that I have declared?
This is suffering (*dukkha*) — this have I declared.
This is the arising of suffering — this have I declared
This is the cessation of suffering — this have I declared.
This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering— this have I declared.
And why, monks, have I declared these truths?

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1. *Dhamma-cakka-pavattana Sutta*, *Samyutta Nikaya*, v. 420.

They are, indeed, useful, are essential to the life of purity, they lead to disgust, to dispassion, to cessation, to tranquillity, to full understanding, to enlightenment, to Nibbana. That is why, monks, they are declared by me. Therefore, monks, an effort should be made to realize: This is suffering, this is the arising of suffering, this is the cessation of suffering, this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.[1]

The Buddha has emphatically said: 'One thing do I make known: suffering, and the cessation of suffering (*dukkhamceva paññapemi, dukkhassa ca nirodham*)'[2]. To understand this unequivocal saying is to understand Buddhism; for the entire teaching of the Buddha is nothing else than the application of this one principle. It seems to me that what can be called the discovery of a Buddha, is just these Four Truths. This is the typical teaching of the Buddhas of all ages.

The Peerless Physician

The Buddha is also known as the peerless physician (*bhisakko*), the supreme surgeon (*sallakatto anuttaro*). He, indeed, is an unrivalled healer.

The Buddha's method of exposition of the Four Truths is comparable to that of a physician. As a physician, he first diagnosed the illness, next he discovered the cause or the arising of the illness; then considered its removal, and lastly applied the remedy.

Suffering (*dukkha*) is the illness; craving (*tanhā*) is the arising or the root cause of the illness (*samudaya*), through the removal of craving, the illness is removed, and that is the cure (*nirodha—nibbāna*); the Noble Eightfold Path (*magga*) is the remedy.

The Buddha's reply to a brahmin who wished to know why the Master is called a Buddha, cleary indicates that it was for no other reason than a perfect knowledge of the four Noble Truths. Here is the Buddha's reply:

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1. *Samyutta Nikaya*, v. 437
2. *Majjhima Nikaya*, No. 22

'I knew what should be known, what should
Be cultivated I have cultivated,
What should be abandoned that have I let go,
Hence, O brahmin, I am Buddha-the Awakened One.'[1]

With the proclamation of the dhamma for the first time, with the setting in motion of the Wheel of the Dhamma (*dhamma-cakka-pavattana*), and with the conversion of the five ascetics, the Deer Park at Isipatana became the birth place of the Buddha's Dispensation (*sāsana*) and of his Community of Monks (*sangha*).[2]

The Spread Of The Dhamma

Thereafter the Buddha spent the *Vassa*,[3] at the deer park at Isipatana, sacred this day to over six hundred millions of the human race. During these three months of 'Rains' fifty others headed by Yasa, a young man of wealth, joined the Order. Now the Buddha had sixty disciples, all Arahats who had realized the Dhamma and were fully competent to teach others. When the rainy season ended, the Master addressed his immediate disciples in these words:

'Released am I, monks, from all ties whether human or divine. You also are delivered from fetters whether human or divine. Go now and wander for the welfare and happiness

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1. *Sutta-nipata*, verse 558. *Majjhima*, *Sutta* 92; *Vinaya*, i. 245; *Theragatha*, 828.
2. Emperor Asoka came on pilgrimage to this holy spot and caused a series of monuments and a commemorative pillar with the lion capital to be erected. This capital with its four magnificent lions upholding the *Dharma-cakra*, 'the Wheel of *Dharma*', now stands in the museum of Sarnath, Benares, and is to-day the official crest of India. The *Dharma-Cakra* festival is still kept in Ceylon.

   Jawaharlal Nehru writes: 'At Sarnath near Benares, I would almost see the Buddha preaching his first sermon, and some of his recorded words would come like a distant echo to me through two thousand five hundred years. Asoka's pillars of stone with their inscriptions would speak to me in their magnificent language and tell me of a man who, though an emperor, was greater than any king or emperor.'*The Discovery of India* (The Signet Press, Calcutta), p. 44.
3. *The 'Rains' or retreat, is the three months of seclusion during the rainy season, i.e. from July to October, in India.*

of many, out of compassion for the world, for the gain, welfare and happiness of gods and men. Let not two of you proceed in the same direction. Proclaim the dhamma that is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle and excellent in the end, possessed of meaning and the letter and utterly perfect. Proclaim the life of purity, and holy life consummate and pure. There are beings with little dust in their eyes who will be lost through not hearing the dhamma, there are beings who will understand the dhamma, I also shall go to Uruvela, to Senanigama, to teach the dhamma.'[1]

Thus did the Buddha commence his sublime mission, which lasted to the end of his life. With his disciples he walked the highways and byways of India enfolding all within the aura of his boundless compassion and wisdom. Though the Order of Monks began its career with sixty bhikkhus, it expanded soon into thousands, and, as a result of the increasing number of monks, many monasteries came into being, and in later times monastic Indian universities like Nālandā, Vikramasilā, Jagaddalā, Vikramapuri and Odantapuri, became cultural centres which gradually influenced the whole of Asia, and through it the mental life of mankind.

After a successful ministry of forty five years the Buddha passed away at the age of eighty at the Sala Grove of the Mallas at Kusinara (in modern Uttara Pradesh about 120 miles north-east of Benares)[2] With a final admonition to his followers (see p. 45).

The Buddha's Ministry

During his long ministry of forty-five years the Buddha walked widely throughout the Northern Districts of India. But during the vassa, he generally stayed in one place.

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1. Vinaya Mahavagga, Khandaka.
2. In a way, it is interesting to note that this greatest of Indian Rishis (seers) was born under a tree in a park, attained enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree (the south branch of which brought by Sanghamitta, the Arahat Theri, daughter of Asoka the Great of India, 3rd century B.C., still flourishes at Anuradhapura, Ceylon, and is the oldest recorded tree in the world), set in motion the 'Wheel of Dhamma' at the deer park under trees, and finally passed away under the twin sala trees. He spent most of his time in the open in forests and in villages of India.

Here follows a brief sketch of his retreats gathered from the texts:

1st year: Bārānasi (Benares) — After the first proclamation of the Dhamma on the full moon day of July, the Buddha spent the first *vassa* at Isipatana.

The 2nd, 3rd and 4th years: Rājagaha—(in the bamboo grove, Veluvana). It was during the third year that Sudatta, a householder of Sāvatthi known for his bounty as Anāthapindika, the feeder of the forlorn, having heard that a Buddha has come into being, went in search of him, listened to him and having gained confidence (*saddhā*) in the *Teacher*, the *Teaching* and the *Taught* (*the Buddha, Dhamma* and *Sangha*) attained the first stage of sainthood (*sotāpatti*). He was renowned as the chief supporter (*dāyaka*) of the Master. Anāthapindika caused to build the famous Jetavana monastery at Savatthi, known today as Sahet-mahet, and offered it to the Buddha and his disciples. The ruins of this monastery are still to be seen.

5th year: Vesāli—The Buddha kept retreat in the Pinnacled Hall (*kūtāgārasālā*). It was at this time that King Suddhodana fell ill. The Master visited him, and preached the Dhamma hearing which the king attained perfect sanctity (*arahatta*), and enjoying the bliss of emancipation for seven days, passed away. The Order of Nuns was also founded during this time (see p. 33).

6th year: Mankula Hill—Here the Buddha performed the 'Twin Wonder' (*yamaka pāṭihāriya*), He did the same, for the first time, at Kapilavatthu to overcome the pride of the Sakyas, his relatives.

7th year: Tāvatimsa—(the heaven of the thirty three). Here the Buddha preached the Abhidhamma or the Higher Doctrine to the deities (*devas*) headed by his mother deva, *Mahāmāyā*, who passed away seven days after the birth of Prince Siddhattha, and was reborn as a deva in the Tavatimsa.

8th year: Bhesakalā forest—(near Sumsumāragiri). It was here that Nakulupitā and his wife, a genial couple, came to see the Buddha, told him about their very happy married life and expressed the wish that they might continue to live together both here and hereafter. These two were placed by the Buddha as chief of those that win confidence.

9th year: Kosambi—at the Ghosita Monastery.

10th year: Pārileyyaka forest—It was in the tenth year that, at Kosambi, a dispute arose between two parties of monks owing to a trivial offence committed by a monk. As they could not be reconciled, and did not pay heed to his exhortation, the Buddha retired to the forest. At the end of the *vassa*, their dispute settled, the monks came to *Sāvatthi* and begged pardon of the Buddha.

11th year: Village of Ekanāla—(in the Magadha country). It was here that the Buddha met the brahmin farmer Kasibhāradvāja who spoke to the Buddha somewhat discourteourly. The Buddha, however, answered his questions with his characteristic sobriety. Bhāradvāja became an ardent follower of the Buddha. It was on this occasion that the very interesting discourse, *Kasibhāradvāja sutta* (*Sutta-nipāta*) was delivered.

12 *year: Veranjā*—The introduction of the Vinaya is attributed to the twelfth year. It was also during this retreat that the brahmin Veranja came to see the Buddha, asked a series of questions on Buddhist practices, and being satisfied with the answers, became a follower of the Blessed One, and invited him and the Sangha to spend the *vassa* at his village Veranjā. At that time there was a famine. The Buddha and his disciples had to be satisfied with very coarse food supplied by horse merchants. As it was the custom of the Buddha to take leave of the inviter before setting out on his journeying, he saw the brahmin at the end of the *vassa*. The latter admitted that though he had invited the Buddha and his disciples to spend the retreat at Veranjā, he had failed in his duties towards them during the entire season due to his being taxed with household duties. However, the next day he offered food and gifts of robes to the Buddha and the Sangha.

13th year: Cāliya Rock—(near the city of Cālikā). During this time the elder Meghiya was his personal attendant. The elder being attracted by a beautiful mango-grove near a river asked the Buddha for permission to go there for meditation. Though the Buddha asked him to wait till another monk came, he repeated the request. The Buddha granted

him permission. The elder went, but to his great surprise he was oppressed by thoughts of sense-pleasures, ill-will and harm, and returned disappointed. Thereon the Buddha said: 'Meghiya, for the deliverance of the mind of the immature five things are conducive to their maturing: 1. a good friend; 2. virtuous behaviour guideed by the essential precepts for training; 3. good counsel tending to dispassion, calm, cessation, enlightenment and Nibbāna; 4. the effort to abandon evil thoughts and acquire wholesome thoughts; and 5. the acquiring of wisdom that discerns the rise and fall of things'.[1] (This preliminary training, as explained by the Master, is necessary for a monk who is bent on practising the higher stages of meditation).

14*th year: Jetavana monastery, Sāvatthi*—During this time the Venerable Rāhula who was still a novice (*sāmanera*) received higher ordination (*upasampadā*). According to Vinaya, higher ordination is not conferred before the age of twenty, Ven. Rāhula had then reached that age.

15*th year: Kapilavatthu*—(the birth place of prince Siddhattha). It was in this year that the death occurred of King Suppabuddha, the father of Yasodhara.

16*th year: City of Ālavi*—During this year Ālavaka, the demon who devoured human flesh, was tamed by the Buddha. He became a follower of the Buddha. For Alavaka's questions and the Master's answers read *Ālavaka Sutta*, in the *Sutta-nipāta*.

17*th year: Rājagaha*, at Veluvana Monastery.

During this time a well known courtesan, Sirimā, sister of Jīvaka, the physician, died. The Buddha attended the funeral, and asked the king to inform the people to buy the dead body—the body that attracted so many when she was

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1. The whole of this discourse is at *Anguttara* iv. 354; *Udana* p. 34 and in brief at *Dhammapada Commentary*, i. 287. The Elder's verse (66) in *Theragatha*. It is said that the Venerable Meghiya was of a Sakyan raja's family. 'The *Dhammapada* verses (33, 34) are as follows: '*The unsteady fickle mind, hard to guard and hard to control, the wise man straightens even as a fletcher, an arrow.*'

   '*Like a fish jerked out of its watery abode and cast on land, this mind quakes, (therefore) the realm of Mara (passions) should be abandoned.*'

alive. No one cared to have it even without paying a price. On that occasion addressing the crowd the Buddha said in verse:

'Behold this painted image, a body full of wounds, put together, diseased, the object of thought of many, in which there is neither permanence nor stability.' (*Dhammapada*, 147).

18*th year: Cāliya rock*—During this time a young weaver's daughter met the Buddha and listened to his discourse on mindfulness of death (*maranānussati*). On another occasion she answered correctly all the four questions put to her by the Master, because she often pondered over the words of the Buddha. Her answers were philosophical, and the congregation who had not given a thought to the Buddha-word, could not grasp the meaning of her answers. The Buddha, however, praised her and addressed them in verse thus:

'Blinded is this world; Few here clearly see. Like a bird that escape from the net only a few go to a good state of existence. (*Dhammapada*, 174).

She heard the Dhamma and attained the first stage of sanctity (*sotāpatti*). But unfortunately she died an untimely death. (For a detailed account of this interesting story, and the questions and answers, see the Commentary on the Dhammapada, vol. iii, p. 170, or Burlingame, Buddhist Legends, Part 3, p. 14.)

19*th year: Cāliya rock:*

20*th year: Rājagaha*, at Veluvana Monastery.

From the 21*st year till the* 43*rd year: Sāvatthi.*

Of these twenty four vassas, eighteen were spent at Jetavana Monastery. The rest at Pubbārāma. Anāthapindika and Visākhā were the chief supporters.

44*th year: Beluva*—(a small village, probably situated near Vesāli), where the Buddha suppressed, by force of will, a grave illness (see p. 42).

In the 45*th year* of his enlightenment, the Buddha passed away at Kusinārā in the month of May (*vesākha*) before the commencement of the rains.

During the first twenty years of the Buddha's life, the bhikkhus: Nāgasamāla, Nāgita, Upavāna, Sunakkhatta, Sāgata, Rādha and Meghiya and the novice (*sāmanera*) Cunda attended upon the Master though not regularly. However, after the twentieth year, the Buddha wished to have a regular attendant. There on all the great eighty Arahats, like Sāriputta and Moggallāna, expressed their willingness to attend upon their Master. But it did not meet with his approval. Perhaps the Buddha thought that these Arahats could be of greater service to mankind.

Then the elders requested Ananda Thera, who had kept silent all this while, to beg of the Master to be his attendant. Ananda Thera's answer is interesting: he said, 'if the Master is willing to have me as his attendant, he will speak'. Then the Buddha said: 'Ananda, let not others persuade you. You on your own may attend upon me'.

Buddhahood and Saintship

Perfect Enlightenment, the discovery and realization of the Four Noble Truths (Buddhahood), is not the prerogative of a single being chosen by Divine Providence; nor is it a unique and unrepeatable event in human history. It is an achievement open to anyone who earnestly strives for perfect purity and wisdom, and with inflexible will cultivates the *pārami*, [1] the Perfections which are the requisites of Buddhahood, and the Noble Eightfold Path. There have been Buddhas in the dim past and there will be Buddhas in the future when necessity arises and conditions are favourable. But we need not think of that distant future; now, in our present days, the "doors to the Deathless" are still wide open. Those who enter through them, reaching perfect sanctity (*Arahatta*), the final liberation from suffering (*Nibbāna*), have been solemnly declared by the Buddha to be his equals as far as the emancipation from defilements and ultimate deliverance is concerned:

> 'Victors like me are they, indeed,
> They who have won defilements' end. [2]

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1. for *parami* see above p. 6, n. 1
2. *Ariya-pariyesana sutta* (*Majjhima*, 26).

The Buddha, however, also made clear to his disciples the difference between a fully Enlightened One and the Arahats, [1] the Accomplished Saints:

'The Tathāgata, O disciples, while being an Arahat, is fully Enlightened. It is he who proclaims a path not proclaimed before; he is the knower of a path, who understands a path, who is skilled in a Path. And now his disciples are wayfarers who follow in his footsteps. That, disciples, is the distinction, the specific feature which distinguishes the Tathāgata, who being an Arahat, is fully Enlightened, from the disciple who is freed by insight.[2]

Salient Features of the Dhamma

The Master disapproved of those who professed to have 'secret doctrines,' saying, 'Secrecy is the hall-mark of false doctrines.' Addressing the Thera Ananda, the Master said: 'I have taught the dhamma, Ananda, without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths, Ananda, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed first of a teacher, who hides some essential knowledge from the pupil.[3]

Driven by universal love and compassion, the Buddha expounded his teaching without keeping back aught that was essential for man's deliverance from the shackles of samsāra, repeated wandering.

The Buddha's teaching from beginning to end is open to all those who have eyes to see, and a mind to understand, and Buddhism was never forced upon anyone at the point of the gun or the bayonet. Conversion by compulsion was unknown amongst Buddhists and repugnant to the Buddha.

Of the Buddha's creed of compassion, H. Fielding Hall writes in '*The Soul of a People*', 'There can never be a war of Buddhism. No ravished country has ever borne witness to the prowess of the followers of the Buddha; no murdered

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1. The word is applied only to those who have fully destroyed the taints. In this sense the Buddha was the first Arahat in the world as he himself revealed to Upaka (see above, p. 13).
2. *Samyutta III.* 66.
3. *Maha-parinibbana Sutta* (*Digha nikaya*, 16).

men have poured out their blood on their hearth-stones, killed in his name; no ruined women have cursed his name to high heaven. He and his faith are clean of the stain of blood. He was the preacher of the Great Peace, of love, of charity, of compassion, and so clear is his teaching that it can never be misunderstood.'

'Buddhism,' observes Rev. Joseph Wain, 'taught a life not by rule, but by principle, a life of beauty; and as a consequence, it was a religion of tolerance. It was the most charitable system under the sun. Never and nowhere had blood been shed for its propagation. It had never persecuted or maltreated those whose beliefs were different—a lesson that Christianity has yet to learn. The Buddha taught men to beautify today, and to sanctify the now.'

When communicating the dhamma to his disciples, the Master made no distinctions whatsoever amongst them; for there were no specially chosen favourite disciples. Amongst his disciples, all those who were Arahats, who were passion -free and had shed the fetters binding to renewed existence, had equally perfected themselves in purity. But there were some outstanding ones who were skilled in different branches of knowledge and practice, and because of their mental endowments, they gained positions of distinction; but special favours were never granted to anyone by the Master. Upāli, for instance, who came from a barber's family was made the chief in matters of discipline (*vinaya*) in preference to many Arahats who belonged to the class of the nobles and warriors (*kshatriya*). Sāriputta and Mahā Moggallāna, brahmins by birth, because of their long-standing aspirations in former lives, became the chief disciples of the Buddha. The former excelled in wisdom (*paññā*) and the latter in supernormal powers (*iddhi*).

The Buddha never wished to extract from his disciples blind and submissive faith in him or his teachings. He always insisted on discriminative examination and intelligent inquiry. In no uncertain terms did he urge critical investigation when he addressed the inquiring Kālāmas in a discourse that has been rightly called the first charter of free thought:

'Yes, Kālāmas, right it is for you to doubt. Come, O Kālāmas, be ye not led by reports or tradition, or hearsay,

nor by what is in a religious text, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearance, nor after reflecting on an approval of some theory, not by seeming possibilities, nor upon the consideration "this recluse is our teacher". But, O Kālāmas, when you know for yourselves: "these things are unwholesome, these things are blamable and unprofitable," then, indeed, do ye reject them...

'And when you know for yourselves: "these things are wholesome, blameless and profitable", then do you, having undertaken them, abide therein.

Then the Buddha questioned them thus:

'Now, what think ye Kālāmas, when greed, hate and delusion arise in a man do they arise to his profit or to his loss? Are they blameable or not?'

— To his loss, Venerable Sir, they are blameable.
— Now what think ye, Kālāmas, when freedom from greed, hate and delusion arise in a man, do they arise to his profit or loss? Are they blameable or not?

— To his profit, Lord. They are blameless.

— So then, Kālāmas, as to my words to you just now: "Be ye not led by reports... abide therein", such was my reason for saying them'.[1]

To take anything on trust is not in the spirit of Buddhism so we find this dialogue between the Master and the disciples: 'If now, knowing this and preserving this, would you say: "We honour our Master and through respect for him we respect what he teaches?" "No, Lord." "That which you affirm, O disciples, is it not only that which you yourselves have recognised, seen and grasped?" Yes, Lord.'[2]

The Buddha faced facts and refused to acknowledge or yield to anything that did not accord with truth. He does

1. *Anguttara*, Nikaya, vol I. p. 188, *sutta* 65. Cf. *Anguttara* I. *sutta* 66 and *Anguttara* II *Bhaddiya sutta* 193. For a full translation of this important discourse read Wheel, No. 8. *Kalama sutta* by Soma Thera.
2. *Majjhima Nikaya* 47.

not want us to recognize anything indiscriminately and without reason. He wants us to comprehend things as they really are; to put forth the necessary effort and work out our own deliverance with heedfulness.

> 'You should make the effort
> The Tāthagatas point out the way'[1]

'Be ye islands unto yourselves. Be ye your own refuge, have recourse to none else for refuge. Hold fast to the Dhamma as an island. Hold fast to the Dhamma as a refuge. Resort yourselves to no other refuge,'[2] so says the Buddha who, for the first time in the world's history, taught that deliverance should be sought independent of a saviour, be he human, or divine.

The idea that another raises a man from lower to higher levels of life, and ultimately rescues him, tends to make man indolent and weak, supine and foolish. This kind of belief degrades a man and smothers every spark of dignity from his moral being.

The Enlightened One exhorts his followers to acquire self-reliance. Others may lend us a helping hand indirectly, but deliverance from suffering must be wrought out and fashioned by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions.

True Purification

In the understanding of things, belief and fear do not play any role in Buddhist thought. The truth of the Dhamma can be grasped only through insight, never through blind faith, or through fear of some known or unknown being.

Not only did the Buddha discourage blind belief, and fear of the omnipotent God as unsuitable approaches for understanding the Truth, but he also denounced adherence to unprofitable rites and rituals, because the mere abandoning of outward things, such as fasting, bathing in rivers, animal sacrifice and similar acts, do not tend to purify a man, do not make a man holy and noble.

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1. *Dhammapada*, v. 276.
2. *Digha Nikaya*, 16.

We find this dialogue between the Buddha and the brahmin Sundarika Bhāradvāja: Once the Buddha addressing the monks explained in details how a seeker after deliverance should train himself, and further added that a man whose mind is free from taints, whose life of purity is perfected, and the task done, could be called one who bathes inwardly.

Then Bhāradvāja seated near the Buddha, heard these words and asked him:

— Does the Venerable Gotama go to bathe in the river Bāhuka?

— Brahmin, what good is the river Bāhuka?

— Indeed, Venerable Gotama, the river Bāhuka is believed by many to be holy. Many people have their evil deeds (*pāpa*) washed away in the river Bāhuka.

Then the Buddha made him understand that bathing in rivers would not cleanse a man of his dirt of evil, and instructed him thus:

'Bathe just here (in this Doctrine and Discipline, *Dhammavinaya*), Brahmin, give security to all beings. If you do not speak falsehood, or kill or steal, if you are confident, and are not mean, what does it avail you to go to Gayā (the name of a river in India during the time of the Buddha)? Your wel at home is also a Gayā."[1]

Says the Dhammapada: (165)

"By oneself is evil done,
By oneself is one defiled;
By oneself is evil left undone,
By oneself is one purified;
Purity and impurity depend on oneself;
No one can purify another.

Caste Problem

Caste, which was a matter of vital importance to the brahmins of India, was one of utter indifference to the Buddha, who strongly condemned the debasing caste system. In his Order of Monks all castes unite as do the rivers in the sea.

1. *Majjhima Nikaya, Vatthupama sutta.* (Translation in Wheel No. 61/62)

They lose their former names, castes, and clans, and become known as members of one community—the *Sangha.*

To Sundarika bhāradvāja, the brahmin who inquired about his lineage, the Buddha answered:

'No Brahmin I, no prince,
No farmer, or aught else.
All worldly ranks I know,
But knowing go my ways
as simply nobody:
Homeless, in pilgrim garb, —
With shaven crown, I go
my way alone, serene.
To ask my birth is vain.'[1]

On one occasion a caste-ridden brahmin insulted the Buddha saying, 'Stop, thou shaveling! Stop, thou outcaste!'

The Master without any feeling of indignation, gently replied:

'Birth maketh not man an outcast,
Birth maketh not man a brahmin;
Action maketh man an outcast,
Action maketh man a brahmin'[2]

and delivered a whole sermon, the *Vasala sutta*, (*Sutta-nipāta*) explaining to the brahmin in detail the characteristics of one who is really an outcast (*vasala*). Convinced, the haughty brahmin took refuge in the Buddha.

The Buddha freely admitted into the Order people from all castes, and classes when he knew that they were fit to live the holy life, and some of them later distinguished themselves in the Order. The Buddha was the only contemporary teacher who endeavoured to blend in mutual tolerance and concord those who hitherto had been rent asunder by differences of caste and class.

Upāli, who was the chief authority on the Vinaya—the disciplinary 'rules' of the Order— was a barber, regarded as

1. *Sutta-nipata*, 455, 456 — Chalmer's Transl. (Harvard Or. Ser.)
2. Ibid. *Vasala Sutta*, 142.

one of the basest occupations of the lower classes. Sunīta who later won Arahatship, was a scavenger, another base occupation. In the Order of Nuns were Punnā and Punnikā, both slave girls. According to Mrs. C. A. F.Rhys Davids, 8½% of the number of those nuns who were able to realize the fruits of their training, were drawn from the despised castes, which were mostly illiterate.[1]

Chief Disciples

Rājagaha, the capital of the Kingdom of Magadha, was one of the first places visited by the Buddha soon after his Enlightenment. As a wandering ascetic, in the early days of his renunciation, he had promised King Seniya Bimbisāra that he would visit Rājagaha when he achieves the object of his search. King Bimbisāra was overjoyed at the sight of the Buddha, and having listened to his teaching, became a lay follower. His devotion to the Buddha became so ardent that within a few days, he offered him his pleasure park, Veluvana, for residence.

Rājagaha during that time was a centre of great learning where many a school of philosophy flourished. One such school of thought had as its head Sanjaya; and among his retinue of two hundred and fifty followers were Upatissa and Kolita who were later to become Sāriputta and Mahā Moggallāna, the two chief disciples of the Buddha.

One day when Upatissa was walking through the streets of Rājagaha, he was greatly struck by the serene countenance and the quiet, dignified deportment of one of the first disciples of the Buddha, the Arahat Assaji, who was on his almsround.

All the strenuous endeavours that Upatissa had made through many a birth to achieve perfection, were now on the verge of being rewarded. Without going back to his teacher, he followed Arahat Assaji to his resting place eager to know whom he followed and what teaching he had accepted.

'Friend', said Upatissa, 'serene is your countenance, clear and radiant is your glance. Who persuaded you to renounce the world? Who is your teacher? What Dhamma

1. See *Buddhism and the Race Question*, by Professor G. P. Malalasekera and K. N. Jayatilleke, Unesco 1959.

(teaching) do you follow?' The Venerable Assaji, rather reluctant to speak much, humbly said: 'I cannot expound the Doctrine and Discipline at length, but I can tell you the meaning briefly'. Upatissa's reply is interesting: 'Well, friend, tell little or much; what I want is just the meaning. Why speak many words?' Then the Arahat Assaji uttered a single verse which embraces the Buddha's entire doctrine of causality:

'Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā — tesam hetum tathāgato āha
Tesam ca yo nirodho — Evam vādi mahā samano'.

'Whatever from a cause proceeds, thereof
The Tathāgata has explained the cause,
Its cessation too he has explained.
This is the teaching of the Supreme Sage'.

Upatissa instantly grasped the meaning and attained the first stage of realization, comprehending 'whatever is of the nature of arising, all that is of the nature of ceasing' (*yamkiñci samudaya dhammam sabbam tam nirodha dhammam*).

With a heart full of joy, he quickly went back to his friend Kolita, told him of his meeting with the Arahat and of the teaching he had received. Kolita, too, like Upatissa, instantly gained the first stage of realization having heard the Dhamma from his friend. Thereon both of them approaached Sanjaya and asked him to follow the Buddha. But he, being afraid of losing his reputation as a religious teacher, refused to do so. Upatissa and Kolita then left Sanjaya much against his protestations, for Veluvana monastery and expressed their wish to become followers of the Buddha. The Buddha gladly welcomed them saying, 'Come, monks, well proclaimed is the dhamma. Live the holy life for the complete ending of suffering (*dukkha*)' and took them into the Order. They attained Deliverance and became the two chief disciples.

Another great one who joined the Order during the Buddha's stay at Veluvana, was the brahmin sage Mahā Kassapa who had renounced great wealth to find out the way to Deliverance. It was the Venerable Mahā Kassapa, three months after the Buddha's passing away (*Parinibbāna*),

who called up the convocation of Arahats (the First Council), at the Sattapanni Cave near Rājagaha under the patronge of King Ajātasattu, to collect and codify the Dhamma-vinaya.

The Order of Nuns

In the early days of the Order, only men were admitted to the Sangha since the Buddha was reluctant to admit women. But there were many devout ladies among the lay followers who had a keen desire for a life of renunciation as nuns. Urged by their keenness, Pajāpati Gotami, the foster-mother of the Buddha, in the company of many ladies of rank, approached the Buddha beseeching him to grant them ordination. But the Buddha still hesitated to accept them. Seeing their discomfiture, and urged by their zeal, the Venerable Ananda took up their cause and pleaded with the Buddha on their behalf. The Buddha finally yielded to this appeal, placing however eight restrictions on the ordination of women. Thus was established in the fifth year of his Enlightenment, the Order of the Nuns, the *Bhikkhunī Sāsana*, for the first time in history, for never before this had there been an Order where women could lead a celibate life of renunciation. Women from all walks of life joined the Order. Foremost in the Order stood the Theris Khemā and Uppalavannā. The lives of quite a number of these noble nuns, their strenuous endeavours to win the goal of freedom, and their paeons of joy at deliverance of mind are graphically described in the *Therī Gāthā*, the Psalms of the Sisters.[1]

At Kapilavatthu

While at Rajagaha, the Blessed One heard that his father wished to see him, and he set out for Kapilavatthu. He did not, however, go straight to the palace, but, according to custom, stopped in a grove outside the town. The next day the Buddha with his bowl, begged for his alms from house to house in the streets of Kapilavatthu. King Suddhodana, startled at the news, rushed to the Buddha and said: 'Why, Master, why do you put us to shame? Why do you go begging for your food? Not one of our race has ever done so'. Replied the Buddha: 'You and your family may claim descent from kings; my descent is from the Buddhas of old; and they, begging their food, always lived on alms.'

1. *Psalms of the Early Buddhists—The Sisters.* Translated by C. F. Rhys Davids, Pali Text Society Translation Series.

Then explaining the Dhamma the Master said, 'Be alert, be mindful, lead a righteous life. The righteous live happily both in this world and the next.' And so the king became established in the Path, he realized the Dhamma. The Buddha was then conducted into the palace where all came to pay their respects to him, but not Princess Yasodharā. The Buddha went to her, and the Princess knowing the impassable gulf between them, fell on the ground at his feet and saluted him. Then relating a Jātaka story, a story of his previous birth,[1] revealing how great her virtue had been in that former life, he made her an adherent to the Doctrine. Later when the Buddha was induced to establish an Order for female mendicants, Yasodharā became one of the first nuns.

When the Buddha was in the palace, Princess Yasodharā arrayed her son Rāhula in all the best attire and sent him to the Blessed One, saying, 'That is thy father, Rāhula, go and ask for your inheritance.'

Prince Rāhula went to the Buddha, stood before him, and said: 'Pleasant is thy shadow, sage'.

And when the Blessed one had finished his meal and left the palace, Prince Rāhula followed him saying, 'Give me my inheritance!' At that the Blessed One spoke to Sāriputta Arahat: 'Well then, Sāriputta, take him into the Order'. Instructing Sāriputta in the manner of ordination, the Master said: 'The hair and beard must be shaved first, Sariputta, and then the saffron robe put on. Adjusting his robe on one shoulder the seeker for ordination should pay homage to the monks and squatting (if this is inconvinient one can kneel) before them with hands raised and palms together, he should say:

'Buddham saranam gacchāmi
Dhammam saranam gacchāmi
Sangham saranam gacchāmi

Dutiyampi Buddham saranam gacchāmi
Dutiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchāmi
Dutiyampi Sangham saranam gacchāmi

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1. *Candakinnara Jataka*, 485.

Tatiyampi Buddham saranam gacchami
Tatiyampi Dhammam saranam gacchami
Tatiyampi Sangham saranam gacchāmi

I go for refuge to the Buddha (the Teacher)
I go for refuge to the Dhamma (the Teaching)
I go for refuge to the Sangha (the Taught)

For the second time I go for refuge to the Buddha
For the second time I go for refuge to the Dhamma
For the second time I go for refuge to the Sangha

For the third time I go for refuge to the Buddha
For the third time I go for refuge to the Dhamma
For the third time I go for refuge to the Sangha[1]

In the *Majjhima Nikāya*, one of the five original Collections in Pali containing the Buddha's discourses, there are three discourses (Nos. 61, 62, 147) entitled *Rāhulovāda* or exhortations to Rāhula, delivered by the Blessed One to teach the Dhamma to little Rāhula. The discourses are entirely devoted to advice on discipline and meditation. Here is an extract from the Master's exhortation in the Mahā Rahulovāda Sutta [2]:

"Cultivate the meditation on lovingkindness (*mettā*), Rāhula; for by cultivating lovingkindness, ill-will is banished. Cultivate the meditation on compassion (*karunā*), Rāhula, for by cultivating compassion, cruelty is banished. Cultivate the meditation on sympathetic joy (*muditā*), Rāhula, for by cultivating sympathetic joy, aversion is banished. Cultivate the meditation on equanimity (*upekkhā*), Rāhula, for by cultivating equanimity, hatred is banished.[3] Cultivate the meditation on impurity (*asubha*), Rāhula, for by meditating on impurity, lust is banished. Cultivate the meditation on the concept of impermanence (*anicca–saññā*), Rāhula, for by meditating on the concept of impermanence pride of self (*asmi-māna*), is banished. Cultivate the meditation on mindfulness on in-and-out-breahting (*ānāpāna sati*), Rāhula,

1. *Vinaya Mahavagga*, Read *Ordination in Theravada Buddhism*, Piyadassi Thera, J. F. Dickson, The Wheel No. 56.
2. Discourse No. 62. For a full translation see The Wheel No. 33
3. See *The Four Sublime States*, The Wheel No. 6.

in-and-out breathing with mindfulness, Rāhula, cultivated and frequently practised, bears much fruit, is of great advantage."

Women in Buddhism

Generally speaking during the time of the Buddha, owing to brahminical influence women were not given much recognition. Sometimes they were held in contempt and in servility to man. It was the Buddha who raised the status of women although there were solitary cases of their showing erudition in matters of philosophy, and so on. In his large-heartedness and magnanimity he always treated women with consideration and civility, and pointed out to them, too, the path to peace, purity and sanctity.

Said the Blessed One: "Mother is the friend at one's home. Wife is the highest friend of the husband."[1]

The Buddha did not reject the invitation for a meal though Ambapāli was of little repute. Whatever food she offered he accepted, and in return, gave her the Dhamma-dāna, the gift of Truth. She was immediately convinced by the teaching and leaving aside her frivolous lay life she entered the Order of Nuns. Ardent and strenuous in her religious practices she then became a saint.

Kisāgotami was another lady to whom the Buddha gave the assistance of his great compassion. Her story is one of the most touching tales recorded in our boqks.

She belonged to the Gotama clan, and was therefore, a kinswoman of the Buddha Gotama. Sāvatthi was her birth place. On account of her tender, fragile body she was called Kisā (lean) Gotami. She married a son of a wealthy merchant and had a child. But before it had started to walk, the babe suddenly fell ill and died thus causing untold grief to the mother. In her boundless love, however, towards her only son, she could not believe that the child had breathed its last. With mind confused, and unaware of her actions, she rushed hither and thither, frantically seeking medicine for her child. But of course, no physician in Sāvatthi could

1. *Samyutta-Nikaya.*

impart life to the dead. At last she met the Supreme Buddha and placing the dead child at the Master's feet implored him to give back life to her babe.

The Lord of Compassion softly said: 'Sister, there is an infallible medicine. I will heal thy affliction, only fetch me a little mustard, but mark, Gotami, that thou receiveth the mustard from a house where no one has died.' She rushed back to the town and the townfolk taking pity upon her readily gave her the mustard that she so desperately sought. But, alas, she could not find anywhere a house where death has not called. Gotami at last became aware of the universality of death. She realized that all the sweetest and cherished things of earth are fleeting; that any meeting ends in a parting and that ultimately life fades out in death. With sorrow banished, she placed her dead child in the charnel-field and retraced her steps to the monastery saying:

'No village law is this, no city law,
No law for this clan, or for that alone;
For the whole world—ay, and the gods in heav'n—
This is the law: All is *impermanent*!' [1]

With the Buddha's guidance Kisagotami realized that impermanency is the fundamental characteristic of all conditioned existence and attained the first stage of sainthood.

Many more are the instances where the Buddha helped and consoled women who suffered from the vicissitudes of life.

Ministering to the Sick

Great, indeed, was the Master's compassion for the sick. On one occasion the Blessed One found an ailing monk, Pūtigatta Tissa, with festering ulcers lying on his soiled bed. Immediately the Master prepared hot water, and with the help of the Venerable Ananda washed him, tenderly nursed the sick brother with his own hands, and taught the Dhamma, thus enabling him to win Arahatship ere he died. On another occasion, too, the Master tended a sick monk, and admonished his disciples thus:

"Whosoever, monks, would wait upon me, he should wait upon the sick."[2]

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1. *Theri Gatha*, Commentary. (See Psalms of the Sisters. p. 107)
2. *Vinaya Mahavagga*. Also see Book of Discipline, Part 4, P. 431

When the Arahat Tissa passed away the funeral rites were duly performed and the Buddha caused the relics to be enshrined in a stupa. [1]

The Buddha's Mettā or loving-kindness was all-pervading and immeasurable. His earnest exhortation to his disciples was:

> 'Just as with her own life
> a mother shields from hurt
> her own, her only child—
> let all-embracing thoughts
> for all that lives be thine.' [2]

Being one who always acted in constant uniformity with what he preached, loving-kindness and compassion dominated his actions always.

While journeying from village to village, from town to town, instructing, enlightening and gladdening the many, the Buddha saw how superstitious folk, steeped in ignorance, slaughtered animals in worship of their gods. He spoke to them:

> 'Of life, which all can take but none can give,
> Life which all creatures love and strive to keep,
> Wonderful, dear, and pleasant unto each,
> Even to the meanest...'[3]

Thus when people who prayed to the gods for mercy, were merciless, and India was blood-stained with the morbid sacrifices of innocent animals at the desecrated altars of

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1. 'To the north-east of the monastery of Jetavana', worte General Alexander Cunningham in his Archaeological Report, 1862—63, 'there was a stupa built on the spot where the Buddha had washed the hands and feet of a sick monk.....The remains of the *stupa* still exist in a mass of solid brick-work, at a distance of 550 feet from the Jetavana monastery'

   In General Cunningham's map of Savatthi (modern Sahet-Mahet), the site of this stupa is marked H. in the plan. See Archaeological Survey of India (Simla 1871), p. 341.

2. *Metta Sutta*, *Sutta-nipata*, verse 149, Chalmer's Transl. (Harvard oriental series).
3. *The Light of Asia.*

imaginary deities, and the harmful rites and rituals of ascetics and brahmins brought disaster and brutal agony, the Buddha, the Compassionate One, pointed out the Ancient Path of the Enlightened ones, of righteousness, love and understanding.

Equanimity and Self-composure

Amidst all the vicissitudes of life—gain and loss, repute and ill-repute, praise and censure, pain and happiness[1]—the Buddha never wavered. He was firm as a solid rock. Touched by happiness or by pain he showed neither elation nor depression. He never encouraged wrangling and animosity. Addressing the monks he once said: 'I quarrel not with the world, monks, it is the world that quarrels with me. An exponent of the Dhamma quarrels not with anyone in the world.[2]

He admonished His disciples in these words:

"Monks, if others were to speak ill of me or ill of the *Dhamma* or ill of the *Sangha* (the Order) you should not on that account entertain thoughts of enmity and spite, and be worrid. If, monks, you are angry and displeased with them it will not only impede your mental development but you will also fail to judge how far that speech is right or wrong. You should unravel what is untrue and make it all clear. Also, monks, if others speak highly of me, highly of the Dhamma and the Sangha, you need not on that account be elated; for that too will mar your inner development. You should acknowledge what is right and show the truth of what has been said".[3]

There never was an occasion when the Buddha manifested unfriendliness towards anyone—even to his opponents and enemies. There were those who were against him and his doctrine, yet the Buddha never regarded them as enemies. When others reproached him in strong terms, the Buddha neither manifested anger nor aversion nor uttered an unkind word.

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1. These are the *attha loka-dhamma*, the eight vicissitudes of life
2. *Samyutta*, iii. 138.
3. *Digha-Nikaya* (*Brahmajala Sutta*).

Said the Buddha:

"As an elephant in battle-field endures the arrows shot from a bow, even so will I endure abuse and unfriendly expression of others." [1]

Devadatta

A striking example of this mental attitude is seen in his relation with Devadatta.

Devadatta was a cousin of the Buddha, who entered the Order and gained supernormal powers of the mundane plane (*puthujjana-iddhi*). Later, however, he began to harbour thoughts of jealousy and ill-will toward his kinsman, the Buddha, and his two chief disciples, Sāriputta and Mahā Moggallāna, with the ambition of becoming the leader of the Sangha, the Order of Monks.

Devadatta wormed himself into the heart of Ajātasattu, the young prince, the son of King Bimbisāra, and one day when the Blessed One was addressing a gathering at Veluvana monastery, where the king, too, was present, Devadatta came unto the Buddha, saluted him and said: 'Venerable Sir, you are now enfeebled with age. May the Master lead a life of solitude free from worry and care. I wil direct the Order".

The Buddha rejected this overture and Devadatta departed irritated and disconcerted, nursing hatred and malice toward the Blessed One. Then with the malicious purpose of causing mischief, he went to prince Ajātasatu, kindled in him the deadly embers of ambition, and said:

"Young man, you had better kill your father and assume kingship lest you die without becoming the ruler. I shall kill the Blessed One and become the Buddha".

So when Ajātasattu murdered his father and ascended the throne, Devadatta suborned ruffians to murder the Buddha, but failing in that endeavour, he himself hurled down a rock as the Buddha was climbing up Gijjhakuta hill in Rājagaha. The rock precipitated down, broke in twain and a splinter

1. *Dhammapada*, 310.

slightly wounded the Buddha. Later Devadatta made an intoxicated elephant to charge on the Buddha; but the animal prostrated himself at the Master's feet, overpowered by his loving-kindness. Devadatta now proceeded to cause a schism in the Sangha, but this discord did not last long. Having failed in all his intrigues, Devadatta retired a disappointed and broken man. Soon afterwards he fell ill, and on his sick-bed repenting his follies, he desired to see the Buddha. But that was not to be; for he died on the litter while being carried to the Buddha. Before death, however, he uttered repentance and sought refuge in the Buddha.[1]

The Last Days

The Mahā Prinibbāna Sutta,[2] the discourse on the passing away of the Blessed One, records in moving detail all the events that occurred during the last months and days of the Buddha's life.

The Blessed One had now reached the ripe age of eighty, his two chief disciples, Sāriputta and Mahā Moggallāna, had passed away three months earlier. Pajāpati Gotami, Yasodharā and Rāhula were also no more.

The Buddha was now at Vesāli, and the rainy season having come, he went, together with a great company of monks, to Beluva to spend there the period of the "rains." There a severe sickness fell upon him, causing him much pain and agony; but the Blessed One mindful and self-possessed, bore it patiently. He was on the verge of death; but he felt he should not pass away without taking leave of the Order. So with a great effort of will he suppressed that illness, and kept his hold on life. His sickness gradually abated, and when quite recovered he called the Venerable Ananda, His personal attendant, and addressing him said:

"Ananda, I am now grown old and full of years, my journeying is drawing to a close. I have reached my sum of days, I am turning eighty years of age; and just as a worn-out cart, Ananda, can only with much additional care be made to move along, so the body of the Tathāgata can only be kept

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1. Comy. on the Dhammapada, Vol: 1, P. 147.
2. *Digha Nik.*, 16. — Translated in The Wheel No. 67—69, "Last Days of the Buddha".

going with much infusion of will-power. It is only when the Tathāgata, ceasing to attend on any outward thing and to experience any worldly sensation, attains to the signless (*animitta*) concentration of mind, and dwells in it—it is only then that the body of the Tathāgata is at ease.

"Therefore, Ananda, be ye islands unto yourselves. Be ye your own refuge. Have recourse to none else for refuge. Hold fast to the Dhamma as an island. Hold fast to the Dhamma as a refuge. Resort yourselves to no other refuge.. Whosoever, Ananda, either now or after I am dead, shall be islands unto themselves, and refuge unto themselves, shall betake themselves to no external refuge—it is they, Ananda, among my disciples who shall reach the very top-most height! But they must be keen to progress."

From Beluva the Buddha journeyed to the Mahāvana, and there, calling up an assembly of all the monks residing in the neighbourhood of Vesāli, addressed them saying: "Disciples, the Dhamma realised by me, I have made known to you. Make yourselves masters of the Dhamma, practise it, meditate upon it and spread it abroad; out of pity for the world, for the good and the gain and weal of gods and men."

The Buddha concluded his exhortation by saying:

"My age is now full ripe, my life drawn to its close;
I leave you, I depart, relying on myself alone!
Be earnest then, O disciples, holy, full of thought!
Be steadfast in resolve! Keep watch o'er your own hearts!
Who wearies not but holds fast to this Truth and Law,
Shall cross this sea of life, shall make an end of grief."

Worn out with sickness, with feeble limbs, the Blessed One now journeyed on with much difficulty, followed by the Venerable Ananda and a great company of monks. Even in this last, long, wearisome journey of his, the Buddha never failed in his attention to others. He instructed Cunda, the smith, who offered him his last meal. Then on the way, he stopped for Pukkusa, a disciple of Alāra Kālāma, replied to all his questions, and so instructed him that Pukkusa offered himself as a follower of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

The Blessed One now reached the Sāla Grove of the Mallas at Kusināra—the journey's end. Knowing that here would be his last resting place, he told the Venerable Ananda: "I am weary, Ananda, and would lie down. Spread over for me the couch with its head to the north between the twin sāla trees". He then laid himself on his right side, composed and mindful, with one leg resting on the other. Speaking now to the Venerable Ananda the Blessed One said:

"They who fulfil the greater and the lesser duties, they who are correct in life, walking according to the precepts—it is they who rightly honour, reverence and venerate the Perfect One with the worthiest homage. Therefore, Ananda, be ye steady in the fulfilment of the greater and the lesser duties, and be ye correct in life, walking according to the precepts. Thus, Ananda, should you train yourselves."

The Last Convert

At that time, a wandering ascetic named Subhadda, who was at Kusināra, heard the news of the Blessed One's approaching death; and in order to clear up certain doubts that troubled his mind, hurried to the sāla Grove to speak to the Buddha. The Venerable Ananda, however, did not wish the Buddha to be disturbed in his last moments; and though Subhadda made several appeals, access to the Master was refused. The Blessed One overheard the conversation. He knew at once that Subhadda was making his investigations with a genuine desire for knowledge; and knowing that Subhadda was capable of quickly grasping the answers, he desired that Subhadda be allowed to see him.

Subhadda's uncertainty was whether the leaders of the other schools of thought such as Pūrana Kassapa, Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta and others, had attained a true understanding. The Blessed One then spoke:

"In whatsoever Doctrine and Discipline(*Dhamma-vinaya*), Subhadda, the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, neither in it is there found a man of true saintliness of the first, or of the second, or of the third, or of the fourth degree. And in whatsoever Doctrine and Discipline, Subhadda, the Noble

Eightfold Path is found, in it is found the man of true saintliness of the first, and the second, and the third, and the fourth degree.[1] Now, in this doctrine and discipline, Subhadda, is found the Noble Eightfold Path, and in it, too, are found the men of true saintliness of all the four degree. Void are the systems of other teachers—void of true saints. And in this one, Subhadda, may the brethren live the life that is right, so that the world be not bereft of Arahats".[2]

Hearing the words of the Blessed One, Subhadda gained confidence, and took refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. Furthermore he desired to be admitted into the Order, and the Buddha requested the Venerable Ananda to receive him. Subhadda thus became the last convert and the last disciple of the Blessed One; and ere long by his strenuous effort he attained the final stage of sainthood (*Arahatta*).

The Last Scene

Now the Blessed One addressing the Venerable Ananda, said:

"It may be, Ananda, that in some of you the thought may arise, 'The word of the Master is ended. We have no teacher any more?' But it is not thus, Ananda, that you should regard.

"The Doctrine and the Discipline (*Dhamma-vinaya*) which I have set forth and laid down for you, let them, after I am gone, be your teacher.

"It may be, monks, that there may be doubts in the minds of some brethren as to the Buddha, or the Dhamma, or the Path (*magga*), or Method (*paṭipadā*). Inquire, monks, freely. Do not have to reproach yourselves afterwards with

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1. These four stages are: *sotapatti*, (Stream-Entry); *sakadagami*, (Once-Return); *anagami*, Non-Return; and *arahatta*, the final stage of sainthood. Arahatship is the stage at which fetters are severed and taints rooted out.
2. Referring to the Noble Eightfold Path, Dr. T. W. Rhys Davids writes: "Buddhist or not Buddhist, I have examined everyone of the great religious systems of the world, and in none of them have I found anything to surpass in beauty and comprehensiveness, the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha. I am content to shape my life according to that Path."

the thought: 'Our teacher was face to face with us, and we could not bring ourselves to inquire of the Exalted One when we were face to face with him'."

When the Buddha had thus spoken the monks were silent.

A second and a third time the Blessed One repeated the words to the monks, and yet the monks were silent.

And the Venerable Ananda said to the Blessed One: "How wonderful a thing is it, Lord, how marvellous! Verily, I believe that in this whole assembly of the monks there is not one who has any doubt or misgivings as to the Buddha or the Dhamma, or the Path or the Method."

The Blessed One confirmed the words of the Venerable Ananda, adding that in the whole assembly, even the most backward one was assured of final deliverence. And after a short while the Master made his final exhortation to those who wished to follow his Teaching now and in the future:

"*Behold now, O monks, I exhort you: impermanent are all compounded things strive on with heedfulness.*"

These were the last words of the Buddha.

Then the Master entered into those nine successive stages of meditative absorption (*jhāna*) which are of increasing sublimity: first the four fine-material absorptions (*rūpa-jhāna*), then the four immaterial absorptions (*arūpa-jhāna*), and finally the state where ideas and sensations entirely cease (*saññā-vedayita-nirodha*). Then he returned through all these stages to the first fine-material absorption and rose again to the fourth one. Immediately after having re-entered this stage (which has been described as having 'purity of mindfulness due to equanimity') the Blessed One passed away (*parinibbāyi*). He realized Nibbāna that is free from any substratum of further becoming (*pari-nibbāna.*)

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1. The passages in quotation marks are taken, with slight alterations, from the "Book of the Great Decease" in *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part II, (*Digha Nikaya*).

In the annals of history, no man is recorded as having so consecrated himself to the welfare of all beings, irrespective of caste, class or creed, as the Supreme Buddha. From the hour of his enlightenment to the end of his life, he strove tirelessly to elevate mankind. He never relaxed in his exertion for the common weal and was never subjected to moral or spiritual fatigue. Though physically he was not always fit, mentally he was ever vigilant and energetic.

Though twenty-five centuries have gone since the passing away of the Buddha, His message of love and wisdom still exists in its purity, decisively influencing the destinies of humanity. Forests of flowers are daily offered at his shrines and countless millions of lips daily repeat the formula *Buddham saranam gacchāmi*, "I take refuge in the Buddha." His greatness yet glows today like a sun that blots out lesser lights, and his Dhamma yet beckons the weary pilgrim to Nibbāna's Security and Peace.

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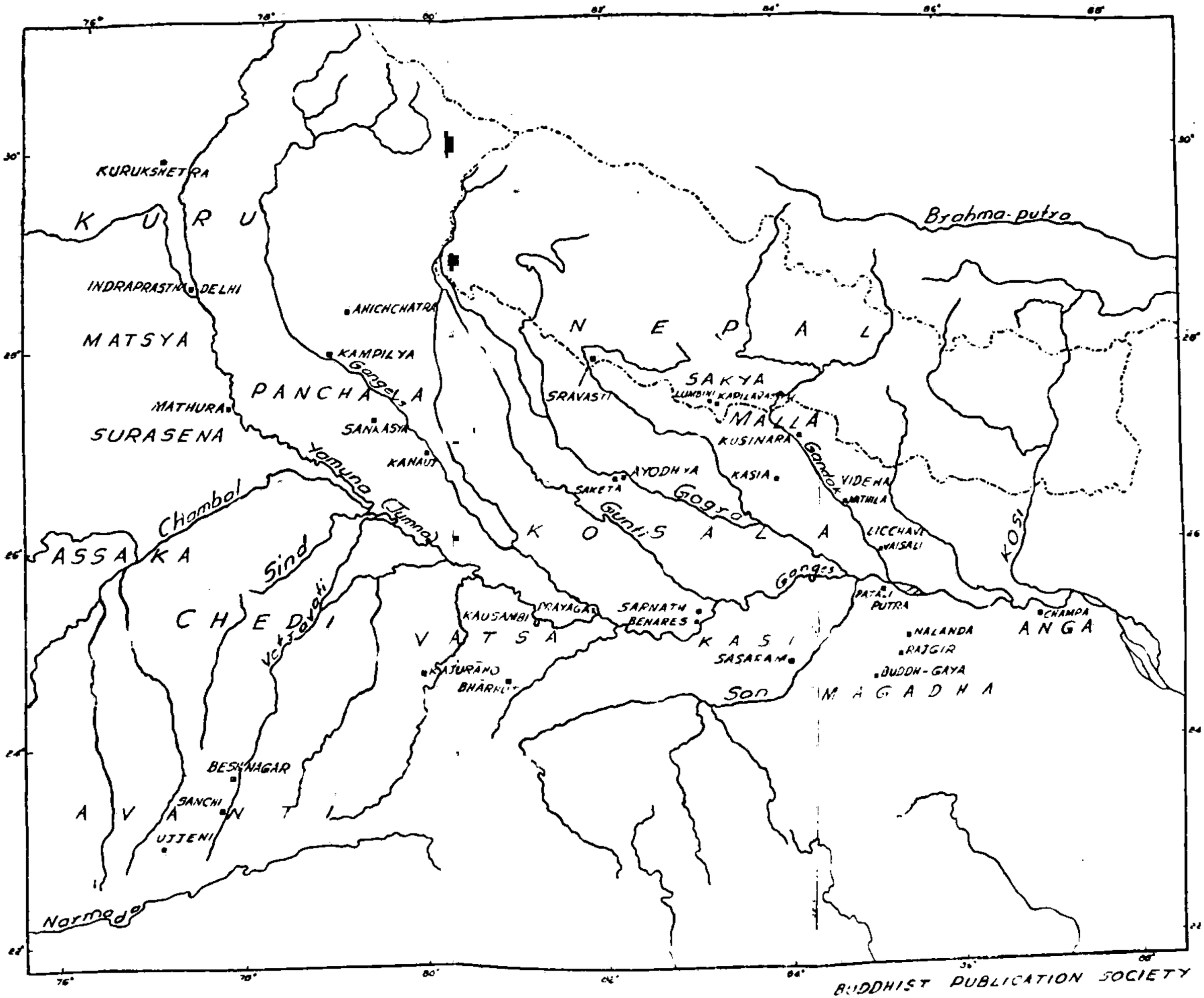
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Dedicated

To the Memory

of

Sir Ernest de Silva

INTRODUCTION

Four Sublime States of mind have been taught by the Buddha:

Love or Lovingkindness *(mettā)*
Compassion (karuṇā)
Sympathetic Joy (muditā)
Equanimity (upekkhā).

In Pāli, the language of the Buddhist scriptures, these four are known under the name of *Brahma-Vihāra.* This term may be rendered by: excellent, lofty or sublime states of mind; or alternatively, by: Brahma-like, god-like or divine abodes.

They are said to be *excellent* or *sublime*, because they are the right, or ideal, way of conduct towards living beings *(sattesu sammā paṭipatti).* These four attitudes of mind provide in fact the answer to all situations arising from social contact. They are the great removers of tension, the great peace-makers in social conflict, the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence; levellers of social barriers, builders of harmonious communities, awakeners of slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revivers of joy and hope long abandoned, promoters of human brotherhood against the forces of egotism.

They are incompatible with a hateful state of mind, and in that they are akin to Brahma who is conceived as the hateless one, in beneficial contrast to many other conceptions of deities, in East and West, who by their own devotees, are said to show anger, wrath, jealousy and 'righteous indignation.' He who assiduously develops these four Sublime States, by conduct and meditation, is said to become an equal of Brahma *(Brahma-samo);* and if they

become the dominant influence in his mind, he will be reborn in congenial worlds, the realms of Brahma. Therefore, these states of mind are called *God-like*, *Brahma-like*.

They are called *Abodes (vihāra)*, because they should become mind's constant dwelling places where our minds feel "at home"; they should not remain merely places of rare and short visits, soon forgotten. In other words, our minds should become thoroughly saturated by them. They should become the inseparable companions of our days, and we should be mindful of them in all our common activities as far as they have any concern with these four mental attitudes. As the *Mettā Sutta*, the Song of Loving-kindness, puts it:

> "When standing, walking, sitting, lying down,
> Whenever he feels free of tiredness,
> Let him establish well this mindfulness—
> This, it is said, is the Divine Abode."

These four—Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity—are also known as the *boundless states (appamaññā)*, because, in their perfection and their true nature, they should not be narrowed down by any limitation as to the range of beings towards which they are extended. They should be unexclusive and impartial, not bound by selective preferences or prejudices. A mind that has attained to that boundlessness of the Brahma-vihāras, will not harbour any national, racial, religious or class-hatred.

But unless that boundless, unrestricted application of these four qualities is rooted in a strong natural affinity with such a mental attitude, it will certainly not be easy to effect that boundless application by a deliberate effort of will,

and to avoid consistently any kind or degree of partiality. To achieve that, it will, in most cases, be necessary to use these four qualities not only as principles of conduct and objects of reflection, but to take them also as subjects of methodical meditation. That meditation is called *Brahmavihāra-bhāvanā*, 'the meditative development of the Sublime States.' Its practical aim is to achieve, with help of these Sublime States, those high stages of mental concentration called *jhāna* or 'meditative absorption.' The meditations on Love, Compassion and Sympathetic Joy may each produce the attainment of the first three Absorptions, while the meditation on Equanimity will lead to the fourth Jhāna only, in which Equanimity is the most significant factor *(jhān'anga)*.

Generally spoken, only persistent meditative practice will have the twofold crowning effect of, firstly, making these four qualities sink deeply into the heart so that they may become spontaneous attitudes not easily overthrown; secondly, it will be meditation that brings out and secures their *boundless* nature, unfolds their all-embracing range. In fact, the detailed instructions given in the Buddhist scriptures for the practice of these four meditations, are clearly intended to unfold gradually the boundlessness of the Sublime States. Systematically all barriers are broken down that restrict their application to selected individuals or places.

In the meditative exercises, the selection of persons to whom the thought of Love, etc., is directed, proceeds from the easier to the more difficult. For instance, when meditating on Love, one starts with an aspiration for one's own well-being, using it as a point of reference for the gradual extension of Love: "Just as I wish to be happy

and free of suffering, so may *that* being . . . . may *all* beings be happy and free of suffering!" Then one extends the thought of Love to a person for whom one has a loving respect, as, for instance, a teacher, then to dearly beloved persons, to indifferent ones and finally to enemies (if any) or those disliked. One should not choose persons dead or of the other sex. After one has been able to cope with the hardest task, to direct one's thoughts of Love to persons disliked, one should now "break down the barriers" *(sīmā - sambheda)* between those four types of persons, and, without making any discrimination, extend one's Love to them equally. At that point of the practice one will have come to the higher stages of concentration: with the appearance of the mental reflex - image (*patibhāga-nimitta*) Access Concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*) will have been reached, and further progress will lead to the full concentration (*appanā*) of the First Absorption, and so forth.

For spatial expansion, the practice starts with those in one's immediate environment (family, etc.), then extends to the neighbouring houses, to the whole street, the town, province, country, etc. Or, in 'pervasion of the directions' (*disa-pharaṇa*), one's thought of Love is directed first to the East, then to the West, North, South, the intermediate directions, Zenith and Nadir.

The same principles of practice apply to the meditative development of Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity, with due variations in the selection of persons. Details of the practice will be found in the literature given at the end of this Introduction.

The ultimate aim of attaining these Brahmavihāra Jhānas is to produce a state of mind that can serve as the firm basis for the liberating insight (*vipassanā*) into the true nature of all phenomena, as being impermanent, liable to suffering and unsubstantial. A mind that has achieved meditative Absorption induced by the Sublime States, will be pure, tranquil, firm, collected and free of coarse selfishness, and will thus be well prepared for the final work of deliverance which can be completed only by insight.

After that brief glance to the ultimate goal, we shall now return to our particular considerations concerned with the significance of the Sublime States themselves.

The preceding remarks will have shown that there are two ways of developing the Sublime States: firstly by practical conduct and an appropriate direction of thought, and secondly by methodical meditation aiming at the Absorptions. Both will prove of help to each other.

As we have mentioned before, methodical meditative practice will help to make Love, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity become spontaneous responses to those situations of life that call for them: it will help considerably in making the mind more firm and calm for withstanding the numerous irritations in life that make it so difficult to keep to these four qualities in thought, words and deeds.

On the other hand, if one's practical conduct will be increasingly governed by these Sublime States, the mind will harbour less resentment, tensions and irritability, the reverberations of which will often, if ever so subtly, intrude even into the hours of meditation, forming there the Hindrance of Restlessness *(uddhacca-nīvaraṇa)*. The

influence of every-day life and thought on the meditative mind is very strong indeed, and only if the gap between them is persistently narrowed down, there will be a chance for steady meditative progress and for achieving the highest aim of it.

Also repeated reflection upon the Sublime States, the blessings bestowed by them and the dangers besetting the opposite qualities, will help in a successful meditative development of the Sublime States. "What a person considers and reflects upon for a long time, to that his mind will bend and incline." It is principally for such a use that the following pages are offered to the reader, with the hope that their repeated contemplation will give to mind and heart a decisive turn towards the sublime heights of the Divine Abodes, and prepare the road to the final liberation from lust, hatred and ignorance.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY !

LITERATURE

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"*The Practice of Lovingkindness* (*Mettā*)" As taught by the Buddha in the Pali Canon. Compiled and translated from the Pali by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli. The Wheel No. 7 (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy).

"*The Path to Deliverance*" By Nyanatiloka Mahathera. §§ 97—118: The Four Divine Abodes. (Colombo, Lake House Bookshop).

THE BASIC PASSAGE ON

THE FOUR SUBLIME STATES

from the Discourses of the Buddha

I

Here, O monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with Love, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with love, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity, and free from distress.

II

Here, O monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with Compassion, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below, and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with Compassion, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity, and free from distress,

III

Here, O monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with Sympathetic Joy, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below, and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with Sympathetic Joy, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity, and free from distress.

IV

Here, O monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with Equanimity, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below, and

around ; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with Equanimity, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity, and free from distress.

(*Dīgha - Nikāya 13*)

THE FOUR SUBLIME STATES

I

LOVE (Mettā)

Love, without desire to possess, knowing well that in the ultimate sense there is no possession and no possessor — this is highest *Love*.

Love, without speaking and thinking of "I", knowing well that this so-called "I" is a mere delusion.

Love, without selecting and excluding; knowing well that to do so means to create Love's own contrasts: dislike, aversion, hatred.

Love, embracing all beings: small and great, far and near, be it on earth, in the water, or in the air.

Love, embracing impartially all sentient beings, and not only those who are useful, pleasing, or amusing to us.

Love, embracing all beings, be they noble-minded or low-minded, good or evil. The noble and the good are embraced because *Love* is flowing to them spontaneously. The low-and evil-minded are included because they are those who are most in need of *Love*. In many of them the seed of goodness may have died merely because warmth was lacking for its growth, because it perished from coldness in a loveless world.

Love, embracing all beings, knowing well that we all are fellow wayfarers through this round of existence—that we all are overcome by the same Law of Suffering.

Love, but not the sensuous fire that burns, scorches, and tortures; that inflicts more wounds than it cures—flaring up now, at the next moment being extinguished, leaving behind more coldness and loneliness than there was felt before.

Rather *Love* that lies like a soft but firm hand on the ailing beings, ever unchanged in its sympathy, without wavering, unconcerned with any response it meets. *Love* that is comforting coolness to those who burn with the fire of suffering and passion; that is life-spending warmth to those abandoned in the cold desert of loneliness; to those who are shivering in the frost of a loveless world; to those whose hearts have become as if empty and dry by the repeated calls for help, by deepest despair.

Love, that is a sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands and is ready to help.

Love, that *is* strength and *gives* strength, this is highest *Love*.

Love, which by the Enlightened One was named "The Liberation of the Heart", "The most sublime beauty", this is highest *Love*.

And what is the highest manifestation of *Love*?

To show to the world the Path leading to the End of Suffering, the Path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

11

COMPASSION (Karuṇā)

The world suffers. But most of men have their eyes and ears closed. They do not see the unbroken stream of tears flowing through life, they do not hear the cry of distress continually pervading the world. Their own little grief or joy bars their sight, deafens their ears. Bound by selfishness their hearts turn stiff and narrow. Being stiff and narrow, how should they be able to strive for any higher goal, to realize that only release from selfish craving will effect their own freedom from suffering?

It is *Compassion* that removes the heavy bar, opens the door to Freedom, makes the narrow heart as wide as the world. *Compassion* takes away from it the inert, weighing, paralysing heaviness, gives wings to those who cling to the lowlands of self.

Through *Compassion* the fact of Suffering remains vividly present to our mind, even at times when personally we are free from it. It gives us rich experience of Suffering, thus strengthening us to meet it prepared, when it befalls us.

Compassion reconciles us to our own destiny by showing us the life of others, often much harder than ours.

Behold the endless caravan of beings, men and beasts, burdened with sorrow and pain! The burden of everyone of them, we also have carried it in bygone times during the unfathomable sequence of repeated births. Behold this, and open to *Compassion* your heart!

And this misery may well be our own destiny again! Whoso himself is without *Compassion* now, will one day cry

for it. If sympathy with others is lacking, it will have to be acquired through a long and painful experience of one's own. Thus is the Great Law of Life. Knowing this keep guard over yourself !

Beings, sunk in ignorance, lost in delusion, hasten from one state of suffering to another, not knowing the real cause, not knowing the escape from it. This insight into the general Law of Suffering is the real foundation of our *Compassion*, not any isolated fact of suffering.

Hence our *Compassion* will also include those who at the moment may be happy, but act with an evil and deluded mind. In their present deeds we shall foresee their future state of distress, and *Compassion* will arise.

The *Compassion* of the wise does not render him a victim of suffering. His thoughts, words, and deeds are full of pity. But his heart does not waver, unchanged it remains, serene and firm. How else should he be able to help ?

May such *Compassion* arise in our hearts ! *Compassion* that is a sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands, and is ready to help.

Compassiom that *is* strength and *gives* strength: this is highest *Compassion*.

And what is the highest manifestation of *Compassion* ?

To show to the world the Path leading to the End of Suffering, the Path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

III

SYMPATHETIC JOY (Muditā)

Not only to Compassion, but also to *Joy with others* open your heart!

Small, indeed, is the share of happiness and joy allotted to beings ! Whenever that little of happiness comes to beings, then you may rejoice with them that, at least, one ray of joy has pierced through the darkness of their life, and dispelled the gray and gloomy mist that enwraps their heart.

Your life will gain in joy by sharing the happiness of others as if it were yours. Did you never observe how in moments of happiness men's features change and become bright with joy ? Did you never notice how joy rouses men to noble aspirations and deeds, exceeding their normal capacity? Did not such experience fill your own heart with joyful bliss ? It is in your power to increase such experience of *Sympathetic Joy*, by producing happiness in others, by bringing them joy and solace.

Let us teach real joy to men ! Many have unlearned it. Life, though being full of woe holds also sources of happiness and joy, unknown to most. Let us teach men to seek and to find real joy within themselves and to rejoice with the joy of others ! Let us teach them to unfold their joy to ever sublimer heights !

Noble and sublime joy is not foreign to the Teaching of the Enlightened One. Wrongly the Buddha's Teaching is sometimes considered to be a doctrine diffusing melancholy. Far from it : the Dhamma leads from step to step to an ever purer and loftier happiness.

Noble and sublime joy is a helper on the Path to the Extinction of Suffering. Not he who is depressed by grief, but one possessed of joy may find that serene calmness leading to a contemplative state of mind. And only a mind serene and collected is able to gain the liberating Wisdom.

The more sublime and nobler the joy of others is, the more justified will be our own *Sympathetic Joy*. A cause for our *joy with others* is their noble life securing them happiness here and in lives hereafter. A still nobler cause for our *Joy with others* is their faith in the Dhamma, their understanding of the Dhamma, their following the Dhamma. Let us give them the *help* of the Dhamma! Let us strive to become more and more able ourselves of rendering such help!

Sympathetic Joy, meaning a sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands, and is ready to help!

Sympathetic Joy that *is* strength and *gives* strength: this is the highest joy.

And what is the highest manifestation of *Sympathetic Joy*?

To show to the world the Path leading to the End of Suffering, the Path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

IV

EQUANIMITY (Upekkhā)

Equanimity is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, rooted in Insight.

Looking around us into the world and within us into our own heart, we see clearly how difficult it is to attain balance of mind and to maintain it.

Looking into life we notice its changeful nature continually moving between contrasts. We notice rise and fall, success and failure, loss and gain; we meet honour and blame and we feel how our heart responds to all that with happiness and sorrow, delight and despair, disappointment and satisfaction, hope and fear. These waves of emotion carry us up, and fling us down; and no sooner we find some rest, than we are in the power of a new wave again. How can we expect to get a footing on the crest of the waves? How shall we erect the building of our life in the midst of this ever restless ocean of existence, if not on the Island of Equanimity?

A world where that little share of happiness allotted to beings is mostly secured after many disappointments, failures, and defeats;

a world where only the courage to start anew, again and again, promises success;

a world where scanty joy grows amidst sickness, separation, and death;

a world where beings who were a short while ago connected with us by Sympathetic Joy, are at the next moment in want of our Compassion —

such a world needs *Equanimity*.

But the kind of *Equanimity* required, has to be based on vigilant presence of mind, not on indifferent dullness. It has to be the result of deliberate and hard training, and not the casual outcome of a passing mood. Equanimity would not deserve its name, if it had to be produced by exertion again and again. In that way it is sure to be weakened and finally defeated by the vicissitudes of life. True equanimity, however, should be able to meet all these severe tests and to regenerate its strength from sources within. But it will possess this power of resistance and self-renewal only if it is rooted in Insight.

What, now, is the nature of that Insight ?

It is the clear understanding of the origin of all these vicissitudes of life, and of the true nature of the so-called individual exposed to them.

We shall have to understand that the multitude of experiences called "life" results from our own actions, in thought, word and deed, performed in this life or in earlier existences. *Kamma* (action) is the womb from which they sprang *(kamma-yoni).* We are the inalienable "owners" of our deeds *(kamma-ssakā)* whether we like it or not. But as soon as we have performed our deeds, most of our control over them is lost. They are going their own way through the world, and whether we like it or not, they will return to us as our due heritage *(kamma-dāyādā).* Nothing that happens to us comes from an "outer" hostile world foreign to us, but everything is the outcome of our own mind and deeds. This knowledge is the first basis of *Equanimity* because it frees us from any fear. In anything that befalls us we meet only ourselves. Therefore, why should we fear? If, however, fear of uncertainty should

arise in us, we know the refuge where such fear is allayed : our good deeds *(kamma-paṭisaraṇa).* By taking this refuge, confidence will grow within us, confidence in the protecting power of our good deeds done in the past. Courage, moreover, will inspire us to perform further good deeds at this very moment, even if the hardships of our present life should tend to discourage us. For we know that doing noble and selfless deeds is the best defence against the hard blows of destiny; we know that it is never too late, always the right time for good actions. If that refuge in doing good and avoiding evil, becomes firmly established within us, one day we shall feel assured : "More and more ceases the misery and evil rooted in the past. And this present life—I try to make it spotless and pure. What else than increase of the good can the future bring ?" And from that certainty will come to us serenity of mind, and the strength of patience and equanimity to bear with all adversities which the present may bring. Then our deeds will be our friends *(kamma-bandhu).* Likewise, all the various events of life, being the result of our deeds, they too will be our friends, even if they bring us sorrow and pain. Our deeds return to us in a guise that often makes them hardly recognizable. Sometimes the result of our actions will return to us by way of surprising reactions of others ; sometimes as a thorough upheaval in our life, happening often against our expectation or contrary to our will. Such experiences point out to us consequences of our deeds we did not foresee; they render visible half-conscious motives of our former actions which we tried to hide even to ourselves, covering them with other reasons. If we get used to see things from this angle, and if we learn to read the messages conveyed by our own experience, then suffering too will be our friend, a stern, but a truthful and well-meaning one, who teaches us and

warns us. Suffering teaches us the most difficult subject: knowledge about ourselves; it warns us against abysses towards which we blindly are moving. By looking at suffering as our teacher and friend, we shall better succeed to endure it with equanimity. Consequently, the teaching of Karma (for it is this doctrine we have spoken of) will prove a powerful impulse to free us from Karma itself, that is from those deeds which again and again throw us into the suffering of repeated births. Disgust will arise at our own craving, at our own delusion, as constantly creating such situations which try to break our strength, our resistance, our *Equanimity*.

The second Insight on which *Equanimity* should be based is the Buddha's teaching of Non-Self *(anattā)*. This doctrine shows that in the ultimate sense deeds are neither performed by any Self or personality, nor do they in their results affect any Self or personality. Further it shows that if there is no Self, we cannot speak of "my own". It is the delusion of a Self that creates suffering and hinders or disturbs equanimity. If this or that quality of ours is blamed, one thinks: "I am blamed" and equanimity is shaken. If this or that work did not succeed one thinks: "*My* work has failed", and equanimity is shaken. If wealth is lost one thinks: "What is *mine* has gone", and equanimity is shaken.

To establish *Equanimity* as an unshakable state of mind one has gradually to give up all possessive *thoughts of mine*, beginning with little things from which it is easy to detach oneself, up to possessions and aims to which our whole heart clings. Moreover, one has to give up step by step all "*thoughts of Self*", beginning with a small section of one's "personality", with qualities of minor importance,

with small weaknesses clearly seen by oneself, up to those emotions and aversions which are regarded as the centre of one's "Self", Thus detachment should be practised.

To the degree we forsake thoughts of "Mine" or "Self" *Equanimity* will enter into our hearts. For how can it be that, what we realize as something foreign and void of a Self shall cause us any agitation, be it of lust, of hatred or of grief? Thus the Teaching of Non-self will be our guide on the Path to Deliverance, to the *Equanimity* of holiness.

* * *

Equanimity is the crown and culmination of the four Sublime States.

But this should not be understood to mean that Equanimity is the negation of Love, Compassion and Sympathetic Joy, or that it leaves them behind as inferior. Far from that. Equanimity includes and pervades them fully, just as perfect Equanimity is fully pervaded by these three.

How, then, do these Four Sublime States pervade and suffuse each other?

Love unbounded guards *Compassion* against turning into partiality, prevents it from making discriminations by selecting and excluding, and thus protects it from falling into partiality or aversion against the excluded side.

Love imparts to *Equanimity* its selflessness, its boundless nature, and even its fervour. For fervour too, transformed and controlled, is part of perfect Equanimity, strengthening its power of keen penetration and wise restraint.

Compassion prevents *Love* and *Sympathetic Joy* from forgetting that, while both are enjoying or giving temporary

and limited happiness, there still exist at that time most dreadful states of suffering in the world. It reminds them that their happiness co-exists with measureless misery, perhaps at the next door-step. It is a reminder to *Love* and *Sympathetic Joy* that there is more suffering in the world than they are able to mitigate; that, after the effect of such mitigation has vanished, sorrow and pain are sure to arise anew until suffering is uprooted entirely at the attainment of Nibbāna. *Compassion* does not allow that *Love* and *Sympathetic Joy* shut themselves up against the wide world by confining themselves to a narrow sector of it. *Compassion* does not tolerate that *Love* and *Sympathetic Joy* turn into a state of self-satisfied complacency within a jealously guarded petty happiness. *Compassion* stirs and urges *Love* to widen its sphere; it stirs and urges *Sympathetic Joy* to search for fresh nourishment. Thus it helps both of them to grow into truly Boundless States (*appamaññā*).

Compassion guards *Equanimity* from falling into cold indifference, and keeps it from indolent or selfish isolation. Until Equanimity has reached perfection, Compassion urges it to enter again and again the battle field of the world, in order to be able to stand the test, by hardening and strengthening itself.

Sympathetic Joy holds *Compassion* back from becoming entirely overwhelmed by the sight of world's suffering, from being absorbed by it to the exclusion of everything else. Sympathetic Joy relieves the tension of mind, soothes the painful burning of the compassionate heart. It keeps Compassion away from melancholic brooding without purpose, from a futile sentimentality that merely weakens and consumes the strength of mind and heart. Sympathetic Joy develops compassion into active sympathy.

Sympathetic Joy gives to *Equanimity* the mild serenity that softens its stern appearance. It is the divine smile on the face of the Enlightened One, a smile that persists in spite of his deep knowledge of the world's suffering, a smile that gives solace and hope, fearlessness and confidence: "Wide open are the doors to Deliverance," thus it speaks.

Equanimity rooted in Insight is to the other three Sublime States their guiding and restraining power, pointing out to them the direction they have to take, and seeing to it that this direction be followed. Equanimity guards *Love* and *Compassion* from being dissipated in vain quests, and from going astray in the labyrinths of uncontrolled emotion. Equanimity, being a vigilant self-control for the sake of the final goal, does not allow that *Sympathetic Joy* contents itself with humble results, forgetting the real aims we have to strive for.

Equanimity which means 'even-mindedness', gives to *Love* an even, unchanging firmness and loyalty. It endows it with the great virtue of patience. Equanimity furnishes *Compassion* with an even, unwavering courage and fearlessness enabling it to face the awesome abyss of misery and despair by which boundless Compassion is confronted again and again. To the active side of Compassion, Equanimity is the calm and firm hand led by wisdom—indispensable to those who want to practise the difficult art of helping others. And here again *Equanimity* means patience, the patient devotion to the work of Campassion.

In these and other ways *Equanimity* may be said to be the crown and culmination of the other three Sublime States. The first three of them, if unconnected with Equanimity and the insight inherent in it, may be liable

to dwindle away due to the lack of a stabilising factor. Isolated virtues, if unsupported by other qualities which give them either firmness or pliancy (as the case may be), often deteriorate or fall into certain defects characteristic of them. For instance, Loving-kindness without energy and insight, may easily decline to a mere sentimental goodness of weak and unreliable nature. Moreover such isolated virtues may often carry man in a direction contrary to his original aims in life and contrary to the welfare of others too. It is the firm and balanced character of a person that knits isolated virtues into an organic and harmonious whole within which the single qualities will bring out their very best, avoiding, with the help of the other virtues, the pitfalls of their respective weaknesses. And this is the very function of equanimity which it performs thus contributing to an ideal relationship between the four Sublime States.

Equanimity is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, rooted in Insight.

But its perfection and its unshakable nature are not lifeless rigidity, they are not like the inert gravity of matter. Equanimity is not dullness, heartlessness and frigidity. Its perfection is not due to an emotional 'emptiness', but to a 'fullness' of understanding, to its being complete in itself. Its unshakable nature is not the immovability of a dead, cold stone, but the manifestation of highest inner strength.

In which way, now, is Equanimity perfect and unshakable?

Whatever stagnates is here dissolved, removed is what is damming up, destroyed what obstructs—vanished are the whirls of emotion and the meanderings of intellect.

Unhindered goes the calm and majestic stream of consciousness, pure and radiant. Watchful Mindfulness (*sati*) has harmonized the warmth of Faith (*saddhā*) with the penetrative keenness of Wisdom (*paññā*); it has balanced Strength of Will (*viriya*) with Calmness of Mind (*samādhi*); and these five inner faculties (*indriya*) have grown into inner forces (*bala*) which cannot be lost again. They cannot be lost because they do not lose themselves any more in the labyrinths of the world (*samsāra*), in the endless diffuseness of life (*papañca*). These inner forces emanate from the mind and act upon the world, but being guarded by Mindfulness, they nowhere bind themselves, and unchanged they return. *Love*, *Compassion* and *Sympathetic Joy* continue to emanate from the mind and act upon the world; but being guarded by Equanimity, they cling nowhere, and unweakened and unsullied they return.

Thus within the saint nothing is lessened by giving, and he does not become poorer by bestowing upon others the riches of his heart and mind. The Saint is like the clear, well-cut crystal which, being without any stains, fully absorbs all the rays of light and sends them out again, intensified by its concentrative power. Unable are the rays to stain the crystal by their various colours. They cannot pierce its hardness, nor disturb its harmonious structure. Unchanged remains the crystal in its genuine purity and strength. "Just as all the streams of the world enter the great ocean, and all the waters of the sky rain into it, but no increase or decrease of the great ocean is to be seen"—even so is the nature of *Holy Equanimity*.

