THE BUDDHA'S EXPLANATION OF THE UNIVERSE

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FOREWORD

THE Buddha has said: "Nobody but you can save yourselves. You, when well disciplined yourselves, become your own saviour." The Buddha only shows the path: the path to deliverance from all sufferings and the way leading to perfect peace of mind, for it is the mind that really suffers. And this peace of mind is attained not by any kind of self-hypnosis nor by any temporary ecstatic state induced by concentration on some illusion

It is to be achieved only by self-understanding of the actual nature of one's own being. It is this understanding of one's own self that can purge one's mind of all its depravities, of all its weaknesses, "paññāya parisujjhāti".

The Buddha's method of showing the way of self-realization, is expounded generally in all his teachings, but particularly in Abhidhamma. Without an exact knowledge of Abhidhamma, the higher doctrine, it may be said that one can know nothing of Buddhism as it is. Many are the manuals compiled by various authors to explain the Abhidhamma in Pāli, Burmese, Sinhalese, and some other eastern languages, whereas there are very few books of this kind in English. So this treatise by Mr. C. P. Ranasinghe, has supplied that long felt need.

May the Dhamma flourish,

B. Ananda Maithreya Nayaka Thero.

Sri Dharmananda Pirivena,
Balangoda, CEYLON,
May 14, 1957.

DEDICATED TO
THE CAUSE OF
WORLD PEACE
AND HARMONY

PREFACE

A group of over 10,000 earnest people, headed by Māthu, a prominent personality, requested the Buddha to explain fully the manner of the incidence of life and the universe. None of these people was so optimistic as to expect a simple reply couched in a few words and phrases, but expressed their willingness to attend a long course of lectures for the purpose.

The Buddha, thus moved, agreed to explain these complex natural phenomena and there followed a series of daily lectures and demonstrations lasting three months, with a minimum of breaks for meals and rest. The explanation was duly given to the complete satisfaction of everybody present. This was 2,500 years ago.

Sāriputta, the chief pupil of the Buddha, reported the proceedings at these meetings. A summary of the proceedings was made which in later times turned out to be indispensable for the explanation of the Buddha's other teachings.

Ever since the Emperor Asoka sent to Ceylon his son, Mahinda, and his daughter, Sanghamitta, with the message of the Buddha, the people of Ceylon have treasured, amongst the Buddha's other teachings, the Sāriputta report of the proceedings mentioned.

I present in these pages a gist of what is available in Sāriputta's report, as preserved to this day by the people of Ceylon. I would emphasize that this is in no way any attempt to reinterpret the Buddha's teaching in the light of knowledge acquired through modern experimental science. This is solely

the product of my efforts to reach the original Buddhist view abou life and the universe.

The translations of the technical terms in Pāli are supported by the appropriate Pāli words at their first occurrence in this discussion and I hope that this would facilitate any reader who may wish to make comparisons and references.

C. P. RANASINGHE

Kiribathgoda,
Kelaniya,
CEYLON.
May 14, 1957.

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THE Pāli Texts on this subject are numerous, the most important of them being :—

1. Dhammasangani Pakarana
2. Vibhanga Pakarana
3. Dhātukathā Pakarana
4. Puggala Paññatti Pakarana
5. Kathāvatthu Pakarana
6. Yamaka Pakarana
7. Paṭṭhāna Pakarana

These texts, collectively known as the "Satta Pakarana", belong to the Abhidhamma section of the Buddha's teaching. No satisfactory translations of them seem to have been published so far in any of the western languages.

The highly specialized technical information which these texts contain was often found to be too difficult for the beginner, and hence the ancient scholars have compiled elementary texts to assist students. These elementary texts are also in Pāli and amongst the most well-known of them are the following:—

1. Abhidhammattha Sangaha
2. Abhidhammāvatāra
3. Nāma Rūpa Pariccheda
4. Paramattha Vinicchaya
5. Nāma Rūpa Samāsa.

Of these five texts, the Abhidhammattha Sangaha, in particular, has been very popular with students and has been translated into some modern languages.

There is also a large number of satellite texts both modern and ancient compiled by various scholars and the enterprising student is encouraged to read from them too, as much as possible.

On one point, however, it is necessary to sound a note of caution. As the Buddha has always emphasized, one should carefully avoid getting enslaved by words, whether they be in the original Pāli texts or in any of the translations, commentaries, synopses, etc. To be successful in this study, the words of the texts or the words of any teacher, including the Buddha himself, should never be accepted in mere faith, but must be fully and clearly understood.

Without laying too much importance on the written words found in the texts or the spoken words of any teacher, one should understand how to benefit most from whatever words as are available. The best benefits of words come to those who use those words mainly to stimulate the mind to develop deep, direct, and concentrated thought.

It is desirable to mention here that there is a tendency amongst some modern scholars to consider that the Abhidhamma is a mere study of the supernatural. This error which seems to be gaining ground fast in some quarters, must be rectified, for the Abhidhamma is far from being any study of the supernatural. Abhidhamma is the study of natural phenomena as they actually are. Abhidhamma is not a mere theory, nor is it abstract and subtle talk. Abhidhamma is the systematic study of the whole universe. Dealing with both mind (nāma) and matter (rūpa), Abhidhamma is the Science of the Universe.

Many will also do well to remember that the Buddha was a discoverer and, even more, that the Buddha was a man like all men. The Buddha set out to find the natural answer to a

simple and straightforward problem which accidentally occurred to him and which worked deeply into him, the problem being: why old-age, disease, and death?

The answer to this problem is not so simple as it would at first sight appear, for in it lay the answer to every knotty problem of the universe. The Buddha was completely successful in his endeavour. After a tedious search, the Buddha not only found the natural answer to the problem he sought to solve, but also discovered every truth about every problem concerning everyone and everything in every part of the universe. This is the manner in which the Buddha achieved the state of Buddhahood.

The Buddha could have kept his discoveries to himself and yet received the same benefits, but he considered it his duty to assist as many as he could with what he discovered. This was the sole motive behind the Buddha's campaign of preaching. The Buddha is unique in one respect and this is that he laid bare all the relevant facts and left each individual the sole master at the helm of all affairs. Asia, which is the birth-place of all the four principal religions (the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist), still continues to have a predominating proportion of people who prefer to accept the Buddha's teaching. And this book contains the fundamental principles of the Buddha's philosophy on which is based the general outlook on life and the cultural make up of not only those people in Asia who profess Buddhism as their religion, but of the Asian population as a whole.

This is, however, more than a subject that should be merely left to the care of the students of Asian Culture and Comparative Religions. In the present civilization of widespread social turmoil, with so many clouds of future universal insecurity gathering

around, thinkers in every field of learning should give their mind to the study of this subject, for, through the influence of the knowledge it imparts, humanity on this Earth can yet find it possible to survive for many centuries to come.

SYNOPSIS

(A TABULAR STATEMENT OF PARAGRAPH HEADINGS AND OTHER FEATURES OF THIS BOOK)

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THE BUDDHA'S EXPLANATION OF THE UNIVERSE

CHAPTER 1

UNITS OF MATTER AND MIND

THE essential prerequisite for the study of life and the universe, the Buddha stated, is a correct comprehension of the exact features of both matter and mind. Our attention should, therefore, in the first instance, be directed towards acquiring the knowledge about the basic features of matter and mind and the fundamental laws governing them. Sound analysis, undoubtedly, is the best method, but, whilst matter can easily be subjected to analysis, mind does not so easily respond. We are often confounded with the latter situation.

Physics and Psychology

In our study of the mind, it is not possible to consider it divorced from matter. It is, therefore, necessary for us to study physics side by side with psychology. Mind, as we normally know it, is so interrelated and interlocked with matter that many people mistake mind also to be matter. A sound study of the science relating to both matter and mind only can help us to appreciate the distinction.

The Buddha declared that the primary factor of the universe is the mind and that the force of the mind is supreme. He had to prove this, and during the course of his explanations, in addition to describing and demonstrating the features of the mind in its most minute detail, he proved beyond all doubt the exact scientific construction of the material universe in the most technical manner.