Holy Equanimity, or — as we may likewise express it—the Saint endowed with Holy Equanimity, is the inner centre of the world. But this inner centre should be well

distinguished from the numberless apparent centres of limited spheres, that is their so-called 'personalities', governing laws, and so on. All of these are only apparent centres, because they cease to be centres whenever their spheres, obeying the laws of impermanence, undergo a total change of their structure and consequently the centre of their gravity. material or mental, will shift. But the inner centre of the Saint's Equanimity is unshakable, because it is immutable. It is immutable because it clings nowhere.

"For the conditioned motion exists, but for the unconditioned there is no motion. Where no motion is there is stillness. Where stillness is, there is no craving. Where no craving is, there is neither coming nor going. Where no coming nor going is, there is neither arising nor passing away. Where neither arising is nor passing away, there is neither this world nor a world beyond, nor a state between. This, verily, is the End of Suffering."

THE PRACTICE OF

LOVINGKINDNESS

(Mettā)

AS TAUGHT BY THE BUDDHA
IN THE PALI CANON

Compiled and Translated from the Pāli

BY

NANAMOLI THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
KANDY 1964 CEYLON.

Second Impression 1964

The "WHEEL" Publication No. 7

INTRODUCTION

The word 'love' — one of the most compelling in the English language is commonly used for purposes so widely separated, so gross and so rarefied, as to render it sometimes nearly meaningless. Yet rightly understood, love is the indispensable and essential foundation no less for the growth and purification of the individual as for the construction of a peaceful, progressive and healthy society.

Now love can be considered in two principal moods: that of lovers for each other, and that of a mother for her child. In its spiritualised form, love can draw its inspiration from either the one or the other. Spiritual love idealizing the love of lovers is often conceived as a consuming flame, and then it sometimes aspires to purification through torture and the violence of martyrdom. But spiritual love that looks for guidance to the love of a mother for her child uplifts itself to the ideal of the pure fount of all safety, welfare and spiritual health (and a mother best serves her child if she guards her own health). It is this latter kind which the Buddha takes as the basis for his teaching of universal love.

Where Greek distinguishes between sensual *eros* and spiritual *agape* English makes do with only the one word 'love'. But the Pali language, like the Sanskrit, has many words covering many shades of meaning. The word chosen by the Buddha for this teaching is *mettā*, from *mitta*, a friend (or better the 'true friend in need').

Mettā in the Buddha's teaching finds its place as the first of four kinds of contemplation designed to develop a sound pacific relationship to other living beings. The four are: *mettā*, which will be rendered here henceforward by 'lovingkindness', *karunā*, which is 'compassion' or 'pity', *muditā*, which is 'gladness at others' success', and *upekkhā*, which is 'onlooking equanimity'. These four are called Divine Abidings *(brahma-vihārā)*, perhaps because whoever can maintain any one of them in being for even a moment has lived for that moment as do the Highest Gods (the *Brahma Devā*).

In the Buddha's teaching these four Divine Abidings, the 'greatest of all worldly merit', if practised alone, without Insight in the true nature of existence, can lead to rebirth in the highest heavens. But all heavenly existence is without exception impermanent, and at the end of the heavenly life-span — no matter how long it may last — the being dies and is reborn according to his past actions. This is because some craving for existence (for being or even non-being) and some sort of view of existence that is not in conformity with truth still remain latent in him, to burst out again when the result of his good actions is spent. And where he will be reborn after that is unpredictable though it is certain that he will be reborn.

The Buddha's teaching of Insight is — in as few words as possible — the training in knowledge and seeing of how it is that anything, whatever it may be whether objective or subjective, comes to be, how it acquires existence only through dependence on conditions, and is impermanent because none of the conditions for its existence is permanent; and how existence, always complex and impermanent, is never safe from pain, and is in need of a self — the will-o'-the-wisp idea, the rainbow mirage,

which lures it on, and which it can never find; for the comforting illusion of permanence in self-identification has constantly to be renewed. And that teaching also shows how there is a true way out from fear of pain. In its concise form this is expressed as the Four Noble Truths: the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of suffering's Origin (craving or need), the Truth of suffering's Cessation (through abandonment of craving), and the Truth of the Way leading to suffering's cessation. These four Truths are called the teaching peculiar to Buddhas *(Buddhānaṁ sāmukkaṁsika-desanā)* since the discovery of them is what distinguishes Buddhas.

The Way (the fourth Truth) is also called the Middle Way because it avoids the two extremes of sensual indulgence and of self-mortification. Its eight members are: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. The practice of Lovingkindnes alone will give effect in some measure to all the members except the first: but it is only with Right View (without self-deception) that *nibbāna* can be reached. Right View gives insight into the real nature of existence of being and non-being, with all its mirages and deceptions, and it is only with its help that the practice of Lovingkindness is perfected, lifted out of the impermanence of even the highest heavens, and directed to the true cessation of Suffering.

That true cessation comes with the elimination of deception by wrong view and with the exhaustion of the stream of craving in its two forms of lust and hate. This Extinction of lust, hate and delusion, is called *nibbāna.*

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The discourses that follow show (in that order) the wretchedness of all anger and hate (there is no righteous

anger in the Buddha's teaching), the rewards of lovingkindness, the practice of lovingkindness as a meditation and contemplation, its result in rebirth, the seeing of all things and all existence as impermanent, suffering, not-self, that is needed in order to have a vision in conformity with truth, without which the first stage of unshakable deliverance cannot be reached (for it is with this insight into how being comes to be that it is seen why the price of birth and life, even in heaven, is death), and lastly the attainment of Arahantship, by which all lust, hate, and delusion, are overcome, lust for being and even for non-being cured, and rebirth ended for good.

But first, before coming to these discourses, some details from the meditation manual, the *Visuddhimagga* or 'Path of Purification', will not be out of place.

Mettā (lovingkindness) is defined as follows: 'Lovingkindness has the mode of friendliness for its characteristic. Its natural function is to promote friendliness. It is manifested as the disappearance of ill-will. Its footing is seeing with kindliness. When it succeeds it eliminates ill-will. When it fails it degenerates into selfish affectionate desire.'

The *Visuddhimagga* recommends going to some quiet place, where one can sit down in a comfortable position. Then, before starting the actual meditation, it is helpful to consider the dangers in hate and the benefits offered by forbearance: for it is a purpose of this meditation to displace hate by forbearance, and besides, one cannot avoid dangers one has not come to see or cultivate benefits one does not yet know. Then there are certain types of persons towards whom lovingkindness should not be developed in the first stages. The attempt, at the outset to regard a disliked person as dear to one is fatiguing, and likewise trying to regard a dearly loved friend with

neutrality, and when an enemy is recalled anger springs up. Again it should not be directed towards members of the opposite sex, to begin with, for this may arouse lust. Right at the start, the meditation of lovingkindness should be developed towards oneself repeatedly in this way: 'May I be happy and free from suffering' or 'May I keep myself free from hostility and trouble and live happily' (though this will never produce the full absorption of contemplation). It is by cultivating the thought 'May I be happy' with oneself as example, that one begins to be interested in the welfare and happiness of other living beings, and to feel in some sense their happiness as if it were one's own: 'Just as I want happiness and fear pain, just as I want to live and not to die, so do other creatures'. So one should first become familiar with pervading oneself as example with lovingkindnes. Only then should one choose someone who is liked and admired and much respected. The meditation can then be developed towards him, remembering endearing words or virtues of his, and thinking such thoughts about him as 'may he be happy.' (In this way the full absorption of contemplation, in which the word-meditation is left behind, can be attained.) When this has become familiar, one can begin to practise lovingkindness towards a dearly beloved companion, and then towards a neutral person as very dear, or towards an enemy a neutral. It is when dealing with an enemy that anger can arise, and all means must be tried in order to get rid of it. As soon as this has succeeded, one will be able to regard an enemy without resentment and with lovingkindness in the same way as one does the admired person, the dearly loved friend, and the neutral person. Then with repeated practice, *jhāna* absorption should be attained in all cases. Lovingkindness can now be effectively maintained in being towards all creatures, or to certain

groups of creatures at a time, or in one direction at a time to all, or to certain groups in succession.

Lovingkindness ought to be brought to the point where there are no longer any barriers set between persons, and for this the following example is given : Suppose a man is with a dear, a neutral and a hostile person, himself being the fourth; then bandits come to him and say 'We need one of you for human sacrifice'; now if that man thinks 'Let them take this one, or that one', he has not yet broken down the barriers, and also if he thinks 'Let them take me but not these three', he has not broken down the barriers either. Why not? Because he seeks the harm of him whom he wishes to be taken and the welfare of only the other three—; it is only when he does not see a single one among the four to be chosen in preference to the other three and directs his mind quite impartially towards himself and the other three that he has broken down the barriers.

Lovingkindness has its 'enemy within' in lust, which easily gains entry in its wake, and it must be well guarded against this. The remedy for lust is the contemplation of ugliness (in the body) as in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya* Sutta 22 and *Majjhima Nikāya* Sutta 10). Its 'enemy without' is its opposite, ill will, which finds its opportunities in the intervals when lovingkindness is not being actively practised. (Full details will be found in Chapter IX of the *Visuddhimagga*).

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In many discourses the Buddha lays emphasis on the need to balance contemplative concentration with understanding. The one supplies the deficiencies of the other. Concentration alone lacks direction: understanding alone is dry and tiring. In the discourses that follow the

simile of a mother's love for her child is given. Now the incomparable value of a mother's love, which sets it above all other kinds, lies in the fact that she understands her child's welfare — her love is not blind. Not love alone, nor faith alone, can ever bring a man all the way to the cessation of suffering, and that is why the Buddha, as the Supreme Physician, prescribes the development of five Faculties in balanced harmony: the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding.

So concentration of love in its highest form — the form that only the Buddha and no one else has given it —, seen as a means to the end, becomes absolutely purified in one who has gained personal experience of the 'supreme safety from bondage' *(anuttaraṁ yogakkhemaṁ)*, which is *nibbāna*, as the ultimate welfare of beings. For he knows from his own experience that their welfare is only assured permanently when suffering has been diagnosed, its origin abandoned, its cessation realized, and the Way maintained in being. Then he has verified the four Noble Truths for himself and can properly evaluate beings' welfare.

'Bhikkhus, it is through not discovering, not penetrating to four truths that both you and I have been trudging and travelling through the roundabout of rebirths for so long' (*Dīgha Nikāya*, Vol. II, p. 90). For the benefit of all those who have not yet done this, the way has been discovered and pointed out by the Buddha and its practicability attested by the Arahants.

The last discourse given in this collection in fact shows how this personal discovery and penetration to the Four Truths can be achieved by using lovingkindness as the vehicle.

THE PRACTICE OF LOVINGKINDNESS

The Wretchedness of Anger

1. From the Anguttara Nikāya, Sattaka-nipāta 60 (Spoken by the Buddha).

BHIKKHUS, seven things gratifying and helpful to an enemy befall one who is angry, whether a woman or a man. What are the seven ?

Here, bhikkhus, an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him be ugly'. Why is that ? No enemy relishes an enemy's beauty. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, be he ever so well bathed, and well anointed, with hair and beard trimmed, and clothed in white, yet he is ugly through his being a prey to anger. This is the first thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy : 'Let him lie in pain'. Why is that ? No enemy relishes an enemy's lying in comfort. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, for all he may lie on a couch spread with rugs, blankets and counterpanes with a deerskin cover, a canopy and red cushions for the head and feet, yet he lies only in pain through his being a prey to anger. This is the second thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy : 'Let him have no prosperity'. Why is that ? No enemy relishes an enemy's prosperity. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, he mistakes bad for good and he mistakes good for bad, and each being thus taken wrongly in the other's sense, these things for long conduce to his harm and suffering, through his being a prey to anger. This is the third thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy : 'Let him not be rich'. Why is that ? No enemy relishes an enemy's having riches. Now when a person is angry, a prey to anger, should he have riches gained by endeavour, built up by the strength of his arm, earned by sweat, lawful and lawfully acquired, yet the king's treasury gathers (in fines) through his being a prey to anger. This is the fourth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy : 'Let him not be famous.' Why is that ? No enemy relishes an enemy's having fame. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, what fame he may have acquired by diligence he loses through his being a prey to anger. This is the fifth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy : 'Let him have no friends.' Why is that ? No enemy relishes an enemy's having friends. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, the friends he may have, his companions, relatives and kin, will keep away from him through his being a prey to anger. This is the sixth

thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy : 'Let him on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell'. Why is that ? No enemy relishes an enemy's going to a good destination. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, he misconducts himself in body, speech and mind, and by his misconduct in body, speech and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell, through his being a prey to anger. This is the seventh thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

When anger does possess a man;
He looks ugly; he lies in pain;
What benefit he may come by
He misconstrues as a mischance;
He loses property (through fines)
Because he has been working harm
Through acts of body and of speech
By angry passion overwhelmed;
The wrath and rage that madden him
Gain him a name of ill repute;
His fellows, relatives and kin
Will seek to shun him from afar;
And anger fathers misery:
This fury does so cloud the mind
Of man that he cannot discern
This fearful inner danger.

An angry man no meaning knows,
No angry man sees an idea,

So wrapped in darkness, as if blind,
Is he whom anger dogs.
Someone a man in anger hurts;
But, when his anger is later spent
With difficulty or with ease,
He suffers as if seared by fire.
His look betrays the sulkiness
Of some dim smoky smouldering glow,
Whence may flare up an anger-blaze
That sets the world of men aflame.
He has no shame or conscience curb,
No kindly words come forth from him,
There is no island refuge for
The man whom anger dogs.

Such acts as will ensure remorse,
Such as are far from True Ideals:
It is of these that I would tell,
So harken to my words.

Anger makes man a parricide,
Anger makes him a matricide,
Anger can make him slay the saint
As he would kill the common man.
Nursed and reared by a mother's care,
He comes to look upon the world,
Yet the common man in anger kills
The being who gave him life.

No being but seeks his own self's good,
None dearer to him than himself,
Yet men in anger kill themselves,
Distraught for reasons manifold:
For crazed they stab themselves with daggers,
In desperation swallow poison,
Perish hanged by ropes, or fling

Themselves over a precipice.
Yet how their life-destroying acts
Bring death unto themselves as well,
That they cannot discern, and that
Is the ruin anger breeds.

This secret place, with anger's aid,
Is where Mortality sets the snare.
To blot it out with discipline,
With vision, strength, and understanding,
To blot each fault out one by one,
The wise man should apply himself,
Training likewise in True Ideals:
'Let smouldering be far from us'.
Then rid of wrath and free from anger,
And rid of lust and free from envy,
Tamed, and with anger left behind,
Taintless, they reach nibbāna.

How to get rid of Anger

2. From the Dhammapada, verses 3 - 5. and Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 128 (Spoken by the Buddha).

"Tis he abused me, he that beat me,
He that worsted me, that robbed me."
Hate never is allayed in men
That cherish suchlike enmity.
"Tis he abused me, he that beat me,
He that worsted me, that robbed me."
Hate surely is allayed in men
Who cherish no such enmity.
For enmity by enmity

Is never in this world allayed;
It is allayed by amity —
That is an ancient principle.

3. *From the Anguttara Nikāya, Pañcaka-nipāta 161*
(Spoken by the Buddha).

Bhikkhus, there are these five ways of removing annoyance, by which annoyance can be entirely removed by a bhikkhu when it arises in him. What are the five?

Lovingkindness can be maintained in being towards a person with whom you are annoyed: this is how annoyance with him can be removed. Compassion can be maintained in being towards a person with whom you are annoyed; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. Onlooking equanimity can be maintained in being towards a person with whom you are annoyed; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. The forgetting and ignoring of a person with whom you are annoyed can be practised; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. Owner-ship of deeds in a person with whom you are annoyed can be concentrated upon thus : This good person is owner of his deeds, heir of his deeds, his deeds are the womb from which he is born, his deeds are his kin for whom he is responsible, his deeds are his refuge, he is heir to his deeds, be they good or bad: this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. These are the five ways of removing annoyance, by which annoyance can be entirely removed in a bhikkhu when it arises in him.

Lovingkindness and its Rewards

4. Fram the Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 21 (Spoken by the Buddha).

Bhikkhus, there are five modes of speech that others may use when they address you. Their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, for good or for harm, and may be accompanied by thoughts of lovingkindness or by inner hate.

Suppose a man came with a hoe and a basket, and he said, I shall make this Great Earth to be without earth'; and he dug here and there and strewed here and there, and spat here and there and relieved himself here and there, saying 'Be without earth, be without earth'; what do you think, bhikkhus, would that man make this Great Earth to be without earth? — No, venerable sir. Why is that? Because this Great Earth is deep and measureless: it cannot possibly be made to be without earth. So the man would reap weariness and disappointment.

Suppose a man came with lake or gambooge or indigo or carmine, and he said 'I shall draw pictures, I shall make pictures appear, on this empty space'; what do you think, bhikkhus, would that man draw pictures, would he make pictures appear, on that empty space? — No, venerable Sir. Why is that? Because that empty space is formless and invisible; he cannot possibly draw pictures, make pictures appear, there. So the man would reap weariness and disappointment.

So too, bhikkhus, there are these five modes of speech that others may use when they address you. Their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, for good or for harm, and may be accompanied by thoughts of lovingkindness or by inner hate. Now this is

how you should train yourselves here: Our minds will remain unaffected, we shall utter no bad words, we shall abide friendly and compassionate, with thoughts of lovingkindness and no inner hate. We shall abide with lovingkindnesc in our hearts extending to that person, and we shall dwell extending it to the entire world as our object, with our hearts abundant, exalted, measureless in lovingkindness, without hostility or ill will. That is how you should train yourselves.

Even were bandits savagely to sever you limb from limb with a two-handled saw, he who entertained hate on that account in his heart would not be one who carried out my teaching.

Bhikkhus, you should keep this instruction on the Simile of the Saw constantly in mind.

5. *From the Itivuttaka, Sutta 27 (Spoken by the Buddha).*

Bhikkhus, whatever kinds of worldly merit there are, all are not worth one sixteenth part of the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness; in shining and beaming and radiance the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness far excels them.

Just as whatever light there is of stars, all is not worth one sixteenth part of the moon's light; in shining and beaming and radiance the moon's light far excels it; and just as in the last month of the Rains, in the Autumn when the heavens are clear, the sun as he climbs the heavens drives all darkness from the sky with his shining and beaming and radiance; and just as, when night is turning to dawn, the Morning Star is shining and beaming and radiating; so too, whatever kinds of worldly merit there are, all are not worth one sixteenth part of the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness; in shining and beaming and radiance the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness far excels them.

6. *From the Anguttara Nikāya, Ekādasa-nipāta 16 (Spoken by the Buddha)*

Bhikkhus, when the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness is maintained in being, made much of, used as one's vehicle, used as one's foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed, then eleven blessings can be expected. What are the eleven?

A man sleeps in comfort; he wakes in comfort; he dreams no evil dreams; he is dear to human beings; he is dear to non-human beings; the gods guard him; no fire or poison or weapon harms him; his mind can be quickly concentrated; the expression of his face is serene; he dies without falling into confusion; and, even if he fails to penetrate any further, he will pass on to the world of High Divinity, to the Brahmā world.

7. *From the Saṁyutta Nikāya, Saṁyutta XX, Sutta 3 (Spoken by the Buddha).*

Bhikkhus, just as clans with many women and few men are readily ruined by robbers and bandits, so too any bhikkhu who has not maintained in being and made much of the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness is readily ruined by non-human beings. And just as clans with few women and many men are not readily ruined by robbers and bandits; so too any bhikkhu who maintains in being and makes much of the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness is not readily ruined by non-human beings. So, bhikkhus, you should train in this way: The heart-deliverance of lovingkindness will be maintained in being and made much of by us, used as our vehicle, used as our foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed. That is how you should train.

8. From the Anguttara Nikāya, Ekanipāta VI, 3-5 and XX. 2 (Spoken by the Buddha).

Bhikkhus, if a bhikkhu cultivates lovingkindness for as long as a fingersnap, he is called a bhikkhu. He is not destitute of jhāna meditation, he carries out the Master's teaching, he responds to advice, and he does not eat the country's alms food in vain. So what should be said of those who make much of it?

9. From the Dīgha Nikāya, Sutta 33 (Spoken by the Elder Sāriputta).

Here, friends, a bhikkhu might say: 'When the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness is maintained in being and made much of by me, used as my vehicle, used as my foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed, ill will nevertheless still invades my heart and remains'. He should be told: 'Not so. Let the worthy one not say so. Let him not misrepresent the Blessed One. It is not good to misrepresent the Blessed One. The Blessed One would not express it thus'. Friends, it is impossible, it cannot happen, that when the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness is maintained in being and made much of, used as one's vehicle, used as one's foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed, ill will can invade the heart and remain; for this, that is to say, the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness, is the escape from ill will.

Lovingkindness as a Contemplation

10. Mettā Sutta

From the Sutta-nipāta, verses 143-52 (Spoken by the Buddha).

What should be done by one skilful in good
So as to gain the State of Peace is this :

Let him be able, and upright, and straight.
Easy to speak to, gentle, and not proud,
Contented too, supported easily,
With few tasks, and living very lightly,
His faculties serene, prudent, and modest,
Unswayed by the emotions of the clans;
And let him never do the slightest thing
That other wise men might hold blamable.

(And let him think:) 'In safety and in bliss
'May creatures all be of a blissful heart.
'Whatever breathing beings there may be,
'No matter whether they are frail or firm,
'With none excepted, be they long or big
'Or middle-sized, or be they short or small
'Or thick, as well as those seen or unseen,
'Or whether they are dwelling far or near,
'Existing or yet seeking to exist,
'May creatures all be of a blissful heart.
'Let no one work another one's undoing
'Or even slight him at all anywhere;
'And never let them wish each other ill
'Through provocation or resentful thought.'

And just as might a mother with her life
Protect the son that was her only child,
So let him then for every living thing
Maintain unbounded consciousness in being,

And let him too with love for all the world
Maintain unbounded consciousness in being
Above, below, and all round in between,
Untroubled, with no enemy or foe.
And while he stands or walks or while he sits
Or while he lies down, free from drowsiness,
Let him resolve upon this mindfulness:
This is Divine Abiding here, they say.

But when he has no trafficking with views,
Is virtuous, and has perfected seeing,
And purges greed for sensual desires,
He surely comes no more to any womb.

11. Methodical Practice: from the Paṭisambhidāmagga (traditionally ascribed to the Arahant Sāriputta).

The heart-deliverance of lovingkindness is practised with unspecified extension, with specified extension, and with directional extension.

That with unspecified extension is practised in five ways as follows: May all *creatures* be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

May all *breathing things*... all *beings*... all *persons*... May all *those who are embodied* be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

That with specified extension is practised in seven ways as follows: May all *women* be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss. May all *men*... all *Noble Ones* (who have attained the Noble Path) ...all who are *not Noble Ones*... all *deities*...

all *human beings*... May all *those in the states of deprivation* be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

That with directional extension is practised in ten ways as follows :

May all creatures in the *eastern direction* be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss. May all creatures in the *western direction*...in the *northern direction*...in the *southern direction*... in the *eastern intermediate direction*... in the *western intermediate direction* ...in the *northern intermediate direction*...in the *southern intermediate direction*... in the *downward direction* .. May all those in the *upward direction* be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

May all breathing things...
May all beings...
May all persons...
May all those who are embodied...
May all women...
May all men...
May all Noble Ones...
May all who are not Noble Ones...
May all deities...
May all human beings...

May all those in the states of deprivation in the eastern direction be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss... May all those in states of deprivation in the upward direction be freed from enmity, distress, anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

12 From the Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Appamaññavibhanga (Traditionally ascribed to the Buddha).

And how does a bhikkhu abide with his heart endued with lovingkindness extending over one direction? Just as he would feel friendliness on seeing a dearly beloved person, so he extends lovingkindness to all creatures.

As practised without insight in the Four Truths

13. From the Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 99 (Spoken by the Buddha).

'Master Gotama, I have heard it said that the Monk Gotama teaches the path to the Retinue of the High Divinity. It would be good if Master Gotama would teach me that.'

'Then listen and attend carefully to what I shall say.'

'Even so, sir' the student Subha Todeyyaputta replied. The Blessed One said this.

'And what is the path to the Retinue of the High Divinity? Here a bhikkhu abides with his heart endued with lovingkindness extending over one quarter, likewise the second quarter, likewise the third quarter, likewise the fourth quarter, and so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides with his heart abundant, exalted, measureless in lovingkindness, without hostility or ill will, extending over the all-encompassing world. While this heart-deliverance of lovingkindness is maintained in being in this way, no action restricted by limited measurement is found there, none persists there. Just as a vigorous trumpeter could easily make himself heard in the four directions, so too when the heart-deliverance of lovingkindness is maintained in being in this way

no action restricted by limited measurement is found there, none persists there. This is a path to the Retinue of the High Divinities.'

As practised with insight in the Four Truths

14. From the Anguttara Nikāya. Catukkanipāta 125
(Spoken by the Buddha).

Here, bhikkhus, a certain person abides with cognizance endued with lovingkindness extending over one quarter, likewise the second quarter, likewise the third quarter, likewise the fourth quarter, and so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides with abundant, exalted, measureless cognizance, without hostility or ill will, extending over the all-encompassing world.

He finds gratification in that, finds it desirable and looks to it for his well-being, steady and resolute thereon, he abides much in it, and if he dies without losing it, he reappears among the gods of a High Divinity's Retinue.

Now the gods of a High Divinity's Retinue have a life-span of one aeon. An ordinary person (who has not attained the Noble Eightfold Path) stays there for his life-span; but after he has used up the whole life-span enjoyed by those gods, he leaves it all, and (according to what his past deeds may have been) he may go down even to hell, or to an animal womb, or to the Ghost Realm. But one who has given ear to the Perfect One stays there (in that heaven) for his life span, and after he has used up the whole life span enjoyed by those gods, he eventually attains complete extinction of lust, hate and delusion in that same kind of heavenly existence.

It is this that distinguishes, that differentiates, the wise hearer who is ennobled (by attainment of the Noble

Path) from the unwise ordinary man, when, that is to say, there is a destination for reappearance (after death. But an Arahant has made an end of birth).

15. From Anguttara, Catukkanipāta 126
(Spoken by the Buddha).

Here, bhikkhus, a certain person abides with his heart endued with lovingkindness extending...over the all-encompassing world.

Now whatever therein (during that state of contemplation) there exists classifiable as form, classifiable as feeling (of pleasure, pain, or neutrality), classifiable as perception, classifiable as determinative acts, or classifiable as consciousness, such ideas he sees as impermanent, as liable to suffering, as a disease, as a cancer, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as being worn away, as void, as not-self. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears (as a Non-Returner) in the Retinue of the Gods of the Pure Abodes (where there are only those who have reached the Noble Path and where Extinction of greed, hate and delusion is reached in less than seven lives without return to this world). And this kind of reappearance is not shared by ordinary men (who have not reached the Noble Eightfold Path).

The Arahant

3. From the Anguttara Nikāya, Tikanipāta 66
(Spoken by the Arahant Nandaka).

Thus I heard. On one occasion the venerable Nandaka was living at Sāvatthi in the Eastern Monastery, Migāra's "Mother's" Palace. Then Migāra's grandson, Sālha, and Pekhuniya's grandson, Rohana, went to the venerable

Nandaka, and after salutation they sat down at one side. When they had done so the venerable Nandaka said to Migāra's grandson Sālha:

'Come, Sālha, do not be satisfied with hearsay or with tradition or with legendary lore or with what has come down in scriptures or with conjecture or with logical inference or with weighing evidence or with a liking for a view after pondering it or with someone else's ability or with the thought "The monk is our teacher." When you know in yourself "These things are unprofitable, liable to censure, condemned by the wise, being adopted and put into effect, they lead to harm and suffering", then you should abandon them. What do you think? Is there greed?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'Covetousness is the meaning of that, I say. Through greed a covetous man kills breathing things, takes what is not given, commits adultery, and utters falsehood, and he gets another to do likewise. Will that be long for his harm and suffering?'— 'Yes, venerable sir.'—'What do you think, is there hate?' —'Yes, venerable sir.'—'Ill will is the meaning of that, I say. Through hate a malevolent man kills breathing things. .. Will that be long for his harm and suffering?'— 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'What do you think? Is there delusion?'—'Yes, venerable sir.'—'Ignorance is the meaning of that, I asy. Through ignorance a deluded man kills breathing things, ... Will that be long for his harm and suffering?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.'—'What do you think? Are these things profitable or unprofitable?'—'Unprofitable, venerable sir.' — 'Reprehensible or blameless?' —, Reprehensible, venerable sir.'—'Condemned or commended by the wise?' — 'Condemned by the wise, venerable sir.' —'Being adopted and put into effect, do they lead to harm and suffering, or do they not, or how does it appear to you in this case?'—'Being adopted and put into effect, venerable

sir, they lead to harm and suffering. So it appears to us in this case·'—'Now that was the reason why I told you "Come, Sālha, do not be satisfied with hearsay,... When you know in yourself "These things are unprofitable, ,' then you should abandon them."

'Come, Sālha, do not be satisfied with hearsay . or with the thought "The monk is our teacher". When you know in yourself "These things are profitable, blameless, commended by the wise, being adopted and put into effect, they lead to welfare and happiness", then you should practise them and abide in them. What do you think? Is there non-greed?'—'Yes, venerable sir.'—'Uncovetousness is the meaning of that, I say. Through non-greed an uncovetous man does not kill breathing things or takes what is not given or commits adultery or utter falsehood, and he gets another to do likewise. Will that be long for his welfare and happiness?'—'Yes, venerable sir.'—'What do you think? Is there non-hate?'—'Yes, venerable sir?'—'Non-ill-will is the meaning of that, I say. Through Non-ill-will an unmalevolent man does not kill breathing things,...Will that be long for his welfare and happiness?' —'Yes, venerable sir.'—'What do you think? Is there non-delusion?'—'Yes, venerable sir.'—'True knowledge is the meaning of that, I say. Through non-delusion a man with true knowledge does not kill breathing things, ..Will that be long for his welfare and happiness?'—'Yes, venerable sir.'—'What do you think? Are these things profitable or unprofitable?'—'Profitable, venerable sir-'—'Reprehensible or blameless?'—'Blameless, venerable sir.'—'Condemned or commended by the wise?'—'Commended by the wise, venerable sir.'—'Being adopted and put into effect, do they lead to welfare and happiness, or do they not, or how does it appear to you in this case?'—'Being adopted and put into effect, venerable sir, they lead to welfare and happiness.

So it appears to us in this case.?'—'Now that was the reason why I told you "Come, Sālha, do not be satisfied with hearsay...When you know in yourself 'These things are profitable...' then you shold practise them and abide in them".

Now a hearer who is ennobled (by reaching the Noble Path), who has rid himself in this way of covetousness and ill will and is undeluded, abides with his heart endued with lovingkindness extending over one quarter, likewise the second quarter, likewise the third quarter, likewise the fourth quarter, and so above, below, around, and everywhere. and to all as to himself; he abides with his heart abundant, exalted, measureless in lovingkindness without hostility or ill will extending over the all-encompassing world. He abides with his heart endued with compassion... gladness equanimity . extending over the all-encompassing world. Now he understands this state of contemplation in this way : 'There is this (state of Divine Abiding in me who have entered the Stream). There is what has been abandoned (which is the amount of greed, hate and delusion exhausted by the Stream-entry Path). There is a superior goal (which is Arahantship). And there is an ultimate escape from this whole field of perception'. When he knows and sees in this way, his heart is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When liberated (by reaching the Arahant Path), there comes thereafter the knowledge that it is liberated. He knows that birth is ended, that the Divine Life has been lived out, that what has to be done is done, and that there is no more of this to come. He understands thus : 'Formerly there was greed, which was bad, and now there is none, which is good. Formerly there was hate, which was bad, and now there

is none, which is good. Formerly there was delusion, which was bad, and now there is none, which is good. So here and now in this very life he is parched no more (by the fever of craving's thirst, his fires of greed, hate and delusion are) extinguished and cooled out, experiencing bliss, he abides (for the remainder of his last life-span) divinely pure in himself.

KALAMA SUTTA

The Buddha's Charter of Free Inquiry

Translated from the Pāli

by

SOMA THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

KANDY 1963 CEYLON

Second impression: 1963

The Wheel Publication No. 8

PREFACE

THE instruction to the Kālāmas (Kālāma Sutta) is justly famous for its encouragement of free inquiry; the spirit of the sutta signifies a teaching that is exempt from fanaticism, bigotry, dogmatism, and intolerance.

The reasonableness of the Dhamma, the Buddha's teaching, is chiefly evident in its welcoming careful examination at all stages of the path to enlightenment. Indeed the whole course of training for wisdom culminating in the purity of the consummate one (the arhat) is intimately bound up with examination and analysis of things internal: the eye and visible objects, the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the body and tactile impressions, the mind and ideas.

Thus since all phenomena have to be correctly understood in the field of the Dhamma, insight is operative throughout. In this sutta it is active in rejecting the bad and adopting the good way; in the extracts given below, in clarifying the basis of knowledge of conditionality and arhatship. Here it may be mentioned that the methods of examination found in the Kālāma Sutta and in the extracts cited here, have sprung from the knowledge of things as they are and that the tenor of these methods is implied in all straight thinking. Further as penetration and comprehension, the constituents of wisdom are the result of such thinking, the place of critical examination and analysis in the development of right vision is obvious. Where is the

wisdom or vision that can descend, all of a sudden, untouched and uninfluenced by critical thought?

The Kālāma Sutta, which sets forth the principles that should be followed by a seeker of truth, and which contains a standard things are judged by, belongs to the framework of the Dhamma; the four solaces taught in the sutta point out the extent to which the Buddha permits suspense of judgment in matters beyond normal cognition. The solaces show that the reason for a virtuous life does not necessarily depend on belief in rebirth or retribution, but on mental well-being acquired through the overcoming of greed, hate, and delusion.

More than fifty years ago, Moncure D. Conway, the author of 'My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East', visited Colombo. He was a friend of Ponnambalam Ramanathan (then Solicitor General of Ceylon), and together with him Conway went to the Vidyodaya Pirivena to learn something of the Buddha's teaching from Hikkaḍuve Siri Sumangala Nāyaka Thera, the founder of the institution. The Nāyaka Thera explained to them the principles contained in the Kālāma Sutta and at the end of the conversation Ramanathan whispered to Conway: 'Is it not strange that you and I, who come from far different religions and regions, should together listen to a sermon from the Buddha in favour of that free thought, that independence of traditional and fashionable doctrines, which is still the vital principle of human development?' — 'Conway: Yes, and we with the (Kālāma) princes pronounce his doctrines good'.

SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

"Friend Saviṭṭha, apart from faith, apart from liking, apart from what has been acquired by repeated hearing, apart from specious reasoning, and from a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, I know this, I see this, 'Decay and death are due to birth'."

(Saṁyuttanikāya, Nidānavagga, Mahāvagga, Sutta No. 8)

"Here a bhikkhu, having seen an object with the eye, knows when greed, hate, and delusion, are within, 'Greed, hate, and delusion, are in me'; he knows when greed, hate, and delusion, are not within, 'Greed, hate, and delusion, are not in me'. Bhikkhus, have these things to be experienced through faith, liking, what has been acquired by repeated hearing, specious reasoning, or a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over? —No, venerable sir.— Bhikkhus, this even is the way by which a bhikkhu, apart from faith, liking, what has been acquired by repeated hearing, specious reasoning, or a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over, declares realisation of knowledge thus: I know that birth has been exhausted, the celibate life has been lived, what must be done, has been done, and there is nothing more to come from this state".

(Saṁyuttanikāya, Salāyatanavagga, Navapūraṇavagga, Sutta No. 8)

CORRECTION

Page 6, last line of para 3,
read: and which falsehood.

THE INSTRUCTION TO THE KĀLĀMAS

The Kālāmas of Kesaputta go to see the Buddha

1. I heard thus. Once the Blessed One, while wandering in the Kosala country with a large community of bhikkhus, entered a town of the Kālāma people called Kesaputta. The Kālāmas who were inhabitants of Kesaputta heard: 'Reverend Gotama, the monk, the son of the Sākiyans, has, while wandering in the Kosala country, entered Kesaputta. The good repute of the Reverend Gotama has been spread in this way: Indeed, the Blessed One is thus consummate, fully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and practice, sublime, knower of the worlds, peerless, guide of tamable men, teacher of divine and human beings, enlightened, blessed. He makes known this world with its beings, its māras and its brahmas, and the group of creatures, with its monks and brahmins, and its divine and human beings, which he by himself has through supernormal knowledge understood clearly. He sets forth the Dhamma, good in the beginning, good in the middle, good in the end, possessed of meaning and the letter, and complete in everything; and he proclaims the purified life of celibacy. Seeing such consummate ones is good indeed'.

2. Then the Kālāmas who were inhabitants of Kesaputta went to where the Blessed One was. On arriving there some paid homage to him and sat down on one side; some exchanged greetings with him and after the ending of cordial memorable

talk, sat down on one side; some saluted him raising their joined palms and sat down on one side; some announced their name and family and sat down on one side; some, without speaking, sat down on one side.

The Kālāmas of Kesaputta ask for guidance from Buddha

3. The Kālāmas who were inhabitants of Kesaputta sitting on one side said to the Blessed One: There are some monks and brahmins, venerable sir, who visit Kesaputta. They illustrate and illuminate only their own doctrines; the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. Some other monks and brahmins too, venerable sir, come to Kesaputta. They also illustrate and illuminate only their own doctrines; the doctrines of others they despise, revile, and pull to pieces. Venerable sir, there is doubt, there is uncertainty, in us concerning them, 'Which of these reverend monks and brahmins spoke the truth and falsehood?'.

The criterion for rejection

4. It is proper for you, Kālāmas, to doubt, to be uncertain; uncertainty has arisen in you about what is doubtful. Come, Kālāmas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher'. Kālāmas, when you yourselves know: These things

are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill', abandon them.

Greed, hate and delusion

5. What do you think, Kālāmas? Does greed appear, in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm? — For his harm, venerable sir. — Kālāmas, being given to greed, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by greed, this man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his harm and ill? — Yes, venerable sir.

6. What do you think, Kālāmas? Does hate appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm? — For his harm, venerable sir. — Kālāmas, being given to hate, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by hate, this man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his harm and ill? — Yes, venerable sir.

7. What do you think, Kālāmas? Does delusion appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm? — For his harm, venerable sir. — Kālāmas, being given to delusion, and being overwhelmed and vanquished mentally by delusion, this man takes life, steals, commits adultery, and tells lies; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his harm and ill? — Yes, venerable sir.

8. What do you think, Kālāmas? Are these things good or bad? — Bad, venerable sir. — Blamable or not blamable? — Blamable, venerable sir. —

Censured or praised by the wise? — Censured, venerable sir.— Undertaken and observed, do these things lead to harm and ill, or not? Or how does it strike you here? — Undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill. Thus it strikes us here.

9. Therefore, did we say, Kālāmas, what was said thus, 'Come Kālāmas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher'. Kālāmas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are bad; these things are blamable; these things are censured by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to harm and ill', abandon them.

The criterion for acceptance

10. Come, Kālāmas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher'. Kālāmas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness', enter on and abide in them.

Absence of greed, hate, and delusion

11. What do you think, Kālāmas? Does absence of greed appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm? — For his benefit, venerable sir. — Kālāmas, being not given to greed, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished mentally by greed, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery, and does not tell lies; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his benefit and happiness? — Yes, venerable sir.

12. What do you think, Kālāmas? Does absence of hate appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm? — For his benefit, venerable sir. — Kālāmas, being not given to hate, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished mentally by hate, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery, and does not tell lies; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his benefit and happiness? — Yes, venerable sir.

13. What do you think, Kālāmas? Does absence of delusion appear in a man, when it does, for his benefit or harm? — For his benefit, venerable sir. — Kālāmas, being not given to delusion, and being not overwhelmed and not vanquished mentally by delusion, this man does not take life, does not steal, does not commit adultery, and does not tell lies; he prompts another too to do likewise. Will that be long for his benefit and happiness? — Yes, venerable sir.

14. What do you think, Kālāmas? Are these things good or bad? — Good, venerable sir. — Blamable or not blamable? — Not blamable, venerable

sir. — Censured or praised by the wise? — Praised, venerable sir. — Undertaken and observed, do these things lead to benefit and happiness, or not? Or how does it strike you here? — Undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness. Thus it strikes us here.

15. Therefore, indeed, did we say, Kālāmas, what was said thus, 'Come, Kālāmas. Do not go upon what has been acquired by repeated hearing; nor upon tradition; nor upon rumour; nor upon what is in a scripture; nor upon surmise; nor upon an axiom; nor upon specious reasoning; nor upon a bias towards a notion that has been pondered over; nor upon another's seeming ability; nor upon the consideration, 'The monk is our teacher'. Kālāmas, when you yourselves know: 'These things are good; these things are not blamable; these things are praised by the wise; undertaken and observed, these things lead to benefit and happiness', enter on and abide in them'.

The Four Exalted Dwellings

16. The disciple of the Noble Ones, Kālāmas, who in this way is devoid of coveting, devoid of ill will, undeluded, clearly comprehending and mindful, dwells, having considered, with the thought of amity, one quarter; likewise the second; likewise the third; likewise the fourth; so above, below, and across; he dwells, having considered, because of the existence in it of all livings beings, everywhere, the entire world, with the great, exalted, boundless thought of amity that is free of hate or malice.

He lives, having considered, with the thought of compassion, one quarter; likewise the second; like-

wise the third; likewise the fourth; so above, below, and across; he dwells, having considered, because of the existence in it of all living beings, everywhere, the entire world, with the great, exalted, boundless thought of compassion that is free of hate or malice.

He lives, having considered, with the thought of gladness, one quarter; likewise the second; likewise the third; likewise the fourth; so above, below, and across; he dwells, having considered, because of the existence in it of all living beings, everywhere, the entire world, with the great, exalted, boundless thought of gladness that is free of hate or malice.

He lives, having considered with the thought of equanimity, one quarter; likewise the second; likewise the third; likewise the fourth; so above, below, and across; he dwells, having considered, because of the existence in it of all living beings, everywhere, the entire world, with the great, exalted, boundless thought of equanimity that is free of hate or malice.

The Four Solaces

17. The disciple of the Noble Ones, Kālāmas, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom four solaces are found here and now.

'Suppose there is a hereafter and there is a fruit, result, of deeds done well or ill. Then it is possible that at the dissolution of the body after death, I shall arise in the heavenly world, which is possessed

of the state of bliss'. This is the first solace found by him.

'Suppose there is no hereafter and there is no fruit, no result, of deeds done well or ill. Yet in this world, here and now, free from hatred, free from malice, safe and sound, and happy, I keep myself'. This is the second solace found by him.

'Suppose evil befalls the evil-doer. I, however, think of doing evil to none. Then, how can ill affect me who do no evil deed?'. This is the third solace found by him.

'Suppose evil does not befall the evil-doer. Then, I, see myself purified in both ways'. This is the fourth solace found by him.

The disciple of the Noble Ones, Kālāmas, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom, here and now, these four solaces are found.

—So it is, Blessed One. So it is, Sublime One. The disciple of the Noble Ones, venerable sir, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom, here and now, four solaces are found.

'Suppose there is a hereafter, and there is fruit, result, of deeds donc well or ill. Then it is possible that at the dissolution of the body after death, I shall arise in the heavenly world, which is possessed of the state of bliss'. This is the first solace found by him.

'Suppose there is no hereafter and there is no fruit, result, of deeds done well or ill. Yet in this world, here and now, free from hatred, free from malice, safe and sound, and happy, I keep myself'. This is the second solace found by him.

'Suppose evil befalls the evil-doer. I, however, think of doing evil to none. Then how can ill affect me who do no evil deed?'. This is the third solace found by him.

'Suppose evil does not befall the evil-doer. Then, I see myself purified both ways'. This is the fourth solace found by him.

The disciple of the Noble Ones, venerable sir, who has such a hate-free mind, such a malice-free mind, such an undefiled mind, and such a purified mind, is one by whom, here and now, these four solaces are found.

Marvellous, venerable sir! Marvellous, venerable sir! As if, venerable sir, a person were to turn face upwards what is upside down, or to uncover the concealed, or to point the way to one who is lost, or to carry a lamp in the darkness thinking, 'Those who have eyes will see visible objects', so has the Dhamma been set forth in many ways by the Blessed One. We, venerable sir, go to the Blessed One for refuge, to the Dhamma for refuge, and to the Community of Bhikkhus for refuge. Venerable sir, may the Blessed One regard us as followers who have gone for refuge for life, from today.

Anguttara Nikāya, Tika Nipāta, Mahāvagga, Sutta No.65

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KARMA AND REBIRTH

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NYANATILOKA MAHATHERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

KANDY CEYLON

First Impression : 1959
Second Impression : 1964

First Published in
"FUNDAMENTALS OF BUDDHISM"
Four Lectures
By Nyanatiloka Mahathera
Published by the
BUDDHA SAHITYA SABHA, COLOMBO.

KARMA AND REBIRTH

When beholding this world and thinking about the destinies of beings, it will appear to most men as if everything in nature was unjust. 'Why', they will ask, 'is one man rich and powerful, but another poor and distressed? Why is one man all his life well and healthy, but another from his very birth sickly or infirm? Why is one man endowed with attractive appearance, intelligence and perfect sense faculties while another is repulsive and ugly, an idiot, blind, or deaf and dumb? Why is one child born amidst utter misery and amongst wretched people, and brought up as a criminal, while another child is born in the midst of plenty and comfort, of noble-minded parents, and enjoys all the advantages of kindly treatment and the best mental and moral education? Why does one man, often without the slightest effort, succeed in all his enterprises, while another fails in all his plans? Why can one man live in luxury, while another man has to live in poverty and distress? Why is one man happy, but another unhappy? Why does one man enjoy long life, while another in the prime of his life is carried away by death? Why is this so? Why do such differences exist in nature?'

These questions are satisfactorily answered by Buddhism. Of all the aforesaid circumstances and conditions constituting the destiny of a being, none can, according to the Buddha's teaching, come into existence without a previous cause and the presence of a number of necessary conditions. Just as, for example, from a rotten mango seed never will come a healthy mango-tree with healthy and sweet fruits, just so the evil volitional actions, or Karma, produced in a former birth, are the seeds, or root-causes, of evil destiny in a later birth. It is a necessary postulate of

thinking that the good and bad destiny of a being, as well as its latent character, cannot be the product of mere chance, but must of necessity have its causes in a previous birth. According to Buddhism, no organic entity, physical or psychical, can come into existence without a previous cause, *i. e.* without a preceding congenial state out of which it has developed. Also never can any living organic entity be produced by something altogether external to it. It can originate only out of itself, *i. e.*, it must have already existed in the seedform as it were. Besides this cause, or root-condition, or seed, there are still many minor conditions required for its actual arising and its development just as the mango tree besides its main cause the seed, requires for its germination, growth and development further conditions such as earth, water, light and heat. Thus the true cause of the birth of a being, together with its character and destiny, goes back to the Karma-volitions produced in a former birth.

According to Buddhism, there are three factors necessary for the rebirth of a human being, that is, for the formation of the embryo in the mother's womb. They are : the female ovum, the male sperm, and the karma-energy, *kamma-vega*, which, in the Suttas is metaphorically called '*gandhabba*', *i. e.* ' ghost. ' This karma-energy is sent forth by a dying individual at the moment of his death. Father and mother only provide the necessary physical material for the formation of the embryonic body. With regard to the characteristic features, the tendencies and faculties lying latent in the embryo, the Buddha's teaching may be explained in the following way : The dying individual, with his whole being convulsively clinging to life, at the very moment of his death, sends forth karmic energies which, like a flash of lighting, hit at a new mother's womb ready for conception. Thus,

through the impinging of the Karma-energies on ovum and sperm, there arises, just as a precipitate, the so-called primary cell.

The process may be compared with the functioning of the air-vibrations produced through speech, which, by the impinging on the acoustic organ af another man, produce a sound, which is purely subjective sensation. At this occasion no transmigration of a sound-sensation takes place, but simply a transference of energy, called the air vibrations. In a similar way, the karma-energies, sent out by the dying individual, produce from the material furnished by the parents the new embryonic being. But no transmigration of a real being, or a soul-entity, takes place at that occasion, but simply the transmission of karma-energy.

Hence we may say that the present-life process (*uppatti bhava*) is the objectification of the corresponding pre-natal Karma-process (*kamma bhava*) and that the future life-process is the objectification of the corresponding present Karma-process. Thus, nothing transmigrates from one life to the next. And what we call our Ego, is in reality only this process of continual change, of continual arising and passing away, moment after moment, day after day, year after year, life after life. Just as a wave that apparently hastens over the surface of the ocean, is in reality nothing but a continuous rising and falling of ever new masses of water, each time called forth through the transmission of energy, even so, closely considered, is there in the ultimate sense no permanent Ego-entity that passes through the ocean of Saṁsāra, but merely a process of physical and mental phenomena takes place, ever and again being whipped up by the impulse and will for life,

It is undoubtedly true that the mental condition of the parents at the moment of conception has con-

siderable influenee upon the character of the embryonic being, and that the nature of the mother may make a deep impression on the character of the child she bears in her womb. The unique mental individuality of the child however, can in no way be produced by the parents. One must here never confound the actual productive cause—*i. e.* the preceding state out of which the later state arises—with the contributing influences and conditions from without. Even if it were really possible that the new individual, as an inseparable whole, was begotten by its parents, twins could by no means ever exhibit totally opposite tendencies. In such a case, children, especially twins, would, with positively no exception, always be found to possess the same character as the parents.

At all times, and probably in all the countries on earth, the belief in ever and again being reborn has been held by many people ; and this belief seems to be due to an intuitional instinct that lies dormant in all beings. Many great thinkers too have taught a continuation of life after death. Already from time immemorial there was taught some form of metempsychosis, *i. e.*, ' transformation of soul,' or metamorphosis, *i. e.*, 'transformation of body,' etc , for instance, by the esoteric doctrines of old Egypt, by Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Plotinus, Pindaros, Vergil, even by the African negroes. Many of the modern thinkers too teach a continuation of the life process after death.

The great German scientist Edgar Dacquê, in his book called ' The Primeval World, Saga and Mankind,' speaking about the wide-spread belief shared by all peoples of the world in a transmigration after death, gives the following warning : "Peoples with culture and acquaintance with science, such as the old Egyptans and wise Indians, were

acting and living in accordance with this belief. They lost this belief only after the rise of the naively realistic and rationalistic Hellenism and Judaism. For this reason it would be better, concerning this problem, not to assume the anaemie attitude of modern sham-civilization, but rather adopt a reverential attitude in trying to solve this problem and grasp it in its profundity."

This law of rebirth can be made comprehensible only by the subconscious 'life-stream,' in Pali, *bhavanga-sota*, which is mentioned in the Abhidhamma-Piṭaka and further explained in the commentaries, esp. the Visuddhi-Magga. The fundamental import of *bhavanga-sota*, or subconscious life-stream, as working hypothesis for the explanation of the various Buddhist doctrines, such as Rebirth, Karma Remembrance of former births, *etc.*, has up to now not yet sufficiently been recognized, or undersstood, by the Western scholars. The term *bhavanga*, or *bhavanga-sota*, is similar to, though not entirely identical with what the modern psychologists, as Jung and others call Soul, or the Unconscious, which, however, in no way signifies the eternal soul-entity of Christian teaching but refers to an ever-changing subconscious process. This subconscious life-stream is the *sine qua non* of all life, and in it all impressions and experiences are stored up, or better said, appear as a multiple process of past images, or memory pictures, which however, as such, are hidden to full consciousness, but which, especially in dream, cross the threshold of consciousness and become fully conscious.

Professor William James (whose words are retranslated here from the German version) says: "Many achievements of the genius have here their beginning. In conversion,

mystical experience, and as prayer, it co-operates with religious life. It contains all momentarily inactive reminiscences and sources of all our dimly motivated passions, impulses, intuitions, hypotheses, fancies, superstitions ; in short, all our non-rational operations result therefrom. It is the source of dreams, etc."

Jung, in his 'Soul Problems of the Present Day,' says: "From the living source of instinct springs forth everything creative." And in another place : " Whatever has been created by human mind results from contents which were really unconscious (or subconscious) seeds." And "The term 'instinct' is of course nothing but a collective term for all possible organic and psychic factors whose nature is for the greater part unknown to us."

The existence of the subconscious life-stream, or *bhavanga-sota,* is a necessary postulate of our thinking. If whatever we have seen, heard, felt, perceived, thought externally or internally experienced and done, if all this, without exception, were not registered somewhere and in some way, be it in the extremely complex nervous system or in the Sub-conscious or Unconscious—then we would not even be able to remember what we were thinking the preceding moment; and we would not know anything of the existence of other beings and things ; would not know our parents, teachers, friends and so on; would even not be able to think at all, as thinking is conditioned by the remembrance of former experiences; and our mind would be a complete *tabula rasa* and emptier than the actual mind of an infant just born, nay even of the embryo in the mother's womb.

Thus this sub-conscious life-stream, or *bhavanga-sota,* can be called the precipitate of all our former actions and

experiences, which must have been going on from time immemorial and must continue for immeasurable periods of time to come. Therefore, whatever constitutes the true and innermost nature of man, or any other being is this subconscious life-stream of which we do not know whence it came and whither it will go. As Heraclitus says: "We never enter the same stream. We are identical with it, and we are not," just as it is said in the Milinda-Pañha: "*na ca so, na ca añño*; neither is it *he* nor is it *another* one (that is reborn)." All life, be it corporeal, conscious or subconscious life, all life is a flux, a continual process of becoming, change and transformation. No persistent element is there to be discovered in this process, Hence, there also is no permanent Ego, or personality, to be found but merely these transitory phenomena. About this unreality of the Ego, the Hungarian psychologist Volgyesi in his 'Message to the Nervous World' says:

"Under the influence of the newest knowledge the psychologists already begin to realize the truth about the delusive nature of the Ego-entity, the mere relative value of the Ego-feeling, the great dependency of this tiny man on the inexhaustibly many and complex working factors of the whole world.....The idea of an independent Ego, and of a selfreliant Free Will: these ideas we should give up and reconcile ourselves to the truth that there does not exist any real Ego at all. What we take for our Ego-feeling, is in reality nothing but one of the most wonderful *fata-morgana* plays of nature, etc.". In the ultimate sense, there do not even exist such things as mental states, *i. e.*, stationary things. Feeling, perception, consciousness, etc. are, in reality, mere passing processes of feeling, perceiving, becoming conscious etc., within which and outside of which

nothing of a separate or permanent entity lies hidden.

Thus a real understanding of the Buddha's doctrine of Karma and Rebirth is possible only to him who has caught a glimpse of the Impersonality, or *anattatā*, and of the Conditionality, or *idapaccayatā*, of all phenomena of existence. Therefore it is said in Visuddhi-Magga, Ch. XIX[1], "Everywhere, in all the realms of existence, the noble disciple sees only mental and corporeal phenomena kept going through the concatenation of causes and effects. No producer of the volitional act or Karma does he see apart from the Karma, no recipient of the Karma-result apart from the result. And he is well aware that wise men are using merely conventional language when, with regard to a karmical act, they speak of a doer, or with regard to a karma-result, they speak of the recipient of the result.

"No doer of the deeds is found,
No one who ever reaps their fruits;
Empty phenomena roll on:
This is the only right view.

"And while the deeds and their results
Roll on and on, conditioned all,
There is no first beginning found,
Just as it is with seed and tree.....

"No god, no Brāhma, can be called
The maker of this wheel of life:
Empty phenomena roll on,
Dependent on conditions all."

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1. See *The Path of Purification*, transl: by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Colombo 1956, Ananda Somage).

In Milinda-Pañha the King asks Nāgasena :

"What is it, Venerable Sir, that will be reborn ?"

"A psycho-physical combination (*nāma-rūpa*), O King," is the answer.

"But how, Venerable Sir? Is it the same psycho-physical combination as this present one ?"

"No, O King. But the present psycho-physical combination produces karmically wholesome and unwholesome volitional activities, and through such Karma a new psycho-physical combination will be born."

Since in ultimate sense, or *paramattha-vasena*, there is no such thing as a real Ego-entity, or Personality, therefore one cannot truly speak of the rebirth of such or such an individual. What actually happens here, is that a psychophysical process, which is cut off at death, continues immediately thereafter somewhere else, in strict conformity to causes and conditions.

Similarly we read in Milinda-Pañha, Chapter III:

"Does, O Venerable Sir, rebirth take place without transmigration ?"

"Yes, O King."

"But how, Venerable Sir, can rebirth take place without passing over of anything? Please, illustrate me this matter."

"If, O King, a man should light a lamp with the help of another lamp, does in that case the light of the one lamp pass over to the other lamp?"

"No, Venerable Sir."

"Just so, O King, does rebirth take place without transmigration."

Further in Visuddhi-Magga XVII it is said: "Whosoever has no clear idea about death, and does not know that death consists in the dissolution of the five groups of existence (*i. e.*, corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness), he thinks that it is a person or being, that dies and transmigrates to a new body, etc. And whosoever has no clear idea about rebirth and does not know that rebirth consists in the arising of the five groups of existence, he thinks that it is a person, or being, that is reborn, or that the person reappears in a new body. And whosoever has no clear idea about the Saṁsāra, the round of rebirths, he thinks that a real person wanders from this world to another world, comes from that world to this world, etc. And whosoever has no clear idea about the phenomena of existence, he thinks that the phenomena are his Ego or something appertaining to the Ego, or something permanent, joyful, or pleasant. And whosoever has no clear idea about the conditional arising of the phenomena of existence, and about the arising of karmical volitions conditioned through ignorance, or *avijjā*, he thinks that it is the Ego that understands or not understands, that acts or causes to act, that enters into a new existence at rebirth. Or he thinks that the atoms or the Creator, etc., with the help of the embryonic process, shape the body, provide it with various faculties; that it is the Ego that receives the sensuous impressions, that feels, that desires, that becomes attached, that again in another world enters into existence. Or he thinks that all beings are coming to life through fate or chance."

"A mere phenomenon it is, a thing conditioned,
That rises in the following existence.
But not from previous life does transmigrate it there,
And yet it cannot rise without a previous cause."

"When this conditionally arisen bodily-mental phenomenon (the foetus) arises, one says that it has entered into (the next) existence. However, no being (*satta*), or life-principle (*jīva*) is there that has transmigrated from previous existence into this present one and yet this embryo could not have come into existence without a previous cause."

This fact may be compared with the reflection of one's face in the mirror, or with the calling forth of an echo by one's voice. Now, just as the image in the mirror or the echo are produced by one's face or voice without any passing over of face or voice, just so it is with the arising of rebirth consciousness. Should there exist a full identity or sameness between the former and the later birth, in that case milk never would turn into curd; and should there exist an entire otherness, curd never could be conditioned through milk. Therefore one should admit neither a full identity, nor an entire otherness of the different stages of existence. Hence *na ca so, na ca añño*: "neither is it the same, nor is it another one." As we have said above: all life, be it corporeal, conscious or subconscious, all life is a flowing, a continual process of becoming, change and transformation.

To sum up, we may say:

There are in the ultimate sense no real beings or things, neither creator nor created; there is but this process of

corporeal and mental phenomena. This whole process of existence has an active and a passive side. The active or causal side of existence consists in the Karma-process (*kamma-bhava*), *i. e.*, wholesome and unwholesome (good and evil) Karma activity, while the passive or caused side consists in Karma results or *vipāka*, the so-called Rebirth- or Life-process (*uppatti-bhava*), *i. e.* the arising, growing, decaying and passing away of all these karmically neutral phenomena of existence.

Thus, in the absolute sense, there exists no real being that wanders through this round of rebirths, but merely this ever-changing twofold process of Karma-activities and Karma results takes place.

The so-called present life is, as it were the reflection of the past one, and the future life the reflection of the present one. Or, the present life is the result of the past karmic activity, and the future life the result of the present karmic activity. Therefore, nowhere is there to be found an Ego-entity that could be the Performer of the karmic activity or the Recipient of the karma-result. Hence, Buddhism does not teach any real transmigration, as in the highest sense there is no such thing as a Being, or Ego-entity, how much less a transmigration of such a Being.

In every man, as already mentioned, there seems to lie dormant the dim instinctive feeling that death cannot be the end of all things, but that somehow a continuation must follow. In which way, however, this may be be, is not clear to him.

It is perhaps quite true that a direct proof for rebirth cannot be given. We have, however, the authentic reports

about children in Burma and elsewhere, who sometimes are able to remember quite distinctly events of their previous life. And how could we ever explain the birth of such prodigies, as Bentham who in his fourth year could read and write Latin and Greek, or as Stuart Mill who at the age of three read Greek and at the age of six wrote a History of Rome, or as Babington Macaulay who in his sixth year wrote a compendium of World History, or as Beethoven who gave public concerts when he was seven, or as Mozart who even before his sixth year had written musical compositions, or as Voltaire who read the fables of Fontaine when he was three years old. Is it not reasonable to assume that all these prodigies and geniuses who often came from uneducated parents, should not already in previous births have laid the foundations to their extraordinary faculties?

How could we further explain that a child of righteous and bodily and mentally healthy parents and ancestors, sometimes immediately after his birth, shows characteristics and tendencies of a criminal type, perceivable by the shape of the skull, by facial expression, by the mental attitude, and behaviour recognizable to phrenologists, physiognomists or psychologists?

We may, therefore, rightly state that the Buddhist doctrine of Karma and Rebirth offers the most plausible explanation for all the variations and dissimilarities in nature, as discussed earlier.

Buddhism teaches that, if in a previous birth the bodily, verbal and mental Karma, or volitional activities, have been evil and low and thus have unfavourably influenced

the subsconscious life-stream (*bhavanga-sota*), then also the results, manifested in the present life, must be disagreeable and evil; and so must be the character and the new actions induced or conditioned through the evil pictures and images of the subconscious life-stream. If the beings, however, have in former lives sown good seeds, then they will reap good fruits in the present life. It is said (M. 135): "Owners of their Kamma, or volitional actions, are the beings, heirs of their Kamma, the Kamma is the womb from which they have sprung, Kamma is their friend and their refuge. Whatever Kamma they perform, wholesome or unwholesome, *kusala* or *akusala*, they will be the heirs of their Kamma."

In the Middle Length Sayings of the Buddha (Majjhima-Nikāya 135) a Brahman raises the problem:—

> "There are men who are short-lived, and those who are long-lived; there are men who are very sick, and such that are healthy; there are men who are hideous, and such that are beautiful; there are men who are powerless, and such that are powerful; there are men who are poor, and such that are rich; there are men who are of low family, and such that are of high family; there are men who are stupid, and such that are intelligent. What then, Master Gotama, is the reason that amongst human beings such inferiority and superiority are found?"

The Blessed One gave the reply:

> "Owners of their Kamma are the beings, heirs of their Kamma, the Kamma is the womb from which they have sprung, Kamma is their friend and refuge. Thus Kamma divides the beings in high and low."

In Anguttara-Nikāya (III. 40), it is said: "Killing, stealing, adultery, lying, slandering, harsh speech and empty prattling, if practised, cultivated and frequently performed, will lead to states of misery, the animal-world or the realm of ghosts." Further: "Whoso kills and is cruel, will either go to hell, or if reborn as man, he will be short-lived. Whoso tortures other beings, will be afflicted with disease. The hater will be hideous, the envious will be without influence, the stubborn will be of low rank, the indolent will be ignorant." In the reverse case, man will be reborn in a heavenly world; or, if reborn as man, he will be endowed with health, beauty, influence, riches, noble rank and intelligence.

Dr. Grimm, in his book 'The Doctrine of the Buddha', tries to show how the law of affinity may at the moment of death regulate the grasping of a new germ. He says: "Whoso, devoid of compassion can kill men, or even animals, carries deep within himself the inclination to shorten life. He finds satisfaction, or even pleasure in the short-livedness of other creatures. Short-lived germs have therefore some affinity for him, an affinity which makes itself known after his death in the grasping of another germ which then takes place to his own detriment. Even so, germs, bearing within themselves the power of developing into a deformed body, have an affinity for one who finds pleasure in ill-treating and disfiguring others.

"Any angry person begets within himself an affinity for ugly bodies and their respective germs since it is the characteristic mark of anger to disfigure the face.

"Whoever is jealous, niggardly, haughty carries with

in himself the tendency to grudge everything to others, and to despise them. Accordingly, germs that are destined to develop in poor outward circumstances possess affinity for him."

Here it is desirable to rectify some wrong applications of the term 'Karma' (Sanskrit) or Kamma (Pāli) prevailing in the West. Karma comes from the root *kar* to do, to make, to act, and thus means 'deed, action.' In Buddhist usage, Karma is a name for wholesome and unwholesome volition or will (*kusala* - and *akusala-cetanā*) and the consciousness and mental factors associated therewith, manifested as bodily, verbal or mere mental action. Already in the Sutta-texts it is said: *Cetanāhaṁ bhikkhave kammam vadāmi, cetayitvā kammaṁ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā, i. e:* "The will (*cetanā*), O monks, do I call Karma. Through will one performs Karma by means of body, speech or mind." Thus Karma is volitional action, nothing more, nothing less. From this fact result the following three statements :—

1. The term Karma never comprises the result of action, as many in the West, misled by theosophical writings, wish this term to be understood. Karma is wholesome or unwholesome volitional 'Action,' and *kamma-vipāka* is the 'Result' of action.

2. There are some who wrongly consider every happening, even our new wholesome and unwholesome actions, as the result of our prenatal Karma. In other words, they believe that the result again becomes the cause of new results, and so *ad infinitum*. Thus they are stamping Buddhism as fatalism ; and they will have to

come to the conclusion that, in that case, our destiny never can be influenced or changed, and no deliverance ever be attained.

3. There is a third wrong application of the term Karma, being an amplification of the first view, *i. e.* that the term Karma comprises also the result of action. It is the assumption of a so-called joint Karma, *i. e.* a mass-Karma, or group-Karma, or national Karma. According to this view, a group of people, *i. e.* a nation, should be responsible for the bad deeds formerly done by this so-called 'same' people. In reality, however, this present people may not consist at all of the karmic heirs of the same individuals who did these bad deeds. According to Buddhism it is of course quite true that anybody who suffers bodily, suffers for his past or present bad deeds. Thus also each of those individuals born within that suffering nation, must, if actually suffering bodily, have done evil somewhere, here or in one of the innumerable spheres of existence ; but he may not have had anything to do with the bad deeds of the so-called nation. We might say that through his evil Karma he was attracted to the miserable condition befitting to him. In short, the term Karma applies, in each instance, only to wholesome and unwholesome volitional activity of the single individual. Karma thus forms the cause, or seed, from which the results will accrue to the individual, be it in this life, or hereafter. [1]

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1. The Pali term *vipāka*, which generally is translated by 'effect', or, 'result', is not exactly identical with these two English terms. According to Kathāvatthu, it refers only to the karma-produced *mental* results, such as pleasurable and painful feeling of the body and all other primary mental phenomena; while, all the corporeal phenomena, such as the five physical sense-organs, etc., are not called *vipāka* but *kammaja* or *kamma-samuṭṭhāna*, *i. e.* 'karma-born' or 'karma-produced'.

Man has it in his power to shape his future destiny by means of his will and actions. It depends on his actions, or Karma, whether his destiny will lead him up or down, either to happiness or to misery. Moreover, Karma is the cause and seed not only for the continuation of the life-process after death, *i. e.*, for the so-called rebirth ; but even in this present life-process, our actions, or Karma, may produce good and bad results, and exercise a decisive influence on our present character and destiny. Thus, for instance, if daily we practise kindness towards all living beings, men as well as animals, we will grow in goodness. Hatred, and all evil actions done through hatred, as well as all the evil and agonizing mental states produced thereby, will not easily rise again. Our nature and character will become firm, happy, peaceful and calm.

If we practise unselfishness and liberality, greed and avarice will become less. If we practise love and kindness, anger and hatred will vanish. If we develop wisdom and knowledge, ignorance and delusion will gradually disappear. The less greed, hatred and ignorance (*lobha, dosa, moha*) dwell in man's heart, the less will he commit evil and unwholesome actions of body, speech and mind. For, all evil things, and all evil destiny, are rooted in greed, hate and ignorance ; and of these three things ignorance, or delusion, *moha*, or *avijjā*, is the chief root and the primary cause of all evil and misery in the world. If there is no more ignorance, there will be no more greed and hatred, no more rebirth, no more suffering.

This goal, however, in the ultimate sense, will be realized only by the Saint (Arahat), *i. e.*, by one who, for ever and all time, is freed from these three roots ; and this

is brought about through the penetrating insight, or *vipassanā*, into the Impermanency, Unsatisfactoriness and Impersonality, or Egolessness, of this whole life-process, and through the detachment from all forms of existence that results from that insight. As soon as greed, hate and ignorance are fully and for ever extinguished, the will for life, tenaciously clinging to existence will come to an end. There will be no more rebirth, and there will have been realized the goal shown by the Enlightened One, namely : extinction of all rebirth and suffering. Thus the Saint (Arahat) does no more perform any Karma, *i. e.*, karmically wholesome or unwholesome volitional actions productive of renewed existence. Though the Holy One, or Arahat, is certainly not inactive and all that he does, speaks and thinks is commonly called 'good', yet it has not the least trace of attachment, pride or self-assertion.

What is called the character of man, is in reality the sum of the subconscious tendencies produced partly by the prenatal, partly by the present volitional activity, or Karma. These tendencies may, during life-time become an inducement to wholesome or unwholesome volitional activity, or Karma, by body, speech or mind. If, however, this thirst for life rooted in ignorance is fully extinguished, then there will be no new rebirth. Once the root of a coconut tree has been fully destroyed, the tree will die off. In exactly the same way, there will be no entering again into a new existence, once the life-affirming three evil roots, *i. e.*, greed, hate and ignorance, have been for ever destroyed. Here one should not forget that all such expressions referring to a personality as 'I,' 'He,' 'Holy One' etc., are merely conventional names for an impersonal life-process.

In this connection it should be mentioned that, according to Buddhism, it is merely the last karmical volition just before death, *maraṇāsanna-kamma*, that determines the nature of the immediately following rebirth. In Buddhist countries, it is therefore the custom to recall to the dying man's memory his good actions performed by him, in order to rouse in him a happy pure karmical state of mind, as a preparation for a favourable rebirth. Or, his relations let him see things (robes or other offerings) which they, for his good and benefit, wish to offer to the Sangha, the community of monks, saying : 'This, we shall offer to the Sangha for your future good and welfare.' Or they let him hear a religious sermon, or a recital of a Sutta, very often the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

In Visuddhi-Magga XVII it is said that, at the moment before death, there will, as a rule, appear to the memory of the evil-doer the mental image of any evil deed, or *Kamma*, formerly done; or there will appear before his mental eyes an attendant circumstance, or object, called *kamma-nimitta*, connected with that bad deed, such as blood, or a blood-stained dagger, etc.; or he may see before his mind an indication of his imminent miserable rebirth, *gati-nimitta*, such as fiery flames, etc. To another dying man there may appear before his mind the image of a voluptuous object inciting his sensual lust.

To a good man there may appear before his mind any noble deed, or *kamma*, formerly done by him, or an object that was present at that time, the so-called *kamma-nimitta*; or he may see in his mind an indication of his imminent rebirth, or *gati-nimitta*, such as a heavenly palace etc.

In the Chinese version of the Mahāyāna-text 'Bhava-

sankrānti-Sūtra' (ed. by Aiyaswāmi Sāstri) it is said in a similar way: "When, at the end of life, the mental consciousness is about to disappear, then all the actions that have been performed, appear in front, just as the image of the beautiful female that has been seen in dream appears before the man, when he remembers her after awakening from sleep. Thus, O King, when the consciousness (at death) has disappeared and the future consciousness is born, it is born either amongst men, or gods, or beasts, or ghosts, or in the states of misery. Immediately after the future consciousness arises, O king, a (new) series of thought (*citta-santati*) belonging to the future arises to enjoy the resultant fruits which are to be enjoyed. O king, there has never been anything that can transmigrate from this world to the future world. But the fruit of action may be obtained in rebirth. You ought to know, O king, that when the former consciousness disappears, it is called death. When the future consciousness arises, it is called birth. When the former consciousness, O king, disappears, there is no place where it goes away to. When the future consciousness arises, it comes not from any place."

In the discourses (Suttas) of the Pali Canon, three types of Karma, or volitional actions, are mentioned, with regard to the time of their bearing fruit, namely: 1. Karma bearing fruit at life-time (*diṭṭhadhamma-vedanīya-kamma*), 2. Karma bearing fruit in the next life *upapajja-vedanīya-kamma*), 3. Karma bearing fruit in later lives (*aparāpariya-vedanīya-kamma*). The explanations of this subject are too technical for this brief introduction into the subject. They imply the following: What appears as a single act of sense perception or mental cognition, actually consists of a series of consecutive thought moments performing

different functions in that cognitive process. The phase of that process where Karmic volition is produced consists of a number of impulsive thought moments, or *javana-citta*, which are flashing up, one after the other, in rapid succession. Now, of these impulsive moments the first one will bear fruit at life-time, the last one in the next birth, and those between these two moments will bear fruit in later lives. The two kinds of Karma bearing fruit at life-time and in the next birth, may sometimes become ineffective or, *ahosi-kamma*. Karma, however, that bears fruit in later lives will, whenever and wherever there is an opportunity, be productive of karma-result ; and as long as this life-process is rolling forward, this Karma never will become ineffective.

The Visuddhi-Magga divides Karma, according to its functions, into four kinds : Generative Karma, Supportive Karma, Counteractive Karma and Destructive Karma, which all may be either wholesome, or unwholesome, good or evil.

'Generative,' or *janaka-kamma*, is the Karma which predominated at the moment of death and conditioned the present existence. It functions from the moment of birth and continues to generate, during the succeeding life-continuity, corporeal and neutral mental phenomena, such as the five kinds of sense-consciousness, and the mental factors associated therewith, as feeling, perception, sense-impression, etc.

The 'Supportive' or *upatthambhaka-kamma*, *supports*, according to its nature, the agreeable or else disagreeable phenomena arising during life time, and aids their continuance.

The 'Counteractive,' or *upapīḷaka-kamma*, *counteracts*, according to its nature, the agreeable or else disagreeable phenomena produced by generative Kamma, and does not allow them to continue.

The 'Destructive,' or *upaghātaka-kamma*, *destroys* the weaker karma and admits only its own agreeable or else disagreeable karma-results.

In the Commentary to Majjhima-Nikāya (No. 135), Generative, or *janaka-kamma*, is compared with a farmer sowing seed; Supportive, or *upatthambhaka-kamma*, with the irrigating, manuring, and watching the field etc.; Counteracting, or *upapīḷaka-kamma*, with the drought that causes a poor harvest; Destructive, or *upaghātaka-kamma*, with a fire that destroys the whole harvest.

Another illustration is this : the rebirth of Devadatta in a royal family was due to his good Generative Karma. His becoming a monk and attaining high spiritual powers, was a good Supportive Karma. His intention of killing the Buddha was a Counteractive Karma, while his causing a split in the Order of monks was a Destructive Karma, owing to which he was born in a world of misery.

It lies outside the scope of this short exposition to give detailed description of all the manifold divisions of Karma found in the Commentaries. The main purpose of this essay is to emphasize that the Buddhist doctrine of Rebirth has nothing to do with the transmigration of any soul or Ego entity, as in the ultimate sense there does not exist any such Ego or I, but merely a continually changing process of mental and corporeal phenomena of existence. Further to point out that both the Karma-process and Rebirth-process may be made comprehensible only by the assumption of a subconscious stream of life underlying everything in animate nature.

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SAKKA'S QUEST

Sakka-pañhā Sutta

Introduction, Translation
and Comments

by

SISTER VAJIRĀ

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

KANDY 1964 CEYLON.

Second Impression 1964

The Wheel Publication No. 10

INTRODUCTION

The Buddhist text (Sutta, or Discourse) discussed here, belongs to a group of Buddhist scriptures called *Dīgha-Nikāya*, the 'Collection of Long Discourses', and is the 21st Discourse in it. It tells the story of a deity descending from his heavenly realm to our earth for meeting and questioning the Buddha, the Enlightened One. So, at the first glance, it may appear that it is quite a miraculous story, and some even may regard it as a 'fairy tale'; but it has a very realistic and quite topical background because that deity's visit to the Buddha had a purpose that concerns all of us humans in the very same way as it concerned that deity Sakka two thousand and five hundred years ago.

Before presenting to the reader the translation of the text, it seems desirable to give first some general information about it. The questions and answers themselves which form the core of the text, will be explained at the places where they occur. It is, however, not the purpose of what was originally a lecture, to deal with them in full which would require a separate treatment. Here will chiefly be stressed those characteristic qualities of Sakka which mark him an individual ripe for the first stage of sainthood: Stream-entry (*sotāpatti*). Such an individual, a Sotāpanna, breaks the lowest, and most vital bonds that chain us to the sorrow-laden cycle of repeated births and deaths—to which also a deity is subject—and enters the stream towards final deliverance.

The spot in India where our text is located and where the visit of the deity Sakka took place, became famous throughout the Buddhist world, and is remembered up to the present day as the Indasālaguha, the Grotto of the Indasāla. Indasāla is the name of a tree which must have stood near that grotto. The village near the Grotto of the Indasāla was at that time called Ambasanda, and was inhabited by Brahmins. To-day its name is Giriyek, situated about six miles East of modern Rājgir or Rajagaha; it is a lovely spot, surrounded by hills, with ancient ruins.

In later times, the scene described in our text—the heavenly visitors appearing before the Buddha—has been represented quite frequently in the sculptural art of India and Ceylon, and some of these works of considerable artistic merit are still preserved (see cover picture).

We shall now introduce briefly the heavenly personages appearing in our text. Sakka is chief of Tāvatiṁsa, the heaven of the Thirty-three gods, which still belongs to the world of sensual desire (*kāma-loka*), and ranges next but one to our own terrestrial sphere. Sakka and his gods of the Thirty-three are thus comparatively low deities.

As the Bhagavā, the Exalted One, himself says in our sutta: it was indeed surprising that Sakka, king of gods, found the time and, what is more, actually thought of seeing the Buddha. According to the texts, the deities of the Thirty-three have a life time of thirty-six millions of years. What is with them a day and a night are here on earth a hundred years. That means, those gods do not even spend a day-night while

a man spends a full life. Since the texts tell us of several visits paid by Sakka to the Exalted One, we have to understand that he has visited the Buddha several times during only a single of his heavenly days, for the Master lived on earth as a Buddha, an Enlightened One, for less than half a century—which to Sakka is less than a day. And this frequency of Sakka's visits to the Bhagavā is indeed striking if we compare his attitude with our own attitude towards spiritual things—though our pleasures and activities are surely much less engaging than the pleasures and activities of such a powerful god.

Between Sakka's realm and ours range the Cātumahārājikā Devā, the Four Great Kings or Guardians of the Four Quarters. They are closely connected with Sakka and the Thirty-three gods. One of these Four Great Kings is Vessavana or Kuvera, lord over the Northern direction and the treasures of the Himalayan regions. He is mild and benevolent, and his is the Ideal Land of perfect beauty, harmony and abundance—the Utopia dreamt of by many a poet. One fairy of his suite occurs in the sutta: her name is Bhuñjatī.

The Gandhabbas, subjects of the Four Great Kings, are the heavenly musicians attending on Sakka and the Thirty-three gods. King of Gandhabbas is Timbaru, famed for his excellence in music; and his lovely daughter is Baddhā Suriya-vaccasā, engaged to the son of Sakka's charioteer, Mātalī.

Of the Gandhabbas one is repeatedly mentioned in the suttas. It is Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba, possessor of the miraculous *panduvīnā* which is said to have belonged once to Māra, the Evil One. This

famous *pandu-vīnā*, some say, is a yellow flute of vilva-wood, others say it is a lyre of the same wood. In our sutta, where the young Gandhabba, Pañcasikha, also plays his rôle, it is described as a lyre of red vilva-wood.

The deities mentioned so far, are all voluntary subjects of Sakka and the Thirty-three, and are higher beings than men. Sakka, however, has also some powerful and ferocious foes—the Asuras, ranging lower than men. They are said to be a kind of giants, living in the ocean. Further it is said of them that they once were Sakka's brothers; for reasons unknown they were banished by Sakka into the ocean with the help of Sakka's thunderbolt. The hostility between Tāvitiṁsas and Asuras becomes acute from time to time and battles take place between them.

What now about the spiritual standard of all these beings? Early Buddhist tradition reveals that in general the Buddha and his great disciples show little regard for these pleasure-loving deities of inferior intellect and superficial understanding of the Dhamma. The Buddha and his early disciples call them the 'puthukāya', the common folk, as we shall see. Only later, when actual knowledge of these beings disappeared intellectual abilities, superior to those of men, were falsely attributed to them. A good proof of their inadequacy is given in our sutta. The young Gandhabba, Pañcasikha, with his lyre of red vilva-wood, being requested by Sakka first to 'win over' the Bhagavā before he himself would come into presence of the Buddha, foolishly produces a song which is nothing more than a love-poem—though Pañcasikha tries much to give some spiritual airs to

it. It may well be a beautiful song, but a man of tact and some understanding would hardly expect a personality like the Buddha even to listen to it much less to be pleased with it. But Sakka as well as Pañcasikha both firmly believed this. That is why the Bhagavā makes a somewhat ironical remark about it, as we shall see later. But, polite as the Bhagavā is, he carries on a conversation with them and never fails to address Sakka as 'king of gods'; sometimes addressing him *āyasmā*, 'venerable one'. Two further names of Sakka occur: Kosiya, being the name of his father, and Vāsavā.

It is true that a great many of these deities are fond of the Bhagavā; not, however, for the Bhagavā's profound wisdom and pure virtue which they hardly are able to appreciate, but rather because they know that the appearance of a Buddha increases their power and weakens their opponents, the Asuras and other lower beings. They know that a Buddha makes many follow the good path and discourages them from following the evil path; and so he uplifts many to heaven and prevents many from downfall.

Sakka, however, is an exception altogether. He, as already indicated by the frequency of his visits to the Bhagavā, is sincerely devoted to the Buddha as the teacher of deliverance and aspires after the goal proclaimed by him.

One event that took place in his own realm evidently deeply impressed him and became the immediate cause of his present visit to the Bhagavā. He had seen two gods lower than himself, who formerly had been monks (bhikkhus) of the Bhagavā, suddenly and before his very sight transcend even him and pass into the Brahma-

world which is far higher than the realm of the Thirty-three. This happened after another god who likewise was a former disciple of the Bhagavā, reminded them of the Buddha-sāsana, the Dispensation of the Buddha, and of their former aspirations which, in the enjoyment of heavenly pleasures, they had almost forgotten.

Sakka evidently had lived up to the principles of the Dhamma and had succeeded in purifying his mind from grosser defilements. His questions are put with great thoughtfulness and skill, and the profound answers were received with the joy that arises from understanding.

It is by the understanding of the Bhagavā's replies that Sakka, king of the Thirty-three gods, attains to Sotāpatti, the first stage of Sainthood, and joyfully proclaims his achievement. He sees now his possible future lives (which, for a Sotāpanna, cannot exceed seven in number) reduced to two at the most: one as a man, where he possibly will achieve sainthood, or, failing that, he will become an Anāgāmī, Once-returner, spending his last life among the deities of the Pure Abodes (Suddhāvāsā).

Sakka's attainment of Sotāpatti during this discourse gives deep significance to this sutta, and it forms a striking contrast to the elaborate frame-work of our text that depicts, in a sometimes humorous way, a world of ease and superficiality.

SAKKA'S QUEST

1. Thus I heard. Once the Bhagavā[1] dwelt in Magadha, to the east of Rājagaha, in the Indasāla Grotto, on the Vediya-mountain, to the north of the Brahmin-village Ambasanda. At that time there arose in Sakka, the king of gods, a desire to see the Bhagavā and he thought to himself: "Where may the Bhagavā at present abide, the Arahant, Sammā Sambuddha, the Holy One, fully enlightened?" And he beheld the Bhagavā staying in Magadha, to the east of Rājagaha, in the Indasāla Grotto, on the Vediya-mountain, to the north of the Brahmin-village Ambasanda.

2. And Sakka, the king of gods, addressed the gods of the Thirty-three and Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba: "Sirs, the Bhagavā dwells in Magadha, to the east of Rājagaha. What, sirs, if we were to go and see the Bhagavā, the Arahant, Sammā-Sambuddha?" "So be it! and good luck unto you!" said the gods of the Thirty-three and Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba, in assent to Sakka, the king of gods; and Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba, took his lyre of red vilva-wood and followed in attendance on Sakka, the king of gods.

And Sakka, the king of gods, surrounded by the gods of the Thirty-three and attended by Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba, had, as quickly as a strong man might stretch out the bent arm or draw in the arm stretched out, vanished from the heaven of the Thirty-three and appeared in Magadha, to the east of Rājagaha, on the Vediya-mountain, to the north of the Brahmin-village Ambasanda.

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1. Bhagavā 'the Exalted One," is a frequent appellation of the Buddha.

3. And, verily, at that time the Vediya-mountain together with the Brahmin-village Ambasanda was bathed in a splendid radiance, as if through the heavenly power of the gods. And the people round about in the villages said: "As if set one fire the Vediya-mountain shines to-day! As if burning and blazing! What may have happened to-day to the Vediya-mountain that it is bathed in a splendid radiance, together with the Brahmin-village Ambasanda—as if through the heavenly power of the gods?" And they were amazed, with hair standing on end.

4. Now Sakka, the king of gods, addressed Pañca-sikha, the young Gandhabba; "Hard of access, my dear Pañcasikha, are Tathāgatas (Perfect Ones) to folks like us; mostly are they in retreat, absorbed in meditation, delighted therein. What, my dear Pañcasikha, if you first were to gain over the Bhagavā? Gained over by you, my dear, we afterwards shall draw near to see the Bhagava, the Arahant, Sammā-Sambuddha.',— "So be it! and good luck unto you;" said Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba, in assent to Sakka, the king of gods, took his lyre of red vilva-wood and approached the Indasāla Grotto.

Having drawn near, he thought to himself: "From here it will be neither too far nor too near for the Bhagavā to hear the song", and he stood aside. Standing aside, Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba, let his lyre of red vilva-wood be heard and a song alluding to the Buddha, the Dhamma, to Arahants, and — to love.

6. The song being over, the Bhagavā addressed Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba: "The sound of your

strings, Pañcasikha, harmonizes with that of your song, and the sound of your song with that of your strings; but, verily, Pañcasikha, your strings neither go beyond your song, nor does your song go beyond your strings. — But when, Pañcasikha, did you compose these stanzas alluding to the Buddha, the Dhamma, Arahants and to love?"

—"There was a time, Lord, when the Bhagavā dwelt at Uruvelā, on the bank of the Nerañjarā-river, at the foot of the goatherds' banyan-tree, soon after his supreme enlightenment. At that very time, Lord, was I enamoured of Baddhā Suriya-vaccasā, the daughter of Timbaru, King of Gandhabbas. This girl, however, Lord, was in love with another, with Sikkhaddhī, the son of the charioteer Mātalī, for whom she longed. Since I could not win that girl by any means whatsoever, I took my lyre of red vilva-wood approached the abode of Timbaru, king of Gandhabbas, and, having drawn near, let my lyre of red vilva-wood be heard and the song alluding to the Buddha, the Dhamma, Arahants and to love.

7. "The song being over, Baddhā Suryiya-vaccasā addressed me: I did not see yet, sir that Bhagavā face to face. However, I have heard of the Bhagavā when being to dance at the pleasure-hall of the Thirty-three gods. Since you, sir, spoke in praise of that Bhagavā, let there be a meeting between us to-day.'—And so, lord, there was a meeting between that girl and me; but don't let me speak on this any further."—

8. Now Sakka, the king of gods, thought to himself: "Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba, is in pleasant conversation with the Bhagavā and the Bhagavā with him." And he addressed Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba: "My dear Pañcasikha, you now pay my respects to the Bhagavā

and say: 'Sakka, Lord, the king of gods, with his ministers and suite pays homage at the feet of the Bhagavā." "So be it! and good luck unto you!" said Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba, in assent to Sakka, the king of gods, and did as requested.

"Happiness be unto Sakka, the king of gods, and his ministers and suite! For desirous of happiness are gods and men, Asuras, Nagas, Gandhabbas and other common folks." This is the way Tathāgatas greet these hosts of great power.

So greeted, Sakka, the king of gods, entered the Bhagavā's Grotto of the Indasala, saluted the Bhagavā and stood aside, and so did the gods of the Thirty-three and Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba.

9. But verily, at that time those uneven spots of the Indasala Grotto had become even, the narrow spaces widened, the darkness vanished, and light had arisen - as if through the heavenly power of the gods.

Thereupon the Bhagavā addressed Sakka, the king of gods: "Wonderful is this, quite wonderful, that the venerable Kosiya, with so much work to do, despite his many obligations, yet has come here!"

—"For a long time, Lord, was I desirous of seeing the Bhagavā; but engaged in many activities on behalf of the Thirty-three gods, I was not able to come. However, Lord, on one occasion when the Bhagavā was dwelling in Sāvatthī, in the Bower of the Salala creeper, I went to see the Bhagavā.

10. "But at that very time, Lord, the Bhagavā was seated in a state of absorption, and Bhuñjatī of Vessavana's suite, with clasped hands saluting the Bhagavā stood near.

Then I, addressing Bhuñjatī, said: Sister, you pay my respects to the Bhagavā and say: 'Sakka, Lord, the king of gods, with his ministers and suite pays homage at the feet of the Bhagavā.' To my request Bhuñjatī replied: 'Sir, it is not the proper time now to see the Bhagavā: the Bhagavā is in seclusion.'—'Well, sister, you then may salute the Bhagavā in my name after the Bhagavā has arisen from that absorption.' Did, Lord, that sister salute the Bhagavā, and does the Bhagavā remember her words?" —"That sister, king of gods, did salute me, and I do remember her words. I had arisen from that absorption through the sound of the venerable's chariot-wheels."

11.—"From those gods, Lord, who were born before us in the realm of the Thirty-three, I have heard that whenever Tathāgatas arise in the world, Arahants, Sammā-Sambuddhas, the heavenly hosts grow in number and the Asura hosts decrease. And that is true, Lord, I myself have realized it, for since the Tathāgata, the Arahant, Sammā-Sambuddha, has appeared in the world, the heavenly hosts grew in number and the Asura hosts decreased.

"Take this instance, Lord. There was, Lord, a daughter of the Sakyan clan in Kapilavatthu, her name was Gopikā. She was devoted to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṇgha and was of accomplished virtue: disgusted with the womanly nature, she cultivated the nature of a man, and at the breaking up of the body, after death, she rose to a happy state, to the heavenly world, to community with the gods of the Thirty-three, and obtained sonship by us. And there they know him as 'Gopaka, son of the gods; Gopaka, son of the gods.'

"But, Lord, three bhikkhus who had led the holy life under the Bhagavā, were born in the lower rank of Gandhabbas. They enjoy the five sense pleasures surrounding them, and they come to wait upon and minister to us. This being so, Gopaka, the son of gods, admonished them: 'Where were your ears I wonder, sirs, when you listened to the doctrine of the Bhagavā? I, having been only a female lay-disciple, am now a god, son of Sakka, the king of gods. Ye, however, sirs, who led the holy life under the Bhagavā have risen but to the lower rank of Gandhabbas. A sad sight indeed is this to us that we should see the followers of the higher life appearing in the lower rank of Gandhabbas!

Of those, Lord, admonished by Gopaka, the son of the gods, two gods regained mindfulness at once, and passed into the world of Brahma Purohita, and only one god remained in sensual pleasures,"

12. GOPAKA'S [1] SONG

"Gopikā, the Seer's devotee [2] was I.
Faithful to the Buddha and the Law,
To the Community I happily ministered.
Untiringly conforming to the Buddha's Norm,
To Tavatiṁsa's realm I rose, am Sakka's son,
Of power great and splendour great,
As 'Gopaka' they know me here.
But, among Gandhabba-folks,
The monks of Gotama I saw
To whom we formerly, at home,
Seated at the bhikkhus' feet,
Had offered food and drink.

---

1 Gopaka is the masculine, Gopikā the feminine form of the name.
2 Upāsikā: a female lay-disciple of a Buddha.

Why did ye, sirs, not grasp
The Buddha's Law, well-propounded,
Evident, and recognized
By them who have eyes to see?

From you it was I too have learnt
This teaching fair. Am Sakka's son,
Of power great and splendour great,
To Tavatiṁsa's realm I rose.

But ye, though choosing what is best,
The unsurpassed Life of Purity,
Have now appeared in lower rank:
Inappropriate your rebirth seems!

A sad sight indeed is this to us—
The followers of the Higher Life
Appearing but in lower rank:
As Gandhabba-folks, O sirs,
You come to wait upon us gods!

I stayed at home, yet behold the difference:
A woman then, to-day I am a man, a god,
And heavenly delights are mine!'

Gopaka, stalwart of the Norm,
Thus incited awe in them;
Falling in with him, they spoke:
'Well then,
An effort let us make, let's strive on!
Lest the servants we would be of others here!'

And two of them put forth their energy,
The Norm of Gotama they called to mind;

They cleansed their thoughts without delay,
And realized the wretchedness of carnal joys.

As an elephant might break his chains,
So they cast off the bonds of fleshly lusts,
The yokes of Mara, hard to overcome,
And left behind the realm of Thirty-three.

Putting an end to passion,
The stainless heroes transcended all:
The gods who were assembled
In Tavatiṁsa's pleasure-hall,
Together with their chief and queens.

Thrilled with this sight, Vāsavā,
Lord over gods, amid celestial hosts,
Spoke this:
'Alas! These, born in lower rank,
They leave behind the Thirty-three!'

Beholding him, the deeply agitated,
Gopaka spoke this to Vāsavā:
'The Buddha verily is god among men,
Conqueror over sense-desire,
The Wise of Sakyans' clan!

These sons of His, on passing thence,
Their insight lost, but got it back through me:
Of those who stayed with us,
One still remains among Gandhabba-folks.
But two trace out the path to Perfect Knowledge,
Their minds set firm, and they now pity us!
For in whatever disciple
The Law should manifest itself:
Doubts do not beset his course.

We hail the Buddha who has crossed the flood
And cut off doubts, the Victor, Chief of Men.
Here from Thee they learnt the Norm—
A blessing verily it was to them :
Two to Brahma-Purohita's excellence attained!

We too have come, O Lord,
This Law, it is our quest!
See us appearing here:
Would, O Lord, that we
A question from the Bhagavā may ask!'

13. Thereupon the Bhagava thought to himself: "Long indeed has this Sakka been pure in mind; whatever question he will ask me it will be to good purpose, not vain; and the answer I shall give, he will quickly understand." And so the Bhagavā addreseed Sakka, the king of gods, by this Stanza:

"Free art thou, O Vāsava,
To ask at will thy questions;
And all thy problems I shall solve for thee."

II

1. Received into audience, Sakka, the king of gods, put the first question to the Bhagavā: "What bond, O Lord, holds gods and men, Asuras, Nāgas, Gandhabbas and other common folks who aspire for living in amity, in harmlessness, in clemency, in benevolence, without hostility, but yet who live in hostility, in violence, in cruelty, in malevolence, not in friendliness?" This was the question Sakka, the king of gods, put to the Bhagavā. The Bhagavā made answer:

"The bond, O king of gods, is envy and selfishness: bound by the bond of envy and selfishness, gods and men, Asuras, Nāgas, Gandhabbas and other common folks live in hostility, in violence, in cruelty, in malevolence; not in friendliness—even though they aspire for living in amity, in harmlessners, in benevolence, without hostility." In this manner the Bhagavā answered the question put by Sakka, the king of gods. Edified, Sakka, the king of gods, approved of the Bhagavā's saying and took delight in it: "Thus it is, O Blessed One. Conquered are my doubts, gone my uncertainty, having heard the Bhagavā's answer to this question."

Comment. Sakka obviously is concerned about the hostility as it exists beetween a great many beings of the sensual sphere (*kāma-loka*): between geds, men, Asuras, Nāgas, Gandhabbas and other common folks But also something else did he observe. Animosity of any kind, be it open warfare or a single malicious thought, is unpleasant to anyone afflicted with it, and so beings resolve not to surrender to it: but for the most part they fail utterly—even as a habitual drunkard cannot by a mere resolution possibly abstain from intoxicants. And here, in the disparity between a mental resolution and the inability to follow it up, Sakka saw the problem; and the Buddha reveals to him that this is due not to something outward, but to conditions inherent in beings themselves: to envy and selfishness.

Of mental defilements, envy and selfishness (*issā-macchariya*) are the most vital, existing in almost all beings of the sensual sphere in some degree or other. These defilements, however hidden they may be, by their very nature trespass on the domain of others, and so introduce ill-feeling which, at any occasion, may result in open hostility.

Sakka at once comprehends the importance of the Bhagavā's answer. He is jubilant to find the remedy to what so sorely aggrieved him, namely: to purify one's mind from envy and selfishness. Here too his lofty spirit is revealed. It must be remembered that Sakka, as a deity. extremely seldom, perhaps once in millions of years, personally experiences the harmful result of envy and selfishness, namely animosity. His life for the most part is full of harmony because of the comparative weakness of these defilements within him. But Sakka, having once fully understood that envy and selfishness are evil, is no longer interested in a more or less of them: he wants to see nothing but the final destruction of envy and selfishness.

So deeply concerned is he with the matter that he now begins a radical inquiry into the conditions which bring on envy and selfishness and the conditions necessary for the eradication of these defilements. He does this with the admirable skill that was already evident from his first question.

2. And Sakka, the king of gods, approving of the Bhagavā's saying and delighting in it, put a further question: "But what, O Lord, brings on envy and selfishness, what is their origin, from what do they spring, what gives rise to them? What being present, envy and selfishness appear? What not being present, envy and selfishness do not appear?"

—"What brings on envy and selfishness, O king of gods, are likes and dislikes. Likes and dislikes are their origin, from likes and dislikes do they spring, likes and dislikes give rise to them, Likes and dislikes being present, envy and selfishness appear. Likes and dislikes not being present, envy and sefishness do not appear."

—"But what, O Lord, brings on likes and dislikes, what is their origin, from what do they spring, what gives rise to them? What being present, likes and dislikes appear? What not being present, likes and dislikes do not appear?"

—"What brings on likes and dislikes, O king of gods, is desire. Desire is their origin, from desire do they spring; desire gives rise to them. Desire being present, likes and dislikes appear. Desire not being present, likes and dislikes do not appear."

—"But what, O Lord, brings on desire, what is its origin, from what does it spring, what gives rise to it? What being present, desire appears?' What not being present, desire does not appear ?"

—"What brings on desire, O king of gods, is (wrong) reflection.[1] Reflection is its origin, from reflection does it spring, reflection gives rise to it. Reflection being present, desire appears. Reflection not being present, desire does not appear."

—"But what, O Lord, makes for (wrong) reflection, what is its origin, from what does it spring, what gives rise to it? What being present, reflection appears? What not being present, reflection does not appear?"

—"What makes for (wrong) reflection, O king of gods, is multiplicity of perception. Multiplicity of perception is its origin, from multiplicity of perception does it spring, multiplicity of perception gives rise to it. Multiplicity of perception being present, reflection appears. Multiplicity of perception not being present, reflection does not appear."

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1. By reflection is meant here a thought influenced by *āsavas* (taints).

Comment. In this set of questions and answers the core of the Buddha's teaching is represented, the idea of conditionality (*paṭicca - samuppāda*), in a new formula: The condition of envy and selfishness (*issā-macchariya*) are likes and dislikes (*piyappiyā*), the condition of likes and dislikes is desire (*chanda*), the condition of desire is (wrong) reflection (*vitakka*), and the condition of reflection is multiplicity of perception (*papañca-saññā-saṅkha*). By the cessation of multifarious perception reflection ceases, by the cessation of reflection desire ceases, by the cessation of desire likes and dislikes cease, and by the cessation of likes and dislikes envy and selfishness are uprooted, and so all animosity.

The idea of conditionality (*paṭicca-samuppāda*) is known tc Sakka; that is evident from the way he questions. And it is indeed the profundity of Sakka's quest that has led to such philosophical heights. For now it has to be understood that envy and selfishness, and the hostility they imply, are so deep-rooted that their destruction ultimately becomes possible only when diversified perception ceases; in other words, envy and selfishness and hostility are inevitable facts of existence.

Multiplicity of perception is a simplified translation of *Papañca-saññā-sankhā*, a Pāli term difficult to translate. *Papaāca-saññā-sankhā* includes any perception that enters individual experience, anything perceived by mind or sense-faculties. *Papañca-saññā-sankhā* is the continual influx of multifarious perceptions which is evoked by, or finds response in craving. [1] It is the inner and outer world of an individual, dependent on former action (kamma), and the cause of fresh one.

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1 Dhammapada 254: 'Papañcabhiratā pajā, nippapañcā Tathāgatā, 'Mankind delights in diversity-but not Tathagatas'; i. e. variety of experience is the very thing commonly wanted.— Further references: Majjhima Nikāya 18; Sutta-Nipata 530, 874, 916.

The cessation of diversified perception thus really means the cessation of existence itself (=cessation of kamma), the ultimate goal, Nibbāna. And this is evident to Sakka at once. He has found the comprehensive outlook that appeals to him; now he wants to know how this can be brought about.

3. "And how, O Lord, must a bhikkhu conduct himself to be endowed with the path fit for leading to the dissolution of the continual influx of multifarions perceptions?"

—"Happiness, o king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. Sorrow too, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. And also indifference, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after.

"Happiness, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. And why? If one knows of a happiness: 'This happiness when followed after by me makes evil states (*akusala dhamma*) grow and good states (*kusala dhamma*) vanish', then that happiness, the happiness connected with worldliness, should not be followed after.[1] And again, if one knows of a happiness: 'This happiness when followed after by me makes evil states vanish and goods states grow', then that happiness, [the happiness that arises from truly understanding the evanescent nature of all phnomena, and the detachment connected with such an understanding][2], should

1. See Majjhima Nikāya 137 (pleasent, etc., feelings connected with worldliness and with renunciation).

2. Explanatory addition by the translator.

be followed after. This may be done with reflection and discursive thinking (*savitakka savicāra*)[1] or without reflection and discursive thinking (*a-vitakka avicāra*). Of the two that without reflection and discursive thinking is the better.[2] Happiness, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. If this was said, it was said for that reason.

"Sorrow too, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. And why? If one knows of a sorrow: 'This sorrow when followed after by me makes evil states grow and good states vanish' — then that sorrow [the frustration sensual indulgence inevitably results in] should not be followed after. And again, if one knows of a sorrow: 'This sorrow when followed after by me makes evil states vanish and good states grow'—then that sorrow [the sorrow of a holy disciple who craves for accomplishment but has not yet achieved the destruction of the taints (*āsava*)] should be followed after. This may be done with reflection and discursive thinking or without reflection and discursive thinking. Of the two that without reflection and discursive thinking is the better. Sorrow too, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. If this was said, it was said for that reason.

"And also indifference, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold: as to be followed after and not to be followed after. And why? If one knows of an indifference, 'This

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1. This refers to beneficial (*kusala*) reflection on the normal level of consciousness and to the tranquillized and reduced reflection existing in the first Absorption (*jhāna*).

2. This refers to the second and third state of Absorption where reflection and discursive thinking are absent.

indifference when followed after by me makes evil states grow and good states vanish' — then that indifference [the stupidity and dullness of an ordinary man who remains indifferent, intoxicated by delusion] should not be followed after. And again, if one knows of an indifference : 'This indifference when followed after by me makes evil states vanish and good states grow' — then that indifference [the true equanimity of a holy disciple, arising from insight and detachment] should be followed after. This may be done with reflection and discursive thinking or without reflection and discursive thinking.[1] Of the two that without reflection is the better. Indifference too, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. If this was said, it was said for that reason.

"It is thus, O king of gods, that a bhikkhu must conduct himself to become fit for the path leading to the dissolution of the continual influx of multifarious perceptions."

In this manner it was that Bhagavā answered the question put by Sakka, the king of gods. Edified, Sakka, the king of gods, approved of the Bhagavā's saying and took delight in it: "Thus it is, O Bhagavā! thus it is, O Sugata! Conquered are my doubts, gone is my uncertainty, having heard the Bhagavā's answer to this question."

Comment. A task such as the dissolution of diversified perception rooted in diversifying craving — is but one of the many courses of training towards the same ultimate goal of Nibbāna. It can be attempted only by a bhikkhu, that much is quite clear to Sakka. That is, he does not hope for its accomplishment in his present

1. The latter alternative refers to the fourth Absorption.

life as a deity, but dedicates himself to the life of a bhikkhu in a birth to come which will be in the human world, as he himself later announces.

It was said earlier that multiplicity of perception (*papañca-saññā-saṅkhā*) comprises the whole of possible experience, for every single perception, be it a form, a sound, an odour, a taste, a touch or an idea, is connected with one of the three feelings, either with happiness (*somanassa*), or with sorrow (*domanassa*), or with indifference (*upekhā*). An untrained mind does neither comprehend this fact nor, and still less so, does he attempt to control the immensity of impressions, but indiscriminately follows after whatever feeling he gets. But the Buddha declares that not any type of happiness, not any type of sorrow and not any type of indifference should be pursued, whilst, on the other hand, a certain happiness, a certain unhappiness and a certain indifference should be cultivated, as indicated in the context above. This is the standard that a trained mind applies to feelings: whether their pursuit is conducive to Nibbāna or not.—

And so the path which the Buddha shows to Sakka is a radical re-evaluation of all experience, taking place in a strenuous course of individual application. And this is *bhāvanā*, a 'making become', bringing into being, an actualization of the Dhamma which has to be pursued until what is now dimly perceived or not at all, becomes a dominant mental force through which one acts effortlessly, in perfect accordance with reality—freed from taints (*āsava*).

And Sakka has understood this too. There remain to be clarified for him the moral conduct obligatory on a bhikkhu and the restraint of sense-faculties.

4. And Sakka, the king of gods, approving of the Bhagavā's saying and delighting in it, put a further question: "And how, O Lord, must a bhikkhu conduct himself to be endowed with the moral restraint obligatory on him."[1]

—"Bodily conduct, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. Conduct by speech too, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. And also pursuit (*pariyesanā*), O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after.

"Bodily conduct, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold as to be followed after and not to be followed after. And why? If one knows of a bodily conduct: 'This bodily conduct when followed after by me makes evil states grow and good states vanish'—then that bodily conduct, [killing, stealing and sexual acts] should not be followed after. And again, if one knows of a bodily conduct: 'This bodily conduct when followed after by me makes evil states vanish and good states grow'—then that bodily conduct [abstaining from killing, stealing and sexual acts] should be followed after. Bodily conduct, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. If this was said, it was said for that reason.

"Conduct by speech too, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. And why? If one knows of a conduct by speech: 'This conduct by speech when followed after by me makes evil states grow and good states vanish'—then that conduct by speech [lying, slander, harsh words and frivolous talk]

1. pāṭimokkha.

should not be followed after. And again, if one knows of a conduct by speech: 'This conduct by speech when followed after by me makes evil states vanish and good states grow' — then that conduct by speech [abstaining from lying, slander, harsh words and frivolous talk] should be followed after. Conduct by speech too, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. If this was said, it was said for that reason.

"And also pursuit, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. And why? If one knows of a pursuit: 'This pursuit when followed after by me makes evil states grow and good states vanish' — then that pursuit [wordly pursuit; *āmisa pariyesanā*] should not be followed after. And again, if one knows of a pursuit: 'This pursuit when followed after by me makes evil states vanish and good states grow'— then that pursuit [pursuit of the truth; *dhamma-pariyesanā*] should be followed after. And also pursuit, O king of gods, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. If this was said, it was said for that reason.

"It is thus, O king of gods, that a bhikkhu must conduct himself to be endowed with the moral restraint obligatory on him."

In this manner the Bhagavā answered the question put by Sakka, the king of gods. Edified, Sakka, the king of gods, approved of the Bhagavā's saying and took delight in it: "Thus it is, O Bhagavā! thus it is, O Sugata! Conquered are my doubts, gone is my uncertainty, having heard the Bhagavā's answer to this question."

5. And Sakka, the king of gods, approving of the Bhagavā's saying and delighted in it, put a further question:

"And how, O Lord, must a bhikkhu conduct himself to be endowed with restraint of his sense faculties?"

—"Form, O king of gods, perceptible by the eye, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. Sound, O king of gods, perceptible by the ear, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. Odour, O king of gods, perceptible by the nose, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. Taste, O king of gods, perceptible by the tongue, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. Touch, O king of gods, perceptible by the body, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after. Mind-object, O king of gods, perceptible by the mind, I declare to be twofold, as to be followed after and not to be followed after."

When this was said, Sakka, the king of gods, spoke thus to the Bhagavā: "The meaning of what was said in brief by the Bhagavā, O Lord, I understand in full thus: A form, O Lord, perceptible by the eye, which makes evil states grow and good states vanish, should not be followed after; and again, O Lord, a form, perceptible by the eye, which makes evil states vanish and good states grow, should be followed after. A sound, O Lord, perceptible by the ear, which makes evil states grow and good states vanish, should, not be followed after; and again, O Lord, a sound perceptible by the ear, which makes evil states vanish and good states grow, should be followed after. An odour, O Lord, perceptible by the nose, which makes evil states grow and good states vanish, should not be followed after; and again, O Lord, an odour, perceptible by the nose, which makes evil states vanish and good states grow, should be

followed after. A taste, O Lord, perceptible by the tongue, which makes evil states grow and good states vanish, should not be followed after; and again, O Lord, a taste, perceptible by the tongue, which makes evil states vanish and good states grow, should be followed after. A touch, O Lord, perceptible by the body, which makes evil states grow and good states vanish, should not be followed after; and again, O Lord, a touch, perceptible by the body, which makes evil states vanish and good states grow, should be followed after. A mind-object, O Lord, perceptible by the mind, which makes evil states grow and good states vanish, should not be followed after; and again, O Lord, a mind-object, perceptible by the mind, which makes evil states vanish and good states grow, should be followed after.

"Thus do I understand the meaning in full, O Lord, of what was said in brief by the Bhagavā. Conquered are my doubts, gone is my uncertainty, having heard the Bhagavā's answer to this question."

6. And Sakka, the king of gods, approving of the Bhagavā's saying and delighting in it, put a further question: "Have, O Lord, all Samaṇas and Brahmaṇas the same doctrine, the same moral code, the same aspiration, the same aim?"—"They have not, O king of gods."—"But why, O Lord, have they not?"—"Many are the conditions of mind, O king of gods, various are the conditions of mind existing in this world. To whatever condition, out of these, the beings adhere, to that only they obstinately and tenaciously cling, maintaining: 'Only this is truth, anything else is folly!' Therefore do not all Samaṇas and Brahmaṇas have the same doctrine, the same moral code, the same aspiration, the same aim."

—"But, O Lord, are all Samaṇas and Brahmaṇas absolutely perfect, absolutely secure, absolutely purified, of absolutely highest achievements?"

—"They are not, O king of gods."—"But why, O Lord, are they not?"—"Those Samaṇas and Brahmaṇas, O king of gods, who have achieved deliverance through the destruction of craving, they only are absolutely perfect, absolutely secure, absolutely purified, of absolutely highest achievement. Therefore are not all Samaṇas and Brahmaṅas absolutely perfect, absolutely secure, absolutely purified, of absolutely highest achievement."

In this manner it was that the Bhagavā answered the question put by Sakka, the king of gods. Edified, Sakka, the king of gods, approved of the Bhagavā's saying and took delight in it: "Thus it is, O Bhagavā! thus it is, O Sugata! Conquered are my doubts, gone is my uncertainty, having heard the Bhagavā's answer to this question."

7. And Sakka, the king of gods, approving of the Bhagavā's saying and delighted in it, addressed the Bhagavā and spoke: "Passion,[1] O Lord, is disease, passion is a cancer, passion is a dart. Passion drags a man about from one existence to another, so that he finds himself now up above, then down below. These problems, O Lord, which were rankling in me for a long time, and to which other Samaṇas and Brāhmaṅas have lent no ear, these the Bhagavā has solved for me, and has removed the dart of doubt and uncertainty."

—"Then, O king of gods, do you remember to have asked these questions from other Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas?" —"I do remember, O Lord, to have done so."—"And in

1. *ejā* (drive; urge) is a synonym of *taṇhā*, 'craving'.

which way did they explain them to you, O king of gods? If this is not inconvenient to you, you may speak."—"Not, O Lord, is it inconvenient to me when the Bhagavā is present or others like him."—"Then, O king of gods, you may speak."

"Whom I deemed to be Samaṇas and Brāhmaṇas, O Lord, were hermits, living solitary in the forest. Them I approached and put these questions. But they made no answer, but rather asked of me a counter-questions: 'What is the name of the venerable one?' Thus asked, I made answer: 'I am, sirs, Sakka, the king of gods.' And they went on questioning me: 'Pray, by what deed did the venerable king of gods rise to that state?' And I expounded to them the Dhamma, as it was heard and understood by me, and they were satisfied—even with that little: 'Verily, we have seen Sakka the king of gods! and what we asked of him that he has answered!' And they actually became my disciples—rather than I the follower of them.

"But I, O Lord, am the follower of the Bhagavā: A stream-enterer[1] am I, delivered from downfall, assured, bound for enlightenment."

—"Do you remember, O king of gods, ever before to have experienced such a feeling of satisfaction and happiness?"—"I do remember it, O Lord."—"And in which way, O king of gods, do you remember it?"—"Once, O Lord, there took place a fight between gods and Asuras; in this fight, O Lord, the gods were victorious, and the Asuras were defeated. The fight being over, the battle being won, I thought to myself: 'What there is of heavenly power and what there is of Asura-power, both will

1. *Sotāpanna*; the first of the four stages of sainthood.

now be enjoyed by the gods !' And so, O Lord, that feeling of satisfaction and happiness was mixed up with thoughts of war and battle, not leading to disenchantment, not leading to dispassion, not leading to cessation, not leading to higher knowledge, not leading to enlightenment, not leading to Nibbāna.

"But this feeling of satisfaction and happiness, O Lord, I experience, having heard the Dhamma from the Bhagavā, is not mixed up with thoughts of war and battle. This solely leads to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to inner calm, to higher knowledge, to enlightenment and to Nibbāna."

8.—"But, O king of gods, what reasons do you perceive to announce the experience of such a feeling of satisfaction and happiness?"—"Six reasons do I perceive, O Lord:

While living here itself,
Born a god as I am—
Fresh potency of life I win.
This I announce to you, O Lord.

This is, O Lord, the first reason.

Departed from the realm of gods,
Heavenly potency being spent,
Mindfully I choose the womb
In which to be reborn my mind delights.

This is, O Lord, the second reason.

Unconfused in understanding,
Delighted in the Buddha's Law,
Wisely shall I dwell,
Clearly comprehending, mindful.

This is, O Lord, the third reason.

And if, while faring along wisely,
Enlightenment should be my part:
I then would dwell in perfect knowledge,
And thus achieve the end.

This is, O Lord, the fourth reason.

Or if, departed from the realm of men,
Human potency being spent,
Again I should become a god:
Chiefest I would be of all the worlds divine.

This is, O Lord, the fifth reason.

Among the deities most sublime,
Among Akaniṭṭha so glorious,
I then would spend the last turn of life;
That abode too awaits me.

This is, Lord, the sixth reason.

These are, O Lord, the six reasons I perceive to announce the experience of such a feeling of satisfaction and happiness."

9. SAKKA'S SONG.

"Seeking the Tatahāgata, I wandered long,
My mind in doubt, steeped in perplexity,
With problems none could solve.

The Samanas of lonely dwellings,
Their company I sought, sat near:
Buddhas I imagined them to be.—

'What makes men reach accomplishment,
What makes them fail?' This I asked of them;
But neither way nor method did they know.

And when they came to understand
That Sakka of the gods it was
Who had appeared to them,
They even asked of me
What skill brought me the fair result.

I taught them what I knew,
The lore preserved among the folk,
And they rejoiced and said:
'Vāsava it was we saw!'

But the Buddha I beheld to-day!
Conqueror over Doubts:
Freed am I from fear,
In finding him who truly knows!

Remover of the dart of craving,
Enlightened, Man without Compare:
Him the hero great I worship,
Him, the Kinsman of the Sun!

The worship once I offered Brahma,
Together with the mighty gods,
We offer now to Thee, O Lord:

The Enlightened One Thou art indeed,
Teacher Thou beyond compare:
Throughout the world of gods and men
Thy equal none can find!"

10. And Sakka, the king of gods, addressed Pañcasikha, the young Gandhabba: "Of great service have you been to me, my dear Pañcasikha, in so far as you first gained over the Bhagavā; gained over by you, my dear, we afterwards drew near to see the Bhagavā, the Arahant, Sammā-Sambuddha. I appoint you to your paternal heritage: you shall be king over Gandhabbas, and Baddha Suriyavaccasā, the Sun maiden longed for by you, I give her to you."

And Sakka, the king of gods, having touched the earth with his hand, made three times this solemn utterance:

Namo tassa Bhagavato, Arahato, Sammā-Sambuddhassa!
Namo tassa Bhagavato, Arahato, Sammā-Sambuddhassa!
Namo tasse Bhagavato, Arahato, Sammā-Sambuddhassā'ti!"

"Honour to Him,
The Exalted One, the Worthy, the Fully Enlightened!

Honour to Him,
The Exalted One, the Worthy, the Fully Enlightened!

Honour to Him,
The Exalted One, the Worthy, the Fully Enlightened!"

And while this discourse had taken place, there arose in Sakka, the king of gods and also in another eighty thousand deities, the pure, spotless eye of the Dhamma;

"Yaṁ kiñci samudaya-dhammaṁ sabban taṁ nirodha-dhamman'ti."

"Every phenomenon-of-origin is a phenomenon-of-dissolution."

Such were the questions which Sakka, the king of gods, was invited to ask and were answered by the Bhagavā. Therefore is this exposition called 'The Questions of Sakka.'

ANATTA AND NIBBANA

Egolessness and Deliverance

BY

NYANAPONIKA THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

KANDY 1959 CEYLON

A slightly differing German version of this essay appeared in 1951 in the magazine "Die Einsicht". The English version was first published in the Quarterly "The Light of the Dhamma" Vol. IV, No. 3 (Rangoon 1957), under the title "Nibbana in the Light of the Middle Doctrine."

ANATTA AND NIBBANA

"This world, Kaccāna, usually leans upon a duality : upon (the belief in) existence or non-existence ..... Avoiding these two extremes, the Perfect One shows the doctrine in the middle : Dependent on Ignorance are the Kamma-formations.....By the cessation of Ignorance, Kamma-formations cease..."

(*Saṃyutta-Nikāya* 12, 15)

The saying of the Buddha quoted here, speaks of the duality (*dvayatā*) of existence (*atthitā*) and non-existence (*natthitā*). These two terms refer to the theories of eternalism (*sassata-diṭṭhi*) and annihilationism (*uccheda-diṭṭhi*) which are the basic misconceptions of actuality that occur again and in many variations, in the history of human thought. *Eternalism* is the belief in a permanent substance or entity, be it conceived as a multitude of individual souls or selves (created or not), as a monistic world-soul. a deity of any description, or as a combination of any of these notions. *Annihilationism*, on the other hand, believes in the temporary existence of separate selves or personalities, which are entirely destroyed or dissolved after death. Accordingly, the two key words of the text quoted above, refer (1) to the absolute, *i.e.* eternal, existence of any assumed substance or entity, and (2) to the ultimate, absolute annihilation of separate entities conceived as impermanent, *i.e.* their non-existence after the end of their life-span. These two extreme views stand and fall with the assumption of something static of either permanent or impermanent nature. They will lose their basis entirely if life is seen in its true nature, as a continuous flux of material and mental processes arising from their appropriate conditions—a process which will cease only when these conditions are removed. This will explain why our text introduces here the

formula of Dependent Origination (*paṭicca-samuppāda*). and its reversal, Dependent Cessation.

Dependent *Origination*, being an unbroken process, excludes the assumption of an absolute Non-existence, or Naught, that is supposed to terminate, by necessity, individual existence ; while the qualifying word *dependent* indicates that there is also no absolute, *i.e.* independent existence, no static Being *per se*, but only an evanescent arising of phenomena, dependent on likewise evanescent conditions.

Dependent *Cessation* excludes the belief in absolute and permanent Existence, and shows, on the other hand, that there is no automatic lapse into Non-existence, but that the cessation of relative existenco is likewise a conditioned occurrence.

Thus these teachings of Dependent Origination and Dependent Cessation are a true Doctrine in the Middle, transcending the extremes of Existence and Non-existence.

Thinking by way of such conceptual contrasts as Existence and Non-existence, has, however, a powerful hold on man because that way of thinking is perpetually nourished by several strong roots, deeply embedded in the human mind. The strongest of them is the practical and theoretical assumption of an Ego or self, the existence of which as a separate entity is taken for granted. It is the powerful wish for a preservation and perpetuation of the personality (or a refined version of it), which is at the background of all the numerous varieties of eternalistic belief. But even with people who have discarded eternalistic creeds or theories, the instinctive belief in the uniqueness and importance of their particular personalities is still so strong that for them the end of the personality, *i.e.*

death, is tantamount to complete annihilation or non-existence. Thus the belief in a self is responsible not only for eternalism. but also for the annihilationist view *(uccheda-diṭṭhi)* which may express itself either in the popular unphilosophical materialism ("death is the end of it"), or in elaborate materialist theories.

There are also other contributory roots of these notions of existence and non-existence which, however, are closely connected with the main root of Ego-belief. There is, for instance, a *linguistic* root, consisting in the basic structure of language (subject and predicate, noun and adjective) and its tendency to simplify affirmative and negative statements for the sake of easy communication and orientation. The structural features of language and linguistic habits of simplified statements have exercised a subtle, but strong influence on our way of thinking, making us inclined to assume that "there must be a thing, if there is a word for it."

For holding these one-sided views, there may be also *emotional* reasons, expressive of basic attitudes to life. They may reflect the moods of optimism and pessimism, hope and despair, the wish to feel secure through metaphysical support, or the desire to live without inhibitions in a materialistically conceived universe. The theoretical views of eternalism and annihilationism may well change during life-time, together with the corresponding moods or emotional needs.

There is also an *intellectual* root : the speculative and theorizing preoccupation of certain minds*, creating various and elaborate philosophical systems in which these and other conceptual opposites are played off against each other with an ingenuity that provides great satisfaction to those engaged in these thought-constructions.

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* They correspond to the *diṭṭhi-carita*, the theorizing type of character, in Buddhist Psychology.

From these brief remarks, one will be able to appreciate the strength and variety of the forces which induce man to think, feel and speak in the way of these opposites, the belief in either absolute existence or absolute non-existence. It was, therefore, with good reason that the Buddha said, in our introductory passage, that men *usually* lean upon that duality. Hence we need not be surprised that even Nibbāna, the Buddhist's goal of deliverance, has been wrongly interpreted in the sense of either of these extremes : existence or non-existence. But these rigid conceptual terms cannot do justice to the dynamic nature of actuality, and still less to Nibbāna which has been declared to be supramundane (*lokuttara*) and beyond conceptional thinking (*atakkāvacara*).

In the early days, when knowledge of Buddhist teachings had just reached the West, most of the writers and scholars took Nibbāna as *non-existence*, pure and simple, with a few exceptions like Schopenhauer and Max Mueller. Consequently, Western writers all too lightly condemned Buddhism as a nihilistic doctrine, teaching annihilation as its highest goal, which these writers described as philosophically absurd and ethically reprehensible. Similar statements can still be read nowadays in prejudiced non-Buddhist literature. The pendular reaction to that view was the conception of Nibbāna as *existence*, in the sense of Pure Being, Pure Being, Pure Consciousness, Pure Self, or any other metaphysical concept, seeing it in the light of religious and metaphysical notions familiar in the West and in the East alike.

But even Buddhist thought could not always keep clear of a lop-sided interpretation of Nibbāna. This happened even in early times : the sect of the Sautrantikas had a rather negativistic view of Nibbāna, while the Mahayanistic

conceptions of Buddhafields (*Buddha-ksetra*), Primordial (*Ādi-*) Buddha, Tathāgatagarbha, etc , favoured a positive-metaphysical interpretation.

It is therefore not surprising that both these extremes are also advocated by modern Buddhist authors. In Buddhist countries of the East, however, there is now, as far as known to the writer, not a single Buddhist school or sect that favours a nihilistic interpretation of Nibbāna. Contrary to erroneous opinions, voiced mainly by uninformed or prejudiced Western authors, Theravāda, *i.e.* the tradition prevalent in Burma, Ceylon, Thailand, etc., is definitely averse to a view that regards Nibbāna as mere extinction. The first main section of this essay will substantiate this statement.

For reasons mentioned earlier, it is not easy, indeed, always to steer clear of those two opposite views of existence and non-existence, and to keep closely to the Middle Path shown by the Buddha, *i.e.* the teaching of Dependent Origination and Dependent Cessation. Until that way of thinking, *i.e.* in terms of conditionality, has been fully absorbed in the texture of one's mind, constant watchfulness will be required against the mind slipping unawares into either of the two extreme views of eternalism and annihilationism, or coming too close to them. When discussing these questions, there is the danger of being carried away by one's own arguments and countering one extreme by its opposite. Therefore, in the treatment of that problem, great caution and self-criticism is required lest one may lose sight of the Middle Path.

It is therefore the primary purpose of this treatise to offer material for a clear demarcation of the Buddha's doctrine of Nibbāna from both misinterpretations of it. It is not the intention of these pages to encourage any speculations on the nature of Nibbāna, which are bound to be futile and may even prove to be detrimental to the endeavours for an actual attainment of it. According to an elucidation of the four Noble Truths, as found in the texts, Nibbāna, the third Truth, is to be realized (*sacchikātabbaṃ*), not to be understood (as the first Truth), nor to be developed (as the fourth Truth). It must also be emphasised here that it will be improper to use the material presented here, in a one-sided manner as an argument in favour of either of the extremes against the other one. Each of the two main sections of this treatise requires the other for its qualification and completion. It is hoped that the material from canonical and commentarial sources collected in these pages, will at least reduce the points of conflict between the opposing interpretations, by clarifying the position of Theravāda.

I. The nihilistic-negative extreme

§ 1

We shall first consider the basic work of post-canonical Theravāda literature, "The Path of Purification" (*Visuddhi-magga*), compiled in the 5th Century A. C. by the great commentator, Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa. This monumental work furnishes a comprehensive and systematic exposition of the principal Buddhist doctrines, derived from the Pāli Canon and ancient commentarial literature which partly incorporates material that may well go back to the earliest times of the teaching.

In that work, in the chapter (XVI) on the Faculties and Truths, in the section dealing with the 3rd Noble Truth, we find a lengthy disquisition on Nibbāna. It is striking that the polemical part of it is exclusively directed against what we have called the "nihilistic-negative extreme" in the interpretation of Nibbāna. We cannot be sure about the reason for that limitation, since there is no explicit statement on it. It is, however, possible that the Venerable Buddhaghosa (or perhaps already the traditional material he used) was keen that the Theravāda teachings on that subject should be well distinguished from those of a prominent contemporary sect, the Sautrantikas, which, in other respects, was close to the general standpoint of Theravāda. It belonged to that group of schools which we suggest should be called *Sāvaka-yāna* (following the *early* Mahayanist nomenclature), instead of the derogatory Hinayāna. The Theravādins obviously did not want to be included in the accusation of nihilism, raised by the Mahayanists against the Sautrantikas. This might have been the external reason for the Visuddhi-magga's emphasis on the rejection of the nihilistic conception of Nibbāna. As to the positive-metaphysical view, the Venerable Buddhaghosa thought it, perhaps, sufficiently covered by the numerous passages in the Visuddhi-magga dealing with the rejection of the eternity-view and of a transcendental Self. However that may be, also nowadays Buddhism, and Theravāda in particular. is quite often wrongly accused of nihilism. It is therefore apposite to reproduce here extracts from the respective arguments found in the Visuddhi-magga, followed

(in § 2) by additions from the commentary to that work. Many of the passages from the Suttanta (the Discourses of the Buddha) which are relevant to a rejection of nihilism, are quoted in both these extracts, making it unnecessary to deal with them separately.

In the aforementioned chapter of the Visuddhi-magga, the argument proper is preceded by a definition of Nibbāna, by way of three categories usually employed in commentarial literature for the purpose of definition.

"Nibbāna has peace as its characteristic. Its function is not to die; or its function is to comfort. It is manifested as the signless [*i.e.* without the "signs", or marks, of greed, hatred and delusion]; or it is manifested as non-diversification.*"

[The first assertion about Nibbāna as non-existence, which follows now, is not a view about the ***nature*** of Nibbāna, but a simple denial of it, on account of the alleged illogical nature of the conception itself:]

"(Question 1.) [Is it not true that] Nibbāna is non-existent because it is unapprehensible like the hare's horn ?

"(Answer.) That is not so, because it is apprehensible by the (right) means. For it is apprehensible by some, (namely the Noble Ones) by the right means, in other words, by the

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* The rendering in the extracts from both works has mainly been taken, with a few alterations, from the excellent new translation of the VisM, by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli ("The Path of Purification"; XLIX, 886pp; publ. by R. Semage, 1956; available at Lake House Bookshop, Colombo, Ceylon). Explanatory additions by the writer of this essay are in [square brackets]: while those by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli are in (curved brackets).

way that is appropriate to it (the way of virtue, concentration, and understanding) .....Therefore it should not be said that it is non-existent because unapprehensible ; for it should not be said that what the foolish ordinary man does not apprehend is unapprehensible. "

[And for those who are followers of the Dhamma, it is added :]

"Again it should not be said that Nibbāna does not exist. Why not ? Because it then follows that the way would be futile. For if Nibbāna were non-existent, then it would follow that the right way, which includes the three Aggregates beginning with Virtue, and is headed by right understanding, would be futile. And it is not futile because it reaches Nibbāna.

" (Q.2) But futility of the way does not follow because what is reached is absence [which has been aspired for] (that is, absonce of the five aggregates, consequent upon the cutting off of the defilements) ?

" (A.) That is not so. Because, though there is [always] absence of past and future (aggregates) , there is nevertheless no reaching of Nibbāna (simply because of that).

"(Q.3) Then is the absence of present (aggregates) as well Nibbāna ?.....

" (A.) That is not so. Because their absence is an impossibility (being self-contradictory), since their absence means that they are *not* present. (Besides if Nibbāna were absence of present aggregates too), that would entail the fault of excluding the arising of the Nibhāna element with result

of past clinging left [*sopādisesanibbāna* ; *i.e.* Nibbāna during lifetime], at the path moment which has present aggregates as its support.

" (Q.4.) Then will there be no fault if it is the non-presence of defilements (that is Nibbāna) ?

" (A). That is not so. Because it would then follow that the noble path was meaningless. For if it were so, then, since defilements (can be) non-existent also before the moment of the noble path [of arahantship ; *e.g.*, temporarily, in every profitable (kusala) state of mind], it follows that the noble path would be meaningless.....

" (Q.5) But is not Nibbāna destruction *(khaya)*, because of the passage beginning "That, friend, which is the destruction of greed ..... (of hate ... of delusion ... is Nibbāna)' (S.IV,251) ?

" (A.) That is not so, because it would follow that arahantship, also, was mere destruction. For that, too, is described in the (same) way beginning 'That, friend, which is the destruction of greed ... (of hate ... of delusion ... ... is arahantship)' (S. IV. 252)[1]

"And what is more, the fallacy then follows that Nibbāna would be temporary, etc. ; for if it were so, it would follow that Nibbāna would be temporary [being limited to the moment of the destruction of greed, etc.], formed [conditioned *(saṅkhata)*; because the destruction of greed, etc., is a conditioned phenomenon, but not Nibbāna].....

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1 "But," says the commentary, 'Arahantship is certainly not mere destruction, since it consists in the four mental aggregate having the highest fruition (of arahantship) as their foremost,"

" ... Because [Nibbāna] serves figuratively speaking as decisive-support (*upanissaya*) for the kind of destruction called 'cessation consisting in non-arising' (*anuppattinirodha*), that (Nibbāna) is called 'destruction' (*khaya*) as a metaphor for it. .....

"(Q.7.) Why is Nibbāna not described in its own nature [but only by circumlocutions and negations]?

"(A.) Because of its extreme subtlety. And its extreme subtlety is established because it inclined the Blessed One to inaction (that is, to not teaching the Dhamma ; see M.I. 186) and because a Noble One's eye is needed to see it (M.I, 510). It is not shared by all because it can only be reached by one who is possessed of the path. And it is uncreated because it has no first beginning.

"(Q.8.) Since it *is*, when the path is, then it is not uncreated ?

"(A.) That is not so, because it is not arousable by the path ; it is only reachable, not arousable, by the path ; that is why it is uncreated. It is because it is uncreated that it is free from ageing and death. It is because of the absence of its creation and of its ageing and death it is permanent. ...

" . . The Buddhas' goal is one and has no plurality. But this (single goal, Nibbāna,) is firstly called 'with result of past clinging left' (*sa-upādisesa*) since it is made known together with the (aggregates resulting from past) clinging still remaining (during the Arahant's life), being thus made known in terms of the stilling of defilement and the remaining (result of past) clinging that are present in one who has reached it by means of development. But (secondly, it is called 'without result of past clinging left' (*anupādisesa*) since after the last consciousness of the Arahant, who has abandoned arousing (future aggregates) and so prevented kamma

from giving result in a future (existence), there is no further arising of aggregates of existence, and those already arisen have disappeared. So the (result of past) clinging that remained is non-existent ; and it is in terms of this non-existence, in the sense that 'there is no (result of past) clinging here' that that (same goal) is called 'without result of past clinging left' (see Itivuttaka 38).

"Because it can be arrived at by distinction of knowledge that succeeds through untiring perseverance[1], and because it is the word of the Omniscient One[2], Nibbāna is not non-existent as regards its nature in the ultimate sense (*paramatthena nāvijjamānaṁ sabhāvato nibbānaṁ*); for this is said : 'Bhikkhus, there is an unborn, an unbecome, an unmade, an unformed' (It. 37 ; Ud.80)."

§ 2.

Taking up the last quotation, the Commentary to the Visuddhi-magga (Paramattha-mañjusā) [3], says :

❖ "By these words the Master proclaimed the actual existence of Nibbāna in the ultimate sense. But he did not proclaim it as a mere injunction of his [*i.e.* as a creedal dogma], saying: 'I am the Lord and Master of the Dhamma'; but, in his compassion for those to whom intellectual understanding is the highest that is attainable; (*padaparama*), he also stated it as a reasoned conclusion (*yuttito*), in the continuation of the passage quoted above (Ud.80): "If, bhikkhus, there

1 Comy,:"This is to show that, for Arahants, Nibbāna is established by their own experience (*paccakkhasiddhatam*)."

2, Comy,: "For others it is established by inference [based on the words of the Master; [*anumāna-siddhatam*]."

3, The paragraphs beginning with ❖ are translated by the author of this essay; those without, by Bhikkhu Nānamoli (taken from the notes to his translation of the Visuddhi-magga).

were not the unborn, etc., an escape from what is born, etc., could not be perceived (*na paññāyetha*). But because, bhikkhus, there is an unborn, etc., an escape from what is born, etc., can be perceived." This is the meaning: if the Unformed Element (*asaṅkhata-dhātu*=Nibbāna), having the nature of being unborn, etc., did not exist, no escape from the formed (or conditioned ; *saṅkhata*), *i.e.* the five aggregates, could be perceived in this world ; their final coming-to-rest (*i.e.* cessation) could not be perceived (*na paññāyeyya*), could not be found (or apprehended; *na upalabheyya*), would not be possible (*na sambhaveyya*). But if Right Understanding and the other path factors, each performing its own function, take Nibbāna as object, then they will completely destroy the defilements. Therefore one can perceive here a getting-away, an escape from the suffering of existence in its entirety.

"Now in the ultimate sense the existingness of the Nibbāna-element has been demonstrated by the Fully Enlightened One, compassionate for the whole world, by many Sutta passages such as "Dhammas without condition," "Unformed dhammas" (see Dhammasaṅgaṇī), "Bhikkhus, there is that sphere (*āyatana*) where neither earth. . , " (Ud. 80), "This state is very hard to see, that is to say, the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all substance of becoming" (D.II, 36; M.I, 167), "Bhikkhus, I shall teach you the unformed and the way leading to the unformed" (S.IV, 362), and so on, and in this Sutta "Bhikkhus, there is an unborn .." (It. 37;Ud. 80).....

"..... the words "Bhikkhus, there is an unborn, an unmade, an unformed" and so on, which demonstrate the existingness of Nibbāna in the ultimate sense, are not misleading [or: have not an ambiguous meaning; *aviparītattha*] because

they are spoken by the Omniscient One, like the words "All formations are impermanent, all formations are painful, all *dhammas* (states) are not-self" (Dh. 277-9; A.I,286; etc.).

❖ "If Nibbāna were mere non-existence (or absence; *abhavamattaṁ eva*), it could not be described by terms as "profound [deep, hard to see, hard to comprehend, peaceful, lofty, inaccessible to ratiocination, subtle, to be known by the wise]" etc.; or as 'the unformed, [the cankerless, the true, the other shore],' etc. [1]; or as 'kammically neutral, (without condition, unincluded [within the three realms of existence],' etc." [2],

§ 3.

The references to Sutta-texts, quoted in the extracts from the Visuddhi-magga and its commentary, make it quite clear that the Buddha declared Nibbāna to be an attainable entity (see § 1, Q.1; §8) and did not conceive it as the mere fact of extinction or cessation (see § 1, Q. 5). All negatively formulated statements on Nibbāna should be understood in the light of the Sutta passages quoted here, and do not admit an interpretation contradictory to these texts. Any forced or far-fetched interpretation of them will be contrary to the whole straightforward way of the Buddha's exposition.

If we have spoken above of Nibbāna as an "entity", it should be taken just as a word-label meant to exclude "non-

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1. These are some of the altogether 33 designations of Nibbāna, in Samyutta Nikāya 43, 12-44.

2. This refers to Abhidhammic classifications in which Nibbāna is included, occurring, for instance, in the Dhammasangani.

existence". It is used in the same restricted sense of a linguistic convention in the emphatic words in the Udāna: "There *is* an unborn ... ", "There *is* that sphere where neither earth...". It is not meant to convey the meaning of "existence" in the strict sense, which should be kept limited to "the five aggregates or any of them". Nibbāna is indescribable in the strictest sense (*avacanīya, avyākata*).

Our extracts from such an authoritative work as the Visuddhi-magga will have shown how emphatically the Theravāda tradition has rejected a nihilistic conception of its highest ideal, Nibbāna. This fact may perhaps help to remove one of the points of controversy among modern writers and Buddhist schools: the prejudice that Theravāda, or even the Pāli Canon, advocates 'annihilation' as its highest goal.

There is, however, another principal point of difference in the interpretation of Buddhism, and of the Pāli Canon in particular which is likewise closely connected with the conception of Nibbāna. It is the question of the range of validity, or application, of the Anattā doctrine, *i. e.* the doctrine of impersonality. It applies not only to the world of conditioned phenomena, but also to Nibbāna. The denial of its application to the latter falls under the heading of the "positive-metaphysical extreme" which will be treated in the following section.

II. The positive-metaphysical extreme

§ 4.

In India, a country so deeply religious and philosophically so creative, the far greater danger to the preservation of the Dhamma's character as a "Middle Way", consisted in

identifying, or connecting, the concept of Nibbāna with any of the numerous theistic, pantheistic or other speculative ideas of a positive-metaphysical type and, chiefly, with various conceptions of an abiding self. According to the penetrative analysis in the Brahmajāla Sutta (Dīgha Nik.1), all these various notions of a self (and this applies also to other metaphysical or theological statements) arise from either of two sources : (1) from a limited and misinterpreted meditative experience (where we may also include supposed revelations, prophetic inspirations, etc.), (2) from bare reasoning (speculative philosophy. and theology), But as the driving force behind all these metaphysical and theological productions of, the human mind looms the powerful urge in man to preserve, in some way or other, his belief in an abiding individuality, or in any mental projection of that urge which he can invest, by proxy, with all his longings for permanency, security, eternal happiness, etc. It is therefore not surprising that, yielding to that powerful. instinctive urge for "self"-preservation, and under the influence of long-cherished and widely held views, there are also nowadays advocates of the positive-metaphysical interpretation of Nibbāna and Anattā, who sincerely believe themselves to be true Buddhists; and among them are many who have a genuine devotion towards the Buddha and a fair appreciation of other aspects of his teachings. With these views we shall now be concerned.

In the spirit of the Middle Way, the following refutation of the positive-metaphysical extreme is also meant to guard against any metaphysical conclusions which may be wrongly derived from our rejection of nihilism, in the first section of this essay. In the reverse, that first section may serve to counter an excessive "defence-reaction" against the metaphysical views to be treated now.

The positive-metaphysical extreme in the interpretation of Nibbāna consists in the identification, or metaphysical association, of a refined or purified self (*attā*) with what, in the context of the respective view, is held to be Nibbāna. Two main types of the metaphysical view can be distinguished which are already implied in the preceding sentence.

(1) The assumption of a universal and unitary (non-dual and non-pluralistic) principle with which a purified self, *i.e.* one thought to be liberated from the aggregates (*khandhā*), either merges, or is assumed to be basically one. These views might differ in details, according to their being influenced either by Theosophy, Vedānta or Mahāyāna (the latter, with varying degrees of justification). [1]

(2) The assumption that the transcendental "selves" of the Arahants, freed from the aggregates, enter Nibbāna which is regarded as their "eternal home" and as "the only state

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1. The *theosophical* variant is, *e.g.*, represented by neo-buddhistic groups in Britain and elsewhere which otherwise have done good work in introducing Westerners to Buddhism or to their conception of it.— The *vedantic* influence is conspicuous, *e.g.*, in utterances of well-meaning Indians, among them men of eminence, maintaining the basic identity or similarity, of the vedantic and buddhistic position concerning Ātman. This is, by the way, quite in contrast to the opinion on that subject, expressed by the great classical exponents of Vedanta. See *Vedanta and Buddhism*, By H. v. Glasenapp ("The Wheel" Publ. No,2),—*Mahāyānistic* influence may be noticeable in some representatives of the former two variants. But also in Mahāyāna literature itself, the positive-metaphysical extreme is met with, in varying degrees : ranging from the Madhyamika scriptures where it is comparatively negligible, up to the Yogavacara school where Asaṅga uses even the terms *mahātma* and *paramātma* in an approving sense (see *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra-śāstra* and Asaṅga's own commentary).

adequate to them". Nibbāna itself is admitted to be not-self (*anattā*), while the Holy Ones (Arahants) are supposed to retain "in Nibbāna" some kind of individuality, in a way unexplained and unexplainable. This view is, to our knowledge, advocatad in such a way only by the German author Dr. Georg Grimm and his followers.

§ 5.

(*a*) Common to both views is the assumption of an eternal self supposed to exist beyond the five aggregates (*khandhā*) that make up personality and existence in its entirety. The supposition that the Buddha should have taught anything like that, is clearly and sufficiently refuted alone by the following saying :

"Any ascetics or brāhmans who conceive manifold (things or ideas) as the self, all of them conceive the five aggregates (as the self) or any one of them."

Ye hi keci bhikkhave samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā anekavihitaṁ attānaṁ samanupassamānā samanupassanti, sabbe te pañcupādānakkhandhe samanupassanti etesaṁ vā aññataraṁ (Samyutta-Nikāya 22, 47).

This textual passage also excludes any misinterpretation of the standard formulation of the Anattā doctrine : "This does not belong to me, this I am not, this is not my self". Some writers believe that this statement permits the conclusion that the Buddha supposed a self to exist outside, or beyond, the five aggregates to which the above formula usually refers. This wrong deduction is finally disposed of by the words of the Buddha quoted above, which clearly say that all the manifold conceptions of a self can have reference only to the five aggregates or to any one, or several, of them. How

else could any idea of a self or a personality be formed, if not from the material of the five aggregates and from a misconception of them ? On what else could notions about a self be based alternatively ? This fact about the only possible way how ideas of a self can be formed was expressed by the Buddha Himself, in the continuation of the text quoted above :

"There is. bhikkhus, an uninstructed worldling . . He regards corporeality as self, or the self as possessing corporeality, or the corporeality as being within the self, or the self within corporeality [similarly with the four mental aggregates]. [1] In this way he arrives at that very conception 'I am' (*iti ayañ-c'eva samanupassanā asmī'ti c'assa adhigatam hoti*)" (Samy. 22, 47).

Further it was said : "If there are corporeality, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness, on account of them and dependent on them arises the belief in individuality . . and speculations about a self". (Samy. 22, 154. 155).

(b) If the words "I", "ego", "personality", "self", etc., should have a meaning at all. any form of an ego-conception, even the most abstract and diluted one, must necessarily be connected with the idea of particularity or separateness, i.e. with a differentiation from what is regarded as ***not*** "ego". But from what could that particularity or differentiation be derived if not from the only available data of experience, i.e. the physical and mental phenomena which have been comprised by the Buddha under the classification of the five aggregates ?

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1. These are the twenty kinds of individuality-belief (*vīsati sakkāyadiṭṭhi*).

In the Discourse called "The Simile of the Serpent" (Majjh.22), it is said: "If , bhikkhus, there is a self, will there also be something belonging to a self ?" — "Certainly, Lord". — "If there is something belonging to a self, will there also be (the view) 'My self' ?"—"Certainly, Lord".— "But since, bhikkhus, a self and anything belonging to a self cannot truly and really be found, is it not a perfectly foolish doctrine to hold the point of view 'This is the world. This is the self. Impermanent, abiding, eternal and immutable shall I be after death, in eternal identity shall I persist' ? "— 'What else should it be, O Lord, than a perfectly foolish doctrine."

The first sentence of that text expresses, in a manner as simple as emphatic, the fact pointed out before: that the assumption of a self requires also something 'belonging to a self' (*attaniya*), *i.e.* properties by which that self receives its distinguishing characteristics. To speak of a self devoid of such differentiating attributes, having therefore nothing to characterize it and to give meaningful contents to the word, will be entirely senseless and in contradiction to the accepted usage of these terms "self", "ego", etc. But this very thing is done by those who advocate the first of the two main-types of the "positive-metaphysical extreme": that is, the assumption of a "great, universal self, or over-self" (***mahātman***) supposed to merge, or be basically identical with, a universal and undifferentiated (*nirguṇa*) metaphysical principle which is sometimes equated with Nibbāna. Those who hold these views are sometimes found to make the bold claim that the Buddha wanted to deny only a "separate self" and that, in none of His utterances, He rejected the existence of a "transcendental self". What has been said before in this section, may serve as an answer to these beliefs.

Those views, however, which we have assigned to the second category, insist on the separate existence of liberated, transcendental "selves" within the Nibbāna-element. They leave quite a number of issues unexplained: how they arrive at any idea of separateness without reference to the world of experience; in what that "separateness" actually consists and how it can be said to persist in the Nibbāna-element, which, by definition, is undifferentiated (*nippapañca*), that is, the very reverse of separateness.

Both varieties of individuality-belief wish to combine various conceptions of self with the Buddhist teaching of Nibbāna. They are, at the very outset, refuted by the philosophically very significant statement in the Discourse on the "Simile of the Serpent", implying that I and Mine, owner and property, substance and attribute, subject and predication are inseparable correlative terms, which, however, lack reality in the ultimate sense.

§ 6

The two main-types of a positive-metaphysical interpretation of Nibbāna can be easily included in a considerable number of false views, mentioned, classified and rejected by the Buddha. A selection of applicable classifications will be presented in what follows. This material, additional to the fundamental remarks in the preceding section, will furnish an abundance of documentation for the fact that not a single eternalistic conception of self and Nibbāna, of any conceivable variety, is reconcilable with the teachings of the Buddha as found in their oldest available presentation, in the Pāli Canon.

(*a*) In the Saṁyutta Nikāya (22,86; 44,2) we read: "Do you think, Anurādha, that the Perfect One is apart from

corporeality (*aññatra rūpā*) . . . apart from consciousness?" [1] — "Certainly not, O Lord." — "Do you think that the Perfect One is someone without corporeality (*arūpī*) . . . . someone (*tathāgata*) without consciousness?" [2] — "Certainly not, O Lord." — "Since the Perfect One, Anurādha, cannot, truly and really, be found by you even during lifetime, is it befitting to declare: 'He who is the Perfect One, the highest being . . . that Perfect One can be made known outside of these four possibilities: The Perfect One exists after death . . does not exist . . exists in some way and in another way not . . neither can be said to exist nor not to exist." — "Certainly not, O Lord."

This text applies to both main-types which assume a self beyond the aggregates. It deserves to be mentioned here that the Commentary paraphrases the words "the Perfect One" (*tathāgato*) by "living being" (*satto*). That is probably meant to convey that the statements in the text are valid not only for the conventional term "the Perfect One", but that they hold true also for any other terms designating an individuality.

(*b*) Since the concept of a self is necessarily linked with that of an ownership of qualities and possessions (see § 5 b), both main-types come under the following headings of the 20 kinds of individuality-belief (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*; see § 5 a):

"He regards the self as possessing corporeality . . as possessing feeling . . perception . . . formations . . consciousness.

This applies, in particular, to the second main-type advocated by Dr. Georg Grimm who expressly speaks of the

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1. *i.e.* outside the aggregates taken singly.
2. *i.e.* outside the aggregates as a whole.

five aggregates as "attributions" ("Beilegungen") of the self. It does not make here any difference that these "attributions" are regarded by Grimm as "incommensurate" to the self and as capable of being discarded. What matters, here, is the fact that such a relationship between the self and the aggregates is assumed, and this justifies the inclusion of that view in the aforementioned type of individuality-belief.

(c) From the "Discourse on the Root Cause" (*Mūla-pariyāya Sutta*; Majjh. 1), the following categories apply to both types: "He thinks (himself) different from (or: beyond) the four material elements, the heavenly worlds, the uncorporeal spheres; from anything seen, heard, (differently) sensed and cognized; from the whole (universe; ***sabbato***; to the second type is applicable: "He thinks (himself) in Nibbāna (***nibbānasmiṁ***) or as different from Nibbāna (***nibbānato maññati***; that is, he believes that the liberated self supposed to enter the Nibbāna element, is different from it)."

(d) In the Sutta "All Cankers" (***Sabb'āsava Sutta***; Majjh. 2), the following instances of unwise and superficial thinking (***ayoniso manasikāra***) are mentioned and rejected:

Six theories about the self, from which the following are applicable here: "I have a self", "By the self I know the self" *.

Sixteen kinds of doubt about the existence and nature of the self, with reference to the past, present and future, *e. g.*: "Am I or am I not?", "What am I?", "Shall I be or not?", "What shall be?"

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* Pāli: ***attanā'va attānam sañjanāmi.*** This refers to vedantic conceptions. Quite similar formulations are found already in the Saṁhita, the pre-Buddhist Upanisads, later in the Bhagavadgīta.

Hereby any type of speculation about an alleged self is rejected.

(*e*) In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (Dīgh. 1), the theories about a self are specified as to their details. Those, however, who advocate the two main-types of the positive-metaphysical extreme, with which we are here concerned, generally avoid or reject detailed statements on the nature of Nibbāna and the self. But if, by them, an eternal and transcendental self is assumed, it must be thought as being of a passive nature (Pāli *vañjho*, barren, unproductive) and motionless, *i. e.* immutable. For, any creative or other relationship to the world would involve an abandonment of the transcendental state assumed. Therefore both main-types fall under the eternalist view, characterized in the Brahmajāla Sutta as follows: "Eternal are self and world; barren (*vañjho*), motionless like a mountain peak, steadfast like a pillar."

(*f*) The rejection of any belief in a self (as abiding or temporarily identical) and of the extremes of existence and not-existence cannot be better concluded then by quoting the continuation of the saying that forms the motto of this treatise:

"For him, Kaccāna, who considers, according to reality and with true wisdom, the origination of (and in) the world, there is not what in the world (is called) 'non-existence' (*natthitā*). For him, Kaccāna, who considers, according to reality and with true wisdom, the cessation of (and in) the world, there is not what in the world (is called) 'existence' (*atthitā*). This world, in general, Kaccāna, is fettered by propensities, clingings and biases. But he (the man of right understanding. *sammā-diṭṭhi*). concerning these propensities, clingings, fixed mental attitudes, biases and deep-rooted inclinations, he does not come near, does not cling, does not

have the mental attitude 'I have a self' (*n'adhiṭṭhāti attā me'ti*). He has no doubt or uncertainty that it is suffering, indeed, that arises, and suffering that ceases. Herein his knowledge does not rely on others. In so far, Kaccāna, is one a man of right understanding". (Saṁy. 12, 15).

III. *Transcending the extremes*

If we examine the utterances on Nibbāna, in the Pāli Canon, we find that it is described (or better: paraphrased) in positive and negative terms. Statements of a positive nature are, *e. g.*, designations like "the profound, the true, the pure, the permanent, the marvellous," etc. (Saṁy. 43; see § 2); further, texts such as those quoted above (§ 2); "There is that sphere . . ", "There is an unborn . . ", etc. Statements in the form of negative terms are, *e. g* , definitions of Nibbāna as "the destruction of greed, hatred and delusion", as cessation of existence" (*bhavanirodha;* Saṁy. 12, 68). If the Buddhist doctrine of Nibbāna is to be understood correctly, one will have to give full weight to the significance of both types of utterance. If one were to quote only one group of them, as a vindication of one's own one-sided opinion, it would result in a lop-sided view.

To the utterances of positive character we may ascribe the following purposes: (1) to exclude the nihilistic extreme, (2) to allay the fears of those who are still without an adequate grasp of the truths of Suffering and Anattā, and consequently shrink back from the final cessation of suffering, *i. e.*, of rebirth, as if recoiling from a threatening fall into a bottomless abyss, (3) for showing Nibbāna as a goal capable of attainment and truly desirable.

The emphatic "There is" that opens the two well-known texts on Nibbāna, in the Udāna, leaves no doubt

that Nibbāna is not conceived as bare extinction or as a camouflage for an absolute Zero. But, on the other hand, as a precaution against a metaphysical misinterpretation of that solemn enunciation "*There is* . . . . (atthi)", we have that likewise emphatic rejection of the extremes of existence (*atthitā*) and non-existence (*natthitā*).

But even those utterances on Nibbāna which are phrased positively, include mostly negative terms too;

"There is that sphere where there is neither earth . . neither this world nor the next, neither coming nor going . . ".

"There is an *un*born, an *un*become . . "

"I shall teach you the Unformed . . the Profound . . , and the way to it. What now is the Unformed . . the Profound . . ? It is the destruction of greed, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion ".

These texts, combining positive and negative statements, illustrate our earlier remark that both the positive and the negative utterances on Nibbāna require mutual qualification, as a precaution against sliding into an extremist position.

Negative utterances are meant to emphasize the supramundane and undepictable nature of Nibbāna that eludes any edequate description in positive terms. Our language is basically unsuited for it, since it is necessarily related to our world of experience, and its structure and terms are derived from it. Therefore the positive statements in the Suttas cannot be more than allusions or metaphors (*pariyāyadesanā*), making use of emotional values intelligible to us, and of experiences and reactions known to those who have trodden the path to the Pathless. In brief, they are evocative, and not truly descriptive; but they have nevertheless great practical value for the reasons mentioned above. Negative statements, however, are quite sound and legitimate

in themselves. They relate Nibbāna to the world of experience only by negations. The negating method of approach consists in. a process of eliminating what is inapplicable to Nibbāna and incommensurate with it. It enables us to make much more definite and useful statements about the supramundane state of Nibbāna than by the use of abstract terms, the positive character of which can be only metaphorical. Negative statements are also the most appropriate and reverential way to speak of that which has been called the Marvellous (*acchariya*) and the Extraordinary (*abbhuta*).

Negative ways of expressions have also another important advantage. Statements like those defining Nibbāna as "the destruction of greed, hatred and delusion", at the same time, indicate the direction to be taken, and the work to be done, for actually *reaching* Nibbāna. And it is this which matters most. These words on the overcoming of greed, hatred and delusion set a clear and convincing task which can be taken up here and now. Further they do not only point to a way that is practicable, and is worthwhile for its own sake, but they also speak of the lofty goal itself which likewise can be experienced here and now, and not only in an unknown Beyond. For it has been said:

"If greed, hatred and delusion have been completely destroyed, insofar is Nibbāna visible here and now, not delayed, inviting of inspection, and directly experiencable by the wise" (Aṅguttara Nik. III, No. 55).

That visible Nibbāna has been lauded by those who attained to it, as an unalloyed and unalienable happiness, as the highest solace, as the unspeakable relief of being freed from burden and bondage. A faint foretaste of it may be experienced in each act of joyful renunciation and in moments of serene detachment. To know oneself, if but temporarily and partially, free from the slavery of passions and the blindness of self-deception; to be master of oneself and to live and

think in the light of knowledge, if but for a time and to a limited extent — these are truly not "mere negative facts", but are the most positive and elevating experiences for those who know more than the fleeting and deceptive happiness of the senses. "There are two kinds of happiness, O monks: the happiness of the sense-pleasures, and the happiness of renunciation. But the greater of them is the happiness of renunciation" (Aṅguttara-Nikāya, Duka-nipāta),

Thus, these seemingly negative words of the destruction of greed, hatred and delusion, will convey to the thoughtful and energetic a stirring positive message: of a way that can here be trodden, of a goal that can here be reached, of a happiness that can here be experienced.

That aspect of a lofty happiness attainable here and now, should, however, not be allowed to cover for us the fact that the attainment of Nibbāna is the end of rebirth, the cessation of becoming. This end or cessation is, however, in no way the destruction or annihilation of anything. What actually takes place is the ending of new origination owing to the stopping of its root-causes: ignorance and craving.

He who sees the Truth of Suffering deeply and thoroughly, is "no longer carried away by the unreal, and does no longer shrink back from the real". He knows, "It is suffering, indeed, that arises, it is suffering that ceases". With a mind unswerving, he strives after the deathless state, the final cessation of suffering—Nibbāna.

"The Holy Ones know it as bliss:
the personality's cessation ;
Repugnant to the worldly folk,
but not to those who clearly see.
What others count as highest bliss,
as pain regard it Holy Ones ;
What those as painful do regard
is for the Holy Ones sheer bliss."

(*Sutta-nipāta, 761/2*)

THE CASE FOR REBIRTH

FRANCIS STORY
The Anagarika Sugatananda

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Kandy 1964 Ceylon

First Edition: 1959
Second, enlarged Edition: 1964

The Wheel Publication No. 12/13

THE CASE FOR REBIRTH

Corrigendum

It is regretted that a number of typographical errors have found their way into the present edition.

The quotation on p. 63, para 1 (p. 68 in the first edition) should read as follows:

> '. . . An individual receives from his parents not a set of fully-formed characters but a set of determinants or genes, as a consequence of whose activities the hereditary characters are developed. This concept of hereditary determinants is fundamental for an understanding of heredity.'

FOREWORD
to the Second Edition

The first edition of this book was published in 1959. Since then, thanks to valuable assistance given by a Parapsychology Foundation in the United States, which is here gratefully acknowledged, I have been enabled to extend my researches over a wider field of cases of the recollection of previous lives in Ceylon, Thailand and India. I am particularly indebted to the Society for Psychical Research of Thailand, under the patronage of His Holiness Somdej Phra Mahavirawongsa, and its members, including Dr. Chien Siriyananda, psychiatrist in charge of the Medical Division, Central Juvenile Court, Bangkok, for the help they have freely given to my researches in Thailand.

The cases I have personally studied, together with reports of others received from various parts of the world, are now being evaluated and classified, and the results will be published in due course. Until the work on them is completed it is not possible to publish the cases in detail, but I have added at the end of the book, in the form of notes, some tentative conclusions which at the time of writing seem to be indicated. It must be understood that these represent my own interpretations based upon my reading of the case histories as a Buddhist, and in the light of Buddhist doctrine as I understand it. I may find cause to modify them later on, and if that be the case I shall not hesitate to do so.

The body of evidence for the truth of rebirth has increased substantially since the book was first written. One highly interesting fact which has emerged is that lespite the wide range of experiences the cases present, which is to be expected in view of the diverse religious, cultural and racial backgrounds of the persons claiming to

have these memories, they show many striking features in common. The similarities are especially noticeable in the accounts given of experiences in the intermediate state between one human life and another. These seem definitely to point to a universal type of post-mortem experience — one which may be coloured by the individual's preconceived ideas and his customary background of living, but is erected upon a psychological groundwork common to all peoples in all ages. One man may travel by jet airliner, another on horseback, but different though their means of transportation may be, they have one thing in common, the fact of travel. So it is with the state between one life on earth and another; the post-mortem experiences vary according to the individual Karma and the details of the preconceived ideational worlds of those who undergo them, but fundamentally they follow the same pattern for all. This being so, it may be possible in time to extract from these cases some fundamental principles which will enable us to formulate a psychology of rebirth, and perhaps even to bring the process under some measure of control. The ethico - psychology of Buddhism already offers the means of doing this, but until the fact of rebirth is more widely accepted and its principles more generally understood, the greater portion of mankind will still continue to blunder along from birth to birth in ignorance of the moral laws that govern human destiny.

As individuals, each with his own particular Karma, we cannot know precisely "what dreams may come when we have shuffled off this mortal coil", but by an extension of knowledge man may ultimately learn how to control them for his own wellbeing, and in learning how to die, discover the way to live.

FRANCIS STORY.

December 1963.

THE CASE FOR REBIRTH

I

The doctrine of reincarnation, the ceaseless round of rebirths, is not, as many people imagine, confined to Buddhism and Hinduism. It is found in some form or another in many ancient religious and philosophical systems and in many parts of the world.

In the oldest records of man's religious thinking we find traces of a belief in the 'transmigration of souls'. Some of the forms it took were naturally primitive and crudely animistic; there is for instance a theory that the ancient Egyptians embalmed their dead to prevent the *Ka*, or soul, from taking another body. If the idea existed in Egypt it almost certainly must have been familiar also to the Babylonians and Assyrians, who shared many of the most important religious beliefs of the Egyptians.

Coming to later times we find reincarnation prominent in the Orphic cult of Greece in the 6th century B. C., when it formed part of the teaching of Pherecydes of Syros. In the Orphic view of life man is a dualism, part evil and part divine. Through a succession of incarnations the individual has to purge himself of the evil in his nature by religious rites and moral purity. When this is accomplished he becomes liberated from the 'circle of becoming' and is wholly divine.