Man is Matter and Mind

The method adopted by the Buddha was that of dissecting. He dissected man and proved that man is matter and mind. He dissected the universe and proved that the universe is matter and mind. He dissected matter to its final stages. He proved the atoms and dissected the atom to prove the elements. He took out the units of elements from the atom and displayed that they exist by repetition and that each unit of element is an action. It was demonstrated that a figure which is approximately 176,470,000,000 is the number of distinct motions of each unit of element during the course of a period of the duration of one flash of lightning.

The Buddha explained that each living being in the universe is a unit of mind and said that in features and performance a unit of mind resembles a unit of element, if not for the fact that in rapidity it is faster and in force it is immeasurably greater. The mind beats at the speed of about 3,000,000,000,000 per the duration of a flash of lightning and this rate of repetition is regular and constant. The forces of the mind vary from being to being according to the weight of accumulations of defilements and purity each carries.

The chief difference between a unit of mind and a unit of matter is that whereas the mind never merges with any other unit of mind or matter, the units of one element always merge or mix freely with units of other elements. The units of elements by merging themselves form substances or matter and the units of elements are in the service of the units of mind.

Mind's Tremendous Energy

Our physical constitution is the result of the forces in our minds. The single unit of mind present in each of us commands

and controls the billions and trillions of units of elements that have united in the formation of the physical self that each carries. There is tremendous energy in each unit of mind but most of it is expended or wasted in the routine process of maintaining the elements of the body in a going condition. If the energy of the mind is conserved by eliminating wastage and also builds additional energy by methods of mind exercise, it is quite practicable for anyone to extend the region of influence of the mind beyond its normal habitation.

The Buddha taught that the mind of each human being is centered in the heart and that it extends into every live molecule in his body. Thus the unit of mind is present in every part of a person's physical system, but the intensity of its presence varies. The presence of the mind is the most intense in the six sense organs and it is the least intense in one's hair and nails. At every beat of the mind at the terrific speed, the physical system beats in every part. The energy it produces sustains the elements of the body in life.

The "Present"

The mind is extremely subtle. The Buddha taught that at every beat the mind changes. Every action of the mind reacts. At every beat it has a tendency to deviate and consequently the mind normally travels a very zig-zag path. The course of the mind is the same as the course of time. They both travel from the infinite past towards the infinite future, and they are only existing at the "present". The present is the fine point of time at which the past separates from the future and its duration is immeasurably tiny like the geometrical point. These help to measure the duration of the beats of the units of mind and matter.

In the Buddha's consideration of the universe, both the mathematics of definiteness and the mathematics of infinity loom very important. We must, therefore, appreciate the basic principles of both types of mathematics.

Mathematics of Infinity

When we work problems of mathematics of definiteness involving different processes, the answers we get are different. We may illustrate the results of the four processes of the mathematics of definiteness as follows:—

(the symbol "D" represents Definiteness.)

$$D + D = 2D$$
$$D - D = 0$$
$$D \times D = D^2$$
$$D \div D = 1$$

A definite quantity added to a similar definite quantity makes the final result twice as much as the original quantity. If, for instance, we add 4 and 4 together, we get 8 as the result. When we subtract a definite quantity from a similar definite quantity, the answer we get is nil. When we multiply two similar definite quantities together, the answer we get is the square of the figure multiplied. If, for instance, we multiply 4 by 4 the answer we get is 16. When a definite quantity is divided by a similar quantity, the answer we get is, invariably, one, *e.g.* 4 divided by 4 is one.

These laws of mathematics of definiteness cannot be applied in the case of the mathematics of infinity. Where an infinite quantity is involved, the working of any problem involving any or every process brings only one result, namely, Infinity. The

working of the four processes of the mathematics of infinity may be illustrated as follows:—

(the symbol "N" represents Infinity.)

$$N + N = N$$
$$N - N = N$$
$$N \times N = N$$
$$N \div N = N$$

When we add an infinite quantity to an infinite quantity, the resulting quantity is also only an infinite quantity, and two infinite quantities are not twice the infinite quantity. Similarly, when we subtract an infinite quantity from an infinite quantity, a balance will always be left and this balance will also be an infinite quantity. When we multiply an infinite quantity even an infinite number of times over, the answer we receive is merely an infinite quantity; and when dividing an infinite quantity also we get the same result, namely, infinity. In other words, the processes are not practicable in the mathematics of infinity.

Space and Time

Infinity works in two directions: the Infinity of Contraction and the Infinity of Extension. The two points, the point of space and the point of time, work according to the law of Infinity of Contraction. The length of space in any direction and the length of time in the direction of both past and future are subject to the law of Infinity of Extension.

A line between two points of space is a definite length and however short it may be, it can be measured and expressed. A line may measure only a three billionth part of an inch, but, with the aid of suitable instruments, it can be measured and expressed as a definite mathematical quantity. Even along a line of space which is only a three billionth part of an inch, the

number of geometrical points of space existing is infinite. The duration of each beat of mind and the points of time through which each of the beats of mind passes has to be considered mathematically similar.

Central Existence

The Buddha explained that the universe is infinite in every way: extent, duration, and so on. This infinity is more than what figures can express. In this ocean of infinity, therefore, any point of space is the centre of the universe. The farthest star, the Astronomers ever discovered is as much the centre of the universe as this Earth. Similar is time. There is no beginning or end of time. In either directions, past or future, time extends to infinity. Any point of time, therefore, is the centre of time. The present is as much the centre of time as a point of time any countless number of years past or future.

The mathematics of definiteness applies only to definite quantities. When we are considering the volume of the human frame, the area of the sphere of human influence, the extent of this Earth, or the extent of the known universe, we are considering definite quantities. Similarly, when we are considering the duration of human life, the duration of this Earth, or the duration of the portion of the universe we know, we are considering definite lengths of time. But the laws of the mathematics of infinity apply to all quantities.

Gaps Between Beats

The duration of the beat of the mind, which is about a three billionth part of the duration of a flash of lightning, is a definite length of time and, therefore, it can be measured and expressed mathematically. Even during this very short period, the number

of points of time through which the mind passes is infinite. When considered in terms of points of time, the duration of each beat of the mind is a very long period.

Between the end of each beat of mind or matter and the beginning of the next beat, there is a complete gap. But this gap is so narrow that it is less than an infinite point. Each succeeding beat follows each preceding one so closely that the gap between them is hardly apparent, yet, this gap is definite and it does exist.

CHAPTER 2

ELEMENTS OF INANIMATE MATTER

THE Buddha referred to all substances in the universe collectively as matter (rūpa), and we shall, in this chapter, proceed to the examination of the Buddha's detailed descriptions of the various substances of which this universe is composed. We shall deal with these various substances in the order of their occurrence.

There are four generally known substances constituting the universe: earth, water, air, and fire. In each of these substances, there exists one element in predominating proportions and a number of other elements in very small proportions. In analysing each substance to its primary and secondary elements, the Buddha referred to them in the abstract sense.

Basic Material Energies

The abstract elements are units of action (kriyā) or forces that exist by repetition, the speed of repetition being 17 times slower than the speed of the repetition of the mind, i.e. about 176,470,000,000 per the duration of a flash of lightning. The abstract elements, in other words, are the material energies of which the universe is constituted and they exist repeating themselves at this speed.

The principal elements of the universe are: (1) abstract earth (paṭhavi), (2) abstract water (āpo), (3) abstract air (vāyo), and (4) abstract heat (tējo). Abstract earth is the basic energy of the common substance known to us as earth; abstract water is the basic energy of the common substance

known to us as water; abstract air is the basic energy of the common substance known to us as air; and abstract heat is the basic energy of the common substance known to us as fire.

Each of these four great abstract elements (mahā bhūta) has two chief characteristics, which would appear to us at first sight to be converse characteristics, but which, on closer examination, would be found to be the same. The two characteristics of each of the four great abstract elements are :—

(1) abstract earth : to harden, and to soften.
(2) abstract water : to flow, and to paste.
(3) abstract air : to expand, and to contract.
(4) abstract heat : to heat, and to cool.

No substance is formed in the universe without the mixing of all the four principal elements, the presence of each element affecting the features in each substance in the eight different manners mentioned.

Formation of Substances

The presence of a large proportion of units of abstract earth in a substance has the effect of making that substance hard, and a small proportion of units of abstract earth makes a substance soft. The presence of a large proportion of units of abstract water makes a substance flow, whilst a small proportion makes the units of other abstract elements present in that substance to cling together.

The presence of a large proportion of units of abstract air causes a substance to expand, and the presence of a small proportion of units of abstract air causes a substance to contract. Similarly, the presence of a large proportion of abstract heat will cause a substance to be hot, and the presence of a small

proportion of units of abstract heat will cause a substance to be cold.

Each of the units of all the elements tends to exist independently, existing by repetition, but such independent existence ceases on the meeting of the units of one species with the units of other species, for, then, all the units stretch infinitely and clasp each other closely, tightly, and firmly.

The units of the four kinds of abstract elements, on meeting, grip each other so tightly and thoroughly that in the union each unit of abstract element in any substance penetrates into all others, and all others penetrate into each other. It is such unions of units of abstract elements that settle into forming substances.

The dual forces of each of the four types of abstract elements begin to operate, causing the effect each type produces on the other three types of abstract elements. If, for instance, a particular substance is formed by the union of a larger proportion of abstract earth with smaller proportions of units of the other three abstract elements, it would tend to be a hard substance. Since the proportion of units of abstract water united in this substance is less, the abstract water will have only the effect of pasting or binding together the other units of abstract elements in that substance. In this mixture, the presence of abstract air is also less, and the effect on the substance would be to make it contract, thus reducing its volume. The presence of abstract heat in a lesser proportion produces the effect of making the substance cold.

Earth, Water, Air, and Fire

In addition to making substances hot and cold, abstract heat has also the quality of settling substances in different states.

When this effect, too, is brought to bear on the substance illustrated, the final product of such a union would be a settled substance, a hard, closely and tightly bound, contracted, and cold piece of matter, such as what we see in the common substance we popularly name as earth.

The common substance we understand as water also has the same properties. Water has a large proportion of units of abstract water. The presence of this large proportion of units of abstract water makes this substance to flow. The existence of only a small proportion of abstract earth makes the substance soft, but the fact that water is fairly heavy indicates that the abstract earth contents of water is appreciable, for weight is also a property of abstract earth. There is also present in water a substantial proportion of abstract air, and the effect thereof is that the substance is expanded. Abstract air, however, serves as an agent of contraction as well, for, if it were not for this effect, water would tend to flow to infinity. Thus, abstract air in water controls the tendency to flow by checking its flow into infinity, whilst preventing it from over-contracting either. Abstract heat makes water hot or cold, according to the intensity of the proportion that is present.

Air is also similar. Air contains a large proportion of abstract air with lesser proportions of the other three abstract elements. The presence of a large proportion of units of abstract air tends to make air to be expanded. The small proportion of units of abstract earth gives air its weight and softness. The proportion of abstract water causes air to flow, and to stick and bind together. The units of abstract heat makes air hot or cold.

Fire is also as much a substance as any of the other three principal common substances. Fire contains a predominating proportion of units of abstract heat, with certain small proportions of units of abstract water, abstract earth, and abstract air.

Basic Energies Merge in All Substances

In this manner, the various substances in the universe are composed by the joint forces of the four great abstract elements, the abstract forces mixing with each other. There does not exist any form of substance in which all the four great abstract elements are not present.

The proportion in which the units of these four great abstract elements exist varies from substance to substance. This variation has resulted in the formation of the vast multiplicity of substances we experience in the universe.

The most important fact to remember is that, whatever the kind of substance we may come across, it will always be found to be a combination of units of the four great abstract elements. The sunlight or lamp light is a combination of all these four kinds of units of abstract elements as much as any weight of rock, metal, liquid, air, or fire.

Constitution of the Atom

The atom (rūpa kalāpa), for the purpose of this study, is the last possible particle of any substance. In an atom, one of the four great abstract elements is reduced to unity, whilst the units of the other three abstract elements may be present in larger numbers. We may , therefore, get an atom consisting of a total of, say, 1,111 units of all abstract elements divided in a proportion such as: abstract earth 1,000 units, abstract heat 100 units, abstract water 10 units, and abstract air 1 unit.

It is not possible to break single units of any abstract elements, and hence, in case, by some process, this atom of 1,111 units of abstract elements is split, the single unit of abstract air present in it will not break. On such a splitting of the atom being done,

the single unit of abstract air would release itself from the rest of the units, thus abandoning the grip in which it was. The unit of abstract air, having left the union in the atom, the balance 1,110 units of abstract elements find themselves immediately dispersed, for, in order to remain in the union, they now do not have the force of the unit of abstract air so essential. On the splitting or dissecting of an atom, therefore, the entire number of units of abstract elements which formed the atom, disperse and they begin to exist individually by repeating themselves, which is their usual process.

Of course, the several repetition of all the units of abstract elements in this atom would continue if the unit of abstract air should remain without contacting the other units of abstract elements. If they were to establish contact, they would settle again.

Atomic Energy

The 1,111 units of abstract elements in this atom, when thus dispersed, turn into 1,111 separate units of actions or energies (kriyā), and each unit of energy begins to repeat itself at its normal speed, being about 176,470,000,000 per the duration of a flash of lightning. The final result is that the single atom which consisted of 1,111 units of abstract elements develops into a force consisting of 1,111 times 176,470,000,000 or 196,058,170,000,000 strokes of repetition per the duration of a flash of lightning. This figure would become still more enormous, if we compute the number of repetitions to a standard measure of time such as, for instance, the second. If by some method, the units of one abstract element could be kept from contact with the units of the other three abstract elements, the continuity of repetition would stretch itself to infinity.

In case all the 1,111 units of abstract elements, present in our supposed atom, were to unite again, an atom similar to the

original one would be formed. The 1,000 units of abstract earth would give this atom 1,000 forces of hardness and weight. The 100 units of abstract heat would give this atom 100 forces of heat. The 10 units of abstract water would add 10 forces of flow or paste, and the unit of abstract air would bring one force of expansion.

How Energies Merge

The four different forces would assemble the atom by merger. The 1,000 units of abstract earth penetrate into and grip every one of the balance 111 units of other elements. The 100 units of abstract heat penetrate into and grip every one of the balance 1,011 units. The 10 units of abstract water penetrate into and grip every one of the balance 1,101 units, and the one unit of abstract air penetrates into and grips the balance 1,110 units. The merger would thus complete itself and the abstract heat would next bring to bear its other force, namely, the force of abstract heat to settle and confirm substances. In this manner, the original atom gets finally formed over again.

The explanation of the Buddha in regard to the manner in which the atoms are formed has to be thoroughly comprehended by us, because this knowledge is indispensable in comprehending the manner in which man takes conception at birth, grows up, and finally dies. This knowledge also helps us to understand the manner in which this Earth and the universe came into being, how they grew up, and how they dissolve in the end and form yet another universe over again.

The forces of the units of abstract heat, particularly, should be noted thoroughly, because, of all the four principal abstract elements, abstract heat is the most restless. Abstract elements enter into substances and escape from substances. Abstract heat enters into substances rapidly, and it also escapes from

substances equally rapidly. This tendency of the units of abstract elements to enter into and escape from substances is a tendency prevailing throughout the universe, and these migrations are even inter-planetary.

Action of Heat

The three abstract elements, abstract earth, abstract water, and abstract air have the tendency to settle down peacefully, but abstract heat causes all the havoc by its travels from substance to substance. An increase or decrease of abstract heat makes the strength of the other three abstract elements differ, thus forcing these elements to form a mean other than what was in course of getting formed.

The units of abstract heat from the sun, for instance, enter the substances on Earth. This additional heat disturbs the settled state of the substances and causes the conditions of circulations. Abstract heat also escapes from the Earth to other planets and the loss of heat in the substances causes a converse disturbance on Earth again. On the Earth itself, units of abstract heat migrate from water to air, and air to water; from earth to air, and air to earth; from fire to earth, air, and water, and from earth, air, and water to fire; and the process continues. All these circulations of the units of abstract heat are responsible for the various physical disturbances with which we are so familiar.