This corresponds very closely to the Buddhist, Hindu and Jain teaching, and there may have been a connection between them; but it is not possible to establish one on

historical evidence. Although by the 6th century B. C. the doctrine had already been developed in the Brahmanas and Upanishads, and may have travelled West along the trade routes, there is still a possibility that it arose spontaneously in Greece. The emphasis on ritualism differentiates it from the Buddhist view, but it is significant that it was at about the same time in both Greece and India that the idea of reincarnation first became linked with a scheme of moral values and spiritual evolution. The connection of Orphism with the mysteries of ceremonial magic must not be allowed to blind us to the fact that it represented a great advance in religious thinking. Hitherto, reincarnation had been regarded in primitive cults as a merely mechanical process, to be controlled, if at all, by spells, incantations and physical devices. This is the idea still prevalent among undeveloped peoples in certain parts of Africa, Polynesia and elsewhere, where, far removed from Indian influences the idea of metempsychosis must have sprung up spontaneously.

Through Orphism reincarnation came to be taught by, among others, Empedocles and Pythagoras. In the hands of the latter the Orphic mysticism was converted into a philosophy. This philosophical aspect of the teaching was inherited by the Platonists, while its mystical character was preserved in the traditions of Gnosticism.

In many respects Greek Gnosticism resembled Hinduism; it was syncretic and eclectic, capable of absorbing into itself ideas from outside sources while at the same time it impregnated with its own thought the beliefs peculiar to other systems. Its influence was felt over many centuries, persisting into the Middle Ages of Europe. In the early centuries of the Christian era we find it in the teachings of men as dissimilar in the general character of their outlook as Plotinus, Cerinthus and Marcion.

Clement of Alexandria, about the second century C.E., wrote very largely from the Gnostic standpoint. He combined reincarnation with the necessity of striving for an enlightened moral elevation: a result that could be achieved only through a development taking place not merely in the present life but in past and future incarnations as well. This belief was shared by the *Pre-existiani*, a sect that numbered among its adherents some of the most advanced thinkers of the period, including Justin Martyr and the great theologian Origen. They represented a very powerful intellectual movement, one in which the natural freedom of Greek intellectualism was struggling for survival in a world that was sliding towards the Dark Ages. Many of their ideas survived in Neo-Platonism; but for the most part they were driven underground, to find an insecure refuge in the suppressed teachings of the so-called heretical sects that came to be known collectively as the Cathars, or 'illuminati'.

A not dissimilar doctrine of transmigration is found in the Kabbalah, where it goes under the Hebrew name Gilgul. It forms an integral part of the Kabbalistic system and is one of the features that distinguish Kabbalism from primitive Judaic thought. The Hekhāloth, a Kabbalistic work of the Gaonic era, gives Gnostic and Pythagorean ideas along with the orthodox stream of Talmudic teaching. The result may be regarded as Hellenised Judaism, but modern research on the Kabbalah tends to suggest that its original sources may be much older than has hitherto been granted.[1] It may in fact preserve a very ancient Rabbinical tradition which was not intended for the masses. Much of its philosophical content is of a high order and reveals a creative expansion of Jewish thought in which reincarnation occupies a significant place.

1 Figures refer to the Notes at the end of the book.

The idea of a transmigrating soul is the central theme of the Bhagavad Gita: "As the soul in this body passes through childhood, youth and old age, even so does it pass to another body. As a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others that are new, so does the incarnate soul cast off worn-out bodies and enter into others that are new" (Gita, Chapter II, vs. 13 and 22).

Throughout the Upanishads the idea of "soul" (ātman) in this sense persists; it is the totality of selfhood and personal identity which transmigrates, occupying successive bodies, becoming now a man, now a god or an animal, yet in some way preserving its uniqueness as the personal ego throughout. Because of certain difficulties attaching to this concept, however, it was somewhat modified in Vedanta, the last phase of Upanishadic thought. In its place arose the theory that the ātman, as an unborn, unoriginated principle not in any way affected by the activities, good or bad, of the phenomenal being, was not identical with the individual at all, but with the "Supreme Soul", the Paramātman or (neuter) Brahman.

Mahavira, the founder of Jainism (the Nigantha Nātaputta of the Buddhist texts), held unequivocally to the "individual soul" theory. Jainism teaches that there are an infinite number of individual souls transmigrating in happy or unhappy states according to their deeds. But whereas in Vedanta release, or Moksha, comes with the realization that the "I" is really identical with the Paramātman or Brahman (the idea summarised in the formula "*Tat tvam asi*" — Thou art That), in Jainism it is believed to come only with the complete cessation of rebirth-producing activities. Since automatic and involuntary actions are considered to bear resultants as well as those performed intentionally, the Jain ideal is complete inactivity. As will be seen later, the Buddhist doctrine

concerning what it is that undergoes rebirth, and the nature of the moral law that governs Karma and Vipāka, or actions and results, differs from both these theories and eliminates the teleological and ethical difficulties to which they give rise.

The faith in survival after death which is basic to religious thought has its natural correlative in reincarnation. If life can extend forward in time beyond the grave it must surely be capable of having extended from the past into the present. "From the womb to the tomb" has its complement in "from the tomb to the womb", and to be born many times is no more miraculous than to have been born once, as Voltaire pointed out.

The opposite view, that a being comes into existence from non-existence, implies that it can also — and most probably will—come to an end with the dissolution of the body. That which has a beginning in time can also cease in time and pass away altogether. The doctrine of a single life on earth therefore holds out no promise of a future life in any other state; rather does it make it improbable. But if we accept that there is a survival of some part, no matter what, of the personality after death we are accepting also a very strong argument for its existence before birth. Reincarnation is the only form that after-death survival could logically take.

So it is not surprising that wherever religion has developed beyond its simplest beginnings some idea of spiritual evolution through a series of lives is found to be a part of its message. The doctrine of reincarnation together with that of the moral law of cause and effect not only provides an explanation of life's inequalities and the crushing burden of suffering under which countless millions of people labour, thus disposing of the problem raised by the existence of pain and evil in the world; it also gives a

rational and practical hope where none existed before. It is, moreover, the supreme justification of moral values in a universe which otherwise appears to be devoid of ethical purpose. It is evident that the Orphic and Gnostic cults recognised this fact when they introduced the concept of moral values into their theology.

II

In all of these systems of thought rebirth is seen, as it is in Buddhism, to be the only means of spiritual purgation. It is necessary for the moral and spiritual evolution of the individual that he should, through a variety of experiences, by his consciously-directed efforts struggle upwards from the lower planes of sensuality and passion to a state of purity in which his latent divinity becomes manifest. That the Cathars, the Kabbalists and others mixed up this reasoned and enlightened doctrine with the practice of what was later to become known as ritual magic, and with theories of the immortal soul that were frankly animistic, is no argument against the essential truth of their belief. Reason has to emerge slowly and painfully from unreason. It was in like manner that the true principles of science were unfolded at the time when scientific method was growing up alongside the occult practices of the astrologers and alchemists. We may smile at the alchemist's faith that he could find a means of transmuting base metals into gold, but in this age of nuclear physics the idea does not seem quite so crazy as it once did. The alteration of atomic patterns in the structure of metals is no longer entirely outside the range of possibility. The alchemist's

methods may have been hopelessly wrong; his basic assumption was not. Similarly, the transformation of the base metal of human nature into the pure gold of divinity is still a possibility. It is only a question of finding the right key to unlock the doors of the mind.

To understand how the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth differs from all those that have been mentioned, and why the term "rebirth" is preferable to "reincarnation" or "transmigration", it is necessary to glance at the main principles of Buddhist teaching.

These are summed up in the Four Noble Truths:

The Truth concerning Suffering
The Truth concerning the cause of Suffering
The Truth concerning the cessation of Suffering
The Truth concerning the Way to the cessation of Suffering.

The first proposition is nothing more then a self-evident fact: that suffering is inherent in all forms of existence. No one can go through life without experiencing physical pain, sickness, disappointment and grief; none can escape old age and death. Suffering is even more prevalent in the life of animals than in that of human beings, and Buddhism takes into account all forms of sentient life. But aside from these obvious aspects of the universal world-suffering there is the fact that all conditioned existence is unstable, restless and lacking in fulfilment. It is a process of *becoming* which never reaches the point of completion in *being*. This in itself is suffering. In brief, life even at its best is unsatisfactory.

In the formula of the Three Characteristics of Being, all phenomenal existence is defined as being impermanent, fraught with suffering, and devoid of self-essence. These three characteristics derive from one another; because

existence is transitory it is painful; because it is transitory and painful it can have no enduring essence of selfhood. There is no "soul" in the sense of a total personality-entity, for what we call the self is merely a current of consciousness linked to a particular physical body. This current of consciousness is made up of thought-moments of infinitesimal duration succeeding one another in a stream of inconceivable rapidity. The psychic life of the individual is just the duration of a single moment of consciousness, no more. We are living all the time what is in reality a series of lives. The life-stream is the rapid succession of these consciousness-moments, or momentary existences, resembling the running of a reel of film through a projector. It is this which gives the illusion of a static entity of being where nothing of the kind exists. The general characteristics of personality are maintained, but only in the same way that a river maintains the same course until something diverts it or it dries up. Thus there is no "immortal soul" that transmigrates, just as there is no river, but only the passage of particles of water flowing in the same direction. Anattā, soullessness, is therefore bound up with Anicca, Impermanence, and Dukkha, Suffering. The three Characteristics are three aspects of the same central fact.

Yet this state of soullessness is capable of producing rebirth. How can this be so, if there is no transmigrating entity — no "soul" to reincarnate? The answer is to be found in the Buddhist system of ethico-psychology, the Abhidhamma. There it is shown that the act of willing is a creative force, which produces effects in and through the conditions of the physical world. The thought-force of a sentient being, generated by the will-to-live, the desire to enjoy sensory experiences, produces after death another being who is the causal resultant of the preceding one. Schopenhauer expressed the same idea when he said that

in rebirth, which he called "Palingenesis", it is the *will*, not an ego-entity, which re-manifests in the new life. The being of the present is not the same as the being of the past, nor will the being of the future be the same as the being of the present. Yet neither are they different beings, because they all belong to the same current of cause and effect. Each is part of an individual current of causality in which "identity" means only "belonging to the same cause-effect continuum". Since mind and body are alike continually undergoing change — or, more precisely, they are made up of constituent factors which are arising and passing away from moment to moment — this is the only kind of "self-identity" which connects the various stages of a single life through childhood, youth, maturity and old age. Buddhism presents a dynamic view of existence in which the life-continuum is merely the current of momentary existences, or successive units of consciousness, linked together by causal relations, both mental and physical. The process may be likened to a current of electricity, which consists of minute particles called electrons. An electron is much lighter in weight than an atom of the lightest chemical element, hydrogen, yet waves of these particles in the form of an electric current can produce many different effects in heat, light and sound, and can produce them on a tremendous scale. In the same way the units of consciousness constitute an energy-potential which in the Buddhist view is the basic energy of the universe, operating through and in conjunction with natural laws.

So we see that mental force is a kind of energy, which Buddhism has linked with moral principles by way of Karma, actions, and Vipāka, moral resultants. Buddhism maintains that the physical universe itself is sustained by this mental energy derived from living beings, which is identical with their Karma. The energy itself is generated

by craving. It operates upon the atomic constituents of the physical world in such a way as to produce bodies equipped with organs of sense by means of which the desire for sensory gratification, produced by past experiences, may be satisfied again. In this world the mind-force which produces rebirth has to operate through the genetic principles known to biology; it requires human generative cells and all the favourable physical conditions of heat, nutrition and so forth, to produce a foetus. When it does so, the foetus and the infant that it later becomes bear both biologically-inherited characteristics and the characteristics carried by the past Karma of the individual whose thought-force has caused the new birth.[2] It is not a question of a "soul" entering the embryo, but of the natural formation of the foetus being moulded by an energy from without, supplied by the causative impulse from some being that lived before. It is only necessary to conceive craving-force as an energy-potential flowing out from the mind of a being at the moment of death, and carrying with it the karmic characteristics of that being, just as the seed of a plant carries with it the botanical characteristics of its type, and a mental picture is formed that corresponds roughly to what actually takes place. Mind force is creative, and its basis is desire. Without desire there can be no will to act; consequently the "will" of Schopenhauer is identical with the Buddhist Taṇhā, or Craving.[3]

The second of the Four Noble Truths, therefore, is that the cause of suffering in the round of rebirths is Craving. But one cause alone is not enough to give rise to a specific result. In this case, craving is conjoined with ignorance. The mind generates craving for sensory experience because of ignorance of the fact that these experiences are impermanent, unsatisfactory and so themselves a source of suffering. So the circle of becoming, without discernible

beginning and without end, is joined. This wheel of existences does not exist in time: time exists in it. Hence it does not require a point of beginning in what we know as time. It is the *perpetuum mobile* of cause and effect, counter-cause and counter-effect, turning round upon itself.

But although, like the revolution of the planets round the sun, it goes on perpetually simply because there is nothing to stop it, it can be brought to an end by the individual for himself, through an act of will. The act of will consists in turning craving into non-craving. When this is accomplished and Nirvana, the state of desirelessness, is reached, there is no more rebirth. The life-asserting impulses are eliminated and there is no further arising of the bases of phenomenal personality. This is the objective set forth in the third of the Noble Truths; that concerning the cessation of suffering.

The way to that cessation, which is the Noble Eightfold Path of self-discipline and meditation leading to perfect purity and Insight-wisdom, is the subject of the last of the Four Noble Truths, and gives epistemological completeness to the whole.

The Buddhist system of thought is thus presented as a reasoned progression from known facts to a conclusion which is ascertainable by the individual and is also accessible to him as a personally-experienced reality. The round of rebirths, or Samsāra, does not come to an end automatically, neither is there any point at which all beings revolving in it gain their release by reason of its ceasing, for it has no temporal boundaries. But anyone can bring to an end his own individual current of cause and effect, and the whole purpose of the Buddha's Teaching was to demonstrate the theoretical and practical means by which this can be achieved. The painful kind of "immortality" conferred by rebirth in conditioned existences is not to be

regarded as a blessing, but rather as a curse which man pronounces upon himself. Nevertheless, by understanding it we are able to gain assurance that there is in truth a moral principle governing the universe; and by learning to use its laws in the right way we become able to control and guide our individual destinies by a higher spiritual purpose and towards a more certain goal.

III

Of late years interest in the doctrine of rebirth has been greatly stimulated by the publicity given to several cases of people who have remembered previous lives. For a long time past it has been known that under deep hypnosis events in very early infancy, outside the normal range of memory, could be recovered, and this technique has been increasingly employed for the treatment of personality disorders. It cannot be used with success on all patients because of the involuntary resistance some subjects show to hypnotic suggestion, which inhibits the co-operation necessary to obtain deep trance. But where it can be applied it has definite advantages over the usual methods of deep psychoanalysis, one of them being the speed with which results are obtained.

The technique is to induce a state of hypnosis and then carry the subject back in time to a particular point in childhood or infancy at which it is suspected that some event of importance in the psychic life may have occurred. In this state, known as hypermnesia, the subject becomes in effect once more the child he was, and re-lives experiences

that have long been buried in the unconscious. Memories of earliest infancy, and in some cases pre-natal memories, have been brought to the surface in this way.

Some practitioners have carried experiments in regression even further, and have found that they were uncovering memories that did not belong to the current life of the subject at all, but to some previous existence. In cases where nothing could be proved, the rebirth explanation has been contested, and various theories such as telepathy, fantasies of the unconscious, and even clairvoyance, have been put forward to account for the phenomena. But apart from the fact that many of the alternatives offered call for the acceptance of psychic faculties which, if what is claimed for them is true, themselves bring rebirth nearer to being a comprehensible reality, none of them alone covers all the phenomena which have been brought under observation. If, for example, xenoglossy, the ability shown by some subjects under hypnosis to speak languages unknown to them in their normal state, is to be explained by telepathy we are brought face to face with a supernormal faculty of the mind which itself contributes to our understanding of the manner in which mental energy may operate in the processes of rebirth. But although telepathy has now been acknowledged as one of the unexplained phenomena of parapsychology, along with clairvoyance, telekinesis and psychometry, it cannot legitimately be expanded to include all the phenomena these experiments have disclosed. To account for all of them on these lines it would be necessary to combine every one of the known extra-sensory faculties into one concept, that of a freely-wandering, disembodied intelligence, independent of spatial and temporal limitations. If we are to apply here the scientific law of parsimony, the more likely alternative is the obvious one that they are simply what they purport to be—memories of previous lives.

As to the theory that the memories are products of the unconscious mind, it cannot survive the proof to the contrary which comes from the revelation of facts that could not have been known to the subject in his present life. These are objective and circumstantial and they exist in abundance, as any reading of the literature on the subject will confirm.

The best-known example of this kind is the case of Bridey Murphy in America, which raised a hurricane of controversy when it broke into the news a few years ago. It was followed some time later by a similar case in England in which the subject, Mrs. Naomi Henry, remembered under hypnosis two previous existences. The experiments were carried out under test conditions by Mr. Henry Blythe, a professional consultant hypnotist. In the presence of several witnesses tape recordings were made of the sessions, which were held under the supervision of a medical practitioner, Dr. William C. Minifie, who testified that the hypnotic trance was genuine. It has been said of these recordings that they provide "what must surely be the most thought-provoking, absorbing and controversial angle ever offered" on the subject.

What happened was this. Mrs. Naomi Henry, a thirty-two-years-old Exeter housewife, the mother of four children, was cured of the smoking habit by hypnotic treatment given by Mr. Henry Blithe, of Torquay, Devon. He found her to be "an exceptionally receptive hypnotic subject", so much so that without informing her of the purpose of his experiments he began a series of sessions in which he succeeded in taking her back beyond present life.

Mrs. Henry remembered two previous existences. In the first she gave her name as Mary Cohan, a girl of 17 living in Cork in the year 1790. Among other circumstances she told how she was married against her wishes to a man

named Charles Gaul, by whom she had two children, Pat and Will. Her husband ill-treated her, and finally caused her death by a beating which broke her leg. Whilst describing these events in the trance she was evidently re-living the intense emotional experiences of the past with the vividness of a present reality rather than of a mere memory. Intervening time had been obliterated and she was once more the illiterate Irish girl she had been over a century and a half before. Her marriage, she said, took place in St. John's Church, in a hamlet named "Grenner". Several of the facts she related were afterwards verified on the spot, but no village of the name of "Grenner" could be traced. Eventually, however, some records dating back to the 17th century were found in the possession of a parish priest, and in them mention was made of a Church of St. John in a village named Greenhalgh. The name is pronounced locally just as Mary Cohan gave it — "Grenner".

Next she remembered a life in which she was Clarice Hellier, a nurse in charge of twenty-four children at Downham in 1902. After relating what she remembered of this life she went on to describe her last illness, her death and her funeral, which it seems she had been able to witness. She was even able to give the number of the grave, 207, in which she had been buried.

When Mrs. Henry emerged from her trance she had no recollection of what had taken place and it was only when she heard the recording that she learned the purpose of the experiments. The authenticity of this case has been established beyond reasonable doubt.

One of the most remarkable men of recent times, Edgar Cayce, obtained evidence of an even more striking nature. Born in Christian County, Kentucky, in 1877, he suffered as a young man from a psycho-somatic constriction of the throat which deprived him of his voice.

Orthodox medical treatments having failed, he was treated by hypnotic suggestion, which was not a recognised form of therapy in those days. In deep trance his voice returned to normal and he diagnosed his own condition. Not only did he describe the physiological symptoms in terms of which he knew nothing in his waking state, but he also prescribed treatment.

His self-cure was so remarkable that he was persuaded, rather against his will, to try prescribing for others whose illnesses would not respond to medical treatment. This he did with great success, using technical terms and prescribing remedies which, as a man of only moderate education, he was quite unfamiliar with in his normal state. Sometimes the medicines he prescribed were conventional remedies in unusual combinations; sometimes they were substances not found in the standard pharmacopoeia. Cayce himself was puzzled and somewhat dismayed by his abnormal faculty, but since it was proving of benefit to an increasing number of sufferers he continued to use it, only refusing to take any payment for the help he rendered. He soon found that a hypnotist was unnecessary; his trances were really self-induced, and he worked thereafter solely through auto-hypnosis.

One day while Cayce was giving a consultation a friend who was present asked him whether reincarnation was true. Still in the trance, Cayce immediately replied that it was. In answer to further questions he said that many of the patients who came to him for treatment were suffering from afflications caused by bad Karma in previous lives. It was because of this that they resisted ordinary treatment. Asked whether he was able to see the past incarnations of his patients and describe them, he said that he could.

When he was told what he had said in the trance, Cayce was more disturbed than before. The thing was getting decidedly out of hand. He had never heard the word Karma, and his only idea of reincarnation was that it was a belief associated with some "heathen" religions. His first reaction was to give the whole thing up, as being something supernatural and possibly inimical to his Christian faith.

It was with great difficulty that he was persuaded to continue. However, he consented to be questioned further under hypnosis, and after having giving some readings and more successful treatments he became convinced that there was nothing irreligious or harmful in the strange ideas that were being revealed. From that time onwards he supplemented all his diagnoses by readings of the past Karma of his patients. It was then found that he was able to give valuable moral and spiritual guidance to counteract bad Karmic tendencies, and his treatments became even more effective. He was now treating the minds as well as the bodies of the patients who sought his help.

When Cayce discovered that he was also able to treat people living at great distances, whom he had never seen, the scope of his work broadened until it ultimately extended all over the United States and beyond. Before he died in 1945 Cayce, with the help of friends and supporters, had established an institution, the Cayce Foundation, at Virginia Beach, Virginia. It is now operating as a research institute under the direction of his associates. Cayce left a vast number of case-histories and other records accumulated over the years, and these are still being examined and correlated by the Foundation. For further information on Edgar Cayce, his work and the light it throws on rebirth, the reader is referred to *Many Mansions* by Gina Cerminara, *"Edgar Cayce, Mystery Man*

of Miracles, by Joseph Millard, and numerous publications issued by the Cayce Foundation.

There is a great deal in the evidence to suggest that Cayce in his hypnotised state had access to lost medical knowledge, as well as the power to see the previous lives of others. In the Buddhist texts of a very early date there are references to advanced medical knowledge and techniques of surgery in some ways comparable to our own. Jivaka, a renowned physician who was a contemporary of the Buddha, is recorded as having performed a brain operation for the removal of a living organism of some kind. But there are still older records than these. The Edwin Smith Papyrus (c. 3,500 B. C.) describes the treatment of cerebral injuries, and the writings attributed to Hippocrates include directions for opening the skull. The great Egyptian physician, Imhotep, who lived about three thousand years before the Christian era and was a many-sided genius comparable to Leonardo da Vinci, had such skill in medicine that he became a legend. He was deified under the Ptolemies and identified with Asklepios, the god of healing, by the Greeks; but there is no doubt whatever that he was an actual historical personage. Without venturing beyond what is naturally suggested by Edgar Cayce's statements concerning rebirth, and their linking up with the often unusual but brilliantly successful treatments he prescribed, it is possible to see that there might be a direct connection between the knowledge possessed by these ancient physicians and the abnormal knowledge released from Cayce's unconscious mind under hypnosis.

But even Cayce was not altogether unique. Egerton C. Baptist, in "Nibbāna or the Kingdom?" quotes the following from "Life and Destiny" by Leon Denis :

"In 1880 at Vera Cruz, Mexico, a seven-year-old child possessed the power to heal. Several people were healed

by vegetable remedies prescribed by the child. When asked how he knew these things, he said that he was formerly a great doctor, and his name was then Jules Alpherese. This surprising faculty developed in him at the age of four years."

In Buddhism, the faculty of remembering previous lives and of discerning the previous lives of others is one that is developed in the course of meditation on selected subjects. But it is acquired only when a certain precisely-defined stage of Jhāna, or mental absorption, has been reached. The subject is dealt with in the Canonical Texts of Buddhism, and at considerable length in the *Visuddhi-Magga* of Buddhaghosa Thera.* Those who have practised meditation to this point in previous lives without having attained complete liberation from rebirth may be reborn with the faculty in a latent form. In the case of others, hypnosis seems to provide a short-cut technique to releasing some at least of the dormant memories of former lives, just as it provides a short cut to results ordinarily reached by deep psychoanalysis. There is much to be done in the way of more extensive and systematic investigation before definite conclusions can be tabulated. The chief difficulty is to obtain suitable subjects for the tests.[4]

* Translated by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli: *The Path of Purification*, 2nd ed. (Colombo 11, Ananda Semage).

IV

A question that is often asked is: if rebirth is a fact, why is it so rare for people to have any recollection of their previous lives?

There are several answers to this. The first and most obvious is that even ordinary memory is very restricted, and varies greatly in extent and vividness with different people. Death itself, the Lethe of psycho-mythology, is an obliterating agent, for it is necessary for each consciousness to begin its renewed course more or less a *tabula rasa* with the formation of a new physical brain. Another factor is the nature of the lives intermediate to one human birth and another. There are, as Buddhism maintains, rebirths in states that are non-human and in which the consciousness does not register impressions clearly, so that a series of such lives between one human birth and another may erase all traces of memory connection between them. A study of the earliest behaviour patterns of children, however, will furnish much evidence to suggest that they bring with them into the new life certain dim awarenesses that do not belong to their present range of experience. The aptitude certain children show for acquiring some particular skills strongly suggests remembering rather than learning. The headmistress of a kindergarten school told the author that a few years after the end of the First World War she noticed that some of her boy pupils were showing a maturity of mind and a facility in gaining knowledge which was so unlike anything in her previous experience that it roused her curiosity. After making a study of these

children she came to the conclusion that they were not learning but remembering. She became convinced of the truth of rebirth when one small boy, born after the war and exhibiting a highly-strung nature which she had formerly attributed to post-war conditions, one day became violently agitated by a sudden explosive noise close behind him. The fear he showed was out of all proportion to the cause; in fact he fell into an almost cataleptic state. When he recovered he told her that he had a vague memory of a tremendous explosion and a brilliant flash of light, and that the loud noise had brought it back to him so vividly that he felt as though he was dying. From that time she was convinced that her extremely intelligent but often nervously unstable pupils were the reincarnations of men whose immediately previous lives had been cut short by the war, and who had been reborn almost at once into the human state to complete the interrupted Karmic continuity of that particular life.[5]

Many children lead vivid lives of the imagination, or so it is supposed. They sometimes speak of things that bear no relation to their present experiences. Parents as a rule do not encourage this kind of imaginativeness, particularly if some of its manifestations cause them embarrassment. They then peremptorily forbid the child to tell any more untruths. But are these always untruths? May they not in fact be residual memories of past experiences? In any case, they are driven under by the parents' unsympathetic attitude and quickly become obliterated by new impressions. In the East, where children are allowed greater latitude to prattle of what they will, this does not happen. The difference may account for the frequently-noted fact that instances of people recollecting past lives are more numerous in the East than in Western countries. The son of a distinguished Indian doctor practising in

Burma started talking of his "wife" and of events and people belonging to another realm of experience as soon as he was able to speak. The boy was living in a tri-lingual environment where Hindi, English and Burmese were spoken, but his father noticed that from the start he used words to denote familiar things, such as doors, tables and houses, which were not Hindi, English or Burmese. The doctor noted down a number of these words phonetically, with the intention of later on trying to identify them. Unfortunately, at that time the Japanese occupation of Burma took place and the records were lost, so it was never possible to establish whether the words belonged to any existing language or not.

Cases of children remembering their previous lives in considerable detail are not uncommon in Asian countries. An example which bears all the classic features of this phenomenon is that of Parmod. the son of Babu Bankey Lal Sharma, M. A., Shastri, a Professor in an intermediate college at Bissauli in the district of Badan. The boy was born at Bissauli on March 15th 1944. As soon as he was able to utter any words clearly he pronounced the names "Mohan", "Moradabad" and "Saharanpur". Later he said quite distinctly, "Mohan Brothers". When he saw his relatives purchasing biscuits he told them that he had a big biscuit factory in Moradabad, and on being taken to large shops he would frequently say that his shop in Moradabad was bigger than any other shop. As time went on he became insistent that he should be taken to Moradabad, where he had a brother, sons, daughter and a wife.

When he was able to give a clear account of himself he said that he was Paramanand, the brother of one B.Mohanlal, the proprietor of a catering firm, Messrs. Mohan Bros., having branches in Saharanpur and Moradabad. As

Paramanand, he said, he had died of a stomach ailment at Saharanpur on May 9th 1943. The date was just nine months and six days before his birth as Pramod.

Early in the year 1949, when the boy was five, a friend of the family, Lala Raghunandanlal of Bissauli, told one of his relatives living in Moradabad about the boy and his assertions, It was then learned that there was actually a firm of Mohan Bros., caterers, the proprietor of which was named Mohan Lal. When the story was told to him, Mr. Mohan Lal visited Bissauli with scme of his relatives, and there met the boy's father. Young Pramod, as it happened, was paying a visit to some relatives in a distant village at the time (July 1949) and could not be seen. Professor Bankey Lal however consented to take him to Moradabad during the forthcoming Independence Day holidays.

They arrived in Moradabad on August 15th. On alighting from the train the boy at once recognised his brother and ran to embrace him. On the way to Mohan Lal's house Pramod recognised the Town Hall and announced that his shop was close at hand. They were riding in a tonga which, to test the boy, was being driven past the shop. Pramod recognised the building and called out for the vehicle to stop. He then alighted and led the way to the house in front of Mohan Lal Brothers' premises where the late Paramanand had lived. There he entered the room which Paramanand had kept for his religious devotions, and did reverence to it. He also recognised his wife and other relatives, and recalled incidents known to them, by which he established his identity to their complete satisfaction. The only person he failed to recognise was his eldest son, who had been thirteen years old when Paramanand died and had altered greatly in the five years' interval.

After a touching reunion with the relatives of his former life, the boy expressed a desire to go to his business premises. On entering the shop he went to the soda-water machine and explained the process of making aerated water, a thing of which he could not have acquired any knowledge in his present life. Finding that the machine would not work, he at once said that the water connection had been stopped, which was a fact; it had been done to test him. After that he said he wanted to go to the Victory Hotel, a business owned by a cousin of Paramanand's, Mr. Karam Chand. The boy led the way to the building, and entering it pointed out some rooms on the upper storey which had been added since his time.

During the two days of their stay in Moradabad the boy was taken to the Meston Park by a leading citizen of the town, Sahu Nanda Lal Saran, who asked him to point out where his civil lines branch had been. At once the boy led the company to the Gujerati Building owned by Sahu Lal Saran and indicated the shop which had once been the branch of Mohan Bros. On the Way to the Meston Park he had already recognised and correctly named the Allahabad Bank, the waterworks and the district jail. Some of the English words, such as Town Hall, were not in use in the small town of Bissauli, and Pramod had never heard them, yet he used them accurately. He not only identified his former relatives but also people who used to visit his shop on business.

The following is the account given by Mr. J. D. Mehra of Messrs. Mohan Bros., Moradabad, a brother of the late Paramanand :

"My brother, Paramanand, aged 39, died of appendicitis on 9th May 1943 at Saharanpur about 100 miles from Moradabad. Pramod, the boy concerned, was born on 15th March 1944 at Bissauli. As the boy grew up he began

to utter things of his previous life. For instance, he would say to his father when offered biscuits that he would have biscuits of his own shop and that he owned a big shop at Moradabad. He used to refer to his four sons, daughter and wife. When his mother would prepare meals he would say to her, 'Why should you prepare meals? I have an elderly wife, send for her.'

"As requested by us it was decided to bring this boy to Moradabad on August 15th 19 8 (the day of India's Independence). Sri Karam Chand, the eldest of our brothers, went to the station to receive the boy and his father. When Mr. Bankey Lal, the father, alighted from the station with his boy, Pramod spotted out Sri Karam Chand from the crowd and clung to him, and would not go to his father. When questioned whether he knew the gentleman he at once replied, 'Yes, he is my *Bara Bhai* (elder brother).'

"Whilst passing the Town Hall compound the boy said that it was the Town Hall, an English word with which he was not familiar in his own small city...When taken round the place where biscuits were manufactured he said that it was a bakery, another English word not familiar to him in his birth-place. Entering the kitchen he said that he used to sit on a wooden cot there and pray. Before he entered the room he did Namaskar to the place where he used to sit in meditation,

"Seeing his wife without the vermilion mark on her forehead he questioned her—'Where is your Bindu (mark) on the forehead?" This was a very significant remark for a boy of his age...."

The boy's own father, Shri Bankey Lal Sharma, wrote the following testimony :

"I have read almost all the versions of the statement regarding the rebirth of Paramanand of Moradabad. As I

have been the eye-witness of all these things, I can say with emphasis that everything contained in the report is true to its minutest detail.

"Paramanand is a wonderful child with a very fine intelligence. He began to utter "Moradabad" and 'Mohan Brothers' alone one year back. Since December last he spoke of the firm he owned during his last existence and also the articles he dealt in. A few days latter he made a reference to a shop of his at Saharanpur. Biscuits and tea have been his great attraction. Although nobody attaches any importance to them in my family, he is very fond of them. It was through the association of biscuits that he spoke of his previous soda water and biscuit firm.

"When he visited Moradabad he recognised almost everybody with the exception of a few, especially his eldest son who is much changed.... He recognised other sons, his only daughter, wife, brothers, mother and father and several others whom he contacted during his previous life....

"I am a middle-class man, but the boy is not satisfied with the present status. He often stresses on buisness and opening a big shop in Bombay or Delhi. In the latter place, he says, he had been several times on business. He wants aeroplanes, ships, mansions, radios and all modern fashions.

"He has a great leaning towards his past relatives and does not want to live with me. He requests me to purchase and have a bank of our own...."

It was only with great difficulty that the boy was taken away from Moradabad after the visit. He showed such unwillingness to leave his old relatives and the shop that his present father had to carry him away in the early hours of August 17th while he was still asleep.

On the day prior to their departure, August 16th 1949, a large public meeting was held at the Arya Samaj where Prof. Bankey Lal, Pramod's father, gave a full account of the development of the boy's memories since his early childhood. The case was investigated in the full light of local publicity by people known to all the persons concerned.

Among numerous cases from Burma the following, given on the testimony of U Yan Pa of Rangoon, is one of the most thoroughly substantiated.

In the village of Shwe Taung Pan, situated close to Dabein on the Rangoon-Pegu trunk line, the eldest daughter of a cultivator named U Po Chon and his wife, Daw Ngwe Thin, was married to another cultivator of the same village, named Ko Ba Thin. This girl, whose name was Ma Phwa Kyin, died in childbirth some time later.

Shortly afterwards a woman in Dabein, Daw Thay Thay Hmyin, the wife of one U Po Yin, become pregnant and in due course gave birth to a daughter whom they named Ah Nyo. When she first began to speak this child expressed a strong wish to go to the neighbouring village, Shwe Taung Pan. She declared that she had lived and died in that village, and that her name was really not Ah Nyo but Ma Phwa Kyin.

Eventually her parents took her to the village. The child at once led them to the house of the late Ma Phwa Kyin, pointing out on the way a rice field and some cattle which she said belonged to her. When the father, mother and two brothers, Mg Ba Khin and Mg Ba Yin, of Ma Phwa Kyin appeared she at once identified them. They confirmed that the house, field and cattle were those that had belonged to Ma Phwa Kyin, and when the child recalled to them incidents of her former life they admitted that her memories were accurate and accepted her as being

without doubt the dead girl reborn. Later she convinced her other surviving relatives in the same way.

The girl Ah Nyo, now about twenty-five years of age, is everywhere in the neighbourhood accepted as the former Ma Phwa Kyin reborn.

More numerous are the cases in which specific skills are carried over from one line to another, rather than any distinct recollection of identity. Among musical prodigies we find Mozart composing minuets before he was four years old; Beethoven playing in public at eight and publishing compositions at ten; Handel giving concerts at nine; Schubert composing at eleven; Chopin playing concertos in public before he was nine and Samuel Wesley playing the organ at three and composing an oratorio at eight. The musical precocity of Brahms, Dvorak and Richard Strauss was manifest at an equally early stage. In a less specialised field there is the case of Christian Heinrich Heinecken, born at Lubeck in 1721. At the age of ten months he was able to speak, and by the time he was one year old he knew by heart the principal incidents of the Pentateuch. "At two years of age he is said to have mastered sacred history; at three he was intimately acquainted with history and geography, ancient and modern, sacred and profane, besides being able to speak French and Latin; and in his fourth year he began the study of religions and church history."

This amazing child created a tremendous sensation, crowds of people flocking to Lubeck to see and discourse with him. He died at the age of four, soon after he had begun to learn writing. That he was able to master so many abstruse subjects before he could even write is proof that his abnormal achievements were not the result of learning but of remembering.

Sangayana, the journal of the Union of Burma Buddha

Sasana Council, reported in its issue of July 1954 the case of a six-year-old girl, Ma Hla Gyi, who showed remarkable intelligence for her age, combined with a phenomenal memory. "She can read," the report stated, "the most difficult Pāli verses a few times, memorise and recite them promptly and correctly". In a test given to her she recited the final stanza of the sub-commentary on the Buddhist Compendium of Philosophy in Pali without an error, after reading it five times. She was also able to recite without a single error a page of the Pāli Paṭṭhāna text (an abstruse Abhidhamma passage) after looking at it for one minute. This might be explained by the possession of a photographic memory, but for the fact that the child could understand what she read and was able to give its meaning.

These and many other instances of the appearance from time to time of child prodigies, although not constituting direct evidence for rebirth present a phenomenon for which biology and psychology cannot account. That memory itself is a something extra to the activities of the brain cells is a conclusion accepted an physiological grounds by Max Loewenthal land others. From the cases available for examination it would seem that memories carried over from one life to another are subject to the same broad general principle as are ordinary memories belonging to the current life: we remember what most interests us, and what we most desire to remember. Therefore a strong Karmic predisposition to a particular form of study is more likely to persist from the past life than are the actual details of that life, which may be connected with personal psychological reactions and emotional responses that are in the ordinary course of nature suppressed.

V

Despite great advances in the study of genetics, there is still much that is unexplained in the biological processes that produce living organisms. While the transmission of hereditary characteristics through the genes can be traced in the operation of physical laws, there is yet no known method of accounting for the sudden mutations that occur from time to time and so give rise to variations of species. Yet these mutations, and the fact that they are possible, is a matter of the first importance, since it is by them that biological evolution takes place. For many generations the structural units of a chromosome, the genes, remain the same, and produce uniform hereditary types; but suddenly, without any intermediary stages, a new type is formed from them which may or may not continue to propagate itself. A well-known example of this is the fruit fly, *Drosophila melanogaster*, which, being normally an insect with a grey body and long wings, produces from time to time a spontaneous mutation having a black body slightly different in shape, and very short wings. Many similar cases are known of this kind of departure from a hereditary form, but precisely what different combinations or genes, chromosomes or atomic patterns cause the variation, or why they occur, is still a mystery to biologists. All that can be said is that the changes are isomeric transformations of the kind found in simple molecular structures, and that they follow the laws of chemical kinetics which also apply to non-living substances under certain conditions.

Between "living" and "non-living" matter there is no sharp line of distinction, for it is known that the processes by which living cells nourish themselves from their surrounding medium, assimilate material for their sustenance and divide into other cells capable of independent existence is closely paralleled by processes observable in chemical molecules. For example, virus particles, which are the simplest form of life known at present, have to be considered as living units because they perform all the essential functions of living cells: yet at the same time they are regular chemical molecules, subject to all the laws of chemistry and physics. As living molecules comparable to the genes by which organic life is propagated, they are able to multiply, and they are also capable of producing biological mutations which result in the appearance from time to time of new types of a particular virus. Yet a purely chemical study of them shows each type of virus to be a well-defined chemical compound similar to various complex organic compounds that are not strictly "living" matter. They thus represent a "bridge" between "living" and "non-living" substance, and possibly the point at which the "non-living" merges into the "living". What has to be sought is the directive principle that prompts the transformation and guides the molecules to combine into more complex organic structures. To be able to follow the process, even right from its earliest stage, is not the same as to know its cause, and it is here that scientific method has to enlarge its scope to include the study of principles and laws underlying the phenomena of the physical universe and functioning on a different level from that to which the scientist has hitherto confined himself. Inasmuch as Buddhism locates these ultimate principles in the mental and immaterial, rather than the physical, realm, the enquiry must necessarily be turned towards the

interaction between mind-energy and the material substance through which it manifests itself. If the transformations of non-living into living matter, and the developments which these transformations afterwards undergo are regarded as the physical manifestation of Kamma and Vipāka (Kamma–result), it is only necessary to add these to the present stock of scientific knowledge as the unknown factors that at present elude identification, for many things still obscure to become clarified, without resorting to the supernatural for an explanation.

The embryo human being derives its hereditary characteristics from the genes of the parents, sharing in equal measure the chromosomes of father and mother, the sex being determined by the proportion of what are distinguished as X and Y chromosomes. Female cells contain always two X - chromosomes, while the male has one X and one Y, and it is in the substitution of one Y for an X-chromosome that the basic difference in sex consists. At the time of conception the male sperm cell unites with the female and by the process of syngamy forms one complete cell, which afterwards divides into two, thus starting the process of mitosis by which the complete organism eventually comes into being. Here, what is *not* known is exactly why in certain cases the X and Y chromosomes combine to form a female, while in others they produce a male cell. This may be purely fortuitous; but it is more in accordance with the scientific view of cause and effect to suspect the presence of another factor that in some way determines the combination. The Buddhist view that this unknown factor is Kamma (Karma) or energy-potential, the mental impulse projected by another being which existed in the past, is one that science by itself can neither prove nor disprove, but it provides the most likely explanation — in fact, the only one which can be

offered as an alternative to the improbable theory of chance. Kamma as cause, and Vipāka as result, also provide an explanation of the intermediate conditions in which sex characteristics are more or less equal in one individual, or where it is possible for a complete change of sex to take place. The Kamma which in the first place produced a male may be weak, or may become exhausted before the life-supporting Kamma comes to an end, in which case the characteristics of the opposite sex may become so marked that they amount virtually to a sex-transformation, the result of a different kind of Kamma coming into operation.* Similarly, masculine thoughts and habits gradually becoming dominant in a female may bring about more and more marked male characteristics with the passage of time, and these influences may be so strong that they actually reveal themselves in physical changes. On the other hand, they may only affect the psychic life. What is certain, as this analysis will attempt to show, is that the thought-accretions do have the power to affect not only the general outlook and habits but the physical body itself. For "thought-accretions" we may substitute here the Buddhist term Sankhāra, since this is one of the various associated meanings of this highly-comprehensive word.

Individual character is usually attributed to two factors, the first being heredity. But simple physical characteristics alone are not always traceable to this cause. Colour-blindness, although it can be followed back through successive generations and shows clearly-marked biological

* The Commentary to Verse 43 of the Dhammapada relates a sudden change of sex, due to exceptionally weighty Kamma, in the case of a youth, Soreyya, who became a woman as the result of a thought of lust directed towards an Arahant, the Thera Mahā Kaccāyaṇa.

transmission, is not invariably hereditary; and in those individual features that partake of both the physical and psychological, such as the sexual deviations referred to above, the hereditary influence does not provide any satisfactory explanation. That they are not hereditary is the conclusion of most authorities. This also applies to the many examples of infant prodigies and to the less striking, but nevertheless significant, instances of children who bear no resemblance whatever to their parents or grandparents. Where hereditary traits transmitted through the genes of the parents cannot account for differences in character the second factor, environmental influence, is brought in to explain the variation. But this also fails to cover all the ground because the same antecedents and the same environment together frequently produce quite dissimilar personalities, and there are numerous examples of pronounced characteristics appearing at birth, before any environmental pressure is brought to bear on the developing personality.

In Buddhist philosophy it is axiomatic that more than one cause is necessary to produce a given result, so that while character may be partly drawn from heredity, and partly modified by environment, these two factors do not in any way rule out the third factor, that of the individual Sankhāra, or kamma-formation-tendency developed in previous lives, which may prove itself stronger than either of them. Hereditary transmissions themselves are a part of the operation of the causal law, for it happens that owing to strong attachments the same persons may be born again and again in the same family. This accounts for the fact that a child may be totally unlike either of its parents in temperament, tastes and abilities, yet may resemble a dead grandfather or some more distant ancestor. Physical appearance may be derived in the first place from the genes

of the parents, but it undergoes modifications as the individual develops along his own lines, and it is then that distinctive characteristics, the result of habitual th ught-tendencies stamping themselves upon the features, become more pronounced.

That the mind, or rather the mental impressions and volitional activities, produce changes in the living structure, is a fact which science is beginning to recognise. Hypnotism affords an opportunity of studying this phenomenon under test conditions. It is only recently that hypnotic suggestion as a mode of therapeutic treatment has been officially recognised by medical associations in many parts of the world, but it is already being used with success as a form of harmless anaesthesia during operations and child-birth, and as a treatment for psychological disorders. Clinical experiments with hypnosis are helping to reveal the secrets of the mysterious action of mind on body, for it has been found possible by suggestion to produce physical reactions which under ordinary conditions could only be obtained by physical means. Doubtless many of the "faith cures" of Lourdes and other religious centres are the result of a strong mental force, comparable with that produced under hypnotism, acting upon the physical body; the force in this instance being the patient's absolute conviction that a miraculous cure will take place. The task of the hypnotic practioner is to induce this acquiescent and receptive state of unquestioning faith by artificial means. This, of course, requires the consent and co-operation of the subject, and it is here that the difficulty usually arises. The patient must have complete faith in the operator to enable him to surrender his own will entirely, for the time being, to another person. When full control of the subject's mind is gained the required suggestions can be made with every confidence that the mind of the subject will carry

them out, and the astonishing thing is that not only does the mind obey, but the body also responds. If, for instance, the idea of a burn is conveyed through the mind, the mark of a burn duly appears on the flesh on the spot indicated, without the use of any physical means to produce it. Many similar experiments attest to this close inter-relationship of the mental and physical, and prove beyond question the truth of the Buddhist teaching that mental conditions precede and determine certain classes of phenomena which we have been wont to consider purely physical and material.

Hysteria also produces marked physiological changes in certain circumstances, among them being the well-attested phenomenon of "phantom pregnancy." The abnormal mental excitation which produces phantom pregnancy is also to be found in states of religious frenzy, when an unnatural degree of strength, insensibility to pain and even invulnerability to injury are exhibited. These unexplained phenomena point to the existence of a mental force which can not only inhibit normal reactions to sense-stimuli, but more than that, is able to affect the physical structure in a particular way.

All this has a distinct bearing on the manner in which the mental impulses generated in past lives, particularly the last mental impressions at the time of the preceding death, influence the physical make-up, and often predetermine the very structure of the body, in the new birth. Before going more deeply into this a specific example may be offered for consideration.

REBIRTH CASE HISTORY

From the records of the Burma Buddhist World-Mission.

S. T. Karen, aet 20. Birthplace, Upper Burma. Examined in Rangoon, 1949.

The subject, a Karen house boy employed by a friend of the writer, while he was in all other respects physically sound, well built and well proportioned, suffered from an unusual malformation of hands and feet. Across his right hand a fairly deep, straight indentation, roughly following the "heart line" of palmistry, but much deeper and sharper than any of the normal lines of the hand, and extending right across the palm, divided the hand into two sections. Above this line the hand was not as well developed as at the base of the palm, and the fingers had something of the childish, unformed appearance that is one of the physical accompaniments of cretinism, although not to the same degree. Lower down on the hand and across the forearm there were similar marks, but not so pronounced as that at the base of the fingers. The left hand was indented in the same unusual fashion, but to a lesser degree; and linear indentations of the same kind appeared less distinctly across both feet and on the calves, the lines being roughly parallel to one another. In addition to this, two toes of the left foot were joined together.

The boy's previous employment had been with a leading Rangoon surgeon who, after examining these marks had declared that although they had been present from birth they could not have been caused by any pre-natal

injury or abnormal condition in the womb. Questioned about them, the boy confirmed that they were congenital, and stated that all the indentations had been much more pronounced in childhood. Furthermore, at birth three of his toes had been joined, but his father, with the rough surgery of village folk, had separated two of the toes himself. During his infancy and boyhood these malformations had been a cause of acute suffering to him, for at times, particularly when the attention of others was drawn to them, his right arm would swell, and severe pain would be felt in all the affected parts. At such times he experienced mental as well as physical distress, being conscious of fear and depression in connection with the malformations.

According to the boy's own narrative, as a child he had been very reluctant to talk about his physical defects, but one night, lying under the mosquito net with his mother he felt a sense of security which enabled him to speak freely. He then told her that he remembered incidents of his previous life which were the cause of his terror and distress whenever he was reminded of the marks. He had been, he said, the son of a rich man, possibly a village headman, who had died leaving him three adjoining houses and a large quantity of silver stored in large vessels of the type known as Pegu jars, besides other treasure secreted in various parts of the buildings. After his father's death he had lived alone, unmarried and without servants, in one of the three houses. One night a band of dacoits, armed with bamboo spears, broke into the house and demanded to be told where the treasure was hidden. When he refused to tell them, the robbers bound him with wire in a crouching position, with his hands firmly secured between his legs. In this position, tightly bound and unable to move, they left him huddled in a corner while they ransacked the other two houses, finally making off

with the entire store of silver and jewellery. For three days he remained in that position in acute agony, and one of the things he remembered vividly was that blood, dripping from the deep cuts made in his hands by the wire, fell onto his feet and congealed between three of his toes. Some time during the third night he suddenly became aware, in his alternating periods of consciousness and insensibility, that he was looking down at a still form crouched in a corner, and wondering who it was. It was only later that he realised the body was his own, and that his consciousness was now located in a different and less substantial form. The rest of his recollection was confused and obscure. It seemed to him that for a long time he wandered about the scene of his former life, conscious only of a sense of loss and profound unhappiness. In this condition he appeared to have no judgement of the passage of time, and was unable to say whether it lasted for days or centuries. His sense of personal identity, too, was very feeble, his thoughts revolving entirely around the events just prior to his death, and the memory of his lost treasure. which he felt a longing to regain. He seemed, he said, to have his whole existence in a single idea which was like an obsession: the loss of his wealth and the desire to recover it. [6]

After a long time he again became aware of living beings, and felt an attraction towards a certain young woman. He attached himself to her, following her movements, and eventually another transition was effected, in a manner he was unable to describe clearly, as the result of which he was reborn as the woman's child.

These were the memories that lingered with him in connection with the strange malformations of his hands and feet, and which he told his mother in halting, childish words when he was able to speak. The case-history bears

several features in common with other instances of the recollection of previous lives that are fairly frequent in the East, and so may be profitably discussed as a typical example. One fact, however, should be noted at the outset: the child who made the claim to these recollections had nothing material to gain by doing so. Neither had the parents. Another noteworthy fact is that the boy was a Karen, of a family that had been nominally Christian for two generations, and would be expected to have no belief in the doctrine of rebirth.

Certain interesting and very significant features emerge from an analysis of this particular case. In the first place, the *craving* motif is strongly marked throughout. The young man's choice of a solitary life in a house filled with valuables suggests a fear of employing servants and a tendency towards miserliness in his character. After death, in the Peta state (i. e. as an unhappy ghost), his attachment to the lost treasure and to the locale of his previous life persisted as the strongest element in his consciousness up to the time when he again became attracted to another human being. So far, this important part played by the impulse of craving and attachment links the story with other instances of Petas haunting the spots where their former property was located; but here there is another element, that of fear, combined with the attachment. This fear was generated during the days and nights when the subject crouched, bound with wire, in the empty building, with no possibility of escape. In remote spots on the outskirts of villages and townships it is even now possible for such a solitude to remain unbroken for weeks at a time. An intensely strong mental impression of the wire cutting into the flesh must have been formed during this period, and it was probably the last image present in the consciousness at death. In accordance with the principles of

Abhidhamma psychology, this last thought-moment would determine the character of the Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa, (connecting-consciousness or rebirth-consciousness), and would thus become the chief factor in determining the conditions of the new birth. To understand how this comes about we must turn to a brief consideration of the Buddhist analysis of consciousness.

The process by which thought impressions register themselves is called Citta-vīthi, or the course of cognition, and there is a Citta-vīthi connected with each of the organs and fields of sense-cognition; that is, eye, ear, nose, tongue, touch (body) and mind. The passive flow of the subconscious mind-continuum (Bhavanga) is disturbed whenever an external impression through one or other of these six channels impinges upon it. This disturbance is called Bhavanga-calana, (vibration of the subconscious mind-continuum) and it lasts for exactly one thought-moment. It is followed immediately afterwards by Bhavangupaccheda, or the cutting-off of Bhavanga, which is a definite interruption in the smooth flow of the subconscious current. At this point the thought-moments begin to follow a set progression of cognitive response beginning with Pañca-dvārāvajjana, which is the turning towards the sense-door (in this case one of the five physical organs). This is followed by the arising of the Consciousness-moment appertaining to whichever of the sense-doors, eye, ear, nose, tongue or body, is involved. This is the involuntary act of turning the attention towards the external object, and it is followed at once by Sampaṭicchana, which is the actual seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or feeling, as the case may be. When this has been effected, the function of Santīraṇa, or Investigation, comes into play; at this stage associative ideas arise by which the mind is able to identify the impression that has been received, so that

the next stage, that of Votthapana, or Identification, can be produced. Votthapana is the stage of conscious recognition, at which the object assumes a definite identity in the mental awareness. This stage is then succeeded in a full course of cognition by no less than seven Javana* thought-moments during which consciousness relating to the object arises and passes away. It is followed by Tadālambana, which is the holding of the impression and the registering of it upon the mental stream; this stage, which lasts for two thought-moments, completes the Citta-vīthi of that particular impression, making sixteen thought-moments of the course of cognition from the first awakening of attention to the object to its fixing upon the consciousness. Each of these thought-moments is complete in itself, consisting of three phases, Arising (Uppāda), Enduring (Thiti), and Passing away (Bhanga),

The relative intensity or feeblenes of impressions varies considerably. One single impression may be the subject of thousands of complete Vīthi, each of them very distinct (Ati-mahanta). If the impression is less marked it is called Mahanta (distinct), and does not give rise to the Tadālambana stage. Still weaker is an impression that does not even reach the Javana stage (Paritta; i. e. feeble); while if it is very feeble indeed (Ati-paritta) it passes away after the Bhavanga-calana (vibration of Bhavanga) without any of the subsequent thought-moments arising. An extremely vivid and clear impression reaching the mind door, accompanied by a full course of cognition, is called Vibhūta (vivid). It is such impressions as these, repeated over and over again, which influence the mind and may be capable ultimately of influencing the body, with or without the

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* Lit. 'Impulsion'. It is at that phase that Kamma, good or evil, is produced.

accompaniment of a volitional impulse directed towards that end. Normally the mind is selective, turning again and again to those impressions which are most agreeable, while ignoring the others; but under certain exceptional conditions disagreeable impressions force themselves upon the attention so strongly that they cannot be thrust aside. Very often such impressions may be rejected by the conscious mind, yet linger in the Bhavanga ineradicably.

We are here dealing with states of consciousness arising in the Kāma Loka (the world of fivefold sense-perception) and such as come into being through contact with external sense-objects. The course of ideational objects, those entering through the Mano-dvāra, mind-door, is slightly different. In the cognitive series (citta-vīthi) dealt with above, the Javana thought-moment occurs up to seven times, but in loss of consciousness or at the moment of death it subsides after the fifth repetition. At that moment, representing the end of the final phase of the current life, cognitive thought (Vīthi-citta) is experienced, and this takes the form of an idea-image which may be that of predominant Kamma, of something associated with that Kamma and its performance, or else a representation of the destiny to which the past Kamma has been directed. At the expiry of the cognitive thought (Vīthi-citta) or that of the Bhavanga, there arises the Cuti-citta (death consciousness) which performs the function of cutting off, and immediately after that the Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa, or connecting-consciousness, arises in the next life as rebirth-consciousness. In the formula of 'Dependent Origination' (Paṭicca-samuppāda) this is expressed as: "Viññāṇa paccayā Nāma-rūpa" — "From (Rebirth-) Consciousness arise Name and Form", i. e., mental and physical aggregates. This Consciousness, conditioned by Ignorance and Actions (Kamma) motivated by Craving, carrying with it the predominant impressions

of the last thought-moments, functions as the Bhavaṅga of the next existence and so determines the key, as it were, in which that life is pitched. Thus the life-continuum flows on from one existence to another in the endless succession of Paṭisandhi, Bhavanga, Vīthi and Cuti.

There is no actual thought-existence that passes across from one life another, but only an impulse. Each moment of consciousness passes away completely, but as it passes it gives rise to a successor which tends to belong to the same pattern; and this process is the same, whether it be considered from the viewpoint of the moment-to-moment life-continuum that makes up a total life-span, or from that of the connecting link between one life and the next. The rebirth is instantaneous and is directly conditioned by the preceding thought-impulse. Since both mind and body are conditioned by it, even the distinctive pattern of the brain convolutions that accompanies a particular talent, say for music or mathematics, is the result of this powerful mental force operating from the past life and stamping its peculiar features on the physical substance, the living cell-tissues of the brain. It is this which accounts for the phenomenon of genius in circumstances where heredity offers no tenable explanation. In the case of the Karen boy under discussion the most potent rebirth-force, craving, was conjoined with a strong impression of physical suffering and physical marks, and this impression had been the central pivot of consciousness for three days and nights — long enough to set up a thought-construction (or a pattern impressed on the Bhavanga) sufficiently emphatic to influence the succeding phases of consciousness and the new body that was formed under its direction. In some way not yet known to science, the thought-energy released at the time of death is able to control the combinations of male

and female gametes and by means of Utu (temperature) and the other purely physical elements of generation to produce a living organism that embodies the nature and potentialities of the past Kamma in a new life (Anāgata vipāka bhava).

Here it should be noted that strongly marked tendencies, both mental and physical, as well as actual memories belonging to past lives, are most in evidence when the rebirth is direct from one human life to another. The memories themselves are transferred by impression on the brain cells, so that the ordinary rules of memory obtain here, and it is the most recent and vivid impressions that survive. Intermediate lives in one or other of the remaining thirty planes of existence can efface altogether the memory of previous human lives, and if these intermediate existences have been in any of the lower states, where consciousness is dim, or spent in the inconceivably long life-span of the Deva realm, it can hardly be expected that there should be any recollection at all. This is only one of the many reasons why most people altogether fail to remember having existed in a previous state, and yet may have a vague feeling that they have done so. In the case under review the subject spent an undefined period in the state of a Peta, or what is popularly known as an "unhappy ghost". His own belief was that this state lasted for a long time; but in such conditions time is a purely subjective element. His existence as a Peta may in fact not have lasted for more than few thought-moments. Questions put to the boy by the writer, however, seemed to indicate that the interval of Peta-existence had actually been of considerable duration, for after his rebirth he had not been able to identify any places or people from the former life. Everything had changed from his memory of it. Other attempts to draw some clue as to the period of the

previous life were equally profitless. The primitive weapons of the dacoits did not necessarily indicate that it took place before the invention of firearms; for the statement that they used wire points to a more recent date. It is possible, however, that the boy's use of the word "wire" was a linguistic error; he may have meant thin strands of creeper, which would produce the same effect. The joining of his toes, corresponding to the manner in which they had stuck together with the congealed blood, is a stricking instance of the enduring power of a mental impression. Crouched with his head bent down to his knees, his hands and feet would be the central objects of his Citta-vīthi, and what was happening to them must have stamped itself visually on his consciousness, to reproduce itself later in his new body by means of Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa.

This case is the most remarkable one known to the writer for the demonstration it gives of the mind's influence upon the physical body in a direct causal sequence from one life to another.[7] That the process of mutation from one existence to the next is carried out without any "soul" or transmigrating entity is another fact that becomes apparent on examination of the case history. The only factor of identity between the headman's son, the Peta (unhappy ghost) and S. T. the Karen houseboy, was the craving-impulse that carried with it the potentiality of re-manifestation: that is, Bhava (existence) resulting from Upādāna (attachment). The terrors and physical affliction were the direct outcome of the Upādāna, or Attachment. In terms of Dependent Origination, Sankhārā (Kamma-tendencies) conditioned by Avijjā (Ignorance) had produced Viññāṇa (Consciousness), and from that consciousness had sprung a fresh Nāma-rūpa (Mind-body) bearing all the marks that had impressed themselves on the last moments of consciousness during repeated Citta-vīthis on

the same object. It is thus that all living beings carry with them, throughout countless existences, the inheritance of their own thoughts and actions, sprung from past tendencies and nourished on the ever-renewed craving that comes from contact between the senses and the objects of the external world. Heredity itself is merely one factor in the multiple operations of the law of Kamma and Vipāka (result), and it too is greatly influenced by the direction taken by past interests, activities and attachments.

In the Buddha's Teaching it is naturally the moral aspect of Kamma and Vipāka that is stressed; and indeed there is a moral aspect to every major volitional impulse. The relationship of good Kamma and good Vipāka, bad Kamma and bad Vipāka, however, is not always obvious at first glance. A child born with a physical deformity, as in the present case, has not necessarily inflicted injury of a similar kind on someone else in a previous life. The physical defect may be the result of a strong mental impression produced by some other means. But as in the case of the Karen boy, the ultimate cause can invariably be traced back to some moral defect of the individual concerned—to some trait of character unduly dominated by the Āsavas, the taints or fluxes associated with the grasping tendency which in Paṭicca-samuppāda is shown as the immediate cause of the process of "Becoming" (Uppāda, or Grasping, gives rise to Bhava, or Becoming; which in its turn causes Jāti, Arising or Rebirth). Thus the whole individual life-process, including its physical medium, the Rūpa (body), must be viewed as "Santati", that is, a causal-continuum of action and result, all the actions being to some degree tainted by craving for existence, passion, self-interest and ignorance, until the attainment of Arahatship extinguishes these energy-supplying fires.

It only remains to be noted that in the operation of mental impulses upon living cells at the time of their uniting, and during the processes of syngamy and mitosis, Buddhism offers a fully scientific explanation of the biological mutations described at the beginning of this chapter.

VI

Buddhism teaches that there are altogether thirty-one planes of existence on which rebirth is possible: the human plane is only one of them. The Thirty-one "Abodes" comprise the states of extreme suffering, or "hells", to which people consign themselves by reason of their bad Karma; the realms of the unhappy spirits, or "Petas", who on account of attachment to mundane concerns of a low order are more or less earthbound; the animal world into which people may be reborn through the manifestation of bestial characteristics; the realm of superior spirits intermediate between earth and the heavenly planes themselves, which are the abodes of Devas enjoying sense-pleasures as the result of their past good actions: and lastly the Brahma worlds, wherein beings who on earth have attained specific spiritual goals live for aeons in pure and immaterial forms. All of these states of existence, however, are impermanent; sooner or later they come to an end, when the Karma that has produced them is exhausted. Rebirth then takes place once more, as the result of craving and residual Karma of another type from past lives which then comes into operation. So the process of Samsāra continues until all craving is extinguished and Nirvāna is reached.

It is important to realise that Buddhism does not teach rebirth only on the human level. If it did so it would leave unexplained all the phenomena of spiritualism and a great deal more besides which has to be accounted for in human experience. Many western spiritualists have now come to accept rebirth as a fact because it is the only valid explanation of certain data which cannot otherwise be fitted into the spiritualist concept. To give only one example, it is well known that spiritualist mediums find it impossible to "contact" certain people after death, while with others they are able to do so. This has always been a great difficulty to spiritualists, but the Buddhist answer is a simple one: it is not all who are reborn into the so-called spirit worlds; and furthermore some of these planes of existence are too remote from the human world to be accessible to any ordinary "medium".

The idea of other realms of existence is more difficult for those to accept who have become conditioned to thinking in terms of "naive realism," and it sometimes happens that through a misunderstanding of the Buddhist doctrine of Anattā (no-self) they believe that rebirth can take place only in a physical and human body. This is an error which the Buddhist texts do not support. To deny the possibility of rebirth in the animal world, for example, is a negation of the universal applicability of the moral law of cause and effect which the Buddha consistently proclaimed. Both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism teach unequivocally that if the Karma of the last thought moment before death is on a low moral level governed by any of the unwholesome factors associated with lust, hatred and delusion, the next manifestation of the causal continuum will be on precisely that level. In other words, rebirth as an animal, a Peta or a being in one of the hell states will result. It must be understood that this does not correspond

at all to the Pythagorean idea that the "soul" of one type of being can enter the body of another. For the sake of a clear understanding of the processes of Samsāra in regard to other realms of existence, the following extracts from letters from the present writer to a friend are given.

"Like yourself, when I first studied Buddhism I thought of rebirth as being only in human form. In the beginning that was satisfactory; as you say, 'a nice, clear-cut philosophy, rational' — and of course ethical as well. But further consideration revealed certain mechanical difficulties in the way of direct rebirth invariably from one human state to another. It meant, for instance, that at the moment of death some conception must be taking place somewhere which was in all respects ideally suited to be the vehicle of expression for the Karmic potential released by the death. Of course, conception is actually taking place in millions of cases all over the world at any moment one cares to name; yet still it seems that too many coincidental factors must somehow be present to bring the thing within the realms of probability. Again, if animals are to be taken into the scheme, which is philosophically necessary in order to make the world-view comprehensive and to get away from the anthropocentric idea that ethics and spiritual meanings apply only to mankind — an idea which always seemed to me quite indefensible — it must be that the rebirth concept is somehow extensible to other modes of existence besides the human. After all, why should we assume that we are the only form of sentient and intelligent existence in the cosmos? Does the scientific outlook forbid us to envisage the possibility of other modes of life, simply becanse we cannot see, hear or handle them? Does not science itself tell us that most of the significant things in the universe, the things that really shape the visible world, are themselves invisible and intangible forces? We

have to take many things on the authority of science which we cannot see and test for ourselves. True, somebody else has presumably tested these theories and so, science being a body of shared knowledge, as distinct from the esotericism of personal revelations, we accept the findings — that the universe is of such and such a construction, that man has evolved from lower forms of life, and so forth. Even when we are led by gradual degrees to Einstein's general theory of relativity, the space-time complex, curved space, the expanding universe and other ideas which nobody, not even the scientists themselves, can demonstrate in tangible form we go on believing something that we cannot realise, or ever hope to realise except as perhaps a mathematical concept, simply because we have faith in the former discoveries of science and have seen that the method bears results. In other words, we believe in the method, even when we cannot check its latest results for ourselves. At that stage very few of us are philosophers enough to ask ourselves why we believe in a substantial physical universe when every new concept of science brings us into a more abstract world and proves that the universe is in reality something quite different from the mental picture we have formed of it from the data furnished by our senses. In a universe of energy, what has become of the solid, impenetrable substance of our world? If it is not exactly illusion, it is so different from the reality that its appearance at least may be termed illusion. Because it is a *shared* illusion and one that is necessary to our continued functioning within the framework of a world that we must regard as substantial, we are compelled to go on treating it as though it were actually the thing it appears to be as interpreted by our sensory awarenesses. But when we try to apply the laws of Newtonian physics to nuclear physics, and Euclidean geometry to the multiple space-time dimension

we find that these laws, while they are still valid in the limited sphere of the material world, are quite inadequate to cope with the abstract and much more complicated world of mathematical (and therefore philosophical)reality. From then on we have to suspect that the relatively simple material universe, in which certain things just cannot be, because they cannot be always seen, heard or felt, is only a very partial aspect of the whole. What was simple and obvious to Charles Bradlaugh becomes not quite so certain. But still, through habit we go on asserting the validity of materialistic principles in spheres where it is far from certain that they obtain. So people say that there cannot be a heaven because they were always told that heaven existed somewhere up above the clouds, and stellar exploration (even before it becomes a fact) has disproved this.

"But on what principle do we insist that heaven or hell must have an objective, external existence? If 'heaven' is happiness and 'hell' misery, they are personal and subjective states; they exist independently of physical location. To take a concrete example, two men may be sitting side by side in a bus. One is desperately unhappy, perhaps through remorse, unsatisfied longing, anger or any one of the myriad causes of human misery; he may be contemplating suicide, even. The other is blissfully happy: he has perhaps got promotion in his job, just had his first book published and the reviewers have been enthusiastic, or he has married the girl he loves. Each of these two men is inhabiting his own personal world, which has nothing to do with the world of the other; yet physically they are sitting side by side in this familiar world shared by us all. They may both get off at Sloane Square: but for one of them Sloane Square is a bus stop in heaven, while for the other it is located nowhere but in hell. So these states of

being—really the only true states, since the external world has no part in making them what they are, but itself takes on whatever aspect they give to it—are internal, subjective and purely mental states. As such they have no connection with location in time or space, or the events of the world going on about them. Each of us lives and has his own peculiar experience in a separate world, to which the external world presents only points of contact and general reference.

"So, if this can be the case in regard to two living men in a bus, whose physical bodies are touching one another but whose minds—and therefore real being—are living in different realms, why do we insist that if heaven exists as a reality it must be accessible by space travel or anything of that kind? In doing so we are naively applying laws that are relevant to physical space and time to other modes of conscious being where they are not relevant at all.

"What I am trying to express is a different vision of the world of reality. To me it seems that the real world is an intangible world of mental events and concepts, to which the external is only incidental. This may of course take the appearance of Berkeleyan idealism or, worse still, mysticism. But in reality it differs fundamentally from both; it is not Berkeleyan idealism because it does not attempt to brush aside the physical world as being non-existent. It accepts that world as a reality; but not the whole or the final reality. It differs from mysticism in that it does not lose touch with the conditions in which we function as living, material organisms, and does not postulate any invasion of the laws governing extra-physical phenomena into the realm of the physical to the disorganisation of the latter. The worlds exist side by side; interpenetrating one another and affecting one another in various ways, but only within the limits imposed by the laws

peculiar to each, and in conformity with those laws. Each world stands in relation to the others as a teleological necessity."

It may be objected that of the two men in the bus, the happiness of the one and the wretchedness of the other have certainly been caused by external events; something has happened to them to put them into their respective heaven and hell. That is true; but it is retrospective to the cause, while we are dealing with the effect as it now is. Their present conditions, whatever may have induced them, have no reference to one another nor to the objective world they share; they are living in discrete worlds that have been created for them by their reaction to some previous events. Now had they been indifferent to those events they could not have been plunged into hell or exalted to heaven by them. So finally their condition can be traced back to their own minds and the degree of their susceptibility to external occasions for joy or sorrow. A certain thing happening to one man may cause him a mild and fleeting unhappiness; the same thing happening to another may reduce him to suicidal despair. The same kind of event objectively, but vastly different in its results—that is, in the kind of world it creates internally. If that is the cause, which is the more significant—the event in itself or the respective mental conditions of the two men, which have invested it with such different degrees of importance? If we say, as it seems to me we are bound to say, that the mental condition is the more significant, it must follow that it is the mental state, not the event, that represents the true reality in any situation. The illustration of the two men in the bus may be a trite and obvious one, but from it we are entitled to draw certain inferences concerning the nature of states of being in terms of isolated experiences. One of them is that the mind has its own habitat and a limitless

capacity for creating its own worlds out of the raw materials of any situation. That these worlds of subjectivity have their counterparts in planes of existence other than our own is borne out by the testimony of Swedenborg, William Blake and a host of others whose independent experience has given them glimpses of their reality.

The part science plays in life is only on the fringe of mankind's collective experience. In any case, when we bring science into the problem of being we ought to begin by defining just what we mean by the word. The most we can say is that science is a body of knowledge concerning accepted facts, gained by the pursuit of a certain method which has been found to give results in the past and so is presumed to be valid for all investigations. Scientific theories are constantly subject to alteration as knowledge increases, but scientific *method* remains the same. Therefore at any given point it is the method that is more important than any particular stage it has brought us to in the never-ending pursuit. But there can be no assurance that the method will eventually succeed in revealing everything; in fact its progress suggests that the more it reveals the more there remains to be explored. It continually opens up new vistas, each of which demands that it be explored with new compasses. The 'expanding universe' may be just a natural allegory of man's expanding knowledge of the universe; something to which there can be no final limit. It becomes increasingly difficult to apply any sort of scientific knowledge to ontological questions, even when it seems to have some bearing on what we desire to know. Science may destroy religious myths but it has not made any important change in the terms of philosophical thought. It has given us a wider range of symbols and a more exact terminology, but that is all. We are no longer obliged to talk of the elements of earth, air, fire and water,

but the philosophical concepts they stood for remain fairly constant. Everything we know is merely a subjective experience based upon data presented by our senses, and these data come to us in the form of impressions which are in most cases far removed from the nature of the object as it really is. All that physics tells us is that the objects of the external world would appear to us quite differently if we possessed a different kind of cognitive apparatus. But even this was known long ago. Things that we see, hear, smell, taste and touch have no intrinsic properties, only the characteristics we invest them with in the course of cognising and appraising. Thus the world of aesthetic values lies only in ourselves, and is in some respects different for each of us. In this mental world, made up of highly-individualised impressions combined with the concepts that have gathered about them from prior association and, in the field of abstract concepts, the biases, predilections and prejudices that are personal to the individual concerned, the range of variations becomes limitless. No two people think exactly alike; which means that no two people inhabit precisely the same world. Two persons may agree on all factual points, yet the interpretation they give to the totality may produce two quite different pictures.

So the world we live in is largely, if not wholly, a mental construct. Science gives us information about the external world which we know to be true so far as it goes. It is true because it is seen to work; if we apply the knowledge practically we get the expected results. Constructing a machine in accordance with certain proved laws of physics we get something that flies, defying another law of physics, gravitation. Something which one law seems to make impossible thus becomes practicable by the understanding and use of other laws. It is this form of pro-

gression from the impossible to the possible that has made our world what it is. The laws governing the propagation of sound make it possible for the of voice of someone talking in London to be heard in New York, and three hundred years ago the "natural philosopher" would have been content to leave it at that and would have had a hearty laugh at the notion of radio. But Newton would probably not have dismissed it as impossible because the genius of a really great scientist is like all other forms of genius—it includes a large amount of imagination. Had it not been for the old alchemists with their absurd theory that somehow the elements of one metal could be rearranged to form another, we should never have had modern chemistry. Even those who went further than the elixir of life and the transmutation of metals, and tried to produce the 'homunculus', an artificial man, were only in a crude way trying to anticipate something which bio-chemistry may one day make possible.

And here it may be noted in passing that even if science should ultimately succeed in generating life from non-living matter, the achievement will make no difference to the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth according to *Kamma*. The karmic causal current may remanifest through vital elements brought together artificially in the same way as it does through the natural biological processes. The artificial production of living organisms may deal the final blow to the theory of divine creation but it will not in any way affect the Buddhist explanation of life.

The laws that work in science are continually having to give way before the discovery of fresh laws which either cancel them out or modify them, or make them subservient to ends which previously they appeared to obstruct. And as this process develops we find ourselves becoming more and more doubtful as to whether it will reach any conclusive

end. The horizon is eternally receding from us, the spiral nebulae forever trusting outwards into limitless space. The familiar and comfortable world of 'things' is meanwhile dissolving into abstract forces, a whirling dance of electrons, of atoms which are never the 'same' atoms from one moment to another of their restless existence. Does what we see bear any relation whatever to the external reality? Can we ever be certain that physics itself is 'true'?

Speculative thought has been dried up at its source by the realisation that science alone can never help to reveal ultimate truth, but can show us only expanding areas of what is relatively true. It was because of this that Wittgenstein was constrained to renounce all attempts to erect systems of philosophy, even negative systems, and was particularly averse to theories which take mathematics or natural science as the ideal. But while the scientist remains content to work within the areas of relative truth and to leave teleological questions alone, his self-denial does not forbid others from making use of his knowledge in the attempt to trace a coherent pattern in the diversity of human experience. We have evidence from other sources that it is possible to improve man's perceptual apparatus and extend it, and by that means we may break through the impasse. It is only necessary that the ideas we bring into play should not be of a kind that science has shown to be false on grounds within its own province.

The limits of scientific competence should be clearly understood. It is a common error to suppose that science has accounted for a phenomenon when it has given it a name, and that it has explanied a cause when it has merely described a process. To take an example, 'natural selection' is accepted as one of the primary factors in evolution. But if we ask what *causes* natural selection—precisely why does a living organism choose one course of action rather than

another, or whence comes the instinctive urge to mate in a certain way that 'happens' to be conformable to biological needs—science is silent. It does not know the answer. It has named a process, and shown how it works, but it has not discovered the reason for it. To say that there is no reason is to evade the issue. The purpose may be assumed to lie in the final result; but that is legislating after the event. A certain phenomenon may be produced by accident, but for a long and involved series of such accidents to bring forth in the end a highly-organised and equipped animal of the type of the higher vertebrates is stretching pure chance too far. All the evidence points towards some kind of drive behind the process; but this theory is vitiated by the fact that the drive does not go directly towards the fulfilment of its purpose. It blunders along by a painful process of trial and error—stopping, retracing its steps, coming to dead ends and scattering the debris of its failures along the path of geological time, yet always, ensuring that in some way its surviving stages are contributory to the ultimate result, whatever that may be. This drive, or demiurge, cannot be a creator-god, for if it were it would achieve its purpose with greater economy and, presumably, with more regard for ethical principles. That these are completely lacking in nature is one of the strongest arguments against the emergent theory. All the indications in fact are opposed to the idea of a supreme deity, whether God be conceived as a complete being or as an evolving and progressively-revealed spiritual principle. Yet when all this is granted we are still left with the vacuum created by the lack of a purposive directing force. The question still remains: Can biological processes be explained in purely physical terms, or do the problems of structure, function and organisation necessitate some kind of teleology? The scientist may reject the "Vitalism" which Hans Driesch postulated

as a necessity, but something of the kind is needed to account for organic evolution.

Buddhism meets the challenge with the concept of the force of craving, an impersonal urge to fulfilment continually renewing itself in successive manifestations. The "demiurge" and the "Elan vital" are both functionally represented in this concept. Here we have not a 'something' which has visualised the final result from the beginning and has been capable of creating from nothing and moving directly towards its consummation, but a blindly-groping urge which shows itself in the instinctive behaviour of animals and on the deeper psychological levels of human beings. It is the one great creative impulse to which all the laws of the universe are subservient.

Far from precluding the possibility of other states of being besides our own, science makes them, by inference, a logical necessity. The facts suggest that, in the words of Sir Oliver Lodge, 'an enlarged psychology, and possibly an enlarged physiology—possibly even an enlarged physics—will have to take into account and rationalize a number of phenomena which so far have been mainly disbelieved or ignored."

It is as well to bear in mind that the existence of extra-terrestrial modes of being had always been recognised until science, by confining the method and grounds of knowledge to the material level, caused an unprecedented antagonism to metaphysical ideas. The revolution in outlook justified itself in many ways, but a new rationalism is emerging which has its roots in the enigmatic territory that modern physics has revealed beyond the tangible world.

Understanding of how rebirth in the human state takes place is sometimes obscured by misconceptions regarding certain biological principles, especially those relating to the transmission of hereditary characteristics. Here it is

necessary to realise that "the various parts of an organism are not received intact from the parents but developed out of comparatively simple structures present in the egg. There is no real analogy between heredity and the legal motion of inheritance of property. One speaks loosely of a given hereditary character being 'transmitted' from parent to offspring, but obviously this is impossible since the only materials which can be thus transmitted are those contained in the uniting sex cells, the eggs and spermatozoa in higher animals. An individual receives from his parents not a set of fully-formed characters but a set of determinants or genes, as a consequence of whose activities the heredity." (Prof. G. H. Beale, Lecturer in Genetics, Edinburgh University, 1957.) The determinants are therefore only a contribution to the sum total of characters, or personality. The extent to which they are decisive must depend very largely on other factors, not all of which are to be accounted for by environment. Heredity and the predispositions from past *Karma* may be complimentary to one another, as when attachment leads to repeated rebirths in the same racial group, or even in the same family; or the *Karmic* tendencies may modify or counteract the hereditary characteristics. It is only if rebirth is taken to mean the transmigration of a "soul" that there is any conflict between it and the known facts of genetics.

The emphasis laid upon *Anatta* is fundamental to the Buddhist point of view. There is no "soul" in the sense of an enduring entity; in its place there is mental energy flowing out from living creatures which after their death continues its current of causality by assembling out of physical substances a new being. But this 'new being" which is the continuation of the *Karmic* cause-effect current of the previous one, does not necessarily have to be a human being. It may be an animal or it may be a being

existing in other realms, where it produces a body in accordance with the particular laws of generation obtaining in those realms. If it has brought about a birth in the *Deva* or *Preta loka* (which are justifiably called 'spirit' realms, since 'spirit' has nothing to do with 'soul' but denotes a particular type of body, different from the bodies of the terrestrial plane) it continues with a more or less recognisable personality. It is similar enough in general characteristics to the person who died to be recognisable as belonging to the same current of causal identity, and so we call it the 'same' person, just as we say that John Smith at ninety is the 'same' person as John Smith the infant which he once was. Actually they are not the same, except in this conventional sense; they merely belong to the same continuum of cause and effect. The new being, Deva or Preta, also retains memories of the previous life, and if emotional links of other attachments are strong it continues to share the interests of people living on this, our own plane. Furthermore, when personality is very strongly marked it is all the more likely to reproduce characteristics which make it identifiable as the 'same' person in a new manifestation.

In this way Buddhism accounts for the phenomena of the seance room. Rebirth in these other realms, or *lokas*, does not necessitate a soul any more than does rebirth as a human being or animal. When the result of the Karma that has caused the rebirth in the Deva or Preta realms is exhausted, the mental energy once more flows out to operate through the conditions of the physical world and human rebirth takes place again. Or it may be that another Deva or Preta rebirth will come about, or a rebirth in any other of the thirty-one planes of existence, according to the nature of the residual Karma.

There are several lines of enquiry on which investigation into rebirth may be carried out. It has been possible to indicate only a few of them here. The serial continuity of life, which so many people in all ages have felt instinctively to be a truth, however, carries with it the force of an intellectual conviction to all who seek for a purpose and a moral pattern in human experience. It is not too much to say that the whole of man's future development depends upon an acceptance of rebirth and a fuller understanding of the ethical principles it brings to light. Mankind is now ripe for a complete re-assessment of values and a re-statement of the universal principles on which our moral and spiritual convictions rest. Unless this is undertaken we stand in danger of a catastrophic destruction of all those virtues by which man has risen to his present position in the hierarchy of living beings. It is only by the acceptance of rebirth as a fact that the sense of moral responsibility in an ordered universe can be restored.

NOTES

1. (p. 5) Since this was written, confirmation of the view that reincarnation beliefs in Kabbalistic Judaism are of considerable antiquity has been found in an article, *Seelenwanderung und Sympathie der Seelen in der Judischen Mystik (Transmigration and the Sympathy of Souls in Jewish Mysticism)*, by Prof. Gershom Scholem, in the *Eranos Jahrbuch* Vol. XXV, 1955 (Rhein Verlag, Basel 1956).

Prof Scholem finds the first mention of reincarnation in the book, *Bahir*, edited c. 1180 in Southern France, but notes that it is there spoken of as a matter of course, without apology or explanatory comments. Official Jewish theology emphatically opposed the doctrine, yet Kirkisani, a 10th century writer, in his "Book of the Lights" affirms that the Karaic teacher 'Anan accepted the doctrine in the 8th century. 'Anan wrote a book on it, and his followers preserved the doctrine.

Prof. Scholem considers it open to question whether the Kabbalists developed the theory of transmigration of souls independently as a psychological assumption, or whether they adopted it from older traditions. But he draws attention to the fact that the *Bahir* contains fragments of an older, undoubtedly Oriental Jewish gnostic source, and concludes: "All things considered, I incline to the view that we are here dealing with an older gnostic Jewish tradition which the book *Bahir* derives through channels unknown to us."

The author is indebted to the Ven. Nyanaponika Maha Thera for the translation of Prof. Scholem's article from the German.

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2. (p. 12) The formation of personality has to be considered under three heads. There is first the Karmic potentiality of the individual, which is the inheritance from his own previous lives. Secondly there is the set of hereditary characteristics which he derives from his parents. This appears to be connected with the Karma by way of attraction, as when the rebirth takes place in the same family or in the same sociological or ethnic group, and accounts for racial characteristics the origins of which cannot be specifically determined. Thirdly, there is environmental influence, which produces modifying effects upon the devoloping personality. Since causality in the Buddhist sense implies multiple causality, the Karmic character-motif which represents at once the residuum of the old personality and the matrix of the new, does not exclude the other two formative factors, nor is it excluded by them.

On the other hand, the attempt to erect a theory of the origin of personality solely upon biological heredity and environmental influences is at the outset nullified by the fact that siblings with the same hereditary background and reared in the same environment show marked differences in character and abilities. Such differences are frequently to be met with even in the case of twins.

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3. (p. 12) The will to act undergoes a complete reversal when desire is totally extinguished, as in the case of the Arahat. It is not, however, converted into what would appear to be its opposite, volitional inertia. The Arahat continues to will and to act as long as he lives, but his willing is not prompted by desire; its source is the uniform, practically automatic, functioning of the impulse of disinterestedness. For this reason it is *Kiriya*, or karmi-

cally neutral and non-regenerative. The personality-pattern in which desire is totally absent bears no resemblance to the psychology of the ordinary person who is subject to rebirth. A close parallel to the Buddhist conception of will as a generative fore is to be found in Bergson's theory of Creative Evolution. If the Bergsonian idea were to be enlarged, as quite logically it could be, to include a succession of lives subject to Karma and its results, the parallel would be exact.

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4. (p. 21) Hypnotic regression, the technique of carrying a subject under hypnosis back to a previous life, may give negative results from a variety of causes. Due to an unconscious resistance the regression may not be complete; or the existence to which the regression has led may have been on a sub-human level and therefore inarticulate. Several cases are known to the author in which the subject has had fragmentary memories of a previous life whilst practising meditation. In some instances the descriptions afterwards given of these experiences strongly suggest that they relate to states of consciousness of a sub-human order. If a hypnotic subject is regressed to a previous condition of this kind the response will naturally be negative.

The question of hetero-biological transition in rebirth is a controversial one; but so far as Buddhism is concerned it is disputed only by those who have not succeeded in overcoming the anthropocentric bias that has its root in personality-belief *(Sakkāya-diṭṭhi)*. It cannot be too often stressed that Buddhism does not subscribe to the belief in a sharp distinction between human and animal life which has dominated Western thought for many centuries, and which continues to colour it on the emotional level despite the discoveries of biological science.

The chief objections to the cases of apparent memories of previous lives under hypnosis may be briefly stated here. The first is that such cases can rarely be confirmed by objective evidence, and that even when such proof is given, as in the cases mentioned in Part III, it is difficult to eliminate the possibility that the subject may have acquired the information either unconsciously by normal means, from books and other sources, or telephathically from other minds. The picture is further complicated by the possibility that the source of information is the "collective unconscious", or race memory. Nevertheless, methods are being devised whereby these possibilities may be either ruled out or confirmed. The "collective unconscious" itself, if it exists, may turn out to be a misinterpretation of what are actually memories of previous lives. Rebirth would seem in fact to imply the existence of a common stock of experiences preserved on the unconscious level in each individual.

Another possibility, in cases where no objective proof can be obtained, is that the suppressed memory of a previous life may be a phantasy. Experience has shown, however, that mental phantasies under hypnosis do not arise spontaneously. They come about in response to suggestions from the hypnotiser, and can readily be distinguished from genuine memories.

In the cases of spontaneous recollection, those in which a child claims to remember a previous existence without assistance from hypnotism, it is easier to eliminate alternative explanations of the phenomenon, These cases present a much broader basis for investigation, particularly in view of the fact that, as recent examples seem to indicate, they occur when the intermediate existence between the former human life and the present one has been relatively short. A number of such cases has recently come under

investigation and the findings on them will be published in the near future. They are supported by much evidential material in the form of identifications by the subjects of persons and places known to them in their previous lives. In quite a few instances the subjects have been found to be in possession of information on matters hitherto unknown to the other persons involved, which on inquiry has been found correct.

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5. (p. 23) Recent investigations carried out by the author in Ceylon and Thailand appear to indicate that such memories occur when the previous life was cut short abruptly by sickness, accident or violence. From a survey of these and a number of cases gathered from other parts of the world it would seem that rebirth in the human world tends to take place more quickly after a premature death, and that it is in such cases that vestigial memories of the previous life are retained in sufficient strength to permit their spontaneous revival.

The implication is that a premature death leaves the pattern set by the regenerative Karma uncompleted, with the result that it is renewed more quickly, and more of the previous personality-structure survives. This, of course, is a tentative supposition which further research may establish or disprove. The accumulation of evidence has to be examined in the light of the fact that personality is a composite formation, subject to alteration, disintegration and reconstruction, and that in rebirth it is not the total personality that is transferred from one life-manifestation to another, but only the karmically-directed impulse of the previous existence, which may reproduce more or less of the recognisable features of the former personality.

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6. (p. 41) Several cases have been found in which the subject remembers an intermediate life. These memories show an underlying unity of pattern, and in some respects confirm the accounts given in spiritualist communications. At first the disembodied entity is not aware that death has taken place. The sensations described resemble those of persons who have had experiences of the disembodied consciousness under anaesthesia or in what is known as astral projection. The term "disembodied" is not strictly correct; the consciousness is always located in, or associated with a body of some kind but the physical vehicle *(Rūpa)* is of the fine-material type known to Buddhist metaphysics; that is to say, while it is unsubstantial on the plane of human consciousness, it is solid on the plane of a different vibrational frequency on which it manifests.

A feature which frequently occurs in these memories is the appearance of a guide who assists and directs the discarnate entity. In the case of a Burmese Buddhist monk whose rebirth history was investigated by the author, such a guide appeared to him shortly after his death, and directed him to his new birth. Subsequently, the same personage appeard to the monk in a dream during a critical period of his present life, and gave him valuable advice. A close parallel has been found in a case in America. A connection may be traced here with the almost universal belief in the "guardian angel" or spirit guide. It is significant, also, that such helpers do not appear to be attached to every individual. The Buddhist explanation is that the guide and protector is someone who has been closely connected by ties of friendship or relationship with the individual in a past life, and who still continues to take an interest in his welfare. The case from America, referred to above, gives support to this explanation. Here again, the post-mortem experience was followed by further

appearances of the guiding entity in the present life, in one of which a strong hint was given of a karmic link between the two persons concerned.

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7. (p. 48) Cases in which the subjects have birthmarks corresponding to injuries or physical characteristics they bore in the previous life form an important class of the rebirth case-histories. They include the following examples:

THAILAND. Large capillary naevus on left of cranium, corresponding to fatal knife wound received in the previous life. Also malformation of big toe, corresponding to wound present at the time of death.

THAILAND, Slight malformation of left ear, reproducing similar irregularity in the previous life.

BURMA. Birthmark on ankle resembling the mark of adhesive tape, corresponding to mark on the dead body of the previous life where adhesive tape had been fixed for blood-transfusion.

CEYLON. Extensive malformation of right arm and right upper chest. The subjeet remembers having killed his wife by stabbing, and relates his deformities to the use of his right hand in the slaying. Case confirmed by a number of living witnesses.

ENGLAND. Round, reddish area the size of a bullet wound, corresponding in position to fatal bullet wound in the pevious life.

BRAZIL. Pigmented mark on back, below right scapula, with area of increased hair over left ribs in front of chest. The subject as a child said that he had been killed by a bullet in World War II.

AMERICA. Scars closely resembling bullet wounds of entry and exit, front and back of left chest. Other particulars of the case suggest death by murder in the in the previous life.

The case in Ceylon differs from the others in that it indicates retributive karmic effect. The others in this selection would appear to be psycho-kinetic effects which could be explained on the assumption that the subjects in a post-mortem disincarnate state saw the marks on their own bodies. These were then reproduced on the new body, as in the cases of S. T., the Karen boy, quoted in Part V (p. 39).

Well-authenticated cases of a change of sex in rebirth at present number fifteen. These are being made the subject of special study in view of the light they may throw on sexual deviations where the case is not traceable in the present life. In a few of the cases so far investigated there is a decided predominance of the characteristics of the opposite sex in the present personality. In others the sexual adjustment is normal. The latter cases are valuable in that they eliminate the possibility that the rebirth memories are a phantasy designed to explain away the sexual aberration. In one case, that of a girl, the previous personality was a boy who had a strong desire to be of the opposite sex. The child not only identified places, and persons still living, connected with the previous life, but also showed strong liking for certain persons and dislike of others, exactly as the previous personality had done. She remembers having wished to be a girl, and is happy now that her wish has been fulfilled. One striking feature of this case is that the girl recognised a school teacher who had been kind to her in the previous life, and now shows a strong attachment to him. The teacher testified that the dead boy whom she claims to be, had asked him whether it was true that people were reborn after death. This particular case is supported by an abundance of detailed proof and contains many features of psychological interest.

By the same author:

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The Four Noble Truths (The Wheel No. 34/35)
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Everyman's Ethics

Four Discourses of the Buddha

Adapted from the translations of

NARADA THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

KANDY CEYLON

Second Impression 1966

THE WHEEL PUBLICATION NO. 14

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SIGĀLOVĀDA SUTTA

The Layman's Code of Discipline

Sigāla was the son of a Buddhist family residing at Rajagaha. His parents were devout followers of the Buddha, but the son was indifferent to religion. The pious father and mother could not by any means persuade their son to accompany them to visit the Buddha or His disciples and hear the noble Doctrine. The son thought it practically useless to pay visits to the Sangha, as such visits may entail material loss. He was only concerned with material prosperity; to him spiritual progress was of no avail. Constantly he would say to his father: " I will have nothing to do with monks. Paying homage to them would make my back ache, and my knees stiff. I should have to sit on the ground and soil and wear out my clothes. And when, at the conversations with them, after so sitting, one gets to know them, one has to invite them and give them offerings, and so one only loses by it."

Finally as the father was about to die, he called his son to his death-bed, and enquired whether he would at least listen to his parting advice. "Most assuredly, dear father, I shall carry out any order you may be pleased to enjoin on me", he replied. "Well then, dear son, after your morning bath worship the six quarters." The father asked him to do so hoping that one day or other, while the son was so engaged, the Buddha or His disciples would see him, and make it an occasion to preach an appropriate discourse to him. And since death-bed wishes are to be remembered, Sigāla carried out his father's wish, not however knowing its true significance.

Now it was the custom of the Buddha to rise from his sleep at 4 o'clock and after experiencing Nibbanic Bliss for

an hour to pervade the whole world with His boundless thoughts of loving-kindness. It is at this hour that He surveys the world with His great compassion to find out to what fellow-being He could be of service on that day. One morning Sigāla was caught in the net of the Buddha's compassion; and with His vision the Buddha seeing that Sigāla could be shown a better channel for his acts of worship, decided : 'This day will I discourse to Sigāla on the layman's Vinaya (code of discipline). That discourse will be of benefit to many folk. There must I go.' The Buddha thereon came up to him on his way for alms to Rājagaha ; and seeing him, engaged in his worship of the six quarters, delivered this great discourse which contains in brief, the whole domestic and social duty of the layman.

Commenting on this Sutta, the Venerable Buddhaghosa says, "Nothing in the duties of a householder is left unmentioned. This Sutta is called the Vinaya of the householder. Hence in one who practises what he has been taught in it, growth is to be looked for, not decay." And Mrs. Rhys Davids adds : "The Buddha's doctrine of love and goodwill between man and man is here set forth in a domestic and social ethics with more comprehensive detail than elsewhere. And truly we may say even now of this Vinaya or code of discipline, so fundamental are the human interests involved, so sane and wide is the wisdom that envisages them, that the utterances are as fresh and practically as binding to-day and here as they were then at Rājagaha. 'Happy would have been the village or the clan on the banks of the Ganges where the people were full of the kindly spirit of fellow-feeling, the noble spirit of justice which breathes through these naive and simple sayings.' Not less happy would be the village, or the family on the banks of the Thames to-day, of which this could be said."

SIGĀLOVĀDA SUTTA

Thus have I heard :

On one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrels' Sanctuary, near Rājagaha.

Now at that time, young Sigāla, a householder's son, rising early in the morning, departing from Rājagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worshipped with joined hands the various quarters — namely, the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir, and the Zenith.

Then the Exalted One, having robed Himself in the forenoon took bowl and robe, and entered Rājagaha for alms. Now he saw young Sigāla worshipping thus and spoke to him as follows :

"Wherefore do you, young householder, rising early in the morning, departing from Rājagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands these various quarters — the East, the South, the West, the North, the Nadir, and the Zenith ? "

— "My father, Lord, while dying, said to me :— 'The six quarters, dear son, you shall worship.' And I, Lord, respecting, revering, reverencing and honouring my father's word, rise early in the morning, and leaving Rājagaha, with wet clothes and wet hair, worship with joined hands, these six quarters."

— "'Tis not thus, young householder, the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble."

—"How then, Lord, should the six quarters be worshipped in the discipline of the noble? 'Tis well, Lord, if the Exalted One would teach the doctrine to me showing how the six quarters should be worshipped in the discipline of the noble!"

—"Well, young householder, listen and bear it well in mind; I shall speak." — "Very good, Lord," responded young Sigāla.

And the Exalted One spoke as follows:

"Inasmuch, young householder, as the noble disciple, (1) has eradicated the four vices in conduct [1], (2) inasmuch as he commits no evil action in four ways, (3) inasmuch as he pursues not the six channels for dissipating wealth, he thus, avoiding these fourteen evil things, covers the six quarters, and enters the path leading to victory in both worlds: he is favoured in this world and in the world beyond. Upon the dissolution of the body, after death, he is born in a happy heavenly realm.

(1) What are the four vices in conduct that he has eradicated? The destruction of life, householder, is a vice and so are stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying. These are the four vices that he has eradicated."

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, He spoke yet again:

"Killing, stealing, lying and adultery,
These four evils the wise ne'er praise.

---

1. *kamma-kilesa*, lit, 'actions of defilement'.

(2) In which four ways does one commit no evil action ? Led by desire does one commit evil. Led by anger does one commit evil. Led by ignorance does one commit evil. Led by fear does one commit evil.[1]

But inasmuch as the noble disciple is not led by desire, anger, ignorance, and fear, he commits no evil."

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again :

"Whoso thro' desire, hate or fear,
Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm,
All his glory fadeth away
E'en as the moon during the waning half.
Who ne'er thro' desire, hate or fear,
Or ignorance doth transgress the Norm,
All his glory e'er increaseth
E'en as the moon during the waxing half."

(3) What are the six channels for dissipating wealth which he does not pursue ?

(*a*) Indulgence in intoxicants which causes infatuation and heedlessness,
(*b*) Sauntering in streets at unseemly hours,
(*c*) Frequenting theatrical shows,
(*d*) Indulgence in gambling which causes heedlessness,
(*e*) Association with evil companions,
(*f*) Habit of idleness.

(*a*) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in indulging in intoxicants which cause infatuation and heedlessness :—

---

1. These are the four *agati*, 'evil courses of action': *chanda, dosa, moha, bhaya.*

i. loss of wealth,
ii. increase of quarrels,
iii. susceptibility to disease,
iv. earning an evil reputation,
v. shameless exposure of body,
vi. weakening of intellect,

(*b*) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in sauntering in streets at unseemly hours:—

i. he himself is unprotected and unguarded,
ii. his wife and children are unprotected and unguarded;
iii. his property is unprotected and unguarded,
iv. he is suspected of evil deeds,[1]
v. he is subject to false rumours,
vi. he meets with many troubles.

(*c*) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in frequenting theatrical shows:—

He is ever thinking:

i. where is there dancing?
ii. where is there singing?
iii. where is there music?
iv. where is there recitation?
v. where is there playing with cymbals?
vi. where is there pot-blowing?[2]

(*d*) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in indulging in gambling:—

---

1. Crimes committed by others.
2. A kind of amusement.

i. the winner begets hate,
ii. the loser grieves for lost wealth,
iii. loss of wealth,
iv. his word is not relied upon in a court of law,
v. he is despised by his friends and associates,
vi. he is not sought after for matrimony; for people would say that he is a gambler and is not fit to look after a wife.

(*e*) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in associating with evil companions, namely: any gambler, any libertine, any drunkard, any swindler, any cheat, any rowdy is his friend and companion.

(*f*) There are, young householder, these six evil consequences in being addicted to idleness:—

He does no work, saying

i. that it is extremely cold,
ii. that it is extremely hot,
iii. that it is too late in the evening,
iv. that it is too early in the morning,
v. that he is extremely hungry,
vi. that he is too full.

Living in this way, he leaves many duties undone, new wealth he does not get, and wealth he has acquired dwindles away."

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:

"One is a bottle friend; one says, 'friend, friend' only to one's face; one is a friend and an associate only when it is advantageous.

Sleeping till sunrise, adultery, irascibility, malevolence, evil companions, avarice — these six causes ruin a man.

The man who has evil comrades and friends is given to evil ways, to ruin doth he fall in both worlds — here and the next.

Dice, women, liquor, dancing, singing, sleeping by day, sauntering at unseemly hours, evil companions, avarice — these nine[1] causes ruin a man.

Who plays with dice and drinks intoxicants, goes to women who are dear unto others as their own lives, associates with the mean and not with elders — he declines just as the moon during the waning half,

Who is drunk, poor, destitute, still thirsty whilst drinking, frequents the bar, sinks in debt as a stone in water, swiftly brings disrepute to his family.

Who by habit sleeps by day, and keeps late hours, is ever intoxicated, and is licentious, is not fit to lead a household life.

Who says it is too hot, too cold, too late, and leaves things undone, the opportunities for good go past such men.

But he who does not regard cold or heat any more than a blade of grass and who does his duties manfully, does not fall away from happiness.

* * *

---

1 The Pāli original has here "six causes" as two compound words and one double-term phrase are counted as units.

These four, young householder, should be understood as foes in the guise of friends :

(1) he who appropriates a friend's possessions,
(2) he who renders lip-service,
(3) he who flatters,
(4) he who brings ruin.

(1) In four ways, young householder, should one who appropriates be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend :—

i. he appropriates his friend's wealth,
ii. he gives little and asks much,
iii. he does his duty out of fear,
iv. he associates for his own advantage.

(2) In four ways, young householder, should one who renders lip-service be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend :—

i. he makes friendly profession as regards the past,
ii. he makes friendly profession as regards the future,
iii. he tries to gain your favour by empty words,
iv. when opportunity for service has arisen, he expresses his inability.

(3) In four ways, young householder, should one who flatters be understood as a foe in the guise of a friend :—

i. he approves of his friend's evil deeds,
ii. he disapproves his friend's good deeds,
iii. he praises him in his presence,
iv. he speaks ill of him in his absence.

(4) In four ways, young householder, should one who brings ruin be understood as a foe in the guise of friend :—

i. he is a companion when you indulge in intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness,

ii. he is a companion when you saunter in streets at unseemly hours,

iii. he is a companion when you frequent theatrical shows,

iv. he is a companion when you indulge in gambling which causes heedlessness.

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again :

"The friend who appropriates,
the friend who renders lip-service,
the friend that flatters,
the friend who brings ruin to you —
these four as enemies the wise behold,
avoid them from afar as paths of peril.

These four, young householder, should be understood as warm-hearted friends:—

(1) he who is a helpmate,
(2 he who is the same in happiness and sorrow,
(3) he who gives good counsel,
(4) he who sympathises.

(1) In four ways, young householder, should a helpmate be understood as a warm-hearted friend :—

i. he guards the heedless,
ii. he protects the wealth of the heedless,
iii. he becomes a refuge when you are in danger,
iv. when there are commitments he provides you with double the supply needed.

(2) In four ways, young householder, should one who is the same in happiness and sorrow be understood as a warm-hearted friend,

i. his secrets he reveals to you,
ii. he conceals your secrets,
iii. in misfortune he does not forsake you,
iv. his life even he sacrifices for your sake.

(3) In four ways, young householder, should one who gives good counsel be understood as a warm-hearted friend:—

i. he restrains you from doing evil,
ii. he encourages you to do good,
iii. he informs you of what is unknown to you,
iv. he points out to you the path to heaven.

(4) In four ways, young householder, should one who sympathises be understood as a warm-hearted friend :—

i. he does not rejoice in your misfortune,
ii. he rejoices in your prosperity,
iii. he restrains others speaking ill of you,
iv. he praises those who speak well of you.

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again :—

"The friend who is a helpmate,
the friend in happiness and woe,
the friend who gives good counsel,
the friend who sympathises too —
these four as friends the wise behold
and cherish them devotedly
as does a mother her own child.

The wise and virtuous shine like blazing fire.
He who acquires his wealth in harmless ways
like to a bee that honey gathers, [1]
riches mount up for him
like ant hill's rapid growth.

With wealth acquired this way,
a layman fit for household life,
in portions four divides his wealth ;
thus will he friendship win.

One portion for his wants he uses,[2]
two portions on his business spends,
the fourth for times of need he keeps.

* * *

And how young householder, does a noble disciple cover the six quarters ?

The following should be looked upon as the six quarters. The parents should be looked upon as the East, teachers as the South, wife and children as the West, friends and associates as the North, servants and employees as the Nadir, ascetics and Brahmans as the Zenith.[3]

In five ways, young householder, a child should minister to his parents as the *East:*—

---

1. Dhammapada v. 49: "As a bee, without harming the flower, its colour or scent, flies away, collecting only the honey..."

2. This portion includes what is spent on good works: gifts to monks, charity, etc.

3. "The symbolism is deliberately chosen: as the day in the East, so life begins with parents' care: teacher's fees and the South are the same word: *dakkhiṇa;* domestic cares follow when the youth becomes man, as the West holds the later day-light; North is 'beyond' (*uttara*), so by help of friends, etc., he gets beyond troubles" — (Rhys Davids).

i. Having supported me I shall support them,
ii. I shall do their duties,
iii. I shall keep the family tradition,
iv. I shall make myself worthy of my inheritance,
v. furthermore I shall offer alms in honour of my departed relatives.[1]

In five ways, young householder, the parents thus ministered to as the *East* by their children, show their compassion :—

i. they restrain them from evil,
ii. they encourage them to do good,
iii. they train them for a profession,
iv. they arrange a suitable marriage,
v. at the proper time they hand over their inheritance to them.

In these five ways do children minister to their parents as the East and the parents show their compassion to their children. Thus is the East covered by them and made safe and secure.

In five ways, young householder, a pupil should minister to a teacher as the *South* :—

i. by rising from the seat in salutation,
ii. by attending on him,
iii. by eagerness to learn,
iv. by personal service,
v. by respectful attention while receiving instructions.

---

1. This is a sacred custom of the Aryans who never forgot the dead. This tradition is still faithfully observed by the Buddhists of Ceylon who make ceremonial offerings of alms to the monks on the 8th day, in the third month, and on each anniversary of the demise of the parents. Merit of these good actions is offered to the departed after such ceremony. Moreover after every *puñña-kamma* (good action), a Buddhist never fails to think of his parents and offer merit Such is the loyalty and the gratitude shown to parents as advised by the Buddha.

In five ways, young householder, do teachers thus ministered to as the South by their pupils, show their compassion :—

i. they train them in the best discipline,
ii. they see that they grasp their lessons well,
iii. they instruct them in the arts and sciences,
iv. they introduce them to their friends and associates,
v. they provide for their safety in every quarter.

The Teachers thus ministered to as the South by their pupils, show their compassion towards them in these five ways. Thus is the South covered by them and made safe and secure.

In five ways, young householder, should a wife as the *West* be ministered to by a husband :—

i. by being courteous to her,
ii. by not despising her,
iii. by being faithful to her,
iv. by handing over authority to her,
v. by providing her with adornments.

The wife thus ministered to as the *West* by her husband, shows her compassion to her husband in five ways :—

i. she performs her duties well,
ii. she is hospitable to relations and attendants,[1]
iii. she is faithful,
iv. she protects what he brings,
v. she is skilled and industrious in discharging her duties.

In these five ways does the wife show her compassion to her husband who ministers to her as the West. Thus is the West covered by him and made safe and secure.

---

1. Lit: 'the folk around' (*parijanā*).

In five ways, young householder, should a clansman minister to his friends and associates as the *North* :—

i. by liberality,
ii. by courteous speech,
iii. by being helpful,
iv. by being impartial,
v. by sincerity.

The friends and associates thus ministered to as the *North* by a clansman show compassion to him in five ways:—

i. They protect him when he is heedless,
ii. they protect his property when he is heedless,
iii. they become a refuge when he is in danger,
iv. they do not forsake him in his troubles,
v. they show consideration for his family.

The friends and associates thus ministered to as the North by a clansman show their compassion towards him in these five ways. Thus is the North covered by him and made safe and secure.

In five ways should a master minister to his servants and employees as the *Nadir* :—

i. by assigning them work according to their ability,
ii. by supplying them with food and wages,
iii. by tending them in sickness,
iv. by sharing with them any delicacies,
v. by granting them leave at times.

The servants and employees thus ministered to as the *Nadir* by their master show their compassion to him in five ways:—

i. they rise before him,
ii. they go to sleep after him,
iii. they take only what is given,
iv. they perform their duties well,
v. they uphold his good name and fame.

The servants and employees thus ministered to as the Nadir show their compassion towards him in these five ways. Thus is the Nadir covered by him and made safe and secure.

In five ways, young householder, should a householder minister to ascetics and Brahmans as the *Zenith:*—

i. by lovable deeds,
ii. by lovable words,
iii. by lovable thoughts,
iv. by keeping open house to them,
v. by supplying their material needs.

The ascetics and Brahmans thus ministered to as the *Zenith* by a householder show their compassion towards him in six ways:—

i. they restrain him from evil,
ii. they persuade him to do good,
iii. they love him with a kind heart,
iv. they make him hear what he has not heard,
v. they clarify what he has already heard,
vi. they point out the path to a heavenly state.

In these six ways do ascetics and Brahmans show their compassion towards a householder who minister to them as the Zenith. Thus is the Zenith covered by him and made safe and secure.

Thus spoke the Exalted One. And when the Master had thus spoken, he spoke yet again:

"The mother and father are the East,
The Teachers are the South,
Wife and children are the West,
The friends and associates are the North.

Servants and employees are the Nadir,
The ascetics and Brahmans are the Zenith;
Who is fit to lead the household life,
These six quarters he should salute.

Who is wise and virtuous,
Gentle and keen-witted,
Humble and amenable,
Such a one to honour may attain.

Who is energetic and not indolent,
In misfortune unshaken,
Flawless in manner and intelligent,
Such a one to honour may attain.

Who is hospitable, and friendly,
Liberal and unselfish,
A guide, an instructor, a leader,
Such a one to honour may attain.

Generosity, sweet speech,
Helpfulness to others,
Impartiality to all,
As the case demands.

These four winning ways make the world go round,
As the lynchpin in a moving car.
If these in the world exist not,
Neither mother nor father will receive
Respect and honour from their children.

Since these four winning ways
The wise appraise in every way ;
To eminence they attain,
And praise they rightly gain."

When the Exalted One had spoken thus, Sigāla, the young householder, said as follows:—

"Excellent, Lord, excellent! It is as if, Lord, a man were to set upright that which was overturned, or were to reveal that which was hidden, or were to point out the way to one who had gone astray, or were to hold a lamp amidst the darkness, so that those who have eyes may see. Even so, has the doctrine been explained in various ways by the Exalted One.

I take refuge, Lord, in the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Order. May the Exalted One receive me as a follower; as one who has taken refuge from this very day to life's end."

MAHĀ-MANGALA SUTTA

Blessings[1]

This famous text, cherished highly in all Buddhist lands, is a terse but comprehensive summary of Buddhist ethics, individual and social. The thirty eight Blessings enumerated in it, are an unfailing guide on life's journey. Rightly starting with 'avoidance of bad company' which is essential to all moral and spiritual progress, the Blessings culminate in the achievement of a passion-free mind, unshakable in its serenity. To follow the ideals set forth in these verses, is the sure way to harmony and progress for the individual as well as for society, nation and mankind.

"The Mahā-Mangala Sutta shows that Buddha's instructions do not always take negative forms, that they are not always a series of classifications and analysis, or concerned exclusively with monastic morality. Here in this Sutta we find family morality expressed in most elegant verses. We can imagine the happy blissful state of household life attained as a result of following these injunctions" (From *The Ethics of Buddhism* by S. Tachibana, Colombo 1943, Bauddha Sahitya Sabha).

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Exalted One was dwelling at Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery, in Jeta's Grove,[2] near Sāvatthī.[3] Now when the night was far spent, a certain deity whose surpassing splendour illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came to the presence of the Exalted One and, drawing near, respectfully saluted Him and stood at one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Exalted one in verse:—

"Many deities and men, yearning after good, have pondered on Blessings.[4] Pray, tell me the greatest blessing!" —

Not to associate with the foolish,[5] but to associate with the wise; and to honour those who are worthy of honour — this is the greatest blessing.

To reside in a suitable locality,[6] to have done meritorious actions in the past and to set oneself in the right course[7] — this is the greatest blessing.

To have much learning, to be skilful in handicrafts,[8] well-trained in discipline,[9] and to be of good speech[10] — this is the greatest blessing.

To support father and mother, to cherish wife and children, and to be engaged in peaceful occupation — this is the greatest blessing.

To be generous in giving, to be righteous in conduct,[11] to help one's relatives, and to be blameless in action — this is the greatest blessing.

To loathe evil and abstain from it, to refrain from intoxicants,[12] and to be steadfast in virtue — this is the greatest blessing.

To be respectful,[13] humble, contented and grateful; and to listen to the Dhamma on due occasions[14] — this is the greatest blessing.

To be patient and obedient, to associate with monks and to have religious discussions on due occasions — this is the greatest blessing.

Self-restraint,[15] a holy and chaste life, the perception of the Noble Truths and the realisation of Nibbana — this is the greatest blessing.

A mind unruffled by the vagaries of fortune,[16] from sorrow freed, from defilements cleansed, from fear liberated[17] — this is the greatest blessing,

Those who thus abide, ever remain invincible, in happiness established. These are the greatest blessings [18]

NOTES

(Derived mainly from the commentaries)

1. This Sutta appears in the Sutta-Nipāta (v. 258ff) and in the Khuddakapātha. SeeMahā-MangalaJātaka(No.453). For a detailed explanation see *Life's Highest Blessing* by Dr. R. L. Soni (146 p.p.) Published by The World Institute of Buddhist Culture, Mandalay (Burma).

2. Anāthapiṇḍika, lit. 'He who gives alms to the helpless'; his former name was Sudatta. After his conversion to Buddhism, he bought the grove belonging to the Prince Jeta, and established a monastery which was subsequently named Jetavanārāma. It was in this monastery that the Buddha observed most of his *vassāna* periods (rainy seasons — the three months' retreat beginning with the full-moon of July). Many are the discourses delivered and many are the incidents connected with the Buddha's life that happened at Jetavana. It was here that the Buddha ministered to the sick monk neglected by his companions, advising them : "Whoever, monks, that would wait upon me, let him wait upon the sick." It was here that the Buddha so poignantly taught the law of impermanence, by asking the bereaved young woman Kisagotami who brought her dead child, to fetch a grain of mustard seed from a home where there has been no bereavement.

3. Identified with modern Sahet-Mahet, near Balrampur.

4. According to the Commentary, *mangala* means that which is conducive to happiness and prosperity.

5. This refers not only to the stupid and uncultured, but also includes the wicked in thought, word and deed.

6. Any place where monks, nuns and lay devotees continually reside, where pious folk are bent on the performance of the ten meritorious deeds, and where the Dhamma exists as a living principle.

7. Making the right resolve for abandoning immorality for morality, faithlessness for faith, and selfishness for generosity.

8. The harmless crafts of the householder by which no living being is injured and nothing unrighteous done; and the crafts of the homeless monk, such as stitching the robes, etc.

9. *Vinaya* means discipline in thought, word and deed. The commentary speaks of two kinds of discipline — that of the householder, which is abstinence from the ten immoral actions (*akusala-kammapatha*), and that of the monk which is the non-transgression of the offences enumerated in the *Pāṭimokkha* (the code of the monk's rules) or the 'fourfold moral purity' (*catu-pārisuddhi-sīla*).

10. *Good speech* that is opportune, truthful, friendly, profitable and spoken with thoughts of loving-kindness.

11. *Righteous conduct* is the observance of the ten good actions (*kusala-kammapatha*) in thought, words and deed:

freeing the mind of greed, ill-will and wrong views; avoiding speech that is untruthful, slanderous, abusive and frivolous; and the non-committal of acts of killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.

12. Total abstinence from alcohol and intoxicating drugs.

13. Towards monks (and of course also to the clergy of other religions), teachers, parents, elders, superiors, etc.

14. For instance, when one is harrassed by evil thoughts.

15. Self-restraint (*tapo*) : the suppression of lusts and hates by the control of the senses; and the suppression of indolence by the rousing of energy.

16. *Loka-dhamma*, i.e. conditions which are necessarily connected with life in this world; there are primarily eight of them: gain and loss, honour and dishonour, praise and blame, pain and joy.

17. Each of these three expressions refers to the mind of the Saint (Arahant). *asoka :* sorrowless ; *viraja :* stainless, i.e. free from lust, hatred and ignorance; *khema:* security from the bonds of sense desires (*kāma*), repeated existence (*bhava*), false views (*diṭṭhi*) and ignorance (*avijjā*).

18. The above-mentioned 38 Blessings.

PARĀBHAVA-SUTTA

Downfall

While the Mangala Sutta deals with the way of life conducive to progress and happiness, the Parābhava Sutta supplements it by pointing out the causes of downfall. He who allows himself to become tarnished by these blemishes of conduct, blocks his own road to worldly, moral and spiritual progress and lowers all that is truly noble and human in man. But he who is heedful of these dangers keeps open the road to all those 38 Blessings of which human nature is capable.

Thus have I heard. Once the Exalted One was dwelling at Anāthapiṇḍika's monastery, in the Jeta Grove, near Sāvatthī.

Now when the night was far spent a certain deity whose surpassing splendour illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came to the presence of the Exalted One and, drawing near, respectfully saluted Him and stood at one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Exalted One in verse :—

The Deity :

Having come here with our questions to the Exalted One, we ask thee, O Gotama, about man's decline. Pray, tell us the cause of downfall!

The Buddha :

Easily known is the progressive one, easily known he who declines. He who loves Dhamma, progresses; he who is averse to it, declines.

The Deity :

Thus much do we see: this is the first cause of one's downfall. Pray, tell us the second cause.[1]

The Buddha :

The wicked are dear to him, with the virtuous he finds no delight, he prefers the creed of the wicked — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Being fond of sleep, fond of company, indolent, lazy and irritable — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Though being well-to-do, not to support father and mother who are old and past their youth — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To deceive by falsehood a Brahmana or ascetic or any other mendicant — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To have much wealth and ample gold and food, but to enjoy one's luxuries alone — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be proud of birth, of wealth or clan, and to despise one's own kinsmen — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be a rake, a drunkard, a gambler, and to squander all one earns — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Not to be contented with one's own wife, and to be seen with harlots and the wives of others — this is a cause of one's downfall.

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1. These lines are repeated after each stanza, with the due enumeration.

Being past one's youth, to take a young wife and to be unable to sleep for jealousy of her — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To place in authority a woman given to drink and sqandering, or a man of a like behaviour — this is a cause of one's downfall.

To be of warrior birth, with vast ambition and of slender means, and to crave for rulership — this is a cause of one's downfall.

Knowing well these causes of downfall in the world, the noble sage endowed with insight shares a happy realm.

VYAGGHAPAJJA SUTTA

Conditions of Welfare

In this Sutta, the Buddha instructs rich householders how to preserve and increase their prosperity and how to avoid loss of wealth. Wealth alone, however, does not make a complete man nor a harmonious society. Possession of wealth all too often multiplies man's desires, and he is ever in the pursuit of amassing more wealth and power. This unrestrained craving, however, leaves him dissatisfied and stifles his inner growth. It creates conflict and disharmony in society through the resentment of the underprivileged who feel themselves exploited by the effects of unrestrained craving.

Therefore the Buddha follows up his advice on material welfare with four essential conditions for spiritual welfare: confidence (in the Master's enlightenment), virtue, liberality and wisdom. These four will instil in man a sense of higher values. He will, then, not only pursue his own material concern, but also be aware of his duty towards society. To mention only one of the implications: a wisely and generously employed liberality will reduce tensions and conflcts in society. Thus the observing of these conditions of material and spiritual welfare will make for an ideal citizen in an ideal society.

THUS have I heard. Once the Exalted One was dwelling amongst the Koliyans[1] in their market town named Kakkarapatta. Then Dīghajānu,[2] a Koliyan, approached the Exalted One, respectfully saluted Him and sat on one side. Thus seated, he addressed the Exalted One as follows:—

"We, Lord, are laymen who enjoy wordly pleasure. We lead a life encumbered by wife and children. We use sandalwood of Kāsi. We deck ourselves with garlands, perfume and unguents. We use gold and silver. To those like us, O Lord, let the Exalted One preach the Doctrine, teach those things that lead to weal and happiness in this life and to weal and happiness in future life."

Conditions of Worldly Progress

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja,[3] conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in this very life. Which four?

The accomplishment of persistent effort (*uṭṭhāna-sampadā*), the accomplishment of watchfulness (*ārakkha-sampadā*), good friendship (*kalyāṇamittatā*) and balanced livelihood (*sama-jīvikatā*).

What is the accomplishment of persistent effort?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, by whatsoever activity a householder earns his living, whether by farming, by trading, by rearing cattle, by archery, by service under the king,

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1. The Koliyans were the rivals of the Sākyans. Queen Mahā Māyā belonged to the Koliyan clan and King Suddhodana to the Sākyan clan.

2. Literally, 'long-kneed,'

3. 'Tigers' Path'; he was so called because his ancestors were born on a forest path infested with tigers. Vyagghapajja was Dīghajānu's family name.

or by any other kind of craft — at that he becomes skilful and is not lazy. He is endowed with the power of discernment as to the proper ways and means; he is able to carry out and allocate (duties). This is called the accomplishment of persistent effort.

What is the accomplishment of watchfulness?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, whatsoever wealth a householder is in possession of, obtained by dint of effort, collected by strength of arm, by the sweat of his brow, justly acquired by right means — such he husbands well by guarding and watching so that kings would not seize it, thieves would not steal, fire would not burn, water would not carry away, nor ill-disposed heirs remove. This is the accomplishment of watchfulness.

What is good friendship?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, in whatsoever village or market town a householder dwells, he associates, converses, engages in discussions with householders or householders' sons, whether young and highly cultured or old and highly cultured, full of faith (*saddhā*),[1] full of virtue (*sīla*), full of charity (*cāga*), full of wisdom (*paññā*). He acts in accordance with the faith of the faithful, with the virtue of the virtuous, with the charity of the charitable, with the wisdom of the wise. This is called good friendship.

What is balanced livelihood?

Herein, Vyagghapajja, a householder knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither

1. *Saddhā* is not blind faith. It is confidence based on knowledge.

extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

Just as the goldsmith,[1] or an apprentice of his, knows, on holding up a balance, that by so much it has dipped down, by so much it has tilted up; even so a householder, knowing his income and expenses leads a balanced life, neither extravagant nor miserly, knowing that thus his income will stand in excess of his expenses, but not his expenses in excess of his income.

If, Vyagghapajja, a householder with little income were to lead an extravagant life, there would be those who say — 'This person enjoys his property like one who eats wood-apple.[2] If, Vyagghapajja, a householder with a large income were to lead a wretched life, there would be those who say — 'This person will die like a starveling.'

The wealth thus amassed, Vyagghapajja, has four sources of destruction :—

(i) Debauchery, (ii) drunkenness, (iii) gambling, (iv) friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and outlets, if a man should close the inlets and open the outlets and there should be no adequate rainfall, decrease of water is to be expected in that tank, and not an increase; even so there are four sources for the destruction of

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1. *Tulādharo*, lit, 'carrier of the scales'.

2. *Udumbarakhādaka*. The Commentary explains that one who wishes to eat wood-apple shakes the tree, with the result that many fruits fall but only a few are eaten, while a large number is wasted.

amassed wealth — debauchery, drunkenness, gambling, and friendship, companionship and intimacy with evil-doers.

There are four sources for the increase of amassed wealth:— (i) abstinence from debauchery, (ii) abstinence from drunkenness, (iii) non-indulgence in gambling, (iv) friendship, companionship and intimacy with the good.

Just as in the case of a great tank with four inlets and four outlets, if a person were to open the inlets and close the outlets, and there should also be adequate rainfall, an increase of water is certainly to be expected in that tank and not a decrease, even so these four conditions are the sources of increase of amassed wealth:

These four conditions, Vyagghapajja, are conducive to a householder's weal and happiness in this very life.

Conditions of Spiritual Progress

Four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life. Which four?

The accomplishment of Faith *(saddhā-sampadā)*, the accomplishment of virtue *(sila-sampadā)*, the accomplishment of Charity *(cāga-sampadā)*, and the accomplishment of Wisdom *(paññā-sampadā)*.

What is the accomplishment of Faith ?

Herein a householder is possessed of faith, he believes in the Enlightenment of the Perfect One *(Tathāgata)* :— Thus, indeed, is that Blessed One: he is the Pure One *(arahā)*, fully enlightened, endowed with knowledge and conduct, well-gone, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men, all-knowing and blessed. This is called the accomplishment fo Faith.

What is the accomplishment of virtue ?

Herein a householder abstains from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and from intoxicants that cause infatuation and heedlessness. This is called the accomplishment of Virtue.

What is the accomplishment of Charity ?

Herein a householder dwells at home with heart free from the stain of avarice, devoted to charity, open-handed, delighting in generosity, attending to the needy, delighting in the distribution of alms. This is called the accomplishment of Charity.

What is the accomplishment of wisdom ?

Herein a householder is wise : he is endowed with wisdom that understands the arising and cessation (of the five aggregates of existence) ; he is possessed of the noble penetrating insight that leads to the destruction of suffering. This is called the accomplishment of Wisdom.

These four conditions, Vyagghapajja, conduce to a householder's weal and happiness in his future life.

"Energetic and heedful in his tasks,
Wisely administering his wealth,
He lives a balanced life,
Protecting what he has amassed.

"Endowed with faith and virtue too,
Generous he is and free from avarice ;
He ever works to clear the path
That leads to weal in future life.

"Thus to the layman full of faith,
By him, so truly named 'Enlightened,'
These eight conditions have been told
Which now and after lead to bliss.'

Dependent Origination

PATICCA SAMUPPĀDA

PIYADASSI THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Kandy 1959 Ceylon

THE PĀLI ALPHABET

Vowels

a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, e, o

Consonants

k, kh, g, gh, ṅ
c, ch, j, jh, ñ
ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ
t, th, d, dh, n
p, ph, b, bh, m
y, r, l, v, s, h, ḷ, ṁ

Pronunciation of Letters

a	as	u	in	but	*ṭ*	as	t	in	cat
ā	,,	a	,,	art	*ḍ*	,,	d	,,	bad
i	,,	i	,,	pin	*ḍh*	,,	d-h	,,	red-hot
ī	,,	ee	,,	seed	*ṇ*	,,	n	,,	hint
u	,,	u	,,	put	*p*	,,	p	,,	lip
ū	,,	u	,,	rule	*ph*	,,	ph	,,	uphill
e	,,	a	,,	fate	*b*	,,	b	,,	rib
o	,,	o	,,	note	*bh*	,,	bh	,,	abhorrence
k	,,	k	,,	key	*m*	,,	m	,,	him
kh	,,	ckh	,,	blockhead	*y*	,,	y	,,	yard
g	,,	g-h	,,	pig-head	*r*	,,	r	,,	rat
ṅ	,,	ng	,,	ring	*l*	,,	l	,,	sell
c	,,	ch	,,	rich	*v*	,,	v	,,	vile
ch	,,	ch-h	,,	witch-house	*s*	,,	s	,,	sit
j	,,	j	,,	judge	*h*	,,	h	,,	hut
jh	,,	dge-h	,,	sledge-hammer	*ḷ*	,,	l	,,	felt
					ṁ	,,	ng	,,	sing
ñ	,,	gn	,,	Mignon	*ṭh*	,,	t-h	,,	cat-head

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Samma-Sam-Buddhassa !

INTRODUCTION

'Dependent Origination' - Paṭicca-Samuppāda - is a basic teaching of the Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism). The doctrine therein being so deep and profound it is not possible within the limited scope of this essay to make an extensive survey of the subject. Based solely on the teaching of the Buddha an attempt is made here to elucidate this doctrine, leaving aside the complex details involved.

Scholars and writers have in various forms rendered this term into English. 'Dependent Origination', 'Dependent Arising', 'Conditioned Co-production', 'Causal Genesis', 'Conditioned Genesis' are some renderings. Throughout this essay the term '*Dependant Origination*' is used. Dependent Origination is not a discourse for the unintelligent and superficial, nor is it a doctrine to be grasped by speculation and mere logic put forward by hair-splitting disputants. Hear these words of the Buddha:

'Deep, indeed, Ananda,[1] is this *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* and deep does it appear. It is through not understanding, through not penetrating this doctrine, that these beings have become entangled like a matted ball of thread, become like munja grass and rushes, unable to pass beyond the woeful states of existence and *saṁsāra*, the cycle of existence.'[2]

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1. The attendant - disciple of the Buddha.
2. *Mahā Nidāna Sutta*, *Dīgha N.*

Those who fail to understand the real significance of this all-important doctrine mistake it to be a mechanical law of causality, or, even a simple simultaneous arising, nay a first beginning of all things, animate and inanimate. Be it remembered that there is no First Cause with a capital '*F*' and a capital '*C*' in Buddhist thought, and Dependent Origination does not attempt to dig out or even investigate a first cause. The Buddha emphatically declared that the first beginning of existence is something inconceivable[1], and that such notions and speculations of a first beginning may lead to mental derangement[2]. If one posits a 'First Cause' one is justified in asking for the cause of that 'First Cause'; for nothing can escape the law of condition and cause which is patent in the world to all but those who will not see.

According to Aldous Huxley, 'Those who make the mistake of thinking in terms of a first cause are fated never to become men of science. But as they do not know what science is, they are not aware that they are losing anything. To refer phenomena back to a first cause has ceased to be fashionable, at any rate in the West . . . . . We shall never succeed in changing our age of iron into an age of gold until we give up our ambition to find a single cause for all our ills, and admit the existence of many causes acting simultaneously, of intricate correlations and reduplicated actions and reactions.'[3]

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1. *Samyutta N., II, Anamataggya Samyutta, p. 179.*
2. *Anguttara N., IV. 77.*
3. *Ends and Means* (London 1945), pp. 14, 15.

A Creator - God, who rewards and punishes the good deeds and ill deeds of the creatures of his creation has no place in Buddhist thought. A theist, however, who attributes beings and events to an omnipotent Creator-God would emphatically say, 'It is God's will; it is sacrilege to question the Authority.' This god-idea stifles the human liberty to investigate, to analyse, to scrutinize, to see what is beyond this naked eye, and retards insight.

Let us grant for argument's sake that '*X*' is the 'first cause'. Now does this assumption of ours bring us one bit nearer to our goal, our deliverance? Does it not close the door to it? Buddhism, on the other hand, states that things are neither due to one cause (*ekahetuka*) nor are they causeless (*a-hetuka*): the twelve factors of *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* and the twenty four conditioning relations (*paccaya*) shown in the *Paṭṭhāna*, the seventh and the last book of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, clearly demonstrate how things are 'multiple-caused' (*aneka-hetuka*); and in stating that things are neither causeless nor due to one single cause, Buddhism antedated modern science by twenty five centuries.

We see a reign of natural law — beginningless causes and effects—and naught else ruling the universe. Every effect becomes in turn a cause and it goes on for ever (as long as ignorance and craving are allowed to continue). A coconut, for instance, is the principal cause or near cause of a coconut tree, and that very tree is again the cause of many a coconut tree. '*X*' has two parents, four grand parents, and thus the law of cause and effect extends unbrokenly like the waves of the sea—ad infinitum.

It is just impossible to conceive of a first beginning. None can trace the ultimate origin of anything, not even of

a grain of sand, let alone of human beings. It is useless and meaningless to go in search of a beginning in a beginningless past. Life is not an identity, it is a becoming. It is a flux of physiological aud psychological changes.

'There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination. Therefore, perhaps, I need not waste any more time upon the argument about the first cause."[1]

Instead of a "First Cause", the Buddha speaks of Conditionality. The whole world is subject to the law of cause and effect, in other words, action and result. We cannot think of anything in this cosmos that is causeless and unconditioned.

As Viscount Samuel says: 'There is no such thing as chance. Every event is the consequence of previous events; everything that happens is the effect of a combination of multitude of prior causes; and like causes always produce like effects. The Laws of Causality and of the Uniformity of Nature prevail everywhere and always.'[2]

Buddhism teaches that all compounded things come into being, presently exist, and cease (*uppāda, ṭhiti* and *bhaṅga*), dependent on conditions and causes. Compare the truth of this saying with that oft-quoted verse of Arahat Thera Assaji,[3] one of the Buddha's first five disciples, who crystallized the entire teaching of the Buddha when

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1. Bertrand Russell, *Why I am not a Christian*, p. 4.

2. *Belief and Action*, Penguin Books, 1939, p. 16.

3, An Arahat is one who has cut himself off from all fetters of existence (*Sansāra*) and attained to perfect purity and peace through comprehending the Dhamma, the Truth.

answering the questions of Upatissa who later became known as Arahat Thera Sāriputta.

His question was: 'What is your teacher's doctrine? What does he proclaim?'

And this was the answer:

'Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā tesaṁ hetuṁ tathāgato
Āha tesaṁ ca yo nirodho esaṁ vādi mahāsamaṇo.'

Whatsoever things proceed from a cause,
The Tathāgata has explained the cause thereof,
Their cessation, too, He has explained.
This is the doctrine of the Supreme Sage.[1]

Though brief, this expresses in unequivocal words Dependent Origination, or Conditionality.

Our books mention that during the whole of the first week, immediately after His enlightenment, the Buddha sat at the foot of the Bodhi tree at Gaya, experiencing the supreme bliss of Emancipation. When the seven days had elapsed He emerged from that *Samādhi*, that state of concentrative thought, and during the first watch of the night[2] thought over the Dependent Origination in direct order thus: 'When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises, namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional formations; dependent on formations, consciousness . . . and so on . . . Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.'[3]

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1. *Mahā Vagga.*

2. First watch: from 6 p. m. to 10 p. m., middle watch: from 10 p. m. to 2 a. m., and the last watch: from 2 a. m. to 6 a. m.

3. For the whole formula consisting of the 12 factors see the last pages of this essay.

Then in the middle watch of the night, He pondered over the Dependent Origination in reverse order thus: 'When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases, namely: with the utter cessation of ignorance, the cessation of volitional formations . . . and so on . . . Thus is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.'

In the last watch of the night, He reflected over the Dependent Origination both in direct order and reverse order thus: 'When this exists, that comes to be; with the arising of this, that arises. When this does not exist, that does not come to be; with the cessation of this, that ceases, namely: dependent on ignorance, volitional formations . . . and so on . . . Thus is the arising of this whole mass of suffering. But by the utter cessation of volitional formations . . . and so on . . . Thus is the ending of this whole mass of suffering.'[1]

One may justifiably be inclined to pose the question: Why did not the Tathāgata set forth the doctrine of 'Dependent Origination' in His first discourse,[2] the sermon delivered to the five ascetics, His erstwhile companions, at Saranath, Benares? The answer is this: The main points discussed in that all-important sermon are the four Noble Truths: suffering, its cause, its destruction, and the way to the destruction of suffering, the Noble Eightfold Way. There is no word in it about 'Dependent Origination'; but he who understands the philosophical and doctrinal significance of the Dependent Origination certainly understands that the twelvefold *Paṭicca - Samuppāda*, 'Dependent

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1. *Udāna, p. 1.*

2. *Dhammacakka-pavattana Sutta Saṁyutta N.*

Origination', both in its direct order (*anuloma*) and reverse order (*paṭiloma*) are included in the four Noble Truths.

The *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* in its direct order manifests the process of becoming (*bhava*), in other words, the appearance of suffering (*dukkha*, the first Truth) ; and how this process of becoming or suffering is conditioned (*dukkha-samudaya*, the second Truth). In its reverse order the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* makes plain the destruction of this becoming (*dukkha-nirodha*, the third Truth) and the cessation of conditions, or the destruction of suffering (*dukkha nirodha gāmini paṭipadā*, the fourth Truth). The Buddha-word with regard to this fact appears in the Anguttara Nikāya thus :

'And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering ?

'Dependent on ignorance arise volitional formations ; dependent on volitional formations, consciousness; dependent on consciousness, mentality-materiality (mental and physical combination); dependent on mentality-materiality the sixfold base (the five physical sense organs and consciousness as the sixth) ; dependent on the sixfold base, contact ; dependent on contact, feeling; dependent on feeling, craving ; dependent on craving, clinging ; dependent on clinging, the process of becoming (rebirth); dependent of the process of becoming, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair come to pass. Thus does the whole mass of suffering arise.

'This, monks, is called the Noble Truth of the Arising of Suffering.

And what, monks, is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering?

'Through the entire cessation of ignorance cease volitional formations; through the cessation of volitional formations, consciousness . . . and so on . . . the cessation of the whole mass of suffering. This monks, is called "the Cessation of Suffering".'[1]

It is now abundantly clear from the foregoing that the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda*, with its twelve factors, is the teaching of the Tathāgata and not as some are inclined to think the work of some writers on the Dhamma of later times. It is unreasonable, nay dangerous, to rush into conclusions without fully understanding the significance of the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda*. Dependent Origination, or the doctrine of conditionality, is often explained in severely practical terms, but it is not a mere pragmatical teaching, though it may appear to be so, owing to such explanations resorted to for brevity's sake. Those conversant with the Tipiṭaka (the Buddhist Canon) know that in the teachings of the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* is found that which brings out the basic principles of knowledge (*ñāṇa*) and wisdom (*paññā*) in the Saddhamma, the Good Law. In this teaching of the conditionality of everything in the world, that is the five aggregates, can be realized the essence of the Buddha's outlook on life. So if the Enlightened One's explanation of the world is to be rightly understood, it has to be through a full grasp of this central teaching summed up in the dictum, '*Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā* . . . . " referred to above.

The doctrine of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, is not the work of some divine power; it is not a creation. Whether a Buddha

1. *Anguttara N, I. 1.76.*

arises or not the fact that '*this being, that becomes; by the arising of this, that arises; this not being, that becomes not; by the cessation of this, that ceases to be*' — this conditionality goes on for ever, uninterrupted and uncontrolled by an external agency or power of any sort. The Buddha discovered this eternal truth, solved the riddle of life, unravelled the mystery of being by comprehending, in all its fullness, the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* with its twelve factors, and expounded it, without keeping back aught that is essential, to those who yet have sufficient intelligence to wish for Light.

I. IGNORANCE (AVIJJĀ)

Let us now deal with the twelve factors of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, one by one, in due order. The first point for discussion is *Avijjā* (Sanskṛit *avidyā*), Ignorance. *Moha* and *Aññāṇa*, or delusion and non-knowledge, are synonyms for *avijjā*. What is *avijjā*? It is the non-knowledge of Enlightenment, Supreme Wisdom (*Bodhi*). In other words, not knowing the four Noble Truths. It is also not-knowing of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, or conditionality, which teaches, '*This being, that becomes*'. Owing to this nescience, the uninstructed entertain wrong views. They regard the impermanent as permanent, the painful as pleasant, the soulless as soul, the godless as god, the impure as pure, and the unreal as real. Further, *Avijjā* is the non-perception of the conglomerate nature of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), or mind and body.

Ignorance or delusion is one of the root causes of all unwholesome actions, all moral defilements (*akusala*). All conceivable wrong notions are the result of ignorance. Independently of this crowning corruption no ill action, whether mental, verbal or physical could be performed. That is why ignorance is enumerated as the first link of the chain of the twelvefold *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Nevertheless, ignorance should not be regarded as a *prima causa*, a first beginning, or an ultimate origin of things. It is certainly not the First Cause; there is no conception of a First Cause in Buddhist thought. The doctrine of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* can be illustrated by a circle (see diagram); for it is the cycle of existence, *bhava cakka*. In a circle any given point may be taken as the starting point. Each and every factor of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* can be joined together with another of the series, and therefore,

no single factor can stand by itself nor function independently of the rest. All are interdependent and inseparable. Nothing is independent, or isolated. Dependent Origination is an unbroken process. In this process nothing is stable or fixed, but all in a whirl. It is the arising of ever changing conditions dependent on similar evanescent conditions. Here there is neither absolute non-existence nor absolute existence, only bare phenomena roll on: *Suddha dhammā pavattanti.*

Ignorance, the first factor of the series, therefore, is not the sole condition for volitional formations, the second factor (*saṁkhāra*). A tripod, for instance, is supported by its three legs; it stands upright because of the interdependence of the legs. If one gives way, the other two fall to the ground unsupported. So, too, the factors of this *Paṭicca Samuppāda* support one another in various ways.

II. VOLITIONAL FORMATIONS (SAṄKHĀRĀ)

Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā (Skt. *saṁskārāḥ*), dependent on Ignorance arise rebirth-producing Volitional Formations. The term *saṅkhāra* has also another meaning. In the statement, '*sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*' or '*aniccā vata saṅkhārā*' (all compounded things are impermanent), the term '*saṅkhāra*' applies to all compounded and conditioned things, i.e., all things that come into being as the effect of causes and conditions and which, themselves, act as causes and conditions in turn again to give rise to other effects. In the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* however, *saṅkhāra* is restricted to mean simply all good and evil actions (*kusala-akusala kamma*), all actions, physical, verbal and mental (*kāya saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra*, and *citta saṅkhāra*) which will bring about reactions. It is difficult to give a satisfactory English equivalent to the

term *saṅkhāra*. Let us, therefore, understand it in this context as rebirth-producing volitional activities, or volitional formations or simply as *kamma* (Skt. *karma*).

Ignorance, *avijjā*, which has taken root in man is the blindness that prevents a man from seeing his actions as they really are, and so it allows craving to drive him on to further actions. If there were no ignorance there would be not such actions (*saṅkhāra*). In the absence of actions conditioned by ignorance, there will be no rebirth, and the whole mass of suffering will cease. In order to exemplify how the twelve factors of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* act upon a connected sequence of lives, the formula has been conceived as extending over three consecutive existences, past, present and future.

Ignorance and Volitional Formations belong to the previous birth. Wholesome *saṅkhāras* are capable of bringing about a good rebirth, i. e., birth in a good state of existence. Unwholesome *saṅkhāras* can cause a bad rebirth or birth in an evil state of existence. It must be mentioned that all *saṅkhāras*, all good and evil actions, have ignorance as condition Here a question may be raised as to how actions conditioned by ignorance could bring about good rebirth.

All attainment of good (*kusala*), from the state of the virtuous worldling (*kalyāṇaputhujjana*) and the 'lesser stream-winner' (*cūlasotāpanna*) to that of the consummate one (*arahat*) is due to the balance of knowledge over delusion and of detachment over craving. Good actions are the direct consequence of whatever clear understanding there may be in the doer. It is not because of delusion and craving that a man gives up killing etc., but because he has the wisdom to see the evil consequences of such

actions and also because he is moved by such qualities as compassion and virtue. It is not possible except for the perfect ones to act from complete knowledge or detachment. To the generality of men such knowledge is unthinkable. As Eddington says, " If 'to know' means 'to be quite certain of' the term is of little use to those who wish to be undogmatic".[1] And if to be detached means to be neutral always such detachment is for the imperfect quite impossible, and meaningless. But occasional detachment is possible, and a measure of knowledge adequate for understanding the good is available for an intelligent man of virtue, for producing actions that are wise and unsoiled by the yearning for rewards in this life. There is much that is done in the world today with no hope of reward, or recognition, out of compassion or for the furtherance of knowledge, peace, and so forth. Such actions definitely are based on knowledge and detachment, not perhaps in the dogmatic, scholastic, or merely metaphysical sense, but in the light of sane, undogmatic thought. Good actions may well have ulterior motives, for instance, the yearning for the fruits of the good; but even in such instances, though tainted by greed and to that extent by delusion, there are in such good actions, for instance in liberality, the detachment to let go and the knowledge of seeing the evils of not giving at all, and the advantage of giving. The presence of craving and ignorance in a person does not mean that he can never act with knowledge and detachment.

Now it must also be understood that although man is capable of performing good actions unsoiled by strong desire for rewards in this life, there may be in him, unconsciously working, a tender longing for good rebirth, or

1. *The Philosophy of Physical Science*, p. i, Cambridge University Press, 1939.

a feeling of desire for rewards in the hereafter. Again, though he may be doing an action out of compassion and without any ulterior motives, he may still be lacking in full awareness of the real nature of life — its being impermanent, sorrow-stricken, and void of an abiding entity or soul. This non-knowledge of the real nature of life, though not so gross and strong as the delusion that induces a heinous act, can yet induce karmically wholesome action leading to a good rebirth. A good rebirth even in the heavens is, however, temporary and may be followed immediately by an unhappy rebirth.

Such non-knowledge motivates and colours the good act. If, for instance, the performance of good actions is motivated by the desire for the resultant happiness in a good rebirth in a heavenly realm. or on earth, then that is the ignorance of the impermanence and unsatisfactory nature of all existence, which becomes a condition of good rebirth — i. e. an inducement - or support condition (*Upanissaya paccaya*). In these, and other ways, ignorance may act as a condition of good rebirth by motivating or colouring good volitional activities (*sankhārā*) of a mundane (*lokiya*) nature. Such is the intrinsic nature of ignorance.

Ignorance of the real nature of life is primarily the ignorance of the four Noble Truths. It is because of this non-knowledge of the Truths that 'beings' take birth again and again. Says the Buddha:

'Monks, it is through not understanding, not penetrating the four Noble Truths that we have run so long, wandered on so long in this long long way, both you and I . . . . But when these four Noble Truths are understood and penetrated,

rooted out is the craving for existence, destroyed is that which leads to renewed becoming, and there is no more coming to be'.[1]

Only the actions of a man who has entirely eradicated all the latent tendencies (*anusaya*), and all the varied ramifications of sorrow's cause, are incapable of producing rebirth; for such actions are issueless. He is the Arahat, the Perfect One, whose clarity of vision, whose depth of insight penetrates into the deepest recesses of life, in whom craving has quite ceased through cognizing the true nature that underlies all appearance. He has transcended all appearancc. He has transcended all capacity for error through the perfect immunity which penetrative Insight, *vipassanā*, alone can give. He is, therefore, released from ignorance (*avijjā*) and his actions no more bring about rebirth.

III. CONSCIOUSNESS (VIÑÑĀṆA)

Saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṁ (skt. *Vijñāna*), dependent on rebirth-producing Volitional Formations belonging to the previous birth, arises Consciousness or *viññāṇa* (re-linking or rebirth consciousness). To express it in another way, dependent on the *kamma* or good and evil actions of the past, is conditioned the conscious life in this present birth. Consciousness, therefore, is the first factor (*nidāna*), or first of the conditioning links belonging to the present existence. *Avijjā* and *saṅkhārā*, ignorance and volitional formations, belonging to the past, together produce *viññāṇa*, consciousness in this birth. We read in the

1. *Dīgha Nikāya*, Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta; *Saṅyutta N.*, v, 430; *Vin.* I, 231.

Mahā Nidāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, how 'once ignorance and craving are destroyed good and evil actions no more come into being, consequently no more rebirth consciousness will spring up again in a mother's womb'. Hence it is clear that rebirth is caused by one's own good and evil actions, and it is not the work of a supreme being, a Creator-God, nor is it due to mere chance.

As this consciousness or *viññāna* is the first of the stream of consciousness (*citta santati*) belonging to one single existence (*bhava*), it is also known as *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, re-linking consciousness. The term *paṭisandhi* literally means re-linking, re-uniting, re-joining. It is re-birth, re-entry into the womb. Rebirth is the arising, the coming to be, the being born, in the future (*paṭisandhīti āyatiṁ uppatti*). It is called re-uniting because of its linking back the new existence to the old (*bhavantara paṭisandhānato paṭisandhīti vuccati*). The joining back of the new to the old is the function of re-uniting or re-linking. Therefore, it is said, the function of re-uniting is the joining together of (one) existence with (another) existence (*bhavato bhavassa paṭisandhānaṁ paṭisandhi kiccaṁ*). *Paṭisandhi-viññāṇa* is the kamma-resultant consciousness (*vipāka viññāṇa.*) present at rebirth, connecting the new existence with the immediately preceding one, and through that with the entire past of the 'being' re-born. This resultant consciousness is due to previous rebirth-producing volitional formations (*saṅkhārā* or *kamma*).

In the *Āneñjasappāya Sutta*,[1] the *vipāka viññāṇa is* referred to as '*saṁvattanikaṁ viññāṇaṁ*', the consciousness that links on, proceeds in one life as *vipāka* from the *kamma* in the former life.

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1. *Majjhima N., 106.*

When it is said, 'the consciousness that links on', it does not mean that this consciousness abides unchanged, continues in the same state without perishing throughout this cycle of existence. Consciousness is also conditioned, and, therefore, is not permanent. Consciousness also comes into being and passes away yielding place to new consciousness. Thus this perpetual stream of consciousness goes on until existence ceases. Existence in a way is consciousness. In the absence of consciousness no 'being' exists in this sentient world.

According to the modern science of biology 'a new human life begins in that miraculous instant when a sperm cell from the father merges with an egg cell or ovum within the mother'. This is the moment of birth. Science speaks of only these two physical common factors. Buddhism, however, speaks of a third factor which is purely psychical.

According to the *Mahātaṇhāsaṁkhaya Sutta*[1] 'By the conjunction of three factors does conception take place. If mother and father come together, but it is not the mother's proper season, and the being-to-be-reborn (*gandhabba*) does not present itself, a germ of life is not planted. If the parents come together, and it is the mother's proper season, but the *gandhabba* is not present, so long there is no conception. If the mother and father come together, and it is the mother's proper season, and the *gandhabba* also presents itself, then a germ of life is there planted'.

This third factor, *gandhabba*, is simply a term for the '*paṭisandhi-viññāṇa*', re-linking consciousness. There is the

1. *Majjhima N., 38.*

last moment of consciousness (*cuti citta*) belonging to the immediately previons life. Immediately next upon the cessation of that consciousness there arises the first moment of consciousness of the present birth, which as stated above, is termed re-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-viññāna*). Between these two moments of consciousness, however, there is no interval, there is no *Antarābhava* or *Antarābhava-satta* which means, 'either a being in the womb or a being in between the state of death and that of rebirth', as some of the *Mahāyāna* schools of thought maintain. It should be clearly understood that this re-linking consciousness is not a 'self' or a 'soul' or an ego entity that experiences the fruits (*vipāka*) of good and evil deeds. The *Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta* records the following incident:

During the time of the Buddha there was a monk called Sāti who entertained the following view: "In so far as I understand *dhamma* taught by the Lord, it is that this consciousness itself runs on, fares on, not another".

The monks who heard of this endeavoured to dissuade Sāti, saying, "Do not, Brother Sāti, speak thus, do not misrepresent the Lord; neither is misrepresentation of the Lord seemly, nor would the Lord speak thus. For, Brother Sāti, in many a figure is dependent origination spoken of in connect on with consciousness by the Lord, saying: 'Apart from condition there is no origination of consciousness".

But Sāti would not change his view. Thereupon the monks reported the matter to the Buddha who summoning him, spoke to him thus:

"Is it true, as is said, that a pernicious view like this has accrued to you, Sāti: 'In so far as I understand *dhamma* taught by the Lord, it is that this consciousness itself runs

on, fares on, not another?"—"Even so do I, Lord, understand *dhamma* taught by the Lord:" it is that this consciousness itself runs on, fares on, not another'.

"What is this consciousness, Sāti ?"

"It is this, Lord, that speaks, that feels, that experiences now here, now there, the fruition of deeds that are lovely and that are depraved".

"But to whom, foolish man, do you understand that *dhamma* was taught by me thus? Foolish man, has not consciousness generated by conditions been spoken of in many a figure by me, saying: Apart from condition there is no origination of consciousness? But now you, foolish man, not only misrepresent me because of your own wrong grasp, but you also injure yourself and give rise to much demerit which, foolish man, will be for your woe and sorrow for a long time".[1]

In the words of the Buddha, the *Paṭicca-Samuppāda* is a very deep and intricate doctrine, and in this difficult doctrine the most subtle and deep point, difficult to grasp, is this third link, consciousness, *viññāṇa* or *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*; for it is this link that explains rebirth.

IV. MENTALIY-MATERIALITY (NĀMA-RŪPA)

Viññāṇa paccāya nāma-rūpam (equal in Pāli and Skt.), dependent on consciousness arises mentality-materiality. The term *nāma* here stands for the mental states (*cetasika*),

1. The quoted passages are from *The Middle Length Sayings I*, P. T. S. (London, 1954), translation of *Majjhima Nikāya*, Vol. 1, Sutta No 38.

in other words, the three mental groups: namely, Feeling (*vedanākkhandha*). Perception (*saññākkhandha*), Volitional Formations (*saṅkhārakkhandha*).

The so called 'being' (*satta*, Skt. *sattva*) is composed of five aggregates or groups (*pañcakkhandha*); namely, physical body, feeling, perception, volitional formations and consciousness (*rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa*). If consciousness is taken as the mind, then feeling, perceptions and volitional formations are the concomitants or factors of that mind. Now when we say dependent on consciousnes arises *nāma-rūpa*, mentality-materiality, materiality means the physical body, its organs, faculties and functions. Mentality means the factors of the mind mentioned above. In other words, *viññāṇa-paccayā nāma-rūpaṁ* means, dependent on consciousness arise the three mental-concomitant factors (feeling, perception and volitional formations) that compose mentality, along with the conascent material body in its first embryonic stage.

Consciousness and its factors (*citta-cetasika*) are always interrelated and interdependent. Consciousness cannot arise and function independently of its factors, nor can the factors arise and function without the consciousness. They arise simultaneously (*sahajāta-paccaya*) and have no independent existence.

V. THE SIXFOLD BASE (SALĀYATANA)

Nāma-rūpa paccayā salāyatanam (Skt. *ṣaḍāyatana*), dependent on mentality-materiality arises the sixfold base, the five physical sense organs, eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, and the mind base (*manāyatana*). '*Manāyatana*' is

a collective term for the many different classes of consciousness, i.e. for the five kinds of sense-consciousness, and the many kinds of mind-consciousness. Hence, five bases are physical phenomena, namely eye, ear, etc , and the sixth base is identical with consciousness'.[1]

The function of *viññāṇa*, consciousness, is varied. The third factor of the chain is made known to us as *viññāṇa*; now here again we hear of a sixth base, *manāyatana*, which is identical with consciousness, but here by *manāyatana* different types of consciousness are meant. It should be borne in mind that consciousness is not something that is permanent and everlasting; it is fleeting, and undergoes change, not remaining the same for two consecutive moments; it comes into being and immediately passes away yielding place to new consciousness. 'These mental phenomena are, as it were, only the different aspects of those units of consciousness which like lightning every moment flash up and immediately thereafter disappear for ever.'[2]

If there were no *nāma-rūpa* (mentality-materiality) no *salāyatana* (sixfold base) could arise. Because of *rūpa* the physical sense organs eye, ear, etc. appear, and because of *manāyatana* (different types of consciousness) the physical sense organs function. Thus *nāma-rūpa* and *salāyatana* are inescapably interrelated and inter-dependent.

VI. CONTACT (PHASSA)

Salāyatana paccayā phasso (Skt. *Sparśa*), dependent on the sixfold base arises contact. In the preceding proposition we saw sixfold base or *āyatanas*, eye, ear, etc , they

1. Nyānātiloka, Fundamentals of Buddhism (Colombo, 1949), p. 67.
2. Ibid, p. 65.

are internal bases (*ajjhattika-āyatana*). External to one's material body there are the corresponding five sense objects, form, sound, odour, taste, and tactile object and further, the mental objects. These are known as the six external bases (*bāhira-āyatana*). These external bases are food for man's internal bases. Hence they are inter-related. Although there is this functional relationship between these six sensitivities and their objects, awareness comes with *viññāṇa*, or consciousness. Hence it is said, 'If consciousness arises because of eye and forms it is termed visual consciousness.'

Now when eye and forms are both present, visual consciousness arises dependent on them. Similarly with ear and sounds, and so on down to mind and mental objects (ideas). Again, when the three, namely, eye, forms and eye-consciousness, come together, it is their coincidence that is called 'contact' (or impression). From contact there arises feeling, and so on.[1]

Thus it is clear that contact (*phassa*) is conditioned by both the internal sixfold base (*ajjhatthika-āyatana*) and the external sixfold base (*bāhira-āyatana*).

In brief, dependent on the sixfold base arises contact or impressions, means : The visual contact conditioned by the eye; the sound contact conditioned by the ear; the smell contact conditioned by the nose; the taste contact conditioned by the tongue; the bodily contact conditioned by the body; the mental contact conditioned by the mind.

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1. Madhupiṇḍika Sutta, 18, and Mahātaṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta, 38, of Majjhima Nikāya.

VII. FEELING (VEDANĀ)

Phassa paccayā vedanā (equal in Pāli and Skt), dependent on Contact arises Feeling. Feeling is sixfold: Feeling born of visual contact; feeling born of sound contact; feeling born of smell contact; feeling born of taste contact; feeling born of body contact and feeling born of mental contact.

Feeling may be pleasurable (*sukha*), painful (*dukkha*), or neutral, i.e. neither pleasurable nor painful (*adukkha-m-asukha=upekkhā*).

As stated in the preceding clause, sense objects can never be cognised by the particular sensitivity without the appropriate kind of consciousness, but when these three factors come together there arises contact. With the arising of contact simultaneously there arises feeling (*vedanā*) and it can never be stopped by any power or force. Such is the nature of contact and feeling. The experiencing of desirable or undesirable kamma-results of good and evil actions performed here or in a previous birth, is one of the prior conditions due to which feeling can arise.

Seeing a form, hearing a sound, smelling an odour, tasting a flavour, touching somc tangible thing, cognising a mental object (idea) man experiences feeling; but it cannot be said that all beings experience the same feeling with the same object. An object, for instance, which may be felt agreeable by one, may be felt unpleasant by another, and neutral by still another. Feeling also may differ in accordance with circumstances. A sense object which once evoked unpleasant feelings in us, may possibly produce pleasant feelings in us under different circumstances, in a totally different background — geographical conditions, climatic conditions, etc. Thus we learn how feeling is conditioned by contact.

VIII. CRAVING (TAṆHĀ)

Vedanā paccayā taṇhā (Skt. *tṛṣṇā*), dependent on feeling arises craving. Craving has its source, its genesis, its rise in feeling. All forms of appetite are included in *taṇhā*. Greed, thirst, desire, lust, burning, yearning, longing, inclination, affection, household love are some of the many terms that denote *taṇhā* which in the words of the Buddha is the Leader to Becoming (*bhava netti*). Becoming which manifests itself as *dukkha*, as suffering, frustration, painful excitement, is our own experience. The enemy of the whole world is lust or craving through which all evils come to living beings. Mankind is entangled in a tangle. Through clear understanding of craving, the origin of craving, the cessation of craving, the true way of practice leading to the cessation of craving, one disentangles this tangle.

What then is craving? The Buddha's answer to this question is: 'It is that craving which leads from rebirth to rebirth accompanied by passionate delight, which rejoices now here, now there'.[1] 'Where does craving arise and take root? Where there is the delightful and the pleasurable, there craving arises and takes root. Forms, sounds, smell, taste, bodily contacts and ideas are delightful and pleasurable, there craving arises and takes root.[2]

Craving when obstructed by some cause is transformed to wrath and frustration. 'From craving arises grief, from craving arises fear. To one free from craving there is no grief. Whence fear?'[3]

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1. *Samyutta N., LVI, 11 Dhammacakka pavattana Sutta.*
2. *Dīgha N. 22.*
3. *Dhammapada, 216.*

Man is always attracted by the pleasant and the delightful, and in his search for pleasure he ceaselessly runs after the six kinds of sense objects and clings to them. He little realizes that no amount of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangibles and mental objects will ever satisfy the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and the mind. In this intense thirst for either possessions or the satisfaction of desires mankind gets bound to the wheel of *saṁsāra*, is twisted and torn between the spokes of agony, and securely closes the door to final deliverance. The Buddha has been most emphatic against this mad rush, and in the Sutta Nipāta(v.61) warns :

> '. . . . Be sure
> pleasure's a chain, brief bliss,
> short rapture, long-drawn woe,
> a baited hook for fools.'[1]

All mundane pleasures are fleeting; like sugar-coated pills of poison they deceive us, insidiously working harm.

Whenever craving for these objects is connected with sensual pleasures it is called 'Sensuous Craving' (*kāma-taṇhā*). When it is associated with the belief in eternal personal existence, then it is called 'Craving for Existence' (*bhava taṇhā*). This is what is known as *sassata diṭṭhi* or eternalism. When craving is associated with the belief in self-annihilation at death, then it is called 'Craving for Self-annihilation' (*vibhava-taṇhā*). This is what is known as *uccheda-diṭṭhi* or nihilism.

Craving is conditioned not only by pleasurable and agreeable feelings, but by unhappy and unpleasant feelings, too. A man in distress craves and thirsts to get rid of it,

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1. *Buddha's Teachings*, transl. by Lord Chalmers. Harvard University Press.

and longs for happiness and release. To express it in another way, the poor and the needy, the sick and the disabled, in brief, all sufferers, crave for happiness, security and solace. On the other hand, the rich, the healthy who have not glimpsed the sufferings of the distressed, and who are already experiencing pleasure, also crave. They crave and long for more and more pleasure. Thus craving is insatiable. As cattle go in search of fresh pasture so do men go in quest of fleeting pleasures, constantly seeking fuel for this life-flame. Their greed is inordinate.

'The whole world,' says the Buddha, 'is in flame, the whole world is consumed by fire. All is in flames. And what is the 'all' that is in flames? The five sense organs and the five sense objects are burning. Mind and thoughts are burning. The five aggregates of grasping (*pañca upādānakkhandhā*) are burning. With what are they burning? With the fire of craving, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion.' Craving is an insatiable fire; and no fire is ever contented. Such is the nature of this corruption that spreads right up to the highest plane of existence with respect to spheres, and right up to the *gotrabhu citta*, the threshold of sainthood, with respect to mind-flux. Where there is no self-desire, there indeed, is no sense desire either; and where there is no self-desire there all ill dies out like a flame whose fuel is spent.

It is only when suffering comes, as its consequence, and not before, that one realizes the viciousness of this poisonous creeper of craving which winds itself round all who are not Arahats or perfectly pure ones who have uprooted its tap-root, ignorance. The more we crave, the more we suffer; sorrow is the tribute we have to pay for having craved. Wherefore, know this craving as our foe here, in

saṁsāra, that guides us to continued and repeated sentient existence, and so builds the 'House of Being'.

The Master on attaining full Enlightenment formed the following thought:

'Through many a birth wandered I in Sansara, seeking for the builder of the house, and finding him not; painful is birth again and again.

'O builder of the house, thou art seen, thou shalt not build a house again. Broken are all thy rafters, shattered is thy ridge-pole. My mind has attained the Unconditioned (Nibbāna), attained is the extinction of craving.[1]

IX. CLINGING (UPĀDĀNA)

Taṇhā paccayā upādānaṁ (equal in Pāli and Skt.), dependent on Craving arises Clinging. This is the mental state that clings to, or grasps the object even as a piece of raw meat that sticks to a sauce-pan. Because of this clinging which is described as craving in a high degree, man becomes a slave to passion, and falls into the net he himself has made of his passion for pleasure, like the caterpillar that spins itself a tangle in which it lives.