Thus the chief mover in all the physical phenomena in the universe is heat, and in our physical system, too, heat plays the most vital part, and it also performs the most damaging duties. Heat is primarily responsible for our decay and death, although it assists us in our birth and growth. Before we examine what the Buddha has said about the manner in which heat acts on us, we shall have to comprehend a few more details.

Variety of Atoms and Substances

It would suffice us in this study, for the moment, if we comprehend the fact that the nature of the substances any atom or a group of atoms may assume, depends on the proportion of the units of each variety of the four different abstract elements that joined in the formation of that atom or the group of atoms. If we consider the combination given in the illustration to be the proportion of units of abstract elements in a substance like earth, a mixture of units in the proportion of, say, 1,000: 100: 10: 1 of abstract heat, abstract air, abstract water, and abstract earth respectively might produce a substance like fire.

The Buddha has not given definite proportions of any of the mixtures, for the proportions of contents vary from substance to substance, but has stated that these units of abstract elements mix in various proportions in the constitution of atoms. The variety of such mixtures produces a variety of atoms and consequently a variety of substances.

Atom is a Feather-Like Phenomenon

The atom, taught by the Buddha, is not a brick-like structure; it rather is a feather-like phenomenon. The shape and features of the atom vary according to the number of units of abstract elements it constitutes. The smallest atom consists of only four units of abstract elements *i.e.* one unit from each kind. The larger atoms carry one unit from one of the four great abstract elements with the remaining three kinds of abstract elements contributing more than one unit.

An atom is a definite substance. It is a feather-like fabric which has got knit together closely with the fine threads, that each unit of abstract element turns into, the threads of one kind alternating with threads of the other three kinds.

How the Atoms Interweave

A mass substance is formed by the union of atoms. But in such a union, the atoms do not maintain individuality. The threads of abstract elements existing in each atom penetrate into the neighbouring atoms, and, as such, a mass of substance is a large group of atoms with the threads of each of the atoms interclasped in, interwoven with, and interpenetrated through the threads of the other atoms of the neighbourhood.

In other words, the atom is a structure formed by the intercoiling of the fibres and filaments which stretch from each unit of the abstract elements. When forming a mass, the fibres of each atom interweave with the fibres of many other atoms and, in the process, the units of abstract elements intermigrate and intermix so thoroughly that, in the end, a homogeneous lump of matter, closely bound in one grip, is formed. Thus is the formation of the various masses of substances we experience in this universe.

Dissecting Atoms

However fast or sharp the dissection may be, when we dissect a mass formation of matter, the abstract elements do not get broken. Such fibres of the units of abstract elements as may lie along the edge of dissection abandon the settled grip methodically at each dissection and coil over on one or the other of the edges of the dissection.

This process continues throughout the dissection of any mass of matter—the abstract elements in their individual units recoiling and readjusting themselves at every dissection. Thus dissection can be continued up to the point of reaching the stage of atoms, *i.e.* up to the point when one of the four great abstract elements present, remaining in each particle, is reduced

to a single unit. Up to this stage, the mass of matter remains in the form of a substance.

The dissection of an atom causes the dispersal of all the units of abstract elements and, as the abstract elements release their grip, the substance ceases to exist and it disappears. But the substance only assumes another form and that form is not discernible to the sense organs excepting the mind. It is not visible to the eye or felt by any other physical organ. The atom when dissected assumes the form of a force or action, the number of units of forces being the number of units of abstract elements that constituted the atom. These units of forces exist turning around in a swiftly revolving cycle for the discussion of which we have to cover a few more facts about matter.

Projective Elements

Each of the units of abstract elements carries five different currents of forces: colour (vaṇṇa), smell (gandha), taste (rasa), sound (sadda), and touch (phoṭṭhabba). When the units of the four principal abstract elements consolidate in the formation of atoms or substances, these five currents of abstract elements also consolidate forming subsidiary substances of matter.

The five currents thus getting consolidated add to each substance an effect of polish. As the units of the four great abstract elements meet in complete embrace, all the five subsidiary substances emerge.

We must not confuse these five subsidiary elements with the senses of the body. The senses of the body are senses of the mind and they are, therefore, not substances, but these five subsidiary elements, being the by-products of the combination of the four great abstract elements, are substances.

The chief characteristic of these five subsidiary substances is to project their polishing effect, and are, therefore, put in one class and collectively referred to as projective elements (gocara rūpa).

Colour and Sound

On the combination of the four great abstract elements in the formation of a substance, the currents of projective colour element mix to settle into a distinctive colour. In the individual units of any of the four great abstract elements, no colours are apparent, but their projective forces develop only when they set in substances. There is present colour even in such fine substances as air, but, our eyes being too weak to reflect them, they are not discernible to us. Only where the colour projective element sets in strong formation do we recognize the presence of colour.

Similarly, the sound projective element sets with the formation of substances and maintains its projective effect throughout the duration of the existence of that substance.

Smell, Taste, and Touch

The smell projective element is also present in every substance, and its presence becomes discernible only to the reflective element of the nose. Our nose catches the projective smell element only when these elements occur in strong concentration.

The taste projective element is also common to all substances, and where it is strongly present and comes into contact with the reflective organ of the tongue, this element becomes discernible to us.

As in the case of these four projective elements, the touch projective element, too, occurs in every formation of substances, and where it is adequately formed, if contacted by our reflective organ of touch, the presence of the projective touch element is felt by us. We shall understand more fully the features of the five projective elements when we consider, in the next chapter, the features of the five elements which occur in converse formation in animate matter.

Space

The next element we have to consider is the sky element (ākāsa rūpa). The sky element is the vacuum which exists between the units of elements and which separates them. However much units of elements may stretch and coil into other units of elements in merging into substances, each unit of abstract element always preserves its unity. It is the sky element that travels with every stretching and coiling and preserves the individuality of every unit of abstract element in every substance, and in every part of the universe.

Even in the most tight grip of the four great abstract elements, there exists the sky element, penetrated through every knot. This prevents the possibility of disappearance of the individuality of every unit of element even under the worst conditions. We have, therefore, to bear in mind that, whether it is the hardest and most tightly formed atom or whether it is the softest and most loosely formed molecule, there always exists a certain quantity of the sky element soaking into and lubricating between every fibre in every substance.

Like the units of mind and the units of the four great abstract elements, there is no beginning or end to the sky element. There does not, however, occur in the sky element the regular and measured beats common to the units of mind and the units

of abstract elements. The whole sky element is one unit of continuous vaccum, vast and infinite in extent, and infinite in age, both past and future.

Atmosphere and Stratosphere

Although the sky element is only one unit of element, in order to facilitate understanding, the Buddha, when teaching, described the sky element in two sections. That section of the sky element which exists penetrated into matter in settled substances, such as is found within the volume of this Earth, is described as the atmosphere (paricchēdākāsa), and the section of the sky element which keeps separate the various clusters or bunches of substances, such as the many planets and stars, is referred to as the stratosphere (ajatākāsa). We must, however, realize that the sky element, whether it is the atmosphere or the stratosphere is the same.

The sky element is the container, or the vessel, in which all the other units of elements and the units of mind do their respective performances. In the vast and infinite ocean of the unit of the sky element, all the other units travel and play, dive and swim. The chief characteristic of the sky element is to prevent complete fusion of different units of elements whilst, at the same time, helping to hold them together.

We must remember that all units of elements, with the exception of the unit of the sky element, exist by repetition at the speed which is only 17 times slower than the rate of repetition of a unit of mind. We have noted how the sky element ensures the preservation of the individuality of the units of elements, even after they settle in consolidation as substances or matter. All the units of abstract elements beat their measured repetition even after solidifying as matter and the beats of the units of abstract elements, at the regular and measured rate, go on

whether they are locked in the substances or whether they remain free. Each unit of abstract element, thus, exercises its measure of force throughout time.

Feature Elements

The units of abstract elements carry in each of them, for this purpose, three internal currents: birth, existence, and death. These are the internal forces operating in each unit of energy which determine its intrinsic features and their activity constitutes the core of each unit of abstract element. The force brought to bear by the current of birth in a unit of abstract element causes the energy of the unit of abstract element to arise; the force brought to bear by the current of existence causes the energy of each unit of abstract element to continue in existence; and the force brought to bear by the current of death causes the energy of the units of abstract elements to ebb and cease.