Clinging (or Attachment; *upādāna*) is four-fold: (i) Attachment to sensuous pleasures or sense desires (*kāma-upādāna*); (ii) attachment to wrong and evil views (*diṭṭhi upādāna*); (iii) attachment to mere external observances—rites and rituals — (*sīlabbata upādāna*) and (iv) attachment to self, or a lasting soul-entity (*attavāda upādāna*).

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1. *Dhammapada, v. 153, 154.*

In brief, by *upādāna*, clinging to sensuous desires interpreted to include all kinds of existence, and clinging to views (*kāma upādāna* and *diṭṭhi upādāna*) are meant; the third and fourth (*sīlabbata* and *attavāda*) being included in the *diṭṭhi upādāna*, wrong views.

Kāma here means both the craving and the craved object (*kilesa kāma* and *vatthukāma*) and when that craving for such desired objects becomes intensified, it is known as *kāma upādāna* or clinging. Man entertains thoughts of craving, and in proportion as he fails to ignore them, they grow till they get intensified to the degree of tenacious clinging.

All the various wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) that were in existence during the time of the Buddha could be included in Nihilism (*uccheda diṭṭhi*) and Eternalism (*sassata diṭṭhi*). To some, especially to the intellectuals, at times, the giving up of a view that they have cherished, is more difficult than giving up objects of sense. Of all wrong views the clinging to a belief in a soul or self or an abiding ego-entity (*attavāda upādāna*) is the strongest, foremost and most pernicious.

It is not without good reason that the Buddha rejected the notion of a self or soul (*attā*). In this conflux of mind and body which undergoes change without remaining the same for two consecutive moments, the Buddha sees not a lasting, indestructible soul. In other words, He could locate no abiding soul in this ever-changing 'creature'. The Enlightened One, therefore, emphatically denied an *attā* either in the five aggregates (material form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, consciousness) or elsewhere.

'All this,' He said, 'is void of an *attā* or anything of the nature of an *attā* (*suññam idam attena vā attaniyena vā*)[1] If this wrong notion is got rid of, all the existing wrong and pernicious views automatically cease.

X. BECOMING (BHAVA)

Upādāna paccayā bhavo (equal in Pāli Skt.), dependent on Clinging arises Becoming. Becoming is twofold, and should be understood as two processes: Kamma-Process (*kamma-bhava*) and Kamma-resultant Rebirth Process (*upapatti bhava*) *Kamma bhava* is the accumulated good and evil actions, the 'kammically active side of life.' *Upapatti bhava* is 'the kammically passive and morally neutral side of life', and signifies the kamma-resultant Rebirth-process in the next life. The next life may be any sphere or plane of sentient existence (*kāma bhava*), that of form (*rūpa bhava*) and that of formless existence (*arūpabhava*).

In the first clause (*avijjā paccayā sankhārā*), *sankhārā* is explained as good and evil actions (*kamma*); if that is so, is it not repetitive to say that *kammabhava*, mentioned here, also means good and evil actions? The *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, we must know, is concerned not only with the present life but with all the three lives—past, present and future. Kamma or the good and evil actions mentioned in the first clause, belong to the past- and on those past actions the present life depends. The *kamma* that is referred to here in this clause, '*upādāna paccayā bhavo*,' belongs to the present life and tha in turn causes future life. *Upādāna paccayā bhavo* means, clinging (*upādāna*) is the condition of the Karma-Process, or actions (*kamma-bhava*).

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1. *Majjhima N.*, 22.

XI. BIRTH (JĀTI)

Bhava paccāyā jāti (equal in Pāli and Skt.), dependent on Becoming arises Birth. Here birth means not the actual child-birth; but the appearance of the five aggregates (material form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness) in the mother's womb This process is conditioned by *kamma-bhava*.

The present birth is brought about by the craving and clinging Kamma-volitions (*taṇhā* and *upādāna*) of the past births, and the craving and clinging Kamma-volitions of the present birth bring about future rebirth. According to the teaching of the Buddha, it is this *kamma* - volition that divides beings into high and low.[1]

'Beings are heirs of their own deeds; bearers of their deeds, and their deeds are the womb out of which they spring,' and through their deeds alone they must change for the better, remake themselves, and win liberation from ill.

We are reaping what we have sown in the past; some of our reapings, we know, we have even sown in this life. In the selfsame way, our actions here mould the hereafter, and thus we begin to understand our position in this mysterious universe. If we, through our ignorance, craving and clinging in the long night of samsaric wandering, have not shaped ourselves as we are, how could there be such difference and dissimilarity between living beings as we see in the world today? Can we conceive of a mind, a single mind vast and confused enough to plan out such a motley sentient world as surrounds us?

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1. *Majjhima N.*, *135*.

Thus *kamma* is the corollary of rebirth, and rebirth on the other hand is the corollary of kamma. Here it may be asked: If kamma is the cause of rebirth and if Buddhism emphatically denies a soul or a transcendental ego how does this kammic process bring about rebirth?

Well, 'No force is ever lost, and there is no reason to think that the force manifest in each being as mind and body is ever lost. It ever undergoes transformations. It is changing now, every moment of our lives. Nor is it lost at death. The vitalizing mind flux is merely reset. It resets in conditions harmonizing with itself, even as broadcast sounds reset in a receiver tuned to the particular wave length. It is the resetting of this vital flux, in fresh conditions, that is called rebirth. Each reborn being starts with an unique set of latent possibilities, the accumulated experiences of the past. That is why character differs, why each endows himself with what theists call 'gifts', and infinite possibilities.'[1]

There is nothing that passes or transmigrates from one life to another. Is it not possible to light one lamp from another and in this process does any flame pass from one to the other? Do you not see the continuity of the flame? It is neither the same flame nor totally a different one.

Kammic process (*kammabhava*), therefore, is 'the force in virtue of which reaction follows actions'; it is the energy that out of a present life, conditions a future life in unending sequence.

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1. "*What I Believe*", an article contributed to the Ceylon Observer, October, 1937, by Dr. Cassius A. Pereira, now Kassapa Thera.

'Desire gives rise to deed; deed gives rise to result; result exhibits itself as new corporeality endowed with new desire. Deed is as inevitably followed by result as the body by its shadow. This is merely the universal natural law of conservation of energy extended to the moral domain. As in the universe no energy can ever be lost, so also in the individual nothing can be lost of the resilient force accumulated by desire. This resilient energy is always transmuted into fresh life and we live eternally through our lust to live. The medium, however, that makes all existence possible is Kamma'.[1]

XII. AGEING AND DEATH (JARĀMARAṆA)

Jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇaṁ, dependent on Birth arise Ageing and Death; and with them naturally come sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. Birth is inevitably followed by ageing and death; in the absence of birth there will be no ageing and death. Thus this whole mass of suffering arises dependent on the twelvefold Dependent Origination, *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Ageing and death are followed by birth, and birth, on the other hand, is followed by ageing and death and the pair thus accompany each other in bewildering succession. Nothing mundane is still; it is all in a whirl. Man builds up wishful hopes and plans for the morrow, but one day, sudden perhaps, and unexpected, there comes the inevitable hour when death puts an end to this brief span of life, and brings our hopes to naught. So long as man is attached to existence through his ignorance, craving and clinging, to him death is not the final end. He will continue his career of whirling along with the wheel of existence, and will be twisted

1. Paul Dahlke, *Buddhist Essays* (London, 1908), p. 115.

and torn between the spokes of agony. Thus, looking around us in the world at the different types of men and women about us, and at the differences in their varying fortunes, we know that these cannot be due to any mere chance.

An external power or agency that punishes the ill deeds and rewards the good deeds of beings has no place in Buddhist thought. Buddhists do not resort to any especially graced person or pray to any imperceptible individual to grant them Deliverance. Not even the supreme Buddha could redeem them from sansāra's bond. In ourselves lies the power to mould our lives. Buddhists are *Kammavādins*, believers in efficacy of actions, good and evil.

According to the teachings of the Buddha the direct cause of the distinctions and inequalities of birth in this life, is the *attakamma* or good and evil actions of each individual in past lives. In other words each man is reaping what he sowed in the past. In the selfsame way his actions here mould his hereafter.

In all actions, good or evil, mind is the most important factor. 'All mental states have mind as their forerunner: mind is chief, everything is mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a polluted mind, pain follows him in consequence as the cart wheel the foot of the beast of burden.' In like manner, in consequence of mentations made, words spoken and deeds done with a pure and placid mind, happiness follows him even as the inseparable shadow.[1]

Man is always changing either for good or for evil. This changing is unavoidable and depends entirely on his own actions and on nothing else.

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1. *Dhammapada*, verse 1.

The world seems to be imperfect and ill-balanced. We are too often confronted with many a difficulty and shortcoming. Men differ from one another in many ways and aspects. Amongst us human beings, let alone the animal kingdom, we see some born as miserable wretches, sunk in deep distress and supremely unhappy; others born into a state of abundance and happiness enjoying a life of luxury and knowing nothing of the world's woe. Again a chosen few are gifted with keen intellect and great mental capacity, while many are wrapt in ignorance. How is it that some of us are blessed with health, beauty, sincere friends and amiable relatives while others are despicable weaklings, destitute and lonely? How is it that some are born to enjoy long life while others pass away in the full bloom of youth? Why are some blessed with affluence, fame and recognition? Why are some chosen few given in full measure all the things which human beings deserve while others are utterly neglected? These are intricate problems that demand a solution.

If we but pause for a moment and impartially investigate and intelligently inquire into things, we will find that these wide differences are not the work of an external agency or a superhuman being. We will find that we ourselves are responsible for our deeds whether good or ill and that we ourselves are the makers of our own Kamma.

Says the Buddha:

> 'According to the seed that is sown
> So is the fruit ye reap therefrom.
> Doer of good will gather good,
> Doer of evil, evil reaps.
> Sown is the seed and thou shalt taste
> The fruit thereof.'

It is just impossible to conceive of an external agency or some all-powerful being who distributes his gifts to different persons in diverse measures, and who at times showers all his gifts on the same individual. Is it not more rational to say that:

'Whatever a man does, the same he in himself will find;
The good man good; and evil that evil has designed:
And so our deeds are all like seeds and bring forth
fruit in kind.'

'Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince
For gentle worthiness and merit won.
Who rulled a King may wander earth in rags
For things done and undone.'

Buddhists do not blame the Buddha or a superhuman being or a deva or an especially graced person for the ills of mankind or praise them for the happiness men experience.

It is knowledge of *kamma* and *kamma-vipāka*, the law of cause and effect, or moral causation, that urges a true Buddhist to refrain from evil and do good. He who understands cause and effect knows well that it is his own actions and nothing else that make his life miserable or otherwise. He knows that the direct cause of the distinctions and inequalities of birth in this life, is the good and evil actions of each individual in past lives and in this life.

'Man today is the result of millions of repetitions of thought and action. He is not readymade; he becomes, and is still becoming. His character is predetermined by his own choice. The thought, the act which he chooses, that by habit he becomes.'

It should, however, be stated that according to Buddhism not everything that occurs is due to past actions. During the time of the Buddha, sectarians like the Niganthas, Makkhali-Gosāla and others, held the view that whatsoever the individual experiences, be they pleasant or unpleasant or neither — all come from former actions or past kamma.[1] The Buddha, however, rejected this theory of an exclusive determination by the past (*pubbekatahetu*) as unreasonable. Hence it is not true to say that all things that occur are due to past kamma or actions.

Is it not absurd for a student who fails in his examinations due to sheer laxity on his part, to attribute the failure to his past kamma? Is it not equaly ridiculous for a person to rush about carelessly, bang himself against a stone or some similar thing, and ascribe the mishap to his past actions or kamma? One can multiply such instances to show that not everything is due to actions performed in the past.

But when the causes and conditions of things are destroyed, automatically the effects also cease to be. Sorrow will disappear if the varied rootlets of sorrow's cause are eliminated. A man, for instance, who burns to ashes a mango seed, puts an end to its germinating power and that seed will never produce a mango plant. It is the same with all compounded things (*sankhāra*), animate or inanimate. As kamma is our own manufacture we have the power to break this endless chain, this wheel of existence (*bhava cakka*). Referring to those enlightened ones who have conquered themselves through the uprooting of the defilements, the Buddha says in the Ratana Sutta :

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1. *Dīgha N.*, 2.

'Their past is extinct, a fresh becoming there is not, their minds are not attached to a future birth, their desires grow not — those wise ones go out even as this lamp.'[1]

The *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, with its twelve links starting with ignorance and ending in ageing and death, shows how man being fettered, wanders in *saṁsāra* birth after birth. But by getting rid of these twelve factors man can liberate himself from suffering and rebirth. The Buddha has taught us the way to put an end to this repeated wandering. It is by endeavouring to halt this Wheel of Existence that we may find the way out of this tangle. The Buddha word which speaks of this cessation of suffering is stated thus:

'Through the entire cessation of ignorance cease volitional formations;
Through the cessation of volitional formations, consciousness;
Through the cessation of consciousness, mentality-materiality;
Through the cessation of mentality - materiality, the sixfold base;
Through the cessation of sixfold base, contact;
Through the cessation of contact, feeling;
Through the cessation of feeling, craving;
Through the cessation of craving, clinging;
Through the cessation of clinging, becoming;
Through the cessation of becoming, birth;
Through the cessation of birth, cease ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair.
Thus does this whole mass of suffering cease.'[2]

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1. *Sutta Nipāta*, *Ratana Sutta*, verse 14.
2. *Anguttara N.*, *I. 176.*

Though in Buddhism time is considered as a mere concept (*paññatti*), in the language of the apparent truth (***sammuti sacca***) we speak of three periods of time; and the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* formula can be taken as representing three periods of time, namely, the past, the present and the future. The two factors Ignorance and Volitional Formations (*avijjā* and *saṅkhāra*) belong to the past; the next eight, beginning with consciousness (*viññāṇa*) belong to the present; and the last pair, birth and ageing and death, belong to the future.

In this Wheel of Existence there are then three connecting links (*sandhi*). Between Volitional Formations (*saṅkhāra*), the last factor of the past, and Consciousness (*viññāṇa*), the first factor of the present, there is one link consisting of past cause and present fruit (*hetu-phala*). Consciousness, Mentality-materiality, the Sixfold Base, Contact, and Feeling are effects in the present life caused by Ignorance and Volitional Formations of the past. Because of these five factors there come into being three other factors, namely, Craving, Clinging and Becoming which will cause birth in the future. Therefore, between Feeling and Craving there is another link consisting of present fruit and present cause (*phala-hetu*). Because of Craving, Clinging, and Becoming of the present there come into being Birth, Ageing and Death in the future. Therefore, between Becoming and Birth there is another link. These three links consist of four sections: i. Ignorance, Volitional Formations; ii. Consciousness, Mentality-materiality, Sixfold Base, Contact, Feeling; iii. Craving, Clinging, Becoming: iv. Birth, Ageing and Death (see diagram).

'Five causes in the past
And now a fivefold fruit,
Five causes now
And yet to come a fivefold fruit.'[1]

The text mentions *Ignorance* and *Volitional Formations* as past causes. "But one who is ignorant hankers, and hankering, clings, and with his clinging as condition there is becoming, therefore *Craving*, *Clinging* and *Becoming* are included as well. Hence it is said: 'In the previous kamma-process becoming, there is delusion, which is *ignorance*; there is accumulation, which is formations; there is attachment, which is craving; there is embracing, which is clinging; there is volition, which is becoming; thus these *five things* in the previous kamma-process becoming are conditions for rebirth-linking here (in the present becoming).'"[2]

Now the fivefold fruit in the present life as given in the text, is represented by five factors; *Consciousness*, *Mentality-materiality*, *the Sixfold Base*, *Contact*, *Feeling*.

There are five causes we now produce, of which the text gives only *Craving*, *Clinging* and *Becoming*. "But when Becoming is included, the *Formations* that precede it or that are associated with it are included too. And by including Craving and Clinging, the *Ignorance* associated with them, deluded by which a man performs kamma is included too. So they are five,"[3]

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1. *Visuddhi Magga, vol. II, p. 579.*

2. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification p. 669*, Colombo 1956, translation of *Visuddhi Magga.*

3. *Ib. p. 671.*

Fivefold fruit we reap in the future. This is represented by *Consciousness, Mentality-materiality, Sixfold Base, Contact, Feeling*. The text gives also birth and ageing and death as the future fivefold fruit. Birth really is represented by these five beginning with Consciousness and ending in Feeling. Ageing and death is the ageing and death of these five.

On close analysis, it becomes clear that in this Dependent Origination, *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, in this repeated process of rebirth, in this Cycle of Existence there is nothing permanent, nothing of the kind of an enduring soul-entity that passes from one birth to the next. All *dhammas* are causally dependent, they are conditioned (*sabbe dhammā paṭiccasamuppannā*), and this process of events is utterly free from the notion of a *Jīvātma* or a *paramātma*, microcosmic soul, macrocosmic soul or cosmic soul. It was the recognition that this *ātma* was an illusion, a mirage, that made the Buddha's doctrine so singular and so revolutionary.

The Buddha declares: "To believe the doer of the deed will be the same as the one who experiences its results (in the next life): this is the one extreme. To believe that the doer of the deed, and the one who experiences its results, are 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 and so on (see formula). Thus arises this whole mass of suffering."

Hence the ancients said:

'There is no doer of a deed
Or one who reaps the deed's result;

Phenomena alone flow on —
No other view than this is right.

'For here there is no Brahmā God,
Creator of the round of births;
Phenomena alone flow on —
Cause and component their condition.'[1]

In concluding this essay on Dependent Origination, a confusion that may arise in the reader's mind should be forestalled. If according to Dependent Origination things are determined by conditions, one may be inclined to think that the Buddha encouraged fatalism or determinism, and that human freedom and 'free will' are put aside.

But what is fatalism? According to the Dictionary of Philosophy, 'Fatalism is determinism, especially in its theological form which asserts that all human *activities are predetermined by God*.' Determinism according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is the philosophical doctrine that human action is not free but necessarily determined by motives, which are regarded as external forces acting upon the will.' The doctrine of kamma refutes that. A clear understanding of Buddhism shows that the Buddha never subscribed to the theory that all things are unalterably fixed; that all things happen by inevitable necessity. Everywhere we see certain laws and conditions functioning, and one of these is *cetanā* or volition, which is *kamma*. There is no law giver, no external agency to interfere with the mental and material happenings. Through causes and conditions things come to be. With the cessation of conditions and causes things come to end.

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1. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, *The Path of Purification* p. 700, translation of *Visuddhi Magga*.

Thus is this endless play of action and reaction kept in perpetual motion by *kamma* concealed by ignorance and propelled by craving. In no way does this affect the freedom of the will and the responsibility of man for his acts (his *kamma*).

Lastly a word about 'free will': will is not something static. It is not a positive entity, or a self-existent thing. Will is quite momentary like any other mental state; there is, therefore, no 'will' as a 'thing' to be either free or not free. The truth is that 'will' is conditioned and a passing phenomenon.

To the genuine Buddhist the primary concern of life is not mere speculation, or vain voyages into the imaginary regions of high fantasy, but the gaining of true happiness and freedom from all ill. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* which speaks of ill and the cessation of ill, is the central conception of Buddhism, and represents the finest flower of Indian thought.

PAṬICCA-SAMUPPĀDA (Anuloma)
'DEPENDENT ORIGINATION' (In direct order)

i-ii. Avijjā-paccayā Sankhārā
ii-iii. Saṇkhāra-paccayā Viññāṇaṁ
iii-iv. Viññāṇa-paccayā Nāma-rūpaṁ
iv-v. Nāma-rūpa-paccayā Salāyatanaṁ
v-vi. Salāyatana-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 Jarā-maranaṁ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassûpāyāsā sambhavanti. Evam etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa samudayo hoti.

PAṬICCA-SAMUPPADA (Paṭiloma)
DEPENDENT ORIGINATION' (In reverse order)

i-ii. Avijjāya tv-eva asesa-virāga-nirodhā sankhāra-nirodho
ii-iii. Sankhāra-nirodhā Viññāṇa-nirodho
iii-iv. Viññāṇa-nirodhā Nāma-rūpa-nirodho
iv-v. Nāma-rūpa-nirodhā Salāyatana-nirodho
v-vi. Salāyatana-nirodhā Phassa-nirodho
vi-vii. Phassa-nirodhā Vedanā-nirodho
vii-viii. Vedanā-nirodhā Taṇhā-nirodho
viii-ix. Taṇhā-nirodhā Upādāna-nirodho
ix-x. Upādāna-nirodhā Bhava-nirodho
x-xi. Bhava-nirodhā Jāti-nirodho
xi-xii. Jāti-nirodhā Jarā-maranaṁ soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassûpāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evam etassa kevalassa dukkha-kkhandhassa nirodho hoti.

(*Saṁyutta - Nikāya, ii, 1*)

Pāli in Sinhala Script

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TRANSLATION

(In Direct Order)

The Arising of the Wheel of Existence

i-ii. Dependent on Ignorance (*avijjā*) arise Volitional Formations (*saṅkhāra*)

ii-iii. Dependent on Volitional Formations (*saṅkhāra*) arises re-linking or rebirth Consciousness (*viññāṇa*)

iii-iv. Dependent on Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) arise Mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*)

iv-v. Dependent on Mentality-materiality (*nāma-rūpa*) arises the Sixfold Base (*saḷāyatana*)

v-vi. Dependent on the Sixfold Base (*saḷāyatana*) arises Contact (*phassa*)

vi-vii. Dependent on Contact (*phassa*) arises Feeling (*vedanā*)

vii-viii. Dependent on Feeling (*vedanā*) arises Craving (*taṇhā*)

viii-ix. Dependent on Craving (*taṇhā*) arises Clinging (*upādana*)

ix-x. Dependent on Clinging (*upādāna*) arises Becoming (*bhavo*)

x-xi. Dependent on Becoming (*bhava*) arises Birth (*jāti*)

xi-xii. Dependent on Birth (*jāti*) arise ageing and death (*jarā-maraṇa*), and sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. Thus there is the arising of this whole mass of suffering.

(In Reverse Order)

The Cessation of the Wheel of Existence

i-ii Through the entire cessation of this Ignorance, Volitional Formations cease

ii-iii. Through the cessation of Volitional Formations, Rebirth Consciousness ceases

iii-iv. Through the cessation of Rebirth Consciousness, Mentality-materiality cease

iv-v. Through the cessation of Mentality-materiality, the Sixfold Base ceases

v-vi. Through the cessation of Sixfold Base, Contact ceases

vi-vii. Through the cessation of Contact, Feeling ceases

vii-viii. Through the cessation of Feeling, Craving ceases

viii-ix. Through the cessation of Craving, Clinging ceases

ix-x. Through the cessation of Clinging, Becoming ceases

x-xi. Through the cessation of Becoming, Birth ceases

xi-xii. Through the cessation of Birth, Ageing and Death cease, and sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair. Thus there is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.

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Buddhism and Christianity

Buddhism and the Vital Problems of our Time

Two Essays

HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP
Professor of Indology
Tuebingen (Germany)

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Kandy 1963 Ceylon

First Impression: 1959
Second Impression: 1963

The Wheel Publication No. 16

PREFACE

We are glad to present to our readers another two essays by Prof. Dr. H. von Glasenapp, eminent Indologist of Germany, whose *Vedanta and Buddhism* we published as No. 2 of this series.

The German originals of both these essays appeared in the German magazine, *Universitas*, Vol. IV, No. 1 and V, No. 3, respectively (Stuttgart, 1949, 1950 ; Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft, m. b. H.).

The English version of *Buddhism and Christianity*, translated by the editor of this series, was published first in the *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. XVI, No. 1 and 2 (Peradeniya, 1958).

The second essay, *Buddhism and the Vital Problems of our Time*, was originally a radio talk delivered in Munich (Germany), in reply to questions formulated by that broadcasting station. It was later read and discussed at the Indian Institute of Culture, Bangalore. The English version is here reproduced, with amendments, from *The Buddhist*, Vol. XXI, No. 7 (Y.M.B.A., Colombo, 1950).

Both essays give an impartial and scholarly treatment of their respective subjects, and the publishers express the hope that especially the lucid comparison of Buddhism and Christianity, will serve to the followers of both religions as a useful source of information about each other's beliefs.

Buddhist Publication Society.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

AMONG the five great religions to which nearly nine-tenths of present-day humanity belong, Buddhism and Christianity have been the most frequent subjects of comparison. And rightly so. Because, together with Islam, and unlike Hinduism and Chinese universism, they are "world religions", that is to say forms of belief that have found followers not merely in a single though vast country, but also in wide regions of the entire world.

Buddhism and Christianity, however, differ from Islam in so far as, unlike the latter, they do not stress the natural aspects of world and man, but they wish to lead beyond them. A comparison between Buddhism and Christianity, however, proves so fruitful mainly because they represent, in the purest form, two great distinctive types of religion which arose East and West of the Indus valley. For two millenniums, these religious systems have given the clearest expression of the metaphysical ideas prevalent in the Far East and in the Occident, respectively.

The similarities between these two religions extend, if I see it rightly, essentially over three spheres : (1) the life history of the founder ; (2) ethics ; and (3) church history.

1. The biographies of Buddha and Christ show many similar features. Both were born in a miraculous way. Soon after their birth, their future greatness is proclaimed by a sage (Asita, Simeon). Both astonish their teachers through the knowledge they possess, though still in their early childhood. Both are tempted by the devil before they start upon their public career. Both walk over the water (*Jātaka*, 190 ; *Matth.*, 14, 26). Both feed 500 and 5,000 persons, respectively (*Jātaka*, 78 ; *Mark*, 14, 16ff.) by multiplying miraculously the

food available. The death of both is accompanied by great natural phenomena. Also the parables ascribed to them show some similarities as, for instance, the story of the sower (*Saṃyutta*, 42, 7 ; *Matth.*, 13, 3), of the prodigal son (" Lotus of the Good Law ", Chap. IV ; *Lk.*, 14), of the widow's mite (*Kalpanamanditika*; *Mark* 12).

From these parallels some writers have attempted to conclude that the Gospels have drawn from the Buddhist texts. But this contention goes much too far. If there is any dependence at all, of the stories in the Gospels on those of India, it could be only by oral tradition, through the migration to the West of certain themes which originated in India, and were taken over by the authors of the biblical scriptures. But that is in no way certain, because many of those similarities are not so striking as to exclude the possibility of their independent origin at different places.

2. Both Buddha and Jesus based their ethics on the " Golden Rule ". Buddha told the Brahmins and householders of a certain village as follows : " A lay-follower reflects thus : ' How can I inflict upon others what is unpleasant to me ? ' On account of that reflection, he does not do any evil to others, and he also does not cause others to do so " (*Saṃyutta* 55, 7). And Jesus says in the Sermon of the Mount : " Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do so to them ; for this is the law and the prophets " (*Matth.* 7, 12 ; *Lk.* 6, 31)—this being, by the way, a teaching which, in negative formulation, was already known to the Jewish religion (*Tob.* 15, 4).

Also the principle " Love thy neighbour like unto yourself " (*Lk.* 10, 27) which, in connection with *Lev.* 19, 18, was raised by Jesus to a maxim of ethical doctrine, is likewise found in Buddhism where it was given a philosophical

foundation mainly by the thinkers of *Mahāyāna* (Śāntideva, beginning of Śikṣāsamuccaya). As to the injunction that love should also be extended to the enemy there is also a parallel statement by the Buddha. According to the *Majjhima Nikāya*, No. 21, he said : " If, O monks, robbers or highwaymen should with a double-handled saw cut your limbs and joints, whoso gave way to anger thereat, would not be following my advice. For thus ought you to train yourselves : ' Undisturbed shall our mind remain, no evil words shall escape our lips ; friendly and full of sympathy shall we remain, with heart full of love, free from any hidden malice. And that person shall we suffuse with loving thoughts ; and from there on the whole world. '"

A practical proof of the love of enemies was given, as the report goes, by the Buddhist sage, Āryadeva. After a philosophical disputation, a fanatical adversary attacked him in his cell with a sword, and Āryadeva was fatally wounded. In spite of that, he is said to have helped his murderer to escape by disguising him with his own monk's robe. Schopenhauer, and.others after him, believed, in view of these ethical teachings, that the Gospels, " must somehow be of Indian origin " (*Parerga* II, sec. 179), and that Jesus was influenced by Buddhism with which he was said to have become acquainted in Egypt. For such a supposition, however, there is not the slightest reason, since we encounter similar noble thoughts also among Chinese and Greek sages, and, in fact, among the great minds of the whole world, without having to assume an actual interdependence.

3. Also the historical development of both religions presents several parallels. Both, setting out from the countries of their origin, have spread over large parts of the world, but in their original home lands they have scarcely any

followers left. The number of Christians in Palestine is very small today, and on the whole continent of India proper, there are at present not even half a million Buddhists.* The brahmanical counter-reformation starting about 800 A.C., and the onslaught of Islam beginning about 1000 A.C., have brought about the passing of already decadent Buddhism in its fatherland, while it counts millions of devotees in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, China, Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, and so on. It is strange how little that fact of the disappearance of Buddhism from the land of the Ganges has been apprised by even many educated persons in the West. Some still believe that Buddhism is the dominant religion of India proper, though out of a population of 400 millions, about 95 millions belong to the Islam, and 270 millions are Hindus (that is devotees of Vishnu and Shiva) among whom the caste system prevails, with Brahmins constituting the hereditary priestly gentry.

It is also significant that today the overwhelming majority of the followers of Buddhism and Christianity belong to a race and linguistic group different from those of their founders. Buddha was an Indo-Aryan ; but, with a few exceptions, most of his devotees are found today among yellow races. Jesus and the Apostles were Jews, but the main contingent of Christians is made up of Europeans speaking Indo-Germanic languages. This shows, very strikingly, that race, language and religion are entirely different spheres. There is perhaps a deep law underlying that fact. Nations of foreign blood accept a new religion with such a great sympathy and enthusiasm probably because it offers them something which they did not possess of their own, and

* Since this essay was written, the number of Buddhists in India has increased to an estimated 10—15 millions in 1959, mainly due to the mass movement among the scheduled classes initiated by the late Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.— *The Editor.*

which, therefore, supplements their own mental heritage in an important way. This holds true also in the case of Islam, since, among the nearly 300 million Mohammedans, those of the Prophet's race, the Semites, are in a minority compared with the Muslims of Turkish, Persian, Indian, Malayan and African extraction.

In the course of their historical development and their dissemination among foreign nations, Buddhism as well as Christianity have absorbed much that was alien to them at the start. One may even say that, after a religion has gone through a sufficiently long period of development and has been exposed to divers influences, more or less all phenomena will appear which the history of religion has ever produced. Buddhism and Christianity, originally, had strict views on all matters of sex, but in both certain sects appeared again and again, which were given to moral laxity or even taught ritual sex enjoyment, as in Buddhism the Shakti cults of the " Diamond Vehicle " (*Vajra-yāna*), or in Christianity certain gnostic schools, medieval sects and modern communities. Buddha and Christ reject extreme asceticism, but there arose numerous zealots who not only advocated painful self-mortification, but even castrated (as the Skopzi) or burned themselves. Pristine Buddhism taught self-liberation through knowledge. Later, however, a school arose which considered, man too weak to win salvation by himself, and instead expected deliverance by the grace of Buddha Amitābha. These Amitābha schools have developed a theology which, to a certain extent, presents a parallel to the Protestant doctrine of salvation by faith. In Japan, the most influential of these schools, the Shin sect, has even broken with the principle of monastic celibacy, and thereby produced a sort of Buddhist clergy of the Protestant type. On the other hand, Tibetan Buddhism has created a kind of Ecclesiastical State with the Dalai Lama as its supreme head.

Both Buddhism and Christianity teach to transcend the world. And, in conformity with the idea of the supremacy of the spiritual life over the conventions of the world, in the monastic order or the church community all class distinctions had to cease. The Buddha taught : " As the rivers lose their names when they reach the ocean, just so members of all castes lose their designations once they have gone forth into homelessness, following the teaching and the discipline of the Perfect One " (*Aṅg.* 8, 19). And the Apostle Paul wrote (*Gal.* 3, 28) : " There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus ".

These postulates, however, did not change conditions prevailing in worldly life. Social reforms were entirely alien to the intentions of Buddhism and Christianity in these early days. In various countries and up to modern times, there were not only house slaves, and even temple slaves, but even in Christian countries, slavery was abolished only in the 19th century (Brazil, 1888).

Finally, both religions have in common certain features of cult and forms of worship. I mention here only : monasticism, tonsure of the clergy, confession, the cult of images, relic worship, ringing of bells, use of rosary and incense, and the erection of towers. There has been much controversy about the question whether and to what extent, one may assume mutual influence with regard to these and several other similarities, but research has so far not come to an entirely satisfactory conclusion.

Though in many details there are great similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, one must not overlook the fact that in matters of doctrine, they show strong contrasts, and their conceptions of salvation belong to entirely different

types of religious attitude. Buddhism, in its purest form, presents a religion based on the conception of an eternal and universal law, a conception found in various forms in India, China and Japan. Christianity, on the other hand, belongs, together with the teaching of Zoroaster, the Jewish religion and Islam, to those religions that profess to have a divine revelation which is manifested in history, and these religions have conquered for themselves all parts of the world west of India. The contrast between Buddhism and Christianity will become clear by objectively placing side by side their central doctrines. I shall base that comparison on what are still today, just as nearly 2,000 years ago, the fundamental doctrinal tenets of both religions, and shall not consider here differences of detail or modern interpretations. Since I may assume an acquaintance with the teachings of Christianity, I shall begin each subsequent discussion of single points, with a very brief statement of the Christian doctrine concerned, following it up with a somewhat more detailed treatment of the different teachings in Buddhism. I hope that, in that way, I shall be able to bring out clearly the differences between these two religions.

1. Christianity differs from all great world religions first of all in that it gives to the personality of its founder a central position in world history as well as in the doctrine of salvation. In Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Judaism, and still more so in religions having no personal founder but being products of historical growth, like Hinduism and Chinese universism, in all of them it is a definite metaphysical and ethical doctrine promulgated by holy men, which is the very centre of their systems. For the Christian, however, it is faith in Jesus Christ that is the inner core of his religion. This evinces most clearly from the fact alone that the 22 scriptures of the New Testament contain only comparatively

few sermons of Jesus concerned with doctrinal matters, while by far the greatest part of the Buddhist Canon is devoted to expositions of the Buddha's teachings. In the scriptures of the New Testament, from the Gospel of St. Matthew up to the Revelation of St. John, the most important concern of the authors was to demonstrate that Christ was a supernatural figure unique in the entire history of the world. Christ's redemptory death on the cross, his resurrection, ascension, and his future advent, are, therefore, the core of the Christian doctrine of salvation.

Buddha's position in Buddhist doctrine bears in no way comparison with those features of Christianity. For the historical Gautama was not the incarnation of a God; he was a human being, purified through countless rebirths as animal, man or angel, until finally in his last embodiment, he attained by his own strength that liberating knowledge which enabled him to enter *Nirvāna*. He was one who pointed out the way to deliverance, but did not, by himself, bestow salvation on others. Though also to him a miraculous birth has been attributed, yet it was not described as a virginal birth. The whole difference, however, of the Buddha's status from that of Christ is chiefly demonstrated by the fact that a Buddha is not an isolated historical phenomenon, but that many Enlightened Ones had appeared in the past, teaching the same doctrine ; and that, in the future, too, Buddhas will appear in the world who will expound to erring humanity the same principles of deliverance in a new form. The later Buddhism of the Great Vehicle (*Mahāyāna*) even teaches that many, if not all men carry within themselves the seed of Buddhahood so that after many rebirths they themselves will finally attain the highest truth and impart it to others.

2. But even the historical personalities of Jesus and the Buddha differ widely. Jesus grew up in a family of poor Jewish craftsmen. Devoting himself exclusively to religious

questions, he was a successor of the Jewish prophets who enthusiastically proclaimed the divine inspirations bestowed upon them. As a noble friend of mankind, full of compassion for the poor, he preached gentleness and love for one's neighbour ; but, on the other hand, he attacked with a passionate zeal abuses, for instance when he showed up as hypocrites the Scribes and Pharisees, when he drove from the Temple the traders and money-lenders ; and held out the prospect of eternal damnation to those who refused to believe in him (*Mark* 16, 16). With the conviction of being the expected Messiah he preached the early advent of the Heavenly Kingdom (*Matth.* 10, 23). With that promise he primarily turned to the " poor in spirit " (*Matth.* 5, 3), because not speculative reasoning, but pious and deep faith is the decisive factor : What is hidden to the clever and wise, has been revealed by God to the babes (*Matth.* 11, 25).

Gautama Buddha, however, stemmed from the princely house of the Sakyas that reigned on the southern slopes of the Himalaya. He lived in splendour and luxury up to his 29th year, then he left the palace and its womanfolk, and went forth into homelessness as a mendicant. After a six years' vain quest for insight spent with various Brahman ascetics, he won enlightenment at Uruvela. This transformed the Bodhisattva, *i.e.*, an aspirant for enlightenment, into a Buddha, that is into one who has awakened to truth. From then onward, up to the eightieth year of his life, he proclaimed the path of deliverance found by him. He died at Kusinara about 480 B.C. Buddha was an aristocrat of high culture, with a very marked sense for beauty in nature and art, free from any resentment, and possessed of a deep knowledge of man's nature. He was a balanced personality, with a serene mind and winning manners, representing the type of a sage who, with firm roots within, had risen above the world.

In the struggle with the systems of his spiritually dynamic time, he evolved out of his own thought a philosophical system that made high demands on the mental faculties of his listeners. As he himself said : " My doctrine is for the wise and not for the unwise ". The fact that his teaching had an appeal also for the uneducated, is explained by his great skill in summarizing in easily intelligible language the fundamental ideas of his philosophy.

So far we have found the following difference between Buddhism and Christianity : Christianity, from its very start was a *movement of faith* appealing to the masses : and only when it won over the upper classes, a Christian philosophy evolved. Buddhism, however, was, in its beginnings, a *philosophical teaching of deliverance.* Its adherents were mainly from the classes of noblemen and warriors, and of the wealthy middle-class, with a few Brahmins. Only when Buddhism reached wider circles it became a popular religion.

3. The teachings of all great religions are laid down in holy scriptures to which an authoritative character is ascribed surpassing all other literature. Christianity regards the Bible as the " Word of God ", as an infallible source of truth in which God, by inspiring the authors of these scriptures, revealed things that otherwise would have remained hidden to man. Contrary to Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, atheistic Buddhism does not know of a revelation in that sense. Nevertheless it possesses a great number of holy texts in which the sayings of the Buddha are collected. That Canon comprises those insights which the Buddha is said to have won by his own strength through comprehending the true nature of reality. It is claimed that everyone who, in his mental development, reaches the same high stage of knowledge, will find confirmed by himself the truth of the Buddha's statements. In fact, however, Buddhists ascribe to

that Canon likewise a kind of revealing character, in so far as they appeal to the sayings of the "omniscient" Buddha which are regarded by them as the final authority. The interpretation of the Buddha word, however, has led among the Buddhists to as many controversies as Bible exegesis among Christians.

We shall now proceed to describe the fundamental tenets of Christian and Buddhist doctrine. In doing so, we shall have to limit ourselves to the general principles which, for two thousand years, have been common to all schools or denominations of these religions. I shall first speak about the different position taken by Christians and Buddhists towards the central questions of religion, that is God, world and soul, and later proceed to a treatment of their teachings on salvation.

4. The central tenet of Christian doctrine is the belief in an eternal, personal, omnipotent, omniscient and all-loving God. He has created the world from nothing, sustains it, and directs its destiny ; he is law-giver, judge, the helper in distress and the saviour of the creatures which he has brought into being. Angels serve him to carry out his will. As originally created by God, all of them were good angels. But a section of them turned disobedient, and, breaking away from the heavenly hosts, formed an opposition to the other angels, a hierarchy which under its leader, the Satan, strives to entice man to evil. Though the devils' power is greater than that of man, it is restricted by the power of God so that they cannot do anything without God's consent, and at the end of the days they will be subjected to divine judgement.

The Buddhists, on their part, believe in a great number of deities (*devatā*) which direct the various manifestations

of nature and of human life. They also know of evil demons and of a kind of devil, *Māra*, who tries to turn the pious from the path of virtue. But all these beings are impermanent though their life span may last millions of years. In the course of their rebirths they have come to their superhuman form of existence thanks to their own deeds ; but when the productive power of their deeds is exhausted, they have to be reborn on earth again, as humans. Though the world will always have a sun god or a thunder god, the occupants of these positions will change again and again, in the course of time. It is obvious that these gods with their restricted life span, range of action and power, cannot be compared with the Christian God since they cannot, be it singly or in their totality, create the world nor give it its moral laws. Hence they resemble only powerful superhuman kings whom the pious devotees may well, to a certain extent, solicit for gifts and favours, but who cannot exert any influence on world events in their totality.

Many *Hindus* assume that, above the numerous impermanent deities, exists an eternal, omniscient, all-loving and omnipotent God who creates, sustains, rules and destroys the world. But the *Buddhists* deny the existence of such a Lord of the Universe. Because, according to them, in the first place, no such original creator of the world can be proved to exist, because every cause must have another cause, and secondly, an omnipotent God will have to be also the creator of evil and this will conflict with his all-loving nature ; or, alternatively, if he is to be good and benevolent, he will have to be thought of without omnipotence and omniscience, since otherwise he would not have called into existence this imperfect world of suffering or he would have eliminated evil. Buddhism, therefore, is outspokenly atheistic, in that respect. The world is not governed by a personal God, but

by an impersonal law that, with inexorable consistency, brings retribution for every morally good or evil deed. The idea that there are numerous deities of limited power can be found also in other religions ; and the ancient Greeks, Romans and Germans believed that, above the gods, there is Moira, Anangke, Fatum or Destiny, which eventually rules everything. For the Chinese the highest principle is the " Tao " which sustains the cosmic order and the harmony between heaven, earth and man. With the Indians there appears already in Vedic times the idea that gods and men are subject to the moral world-order, the Rita (ṛta), and from about 800 B.C. this idea is linked with the doctrine of *Karma*, the doctrine of the after-effects of guilt and merit. According to that doctrine, every action carries in itself, seed-like, its own reward or punishment. After death, an individual, in accordance with his good or evil deeds, is reincarnated in the body of either an animal, a man, a deity or a demon, in order to reap the fruits of his previous actions. This retribution occurs automatically, as a natural, regular occurrence, without requiring a divine judge who shares out reward and punishment.

As to the differences between Buddhism and Christianity, in the present context, we may say that the same functions which in Christian doctrine are related to the concept of a personal God, are in Buddhism divided among a number of different factors. The natural and moral order of the world and its periodical rise and fall are preserved by an impersonal and immanent cosmic law (*Dharma*). The retribution for one's actions operates through the inherent efficacy of these deeds themselves. Helpers in need are the numerous, but transient deities, while the truths of deliverance are revealed by human beings evolved to the perfection of Buddhas (Awakened Ones) who, therefore, are also made objects

of a cult and of devotion. Saviour, however, is each man for himself, in so far as he has overcome the world through wisdom and self-control.

The homage paid to the Buddha, as it may be observed in Buddhist temples, has a meaning quite different from the worship of God in Christian Churches. The Christian worships God in reverence due to the creator of the universe and the ruler of all its destinies ; or he does so in order to be granted spiritual or material boons by God's grace. The Buddhist pays homage to the Buddha without expecting that he hears him or does something for him. Since the Buddha has entered into *Nirvāna* he can neither hear the prayers of the pious nor can he help them. If a Buddhist turns to the Buddha as if to a personality that actually confronts him, his act has a fictive character. The devotee expects from his act only spiritual edification and a good *Karma*. This theory as advocated today by orthodox Buddhism, has, however, often been altered in practice and in the teachings of some of the Buddhist schools. But even those who think it possible that a Buddha may intervene in favour of a devotee, regard the Buddha only as a Saviour, a bringer of deliverance, and not as the creator and ruler of the universe.

5. According to Christian doctrine, God has created the world from nothing, and he rules it according to a definite plan. The stopping of the cosmic process comprises the end of the world, the universal resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgement, the eternal damnation of the sinners and the eternal bliss of the pious in a heavenly Jerusalem descended to earth. Until the 18th century, it was believed that the entire world history comprised only 6,000 years, though the time of the creation has been calculated differently. The Byzantines made their world era start on the 1st of

September, 5509 B.C., while Luther dated the creation at the year 3960 B.C. Although the calculations about the beginning and the end of the world process—mainly based on the statements about the generations between Adam and Christ (*Matth.*, 1, 17 and *Lk.*, 3, 21)—have been abandoned in recent times, yet for Christianity the view that the historical fact of creation and salvation constitutes a single and unrepeatable event, remains a guiding principle.

Buddhism, however, knows neither a first beginning nor a definite end of the world. Since every form of existence presupposes action in a preceding life, and since *Karma* produced in one existence must find its retribution in a future one, Buddhism teaches a periodical cycle of cosmic rise and fall, evolution and dissolution. Since the number of living beings that produce *Karma*, is infinitely vast, and the unexhausted *Karma* of beings inhabiting a world which is in the process of dissolution, has to find realization in a newly arising world, worldly existence will never come to an end, however large the number of human beings may be that reach deliverance. There is another essential difference between the Christian and the Buddhist conception of the world. Buddhists have always assumed an infinite number of world systems situated next to each other in space, each of them consisting of an earth, a heaven above and a hell below.

6. According to Christian views, man is composed of body and soul. While the body is formed of matter in the mother's womb, the soul is a special creation of God, from nothing. A soul is a simple, spiritual, immaterial substance. Maintained in eternal existence by God, the soul continues also after the dissolution of the body at death, and receives from God the rewards of its deeds, either in heaven or hell. At the end of time, God causes a resurrection of all flesh

and unites again the souls with their former bodies. By the fact that thus the whole man, *i.e.*, not only his soul but also his body, received reward or punishment, the bliss of the heavenly realm or the torment of eternal damnation is felt with still greater intensity. In Christianity, the significance of life on earth and of the decisions made in it, has been enhanced to the utmost through the idea that it is man's conduct during that short life-span which determines the soul's destiny for all eternity.

Also many Indian systems are based upon that anthropological dualism. It is the conception of an infinitely large number of eternal and purely spiritual souls linked, since beginningless time, with bodies formed by particles of primordial matter. The souls are thought to change these bodies in the course of their existences, until they become free of them on attainment of deliverance. In contrast to all Indian teachings of deliverance, and most others, Buddhism denies the existence of eternal substances, essentially unchangeable. What appears to us as matter, actually comes into being only through the natural co-operation of a multitude of single factors like colours, sounds, odours, tactiles, spatial and temporal qualities, etc. Also what we call "soul" is only a play of ever-changing sensations, perceptions and cognitive acts, combined into an entirety, yet being devoid of any underlying entity. It is only because some of these complex phenomena seem to have a relative stability, that men believe in the existence of matter or soul. But in truth, only *dharmas* exist, *i.e.*, "factors of existence" that arise in functional dependence on each other, and cease again after a short time. This doctrine of the *Dharmas* is the characteristic teaching peculiar to Buddhism. It was developed by the Buddha into a philosophy of becoming from an idea still noticeable in the *Vedic* texts ascrib-

ing positive subsistence to everything that exists including qualities, events, modal states, etc.

In that respect, Buddha is a precursor of Hume and Mach who likewise declared any substance to be a fiction. But for the Buddha, the doctrine of the *Dharmas* combines with the acceptance of a moral law governing the efficacy of all actions. Just as nothing occurs without producing some effect in the physical world, so every morally good or evil act is the cause of definite effects. Though, when a being dies, a combination of factors is dissolved which had previously formed a personality, yet the deeds performed in the life now passed, become the cause of a new and separate being's birth. The newly born is different from the being that had died, but it takes over, as it were, the latter's inheritance. Thus the stream of the factors of existenc is continued also after death, and one life form follows the other without break. Since any act can have only a retribution of limited duration, Buddhists do not know eternal bliss in heaven or eternal torments in hell, but believe that the inhabitants of heaven and hell are later reborn again on earth.

7. Christianity and Buddhism agree in their strong emphasis on the impermanency of all things. In Christianity, the suffering, inherent in the world, is the outcome of sin, and sin is disobedience towards God's commandments. Because Adam had sinned, all his progeny is afflicted with Original Sin. Man is too weak to free himself from sin by his own strength. Therefore, God in his compassion became man in Christ, and died, as a vicarious redemptory sacrifice for all humanity. Through Christ's sacrificial death all men have become free from the power of sin, but that vicarious salvation from evil becomes reality only if man opens himself to divine grace through his faith in Christ.

The idea of collective guilt and collective salvation is far from the Buddhist's way of thinking. According to Buddhism, everyone accumulates his own evil and everyone has to work out his own deliverance. The entire Christian conception of sin, as a matter of fact, is alien to the Buddhist. If man has to suffer in punishment for his misdeeds, it is not on account of his disobeying divine commandments, but because his actions are in conflict with the eternal cosmic law and, therefore, produce bad *Karma*. In general, the suffering which is life for a Buddhist is not stamped with the mark of sin, but carries only the character of impermanence and insubstantiality. This inherent characteristic of existence is the cause of life ever ending in death, of life with its aimless and meaningless wandering through always new forms of being. It is that which basically constitutes life's suffering. And the cause of this woeful conflict is a thirst for sense enjoyment, an attachment to existence, a will to live, a passion that either craves for possession or wants to escape. All these propensities and impulses have their original source in ignorance, that is in lack of insight into the true nature of reality. He who sees that neither in the internal nor in the external world anything can be found that abides ; and that there is also no Ego as a point of rest within the general flux of phenomena ; who is aware that there is no self either as the eternal witness or temporary owner of sense perceptions and volitions—such a one, through that very knowledge, is set free of selfishness, of hate, greed and delusion. By a gradual process of purification, extending through aeons over many existences, he finally discards the illusion of self-affirmation. Through mindful observation, keen reflection and meditative calm he eliminates all selfish propensities, and sees also his own personality as a mere bundle of *Dharmas*, *i.e.*, processes of natural law that arise and vanish conditioned by functional relations. Dispassion-

ate and without attachment, he pervades, as the Buddhist scriptures say, " the whole world with his heart filled with loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity " (*Digha* No. 13). Without clinging to life and without fear of death he waits for the hour when his bodily form breaks up and he reaches final deliverance from rebirth.

8. The definite and perpetual state of salvation which is the redeemed person's share according to Christian doctrine, is conceived as an eternal life in the heavenly kingdom. If, after the second advent of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the Last Judgement, the final kingdom of God has been established, then, after the old world's destruction, on a new earth, the redeemed ones will live in an inseparable communion with God and Christ.

The Buddhist conception of *Nirvāna* presents the most radical contrast to Christian eschatology. The Christian hopes for infinite continuation of his entire personality, not only of his soul but also of his body resurrected from dust to a new life. The Buddhist, however, wishes to be extinguished completely, so that all mental and corporeal factors which form the individual, will disappear without a remainder. *Nirvāna* is the direct opposite of all that constitutes earthly existence. It is a relative Naught in so far as it contains neither the consciousness nor any other factor that occurs in this world of change or could possibly contribute to its formation. Not wrongly, therefore, has *Nirvāna* been compared to empty space in which there are no differentiations left, and which does not cling to anything. In strongest contrast to the world which is impermanent, without an abiding self-nature and subject to suffering, *Nirvāna* is highest bliss, but a bliss that is not *felt*, *i.e.*, beyond the

happiness of sensation (*Aṅg.* 9, 34, 1-3). In the conception of the final goal of deliverance there is expressed the ultimate and most decisive contrast between the Christian and the Buddhist abnegation of the world. The Christian renounces the world because it is imperfect through sin, and he hopes for a personal, active and eternal life beyond, in a world that, through God's power, has been freed from sin and purified to perfection. But the Buddhist thinks that an individual existence without becoming and cessation, and, hence, without suffering, is unthinkable. He believes though, that in future, during the ever-recurring cyclical changes of good and bad epochs, also a happy age will dawn upon mankind again. But that happy epoch will be no less transient than earlier ones have been. Never will the cosmic process find its crowning consummation in a blessed finality. Hence there is no collective salvation, but only an individual deliverance. While the cosmic process following unalterable laws continues its course, only a saint who has become mature for *Nirvāna*, will extinguish like a flame without fuel, in the midst of an environment that, with fuel unexhausted, is still aburning.

9. The different attitude towards the world and its history tallies also with the dissimilar evaluation given to other religions by Christians and Buddhists respectively. Christianity being convinced of the absolute superiority of its own faith, has always questioned the justification of other forms of faith. Buddhism, however, does not believe that man has to decide about it within a single life on earth. The Buddhist, therefore, regards all other religions as first steps to his own. Consequently, in the countries to which Buddhism spread, it did not fight against the original religions found there, but tried to suffuse them with its own spirit. Therefore, Buddhism has never claimed exclusive, absolute

or totalitarian authority. In modern China, most Buddhists are simultaneously Confucians and Taoists, and in Japan, membership of a Buddhist sect does not exclude faith in the Shinto gods. This large-hearted tolerance of Buddhism is also illustrated in its history which is almost free from religious wars and persecution of heretics.

The fundamental doctrines of Buddhism and Christianity as outlined here and accepted as concrete facts by the majority of the faithful, have sometimes been interpreted by thinkers of both religions in a rationalistic or in a mystical sense, and these interpretations have modified the meaning of these doctrines considerably. In our present context, however, we cannot enter into a treatment of these transformations. By doing so, our comparative study would lack that firm ground required, which, for a historian's purpose, can be provided only by the authoritative and clearly outlined tenets of the respective teachings.

Though Buddhism and Christianity differ from each other in their respective views about world and self, about the meaning of life and man's ultimate destiny, yet they agree again in the ultimate postulates of all religious life. For both religions proclaim man's responsibility for his actions and the freedom of moral choice ; both teach retribution for all deeds, and believe in the perfectibility of the individual. " You must be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect " (*Matth.* 5, 48), says Jesus. And the Buddha summarizes the essence of his ethics in the words : " To shun all evil, to practise what is good, to cleanse one's own heart : that is the teaching of the Enlightened Ones ".

BUDDHISM AND THE VITAL PROBLEMS OF OUR TIME

Buddhism venerates as its founder the Indian Prince Siddhartha of the family of the Shakyas (c. 560-480 B.C.), whom his contemporaries were accustomed to call by his surname Gautama or by the honorific " Buddha ". The word Buddha means the Awakened, the Enlightened, and was applied to the Indian men of those times who were believed to have fathomed the mystery of the world and to have discovered the way to salvation, by their own efforts and not through revelation. The gospel of Gautama spread quickly over the whole of India in his lifetime and after his death, but fell into decay by about 1000 A.D., and had to give way, in the country of its origin, to Hinduism and Islam.

But Buddhism found ample recompense for this loss in Ceylon and Further India, in China, Japan, Tibet and Mongolia. The number of Buddhists in the Far East is estimated at 500 to 600 million, but this figure does not give a clear idea of its extension, since the acceptance of some of its doctrines or the observance of Buddhist customs is not incompatible with adhesion to Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto and the various popular cults. For it has always been foreign to the spirit of Buddhism to claim exclusive validity. On the contrary, in its all-embracing tolerance, it has always lived peacefully side by side with other religions, and has absorbed ideas originally foreign to it, trying to permeate them with its own spirit.

Present-day Buddhism flourishes in two different forms. In Ceylon and Further India the original doctrine prevails, which is called the Lesser Vehicle, or *Hīnayāna* ; in the Far East and the Tibetan cultural area this " simple doctrine ", has undergone a significant broadening as regards philo-

sophy and ceremonial. This is called the Great Vehicle to salvation, *Mahāyāna*. But the basic ideas of all forms of Buddhism have remained more or less the same, so that in our survey we need take no notice of the differences in detail.

Among the world religions, Buddhism is the one whose area of influence lies farthest from the West, and also that which is most different in its doctrine from the teachings of Christianity and Islam.

God

First and foremost, Buddhism does not teach the existence of any personal god who created and rules the world. It admits the existence of many gods ; but these are only transitory beings with limited powers. They are born and pass away ; they can exert no influence on the world process, as a whole. Also the great saints and saviours, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, do not have the position which the Western religions ascribe to their one God. They can enlighten individuals, and according to the Great Vehicle can lead them by their grace to the path of salvation. But they are not able to interfere with the cosmic process or change the world.

The Universe follows its own unalterable natural and moral laws. The most important of these is the law of *Karma*, the law of retributive moral causality. This brings it about that every ethically good or bad action inexorably finds its rewards or punishment, because the doer of the deed is born again after his death as a new being, and in that life reaps what he has sown in the previous life.

The Soul

Another point on which Buddhism differs from Christianity and Islam is this : both Western religions assume

immortal souls created by God, which after death continue to exist in heaven or hell. Buddhism, however, denies that there can be anything in the world which persists unchanged. According to its theory, life is a stream of elements which are always coming into existence and ceasing to exist, which influence each other according to certain laws. The life-stream of man continues after his death as a new being which has to pursue its happy and unhappy existence, as god, man, animal or inhabitant of hell, in accordance with the good or evil nature of his deeds. A life continues until the *karma*, the power of the deeds which called the being into existence, is exhausted. Then, on the basis of the actions performed in that life, a new being comes into existence which is the heir of the previous life, and so on.

Since each life is the consequence of the actions of a previous life, no beginning of the world can be conceived. Since in each life new actions are performed which produce *karma*, there can in the natural course of things be no end of the world. A few beings, however, succeed, through knowledge of truth, in getting rid of the passions which are the root cause of the *karmic* process. They withdraw from the world, they enter into *Nirvāna*, into the great peace. But, however many beings may enter into *Nirvāna*, the cosmic process will never come to an end. For the number of beings who inhabit the infinitely vast number of worlds as animals, men, spirits, gods and inhabitants of hell, is infinitely great.

Thus as little can be said about an end of the world as about a beginning. And with this we come to a third important point where Buddhism differs from Islam and Christianity. Both of these teach that the world was created by God out of nothing, that it remains under his governance for some thousands of years and that on the Last Day it will come to a definite end, when the dead will rise again, all men will receive their

eternal reward or eternal punishment, and a new earth of eternal duration and splendour will be created. The ideas of a primordial creation and a definite end of the world are as foreign to Buddhism as that of a providential direction of cosmic events in accordance with a divine plan. It will be evident that, because of these divergences from the conceptions and dogmas of theistic religions, Buddhism must strive at different answers concerning many of the questions which concern us here.

Before I proceed to discuss these questions, I must say a word about my own personal attitude towards Buddhism. I am not a Buddhist, but one engaged in Buddhist research. I have concerned myself for over thirty years with the Buddhist scriptures in the Indian languages, and have studied the principal Buddhist countries (except Tibet and Mongolia) at first-hand on three prolonged visits. In view of my knowledge of the Buddhist sacred writings, and the many discussions I have had with Buddhist monks and laymen, I believe I can answer these questions objectively and correctly in the spirit of Buddhism. I hope that in this way I shall be able to add to the understanding of a doctrine the study of which has been my life's work, and a knowledge of which, in my opinion, is necessary for anybody who seriously concerns himself with the various solutions which the riddle of existence puts before us.

The Meaning of Life

(1) The first question which has been addressed to me is : " So far as we can see, both the life of the individual, and the history of mankind, as a whole, proceed according to definite laws and in definite phases. Apart from such causal regularities, has life any *meaning* which is comprehensible to us ? Has man any definite task within this

world ? Or does this task merely consist in preparing himself to leave the world ?

" Regarded from the religious standpoint, is it ultimately unimportant how man behaves in this world ? If not, where can he find directions as to his behaviour, and how can he know the validity of these directions ? If the world has a comprehensible meaning, how is the suffering of innocent people to be explained ? "

As I see it, there are in this group of questions no fewer than six separate questions. I shall answer them one by one.

a) What is the goal of the cosmic process? According to the Buddhist view, which I have already outlined, this question cannot be answered. For Buddhism does not believe in a final state of things towards which history progresses. The cosmos is in eternal movement, and the numerous world systems of which it consists, pass periodically through the four phases of coming into being, existence, dissolution and non-existence.

Cosmology

Buddhist cosmology usually starts by describing how an existing world which is ripe for dissolution, is emptied of its inhabitants. These beings, after their death, are born again in another world, and the uninhabited world is destroyed completely by fire, water or wind. The world thus destroyed disappears for an enormous period of time, and there exists in its place only empty space. When the lawfully fixed period of non-existence comes to an end, there arises a new world system by virtue of the latent *karmic* power of the beings of the world which was destroyed. In empty space there first springs up a faint breeze which grows ever stronger

and finally the heaven worlds, earth and hell are formed. These are then populated with the beings who have had to live through the intervening period in other worlds.

At the beginning of such a newly arisen world, men are without sex. They are endowed with a radiant body, they hover over the earth's surface, and they need no physical nourishment. But because out of curiosity they feed on the finer substance of the earth, they become earth-bound creatures with gross and perishable bodies. Desire which grows ever stronger in them, causes them gradually to lose their original purity and virtue ; they give themselves to bodily pleasures and quarrel with each other over their possessions which had so far been held in common. So that order may be re-established, property is introduced, and one man is installed as king. The need for a division of labour then leads to the formation of special callings and castes.

Over a period of millions of years, the natural and moral condition of the world deteriorates from generation to generation, so that human beings who in the beginning had an unimaginably long life, now never live beyond a hundred years. This position in which we find ourselves now, will in the future become still worse. At last Armageddon, " the time of the swords ", breaks out, which lasts for seven days, during which the greater part of mankind is killed.

During this period of horror a few men have gone back to live in the forest, and subsist peacefully on fruit and roots. Taught by the catastrophe, they determine for the future to live a peaceful, moral life. Henceforth conditions improve so that men become good and happy. This better state of things again lasts only for a time, and then decline sets in. Twenty periods of this kind, of falling and rising culture,

follow in succession. When in the last, the twentieth period, the optimal point is reached, an emptying of the world from all living beings takes place, and finally its destruction, as described before. In this manner the cosmos undergoes continuous change, as in accordance with eternal laws many worlds, one after another, come into existence and pass away.

(*b*) Thus Buddhism knows no ultimate goal of world evolution. Nevertheless the world has a meaning. It is the ever-changing scene of the retribution of good and evil deeds (*Karma*).

(*c*) The duty of man consists in the first place, to see to it that, through leading a moral life, he is reborn in a good environment, with a happy future. As a distant and supreme goal *Nirvana* beckons to the religious man, but it can be attained only after long purification. Hence the final task of man is to prepare himself to leave the world.

(*d*) From the foregoing it follows that according to the Buddhist view the present conduct of man is of fundamental importance for his future fate. The entire Buddhist teaching is based on a belief in the moral structure of the universe. Such a belief rests not only on the conviction that everything good and evil will have its retribution and that it is possible for man continually to perfect himself ; it also presupposes that there exists an objective criterion of what helps man on the way to perfection and of what obstructs his progress.

The Buddha proclaimed an ethics of intention. What decides whether an action produces good or bad *karma* is the intention with which it is performed. Therefore, actions which are not performed as the result of a moral decision, positive or negative, have no *karmic* results.

It is understandable that this lofty philosophical view has not been preserved for long. In the course of its history Buddhism has developed, in many different forms, the theory that the giving of gifts to monks, and the performance of certain sacred rites, produce a store of meritorious works. Indeed, in many of the schools of the Great Vehicle, ritualism has obtained such importance that the performance of magical rites, like the mechanical turning of prayer-wheels or the muttering of certain sacred formulae, have become a principal activity of the devotees. This is a regrettable though understandable degeneration, which, indeed, is not unknown in other religions.

Rebirth

(*e*) For the doctrine that good or evil deeds receive their reward or punishment in a new existence, Buddhists find empirical confirmation in this, that according to their opinion, men who have reached a certain height of spiritual development are able to look back upon their own previous lives and the rebirths of other beings. Since only a few individuals have reached so high a stage of spiritual maturity, the rest of us must rely on the testimony of these saints, just as those who have not visited a foreign country have to put their trust in the statement of reliable travellers.

First among possessors of such knowledge come the Buddhas, *i.e.*, men to whom, by virtue of the enlightenment they have attained, the connection between natural events and the moral realm has become evident. The word of a Buddha, therefore, ranks as the highest authority for all conduct ; and from the sayings of Gautama preserved in the holy scriptures, a Buddhist derives guidance for his life.

(*f*) The doctrine of moral causality offers the Buddhists an explanation why one man is distinguished, rich and happy,

and the other lowly, poor and miserable. The fact that good men often fare badly, while evil men are happy, is explained according to this doctrine by assuming that the good men have still to expiate in this life the sins of a previous existence while a bad man who has done good deeds in his previous life is now getting the reward for them. For the whole of the circumstances in which anyone now lives is a consequence of the actions of his previous existence, while on the other hand, what he does now is done by the free decision of his will.

It can be objected against this theory that in his behaviour man is very largely determined by his predispositions, and that it is, therefore, difficult to establish the freedom of his moral decisions. Buddhism replies on this point that, against the fatalistic teachings of his time, the Buddha always emphasised : " I teach (the efficacy of) action and energy ", and that the workings of the law of *karma* are beyond the grasp of the ordinary man.

(2) The second question which I have to answer from the standpoint of Buddhism runs thus : " If man has a normative ideal to which he has to conform, what are the conditions of life which guarantee him the quickest fulfilment of this task ? "

According to the Buddhist view, man occupies an exceptional position among living beings. He alone is in a position to question life itself and to achieve a transcending of it. Animals cannot do so, since they are wholly absorbed by the life of the senses. The heavenly beings also cannot do so, since because of their long life and the happiness they enjoy, the idea never occurs to them that life is transient and, therefore, unsubstantial and unsatisfactory.

In consequence of this middle position in the hierarchy of living forms which man occupies, existence as a man is always praised as a rare piece of good fortune. On this point it is said : " The chance is as small as that a blind turtle, emerging from the sea once in a hundred years, should put its head straight into a single-necked yoke—so small is the chance that a being in the course of his repeated rebirths should once become a man (*Majjhima*, 159).

Man should, therefore, make use of the precious boon which has fallen to his lot, and take care that he improves himself morally, in order gradually to attain perfection. A famous saying in the *Dhammapada* (v. 183) shows the way to the fulfilment of this task : " Shun all evil, do good, and purify your own heart : that is the teaching of the Buddhas ". The avoidance of evil consists in not killing, not stealing, not lying, not committing fornication and not using intoxicating drinks which reduce man's mental capacity or deaden his sense of responsibility. He should, therefore, follow no calling in which he is bound to come into conflict with these postulates ; he cannot be a hunter, a butcher, an executioner, a publican, and so on. It is easiest for him if he detaches himself from the world, and thus avoids its temptations. But only a few are mature enough to enter the monastery or to live as a pious hermit.

Thus the Buddhist ought not to be content with conditions as he finds them ; he must try, wherever he can, to change them in accordance with Buddhist principles. Where that is not possible, his effort must be to make himself inwardly free from his environment so that he may detach himself from it and rise above it.

(3) We now come to the third question which raises the following problem :

"Are all men equal ? If not, in what do they differ?, In what respects is equality of all men desirable, and how far should existing differences be preserved ?"

Since not even twins are completely alike in their abilities and their destiny, there can be in practice no complete equality of all men. Buddhism has, therefore, never tried to make all men alike. According to Buddhism mankind as a whole resembles to a certain extent a great pyramid, the broad base of which consists of the crude worldlings who are still far removed from the light of truth, while the narrow summit comprises only the few perfected ones. And between these two extremes, men are ranged in infinitely many degrees of virtue and knowledge. But for all of them, Buddhism tries to show the way to spiritual progress, by prescribing for them a spiritual diet suited to their individual needs. And just as it answers to the many different levels of comprehension of men, it also tries to adapt itself to the peculiarities of various cultures and races.

The Amitabha Cult

In its eagerness to satisfy the most varied needs of people, the Great Vehicle in particular has taken over many features and conceptions which were originally foreign to Buddhism Thus in East Asia today, the cult of Buddha Amitabha is very widespread. This mythical saviour calls to his heavenly paradise all those who, in their hour of death in faith seek refuge in him ; so that, being protected there from all evil influences, they can prepare themselves for *Nirvāna*. Here Buddhism has adopted modes of thought from the theistic religions of divine grace. But in doing so it has not abandoned its principle of an eternal cosmic law which governs everything, for Amitabha is only the bringer of good tidings into this sorrowful world. He has no part in

creating or ruling it, for how could an omniscient spiritual being bring into existence this world full of pain, or hurl the wicked down into the abyss of hell for their misdeeds, or condemn them to reincarnation in miserable forms of life ?

Thus Buddhism acknowledges the differences among men in spiritual-religious matters, and has, therefore, presented its doctrine of salvation in the most variegated forms. On the other hand, it attaches no weight to differences of race, nationality, class or creed. In contrast to Brahmanism it has not excluded wide sections of the people from its gospel of salvation, and entry into its order is open to all strata of society.

(4) The fourth question which has been put to me is this : " Which social institutions belong to the foundations of mankind and which are susceptible of alteration and development without harm to what is truly human ? How does it stand in this regard with marriage, the family, the State, property, the right of self-determination of the individual, and so on ? "

According to its doctrine that all things are in a continual process of change, Buddhism recognises no social institution as eternal or unalterable. While the Chinese consider the State an institution belonging to mankind from its earliest times, Buddhism holds that it arose at a definite period of the cosmic process and will later disappear. Caste, which for the Hindus rests on God-given foundations, is for Buddhism a system arising from needs of the time, and having value only for India. Likewise marriage, the family, and property are obligatory only for worldly men of a limited historical period. With the giving up of the worldly life all these institutions lose their significance. The monk, who has renounced worldly life, has, at least, in theory, risen above these obligations.

It is not surprising that this standpoint, adopted by the Buddha and by the authoritative fathers of the Buddhist church, has been much modified in the course of history. Under the pressure of outside forces, Buddhism had to make concessions to the state in several countries, and the prevailing ideal of nationalism is not without influence on the thought of many Buddhists. It is well known that in Japan among many sects loyalty to the monarch and patriotism have become articles of religious faith, and that in Tibet a kind of theocratic state has arisen.

No Central Authority

All these facts in no way alter the basic position which Buddhism adopts in relation to all earthly institutions. They have their value and their sphere of application at a certain stage ; but for those who can see everything from a higher plane, they are in themselves only temporary means whereby order is maintained in the world.

As I understand it, Buddhism is all throughout a doctrine of salvation for the individual ; the idea of a human collectivity, which has sinned and can be redeemed, is alien to it. Therefore, it has no central authority which claims the right of issuing orders or proclaiming dogmas binding on all the Buddhists of the world. When the Buddha lay on his death-bed and was asked who henceforth would lead the community, he said, " In future the *dharma* will be your master ".

It is clear that this pronouncement of the Exalted One had various unfortunate consequences for the community. For the absence of a generally acknowledged supreme spiritual authority had the result that very soon after the *Nirvāna* of the Perfect One dissensions arose over the interpretation of controversial points in the doctrine or over individual

cases of monastic discipline, and that again and again new sects appeared.

Buddhism has accepted this with open eyes, for the right of self-determination of the individual and of the local congregation represented by the monastic chapter, have always seemed to it to outweigh these disadvantages. How far-reaching this right of self-determination is can be seen from the fact that it not only was, and is open to the layman, under certain conditions, to enter at any time into the circle of devotees of the Exalted One, and to leave it again, but it was and is even possible to belong at the same time to other religious communities and cults. The monk was always free to leave the order, and it often happened that people repeatedly during their lives became monks and returned to the world again.

In the twenty-five centuries of the history of Buddhism one naturally comes across instances in which the conditions described here have undergone modification for a time. But in general both the Lesser and the Great Vehicle have maintained the basic principle of the right of self-determination.

Buddhism and Politics

(5) The fifth question addressed to me runs as follows :

" As far as it appears possible and necessary to alter social institutions, how far and by what means is it permissible to act against the existing system and its defenders? When may co-operation be refused in the undertakings carried on by the current holders of power ? When is obedience to the conventions of the society into which one was born, obligatory ? "

The answer to this can be given briefly. Since Buddhism tried to establish a spiritual order, which is not for this world,

it does not claim to be a protagonist of social reforms. It is a common error to believe that the Buddha wished to destroy the caste system in India ; he did not interfere with the social order as it existed, when he laid down that caste differences should no longer be observed within his order. This was no innovation, for this principle was observed among other Indian ascetics.

To change existing conditions by violence must appear to all Buddhists completely opposed to the teaching of the Master. For any exercise of brute force is alien to the merciful spirit of the pure doctrine. The Buddha condemned any thought of hate-inspired retaliation (*Dhammapada*, 3-5).

Certainly, departures from this hallowed principle occurred, but in the whole course of Buddhist history they play no important part. It has, therefore, never known either a social revolution, nor crusades, nor wars of religion. The struggle against conditions, which were found to be oppressive, and against the unrighteous claims of the mighty, was, therefore, mostly conducted in a peaceful manner by way of passive resistance.

The Perfectibility of Man

(6) The answer to the sixth question will also not occupy us long. It is as follows :

"Is man capable of changing, transforming himself, induced by instruction or revelation, and has he perhaps that capacity even to an unlimited extent ? And which are the limits of his capacity to become good and wise ?"

Buddhism does not recognise any fundamental difference between the children of light and the children of darkness, foreordained to eternal bliss or to eternal damnation. On

the contrary, it assumes that there are infinitely many stages in spiritual development, and in the achievement of them, beings rise or fall in accordance with their actions performed in the course of their rebirths. The story of the robber-chief, Angulimala, who had committed many murders shows that a man may by virtue of right instruction, evolve from a criminal to a saint in the course of one existence. Converted by the Buddha, Angulimala became an Arhat, and entered into *Nirvāna*.

That even the worst sinner can finally attain perfection is also shown by the story of the Buddha's cousin, Devadatta. This man committed the two worst sins known to Buddhism : he had sought, inspired by ambition, to murder the Buddha, and he had brought about a schism in the order. As punishment he died of a haemorrhage and went to hell. When he will have atoned for his misdeeds by staying in hell for a hundred thousand aeons, he will be purified of evil, and finally attain enlightenment and become a Pacceka-Buddha. The belief in man's unlimited capacity for change could hardly go farther than that.

The related question, whether all beings have the capacity, in the course of their rebirths, to become wise and good and thereby finally attain deliverance, was not answered by the Buddha. Later teachers expressed themselves on this subject in various ways. While many seem to have accepted such a belief, others* thought that there are beings who are by nature incapable of assimilating the highest knowledge, and, therefore, must remain forever subject to the cycle of rebirths.

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*This refers to certain Mahāyāna Schools.—*The Editor.*

Buddhism and Modern Science

(7) I now turn to the seventh and last question. It runs : " How far is what contemporary science has to say about man and world, in harmony with the teachings of Buddhism, or in contradiction to it ? "

Buddhism originated 2,500 years ago in India, and until the beginning of the last century it was confined to countries which were entirely untouched by modern science. It, therefore, goes without saying that many of its doctrines, so far as they touch upon scientific, cosmological and geographical matters, are irreconcilable with the results of modern Western science. It was born and grew in an era when an unlimited credulity prevailed ; if we read the holy scriptures as we should read works of later times, in the spirit of literal history, we shall find things which do not fit into our modern picture of the world. We read that the Buddha was conceived by his mother miraculously, that he was able to fly through the air to Ceylon three times, that he increased food by magic, walked on water, and so on. And similar miracles are reported of his followers and of later saints ; visions, magical cures, fantasies and the like, in short almost all those things which were natural to the mode of thought of antiquity and mediaeval times in all parts of the world.

A Law-governed Universe

Notwithstanding many such features, so strange to us, which like a thick undergrowth overspread more especially the later literature, we do, on the other hand, find much, even in the old texts, which strikes us as quite modern.

(*a*) First and above all is to be noted the principle of general and thorough-going conformity to natural law which rules the whole Buddhist system. Again and again it is

said : " This basic principle stands firm, this universal conformity to law, the conditioning of one thing by another " (*Samyutta*, 12-20-4). " Profound is this law of dependent origination. Since it does not know, understand or grasp this law, this generation has become confused, like a ball of thread " (*ib.*, 12.4). But a well-trained disciple ponders thoroughly the dependent origination, for he knows thus : " When that is, this comes into being ; through the destruction of that, this is destroyed " (*ib.*, 12.41-51, etc.).

(*b*) A further point of agreement is its positivistic character. For the Buddhist doctrine denies the existence of eternal substances : matter and spirit are false abstractions ; in reality there are only changing factors (*dharma*) which are lawfully connected and arise in functional dependence of each other. Like Ernst Mach, the Buddha, therefore, resolves the ego into a stream of lawfully co-operating elements, and can say with him : " The ego is as little an absolute permanent entity as the body. The apparent permanence of the ego consists only in its continuity ".

In the philosophy of the Great Vehicle, Buddhism goes to the point of denying the reality of the external world. It is characteristic of the philosophical spirit of Asia that such epistemological doctrines do not, as with us, remain without close relation to the true religious life, but enter deeply into it and occupy the thought of wide circles. The consistent idealism of the theory of " Consciousness only " forms the basis of the Zen sect, widespread in China and Japan, which tries through meditation to realise the " void " which is above contradictions ; and is also the basis of the priestly magic and mysticism of Tibet.

(*c*) It resembles modern modes of thought when the Buddha teaches that there are many problems that man, with his limited intellectual capacity, will never be able to solve, but in his cogitations about them entangles himself again and again in contradictions concerning problems such as the workings of *karma*, the nature of the world, the question whether the world is eternal or not, finite or infinite, how the vital principle connects with the body, and what is the state of the saint who has entered into *Nirvana*.

(*d*) Buddhism also agrees with modern science in its picture of a universe of a vast spatial extent and unending time. The Buddha taught that there exist side by side infinitely many world systems which continually come into existence and perish again. It is not that he anticipated Copernicus ; for each world system has an Earth at the centre, and sun, moon and stars revolve round it. It is rather that the conception of a multiplicity of worlds appears in his teaching as the natural consequence of the principle of retributive causality of actions. The number of actions which have to find reward or punishment is so infinitely great, that the appropriate retribution could not be comprised within one world, with its regular alternation of rising and falling cultural levels.

(*e*) Buddhism finds itself again in agreement with modern biology in that it acknowledges no essential difference, but only a difference of degree, between man and animal. However, it is far from the Darwinian line of thought.

(*f*) Finally, it can also be said that the Indians discovered the unconscious earlier than the Western psychologists. For them the unconscious consists in the totality of the impressions which slumber in the individual as the inheritance from his previous existence. The Buddhist technique

of meditation, which is concerned with these latent forces, is thus a forerunner of modern psycho-analysis, of autogenic mental training, etc.

The attitudes of present-day Buddhists towards modern science vary. So far as I can see, three attitudes can be distinguished :

(*a*) The great mass of Buddhist laymen and monks in Asia are still untouched by the modern natural sciences. For them the words of the Buddha and the commentaries on them are still the infallible source of all knowledge of the universe and its phenomena.

(*b*) Many Buddhists try to prove that the cosmological ideas and miraculous stories of the Canon conform to fact, and for this purpose interpret the texts in an artificial sense or draw upon the assertions of modern occultism as proofs. It is noteworthy that they do not consider miracles to be violations of the law of nature brought about by a supernatural power, but assume that there are unknown forces and laws which cause events that to us appear as miracles but are really not.

(*c*) Other Buddhists again, regard the statements of the texts on natural phenomena as conditioned by the ideas prevailing in those times and, therefore, no longer authoritative. They say that the Buddha was not concerned to put forward a scientific world view valid for all time, but that the essential core of Buddhism is rather its practical doctrine of salvation. The Buddha always maintained that everything of this earth is transitory, unreal and, therefore, unsatisfactory, and that so long as man is still under the subjection of the three cardinal vices of hatred, greed and ignorance he will never attain to inner peace and serene clarity of vision. Only through the purification from all desires and the complete

realisation of absolute selflessness, through a moral conduct of life and constant practice of meditation, can he approach a state in which he lives in peace with himself and with the world. Man can elevate himself and raise his stature by emulating the great example of the Buddha seated in calm meditation, whose face shines in triumphant peace. Then man can lift himself above the fierce current of time, up to the imperishable state that is beyond all the unrest of the inexorable nexus of Becoming and Suffering. And the ideal that presents itself here is that unshakable composure of mind which a Buddhist verse describes :

He whose mind is like a rock,
Firmly anchored, shakes no more,
Who has escaped from all passion,
Is no more angry and no more afraid,
He whose mind is thus without equal,
How can sorrow defeat him ?
—(*Udāna*, 4.4).

Three Cardinal Discourses of the Buddha

1. The First Sermon
2. The Sermon on Not-Self
3. The Fire Sermon

With Introduction and Notes

Translated by

Ñāṇamoli Thera

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY

KANDY CEYLON

INTRODUCTION

'No doing any kind of evil,
Perfecting profitable skill,
And purifying one's own heart:
This is the Buddhas' dispensation'.

The message of the Awakened Ones, so stated as it is in the *Dhammapada* in the plain terms of good and evil, upholds the same value that every great compassionate religion shares. But the seed of good has to grow in the soil of truth; and how the tree grows depends upon the nature of the soil in which it is planted and whence it draws its nourishment. With men as the custodians of the true, the fulfilment of the good depends upon how truth is conceived by men to be. By their acts they verify it.