When the abstract elements merge in the formation of substances, the currents of birth, existence, and death, whilst remaining active within each unit of abstract element, cause the formation of three subsidiary substances, namely, the subsidiary substances of birth, existence, and death, which condition the birth, existence, and death of the substances. The total joint forces of the currents of birth, existence, and death of all the units of elements combining in the formation of a substance are brought to bear on the subsidiary substances, and according to the strength into which these three subsidiary substances settle, each substance acquires strength to bring into operation its force to exist.

The birth element (upacaya rūpa) existing in a free unit of energy causes only its own initiation, but when it settles itself into a substance, it also causes the initiation of the substance. The existence element (jaratā rūpa) of a

free unit of energy causes only its own continuance in existence, but when settled into a substance, it also causes the continuance of existence of the substance; and the death element (aniccatā rūpa) of a free unit of energy causes only its own cessation, but when in a substance, it also causes the cessation of the substance. These three elements operating in the abstract elements in the form of currents of forces consolidate in substances also in the form of currents of forces and are, therefore, discernible only to the mind. They are not discernible to the other sense organs.

The current of the force of birth, existence, and death settling in each substance is only a wider cycle produced by the currents of birth, existence, and death that run in each of the units of the four great abstract elements which have merged in its formation. The currents of birth, existence, and death operating in all the substances in a planet or star, produce a current of force conditioning the birth, existence, and death of the whole planet or star. And the currents of birth, existence, and death produced by all the planets and stars cause a current of force conditioning the birth, existence, and death of the whole physical universe. In this way, the cycle of birth, existence, and death expands its sphere of operation from each unit of abstract element and ultimately covers the entire field of the infinite universe.

Currents of Birth, Existence, and Death

The three currents of birth, existence, and death present in abstract elements spring into action in rotation and cause the process of repetition of the units of abstract elements. When the force of the current of birth is active, the other two currents remain dormant; when the force of the current of existence is active, the other two currents, namely, birth and death, remain

dormant; and when the force of the current of death is active, the other two currents, namely, birth and existence, remain dormant.

The forces of each of these three currents do not last for long. Whilst a current is active, it consumes rapidly the forces it has and whilst a current remains dormant, it gathers more forces into it. Since only one current turns active at a time, there are always two currents in course of gathering strengths of forces in dormancy.

As each current turns active and expends its forces, its next current matures in strength sufficient to turn active, and, in this manner, each dormant current appears with adequate strength of force at its due turn and no sooner does one current complete its function than the next current takes over and carries through its task. The first current is followed by the second, the second by the third, and the third by the first; or, as it happens, the activity of the current of birth is followed by the current of existence, the current of existence is followed by the current of death, and the current of death is followed by the activity of the current of birth, and, in this order, the cycle of repetition turns.

Rapid Action in Relay Order

As the current of birth present in a unit of abstract element causes the initiation or birth of a fresh repetition of energy in that unit of abstract element, the current of existence emerges and waits in readiness to take over at the point when the function of the current of birth is complete. On completion of the birth of the repetition, the current of existence takes over completely from the current of birth, causing the current of birth to retire to rest and regain

strength. The current of existence thus assumes control of the unit of abstract element, and forces through its stage.

Whilst thus carrying through its task, the current of existence expends its strength and, in the meantime, the current of death is gaining strength. The point soon arrives for the current of death to take over control from the current of existence, and so it happens. The current of death thus set at its work employs its full force and does its task, but is so exhausted in the end, that it is wanting to retire to rest and regain strength. By this time, the current of birth is again fully refreshed and is waiting to take over from the current of death and it does so.

Thus the three currents of birth, existence, and death keep on at these relay tasks performing their respective functions with unfailing efficiency and appearing at their turns with perfect punctuality. The whole process works with such exact mechanical precision, that there is nowhere any lagging behind. On this three-spoked wheel of repetition, the universe of matter turns on and on.

Time is the path along which all cycles turn and the "present" is the point of this path where all cycles rest, and, accordingly, the cycles of matter, too, turn and rest. As we have studied, the speed of the turn of the wheel of repetition is about 176,470,000,000 per the duration of a flash of lightning and we could only imagine the whole process of repetition occurring at a speed so fast within a single unit of abstract element.

Where the Wheel of Repetition Turns

We must note that of all the units of elements it is only in the units of abstract earth, abstract water, abstract air, and abstract heat that the wheel of birth, existence, and death turns. The

sky element is a continuous phenomenon and, therefore, the sky element is immune from the law of repetition: the wheel of birth, existence, and death does not occur in the sky element.

The projective elements, however, are subject to the process of the four great abstract elements—they are the by-products of the four great abstract elements. With the four great abstract elements the projective elements emerge, exist, and cease. The projective elements, *viz.* colour, sound, taste, smell, and touch, therefore, are subject to the forces of birth, existence, and death, but, we must remember, that it is merely the manifestation of the occurrence of birth, existence, and death of the four great abstract elements, and that it is not an independent and distinct force of birth, existence, and death which is occurring in the projective elements.

As the four great abstract elements are born, the projective elements come into being; as the four great abstract elements exist, the projective elements exist; and as the four great abstract elements cease, the projective elements, too, cease to be. The projective elements, in other words, turn in the cycle of repetition only with the four great abstract elements, and they do not have any intrinsic strength to turn in this cycle on their own.

Law of Conservation of Energy

Although the wheels of birth, existence, and death turn so rapidly and ceaselessly in all abstract elements, the sky element conserves the energy of every unit of abstract element and thus prevents the occurrence of any variation of strength. We have mentioned that the sky element, for this purpose, penetrates into all abstract elements and also we said that the individuality of the units of abstract elements is preserved by the sky element even when they combine in atoms and molecules

of substances. Owing to the action of the sky element, the units of abstract elements, even though locked in atoms of substances, remain so perfectly intact that there is no hindrance whatever to the operation of the law of repetition.

Even in the tightest consolidation of the units of abstract elements, this law of repetition operates as easily and automatically as when the abstract elements remain aloof. Whilst the measure of energy of each unit of abstract element is conserved for itself by the sky element, the law of repetition thus operates in all abstract elements all over the universe, the wheel of birth, existence, and death turning in all substances, including the substances of which man is constituted.

Each of the beats of the mind is divided into three seasons and each of these seasons is reckoned, for purposes of calculation, as a mind moment (cittakkhaṇa). Since the mind beats 17 times during the time taken by a unit of abstract element to beat once, there are in a beat of a unit of abstract element 51, *i.e.* 17x3, periods of mind moments. Within the first mind moment of the beat of an abstract element, the birth of each unit of abstract element completes itself. The existence continues through the next 49 mind moments, and during the 51st mind moment, each of the units of abstract elements ceases, having completely overtaken by the force of death. Thus the duration of a beat of an abstract element gets divided into three stages, with two short periods for the stages of birth and death, and a long period for the stage of existence.

Repetition and Continuous Flux

In order to avoid confusion of the birth element, the Buddha has confined the use of the word birth (upacaya) only to mean the first birth of the unit of abstract element in any atom of matter. But each birth keeps repeating regularly and alternately

with existence and death. These repetition births of the units of abstract elements in the same settled atom of matter is referred to by the Buddha as the repetitive element (santati rūpa). The repetitive element is quite the same as the birth element, the only difference being that the birth element refers to the substance of first birth of a substance, whilst the repetitive element refers to the substance of subsequent birth of abstract elements in the same substance.

This ends our brief consideration of the units of the various kinds of abstract elements that combine to form the inanimate material universe. We have, however, not considered the features of the various particular subsidiary substances, but that consideration does not seem to be practicable, for each main substance has an infinite variety of subsidiary substances. The colour projective element, for instance, has an infinite number of divisions possible —colour may be red, blue, black, yellow, green, etc. Besides, the universe, the Buddha stated, is everywhere in a state of continuous flux, and, therefore, to fix particular analysis to any definite part or portion of it, is not a practicable task. Such secondary details, undoubtedly, are very interesting, but, for us to comprehend them, we must learn beforehand a few more primary principles. We shall, therefore, proceed to our next consideration, namely, the elements peculiar to the animate material universe.

CHAPTER 3

LIFE ELEMENTS

We have studied in the last chapter the 13 different elements that combine in the formation of the inanimate universe. The unit of the infinite sky element holds and nurtures the entire infinity of units of all the other elements. The five projective elements (gocara rūpa) are the direct by-products of the four great abstract elements (mahā bhūta), and the feature elements (lakkhaṇa rūpa) are the intrinsic forces revolving within the units of abstract elements. Both the projective elements and the feature elements, therefore, appear, exist, and cease as combinations of the four great abstract elements.

Throughout the study of this chapter, it is essential to remember the 13 elements already described, and as such, for purposes of ready reference, we shall name them again as follows: the four great abstract elements—abstract earth, abstract water, abstract air, and abstract heat; the five projective elements—colour, taste, sound, smell, and touch; the three feature elements—force of birth, force of existence, and force of death; and the sky element. Total: 13. The repetition element is the same as the force of birth.

For a thorough appreciation of the facts discussed in this chapter, a basic knowledge of the manner of the performances of the unit of mind is also essential. The knowledge about the mind that we have gathered by reading the first chapter (Units of Matter and Mind) is adequate for the purpose and, therefore, we must utilize that information whenever the need might arise.

Additional Elements in Living Beings

The difference between a dead body and a live man is that, in the case of the dead body, there exist only the 13 abstract elements we have so far learnt, whilst in a live man there exist, in addition to the 13 abstract elements of the dead body, 15 more abstract elements which are peculiar to animate existence. It is our task now to analyse the additional 15 elements that the live man carries over and above what the dead man has.

A man in full physical strength and life carries in active form all the 15 additional elements which we may hereafter refer to as life elements. All life elements that exist in each person are the product of the forces of the unit of mind he carries. These elements come into being with the arrival of the unit of mind and cease to be on the departure of the unit of mind. These elements are also substances which are subsidiary to the four great abstract elements, but they are a finer product than any other product of these elements of inanimate matter, for the life elements are subjected to the stronger and more rapid beating emanating from the beats of the mind.

Matter Within the Hold of Mind

Life elements are substances which emerge when inanimate units of matter come into the hold of the units of mind. The physical system of each material being living in the universe is a bundle of the 13 kinds of units of inanimate matter. These units of elements are, comparatively, slow in motion and weak in strength, so that the units of matter, travelling with a unit of mind, are subject to constant pulls from the latter.

The superior strength of the unit of mind over the unit of matter gets balanced by the occurrence of a twofold effect: the unit of mind absorbs more units of matter into its physical

system, and it maintains the physical life system in an appropriate grade of quality. The quantity and quality of the material frame, therefore, effectively adjusts the extra strength of the unit of mind, so that the material being acquires the requisite mind-matter equilibrium for existence.

Effect of Rapid Beating

In motion, a unit of matter beats only once for every 17 beats of a unit of mind, so that, when the mind does 3,000,000,000,000 beats during a period of about the duration of a flash of lightning, a unit of matter beats only about 176,470,000,000. Consequently, at every beat of the mind, the units of matter are fiercely spurred to activity and these spurs occurring 17 times per every repetition of a unit of matter, the whole number of units of matter, comprising a physical life system, gets thoroughly shaken in the pr ocess.

The units of matter in a physical life system when subject to the fierce handling of the unit of mind, turn more turbulent than they normally are. As when soap water is beaten, a lather is formed, the units of matter, when beaten by a unit of mind, form subsidiary waves of subtle foam.

Production of Life Elements and How They Spread

In the process of beating the units of matter to life, the units of mind employ 15 different forces and each acting like a stick produces a different wave of subtle foam—a life element. All these 15 sticks of forces exist in every unit of mind, but only a few of them maintain permanent strength, whilst the rest vary their strength from season to season and age to age. Owing to this variation of the strength of the mind's forces, some of the life elements are produced in smaller quantities whilst the rest

are produced in larger quantities. Since the unit of mind never drops its inherent forces completely, the less strong forces that produce life elements remain in the mind, however small the production of life elements from them may be. Thus the production of all life elements continues at all times in each physical system, the less strong formations appearing only in dormant form.

All life elements spread throughout each physical life system, and, therefore, it is necessary for us to remember that all the 15 life elements exist in every particle of matter composing each person. These elements, however, gather in adequate concentration for observable action only in the various organs that occur for the purpose. The life elements existing in the particles of matter in the other parts of the body remain dormant. The understanding of this existence and the manner in which the life elements are spread throughout the system will become important when we reach the latter stages of our study of the universe.

Before we consider further the exact method in which the mind builds up life elements and how it utilizes the life elements for its purposes, it is necessary that we should comprehend the features and performances of each of these life elements. We shall, therefore, commence the examination of the 15 life elements systematically.

Elements of Reflection

We learnt in our last chapter the existence of five projective elements in inanimate matter, *viz.* colour, taste, sound, smell, and touch. Conversely to each of these elements occurs a life element—an element of reflection (pasāda rūpa).

These reflective elements are only an effect of polish, that develops on the sense organs, with the aid of which the environ-

ment is mirrored to the mind. The polish of the reflective elements contacts and reflects the polishes of the projective elements present in both animate and inanimate matter. There are five reflective elements to reflect the five projective elements present in matter, and these active reflective elements in sufficient concentration occur only in the appropriate sense organs.

All the reflective polish elements occur in a dormant state throughout a person's physical system and, therefore, it must not be mistaken that where the sense organs are undeveloped or ineffective, the respective reflective elements do not occur. The fact that a particular organ is ineffective means that the reflective elements do not gather into that organ in sufficient concentration and in sufficiently active form to cause the reflections efficiently. In such circumstances, the reflective elements occurring even in its reflective organ form only in dormant state.

The reflective polish elements are five in number and they are: eye (cakshu), ear (shotra), nose (ghāna), tongue (jivhā), and touch (kāya). These elements are also subsidiary to the four great abstract elements, but exist only in the abstract form.

Eye

In the elements of the membranes of the retina of the eye, there exists a surface polish, which is fed and preserved by the elements of the inner membranes, that reflects to the mind the existence of the various colours which may appear before it. The element which thus reflects to the mind the colour projective elements present in matter is termed the reflective element of the eye (cakkhu pasāda rūpa). The reflective element of the eye also helps us to visualize any colours it may have experienced in the past or which it may, by forecasting, expect to experience in the future.

Besides reflecting to the mind the projective polish elements of colour, the reflective element of the eye does not do any other function. We must comprehend fully the fact that, of all the 28 elements of matter, there is only one element, *viz.* colour, which the eye can reflect. The remaining 27 elements are not discernible to the eye.

Ear

In fully developed beings, there forms in the elements of the ear drum a subtle element of reflective polish which springs to the surface and reflects to the mind the existence of any projective sound elements in the environment. This reflective polish which exists in the ear drum is termed the reflective element of the ear (sota pasāda rūpa).

When any projective sound element comes into contact with the reflective element of the ear, the ear drum absorbs the reflection and conveys it to the mind, thus causing the sense of hearing. The reflective element of the ear can reflect only the projective sound element, and the balance 27 elements of matter are not discernible to the reflective element of the ear.

Nose and Tongue

A similar reflective polish element exists in the nose, which reflects the projective smell element present in matter. This element also springs to the surface continuously and absorbs any reflections of smell and conveys such reflections to the mind. The sense of smell is thus conveyed to the mind. This element is termed the reflective element of the nose (ghāna pasāda rūpa). The reflective element of the nose can only reflect the projective element of smell, and the other 27 elements of matter are not discernible to the nose.

In the tongue also there springs to the surface a reflective polish element which reflects the projective element of taste present in matter. This element is termed the reflective element of the tongue (jivhā pasāda rūpa). The reflective element of the tongue can only reflect to the mind the presence of any projective element of taste, and the remaining 27 elements are not discernible to the reflective element of the tongue.

Touch Reflection

These four reflective elements, eye, ear, nose, and tongue, can each perform only one task, *i.e.* to reflect its corresponding projective element. The active presence of each of these four reflective elements is localized to the respective organ or organs to which each of the four reflective elements belongs.