'A monk called Gotama, it seems, a son of the Sakyans who went forth into homelessness from a Sakyan clan has come. . . Now a good report of Master Gotama has been spread to this effect: "That Blessed One is such since he is accomplished and fully awakened, perfect in true knowledge and conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of men to be tamed, teacher of gods and men, awakened and blessed. . . He teaches a True Idea that is good in the beginning, good in the middle and good in the end, with its own special meaning and phrasing, he exhibits a divine life that is utterly perfect and pure." Now it is good to see such Accomplished Ones'. So it was said of him at the time. But what,

then, was the fundamental ground of that teaching? Of the many ways that such a question might be answered, perhaps the simplest and best is this : 'He expounded the teaching that is peculiar to Buddhas: Suffering, Origin, Cessation, and a Path'. These four are known otherwise as the *Four Noble Truths*. This, with the cognate teaching of Not-Self, may be said to constitute the fundamental ground of the teaching of Buddhas, this is what marks them, sets them apart and entitles them to the unique epithet 'Buddha'.

The three discourses here presented display precisely in all its incomparably serene simplicity, without assumptions, that special fundamental teaching, from which all Buddhism branches and to which it all points back. The first discourse displays this fourfold Truth as something to be realized and verified for oneself here and now; the second discloses the contradictions which infect all self-conceits; the third echoes the second from another angle.

The circumstances that led up to the discovery of these four Truths and to the delivery of these three discourses were briefly as follows. The Bodhisatta — as he then was, before his awakening — was twenty-nine when he left the house life, where he enjoyed the extreme of luxury. He went into 'exile' in order to find not a palliative but the true and incontrovertible way out from suffering ('This world has surely happened upon woe since it is born and ages and dies but to fall from one kind of existence and reappear in another. Yet it knows no escape from this suffering, from ageing and death: surely there is an escape from this suffering, from ageing and death?'). He studied and practised under two of the foremost teachers of *samādhi* (Concentration or Quiet) and reached the highest meditative attainments possible thereby. But that was not enough ('I was not satisfied with that as a True Idea; I left it

and went away'). He then spent the best part of the next six years in the practice of asceticism, trying every sort of extreme self-mortification. During this time he was waited on by five ascetics, who hoped that if he discovered the Deathless State he would be able to communicate his discovery to them. This too failed ('By this gruelling penance I have attained no distinction higher than the human ideal worthy of a noble one's knowing and seeing. Might there be another way to awakening?'). He decided to try once more the path of concentration, attained through mindfulness of breathing, though this time not pushed to the extremity of quiet but guided instead by ordered consideration ('I thought: "While my Sakyan father was busy and I (as a child) was sitting in the shade of a rose-apple tree, then quite secluded from sensual desires, secluded from unprofitable ideas, I had direct acquaintance of entering upon and abiding in the first *jhāna*-meditation, which is accompanied by thinking and exploring, with happiness and pleasure born of seclusion. Might that be the way to enlightenment?". And following upon that memory came the recognition: "That is the only way to enlightenment"). He now gave up self-mortification and took normal food again in order to restore to his emaciated body strength sufficient for his purpose. Then the five ascetics left him in disgust, judging that he had failed and was merely reverting to what he had forsaken. But now in solitude, his new balanced effort, in the harmony of virtue, unified in concentration, and guided by the ordered consideration of insight with mindfulness, at length brought success in discovery of the way to the goal he had sought for so long ('So I too found the ancient path, the ancient trail, travelled by the Awakened Ones of old'). Five faculties in perfect balance had brought him to the goal: they were the four, namely energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding, with faith in the efficacy of the other four

— the five that 'merge into the Deathless'. According to tradition, the Awakening took place on the night of the Vesākha full moon in the fruitful month of May.

It was upon invitation that he resolved to communicate his discovery to others. For his first audience to whom to divulge it he chose the five ascetics who had shared his self-mortification but had later left him. They were now at Benares — India's 'Eternal City'— and so in due course he went there to rejoin them. Just two months after his awakening he preached his first sermon — the 'Setting Rolling of the Wheel of Truth' or 'Bringing into Existence the Blessing of the True Ideal'— with the five ascetics for his hearers. The tradition says it was the evening of the Āsāḷha full moon in July, the day before the Rainy Season begins, and he began to speak at the moment when the sun was dipping and the full moon simultaneously rising.

This, his first sermon, made one of his listeners, the ascetic Kondañña, a Stream-Enterer with his attainment of the first of the four progressive stages of realization. The other four soon followed in his footsteps. The second sermon, on the Characteristic of Not-Self, was preached to the same five, and it brought them to the fourth and final stage, that of Arahantship: 'and then' as it is said 'there were six Arahants in the world'.

These are the first two discourses presented here, and they were the first two sermons ever uttered by the Buddha. The third, the 'Fire Sermon', was delivered some months later to an audience of a thousand ascetics converted from the heaven-bent practice of fire-worship.

All three discourses deal only with understanding (*paññā*) among the faculties mentioned above as required to be

balanced. But understanding, in order to reach perfection, has indeed to be aided by the others, or in other words to be founded upon Virtue ('habit without conflict') and to be fortified by concentration (though not necessarily developed to the fulness of quietism). Thus and no otherwise it can reach its goal of unshakable liberation. Virtue and concentration alone without the guidance of Understanding can do no more than suppress, but they cannot of themselves alone give unshakable liberation. Now the hearers of all these three discourses were, like the Buddha himself, all ascetics already expert in the techniques and refinements of both virtue *(sīla)* and concentration *(samādhi)*. So the Buddha had thus no need to tell them about what they already knew very well. Similarly he had no need to expound the doctrine of Action *(kamma)* and its Ripening *(vipāka)* with which they were already thoroughly acquainted through the ancient teachings. What he had to do was first to show how it is possible to go astray towards the opposite extremes of sensual indulgence and self-torment, and second to describe the facts, to show how things are, clearly and succinctly enough to stir his hearers to the additional spontaneous movement of understanding essential and indispensable for the final discovery of deliverance, each for himself ('A Perfect One is one who shows the way').

Now let the discourses speak for themselves. Their incalculable strength lies in their simplicity and in their actuality. The profound truth is there, discoverable even through the misty medium of translation.

SETTING ROLLING THE WHEEL OF TRUTH

(Dhamma-cakka-ppavattana-sutta)

Thus I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Benares in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers). There he addressed the Bhikkhus of the group of five :—

Bhikkhus, these two extremes ought not to be cultivated by one gone forth from the house-life. What are the two? There is devotion to indulgence of pleasure in the objects of sensual desire, which is inferior, low, vulgar, ignoble, and leads to no good; and there is devotion to self-torment, which is painful, ignoble, and leads to no good.

The middle way discovered by a Perfect One avoids both these extremes: it gives vision, it gives knowledge, and it leads to peace, to direct acquaintance, to discovery, to nibbana. And what is that middle way? It is simply the noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right intention; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulnes, right concentration. That is the middle way discovered by a Perfect One, which gives vision, which gives knowledge, and which leads to peace, to direct acquaintance, to discovery, to nibbana.

Suffering, as a noble truth, is this: Birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering, association with the loathed is suffering, dissociation from the loved is suffering, not to get what one wants is suffering — in short, suffering is the five categories of clinging's objects.

The origin of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is the craving that produces renewal of being, accompanied by enjoyment and lust, and enjoying this and that; in other words, craving for sensual desires, craving for being, craving for non-being.

Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is remainderless fading and ceasing, giving up, relinquishing, letting go and rejecting, of that same craving.

The way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this: It is simply the noble eightfold path, that is to say, right view, right intention; right speech, right action, right livelihood; right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

'Suffering, as a noble truth, is this': such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth, can be diagnosed': such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before. 'This suffering, as a noble truth, has been diagnosed': such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

'The origin of suffering, as a noble truth, is this': such was the vision,... 'This origin of suffering, as a noble truth, can be abandoned': such was the vision,... 'This origin of suffering, as a noble truth, has been abandoned': such was the vision,... in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

'Cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this': such was the vision,...' This cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, can be verified': such was the vision,... 'This cessation of suffer-

ing, as a noble truth, has been verified': such was the vision,... in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

'The way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, is this': such was the vision,... 'This way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, can be developed': such was the vision,... 'This way leading to cessation of suffering, as a noble truth, has been developed': such was the vision, the knowledge, the understanding, the finding, the light, that arose in regard to ideas not heard by me before.

As long as my knowing and seeing how things are was not quite purified in these twelve aspects — in these three phases of each of the four noble truths — I did not claim to have discovered the full awakening that is supreme in the world with its gods, its angels of death and high divinity, in this generation with its monks and divines, with its princes and men. But as soon as my knowing and seeing how things are was quite purified in these twelve aspects — in these three phases of each of the four noble truths — then I claimed to have discovered the full awakening that is supreme in the world with its gods, its angels of death and high divinity, in this generation with its monks and divines, with its princes and men. Knowing and seeing arose in me thus: My heart's deliverance is unassailable. This is the last birth. Now there is no renewal of being.

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus of the group of five were glad, and they approved his words.

Now during this utterance, there arose in the venerable Kondañña the spotless, immaculate vision of the True Idea: Whatever is inseparable from the idea of arising is all inseparable from the idea of cessation.

When the Wheel of Truth had thus been set rolling by the Blessed One the earth-gods raised the cry: 'At Benares, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the matchless Wheel of Truth has been set rolling by the Blessed One, not to be stopped by monk or divine or god or death-angel or high divinity or anyone in the world'.

On hearing the earth-gods' cry, [all the gods in turn in the six paradises of the sensual sphere took up the cry till it reached beyond to the Retinue of High Divinity in the sphere of pure form]. And so indeed in that hour, at the moment, the cry soared up to the World of High Divinity, and this ten-thousand-fold world-element shook and rocked and quaked, and a great measureless radiance surpassing the very nature of the gods was displayed in the world.

Then the Blessed One uttered the exclamation: 'Kodañña knows! Kondañña knows!', and that is how that venerable one acquired the name, Aññā-Kondañña — Kondañña who knows. (Saṁyutta-Nikāya LVI, 11).

THE NOT-SELF CHARACTERISTIC

Anatta-lakkhaṇa-sutta

Thus I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Benares, in the Deer Park at Isipatana (the Resort of Seers). There he addressed the Bhikkhus of the group of five:— 'Bhikkhus'.—'Venerable sir' they replied. The Blessed One said this :

Bhikkhus, form is not-self. Were form self, then this form would not lead to affliction, and one could have it of form 'Let my form be thus, let my form be not thus'. And since form is not-self so it leads to affliction, and none can have it of form 'Let my form be thus, let my form be not thus'.

Bhikkhus, feeling is not-self...
Bhikkhus, perception is not-self...
Bhikkhus, determinations are not-self...

Bhikkhus, consciousness is not-self. Were consciousness self, then this consciousness would not lead to affliction, and one could have it of consciousness 'Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus'. And since consciousness is not-self so it leads to affliction, and none can have it of consciousness 'Let my consciousness be thus, let my consciousness be not thus'.

Bhikkhus, how do you conceive it: is form permanent or impermanent?—Impermanent, venerable sir.—Now is what is impermanent painful or pleasant?—Painful, venerable sir. —Now is what is impermanent, what is painful since inseparable from the idea of change, fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this is I, this is my self'?—No, venerable sir.

Is feeling permanent or impermanent?—...
Is perception permanent or impermanent?—...
Are determinations permanent or impermanent?—...

Is consciousness permanent or impermanent?—Impermanent, venerable sir.—Now is what is impermanent pleasant or painful?— Painful, venerable sir.— Now is what is impermanent, what is painful since inseparable from the idea of change, fit to be regarded thus: 'This is mine, this is I, this is my self'?—No, venerable sir.

So, bhikkhus, any kind of form whatever, whether past, future, or presently arisen, whether gross or subtle, whether in oneself or external, whether inferior or superior, whether far or near, must, with right understanding how it is, be regarded thus: 'This is not mine, this is not I this is not my self'.

Any kind of feeling whatever,...
Any kind of perception whatever,...
Any kind of determination whatever,...

Any kind of consciousness whatever, whether past, future, or presently arisen, whether gross or subtle, whether in oneself or external, whether inferior or superior, whether far or near, must, with right understanding how it is, be regarded thus: 'This is not mine, this is not I, this is not my self'.

Bhikkhus, when a noble follower who has heard (the truth) sees thus, he finds estrangement in form, he finds estrangement in feeling, he finds estrangement in perception, he finds estrangement in determinations, he finds estrange ment in consciousness.

When he finds estrangement, passion fades out. With the fading of passion he is liberated. When liberated, there is

knowledge that he is liberated: he understands 'Birth is exhausted, the divine life has been lived out, what can be done is done, of this there is no more beyond'.

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were glad, and they approved his words.

Now during this utterance, the hearts of the bhikkus of the group of five were liberated from taints through clinging no more. (Saṁyutta-Nikāya XXII, 59).

THE FIRE SERMON

Āditta-pariyāya-sutta

Thus I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Gayā, at Gayāsisā together with a thousand bhikkhus. There he addressed the bhikkhus :

Bhikkhus, all is burning. And what is the All that is burning ?

The eye is burning, forms are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, also whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact for its indispensable condition, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion; I say it is burning with birth, ageing and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs.

The ear is burning, sounds are burning,...
The nose is burning, odours are burning,...
The tongue is burning, flavours are burning,...
The body is burning, tangibles are burning,...

The mind is burning, ideas are burning, mind-consciousness is burning, mind-contact is burning, also whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with mind-contact for its indispensable condition, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion ; I say it is burning with birth, ageing and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs.

Bhikkhus, when a noble follower who has heard (the truth) sees thus, he finds estrangement in the eye, finds estrangement in forms, finds estrangement in eye-consciousness, finds estrangement in eye-contact, and whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact for its indispensable condition, in that too he finds estrangement.

He finds estrangement in the ear,... in sounds,...
He finds estrangement in the nose,... in odours,...
He finds estrangement in the tongue,... in flavours,...
He finds estrangement in the body,... in tangibles,...

He finds estrangement in the mind, finds estrangement in ideas, finds estrangement in mind-consciousness, finds estrangement in mind-contact, and whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact for its indispensable condition, in that too he finds estrangement.

When he finds estrangement, passion fades out. With the fading of passion he is liberated. When liberated there is knowledge that he is liberated: he understands 'Birth is exhausted, the divine life has been lived out, what can be done is done, of this there is no more beyond'.

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were glad, and they approved his words.

Now during this utterance, the hearts of those thousand bhikkhus were liberated from taints through clinging no more. (Samyutta-Nikāya XXXV, 28).

NOTES

FIRST SUTTA

THUS I HEARD: Words spoken by Ānanda Thera at the First Council when all the Discourses were recited three months after the Buddha's *Parinibbāna*.

PERFECT ONE: The Pali word *Tathāgata* has several alternative explanations including *tathā āgato* ('thus come', i.e., by the way followed by all Buddhas), *tathā gato* ('thus gone', i.e., to the discovery of the Four Truths), and *tatha-lakkhaṇaṁ āgato* ('come to the characteristic of the real or the 'such', namely the undeceptive truth).

NIBBANA: Pali *nibbāna*, Sanskrit *nirvāṇa*. The meaning is 'extinction', that is, of the 'fires' of lust, hate and delusion, or more briefly of craving and ignorance, and so nibbana is a name for the third Truth as liberation. The word is made up of the prefix *nir* (not) and *vāna* ('effort of blowing', figuratively 'craving'); probably the origin was a smith's fire, which 'goes out' or 'becomes extinguished' (*nibbāyati*) if no longer blown on by the bellows, but the simile most used is that of a lamp's extinguishment (*nibbāna*) through exhaustion of wick and oil.

NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH: The members of the Path are defined in the *Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* and elsewhere as follows: *Right View* of the Four Truths. *Right Intention* governed by renunciation (non-sensuality), non-ill-will, and non-cruelty (harmlessness). *Right Speech* in abstention from lying, slander, abuse, and gossip. *Right Action* in abstention from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct. *Right Livelihood* for bhikkhus as that allowed by the Rules of the Discipline, and for laymen as avoidance of trading in weapons, living

beings, meat, intoxicants, and poisons (Anguttara, Fives). *Right Effort* to avoid unarisen and to abandon arisen evil, and to arouse unarisen and to develop arisen good. *Right Mindfulness* of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness as given in the *Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, that is contemplation of the body as a body, of feelings as feelings, of states of consciousness as states of consciousness, and of ideas as ideas. *Right Concentration* as (any of) the four *jhāna*-meditations. Collectively the first two members are called Understanding (*paññā*), the next three Virtue *(sīla)*, and the last three Concentration *(samādhi)*. The Noble Eightfold Path is developed in four progressive stages, namely those of Stream-Entry (where wrong view, ritualism and doubt are ended), Once-Return (where sensuality and ill will are weakened), Non-Return (where these two are ended) and Arahantship (where lust for form, lust for the formless, conceit, agitation and ignorance are ended), this being the end of craving which causes suffering.

SUFFERING: the Pali word *dukkha*, made up of *dur* ('bad, 'unsatisfactory') and *kha* ('state', '-ness') extends its meaning from the actual suffering present in physical pain or mental grief to any unwelcome state of insecurity, no matter how vague.

TRUTH: Pali *sacca* (compare Sanskrit *satya*); from the root *as* 'to be there', 'to be existent', 'to have reality', etc., and so literally a 'there-is-ness' in the sense of a state that, unlike a mirage, does not deceive or disappoint. The common sense use of truth is by no means always consistent, and the word and the notion must therefore be handled with some care, taking it here only as treated by the Buddha. 'As to individual philosophers' and divines' individual factional truths — that is 'to say "The world is eternal" or "The world is not eternal",

"The world is finite" or "The world is infinite", "The soul is what the body is" or "The soul is one, the body is another", "After death a Perfect One is" or "After death a Perfect One is not" or "After death a Perfect One both is and is not" or "After death a Perfect One neither is nor is not"—when a bhikkhu has cast off all these, has renounced and rejected, banished, abandoned and relinquished them all, he thus becomes one who has cast off factional truths (Anguttara-Nikāya IV, 38). But how is truth to be found which is not factional? 'There are five ideas that ripen here and now in two ways. What five? Faith, preference, hearsay-learning, arguing upon evidence, and liking through pondering a view. Now something may have faith well placed in it and yet be hollow, empty and false; and again something may have no faith placed in it and yet be factual, true and no other than it seems; and so with preference and the rest. If a man has faith, then he guards truth when he says "My faith is thus", but on that account draws no unreserved conclusion "Only this is true, the other is wrong". In this way he guards truth; but there is as yet no discovery of truth. And so with preference and the rest. How is truth discovered? Here a bhikhhu lives near some village or town. Then a householder or his son goes to him in order to test him in three kinds of ideas, in ideas provocative of greed, of hate, and of delusion, wondering "Are there in this venerable one any such ideas, whereby his mind being obsessed he might, unknowing, say 'I know', unseeing, say 'I see', or get others to do likewise, which would be long for their harm and suffering?". While thus testing him he comes to find that there are no such ideas in him, and he finds that "The bodily and verbal hehaviour of that venerable are not those of one affected by lust or hate or delusion. But the True Idea that this venerable one teaches is profound, hard to see and discover; yet it is the most peaceful and superior of

all, out of reach of logical ratiocination, subtle, for the wise to experience; such a True Idea cannot be taught by one affected by lust or hate or delusion". It is as soon as, by testing him, he comes to see that he is purified from ideas provocative of lust, hate and delusion, that he then plants his faith in him. When he visits him he respects him, when he respects him he gives ear, one who gives ear hears the True Idea with attentiveness. Having heard the True Idea, he remembers it, he investigates the meaning of ideas remembered. When he does that he acquires a preference by pondering the ideas. That produces interest. One interested is actively committed. So committed, he makes a judgment. According to his judgment he exerts himself. When he exerts himself he comes to realize with the body the ultimate truth and he sees it by the penetrating of it with understanding. That is how there is discovery of truth. But there is as yet no final arrival at truth. How is truth finally arrived at? Final arrival at truth is the repetition, the keeping in being, the development, of those same ideas. That is how there is final arrival at truth' (Majjhima-Nikāya 95 abbreviated). This undeceptive truth so arrived at is the Four Noble Truths, of which it is said 'These four Noble Truths are what is real, not unreal, not other (than they seem), that is why they are called Noble Truths' (Sacca-Saṁyutta). Besides this essential static unity of the Four Truths as undeceptiveness, the dynamic structure of the transfiguration which they operate in combination is expressed as follows: 'Who sees suffering sees also the origin of suffering and the cessation of suffering and the way leading to cessation of suffering' (and whichever of the Four Truths he sees, he sees the other three therewith: Sacca-Saṁyutta), and 'Of these four Noble Truths, there is noble truth to be diagnosed, there is noble truth to be abandoned, there is noble truth to be

verified, and there is noble truth to be developed (kept in being)' (Sacca-Saṁyutta).

CATEGORIES: this represents the Pali word *khandha* (Sanskrit *skandha*), which is often rendered by 'aggregate'. The five are as given in the second Discourse. They are headings that comprise all that can be said to arise and that forms the object of clinging. 'The clinging is neither the same as these five categories which are its objects, nor is it something apart from them; it is will and lust in regard to these five categories of clinging's objects that is the clinging there' (Majjhima, Sutta 109). The five are respectively compared to a lump of froth, a bubble, a mirage, a coreless plantain-stem, and a conjuring-trick.

CLINGING: as unsatisfactory and inadequate but accepted rendering for the Pali *upādāna*. The word means literally 'taking up' (*upa* plus *ādāna;* compare the Latin *assumere* from *ad* plus *sumere*). By first metaphor it means a fire's 'fuel', i.e., what a fire 'takes upon itself' and 'consumes'. By second metaphor it is used for the assumption and consumption that satisfies craving and produces existence. As such it is the condition *sine qua non* for being. What is consumed (or assumed) is the categories (q.v.). The word 'clinging' has to represent this meaning, Clinging's ending is nibbana.

CRAVING: Though the word *taṇhā* doubtless once meant 'thirst' (compare Sanskrit *tṛṣṇā*) it is never used in Pali in that sense. With ignorance it is regarded as a basic factor in the continuity of existence. Craving draws creatures on through greed and drives them on through hate, while ignorance prevents their seeing the truth of how things are or where they are going. Denial is as much an activity of craving as assertion is. Denial maintains the denied.

CESSATION: *nirodha*, meaning the cessation of suffering through the cesssation of craving, is regardable as the removal of a poison, the curing of a disease, not as the mere denial of it opposed to the assertion of it or the obstruction (*paṭivirodha*) of it in conflict with the favouring (*anurodha*) of it (see under *Craving*), since both assertion and denial confirm and maintain alike the basic idea or state that is required to be cured. Cessation, therefore, is not to be confounded with mere negativism or nihilism. 'Any pleasure and joy that arise in dependence on the world is *gratification;* that the world is impermanent, pain-haunted and inseparable from the idea of change is the *disappointment* in the world; the removal of desire and lust is the *cure* (the *escape*) in the world' (Anguttara, Threes). The 'cure' or 'escape' is Cessation: the Buddha would not claim awakening till he had diagnosed how these three things came to be.

KNOWING AND SEEING HOW THINGS ARE: the force of the Pali word *yathābhūta*, literally 'how (it has) come to be', 'how (it) is', 'how (things) exist', lies in the direct allusion to the absolutely relative conditionedness of all being. It is given specially thus: 'Seeing "such is form, such its origin, such its going out"', and so with the other four categories.

THE VENERABLE KONDAÑÑA: one of the five bhikkhus. See Introduction.

SECOND SUTTA

FORM: Pali *rūpa* ('what appears', 'appearance'). As the first of the five Categories (q.v.) it is defined in terms of the 'four Great Entities', namely earth (hardness), water (cohesion), fire (temperature), and air (distension and motion), along with the negative aspect of space (what does not appear), from all of which are derived the secondary phenomena such as

'persons', 'features', 'shapes', etc.; these are regarded as 'secondary' because while form can appear without them they cannot appear without form. It is also defined as 'that which is being worn away' *(ruppati)*, thus underlining its general characteristic of instability.

NOT-SELF: Together with the four Truths, this is taught only by Buddhas. *Anattā* ('not-self') is shown as a general characteristic without exception. 'The characteristic of impermanence does not become apparent because, when rise and fall are not given attention, it is concealed by continuity; the characteristic of pain does not become apparent because, when continuous oppression is not given attention, it is concealed by the postures (changing from one posture to another, waking and sleeping); the characteristic of not-self does not become apparent because, when resolution into the various elements (that compose whatever is) is not given attention, it is concealed by compactness' (Visuddhimagga, Ch. XXI). Self-identification and hunger for permanence and bliss form the principal manifestations of craving guided by view that is wrong because it is not in conformity with undeceptive truth. When confronted with the contradictions and the impossibility of self-identification with any of the five Categories of Clinging's objects (q,v.) craving seeks to satisfy this need by imagining a soul (individual or universal); but since no such soul, however conceived, can escape falling within the five Categories of Clinging's objects, this solution is always foredoomed to failure. Similarly any attempt to identify self with nibbāna must always fail for the same reason. Nibbāna conceived as identical (with self) or (self) as apart from it (emanence) or inside it (immanence) or nibbāna conceived as 'mine' is misconceived (Majjhima-Nikāya Sutta 1). This does not prevent a Perfect One from using the speech that is current in the

world in order to communicate, though he does so without misapprehending it, as is shown in the *Dhammapada:* 'Self is saviour of self; what other saviour could there be? For only with (one-) self well tamed one finds the saviour hard to find. Only by self is evil done, self-born and given being by self, oppressing him who knowledge lacks as grinding diamond does the stone' (Verses 160-1). Similarly with the expression 'in oneself' *(ajjhattaṁ)* in the Second Discourse, this is simply a convenient convention for the focus of the individual viewpoint, not to be misapprehended. A bhikkhu heard the Buddha saying, as in the Second Discourse here, that the five Categories are 'not mine', etc., and he wondered 'So it seems form is not-self, feeling, perception, determinations, and consciousness are not-self: what self, then, will the action done by the not-self affect?' He was severely rebuked by the Buddha for forgetting the conditionedness of all arisen things (Majjhima-Nikāya 109). 'It is impossible that anyone with right view should see any idea as self' (Majjhima-Nikāya 115), and 'Whatever philosophers and divines see self in its various forms, they see only the five Categories, or one or other of them' (Saṁyutta-Nikāya XXII, 47).

FEELING (vedanā): this is always confined strictly to the affective feelings of (bodily or mental) pleasure and pain with the normally ignored neutral feeling of 'neither-pain-nor-pleasure'. These can be subdivided in various ways.

PERCEPTION (saññā) means simply recognition.

DETERMINATIONS: a great many different renderings of this term are current, the next best of which is certainly 'formations'. The Pali word *sankhārā* (Sanskrit *saṃskārā*) means literally 'a construction' and is derived from the prefix *saṃ* (='con') plus the verb *karoti* ('to do', 'to make': compare the Latin *conficere* from *con-* plus *facere* ('to do'), which

gives the French 'confection'= 'a construction'). The Sanskrit meant ritual acts with the purpose of bringing about a good rebirth. As used in Pali by the Buddha it covers any aspects having to do with action, willing, making, planning, using, choice, etc. (anything teleological); and contact (q.v.) is often placed at the head of lists defining it. Otherwise defined as bodily, verbal and mental action.

CONSCIOUSNESS: (viññāṇa) is here the bare being-conscious left for consideration when the other four Categories have been dealt with. It is only describable in individual plurality in terms of the other four Categories, as fire is individualized only by the fuel it burns (see Majjhima-Nikāya Suttas 38, 109). Otherwise it is regardable as an infiniteness (Majjhima-Nikāya Sutta 111) dependent upon the contemplation of it as such. It is impermanent, etc., because however it arises, it can only do so in dependence on the other Categories, that is, on conditions themselves impermanent, painful and not-self. It never arises unless accompanied by conascent *perception* (q.v.) and *feeling* (q.v.). It has six 'doors' (see under 'eye' and 'mind') for cognizing its objective fields, but no more.

ESTRANGEMENT: the Pali noun *nibbidā* and its verb *nibbindati* are made up from the prefix *nir* in its negative sense of 'out' and the root *vid* 'to find', 'to feel', 'to know intimately'. *Nibbidā* is thus a 'finding out'. What is thus 'found out' is the intimate hidden contradictoriness in any kind of self-identification based in any way on these things (and there is no way of determining self-identification apart from them—see under 'Not-self'). Elsewhere the Buddha says: 'Whatever there is there of form, feeling, perception, determinations, or consciousness, such ideas he sees as impermanent, as subject to pain, as a sickness, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as an alienation, as a disintegration, as void, as not-self. He averts his heart from those ideas, and for the most

peaceful, the supreme goal, he turns his heart to the deathless element, that is to say, the stilling of all determinations, the relinquishment of all substance, the exhaustion of craving, the fading of passion, cessation, extinction' (Majjhima-Nikāya Sutta 64). The 'stuff' of life can *also* be seen thus. Normally the discovery of a contradiction is for the unliberated mind a disagreeable one. Several courses are then open, It can refuse to face it, pretending to itself to the point of full persuasion and belief that no contradiction is there; or one side of the contradiction may be unilaterally affirmed and the other repressed and forgotten; or a temporary compromise may be found (all of which expedients are haunted by insecurity); or else the contradiction may be faced in its truth and made the basis for a movement towards liberation. So too, on finding estrangement thus, two main courses are open: either the search, leaving craving for self-identification intact, can be continued for sops to allay the symptoms of the sickness, or else a movement can be started in the direction of a cure for the underlying sickness of craving and liberation from the everlasting hunt for palliatives, whether for oneself or others. In this sense alone 'Self protection is the protection of others and protection of others self protection' *(Satipaṭṭhāna Saṁyutta).*

THIRD SUTTA

THE EYE, ETC: the six beginning with the *eye* and ending with the *mind* (q.v.) are called the six 'Bases for Contact (see Contact) in oneself' and are also known as the six 'Doors' for perception. Their corresponding objects are called the 'external Bases'. ('Sense-organ' is both too material and too objective, since the emphasis here is on the subjective faculty of seeing, etc., not the associated piece of flesh *seen* in someone else or 'in the looking-glass, which, in so far as it is visible, is not 'seeing' but 'form' as the 'external' object of the seeing 'eye in

oneself', and in so far as it is tangible is the object of the body-base in oneself, and in so far as it is apprehended as a 'bodily feature' is the object of the mind-base in oneself. Here the *eye* be taken simply as the *perspective-pointing-inwards-to-a-centre* in the otherwise uncoordinated visual field consisting of colours, which makes them cognizable by eye-consciousness, and which is misconceivable as "I". The six Bases in Oneself are compared to an empty village and the six External Bases to village-raiding robbers.

FORMS: the first of the six 'External Bases', respective objective fields or objects of the six 'Bases in Oneself' (see 'eye'). The same Pali word *rūpa* is used for the eye's object as for the first of the five Categories, but here in the plural. Colours, the basis for the visual perspective of the eye (q.v.) are intended, primarily (see also under *Form* above).

CONTACT: the Pali word *phassa* comes from the verb *phusati* 'to touch' (sometimes used in the sense of 'to arrive at' or 'to realize'), from which also comes the word *phoṭṭhabba* ('tangible', the object of the Fifth Base in oneself, namely body-sensitivity). But here it is generalized to mean 'contact' in the sense of 'presence of object to subject' or 'presence of cognized to consciousness' in all forms of consciousness. It is defined as follows: 'Eye-consciousness arises dependent on eye and on forms; the coincidence of the three is contact (presence)', and likewise in the cases of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Failing it, no knowledge, no consciousness of any sort whatever, can arise at all. This fundamental idea is sometimes placed at the head of lists of things defining Determinations (q.v.).

BODY: the Pali word *kāya* is used both for the physical body and for any group, as the English word 'body' is. In Pali it is also used in this sense (a) for the physical frame, namely

'this body with its consciousness' in a general sense, sometimes called 'old action', and then it forms the subject of Body Contemplation as set forth in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the aim of which is to analyse this 'conglomeration' into its motley constituents. Or else it is used in a strict sense, as here, namely (b) that 'door' of the subjective body-sensitivity or 'tactile sense', the *perspective-pointing-inwards-to-a-centre* in the otherwise uncoordinated tactile field of tangibles consisting of the hard, the hot-or-cold, and the distended-and-movable (see also under "Eye").

MIND: the Pali word *mano* belongs to a root meaning 'to measure, compare, coordinate'. Here it is intended as that special 'door' in which the five kinds of consciousness arising in the other five 'doors' (see under "Eye"), themselves with objective fields having nothing in common, are combined with their objective fields into a unitive *perspective-pointing-inwards-to-a-centre* together with certain objects apprehendable in this mind-door such as infiniteness of space, etc. (and names, fictions, etc.). Whatever is cognized in this door (see under "consciousness") is cognized as an *idea* (q.v; as opposed to the bare objects of the eye uncognized by it as well). Here it makes this otherwise uncoordinated field of ideas cognizable by mind-consciousness (q.v.). And in the presence (with the 'contact') of ignorance (of the four Truths) it is misconceived as 'I'. It is thus the fusing of this heterogeneous 'stuff' of experience into a coherent pattern, where it also has the function of giving temporal succession and flow to that pattern by its presenting all ideas for cognition as 'preceded'. In the *Abhidhamma*, but not in the *Suttas*, 'the (material) form which is the support for mind' is mentioned (implying perhaps the whole 'body with its consciousness') but not further specified. This would place 'mind' on a somewhat similar basis to the 'eye-seeing' as meant here in its relation to

the objective piece of flesh (see under 'eye'). Later notions coupled it with the heart. Now fashion identifies it with the brain; but such identifications are not easy to justify unilaterally; and if they in any way depend upon a prior and always philosophically questionable assumption of a separate body-substance and a mind-substance, they will find no footing in the Buddha's teaching where substances are not assumed.

MIND-CONSCIOUSNESS: if it is remembered that each of the six pairs of Bases, the five consisting of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body, being coordinated by mind, are open to any one's self-inspection, and that consciousness is considered here as arising dependently upon each of these six pairs of Bases and in no other way whatsoever (since no other description rejecting all six is possible without self-contradiction), then this notion of mind-consciousness should present no special difficulty.

IDEAS: The word *dhamma* is a gerundive from the verb *dharati* 'to carry', 'to remember', thus it means literally a 'carryable', a 'rememberable'. In this context of the six pairs of Bases it means the 'rememberables' which form the mind's special object; as distinct from the forms seen only with the eye, the sounds heard with the ear, the odours smelt with the nose, the flavours tasted with the tougue, and the tangibles touched wtih the body, ideas are what are apprehended through the 'mind-door' (see under 'eye', 'forms', and 'mind', and also 'contact'). These six cover all that can be known. But while the first five (see 'forms') are uncoordinated *between themselves* and have no direct access to each other, in the mind 'door' the five find a common denominator and are given a coordinating perspective together with the mind's own special objects. So the *idea* as a 'rememberable', is the aspect of the known apprehended by the mind, whether coordinating

the five kinds of consciousness or apprehending the ideas peculiar to it (see 'mind') or whether appprehending its own special objects. This must include all the many other meanings of the word *dhamma* (Sanskrit *dharma*). Nibbana, in so far as it is knowable—describable—, is an object of the mind, and is thus an idea. 'All ideas are not-self'. What is inherently unknowable has no place in the Teaching.

THE THREE SUTTAS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

The first of these three discourses sets out the vision of Truth peculiar to Buddhas, with its foundation of suffering' ('I teach only suffering, and the liberation from suffering'). The second then takes the 'five Categories' given in the definition of Suffering in the first, and it shows how, in this comprehensive analysis, every component can be 'diagnosed' rightly, that is to say in conformity with truth. It is this treatment that elicits the characteristic of Not-Self. The two characteristics of Impermanence and Suffering in the world were well recognised in ancient Indian philosophies and have never been peculiar to Buddhism. This exposure of the inherent contradiction in the very nature of the idea self-identity, to which craving cleaves with the would-be self-preserving stranglehold of a drowning man upon his rescuer, is here made the very basis for the movement to liberation. Craving is cured through coming to understand how things are while truth is being 'guarded' (see under 'Truth' above). The consequent 'fading of lust' is brought about by the 'discovery of truth' and the 'understanding that there is no more of this beyond' is the result of the 'final arrival at Truth by keeping it in being through development. In the third discourse the very same ground is gone over but described in different terms, The comprehensive analysis in terms of the five Categories with

their general rather than individual emphasis is replaced by the equally comprehensive and complementary analysis in terms of the six pairs of Bases, which analyse the individual viewpoint, without which no consciousness can arise. And instead of the dispassionate term not-self, everything that could possibly be identified as self is, without mentioning the term, presented to the same effect in the colours of a conflagration of passion behind a mirage of deception. Only a Buddha 'whose heart is cooled by compassion' can have the courage to venture so far in the search for Truth and discover thereby the true State of Peace.

QUESTIONS

Is not seeking one's own salvation a selfish aim?—If the aim prescribed were a heavenly personal existence for ever with self-preservation (whether through selfishnes as such or disguised as altruism), then the answer could hardly but be Yes. But with the aim as the removal of self-insistence in every form (not excluding ultimately 'self-denial', which, like negation, is just another affirmation of the basic idea so strenuously denied), the cure of the infectious sickness that leads to untold suffering, does the question arise at all? But even granting that it did, would not the Arahant disciple display, after the Buddha, the highest altruism by showing how the aspiration to health is not a deception, since by his success he bears witness that it can be achieved and that no one is for ever excluded from following his example?

But this description in terms of suffering, is it not pessimistic?—Is it not rather the very reverse? For true optimism is surely shown by having the courage and energy to see how things are, and where liberation lies, and would it not be true pessimism to be satisfied to try and make existence out to be pleasanter or safer, and liberation easier, than is in conformity

with truth? Must not true liberation lie beyond the dialectic of pessimism and optimism, beyond alternatives of selfishness and altruism, as Truth (not factional truths) lies beyond that of being and non-being?

Does not the teaching of Not-Self imply that there is in fact no action, that, for instance, there are no living beings to kill?— The answer is certainly No. The reasons would be too lengthy to go into here in detail. But it is said by the Buddha: 'The Buddhas in the past, accomplished and fully awakened, those Blessed Ones maintained the efficacy of action and of certain action to be done, and so will those do in the future, and so do I now' (Anguttara-Nikāya, Threes, 136).

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Devotion in Buddhism

THREE ESSAYS

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
Kandy 1960 Ceylon

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THE VENERABLE BUDDHAGHOSA'S SALUTATION TO THE TRIPLE GEM

Heart compassionate cool, lamp of lore,
Shattering all nescience-murk at the core,
World-Honoured One, Thee do I adore,
The Welfarer freed from faring more.

What he the Lord made become to gain
Buddhahood-Enlightenment, state beyond stain,
The State Supreme that the Saints attain—
I worship that best thing that ends pain.

Sons of the Well Gone One's very breast,
Quellers of the Mara-host of life's unrest,
Octad that 'mongst groups is deemed the crest,
Bowing do I hail that Order blest.

Translated by Soma Thera.

DEVOTION IN BUDDHISM

I

The Buddha repeatedly discouraged any excessive veneration paid to him personally. He knew that an excess of purely emotional devotion will obstruct or disturb the development of a balanced character, and that it may become a serious obstacle to progress on the path to deliverance. The history of religion has since proved him right, as illustrated by the extravagancies of emotional mysticism in East and West.

There is the story of the monk Vakkali who full of devotion and love for the Buddha, was ever desirous to behold him bodily. To him the Buddha said: "What shall it profit you to see this impure body? Who sees the Teaching (Dhamma), sees me."

Shortly before the Buddha passed away, he said: "If a monk or a nun, a devout man or a devout woman, lives in accordance with the Teaching, is correct in his life, walks in conformity with the Teaching — it is he who rightly honours, reverences, venerates, holds sacred and reveres the Perfect One (*Tathāgata*) with the worthiest homage".

A true and deep understanding of the Dhamma, together with a conduct that is in conformity with that understanding — these are vastly superior to any external homage or mere emotional devotion. That is the instruction conveyed by these two teachings of the Master.

It will be a mistake, however, to conclude that the Buddha disparaged a reverential and devotional attitude

of mind when it is the natural outflow of a true understanding and a deep admiration of what is great and noble. It would also be a grievous error to believe that the "Seeing of the Teaching" (spoken of in the first saying) is identical with a mere intellectual appreciation of the doctrine and a purely conceptual grasp of it. Such a one-sidedly abstract approach to the very concrete message of the Buddha all too often leads to intellectual smugness. In its barrenness it will certainly not be a substitute for the strong and enlivening impulse imparted by a deep-felt devotion to what is known as great, noble and exemplary. Devotion being a facet and natural accompaniment of Confidence (*saddhā*), is a necessary factor in the 'balance of faculties' (*indriya-samatā*) required for final deliverance. Confidence, in all its aspects (and among them, the devotional) is required for resolving any stagnation and other shortcomings resulting from a onesided development of the intellectual faculties (intelligence, insight, wisdom; *paññā*) which often tend to turn around in circles endlessly, without being able to effect a break-through. Here, Devotion, Confidence, Faith (in whatever way we wish to render the Pāli term *saddhā*) may be able to give quick help.

Though the Buddha refused to be made the object of an emotional 'personality cult', he, on the other hand, knew that "respect and homage paid to those who are worthy of it, is a great blessing". The Buddha made this statement in the very first stanza of one of his principal ethical injunctions, the verses on Blessings (*Mahā-Mangala Sutta*).[1] Mentioning the value of a respectful, reverential attitude

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1. See THE WHEEL No. 14; "Everyman's Ethics", p. 19 ff (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy).

together with the blessings of "avoiding fools and associating the wise", the Buddha obviously regarded such attitude as fundamental for individual and social progress and for the acquisition of any further and higher Blessings. One who is incapable of any reverential attitude will also be incapable of any spiritual progress beyond the narrow limits of his present mental condition. One who is so blind as not to see or recognize anything higher and better than the little mud-pool of his own petty self and environment, will for a long time suffer from 'retarded growth'. And he who out of a demonstrative self-assertion, scorns any reverential attitude in himself and in others, is imprisoned in his self-conceit which is a most effective bar to a true maturity of character and to spiritual growth. It is by recognizing and honouring someone or something higher, one honours and enhances one's own inner potentialities.

> *"When the high heart we magnify,*
> *And the sure vision celebrate,*
> *And worship greatness passing by,*
> *Ourselves are great."*

Since respect, reverence and devotion are partial aspects of the Buddhist concept of Confidence (*saddhā*), one will now understand, also from this angle. why Confidence has been called the seed of any other beneficial quality.

The nobler the object of reverence or devotion, the higher is the blessing bestowed by it. "Those who have joyous confidence in the highest, highest fruit will be theirs" (Anguttara-Nik., The Fours, No. 34). The supreme objects of a Buddhist's reverence and devotion are his Three Refuges, also called the Three Jewels or Ideals : the

Buddha, his Teaching (*Dhamma*) and the Community of saintly monks (*Sangha*).[1] Here, too, the Buddha is revered not as a personality of such and such a name, nor as a deity, but as the embodiment of Enlightenment. A text often recurring in the Buddhist scriptures, says that a devout lay disciple "has confidence (*saddhā*), he believes in the Enlightenment of the Perfect One". This confidence, however, is not the outcome of blind faith based on hearsay, but it is derived from the devotee's reasoned conviction based on his own understanding of the Buddha Word which speaks to him clearly with a voice of unmistakable Enlightenment. This derivation of his assurance is emphasized by the fact that, along with Confidence, also Wisdom is mentioned among the qualities of an ideal lay follower.

We may now ask: Is it not quite natural that feelings of love, gratitude, reverence and devotion seek expression through the entire man, through acts of body and speech as well as through his thoughts and unexpressed sentiments? Will one, for instance, hide one's feelings towards parents and other beloved ones? Will not one rather express them by loving words and deeds? Will not one cherish their memory in suitable ways, as for instance, by preserving their likeness in one's home, by placing flowers on their graves, by recalling their noble qualities? In such a way, also one who has become alienated from the devotional aspects of religion, may seek to understand the outward acts of homage which are customary in Budddhist lands: when, with reverential gesture, flowers and incense are placed before a Buddha image and devotional texts are recited which are not prayers but meditations. Provided that such

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1. See BODHI LEAVES No. 5; 'The Three Refuges' by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy).

practice does not deteriorate into a thoughtless routine, a follower of the Dhamma will derive benefit if he takes up some form of devotional practice adapting it to his personal temperament and to the social customs of his environment.

Buddhism, however, does not in the least impose upon its followers a *demand* to observe any outward form of devotion or worship. This is entirely left to the choice of individuals whose emotional, devotional and intellectual needs are bound to differ greatly. No Buddhist should feel himself forced into an iron-cast mould, be it of a devotional or a rationalistic shape. As a follower of the Middle Way, a Buddhist should, however, avoid one-sided judgment also in this respect, and should try to appreciate individual needs and preferences of others which differ from those of his own.

More important and of greater general validity, however, than these outward forms of devotion, are the basic capacity for respect and reverence discussed at the beginning, and the practice of meditations or contemplations of a devotional character. Many benefits accrue from these and hence it was for good reasons that the Enlightened One recommended strongly and repeatedly the meditative Recollection of the Buddha (*Buddhānussati*), along with other kindred Recollections.[1] Here, again, the reference is to the embodied ideal ; and, therefore, the Buddha as a being freed from all traces of vanity and egotism, could well venture to recommend to his disciples a meditation of the Buddha.

What, then, are the benefits of such devotional meditations ? Their first benefit is *mental purification* ; they have

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1. See *The Path of Purification (Visuddhi Magga)*, transl. by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli, Chapter VII (Lake House Bookshop, Colombo).

been called by the Buddha "efficacious procedures for purifying a defiled mind" (Angutt. Nik., The Threes, No. 71). "When a noble disciple contemplates upon the Enlightened One, at that time his mind is not enwrapped in lust, nor in hatred, nor in delusion. At such a time his mind is rightly directed: it has got rid of lust, is aloof from it, is freed from it. Lust is here a name of the five sense desires. By cultivating this contemplation, many beings become purified" (Angutt. Nik., The Sixes, No. 25).

If, by practising that devotional meditation, one endeavours to live, as it were, 'in the Master's presence' (*satthā sammukhī bhūto*), one will feel ashamed to do or speak or think anything unworthy, one will shrink back from evil; and as a positive reaction, one will feel inspired to high endeavour, in emulation of the Master's great example.

Images, and not abstract concepts, are the language of the subconscious. If, therefore, the image of the Enlightened One is often created, within one's mind, as the embodiment of Man Perfected, it will deeply penetrate into the subconscious mind, and, if sufficiently strong, will act as an 'automatic brake' against evil impulses. In such a way, the subconscious may become a powerful ally in gaining self-mastery while normally it is too often the hidden enemy of such endeavour. For that purpose of '*educating the subsconscious*', it will be helpful to use a Buddha image, or a picture, as an aid in visualization, and in that way concentration of mind may be attained fairly soon. For evoking and deeply absorbing some features of the Buddha's mentality, his qualities should be contemplated for instance in the way described in the 'Path of Purification' (Visuddhi Magga).

The Recollection of the Buddha, being productive of joy (*pīti*), is an effective way of *invigorating the mind*, of lifting it up from states of listlessness, tension, fatigue, and frustration, which occur during meditation as well as in ordinary life. The Buddha himself advised: "If (in the strenuous practice of a subject of meditation, for instance) in the Contemplation of the Body, bodily agitation (including sense desires), or mental lassitude or distraction should arise in the meditator, then he should turn his mind to a gladdening (or elevating) subject" (Saṁy. 47, 10). And here the Teachers of old recommend especially the Recollection of the Buddha. When under its influence those hindrances to concentration have vanished, the meditator will be able to return to his original subject of meditation.

For a beginner especially, attempts at gaining concentration are often frustrated by an uneasy self-consciousness; the meditator squints, as it were, back upon himself: he becomes disturbingly aware of his body with its little discomforts, and of his mental state struggling against obstacles and thereby strengthening them. This may, for instance, happen when the subjects of meditation are one's own physical or mental processes, but it may also occur with any other subject. In such a situation, it will be profitable to follow the advice given earlier and to turn one's attention from one's own personality to the inspiring visualization of the Buddha and the contemplation of his qualities. The joy thus produced may bring about that self-forgetfulness which is such an important factor for gaining concentration. Joy (*pīti*; 'joyful interest') produces calm (*passaddhi*), calm leads to ease (*sukha*) and ease to concentration (*samādhi*). Thus devotional meditation can serve as a valuable *aid in attaining mental concentration*

which is the basis of liberating Insight. This function of devotional meditation cannot be better described than in the words of the Master.

"When a noble disciple contemplates upon the Enlightened One, at that time his mind is not enwrapped by lust nor by delusion and at that time his mind is rightly directed towards the Perfect One (Tathāgata). And with a rightly directed mind the noble disciple gains enthusiasm for the goal, enthusiasm for the Dhamma, gains the delight derived from the Dhamma. In him thus delighted, joy arises; to one joyfully minded body and mind become calm; calmed in body and mind, he feels at ease; and if at ease, the mind finds concentration. Such a one is called a noble disciple who among a humanity gone wrong, has attained to what is right; who among a humanity beset by troubles, dwells free of troubles" (Angutt. Nik., The Sixes, No. 10).

Nyanaponika Thera

HOMAGE TO THE BUDDHA BY SABHIYA ON HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THE DOCTRINE

End ng, transcending Ills,
Cankerless Arahat,
thy insight, light, and lore,
have brought me safe across!

For marking my distress,
for freeing me from doubt,
I laud thee, sage benign,
consummate master-mind,
great Kinsman of the Sun!

The doubts I had are solved by thee, O Seer,
O All-Enlighten'd sage immaculate!

With ev'ry perturbation rooted up,
unfever'd, tranquil, strong in Truth art thou!

Great Victor! Paragon! Thy words rejoice
all gods, all Nāradas, all Pabbatas.

I hail thee noblest, foremost of mankind;
nor earth nor heaven holds thy counterpart!

Enlighten'd Master! Over Māra's hosts
triumphant! Sage, who, wrong propensities
uprooting, for thyself salvation found
and taught mankind to find salvation too!

Thou hast surmounted all that breeds rebirth
and extirpated canker-growths within!
With naught to bind thee thrall to life, thou'rt free
as forest lion from all fears and dread.

E'en as a lotus fair to water gives
no lodgement, thou by good and bad alike
art unaffected. Stretch thou forth thy feet,
O Victor! I salute my Master's feet!

From 'Buddhas Teachings' (Sutta Nipāta),
translated by Lord Chalmers (Harrard Oriental Series).

DEVOTION IN BUDDHISM

II

Religion and devotion are inseparable, and Buddhism is no exception to this rule. Theravāda or Buddhism based on the Pāli Tipiṭaka, the original Teachings of the Buddha (sometimes called Hīnayāna), is alleged by some to be dry and intellectual, to have no devotion or higher emotional content in it. There may be some truth in this allegation when it concerns those people who only superficially profess adherence to the Teaching (Dhamma) or who limit themselves only to an intellectual study and appreciation of the Dhamma without applying its tenets to their everyday life. For the true follower of Theravāda, however, devotion is an indispensable aid on the way to Deliverance. For him even the word BUDDHA can produce the deepest emotional stirring and rapture.

Dhamma, said the Buddha, may be compared to a snake which if caught by the head is brought under control but if seized by the tail, carries death. Similarly the Dhamma rightly understood and lived, leads to the extinction of all suffering, but will cause harm if misunderstood and misapplied.[1] If we are to accept that Buddhism starves emotion and lays emphasis on reason alone then it would have been impossible for Buddhism to flourish for more than 2500 years as a *living religion* providing the spiritual and cultural requirements of millions. Countries like Burma, Thailand, Ceylon, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam cannot conceivably be supposed to have quenched their spiritual

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1. See 'The Discourse on the Simile of the Serpent' (Majjhima Nikāya No. 22 - Alagaddūpama Sutta).

thirst with mere dry abstractions. Further, emotion, as a distinct mental factor, cannot be just suppressed; it is bound to express itself. In point of fact, the balancing of these two mental faculties, emotion and reason, is considered in Buddhism most essential for a harmonious spiritual development. Harmony, moderation and gradual development are features that run through the entire system of Buddhism like a scarlet thread.

In the theistic conception of *bhakti* or faith, devotion is always accompanied by practices like prayers, rituals, vows, and an unquestioned obedience to a Creator God, his earthly incarnation or some deity. There is fear of being punished if the command of God is either questioned or not followed with submission. And wherever there is fear there will arise blind faith, dogmatism, superstition, ritualism, intolerance and such other evil consequences, because fear restricts mental growth, traps the mind and makes it insular. Prayers, rituals and vows lead men to ask and crave for worldly boons and pleasures while alive, and for happy states on earth or in heavenly worlds, after death. Love taking the form of an uncontrolled emotional devotion may and often does, create selfish affection (*sneha*) and a physical relationship between the devotee and his or her lord which in many cases may turn carnal. Being associated with religion such indulgences may remain undetected and even become a holy practice which could be conducted unhindered. This would give one a free licence to roam in the wilderness of vague imaginations. One waits for the saving grace of the God in all activities and thereby loses self-confidence and becomes indolent and a slave to superstitions. Devotion should not be wholly emotional, for it may grow positively harmful in that the devotee may become fanatical or, having become too sensitive emotionally, get upset by little mishaps or gains.

Against such one-sided emphasis, the concept of devotion in Theravāda Buddhism is distinctly different. Devotion from this stand-point is *ñāṇasampayutta*; i. e. accompanied by knowledge, so that it presents, on both the philosophical and emotional level, a strong contrast to those religions which lay emphasis on emotion alone. The philosophical aspect calls into play two important mental faculties, viz., the rational and the volitional. The emotional aspect has, as it were, many facets, bringing together several mental factors, such as gratitude, reverence, love, faith or confidence, and joy. Forasmuch as devotion is a culture of mind, it sets on foot a harmonious development of all the mental faculties bringing about integration and wholeness of character required for the attainment of Nibbana. What part each of these different faculties play in the act of devotion, will be discussed later.

The object of devotion in Buddhism is what is known as the "Triple Gem" (*Ratanattaya*) or the "Threefold Refuge" (*Saranattaya*), comprising the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha; that is, the Enlightened One, his doctrine and the order of his noble disciples, i. e. the ariyas or saints. The Ratanas are so called because nothing can be more precious and worthy of bestowing incomparable and unalloyed peace and happiness than these; hence they are also the highest refuge, the peerless source of security and protection.

The practice of devotion consists in reflecting or meditating (*anussati*) on the qualities or attributes of that Triple Gem. These qualities are embodied in the most simple yet profound formula known as *Ratanattaya Vandanā Gāthā* - the Hymn of Homage to the Triple Gem, familiar to all Buddhists from the time they learn to speak, which they recite on all occasions of worship.

Itipi so Bhagavā - Arahaṁ Sammāsambuddho, vijjā-caraṇasampanno, sugato, lokavidū, anuttaro, purisa-dhammasārathi, satthā devamanussānaṁ, Buddho, Bhaga-vā'ti.

Thus, indeed, is that Blessed One. he is the Holy One, fully enlightened, endowed with vision and conduct, sublime, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed.

Svākkhāto Bhagavatā dhammo, sandiṭṭhiko, Akāliko, ehipassiko, opanayiko, paccattaṁ veditabbo viññūhi'ti.

Well-expounded is the Dhamma (teaching) by the Blessed One, verifiable here and now, with immediate fruit, inviting all to test for themselves, leading on to Nibbana, to be comprehended by the wise, each for himself.

Supaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka - sangho, ujupaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka - sangho, ñāyapaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho sāmīcipaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasangho; yadidam cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭhapurisapuggalā, esa bhagavato sāvakasangho, āhuneyyo, pāhuneyyo. dakkhi-neyyo añjalikaraṇīyo, anuttaraṁ puññakkhettaṁ lokassā' ti.

Of perfect conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples, of wise conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples, of dutiful conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples; that is to say, the Four Pairs of men,[1] the Eight Persons.

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1. The Four Pairs and Eight Persons refer to the four stages of Sainthood endowed with the eightfold Supermundane Knowledge of Path (*Magga*) and Fruition (*Phala*).

This Order of the Lord's Disciples is worthy of offerings, worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts, worthy of reverential salutation, as an incomparable field of merit to the world.—

Space does not permit to go here into the details of the practice of devotional meditations. Briefly, it is meditating on the true significance of these attributes — nine of the Buddha, six of the Dhamma, ten of the Sangha — and accomplish an inner transformation by implanting them, as it were, within.

Buddha is venerated and followed as the Great Teacher, the spiritual Master. The term Buddha is an honorific expression implying the attainment of Supreme Enlightenment; that is to say, it is not a personal name but an indication of a state of perfection. It is also an attribute of a perfect and holy guide who, by virtue of having discovered a truth unaided and through long and painful struggle, guides, points out and makes known to beings, out of great compassion, the nature of reality otherwise called the Four Noble Truths - *Cattāri ariya saccāni*. These are embodied in this succinct and profound saying of the Master: "Sorrow I point out. and sorrow's end".

Hence, to the Buddhists the Buddha is not a God or an incarnation of a God (Avatāra), nor is He an ever-abiding universal principle; and the Buddha has no commandments to give which need be accepted with unquestioning obedience. Prayers to him, or rituals and vows, and blind faith in him have no meaning whatsoever.

Dhamma here constitutes the transcendental truths of Nibbana as well as the Eightfold Path leading to Nibbana as discovered and proclaimed by the Buddha. Here reflection

(*anussati*) is meditation on the Dhamma's transcendental qualities. That is to say, meditation on that perfect state of Deliverance which is freed from greed, hate and delusion — the source of all samsaric turmoil — and is a condition of Peace and Bliss that terminates death and rebirth for all time. It is also meditation on that perfect path which leads to this perfect goal, namely, on Right Understanding, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

Sangha is the Order or Community of Noble Disciples (*Ariyas*) established in the Goal or on the Path that leads to the Goal; thus forming the 'living example' to those still striving.

Briefly, Buddha is the Way-finder, the Supreme Teacher, the Unmatched Guide. Dhamma is the incomparable Way, the Perfect Teaching; the Sangha refers to those who dedicating themselves to the full realisation of the Dhamma, and earnestly striving have entered upon the Paths of Sanctitude

In the course of the actual practice of devotion these three, however, embody and culminate in one idea, one Truth. Hence it is said:

Dhammakāyo yato Satthā, Dhammo satthā tato mato;
Dhamme ṭhito so sangho ca satthu sankham nigacchati;

Since the Teacher is the Truth-embodiment,
so is the Truth the very Teacher,
and the Noble Order being established on th e Truth,
Also goes by the name of the Teacher.

Thus the act of devotion is directed to one single object which forms the Guide as well as the Goal, independent of, and unmixed with the notion of any personality or incarnation, a God or Paramatman, but purely as an aspiration for an ideal of absolute perfection and purity, attainable through self-control, discipline and mental development.

Devotional acts with such background and based on the realisation of these great attributes, set going mental dispositions favourable to the attainment of similar qualities in one's own mind, be it even to a small degree. At first, they appear as a rather unimportant contribution to the attainment of the lofty goal, but the cumulative effect of a series of such devotional acts later grows and transforms itself until it becomes of the same stuff — *evam-dhammo* — as these great attributes, i. e., of the very truth. Further, this form of devotion with mental faculties well-balanced, maintains itself as a habitual frame of mind and not as an isolated act spasmodically indulged in, thus ensuring a steady progress. When devotion reaches a very high point the distinction of subject, i. e. the self-notion, disappears and what is realised is the very 'stuff', nature or substance of the Triple Gem. Hence devotion is directed towards an ever present reality and not merely towards a dead teacher or empty abstractions.

As mentioned earlier, a devotional act calls into play many forces and faculties of the mind. The most important of these is Faith (*Saddhā*) in the Triple Gem, which, in Buddhism, means conviction and confidence born of knowledge. Faith is associated with other factors such as gratitude, love, joy and deep reverence, forming as a whole, what may be called here, the emotional aspect. Inasmuch

as this Saddhā or conviction born of knowledge, contains no element of selfish affection (*sineha*) nor personal relationship and blind faith, it differs essentially from the theistic concept of faith and devotion. The basis of Saddhā is wise understanding of the true significance of the Triple Gem as closely related to the problem of suffering and the deliverance from it. At least it must be accompanied by a deep conviction in the 'Law of Kamma' as a factor that sustains and perpetuates this endless course of birth and death, and the suffering associated with life.

Since Saddhā is the one indispensible factor that governs all spiritual growth it is called the Seed (*bīja*) from which is born the 'tree of wisdom' that bears the 'fruit of deliverance'. There are five mental powers (*bala*), also called spiritual faculties (*indriya*), namely, *Saddhā* - Faith; *Viriya* - Energy; *Sati* - Mindfulness; *Samādhi*-Concentration; *Paññā* - Intuitive insight or Wisdom. Of these the primary factor is Saddhā which if properly cultivated, conditions the development of the rest. In its highest, i.e. supermundane sense, Saddhā is *Aveccappasāda*, unshakable faith in the Triple Gem — achievable through the attainment of the Noble Path (Ariya Magga). And only in this sense is it true 'self-surrender' which is the culmination of devotion. Self-surrender, in the Buddhist sense, is not a a spiritual unification with some other entity or merging with some universal principle nor the sacrifice of one's will at the feet of some one else, a God, deity or teacher. But it is the entire abandonment, down to the last vestige, of all 'self-notion', of 'personality-belief' (belief in an immortal self) - *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. When accomplished this brings to pass the overcoming of at least two other mental fetters (*samyojana*), namely, *Sceptical Doubt* (*vicikicchā*) and *Clinging-to-rites-and rituals* (*Sīlabbata-parāmāsa*). Lastly,

since Saddhā rouses other concomitant factors, such as assurance, joy, gratitude and reverence, one will realise the tremendous significance of the Triple Gem as the true Refuge from the toils and tumults of Samsāra. A deliberate and conscious cultivation of this one factor, therefore, means the development of the entire emotional aspect which forms the source of all mental energy.

This brings us to the philosophical side with its two faculties, the rational and the volitional. The function of the rational faculty is to investigate and probe into the nature of existence in order to understand, at least intellectually, its reality in the true perspective. It is the dispassionate and objective study and scrutiny of things. When one removes the lid of 'self' or 'ego-centric consciousness' from the jar of life and lays it bare for objective analysis and observation only then does true understanding spring up in the mind. It must be agreed that understanding is manifold and of various kinds, so that one particular object may also be explained in quite the opposite way, perhaps reasonably too! Hence, what is intended here is understanding in terms of the Noble Truths according to which existence is regarded not as something permanent, pleasurable and endowed with a self or ego but as an impersonal process, arising and passing away dependent on conditions; that is to say, as impermanent, subject to suffering and unsubstantial (*anicca*, *dukkha*, *anattā*).

It is a proven fact that the basic instinct in all beings is the search for happiness and pleasure, and security or safety against death, disease and danger, although it is quite obvious that death is more certain than life. If life were not impermanent then there would be no need to crave for security and protection; likewise, the search for happiness and pleasure is another proof of the intrinsic suffering

in life. The same is true of the self-delusion ; for, if there were such a thing as an abiding self then it would mean that we would be free from the clutches of death and from all misery. 'Self' as an independent entity unaffected by all empirical fetters and limitations presupposes 'ownership' and the status of being the 'master' and 'possessor' of this life. Nobody ever wishes to suffer or to die. If there were an eternal or divine self then it would prevent all forms of suffering, death, etc. But that does not happen. Further where is the need for such a freed, happy and permanent self to strive for freedom, happiness and security ? Hence where is the need for religion which aims at these attainments? The reality, however, is that there is only a *self-delusion* which is the root of all suffering and the cause of all limitation. Conditioned by this delusion, known to Buddhists as *Avijjā*, beings engage themselves in this mad rush of activities driven all the time by manifold cravings. Actions must produce reactions and these acts of craving that we always and almost helplessly perform cannot escape from producing results, namely the continuity of this stream of life, this cycle of births and deaths. But this inherent unsatisfactoriness in samsaric existence need not create undue anxiety, frustration or pessimism ; in fact, it should be the greatest incentive to hope, assurance and optimism. For the opposite of suffering too must exist. If only these actions are free from *craving* — the root cause of suffering — there is no reason why lasting happiness and peace could not be achieved. This, a death'ess state of supermundance happiness called NIBBANA, is the goal of Buddhism.

With this background, it may be noticed, the rational faculty is not limited to a barren intellectualism ; it arouses the volition to transform knowledge into a living truth ;

besides, causing a definite enrichment of the emotional faculty. Such understanding may arise as a result of study and hearing of the Dhamma (*sutamaya ñāṇa*), or through deep thinking and observation of things as they really are (*cintamaya ñāṇa*). or again through meditation (*bhāvanamaya ñāṇa*). While Saddhā should have firm roots in right understanding, also true understanding, on its part, should not be devoid of Faith or Confidence in order to avoid the futility and dryness of remaining merely theoretical. The same is true in the case of will or determination. It must likewise be based on Saddhā in order to maintain its firmness and vigour by which theory is translated into practice.

This brings us to the function of the volitional faculty as purposive will, resoluteness or determination. It is the drive, the propulsive agency that transforms knowledge into action. It functions on the basis of understanding as a factor that harnesses mental energy for one-pointed application, for singleness of aim. It frees intellect from dryness and prevents emotion from indulgence and over-activity, that is, from undue dissipation of mental energy, thereby mobilizing purpose and concentrated effort. Although this faculty has been mentioned last, it is not less important than the other two. After all, it is volition that invests every action, whether in body, speech or mind, with the potentiality of producing results. And devotion as an act leading to deliverance must necessarily have a powerful volition. In fact, all these three faculties are mutually complimentary in the realisation of the common goal, Nibbāna.

It may not be inappropriate if the simile of the construction of a building is used to illustrate the functions of these faculties ; for devotion is also a constructive activity

after all. Understanding is like the plan and estimates; Will is the actual execution of the work of construction according to the plan; and Saddhā is like the building materials needed for the construction.

Without a proper plan a construction may prove positively dangerous and the exclusion of the other two would mean no construction whatsoever. Thus the task of building a spiritual structure is accomplished in Buddhist devotion with the mutual co-operation and assistance of all the various faculties of the mind.

Bhikkhu Vanga Buddharakkhita
(*Bangalore, India*)

THE VENERABLE DHARMAPALA'S SALUTATION TO THE TRIPLE GEM

Lord of great compassion, voyager, Thou,
Across the knowledge-sea, to Thee I bow,
Thou by method fine, vivid and profound,
The path dost well proclaim.

What leadth from the world the men who bring,
Life-mode and love to fullness, that Best Thing,
To which the Perfect One both homage pay,
That Thing do I revere.

Who in path and fruition steadfast stand,
With virtue and such goods, the noble band,
Unrivalled field for reaping merit rich,
That band do I revere.

From the Udāna Commentary
Translated by Soma Thera.

FLOWER OFFERING

Nirodha-samāpattito vuṭṭhahitvā viya nisinnassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammāsambuddhassa, iminā pupphena pūjemi, pūjemi, pūjemi. Idaṁ puppha-pūjaṁ Buddha-Paccekabuddha Aggasāvaka Mahāsāvaka-Arahantānaṁ sabhāvasīlaṁ, aham'pi tesaṁ anuvattako homi.

Idaṁ puppham idāni vaṇṇenapi suvaṇṇaṁ, gandhenapi sugandhaṁ santhānenapi susanthānaṁ khippameva dubbaṇṇaṁ duggandhaṁ dussanthānaṁ pappoti.

Evameva sabbe sankhārā aniccā, sabbe sankhārā dukkhā, sabbe dhammā anattā'ti. Iminā vandanamānana-pūjā - patipattyānubhāvena āsavakkhayāvahaṁ hotu cittaṁ sabbadukkhā pamuccatu.

An English rendering of the above Pali formula repeated whilst offering flowers, is as follows:—

"As if to the Blessed One, the Holy One, the Perfectly Awakened One—newly arisen from supermost ecstasy, with these flowers, reverentially I make offering.

"This reverential flower-offering was a virtuous practice of the Buddhas, Pacceka Buddhas, the Chief Disciples, the Great Disciples and the Arahans. I also am following on their path hereby.

"These flowers are now in colour lovely, in scent sweet, in shapebeautiful; soon they will be bad-coloured, ill-smelling and ugly. So too all things compounded: they pass away, are pain-laden and soulless.

"May this worship, adoration, and reverential offering, through the lofty dignity and psychic power of the practice,

help to root out the corruptions. May I gain release from all suffering".

Flower gifts to those loved, trusted and respected have been an ancient and honoured custom of the East. A flower-offering was made by the Buddha Dipankara to the ascetic Sumedha, who too having resolved to be a Buddha then obtained from the Perfect One the first Niyata Vivarana—or assurance of success in the aspiration for Buddhahood.

It is recorded that the gods offered flowers to the future Buddha at His Birth, and again on His Enlightenment and death (*Parinibbana*).

The Buddhists offer flowers to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha.

The Buddha is the embodiment of wisdom: He is the supremely Enlightened One: He who, out of compassion for the countless throng of sentient beings crossed this Sea of Samsara, of Birth, Decay and Death, after a ceaseless effort extending over aeons.

The Dhamma is the *Navalokuttara Dhamma* (the nine-fold Supermundane or Hypercosmic), i. e. the four Paths and Fruits of Sanctitude thereof (*Magga* and *Phala*) and Nibbana, which does not exist outside Buddhism and which alone offers a solution to the Riddle of Life.

The Sangha are those who have attained these Paths and Fruits, Sotāpatti, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī and Arahan. The monks of the present day too are making an earnest endeavour to attain to these sublime states. Hence it is a mistake to suppose that Buddhist monks are a lazy lot, for they are engaged in wholly meritorious work, the difference

in the several individuals is only in the degree of earnestness and zeal displayed. Theirs is a life of renunciation. Only the good Buddhist layman knows and can appreciate this.

There being no Buddha living, the Buddhists worship the three *Cetiyas* (literally meaning, pegs on which to hang one's throughts , *Paribhogika*, the things used by the Buddha, e.g. the Bo-tree at His Enlightenment, which now serves as a symbol of Bodhi or Enlightenment; *Sarīrika*, the body relics of the Buddha which are now mostly enshrined in the several dagobas; *Uddesika*, the image beautiful of the Buddha. He sees in his mind the golden figure of the Buddha, or six-rayed aura round His head, a radiantly perfect body and the brilliant glory of His mind. It is the mind's eye and not the physical eye that is active. The offering is to One who worked through many aeons out of compassion to that particular one who takes refuge in Him. It is only an acknowledgement of one worthy of honour.

But in no wise does the Buddhist ask of Him pardon or blessings. He only reflects on His perfections, learns to be self-reliant like Him, to be humble and to honour those worthy of honour and so dispel pride. This last, be it noted, is what an envious man is unable to do.

Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā (charity, a virtuous life and meditation) help to root out Greed, Hatred and Ignorance which make this life of ours what it is, a state of painful flux. Let us, as Buddhists would naturally do, submit this act of flower-offering to the cold light of reason and watch its results.

The flower is the acme of nature's perfection. It is beauty itself. Its lovely colour pleases the sight. Its softness pleases the sense of touch. The thought of it also is

gratifying. The gift or dāna of it must indeed kill Greed or Lobha in the giver.

Of the two kinds of sīla (virtue), the negative and the positive, the flower-offering is of the positive kind, a good *action*. It is productive of a *kusala cetanā*, a meritorious thought, for at the time of offering one reflects that this has been the virtuous practice of the good and saintly of old. and that one is thus striving to follow those noble footsteps; and this is the Sīla, or right observance, where Hatred finds no room.

The Bhāvanā here is meditation on *Anicca*, *Dukkha*, *Anattā* (the transiency, sorrow and soullessness of life). It is this aspect of the flower-offering that raises this act to the highest psychic levels, to one of real usefulness in helping one to make headway along the Grand Highway — the noble Eightfold Path.

The flower blooms and is beautiful, in that it has lovely colours, emanates sweet scent, and is soft to the touch. But all this is not for long; for soon the flower will fade This beauty which we adore and covet is a passing show. It is this same beauty that makes us cling to life. It is not real. It is only a mental concept, which varies even geographically. Each nation has its own ideal of perfection of the human form The Negro has his own and thinks his ideal the best. The Mongolian has one type of beauty, and the Aryan another. What then is "beauty"? It is only an idea. To the Buddhist, beauty is anicca. This beautiful body is food for worms. All things we value eventually turn to ashes in our grasp. Samsara's "beauty" is a stumbling-block on the Noble Path to Nibbana, which is the only Beautiful.

That all things are transitory and therefore painful is not appreciated by the average Westerner, wrapt. as he is in the world of sense. Paññā or Wisdom, according to a Buddhist, is the due realisation of these all - pervading facts, the Anicca, Dukka and Anattā (Transiency, Sorrow and Soullessness) of ourselves and all that is about us. The ultimate Truth is understood only thus. Therefore a Buddhist Bhāvanā is on a higher level than that of the yogi who is merely bent on gaining trances, by the cultivation of a "soul-force" delusion, which the Buddhist knows is a hindrance to ultimate salvation, and therefore to be suppressed.

The nature of a flower-offering is not to be despised; say not that it is "exoteric" Buddhism. Truly, it is exoteric, in its simple grandeur, to most Westerners and some Westernised Easterners. For the direct result of flower-offering is a *ti-hetuka* merit, one that is free from Greed, Hatred and Ignorance, and the death of a person in that state of mind results in a *ti-hetuka* birth.

The last words of the Buddha, to the Thera Ananda, on this subject should be borne in mind, and the flower-offering must not be merely a "gift" of love and reverence. The surest way to worship the Lord is to follow His precepts, to *live* the life as detailed by Him. Therefore Dāna, Sīla and Bhāvanā, especially the last, must be included in this act of flower-offering The flowers themselves serve as the peg on which to hang one's aspiring thoughts, the mind does the rest; it makes the simple act sublime.

Kassapa Thera

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BUDDHISM IN A NUTSHELL

by

NARADA THERA

BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
KANDY 1966 CEYLON

THE WHEEL PUBLICATIONS

Special Issue ...

Printed at:
Lake House Printers and Publishers Ltd.
Lake House, Colombo.

PREFACE

Buddhism in a Nutshell first appeared in 1933. Since then several editions were published by various philanthropic gentlemen for free distribution.

To the present edition which is based on the revised one of 1959, an explanation of the Noble Eightfold Path has been added.

For a fuller exposition of the subjects dealt with here, readers are kindly requested to read the revised and enlarged edition of *The Buddha and His Teachings*, published in 1964.

Permission may freely be obtained to reprint or to translate this book.

NĀRADA

Vajirarama
Colombo, Ceylon
July 1966

BUDDHISM IN A NUTSHELL

Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahata Sammā-Sambuddhassa

Chapter I

THE BUDDHA

On the fullmoon day of May, in the year 623 B.C. there was born in the district of Nepal an Indian Sakya Prince named Siddhattha Gotama, who was destined to be the greatest religious teacher in the world. Brought up in the lap of luxury, receiving an education befitting a prince, he married and had a son.

His contemplative nature and boundless compassion did not permit him to enjoy the fleeting material pleasures of a Royal household. He knew no woe, but he felt a deep pity for sorrowing humanity. Amidst comfort and prosperity, he realized the universality of sorrow. The palace, with all its worldly amusements, was no longer a congenial place for the compassionate prince. The time was ripe for him to depart. Realizing the vanity of sensual enjoyments, in his twenty-ninth year, he renounced all worldly pleasures and donning the simple yellow garb of an ascetic, alone, penniless, wandered forth in search of Truth and Peace.

It was an unprecedented historic renunciation; for he renounced not in his old age but in the prime of manhood, not in poverty but in plenty. As it was the belief in the ancient days that no deliverance could be gained unless one leads a life of strict asceticism, he strenuously practised all forms of severe austerities. "Adding vigil after vigil, and penance after penance," he made a superhuman effort for six long years.

His body was reduced to almost a skeleton. The more he tormented his body, the farther his goal receded from him. The painful, unsuccessful austerities which he strenuously practised proved absolutely futile. He was now fully convinced, through personal experience, of the utter futility of self-mortification which weakened his body and resulted in lassitude of spirit.

Benefiting by this invaluable experience of his, he finally decided to follow an independent course, avoiding the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. The former retards one's spiritual progress, and the latter weakens one's intellect. The new way which he himself discovered was the Middle Path, *Majjhimā Paṭipadā*, which subsequently became one of the salient characteristics of his teaching.

One happy morning, while He was deeply absorbed in meditation, unaided and unguided by any supernatural power and solely relying on His efforts and wisdom, He eradicated all defilements, purified Himself, and, realizing things as they truly are, attained Enlightenment (Buddhahood) at the age of 35. He was not born a Buddha,[1] but He became a Buddha by His own striving. As the perfect embodiment of all the virtues He preached, endowed with deep wisdom commensurate with His boundless compassion, He devoted the remainder of His precious life to serve humanity both by example and precept, dominated by no personal motive whatever.

After a very successful ministry of 45 long years the Buddha, as every other human being, succumbed to the inexorable law of change, and finally passed away in His 80th year, exhorting His disciples to regard His doctrine as their teacher.

The Buddha was a human being. As a man He was born, as a man He lived, and as a man His life came to an end. Though a human being, He became an extraordinary man (*Acchariya Manussa*), but He never arrogated to Himself divinity. The Buddha laid stress on this important point

1 An Awakened or Enlightened One.

and left no room whatever for anyone to fall into the error of thinking that He was an immortal divine being. Fortunately there is no deification in the case of the Buddha. It should, however, be remarked that there was no Teacher, "ever so godless as the Buddha, yet none so god-like."

The Buddha is neither an incarnation of the Hindu God Vishnu, as is believed by some, nor is He a saviour who freely saves others by His personal salvation. The Buddha exhorts His disciples to depend on themselves for their deliverance, for both purity and defilement depend on oneself. Clarifying His relationship with His followers and emphasizing the importance of self-reliance and individual striving, the Buddha plainly states: "You should exert yourselves, the Tathagatas[2] are only teachers".

The Buddhas point out the path, and it is left for us to follow that path to obtain our purification.

"To depend on others for salvation is negative, but to depend on oneself is positive". Dependence on others means a surrender of one's effort.

In exhorting His disciples to be self-dependent the Buddha says in the *Parinibbāna Sutta*: "Be ye islands unto yourselves, be ye a refuge unto yourselves, seek not for refuge in others." These significant words are self-elevating. They reveal how vital is self-exertion to accomplish one's object and, how superficial and futile is to seek redemption through benignant saviours and to crave for illusory happiness in an after-life through the propitiation of imaginary gods or by irresponsive prayers and meaningless sacrifices.

Furthermore, the Buddha does not claim the monopoly of Buddhahood which, as a matter of fact, is not the prerogative of any specially graced person. He reached the highest possible state of perfection any person could aspire to, and without the close-fist of a teacher He revealed the only straight path that leads thereto. According to the Teaching of the

2 Lit., Thus who hath come.

Buddha anybody may aspire to that supreme state of perfection if he makes the necessary exertion. The Buddha does not condemn men by calling them wretched sinners, but, on the contrary, He gladdens them by saying that they are pure in heart at conception. In His opinion the world is not wicked but is deluded by ignorance. Instead of disheartening His followers and reserving that exalted state only to Himself He encourages and induces them to emulate Him, for Buddhahood is latent in all. In one sense all are potential Buddhas.

One who aspires to become a Buddha is called a Bodhisatta, which, literally, means a wisdom- being. This Bodhisatta ideal is the most beautiful and the most refined course of life that has ever been presented to this ego-centric world, for what is nobler than a life of service and purity.

As a Man He attained Buddhahood and proclaimed to the world the latent inconceivable possibilities and the creative power of man. Instead of placing an unseen Almighty God over man who arbitrarily controls the destinies of mankind, and making him subservient to a supreme power, He raised the worth of mankind. It was He who taught that man can gain his deliverance and purification by his own exertion without depending on an external God or mediating priests. It was He who taught the ego-centric world the noble ideal of selfless service. It was He who revolted against the degrading caste system and taught equality of mankind and gave equal opportunites for all to distinguish themselves in every walk of life.

He declared that the gates of success and prosperity were open to all in every condition of life, high or low, saint or criminal, who would care to turn a new leaf and aspire to perfection.

Irrespective of caste, colour or rank He established for both deserving men and women a democratically constituted celibate Order. He did not force His followers to be slaves either to His Teachings or to Himself but granted complete freedom of thought.

He comforted the bereaved by His consoling words. He ministered to the sick that were deserted. He helped the poor that were neglected. He ennobled the lives of the deluded, purified the corrupted lives of criminals. He encouraged the feeble, united the divided, enlightened the ignorant, clarified the mystic, guided the benighted, elevated the base, dignified the noble. Both rich and poor, saints and criminals loved Him alike. Despotic and righteous kings, famous and obscure princes and nobles, generous and stingy millionaires, haughty and humble scholars, destitute paupers, down-trodden scavengers, wicked murderers, despised courtesans—all benefited by His words of wisdom and compassion.

His noble example was a source of inspiration to all. His serene and peaceful countenance was a soothing sight to the pious eyes. His message of Peace and Tolerance was welcomed by all with indescribable joy and was of eternal benefit to every one who had the fortune to hear and practise it.

Wherever His teaching penetrated it left an indelible impression upon the character of the respective peoples. The cultural advancement of all the Buddhist nations was mainly due to His sublime Teachings. In fact all Buddhist countries like Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Nepal, Tibet, China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, etc. grew up in the cradle of Buddhism. Though more than 2500 years have elapsed since the passing away of this greatest Teacher, yet His unique personality exerts a great influence on all who come to know Him.

His iron will, profound wisdom, universal love, boundless compassion, selfless service, historic renunciation, perfect purity, magnetic personality, exemplary methods employed to propagate the Teachings, and His final success—all these factors have compelled about one-fifth of the population of the world today to hail the Buddha as their supreme religious Teacher.