The reflective element of touch (kāya pasāda rūpa), however, is spread in sufficient concentration throughout the entire live physical system of each person. The reflective element of touch springs to the surface all over a person's body, including the other sense organs as well.

Projective Touch Elements

The reflective element of touch mirrors to the mind the projective element of touch present in matter. The projective element of touch incorporates three of the great abstract elements in its formation. The presence of abstract earth is conveyed to the mind by a reflection of hardness or softness. The presence of abstract heat is conveyed to the mind by reflections of hotness or coldness, and the presence of abstract air is conveyed to the mind by reflections of fullness or emptiness.

Besides these three great abstract elements which go to form the compound element of projective polish of touch, the

reflective element of touch present in man and other beings does not reflect the presence of any other element to the mind. A total of 24 elements is not discernible to the reflective element of touch which is present in all parts of our body.

Five Organs Reflect the Environment

When we look at an object, the reflective element of the eye present in our two eyes reflects to the mind the projective colour element that is present in that object and thus the mind receives a colour picture of the objects before the eyes. If we were to approach an object and touch it, the three great abstract elements, *i.e.* abstract earth, abstract heat, and abstract air, present in that object convey their respective projective effect to our reflective element of touch. If our reflective element of the nose were to contact the projective element of smell, the mind takes an impression of the presence of smell. If the projective element of taste present in an object were to contact the reflective element of the tongue, that reflection is absorbed into the mind, thus forming the sense of taste; and if an object emits the projective element of sound and that element were to get reflected by the reflective element of the ear and carried to the mind, the sense of hearing is felt by the mind.

We must remember that it is in this manner and by these five main methods that the mind becomes aware of the environment, and, therefore, we may consider the five sense organs, which house these five reflective elements in heavy concentration, as the five main gates of the mind. (The other sense organ, the heart, which is not an environment sense organ, will be discussed presently).

Elements Defying Environment Organs

We have seen that only 8 out of the 28 elements of matter become discernible to our mind through the five environment

sense organs which we have now discussed, and a total of 20 elements are not discernible to these five sense organs. The elements which are discernible to the five environment sense organs are: the projective elements of colour, sound, smell, taste, and touch—and the touch projective element comprises abstract earth, abstract heat, and abstract air. The presence of the 20 elements of matter which are not discernible to the five environment sense organs, is, therefore, not felt by our mind through them.

We must observe that amongst the 20 elements of matter which the environment reflective organs cannot reflect is included one of the great abstract elements —*viz*. abstract water. When we touch the substance which we commonly refer to as water, we would observe, on close study, that the only reflections our mind receives are the heat, the softness, and the fullness of water. When we look at water, we only reflect its colour. When we smell water, we reflect only its smell, provided, of course, if there were present in that water the smell projective element in sufficient concentration; and when we taste water, we only reflect its taste. We do not have a sense organ to reflect the flow-and-paste feature of abstract water, and, hence, we cannot know the presence of abstract water with the aid of any of the environment sense organs.

Mind Can Discern All Elements

The great abstract element, abstract water, and the 19 subsidiary elements of matter which are not discernible to the environment sense organs are all discernible to the mind, which, as we have learnt, has its centre at the heart. But it must be a powerful mind that can reflect these 20 elements, because direct reflections, unaided by the environment sense organs, are possible only to those with powerful minds. Fortunately, the mind of man is powerful enough to record such direct reflections

and, therefore, the entire subject of the universe is within man's grasp.

Whilst in any physics or chemistry laboratory, one may test the 8 elements which are discernible to the environment sense organs, the mind is the one laboratory that can test the other 20. The mind that can test these 20 subtle elements should certainly be more powerful than any laboratory equipment so far made, or will ever be made. And the human mind being more powerful than any laboratory equipment, the Buddha made the experiment on his own mind, and successfully reached regions of knowledge beyond the scope of any material instruments.

Heart Element

The next, and in many respects the most important, life element is also a reflective element: the reflective element of the heart (hadaya vatthu rūpa). It is with the aid of this element that the major reflections of the mind are made. The heart reflective element is also a by-product of the four great abstract elements and, as such, it can only be understood as a force, a polish, or a light that exists with the blood in the cavities of the heart. Although the blood flows in and out of the heart, this reflective light which is the main mirror of the mind, remains constantly within. It is the most powerful and forceful reflective polish element of the body. The function performed by this element is to reflect to the mind the passions and emotions both good and bad.

The concentration of the heart element in the cavities of the heart, constitutes the centre of the mind and to it are linked the five environment reflective elements. The heart element is the central station at which the despatches from the five environment reflective elements are directed , and such major reflections of the environment as are mirrored in sufficient strength

penetrate to the heart reflective element and so the waves of emotions and passions begin. The minor reflections of the environment reflective elements fade before they penetrate the heart reflective element. The heart reflective element also exists throughout the entire physical life system, but only inside the cavities of the heart does it spring in active formation.

Reflective Elements Emerge in Due Order

The five environment reflective elements and the heart reflective element do not occur in active formation throughout the physical life system. These elements emerge in active formation only in their respective physical organs and the rest of the physical system carry them only in their dormant form.

Even in the respective organs, the environment reflective life elements develop active strength progressively. During the first stages of life, *i.e.* during the period immediately after material beings take conception, the environment reflective elements remain dormant throughout the physical system, including the organs which belong to each element. The heart reflective element, however, occurs in active formation simultaneously at conception and continues to be active throughout the duration of existence of each physical life system until death.

Elements in Life Long Activity

This feature of the heart reflective element is common in four other life elements occurring in each life system, and they are: the two sex elements, the evolution element, and the food element. These four life elements also occur in active formation simultaneously at conception and continue throughout the duration of life until death.

The heart reflective element is actively present only in its physical organ: the heart. In the rest of the physical body, the heart reflective element remains only in the dormant form. There are also ups and downs in the intensity of the activity of the heart reflective element, for, like the environment reflective elements, there are times when the heart reflective element works very rapidly and in great strength, and also there are times when the heart reflective element relaxes.

But in the case of the sex elements, the evolution elements, and the food element, these variations do not exist. They have no localized organs where they concentrate. The regularity and intensity of the activity of these elements are maintained at all periods from the very first point of time when the conception of a material being takes place up to the very last point of time when the death of that material being occurs. As to localization, these elements remain distributed evenly throughout each physical life system.

Male and Female Sex Elements

The two sex elements (bhāva rūpa) are: (1) female (sthri bhāva), and (2) male (purusa bhāva). Both these sex life elements are present in every being, but the proportion of their presence varies. The proportion of the presence of these two elements determines the sex to which each being belongs. If a particular being carries a larger proportion of the male sex element, he turns out to be a male, and if a particular being carries a larger proportion of the female sex element, she turns out to be a female.

Every unit of mind that forms into a unit of material existence carries the forces necessary for the formation of male and female sex elements, but it is in a pair of scales of extreme precision that the forces of feminity and masculinity of each unit of mind

get weighed. The slightest weight of the forces of feminity over masculinity, or the converse, draws a person on the side of complete female or male form. On whichever the side the scale may rest, the element of that sex grows in profusion and spreads through and mixes with every atom and molecule of that person's physical system, whilst the other sex element remains in the system in a dormant form only.

The presence of the opposite sex element even in dormant form is also significant, because the growth of the main sex system is controlled thereby. The force of the opposite sex elements causes the growth of opposite sex characteristics in a person's physical system. This has resulted in the presence of the rudiments of an undeveloped man in every woman's physical system, and an undeveloped woman in every man's physical system.

Sex Changes

The variation of the presence of the two sex elements is the result of the state of each person's mind, which is determined by itself according to the grade of impressions that each unit of mind carries.

The impressions of a person's reflections on the mind, and, particularly, the impressions of a person's sex reflections, determine the variety and strength of the mind to form the sex elements. According to a person's reflections or morality or immorality, the variations of the degree of sex occur. During the course of the circulation of each unit of mind in the material universe, it gathers different strengths of sex. During one era, a unit of mind may gather more of the female sex force and less of the male sex force; and in another era, the same unit of mind may gather more of the male sex force and less of the female sex force.