Paying a glowing tribute to the Buddha Sri Radhakrishnan states: "In Gautama the Buddha we have a master-mind from

the East second to none so far as the influence on the thought and life of the human race is concerned, and, sacred to all as the founder of a religious tradition whose hold is hardly less wide and deep than any other. He belongs to the history of the world's thought, to the general inheritance of all cultivated men, for, judged by intellectual integrity, moral earnestness, and spiritual insight, He is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in history".

In *The Three Greatest Men in History* H. G. Wells writes:- "In the Buddha you see clearly a man, simple, devout, lonely, battling for light—a vivid human personality, not a myth. He too gave a message to mankind universal in character. Many of our best modern ideas are in closest harmony with it. All the miseries and discontents are due, he taught, to selfishness. Before a man can become serene he must cease to live for his senses or himself. Then he merges into a great being. Buddha in different language called men to self-forgetfulness 500 years before Christ. In some ways he is nearer to us and our needs. He was more lucid upon our individual importance and service than Christ and less ambiguous upon the question of personal immortality".

St. Hilaire remarks "The perfect model of all the virtues He preaches... His life has not a stain upon it."

Fausboll says—"The more I know Him, the more I love Him."

A humble follower of his would say—"The more I know Him, the more I love Him; the more I love Him, the more I know Him."

Chapter 2

THE DHAMMA

Is it a Philosophy?

The non-aggressive, moral and philosophical system expounded by the Buddha, which demands no blind faith from its adherents, expounds no dogmatic creeds, encourages no superstitious rites and ceremonies, but advocates a golden mean that guides a disciple through pure living and pure thinking to the gain of supreme wisdom and deliverance from all evil, is called the Dhamma and is popularly known as Buddhism.

The all-merciful Buddha has passed away, but the sublime Dhamma which He unreservedly bequeathed to humanity, still exists in its pristine purity.

Although the Master has left no written records of His Teachings, His distinguished disciples preserved them by committing to memory and transmitting them orally from generation to generation.

Immediately after His demise 500 chief Arahats[1] versed in the Dhamma[2] and Vinaya[3], held a convocation to rehearse the Doctrine as was originally taught by the Buddha. Venerable Ananda Thera, who enjoyed the special privilege of hearing all the discourses, recited the Dhamma, while the Venerable Upali recited the Vinaya.

The *Tipiṭaka* was compiled and arranged in its present form by those Arahats of old.

1 Literally, the Worthy Ones. They are the enlightened disciples who have destroyed all passions.

2 The Teaching.

3 The Discipline.

During the reign of the pious Sinhala King Vattagamani Abhaya, about 83 B.C., the Tipitaka was, for the first time in the history of Buddhism, committed to writing on palm leaves (ola) in Ceylon.

This voluminous *Tipiṭaka*, which contains the essence of the Buddha's Teaching, is estimated to be about eleven times the size of the Bible. A striking contrast between the Tipitaka and the Bible is that the former is not a gradual development like the latter.

As the word itself implies the *Tipiṭaka* consists of three baskets. They are the Basket of Discipline (*Vinaya Piṭaka*), the Basket of Discourses (*Sutta Piṭaka*), and the Basket of Ultimate Doctrine (*Abhidhamma Piṭaka*).

The *Vinaya Piṭaka* which is regarded as the sheet anchor of the oldest historic celibate order—the Sangha—mainly deals with rules and regulations which the Buddha promulgated, as occasion arose, for the future discipline of the Order of monks (*Bhikkhus*) and nuns (*Bhikkhunis*). It describes in detail the gradual development of the *Sāsana* (Dispensation). An account of the life and ministry of the Buddha is also given. Indirectly it reveals some important and interesting information about ancient history, Indian customs, arts, science, etc.

The Vinaya Piṭaka consists of the five following books:—

1. *Pārājika* Pāli—Major Offences } *Vibhanga*
2. *Pācittiya* Pāli—Minor Offences } *Vibhanga*
3. *Mahāvagga* Pāli—Greater Section } *Khandaka*
4. *Cullavagga* Pāli—Shorter Section } *Khandaka*
5. *Parivāra* Pāli—Epitome of the Vinaya

The *Sutta Piṭaka* consists chiefly of discourses, delivered by the Buddha Himself on various occasions. There are also a few discourses delivered by some of His distinguished disciples such as the Venerable Sariputta, Ananda, Moggallana

etc., included in it. It is like a book of prescriptions, as the sermons embodied therein were expounded to suit the different occasions and the temperaments of various persons. There may be seemingly contradictory statements, but they should not be misconstrued as they were opportunely uttered by the Buddha to suit a particular purpose: for instance, to the self-same question He would maintain silence (when the inquirer is merely foolishly inquisitive), or give a detailed reply when He knew the inquirer to be an earnest seeker. Most of the sermons were intended mainly for the benefit of Bhikkhus and they deal with the Holy life and with the exposition of the doctrine. There are also several other discourses which deal with both the material and moral progress of His lay followers.

This Piṭaka is divided into five Nikayas or collections, viz:—

1. *Dïgha Nikāya* (Collection of Long Discourses),
2. *Majjhima Nikāya* (Collection of Middle-length Discourses),
3. *Sanyutta Nikāya* (Collection of Kindred Sayings),
4. *Anguttara Nikāya* (Collection of Discourses arranged in accordance with numbers),
5. *Khuddaka Nikāya* (Smaller Collection).

The fifth is subdivided into fifteen books:

1. *Khuddaka Pātha* (Shorter Texts),
2. *Dhammapada* (Way of Truth),
3. *Udāna* (Paeans of Joy),
4. *Iti Vuttaka* (''Thus said'' Discourses),
5. *Sutta Nipāta* (Collected Discourses),
6. *Vimāna Vatthu* (Stories of Celestial Mansions),
7. *Peta Vatthu* (Stories of Petas),
8. *Theragāthā* (Psalms of the Brethren),
9. *Therigāthā* (Psalms of the Sisters),

10. *Jātaka* (Birth Stories),
11. *Niddesa* (Expositions),
12. *Paṭisambhidā Magga* (Analytical Knowledge),
13. *Apadāna* (Lives of Arahats),
14. *Buddhavaṁsa* (The History of the Buddha),
15. *Cariyā Piṭaka* (Modes of Conduct).

The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is the most important and the most interesting of the three, containing as it does the profound philosophy of the Buddha's Teaching in contrast to the illuminating and simpler discourses in the Sutta Pitaka.

In the *Sutta Piṭaka* is found the conventional teaching (*vohāra desanā*) while in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is found the ultimate teaching (*paramattha-desanā*).

To the wise, Abhidhamma is an indispensable guide; to the spiritually evolved, an intellectual treat; and to research scholars, food for thought. Consciousness is defined. Thoughts are analysed and classified chiefly from an ethical standpoint. Mental states are enumerated. The composition of each type of consciousness is set forth in detail. How thoughts arise, is minutely described. Irrelevant problems that interest mankind but having no relation to one's purification, are deliberately set aside.

Matter is summarily discussed; fundamental units of matter, properties of matter, sources of matter, relationship between mind and matter, are explained.

The Abhidhamma investigates mind and matter, the two composite factors of the so-called being, to help the understanding of things as they truly are, and a philosophy has been developed on those lines. Based on that philosophy, an ethical system has been evolved, to realize the ultimate goal, Nibbana.

The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* consists of seven books:—

1. *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (Classification of Dhammas),
2. *Vibhanga* (The Book of Divisions),

3. *Kathā-Vatthu* (Points of Controversy),
4. *Puggala-Paññatti* (Description of Individuals),
5. *Dhātu-Kathā* (Discussion with reference to elements)
6. *Yamaka* (The Book of Pairs),
7. *Paṭṭhāna* (The Book of Relations)

In the Tipiṭaka one finds milk for the babe and meat for the strong, for the Buddha taught His doctrine both to the masses and to the intelligentsia. The sublime Dhamma enshrined in these sacred texts, deals with truths and facts, and is not concerned with theories and philosophies which may be accepted as profound truths today only to be thrown overboard tomorrow. The Buddha has presented us with no new astounding philosophical theories, nor did He venture to create any new material science. He explained to us what is within and without, so far as it concerns our emancipation, and ultimately expounded a path of deliverance, which is unique. Incidentally, He has, however, forestalled many a modern scientist and philosopher.

Schopenhauer in his "World as Will and Idea" has presented the truth of suffering and its cause in a Western garb. Spinoza, though he denies not the existence of a permanent reality, asserts that all phenomenal existence is transitory. In his opinion sorrow is conquered "by finding an object of knowledge which is not transient, not ephemeral, but is immutable, permanent, everlasting". Berkeley proved that the so-called indivisible atom is a metaphysical fiction. Hume, after a relentless analysis of the mind, concluded that consciousness consists of fleeting mental states. Bergson advocates the doctrine of change. Prof. James refers to a stream of consciousness.

The Buddha expounded these doctrines of Transiency, (*Anicca*), Sorrow (*Dukkha*), and No-Soul (*Anattā*) some 2500 years ago while He was sojourning in the valley of the Ganges.

It should be understood that the Buddha did not preach all that He knew. On one occasion while the Buddha was passing through a forest He took a handful of leaves and said: "O Bhikkhus, what I have taught is comparable to the leaves in my hand. What I have not taught is comparable to the amount of leaves in the forest."

He taught what He deemed was absolutely essential for one's purification making no distinction between an esoteric and exoteric doctrine. He was characteristically silent on questions irrelevant to His noble mission.

Buddhism no doubt accords with science, but both should be treated as parallel teachings, since one deals mainly with material truths while the other confines itself to moral and spiritual truths. The subject matter of each is different.

The Dhamma He taught is not merely to be preserved in books, nor is it a subject to be studied from an historical or literary standpoint. On the contrary it is to be learnt and put into practice in the course of one's daily life, for without practice one cannot appreciate the truth. The Dhamma is to be studied, and more to be practised, and above all to be realized: immediate realization is its ultimate goal. As such the Dhamma is compared to a raft which is meant for the sole purpose of escaping from the ocean of birth and death (*Saṁsāra*).

Buddhism, therefore, cannot strictly be called a mere philosophy because it is not merely the "love of, inducing the search after, wisdom". Buddhism may approximate a philosophy, but it is very much more comprehensive.

Philosophy deals mainly with knowledge and is not concerned with practice; whereas Buddhism lays special emphasis on practice and realization.

Chapter 3

IS IT A RELIGION?

It is neither a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, for it is not "a system of faith and worship owing any allegiance to a supernatural being".

Buddhism does not demand blind faith from its adherents. Here mere belief is dethroned and is substituted by confidence based on knowledge, which, in Pāli, is known as *Saddhā*. The confidence placed by a follower on the Buddha is like that of a sick person in a noted physician, or a student in his teacher. A Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha because it was He who discovered the Path of Deliverance.

A Buddhist does not seek refuge in the Buddha with the hope that he will be saved by His personal purification. The Buddha gives no such guarantee. It is not within the power of a Buddha to wash away the impurities of others. One could neither purify nor defile another.

The Buddha, as Teacher, instructs us, but we ourselves are directly responsible for our purification.

Although a Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha, he does not make any self-surrender. Nor does a Buddhist sacrifice his freedom of thought by becoming a follower of the Buddha. He can exercise his own free will and develop his knowledge even to the extent of becoming a Buddha himself.

The starting point of Buddhism is reasoning or understanding, or, in other words, *Sammā-Diṭṭhi*.

To the seekers of truth the Buddha says:

"Do not accept anything on (mere) hearsay—(i.e. thinking that thus have we heard it from a long time). Do not accept anything by mere tradition—(i.e. thinking that it has thus been handed down through many generations). Do not accept anything on account of mere rumours—(i.e. by believing what

others say without any investigation). Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures. Do not accept anything by mere supposition. Do not accept anything by mere inference. Do not accept anything by merely considering the reasons. Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your pre-conceived notions. Do not accept anything merely because it seems acceptable—(i.e., thinking that as the speaker seems to be a good person his word should be accepted). Do not accept anything thinking that the ascetic is respected by us (therefore it is right to accept his word).

"But when you know for yourselves—these things are immoral, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken conduce to ruin and sorrow—then indeed do you reject them'.

"When you know for yourselves—these things are moral, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to well-being and happiness—then do you live acting accordingly."

These inspiring words of the Buddha still retain their original force and freshness.

Though there is no blind faith, one might argue whether there is no worshipping of images etc. in Buddhism.

Buddhists do not worship an image expecting worldly or spiritual favours, but pay their reverence to what it represents.

An understanding Buddhist, in offering flowers and incense to an image, designedly makes himself feel that he is in the presence of the living Buddha and thereby gains inspiration from His noble personality and breathes deep His boundless compassion. He tries to follow His noble example.

The Bo-tree is also a symbol of Enlightenment. These external objects of reverence are not absolutely necessary, but they are useful as they tend to concentrate one's attention. An intellectual person could dispense with them as he could easily focus his attention and visualise the Buddha.

For our own good, and out of gratitude, we pay such external respect but what the Buddha expects from His disciple is not so much obeisance as the actual observance of His Teachings. The Buddha says—"He honours me best who practises my teaching best." "He who sees the Dhamma sees me."

With regard to images, however, Count Keyserling remarks —"I see nothing more grand in this world than the image of the Buddha. It is an absolutely perfect embodiment of spirituality in the visible domain".

Furthermore, it must be mentioned that there are no petitional or intercessory prayers in Buddhism. However much we may pray to the Buddha we cannot be saved. The Buddha does not grant favours to those who pray to Him. Instead of petitional prayers there is meditation that leads to self-control, purification and enlightenment. Meditation is neither a silent reverie nor keeping the mind blank. It is an active striving. It serves as a tonic both to the heart and the mind. The Buddha not only speaks of the futility of offering prayers but also disparages a slave mentality. A Buddhist should not pray to be saved, but should rely on himself and win his freedom.

"Prayers take the character of private communications, selfish bargaining with God. It seeks for objects of earthly ambitions and inflames the sense of self. Meditation on the other hand is self-change".[1]

In Buddhism there is not, as in most other religions, an almighty God to be obeyed and feared. The Buddha does not believe in a cosmic potentate, omniscient and omnipresent. In Buddhism there are no divine revelations or divine messengers. A Buddhist is, therefore, not subservient to any higher supernatural power which controls his destinies and which arbitrarily rewards and punishes. Since Buddhists do not believe in revelations of a divine being Buddhism does not claim the monopoly of truth and does not condemn any

1 Sri Radhakrishnan

other religion. But Buddhism recognises the infinite latent possibilities of man and teaches that man can gain deliverance from suffering by his own efforts independent of divine help or mediating priests.

Buddhism cannot, therefore, strictly be called a religion because it is neither a system of faith and worship, nor "the outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a God or gods having power over their own destiny to whom obedience, service, and honour are due".

If, by religion, is meant "a teaching which takes a view of life that is more than superficial, a teaching which looks into life and not merely at it, a teaching which furnishes men with a guide to conduct that is in accord with this its in-look, a teaching which enables those who give it heed to face life with fortitude and death with serenity",[2] or a system to get rid of the ills of life, then it is certainly a religion of religions.

2 Bhikkhu Silacara

Chapter 4

IS BUDDHISM AN ETHICAL SYSTEM?

It no doubt contains an excellent ethical code which is unparalleled in its perfection and altruistic attitude. It deals with one way of life for the monks and another for the laity. But Buddhism is much more than an ordinary moral teaching. Morality is only the preliminary stage on the Path of Purity, and is a means to an end, but not an end in itself. Conduct, though essential, is itself insufficient to gain one's emancipation. It should be coupled with wisdom or knowledge (*Paññā*). The base of Buddhism is morality, and wisdom is its apex.

In observing the principles of morality a Buddhist should not only regard his own self but also should have a consideration for others as well—animals not excluded. Morality in Buddhism is not founded on any doubtful revelation nor is it the ingenious invention of an exceptional mind, but it is a rational and practical code based on verifiable facts and individual experience.

It should be mentioned that any external supernatural agency plays no part whatever in the moulding of the character of a Buddhist. In Buddhism there is no one to reward or punish. Pain or happiness are the inevitable results of one's actions. The question of incurring the pleasure or displeasure of a God does not enter the mind of a Buddhist. Neither hope of reward nor fear of punishment acts as an incentive to him to do good or to refrain from evil. A Buddhist is aware of future consequences, but he refrains from evil because it retards, does good because it aids progress to Enlightenment (Bodhi). There are also some who do good because it is good, refrain from evil because it is bad.

To understand the exceptionally high standard of morality the Buddha expects from His ideal followers, one must care-

fully read the Dhammapada, Sigalovada Sutta, Vyagghapajja Sutta, Mangala Sutta, Karaniya Sutta, Parabhava Sutta, Vasala Sutta, Dhammika Sutta, etc.

As a moral teaching it excels all other ethical systems, but morality is only the beginning and not the end of Buddhism.

In one sense Buddhism is not a philosophy, in another sense it is the philosophy of philosophies.

In one sense Buddhism is not a religion, in another sense it is the religion of religions.

Buddhism is neither a metaphysical path nor a ritualistic path.

It is neither sceptical nor dogmatic.

It is neither self-mortification nor self-indulgence.

It is neither pessimism nor optimism.

It is neither eternalism nor nihilism.

It is neither absolutely this-worldly nor other-worldly.

It is a unique Path of Enlightenment.

The original Pāli term for Buddhism is Dhamma, which, literally, means that which upholds. There is no English equivalent that exactly conveys the meaning of the Pāli term.

The Dhamma is that which really is. It is the Doctrine of Reality. It is a means of Deliverance from suffering, and Deliverance itself. Whether the Buddhas arise or not the Dhamma exists. It lies hidden from the ignorant eyes of men, till a Buddha, an Enlightened One, realizes and compassionately reveals it to the world.

This Dhamma is not something apart from oneself, but is closely associated with oneself. As such the Buddha exhorts:

"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 no external refuge". (*Parinibbāna Sutta.*)

Chapter 5

SOME SALIENT FEATURES OF BUDDHISM

The foundations of Buddhism are the four Noble Truths —namely, Suffering (the *raison d'être* of Buddhism), its cause, i.e. Craving, its end, i.e. Nibbana (the Summum Bonum of Buddhism), and the Middle Way.

What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?

"Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, to be separated from the pleasant is suffering, not to receive what one craves for is suffering, in brief the five Aggregates of Attachment are suffering.

What is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering?

"It is the craving which leads from rebirth to rebirth accompanied by lust of passion, which delights now here now there; it is the craving for sensual pleasures (*Kāmataṇhā*), for existence (*Bhavataṇhā*)[1] and for annihilation (*Vibhavataṇhā*).[2]

What is the Noble Truth of the Annihilation of Suffering?

"It is the remainderless, total annihilation of this very craving, the forsaking of it, the breaking loose, fleeing, deliverance from it.

What is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Annihilation of Suffering?

"It is the Noble Eightfold Path which consists of right understanding, right thoughts, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness, and right concentration".

1 Craving associated with "Eternalism" (*Sassataditthi*) (Comy).

2 Craving associated with "Nihilism" (*Ucchedaditthi*) (Comy).

Whether the Buddhas arise or not these four Truths exist in the universe. The Buddhas only reveal these Truths which lay hidden in the dark abyss of time.

Scientifically interpreted, the Dhamma may be called the law of cause and effect. These two embrace the entire body of the Buddha's Teachings.

The first three represent the philosophy of Buddhism; the fourth represents the ethics of Buddhism, based on that philosophy. All these four truths are dependent on this body itself. The Buddha states:— "In this very one-fathom long body along with perceptions and thoughts, do I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the end of the world and the path leading to the end of the world." Here the term world is applied to suffering.

Buddhism rests on the pivot of sorrow. But it does not thereby follow that Buddhism is pessimistic. It is neither totally pessimistic nor totally optimistic, but, on the contrary, it teaches a truth that lies midway between them. One would be justified in calling the Buddha a pessimist if He had only enunciated the Truth of suffering without suggesting a means to put an end to it. The Buddha perceived the universality of sorrow and did prescribe a panacea for this universal sickness of humanity. The highest conceivable happiness, according to the Buddha, is Nibbana, which is the total extinction of suffering.

The author of the article on Pessimism in the Encyclopaedia Britannica writes: "Pessimism denotes an attitude of hopelessness towards life, a vague general opinion that pain and evil predominate in human affairs. The original doctrine of the Buddha is in fact as optimistic as any optimism of the West. To call it pessimism is merely to apply to it a characteristically Western principle to which happiness is impossible without personality. The true Buddhist looks forward with enthusiasm to absorption into eternal bliss".

Ordinarily the enjoyment of sensual pleasures is the highest and only happiness of the average man. There is no doubt a

kind of momentary happiness in the anticipation, gratification and retrospection of such fleeting material pleasures, but they are illusive and temporary. According to the Buddha non-attachment is a greater bliss.

The Buddha does not expect His followers to be constantly pondering on suffering and lead a miserable unhappy life. He exhorts them to be always happy and cheerful, for zest (*Pīti*) is one of the factors of Enlightenment.

Real happiness is found within, and is not to be defined in terms of wealth, children, honours or fame. If such possessions are misdirected, forcibly or unjustly obtained, misappropriated or even viewed with attachment, they will be a source of pain and sorrow to the possessors.

Instead of trying to rationalise suffering, Buddhism takes suffering for granted and seeks the cause to eradicate it. Suffering exists as long as there is craving. It can only be annihilated by treading the Noble Eightfold Path and attaining the supreme bliss of Nibbana.

These four Truths can be verified by experience. Hence the Buddha Dhamma is not based on the fear of the unknown, but is founded on the bedrock of facts which can be tested by ourselves and verified by experience. Buddhism is, therefore, rational and intensely practical.

Such a rational and practical system cannot contain mysteries or esoteric doctrines. Blind faith, therefore, is foreign to Buddhism. Where there is no blind faith there cannot be any coercion or persecution or fanaticism. To the unique credit of Buddhism it must be said that throughout its peaceful march of 2500 years no drop of blood was shed in the name of the Buddha, no mighty monarch wielded his powerful sword to propagate the Dhamma, and no conversion was made either by force or by repulsive methods. Yet, the Buddha was the first and the greatest missionary that lived on earth.

Aldous Huxley writes:—"Alone of all the great world religions Buddhism made its way without persecution, censorship or inquisition."

Lord Russell remarks:—"Of the great religions of history, I prefer Buddhism, especially in its earliest forms; because it has had the smallest element of persecution."

In the name of Buddhism no altar was reddened with the blood of a Hypatia, no Bruno was burnt alive.

Buddhism appeals more to the intellect than to the emotion. It is concerned more with the character of the devotees than with their numerical strength.

On one occasion Upali, a follower of Nigantha Nataputta, approached the Buddha and was so pleased with the Buddha's exposition of the Dhamma that he instantly expressed his desire to become a follower of the Buddha. But the Buddha cautioned him, saying:—

"Of a verity, O householder, make a thorough investigation. It is well for a distinguished man like you to make (first) a thorough investigation."

Upali, who was overjoyed at this unexpected remark of the Buddha, said "Lord, had I been a follower of another religion, its adherents would have taken me round the streets in a procession proclaiming that such and such a millionaire had renounced his former faith and embraced theirs. But, Lord, Your Reverence advises me to investigate further. The more pleased am I with this remark of yours. For the second time, Lord, I seek refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Sangha".

Buddhism is saturated with this spirit of free enquiry and complete tolerance. It is the teaching of the open mind and the sympathetic heart, which, lighting and warming the whole universe with its twin rays of wisdom and compassion, sheds its genial glow on every being struggling in the ocean of birth and death.

The Buddha was so tolerant that He did not even exercise His power to give commandments to His lay followers. Instead of using the imperative, He said:— "It behoves you

to do this—It behoves you not to do this''. He commands not but does exhort.

This tolerance the Buddha extended to men, women and all living beings.

It was the Buddha who first attempted to abolish slavery and vehemently protested against the degrading caste-system which was firmly rooted in the soil of India . In the Word of the Buddha it is not by mere birth one becomes an outcast or a noble, but by one's actions. Caste or colour does not preclude one from becoming a Buddhist or from entering the Order. Fishermen, scavengers, courtesans, together with warriors and Brahmins, were freely admitted to the Order and enjoyed equal privileges and were also given positions of rank. Upali, the barber for instance, was made in preference to all others the chief in matters pertaining to Vinaya discipline. The timid Sunita, the scavenger, who attained Arahatship was admitted by the Buddha Himself into the Order. Angulimala, the robber and criminal, was converted to a compassionate saint. The fierce Alavaka sought refuge in the Buddha and became a saint. The courtesan Ambapali entered the Order and attained Arahatship. Such instances could easily be multiplied from the Tipitaka to show that the portals of Buddhism were wide open to all, irrespective of caste, colour or rank.

It was also the Buddha who raised the status of downtrodden women and not only brought them to a realization of their importance to society but also founded the first celibate religious order for women with rules and regulations.

The Buddha did not humiliate women, but only regarded them as feeble by nature. He saw the innate good of both men and women and assigned to them their due places in His teaching . Sex is no barrier to attaining Sainthood.

Sometimes the Pāli term used to denote women is ''*Mātugāma*'' which means mother-folk or society of mothers. As a mother, woman holds an honourable place in Buddhism.

Even the wife is regarded as "the best friend" (*paramā sakhā*) of the husband.

Hasty critics are only making ex parte statements when they reproach Buddhism with being inimical to women. Although at first the Buddha refused to admit women into the Order on reasonable grounds, yet later He yielded to the entreaties of His foster-mother, Pajapati Gotami, and founded the Bhikkhuni Order. Just as the Arahats Sariputta and Moggallana were made the two chief disciples in the Order of monks, even so He appointed Arahats Khemā and Uppalavannā as the two chief female disciples. Many other female disciples too were named by the Buddha Himself as His distinguished and pious followers.

On one occasion the Buddha said to King Kosala who was displeased on hearing that a daughter was born to him:—

> "A woman child, O Lord of men, may prove
> Even a better offspring than a male".

Many women, who otherwise would have fallen into oblivion, distinguished themselves in various ways, and gained their emancipation by following the Dhamma and entering the Order. In this new Order, which later proved to be a great blessing to many women, queens, princesses, daughters of noble families, widows, bereaved mothers, destitute women, pitiable courtesans—all, despite their caste or rank, met on a common platform, enjoyed perfect consolation and peace, and breathed that free atmosphere which is denied to those cloistered in cottages and palatial mansions.

It was also the Buddha who banned the sacrifice of poor beasts and admonished His followers to extend their loving kindness (*Mettā*) to all living beings—even to the tiniest creature that crawls at one's feet. No man has the power or the right to destroy the life of another as life is precious to all.

A genuine Buddhist would exercise this loving-kindness towards every living being and identify himself with all, making

no distinction whatsoever with regard to caste, colour or sex.

It is this Buddhist Mettā that attempts to break all the barriers which separate one from another. There is no reason to keep aloof from others merely because they belong to another persuasion or another nationality. In that noble Toleration Edict which is based on *Culla-Vyūha* and *Mahā-Vyūha* Suttas, Asoka says: "Concourse alone is best, that is, all should harken willingly to the doctrine professed by others".

Buddhism is not confined to any country or any particular nation. It is universal. It is not nationalism which, in other words, is another form of caste system founded on a wider basis. Buddhism, if it be permitted to say so, is super-nationalism.

To a Buddhist there is no far or near, no enemy or foreigner, no renegade or untouchable, since universal love realised through understanding has established the brotherhood of all living beings. A real Buddhist is a citizen of the world. He regards the whole world as his motherland and all as his brothers and sisters.

Buddhism is, therefore, unique, mainly owing to its tolerance, non-aggressiveness, rationality, practicability, efficacy and universality. It is the noblest of all unifying influences and the only lever that can uplift the world.

These are some of the salient features of Buddhism, and amongst some of the fundamental doctrines may be said—Kamma or the Law of Moral Causation, the Doctrine of Rebirth, Anatta and Nibbana.

Chapter 6

KAMMA OR THE LAW OF MORAL CAUSATION

We are faced with a totally ill-balanced world. We perceive the inequalities and manifold destinies of men and the numerous grades of beings that exist in the universe. We see one born into a condition of affluence, endowed with fine mental, moral and physical qualities and another into a condition of abject poverty and wretchedness. Here is a man virtuous and holy, but, contrary to his expectation, ill-luck is ever ready to greet him. The wicked world runs counter to his ambitions and desires. He is poor and miserable in spite of his honest dealings and piety. There is another vicious and foolish, but accounted to be fortune's darling. He is rewarded with all forms of favours, despite his shortcomings and evil modes of life.

Why, it may be questioned, should one be an inferior and another a superior? Why should one be wrested from the hands of a fond mother when he has scarcely seen a few summers, and another should perish in the flower of manhood, or at the ripe age of eighty or hundred? Why should one be sick and infirm, and another strong and healthy? Why should one be handsome, and another ugly and hideous, repulsive to all? Why should one be brought up in the lap of luxury, and another in absolute poverty, steeped in misery? Why should one be born a millionaire and another a pauper? Why should one be a mental prodigy, and another an idiot? Why should one be born with saintly characteristics, and another with criminal tendencies? Why should some be linguists, artists, mathematicians or musicians from the very cradle? Why should some be congenitally blind, deaf and deformed? Why should some be blessed and others cursed from their birth?

These are some problems that perplex the minds of all thinking men. How are we to account for all this unevenness of the world, this inequality of mankind?

Is it due to the work of blind chance or accident?

There is nothing in this world that happens by blind chance or accident. To say that anything happens by chance, is no more true than that this book has come here of itself. Strictly speaking, nothing happens to man that he does not deserve for some reason or other.

Could this be the fiat of an irresponsible Creator?

Huxley writes:—"If we are to assume that anybody has designedly set this wonderful universe going, it is perfectly clear to me that he is no more entirely benevolent and just, in any intelligible sense of the words, than that he is malevolent and unjust".

According to Einstein: "If this being (God) is omnipotent, then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also his work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an Almighty Being?

"In giving out punishments and rewards, he would to a certain extent be passing judgment on himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to him?

"According to the theological principles man is created arbitrarily and without his desire and at the moment of his creation is either blessed or damned eternally. Hence man is either good or evil, fortunate or unfortunate, noble or depraved, from the first step in the process of his physical creation to the moment of his last breath, regardless of his individual desires, hopes, ambitions, struggles or devoted prayers. Such is theological fatalism". (Spencer Lewis)

As Charles Bradlaugh says:—"The existence of evil is a terrible stumbling block to the Theist. Pain, misery, crime, poverty confront the advocate of eternal goodness and chal-

lenge with unanswerable potency his declaration of Deity as all-good, all-wise, and all-powerful''.

In the words of Schopenhauer:—''Whoever regards himself as having become out of nothing must also think that he will again become nothing; for an eternity has passed before he was, and then a second eternity had begun, through which he will never cease to be, is a monstrous thought.

''If birth is the absolute beginning, then death must be his absolute end; and the assumption that man is made out of nothing leads necessarily to the assumption that death is his absolute end.''

Commenting on human sufferings and God, Prof. J. B. S. Haldane writes:—''Either suffering is needed to perfect human character, or God is not Almighty. The former theory is disproved by the fact that some people who have suffered very little but have been fortunate in their ancestry and education have very fine characters. The objection to the second is that it is only in connection with the universe as a whole that there is any intellectual gap to be filled by the postulation of a deity. And a creator could presumably create whatever he or it wanted''.

Lord Russell states:—''The world, we are told, was created by a God who is both good and omnipotent. Before He created the world He foresaw all the pain and misery that it would contain. He is therefore responsible for all of it. It is useless to argue that the pain in the world is due to sin...If God knew in advance the sins of which man would be guilty, He was clearly responsible for all the consequences of those sins when He decided to create man.''

In 'Despair', a poem of his old age, Lord Tennyson thus boldly attacks God, who, as recorded in Isaiah, says, ''I make peace and create evil''. (Isaiah, xiv. 7).

> ''What! I should call on that infinite love that has
> served us so well?
> Infinite cruelty, rather, that made everlasting hell,

Made us, foreknew us, foredoomed us, and does what
he will with his own.
Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us
groan".

Surely "the doctrine that all men are sinners and have the essential sin of Adam is a challenge to justice, mercy, love and omnipotent fairness".

Some writers of old authoritatively declared that God created man in his own image. Some modern thinkers state, on the contrary, that man created God in his own image. With the growth of civilization man's concept of God also became more and more refined.

It is, however, impossible to conceive of such a being either in or outside the universe.

Could this variation be due to heredity and environment? One must admit that all such chemico-physical phenomena revealed by scientists, are partly instrumental, but they cannot be solely responsible for the subtle distinctions and vast differences that exist amongst individuals. Yet why should identical twins who are physically alike, inheriting like genes, enjoying the same privilege of upbringing, be very often temperamentally, morally and intellectually totally different?

Heredity alone cannot account for these vast differences. Strictly speaking, it accounts more plausibly for their similarities than for most of the differences. The infinitesimally minute chemico-physical germ, which is about 30 millionth part of an inch across, inherited from parents, explains only a portion of man, his physical foundation. With regard to the more complex and subtle mental, intellectual and moral differences we need more enlightenment. The theory of heredity cannot give a satisfactory explanation for the birth of a criminal in a long line of honourable ancestors, the birth of a saint or a noble man in a family of evil repute, for the arising

of infant prodigies, men of genius and great religious teachers.

According to Buddhism this variation is due not only to to heredity, environment, "nature and nurture", but also to our own kamma, or in other words, to the result of our own inherited past actions and our present deeds. We ourselves are responsible for our own deeds, happiness and misery. We build our own hells. We create our own heavens. We are the architects of our own fate. In short we ourselves are our own kamma.

[1]On one occasion a certain young man named Subha approached the Buddha, and questioned why and wherefore it was that among human beings there are the low and high states.

"For", said he, "we find amongst mankind those of brief life and those of long life, the hale and the ailing, the good-looking and the ill-looking, the powerful and the powerless, the poor and the rich, the low-born and the high-born, the ignorant and the intelligent".

The Buddha briefly replied: "Every living being has kamma as its own, its inheritance, its cause, its kinsman, its refuge. Kamma is that which differentiates all living beings into low and high states".

He then explained the cause of such differences in accordance with the law of moral causation.

Thus from a Buddhist standpoint, our present mental, intellectual, moral and temperamental differences are mainly due to our own actions and tendencies, both past and present.

Kamma, literally, means action; but, in its ultimate sense, it means the meritorious and demeritorious volition (*Kusala Akusala Cetanā*). Kamma constitutes both good and evil. Good begets good. Evil begets evil. Like attracts like. This is the law of Kamma.

1 *Cūlakamma Vibhanga Sutta—Majjhima Nikāya No. 135.*

As some Westerners prefer to say Kamma is "action-influence".

We reap what we have sown. What we sow we reap somewhere or somewhen. In one sense we are the result of what we were; we will be the result of what we are. In another sense, we are not totally the result of what we were; we will not absolutely be the result of what we are. For instance, a criminal today may be a saint tomorrow.

Buddhism attributes this variation to Kamma, but it does not assert that everything is due to Kamma.

If everything were due to Kamma, a man must ever be bad, for it is his Kamma to be bad. One need not consult a physician to be cured of a disease, for if one's Kamma is such one will be cured.

According to Buddhism, there are five orders or processes (*Niyāmas*) which operate in the physical and mental realms:—

i. *Kamma Niyāma*, order of act and result, e.g. desirable and undesirable acts produce corresponding good and bad results.

ii. *Utu Niyāma*, physical (inorganic) order, e.g. seasonal phenomena of winds and rains.

iii. *Bīja Niyāma*, order of germs or seeds (physical organic order); e.g., rice produced from rice-seed, sugary taste from sugar cane or honey etc. The scientific theory of cells and genes and the physical similarity of twins may be ascribed to this order.

iv. *Citta Niyāma*, order of mind or psychic law, e.g., processes of consciousness (*Citta Vīthi*), power of mind, etc.

v. *Dhamma Niyāma*, order of the norm, e.g. the natural phenomena occurring at the advent of a Bodhisatta in his last birth, gravitation, etc.

Every mental or physical phenomenon could be explained by these all-embracing five orders or processes which are laws in themselves.

Kamma is, therefore, only one of the five orders that prevail in the universe. It is a law in itself, but it does not thereby follow that there should be a law-giver. Ordinary laws of nature, like gravitation, need no law-giver. It operates in its own field without the intervention of an external independent ruling agency.

Nobody, for instance, has decreed that fire should burn. Nobody has commanded that water should seek its own level. No scientist has ordered that water should consist of H_2O, and that coldness should be one of its properties. These are their intrinsic characteristics. Kamma is neither fate nor predestination imposed upon us by some mysterious unknown power to which we must helplessly submit ourselves. It is one's own doing reacting on oneself, and so one has the possibility to divert the course of Kamma to some extent. How far one diverts it depends on oneself.

It must also be said that such phraseology as rewards and punishments should not be allowed to enter into discussions concerning the problem of Kamma. For Buddhism does not recognise an Almighty Being who rules His subjects and rewards and punishes them accordingly. Buddhists, on the contrary, believe that sorrow and happiness one experiences are the natural outcome of one's own good and bad actions. It should be stated that Kamma has both the continuative and the retributive principle.

Inherent in Kamma is the potentiality of producing its due effect. The cause produces the effect; the effect explains the cause. Seed produces the fruit; the fruit explains the seed as both are inter-related. Even so Kamma and its effect are inter-related; "the effect already blooms in the cause".

A Buddhist who is fully convinced of the doctrine of Kamma does not pray to another to be saved but confidently relies on himself for his purification because it teaches individual responsibility.

It is this doctrine of Kamma that gives him consolation, hope, self-reliance and moral courage. It is this belief in

Kamma "that validates his effort, kindles his enthusiasm", makes him ever kind, tolerant and considerate. It is also this firm belief in Kamma that prompts him to refrain from evil, do good and be good without being frightened of any punishment or tempted by any reward.

It is this doctrine of Kamma that can explain the problem of suffering, the mystery of so-called fate or predestination of other religions, and above all the inequality of mankind.

Kamma and rebirth are accepted as axiomatic.

Chapter 7

RE-BIRTH

As long as this Kammic force exists there is re-birth, for beings are merely the visible manifestation of this invisible Kammic force. Death is nothing but the temporary end of this temporary phenomenon. It is not the complete annihilation of this so-called being. The organic life has ceased, but the Kammic force which hitherto actuated it has not been destroyed. As the Kammic force remains entirely undisturbed by the distintegration of the fleeting body, the passing away of the present dying thought-moment only conditions a fresh consciousness in another birth.

It is Kamma, rooted in ignorance and craving, that conditions rebirth. Past Kamma conditions the present birth; and present Kamma, in combination with past Kamma, conditions the future. The present is the offspring of the past, and becomes, in turn, the parent of the future,

If we postulate a past, present, and a future life, then we are at once faced with the alleged mysterious problem—'What is the ultimate origin of life?'

Either there must be a beginning or there cannot be a beginning for life.

One school, in attempting to solve the problem, postulates a first cause, God, viewed as a force or as an Almighty Being.

Another school denies a first cause for, in common experience, the cause ever becomes the effect and the effect becomes the cause. In a circle of cause and effect a first cause is inconceivable. According to the former, life has had a beginning, according to the latter, it is beginningless.

From the scientific standpoint, we are the direct products of the sperm and ovum cells provided by our parents. As such life precedes life. With regard to the origin of the

first protoplasm of life, or colloid, scientists plead ignorance.

According to Buddhism we are born from the matrix of action (Kammayoni). Parents merely provide an infinitesimally small cell. As such being precedes being. At the moment of conception it is past Kamma that conditions the initial consciousness that vitalizes the foetus. It is this invisible Kammic energy, generated from the past birth that produces mental phenomena and the phenomenon of life in an already extant physical phenomenon, to complete the trio that constitutes man.

For a being to be born here a being must die somewhere. The birth of a being, which strictly means the arising of the five aggregates or psycho-physical phenomena in this present life, corresponds to the death of a being in a past life; just as, in conventional terms, the rising of the sun in one place means the setting of the sun in another place. This enigmatic statement may be better understood by imagining life as a wave and not as a straight line. Birth and death are only two phases of the same process. Birth precedes death, and death, on the other hand, precedes birth. The constant succession of birth and death in connection with each individual life flux constitutes what is technically known as *Samsāra*—recurrent wandering.

What is the ultimate origin of life?

The Buddha declares:—"Without cognizable end is this Samsāra. A first beginning of beings, who, obstructed by ignorance and fettered by craving, wander and fare on, is not to be perceived".

This life-stream flows *ad infinitum*, as long as it is fed by the muddy waters of ignorance and craving. When these two are completely cut off, then only, if one so wishes, does the stream cease to flow, rebirth ends as in the case of the Buddhas and Arahats. An ultimate beginning of this life-stream cannot be determined, as a stage cannot be perceived when this life-force was not fraught with ignorance and craving.

The Buddha has here referred merely to the beginning of the life-stream of living beings. It is left to scientists to speculate on the origin and the evolution of the universe. The Buddha does not attempt to solve all the ethical and philosophical problems that perplex mankind. Nor does He deal with theories and speculations that tend neither to edification nor to enlightenment. Nor does He demand blind faith from His adherents anent a First Cause. He is chiefly concerned with the problem of suffering and its destruction. With but this one practical and specific purpose in view, all irrelevant side issues are completely ignored.

But how are we to believe that there is a past existence?

The most valuable evidence Buddhists cite in favour of rebirth is the Buddha, for He developed a knowledge which enabled Him to read past and future lives.

Following His instructions, His disciples also developed this knowledge and were able to read their past lives to a great extent.

Even some Indian Rishis, before the advent of the Buddha, were distinguished for such psychic powers as clairaudience, clairvoyance, thought-reading, remembering past births etc.

There are also some persons, who probably in accordance with the laws of association, spontaneously develop the memory of their past birth, and remember fragments of their previous lives. Such cases are very rare, but those few well-attested, respectable cases tend to throw some light on the idea of a past birth. So are the experiences of some modern dependable psychists and strange cases of alternating and multiple personalities.

In hypnotic states some relate experiences of their past lives; while a few others, read the past lives of others and even heal diseases.[1]

Sometimes we get strange experiences which cannot be explained but by rebirth.

1 See—*Many Mansions* and *The World Within* by Gina Cerminara

How often do we meet persons whom we have never met, and yet instinctively feel that they are quite familiar to us? How often do we visit places, and yet feel impressed that we are perfectly acquainted with those surroundings?

The Buddha tells us:—

"Through previous associations or present advantage, that old love springs up again like the lotus in the water".

Experiences of some reliable modern psychists, ghostly phenomena, spirit communications, strange alternating and multiple personalities and so on shed some light upon this problem of rebirth.

Into this world come Perfect Ones like the Buddhas and highly developed personalities. Do they evolve suddenly? Can they be the products of a single existence?

How are we to account for great characters like Buddhaghosa, Panini, Kalidasa, Homer and Plato, men of genius like Shakespeare, infant prodigies like Pascal, Mozart, Beethoven, Raphael, Ramanujan, etc.?

Heredity alone cannot account for them. "Else their ancestry would disclose it, their posterity, even greater than themselves, demonstrate it".

Could they rise to such lofty heights if they had not lived noble lives and gained similar experiences in the past? Is it by mere chance that they are been born of those particular parents and placed under those favourable circumstances?

The few years that we are privileged to spend here, or for the most five score years, must certainly be an inadequate preparation for eternity.

If one believes in the present and in the future, it is quite logical to believe in the past. The present is the offspring of the past, and acts in turn as the parent of the future.

If there are reasons to believe that we have existed in the past, then surely there are no reasons to disbelieve that we shall

continue to exist after our present life has apparently ceased.

It is indeed a strong argument in favour of past and future lives that "in this world virtuous persons are very often unfortunate and vicious persons prosperous."

A Western writer says:

"Whether we believe in a past existence or not, it forms the only reasonable hypothesis which bridges certain gaps in human knowledge concerning certain facts of every day life. Our reason tells us that this idea of past birth and Kamma alone can explain the degrees of difference that exist between twins, how men like Shakespeare with a very limited experience are able to portray with marvellous exactitude the most diverse types of human character, scenes and so forth of which they could have no actual knowledge. why the work of the genius invariably transcends his experience. the existence of infant precocity, the vast diversity in mind and morals, in brain and physique, in conditions, circumstances and environment observable throughout the world. and so forth".

It should be stated that this doctrine of rebirth can neither be proved nor disproved experimentally. but it is accepted as an evidentially verifiable fact.

The cause of this Kamma, continues the Buddha, is *avijjā* or ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Ignorance is, therefore, the cause of birth and death; and its transmutation into knowingness or vijjā is consequently their cessation.

The result of this analytical method is summed up in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda.*

Chapter 8

PATICCA SAMUPPADA

Paṭicca means because of, or dependent upon: *Samuppāda* "arising or origination". *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, therefore, literally means—"Dependent-Arising" or "Dependent Origination".

It must be borne in mind that *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is only a discourse on the process of birth and death and not a theory of the ultimate origin of life. It deals with the cause of rebirth and suffering, but it does not in the least attempt to show the evolution of the world from primordial matter.

Ignorance (*Avijjā*) is the first link or cause of the wheel of life. It clouds all right understanding.

Dependent on ignorance of the Four Noble Truths arise activities (*Sankhārā*)—both moral and immoral. The activities whether good or bad rooted in ignorance which must necessarily have their due effects, only tend to prolong life's wandering. Nevertheless, good actions are essential to get rid of the ills of life.

Dependent on activities arises re-birth consciousness (*Viññāṇa*). This links the past with the present.

Simultaneous with the arising of rebirth-consciousness there come into being mind and body (*Nāma-rūpa*).

The six senses (*Saḷāyatana*) are the inevitable consequences of mind and body.

Because of the six senses contact (*Phassa*) sets in. Contact leads to feeling (*Vedanā*).

These five, viz., consciousness, mind and matter, six senses, contact and feeling are the effects of past actions and are called the passive side of life.

Dependent on feeling arises craving (*Tanhā*). Craving results in grasping (*Upādāna*). Grasping is the cause of

Kamma (*Bhava*) which in its turn, conditions future birth (*Jāti*). Birth is the inevitable cause of old age and death (*Jarā-maraṇa*).

If on account of cause effect comes to be, then if the cause ceases, the effect also must cease.

The reverse order of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* will make the matter clear.

Old age and death are possible in, and with, a psycho-physical organism. Such an organism must be born; therefore it pre-supposes birth. But birth is the inevitable result of past deeds or Kamma Kamma is conditioned by grasping which is due to craving. Such craving can appear only where feeling exists. Feeling is the outcome of contact between the senses and objects. Therefore it presupposes organs of senses which cannot exist without mind and body. Where there is a mind there is consciousness. It is the result of past good and evil. The acquisition of good and evil is due to ignorance of things as they truly are.

The whole formula may be summed up thus: –

Dependent on Ignorance arise Activities (Moral and Immoral).
,, ,, Activities arises Consciousness (Re-birth Consciousness).
,, ,, Consciousness arise Mind and Matter.
,, ,, Mind and Matter arise the six Spheres of Sense.
,, ,, the Six Spheres of Sense arises Contact.
,, ,, Contact arises Feeling.
,, ,, Feeling arises Craving.
,, ,, Craving arises Grasping.
,, ,, Grasping arise Actions (Kamma).
,, ,, Actions arises Re-birth.
,, ,, Birth arise Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair.

Thus does the entire aggregate of suffering arise. The first two of these twelve pertain to the past, the middle eight to the present, and the last two to the future.

The complete cessation of Ignorance leads to the cessation of Activities.

The cessation of Activities leads to the cessation of Consciousness.

,, ,, ,, Consciousness leads to the cessation of mind and matter.

,, ,, ,, Mind and Matter leads to the cessation of the six Spheres of Sense.

,, ,, ,, the six Spheres of Sense leads to the cessation of contact.

,, ,, ,, Contact leads to the cessation of Feeling.

,, ,, ,, Feeling leads to the cessation of Craving.

,, ,, ,, Craving leads to the cessation of Grasping.

,, ,, ,, Grasping leads to the cessation of Actions.

,, ,, ,, Actions leads to the cessation of Re-birth.

,, ,, ,, Re-birth leads to the cessation of Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief, and Despair.

Thus does the cessation of this entire aggregate of suffering result.

This process of cause and effect continues ad infinitum. The beginning of this process cannot be determined as it is impossible to say whence this life-flux was encompassed by nescience. But when this nescience is turned into knowledge, and the life-flux is diverted into Nibbāna-dhātu, then the end of the life process or *Samsāra* comes about.

Chapter 9

ANATTA OR SOUL-LESSNESS

This Buddhist doctrine of re-birth should be distinguished from the theory of re-incarnation which implies the transmigration of a soul and its invariable material rebirth. Buddhism denies the existence of an unchanging or eternal soul created by a God or emanating from a Divine Essence (*Paramātma*).

If the immortal soul, which is supposed to be the essence of man, is eternal, there cannot be either a rise or a fall. Besides one cannot understand why "different souls are so variously constituted at the outset".

To prove the existence of endless felicity in an eternal heaven and unending torments in an eternal hell, an immortal soul is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, what is it that is punished in hell or rewarded in heaven?

"It should be said", writes Bertrand Russell, "that the old distinction between soul and body has evaporated quite as much because 'matter' has lost its solidity as mind has lost its spirituality. Psychology is just beginning to be scientific. In the present state of psychology belief in immortality can at any rate claim no support from science".

Buddhists do agree with Russell when he says "there is obviously some reason in which I am the same person as I was yesterday, and, to take an even more obvious example, if I simultaneously see a man and hear him speaking, there is some sense in which the 'I' that sees is the same as the 'I' that hears".

Till recently scientists believed in an indivisible and indestructible atom. "For sufficient reasons physicists have reduced this atom to a series of events. For equally good reasons psychologists find that mind has not the identity of a

single continuing thing but is a series of occurrences bound together by certain intimate relations. The question of immortality, therefore, has become the question whether these intimate relations exist between occurrences connected with a living body and other occurrences which take place after that body is dead''.

As C. E. M. Joad says in 'The Meaning of Life', matter has since disintegrated under our very eyes. It is no longer solid; it is no longer enduring, it is no longer determined by compulsive causal laws; and more important than all, it is no longer known.

The so-called atoms, it seems, are both ''divisible and destructible''. The electrons and protons that compose atoms ''can meet and annihilate one another while their persistence, such as it is, is rather that of a wave lacking fixed boundaries, and in process of continual change both as regards shape and position than that of a thing.''[1]

Bishop Berkeley who showed that this so-called atom is a metaphysical fiction held that there exists a spiritual substance called the soul.

Hume, for instance, looked into consciousness and perceived that there was nothing except fleeting mental states and concluded that the supposed 'permanent ego' is non-existent.

''There are some philosophers'', he says, ''who imagine we are every moment conscious of what we call 'ourself', that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence and so we are certain...both of its perfect identity and simplicity. For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call 'myself' I always stumble on some particular perception or other—of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself...and never can observe anything but the perception...nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a perfect non-entity''.

1 C.E.M. Joad, *The Meaning of Life*.

Bergson says, "All consciousness is time existence; and a conscious state is not a state that endures without changing. It is a change without ceasing, when change ceases it ceases; it is itself nothing but change."

Dealing with this question of soul Prof. James says—"The soul-theory is a complete superfluity, so far as accounting for the actually verified facts of conscious experience goes. So far no one can be compelled to subscribe to it for definite scientific reasons". In concluding his interesting chapter on the soul he says:—"And in this book the provisional solution which we have reached must be the final word: the thoughts themselves are the thinkers".

Watson, a distinguished psychologist, states:— "No one has ever touched a soul or has seen one in a test tube, or has in any way come into relationship with it as he has with the other objects of his daily experience. Nevertheless to doubt its existence is to become a heretic and once might possibly even had led to the loss of one's head. Even today a man holding a public position dare not question it".

The Buddha anticipated these facts some 2500 years ago.

According to Buddhism mind is nothing but a complex compound of fleeting mental states. One unit of consciousness consists of three phases—arising or genesis (*uppāda*) static or development (*ṭhiti*), and cessation or dissolution (*bhanga*). Immediately after the cessation stage of a thought-moment there occurs the genesis stage of the subsequent thought-moment. Each momentary consciousness of this ever-changing life-process, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions to its successor. Every fresh consciousness consists of the potentialities of its predecessors together with something more. There is, therefore, a continuous flow of consciousness like a stream without any interruption. The subsequent thought-moment is neither absolutely the same as its predecessor—since that which goes to make it up is not identical—nor entirely another—being the same continuity of Kamma energy.

Here there is no identical being but there is an identity in process.

Every moment there is birth, every moment there is death. The arising of one thought-moment means the passing away of another thought-moment and vice versa. In the course of one life-time there is momentary rebirth without a soul.

It must not be understood that a consciousness is chopped up in bits and joined together like a train or a chain. But, on the contrary, "it persistently flows on like a river receiving from the tributary streams of sense constant accretions to its flood, and ever dispensing to the world without it the thought-stuff it has gathered by the way".[1] It has birth for its source and death for its mouth. The rapidity of the flow is such that hardly is there any standard whereby it can be measured even approximately. However, it pleases the commentators to say that the time duration of one thought-movement is even less than one-billionth part of the time occupied by a flash of lightning.

Here we find a juxta-position of such fleeting mental states of consciousness opposed to a super-position of such states as some appear to believe. No state once gone ever recurs nor is identical with what goes before. But we worldlings, veiled by the web of illusion, mistake this apparent continuity to be something eternal and go to the extent of introducing an unchanging soul, an Attā, the supposed doer and receptacle of all actions to this ever-changing consciousness.

"The so-called being is like a flash of lightning that is resolved into a succession of sparks that follow upon one another with such rapidity that the human retina cannot perceive them separately, nor can the uninstructed conceive of such succession of separate sparks".[2] As the wheel of a cart rests on the ground at one point, so does the being live only for one thought-moment. It is always in the present, and is

1 See *Compendium of Philosophy*, Tr. by Shwe Zan Aung (Pali Text Society, London)—Introduction p. 12

2 Compare the cinematograph film where individual photographs give rise to a notion of movement.

ever slipping into the irrevocable past. What we shall become is determined by this present thought-moment.

If there is no soul, what is it that is reborn? one might ask.

Well, there is nothing to be re-born. When life ceases the Kammic energy re-materialises itself in another form. As Bhikkhu Silacara says: "Unseen it passes whithersoever the conditions appropriate to its visible manifestation are present. Here showing itself as a tiny gnat or worm, there making its presence known in the dazzling magnificence of a Deva or an Archangel's existence. When one mode of its manifestation ceases it merely passes on, and where suitable circumstances offer, reveals itself afresh in another name or form."

Birth is the arising of the psycho-physical phenomena. Death is merely the temporary end of a temporary phenomenon.

Just as the arising of a physical state is conditioned by a preceding state as its cause, so the appearance of psycho-physical phenomena is conditioned by causes anterior to its birth. As the process of one life-span is possible without a permanent entity passing from one thought-moment to another, so a series of life-processes is possible without an immortal soul to transmigrate from one existence to another.

Buddhism does not totally deny the existence of a personality in an empirical sense. It only attempts to show that it does not exist in an ultimate sense. The Buddhist philosophical term for an individual is Santāna, i.e., a flux or a continuity. It includes the mental and physical elements as well. The Kammic force of each individual binds the elements together. This uninterrupted flux or continuity of psycho-physical phenomenon, which is conditioned by Kamma, and not limited only to the present life, but having its source in the beginningless past and its continuation in the future —is the Buddhist substitute for the permanent ego or the immortal soul of other religions.

Chapter 10

NIBBĀNA

This process of birth and death continues *ad infinitum* until this flux is transmuted, so to say, to Nibbānadhātu, the ultimate goal of Buddhists.

The Pali word Nibbāna is formed of *Ni* and *Vāna*. *Ni* is a negative particle and *Vāna* means lusting or craving. "It is called Nibbāna, in that it is a departure from the craving which is called *Vāna*, lusting". Literally, Nibbāna means non-attachment.

It may also be defined as the extinction of lust, hatred and ignorance. "The whole world is in flames", says the Buddha. "By what fire is it kindled? By the fire of lust, hatred and ignorance, by the fire of birth, old age, death, pain, lamentation, sorrow, grief and despair it is kindled."

It should not be understood that Nibbāna is a state of nothingness or annihilation owing to the fact that we cannot perceive it with our worldly knowledge. One cannot say that there exists no light just because the blind man does not see it. In that well known story, too, the fish arguing with his friend, the turtle, triumphantly concluded that there exists no land.

Nibbāna of the Buddhists is neither a mere nothingness nor a state of annihilation, but what it is no words can adequately express. Nibbāna is a Dhamma which is "unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, and unformed". Hence it is eternal (*Dhuva*), desirable (*Subha*), and happy (*Sukha*).

In Nibbāna nothing is "eternalised", nor is anything "annihilated," besides suffering.

According to the Books references are made to Nibbāna as *Sopādisesa* and *Anupādisesa*. These, in fact, are not two kinds of Nibbāna, but the one single Nibbāna, receiving its

name according to the way it is experienced before and after death.

Nibbāna is not situated in any place nor is it a sort of heaven where a transcendental ego resides. It is a state which is dependent upon this body itself. It is an attainment (Dhamma) which is within the reach of all. Nibbāna is a supramundane state attainable even in this present life. Buddhism does not state that this ultimate goal could be reached only in a life beyond. Here lies the chief difference between the Buddhist conception of Nibbāna and the non-Buddhist conception of an eternal heaven attainable only after death or a union with a God or Divine Essence in an after-life. When Nibbāna is realized in this life with the body remaining, it is called *Sopādisesa Nibbāna-dhātu.* When an Arahat attains Parinibbāna, after the dissolution of his body, without any remainder of physical existence it is called *Anupādisesa Nibbāna-dhātu.*

In the words of Sir Edwin Arnold—

"If any teach Nirvana is to cease
Say unto such they lie.
If any teach Nirvana is to live
Say unto such they err".

From a metaphysical standpoint Nibbāna is deliverance from suffering. From a psychological standpoint Nibbāna is the eradication of egoism. From an ethical standpoint Nibbāna is the destruction of lust, hatred and ignorance.

Does the Arahat exist or not after death?

The Buddha replies—"The Arahat who has been released from the five aggregates is deep, immeasurable like the mighty ocean. To say that he is reborn would not fit the case. To say that he is neither reborn nor not reborn would not fit the case."

One cannot say that an Arhat is reborn as all passions that condition rebirth are eradicated; nor can one say that the Arahat is annihilated for there is nothing to annihilate.

Robert Oppenheimer, a scientist, writes:—

"If we ask, for instance, whether the position of the electron remains the same, we must say 'no', if we ask whether the electron's position changes with time, we must say 'no'; if we ask whether the electron is at rest, we must say 'no'; if we ask whether it is in motion, we must say 'no'.

"The Buddha has given such answers when interrogated as to the conditions of man's self after death;[1] but they are not familiar answers from the tradition of the 17th and 18th century science".

1 Evidently the writer is referring to the state of an Arahat after death.

Chapter 11

THE PATH TO NIBBĀNA

How is Nibbāna to be attained?

It is by following the Noble Eight-fold Path which consists of Right Understanding (*sammā-diṭṭhi*), Right Thoughts (*sammā-sankappa*), Right Speech (*sammā-vācā*), Right Actions (*sammā-kammanta*), Right Livelihood (*sammā-ājīva*), Right Effort (*sammā-vāyāma*), Right Mindfulness (*sammā-sati*) and Right Concentration (*sammā-samādhi*).

1. *Right Understanding*, which is the key-note of Buddhism, is explained as the knowledge of the four Noble Truths. To understand rightly means to understand things as they really are and not as they appear to be. This refers primarily to a correct understanding of oneself, because, as the Rohitassa Sutta states "Dependent on this one-fathom long body with its consciousness" are all the four Truths. In the practice of the Noble Eight-fold Path, Right Understanding stands at the beginning as well as at its end. A minimum degree of Right Understanding is necessary at the very beginning because it gives the right motivations to the other seven factors of the Path and gives to them correct direction. At the culmination of the practice, Right Understanding has matured into perfect Insight Wisdom(*vipassanā-paññā*), leading directly to the Stages of Sainthood.

2. Clear vision or right understanding leads to clear thinking. The second factor of the Noble Eight-fold Path is, therefore, *Right Thoughts* (*sammā-sankappa*), which serves the double purpose of eliminating evil thoughts and developing pure thoughts. Right Thoughts, in this particular connection, are threefold. They consist of:

i. *Nekkhamma*—Renunciation of worldly pleasures or the virtue of selflessness, which is opposed to attachment, selfishness, and possessiveness.

ii. *Avyāpāda*—Lovingkindness, goodwill, or benevolence, which is opposed to hatred, ill-will, or aversion; and

iii. *Avihiṁsā*—Harmlessness or compassion, which is opposed to cruelty and callousness.

3. Right Thoughts lead to *Right Speech*, the third factor. This includes abstinence from falsehood, slandering, harsh words, and frivolous talk.

4. Right Speech must be followed by *Right Action* which comprises abstinence from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.

5. Purifying his thoughts, words and deeds at the outset, the spiritual pilgrim tries to purify his *livelihood* by refraining from the five kinds of trade which are forbidden to a lay-disciple. They are trading in arms, human beings, animals for slaughter, intoxicating drinks and drugs, and poisons.

For monks, wrong livelihood consists of hypocritical conduct and wrong means of obtaining the requisites of monk-life.

6. *Right Effort* is fourfold, namely,

i. The endeavour to discard evil that has already arisen;
ii. the endeavour to prevent the arising of unarisen evil;
iii. the endeavour to develop unarisen good;
iv. the endeavour to promote the good which has already arisen.

7. *Right Mindfulness* is constant mindfulness with regard to body, feelings, thoughts, and mind-objects.

8. Right Effort and Right Mindfulness lead to *Right Concentration*. It is the one-pointedness of mind, culminating in the Jhānas or meditative absorptions.

Of these eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path the first two are grouped under the heading of Wisdom (*paññā*), the following three under Morality (*sīla*), and the last three under

Concentration (*samādhi*). But according to the order of development the sequence is as follows:

I. Morality (*sīla*)	Right Speech Right Action Right Livelihood
II. Concentration (*samādhi*)	Right Effort Right Mindfulness Right Concentration
III. Wisdom (*paññā*)	Right Understanding Right Thoughts

Morality (*sīla*) is the first stage on this path to Nibbāna. Without killing or causing injury to any living creature, man should be kind and compassionate towards all, even to the tiniest creature that crawls at his feet. Refraining from stealing, he should be upright and honest in all his dealings. Abstaining from sexual misconduct which debases the exalted nature of man, he should be pure. Shunning false speech, he should be truthful. Avoiding pernicious drinks that promote heedlessness, he should be sober and diligent.

These elementary principles of regulated behaviour are essential to one who treads the path to Nibbāna. Violation of them means the introduction of obstacles on the path which will obstruct his moral progress. Observance of them means steady and smooth progress along the path.

The spiritual pilgrim, disciplining thus his words and deeds, may advance a step further and try to control his senses.

While he progresses slowly and steadily with regulated word and deed and restrained senses, the Kammic force of this striving aspirant may compel him to renounce worldly pleasures and adopt the ascetic life. To him then comes the idea that

"A den of strife is household life,
And filled with toil and need;
But free and high as the open sky
Is the life the homeless lead".

It should not be understood that everyone is expected to lead the life of a Bhikkhu or a celibate life to achieve one's goal. One's spiritual progress is expedited by being a Bhikkhu although as a lay follower one can become an Arahat. After attaining the third stage of Sainthood, one leads a life of celibacy.

Securing a firm footing on the ground of morality, the progressing pilgrim then embarks upon the higher practice of Samādhi, the control and culture of the mind—the second stage on this Path.

Samādhi—is the "one-pointedness of the mind". It is the concentration of the mind on one object to the entire exclusion of all irrelevant matter.

There are different subjects for meditation according to the temperaments of the individuals. Concentration on respiration is the easiest to gain the one-pointedness of the mind. Meditation on loving-kindness is very beneficial as it is conducive to mental peace and happiness.

Cultivation of the four sublime states—loving-kindness (*Mettā*), compassion (*Karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*Muditā*), and equanimity (*Upekkhā*)—is highly commendable.

After giving careful consideration to the subject for contemplation, he should choose the one most suited to his temperament. This being satisfactorily settled, he makes a persistent effort to focus his mind until he becomes so wholly absorbed and interested in it, that all other thoughts get ipso facto excluded from the mind. The five hindrances to progress—namely, sense-desire, hatred, sloth and torpor, restlessness and brooding and doubts are then temporarily inhibited. Eventually he gains ecstatic concentration and, to his indes-

cribable joy, becomes enwrapt in Jhāna, enjoying the calmness and serenity of a one-pointed-mind.

When one gains this perfect one-pointedness of the mind it is possible for one to develop the five Supernormal Powers (*Abhiññā*)—Divine Eye (*Dibbacakkhu*), Divine Ear (*Dibbasota*), Reminiscence of past births (*Pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*), Thought Reading (*Paracitta-vijānana*), and different Psychic Powers (*Iddhividha*). It must not be understood that those supernormal powers are essential for Sainthood.

Though the mind is now purified there still lies dormant in him the tendency to give vent to his passions, for, by concentration, passions are lulled to sleep temporarily. They may rise to the surface at unexpected moments.

Both Discipline and Concentration are helpful to clear the Path of its obstacles but it is Insight (*Vipassanā Paññā*) alone which enables one to see things as they truly are, and consequently reach the ultimate goal by completely annihilating the passions inhibited by Samādhi. This is the third and the final stage on the Path to Nibbāna.

With his one-pointed mind which now resembles a polished mirror he looks at the world to get a correct view of life. Wherever he turns his eyes he sees nought but the Three Characteristics—*Anicca* (transiency), *Dukkha* (sorrow) and *Anattā* (soul-lessness) standing out in bold relief. He comprehends that life is constantly changing and all conditioned things are transient. Neither in heaven nor on earth does he find any genuine happiness, for every form of pleasure is a prelude to pain. What is transient is therefore painful, and where change and sorrow prevail, there cannot be a permanent immortal soul.

Whereupon, of these three characteristics, he chooses one that appeals to him most and intently keeps on developing Insight in that particular direction until that glorious day comes to him when he would realize Nibbāna for the first time in his life, having destroyed the three Fetters—self-

illusion (*Sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), doubts (*Vicikicchā*), indulgence in (wrongful) rites and ceremonies (*Sīlabbataparāmāsa*).

At this stage he is called a *Sotāpanna* (Stream-Winner) —one who has entered the stream that leads to Nibbāna. As he has not eradicated all Fetters he is reborn seven times at the most.

Summoning up fresh courage, as a result of this glimpse of Nibbāna, the Pilgrim makes rapid progress and cultivating deeper Insight becomes a *Sakadāgāmi*—(Once Returner)—by weakening two more Fetters—namely, Sense-desire (*Kāmarāga*) and ill-will (*Paṭigha*). He is called a Sakadagami because he is reborn on earth only once in case he does not attain Arahatship.

It is in the third stage of Sainthood—*Anāgāmi* (Never-Returner) that he completely discards the aforesaid two Fetters. Thereafter, he neither returns to this world nor does he seek birth in the celestial realms, since he has no more desire for sensual pleasures. After death he is reborn in the "Pure Abodes" (*Suddhāvāsa*), a congenial Brahma plane, till he attains Arahatship.

Now the saintly pilgrim, encouraged by the unprecedented success of his endeavours, makes his final advance and destroying the remaining Fetters, namely, lust after life in Realms of Forms (*Rūparāga*) and Formless Realms (*Arūparāga*), conceit (*Māna*), restlessness (*Uddhacca*), and ignorance (*Avijjā*) becomes a perfect Saint—an Arahat, a Worthy One.

Instantly he realizes that what was to be accomplished has been done, that a heavy burden of sorrow has been relinquished, that all forms of attachment have been totally annihilated, and that the Path to Nibbāna has been trodden. The Worthy-One now stands on heights more than celestial, far removed from the rebellious passions and defilements of the world, realizing the unutterable bliss of Nibbāna and like many an Arahat of old, uttering that paean of joy:—

"Goodwill and wisdom, mind by method trained,

The highest conduct on good morals based,
This maketh mortals pure, not rank or wealth''.

As T. H. Huxley states—''Buddhism is a system which knows no God in the western sense, which denies a soul to man, which counts the belief in immortality a blunder, which refuses any efficacy to prayer and sacrifice, which bids men look to nothing but their own efforts for salvation, which in its original purity knew nothing of vows of obedience and never sought the aid of the secular arm: yet spread over a considerable moiety of the world with marvellous rapidity—and is still the dominant creed of a large fraction of mankind.''

APPENDIX

CONCENTRATION ON RESPIRATION

Ānāpāna Sati

Ānāpāna Sati is mindfulness on respiration. *Āna* means inhalation and *Apāna*, exhalation.

Concentration on the breathing process leads to one-pointedness of the mind and ultimately to Insight which enables one to attain Sainthood or Arahatship.

The Buddha also practised concentration on respiration before He attained Enlightenment.

This harmless concentration may be practised by any person irrespective of religious beliefs.

Adopting a convenient posture, keep the body erect. Place the right hand over the left hand. Eyes may be closed or half-closed.

Easterners generally sit cross-legged with the body erect. They sit placing the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. This is the full position. Sometimes they adopt the half position, that is by simply placing the right foot on the left thigh or the left foot on the right thigh.

When the triangular position is assumed the whole body is well-balanced.

Those who find the cross-legged posture too difficult may sit comfortably in a chair or any other support sufficiently high to rest the legs on the ground.

It is of no importance which posture one may adopt provided the position is easy and relaxed.

Head should not be drooping. Neck should be straightened so that the nose may be in a perpendicular line with the navel.

Buddhas usually adopt the full lotus position. They sit with half closed eyes looking not more than a distance of three and half feet.

Before the practice, bad air from the lungs should be breathed out slowly through the mouth and then the mouth should be closed.

Now inhale through the nostrils normally, without strain, without force. Mentally count one. Exhale and count two. Inhale and count three. Count up to ten constantly concentrating on the breathing process without thinking of anything else. While doing so one's mind may wander. But, one need not be discouraged. Gradually one may increase the number of series—say five series of ten.

Later, one may inhale and pause for a moment, concentrating merely on inhalation without counting. Exhale and pause for a moment. Thus inhale and exhale concentrating on respiration. Some prefer counting as it aids concentration while others prefer not to count. What is essential is concentration and not counting which is secondary.

When one practises this concentration one feels very peaceful, light in mind and body. After practising for a certain period a day might come when one may realize that this so-called body is supported by mere breath and that body perishes when breathing ceases. One fully realizes impermanence. Where there is change there cannot be a permanent entity or an immortal soul. Insight can then be developed to attain Arahatship.

It is clear that the object of this concentration on respiration is not merely to gain one-pointedness but also to cultivate Insight to obtain deliverance from suffering.

In some discourses this simple and harmless method of respiration is described as follows:—

"Mindfully he inhales; mindfully he exhales.

1. When making a long inhalation he knows: 'I make a long inhalation'; when making a long exhalation he knows: 'I make a long exhalation'.

2. When making a short inhalation he knows: 'I make a short inhalation'; when making a short exhalation he knows; 'I make a short exhalation'.

3. Clearly perceiving the entire breathing process (i.e., the beginning, middle and end), 'I will inhale'; thus he trains himself; clearly perceiving the entire breathing process, 'I will exhale'; thus he trains himself'.

4. Calming the respirations, 'I will inhale': thus he trains himself; calming the respirations, 'I will exhale': thus he trains himself.''

MEDITATION ON LOVING-KINDNESS (*Mettā*)

Be still and peaceful.
Recite three times—*Namo Buddhāya*—(Honour to the Buddha)
Recite three times—*Arahaṁ*—(The Pure One)
Recite—

Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi—(I go to the Buddha for refuge)
Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi—(I go to the Dhamma for refuge)
Sanghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi—(I go to the Sangha for refuge)[1]

* * *

Think thus—

My mind is temporarily pure, free from all impurities; free from lust, hatred and ignorance; free from all evil thoughts.

My mind is pure and clean. Like a polished mirror is my stainless mind.

As a clean and empty vessel is filled with pure water I now fill my clean heart and pure mind with peaceful and sublime thoughts of boundless loving-kindness, overflowing compassion, sympathetic joy and perfect equanimity.

I have now washed my mind and heart of anger, illwill, cruelty, violence, jealousy, envy, passion and aversion.

Think ten times—

May I[2] be well and happy!
May I be free from suffering, disease, grief, worry and anger!
May I be strong, self-confident, healthy and peaceful!

1 This introductory part may be omitted by non-Buddhists.
2 Here the term "I" is used in a conventional sense.

Think thus—

Now I charge every particle of my system, from head to foot, with thoughts of boundless loving-kindness and compassion. I am the embodiment of loving-kindness and compassion. My whole body is saturated with loving-kindness and compassion. I am a stronghold, a fortress of loving-kindness and compassion. I am nothing but loving-kindness and compassion. I have sublimated myself, elevated myself, ennobled myself.

Think ten times—

May I be well and happy!

May I be free from suffering, disease, grief, worry and anger!

May I be strong, self-confident, healthy and peaceful!

Think—

Mentally I create an aura of loving-kindness around me. By means of this aura, I cut off all negative thoughts, hostile vibrations. I am not affected by the evil vibrations of others. I return good for evil, loving-kindness for anger, compassion for cruelty, sympathetic joy for jealousy. I am peaceful and well-balanced in mind. Now I am a fortress of loving-kindness, a stronghold of morality.

What I have gained I now give unto others.

Think of all your near and dear ones at home, individually or collectively, and fill them with thoughts of loving-kindness, and wish them peace and happiness, repeating May all beings be well and happy!...Then think of all seen and unseen beings, living near and far, men, women, animals and all living beings, in the East, West, North, South, above and below, and radiate boundless loving-kindness, without any enmity or obstruction, towards all, irrespective of class, creed, colour or sex.

Think that all are your brothers and sisters, fellow-beings in the ocean of life. You identify yourself with all. You are one with all.

Repeat ten times—May all beings be well and happy... and wish them all peace and happiness.

In the course of your daily life try to translate your thoughts into action as occasion demands.

PERFECTIONS (*Pārami*)

1. May I be generous and helpful! (*Dāna*—Generosity)
2. May I be well-disciplined and refined in manners! May I be pure and clean in all my dealings! May my thoughts, words and deeds be pure!
   (*Sīla*—Morality)
3. May I not be selfish and self-possessive but selfless and disinterested!
   May I be able to sacrifice my pleasure for the sake of others!
   (*Nekkhamma*—Renunciation)
4. May I be wise and be able to see things as they truly are! May I see the light of Truth and lead others from darkness to light! May I be enlightened and be able to enlighten others! May I be able to give the benefit of my knowledge to others!
   (*Paññā*—Wisdom)
5. May I be energetic, vigorous and persevering ! May I strive diligently until I achieve my goal! May I be fearless in facing dangers and courageously surmount all obstacles! May I be able to serve others to the best of my ability!
   (*Viriya*—Energy)
6. May I ever be patient! May I be able to bear and forbear the wrongs of others! May I ever be tolerant and see the good and beautiful in all!
   (*Khanti*—Patience)
7. May I ever be truthful and honest! May I not hide the truth to be polite! May I never swerve from the path of Truth!
   (*Sacca*—Truthfulness).
8. May I be firm and resolute and have an iron will! May I be soft as a flower and firm as a rock! May I ever be

high-principled!
(*Adhiṭṭhāna*—Determination).

9. May I ever be kind, friendly and compassionate! May I be able to regard all as my brothers and sisters and be one with all!
(*Mettā*—Loving-kindness)

10. May I ever be calm, serene, unruffled and peaceful! May I gain a balanced mind! May I have perfect equanimity!
(*Upekkhā*—Equanimity).

May I serve to be perfect!
May I be perfect to serve!

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BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
KANDY

Report for the Year 1958

The increasing interest manifested throughout the world in the study and practice of Buddhism suggested to a few Buddhists friends in Kandy the necessity to build up an organisation that could publish and supply free Buddhist literature to foreign countries. Accordingly in January 1958 the Buddhist Publication Society was established at the Forest Hermitage, Kandy, with these objects.

Our main emphasis is on the issue, primarily in English, of concise booklets and small tracts, though we hope sometime in future to publish larger books on Buddhism. Two serial publications are issued regularly — the booklet series 'The Wheel' and the tracts 'The Bodhi Leaves'. It is intended that the 'Wheel' series should gradually cover all important aspects of the Buddha's Teaching, Buddhist history and literature, and translations of Buddhist texts; the 'Bodhi Leaves' to contain popular introductions and short essys.

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In 1958 the following booklets and tracts were issued :

THE WHEEL NO. 1: The Seven Factors of Enlightenment. Ven. Piyadassi Thera.

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Ven. Nyanasatta Thera.

4: Self-Mastery. Ven. Soma Thera.

We are glad to find that our publications were appreciated by our readers, and that several of them have been re-published in such well-known Buddhist journals like The Light of the Dhamma, The Light of the Buddha (Burma), The Sangha (England); World Buddhism and The Buddhist (Ceylon).

Distribution

The field of distribution covered 55 countries and our literature was sent to 470 foreign addresses (now, in 1959, increased to 830), which include individual Buddhists, Buddhist associations and friends of Buddhism, thus indicating the wide-spread demand for Buddhist literature. Though we started publishing with 1000 copies of 'The Wheel' and 2500 of 'Bodhi Leaves', we later increased the issues to 5000 and 10,000 respectively. This, to some extent, was possible by the generous subsidy sanctioned by the Hon. the Minister of Cultural Affairs. These quantities, however, represent a very small portion of our potential requirements. The revival of Buddhism in India alone and the demands made by Buddhist associations there make a considerable increase of our output imperative.

As a token of our good will towards making known of the Dhamma in the vernaculars of India, we have made a contribution of Rs. 50/- to the Maha Bodhi Ashoka Mission of Ajmer, for which amount booklets in Hindi have been printed in the name of our Society.

Our publications have been generally distributed free of any charge, even postage being met by the Society. All this was possible by the generous voluntary donations received both from Ceylon and several foreign countries. Unfortunately our well-wishers in India, Burma and several continental countries are deprived of giving us their voluntary assistance owing to the restrictions placed on foreign

exchange. We took hardly any interest in selling our publications; but a small quantity was taken over by book-sellers, and we received therefrom the small income of Rs. 213/38. during the year.

The stocks of several booklets and tracts are now exhausted or greately reduced, and reprints which are urgently required, will be undertaken to the extent of funds available. We would welcome any special support in this direction.

A small start has been made with adverstising our publications in foreign newspapers. A devoted friend of our Society, Mrs. Irene Quittner, has so far inserted four advertisements in the London 'Observer' and 'News Chronicle' and has sent free booklets to an appreciable number of inquirers from all parts of the United Kingdom.

The instructive value of several of our publications for students was appreciated by the educational authorities of Ceylon who have distributed them to a large number of school libraries.

Finances

The annual Associate Membership fee is Rs. 25/-; and during the year 1958, 115 enrolled themselves as members. The total received by the Society on account of memberships and donations to the Publication Fund was Rs. 6,731/23. But for the generous assistance of these members and donors, we would not have been able to put the Society on a sound footing and to record such a successful year of publication. We expect the continued assistance of our supporters as our field of distribution is getting much wider and the publication costs heavier. A list of the donations and membership fees received, and a statement of Income and Expenditure are annexed.

Expenditure: The main expenditure was on printing the publications, and the charges thereon totalled Rs. 4,560/-. The other heavy items of expenditure were on postage for parcels and correspondence, and stationery; these were Rs. 536/- and Rs. 498/75 respectively.

Acknowledgements

To our **authors**, the Ven'bles Narada Mahathera, Piyadassi Mahathera, Soma Mahathera, Nyanaponika Mahathera,

Nyanasatta Thera, Ñāṇamoli Bhikkhu ; to Prof. Dr. H. von Glasenapp, and to Messrs. K. N. Jayatilleke and David Maurice we record here our grateful thanks. **Voluntary helpers**: Mr. W. H. Somaratna of the Bank of Ceylon gave us assistance in keeping accounts and in drawing up the final Statements. Mr. K. R. Perera, Lecturer at the School of Co-operation, quite readily helped us with the audit of the accounts for the year. Messrs. Dharmadasa Pieris, G. Samararatne, R. M. T. B. Ratnayaka, P. S. B. Ratnayaka gave us occasional assistance in clerical work and distribution. Messrs. Simon and Karunadasa, the Hermitage attendants, did all the packing up of our books for the post, regularly carried our heavy mail and almost daily attended to all our errands in the town. We are grateful to all these helpers and to several others who assisted us in various ways.

The labour involved in our work has been very heavy: publishing, editing, distributing. accounting and an extensive correspondence. All this has been a labour of love and no charge has been made on the finances of the Society. One of our helpers has undertaken to form a small group calling itself 'Friends of the Buddhist Publication Society'. We hope he would be successful in getting this group up since, with the increasing volume of work, we do need much more and regular help than we had during the year.

We express our appreciation for the co-operation received from our **printers**, the Union Printing Works, Kandy and Sita Book Depot and Printing Works, Kandy.

In conclusion, I wish to express my great appreciation to Mr. A. S. Karunaratne, J. P. U. M., Crown Proctor, for having so kindly functioned as Treasurer in spite of his many duties. It was also he who had primarily urged the establishment of this Society. I find it however impossible to assess adequately the value of the unstinted devoted labour given by the Asst. Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. Richard Abeyasekara, to almost all work connected with the Society.

May the merit acquired by all those who so generously helped our movement of making known the Dhamma, be shared by all beings in the world, and may this puñña-kamma (meritorius act) be an aid on their path to Deliverance.

Forest Hermitage,
Kandy. July 1959.

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