According to the strength of sex force dominant during each period, change from male form to female form, and from female form to male form very often occur. There is hardly a being in the universe who is now a male but who had not been a female before; or a being who is now a female but who had not been a male before. Such changes of sex, however, occur at the change of each life, normally, but instances are not uncommon where such changes occur even in the midst of a single life time.

Sex Development

We have seen that of the two sex elements, one remains dormant and the other gets active and that, whichever be the element that gets active, it spreads in active form throughout the entire physical system. The active sex element develops and preserves the various organs of the body. The units of elements that form the first atom of conception of material life, carry the fullest provision for the development of both sexes, but during the course of its processing according to the strength of the mind, only one of the sexes develops, and the other sex remains dormant and neglected.

The unit of mind begins the production of the active sex elements at the moment of conception and it ceases the formation of the active sex elements only at the point of time of death. We must remember that in any physical system only one kind of sex element springs in active form, and when one sex element springs into active form, the other sex element remains dormant. The sex elements are also a by-product of the four great abstract elements, and are only discernible to the mind as a force. These elements, like all other life elements, beat at the same speed as the mind.

Evolution Element

Equal in importance to the two sex elements, and the reflective element of the heart, is the element of continuity of form or the

evolution element (jīvita rūpa). This element also begins in active strength simultaneously with conception, continues in active strength through each length of life and ends only at death. Like the sex elements, the evolution element, too, is spread in active strength throughout each physical life system, so that, the evolution element is continuously at work in every particle of which a being is composed.

The chief function of the evolution element is to supply to the various particles the strength and force requisite to preserve the continuity of the species of those particles, so that the force of repetition of elements does not cause any variation from the preceding generation of each particle. The evolution element, in this task, ensures the regularity of the proportion of contents of the particles in the various parts of the physical system and, thus, the normal tendency of inanimate matter to establish a homogeneous condition and merge with other elements of the same kind in the neighbourhood is prevented.

Variations Due to Forces of Mind

The evolution element, although its main function is the preservation of species of atoms in each physical life system, is never able to perform this task effectively. This is due to the action of the unit of mind to whose forces all elements are always subject. According to the releases of the forces from the unit of mind, the evolution element causes a measure of variation. This variation is sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. But, the variation thus caused is so slight, that it is almost imperceptible if it is measured between short periods of time. The variation is appreciable over long periods of time in all instances.

In material beings who spring from parents, the evolution element begins from the evolution element of the parents, the

offspring having inherited the evolution element from the parents. But owing to the variation of the forces of the minds of the parents and the mind of the offspring, the process of variation which this causes on the formation and development of the material figure of the offspring, and the slow speed at which the variation of the evolution element takes place, the atoms and molecules, and the organs and bodily form, in content and structure, of parents and children appear quite similar, but yet are quite unlike.

Food Element

The last amongst the essential primary life elements which occur in active form at the conception of any being, and as important as any other element, is the food element (āhāra rūpa.) This is also an abstract element, formed by the mind, of the four great abstract elements, which supplies the force to assimilate and absorb into the physical system additional units of elements from foreign substances, and thus assists in the processing and accumulation of the requisite new materials for the building, maintenance, and preservation of the physical body. The food element replaces wasted energy and also assists in building up additional energy in the body, and maintains a constant and regular level of supply. The food element should not be confused with food—food element is the force that extracts from food the units of elements from food to build and replenish the physical body.

The two sex elements, the heart reflective element, the evolution element, and the food element are the primary elements of life. These five elements integrate themselves simultaneously at conception, continue through life, and cease at death.

Motion Elements

We have now covered the 13 elements of inanimate matter and 10 elements of animate beings, making a total of

23 elements. These 23 elements are all that combine in the formation of our physical body which is the vehicle of our life. But this vehicle, if made of only these 23 elements would still remain stationary like a mere log of wood, and, therefore, 5 more life elements join it to supply the force of mobility and manoeuvrability. With these 5 elements the vehicle of our physical self is complete.

Of these 5 elements, two are motion elements (viññappti rūpa), and the other three are condition elements (vikāra rūpa).

The two motion elements are: the physical motion element (kāya viññappti), and the sound motion element (vāg viññappti). The main function of the physical motion element is to turn the appropriate elements of the body to the appropriate organs, so that those organs may perform their respective tasks. The physical motion element controls the other elements of the body, concentrating them or withdrawing them according to the needs of each situation. This element also regulates the strength of the other formations of elements, such as abstract air, abstract water, abstract heat, abstract earth, etc. Thus varying the intensities of the elements and their forces, it facilitates the different motions of the body.

Physical Motion and Speech

When, for instance, we wish to raise our hand, a wave of the mind forces a stream of physical motion elements, which condition the different elements in the various parts of our body and which support the hand, to assist the hand to move to the desired position. Every action of our body is thus controlled and conditioned by these physical motion elements present in all material beings. When we wish to put down our hand, the same process works conversely. The wave of mind withdraws the physical motion element that it alerted and causes the hand

to drop down. When we are walking, the physical motion element gets to its task by moving the various parts of the body and when we wish to stop, the waves of the mind causes the physical motion elements to cease activity, and, if necessary, cause physical motion elements of converse strength to spring to stop the continuity.

Without the co-operation and direction of the physical motion elements, no motions of our physical self are possible. At the helm of the physical structure is the mind, and the control over the physical system that the mind employs is the physical motion element. The work of motions, actually, is performed by the four great abstract elements, but it is the physical motion element which, having received the stimuli from the mind, increases or decreases the forces of the great abstract elements by increasing or decreasing their concentrations.

The sound motion element is the element which varies the noise of the sound we make in our speaking. Like the physical motion element, which controls the manner of the flow of the various elements in the body, the sound motion element controls the flow of air inward and outward, and it also controls the precise speed and force with which the air thus moved should contact the various parts of the throat and mouth to produce the different sounds to form the different words required to be spoken.

Condition Elements and Health

Finally, we have the three condition elements: the element of inaction (lahutā rūpa), the element of release (mudutā rūpa), and the element of adoptability (kammaññatā rūpa). The function of these elements is to create conditions which make the performances of the body efficient or inefficient. The element of inaction makes the parts of the body affected by it

seem heavy and tied down, thus reducing the efficiency of those parts.

The element of release makes the various organs of the body affected by it seem light and free, so that those organs become easily manoeuvrable. The element of adoptability creates the maximum forces of condition elements, thus causing the organs affected to be hesitant and lethargic in all actions.

The presence of active elements of inaction and adoptability in the physical system of a person is an indication of physical ill health and disorder, and these elements hamper the efficient functioning of the various organs of a person's physical self. The presence of active elements of release is, on the other hand, an indication of good health and these elements make a person vigorous and cheerful. The element of adoptability brings a person to a condition between good health and ill health, and the operations of the elements of inaction and release are mostly governed by its activity. All these three elements work for the most part harmoniously keeping each person at a certain level of health.

Recapitulation

With this discussion of the chief features of the 15 elements occurring in living beings, we have covered the entire field of elements that combine to form both the animate and the inanimate universe. What we have done in this chapter and the previous one has been to familiarize ourselves with the various elements and, therefore, our knowledge so far is confined to the acquisition of a fair view of the chief characteristics of each of the 28 elements of matter. We may have discussed most of the elements mainly in catalogue form but, if we have followed this study with adequate care, the degree of proficiency we have now achieved should be appreciable.

We must, in particular, note that the 28 elements of matter mix in the combinations of all human beings and the other beings of the universe, including the members of the animal kingdom. In the physical life system of some of the lower beings, and even in the physical life system of some human beings, some of the 15 life elements, particularly a few of the environment reflective sense elements, do not occur in sufficient strength to spring into active functioning; nevertheless, the seeds of the forces that cause these elements are present in every unit of mind. These seeds in such cases are covered by the occurrence of dark patches of impressions which conceal both their presence and activity. Such effects, however, cease after lapse of time.

The evolution element and the two sex elements jointly supply the unit of mind, at each conception, the blue-print according to which to found, and the mould in which to cast its physical figure; the food element extracts from the neighbourhood the requisite materials to build, repair, and renew the physical figure; the heart reflective element conditions the climate within the physical figure; the five environment sense organs provide the needed watches at the entrances to the physical figure; and the three elements of condition, together with the two elements of motion, supply the switch gear to steer the physical figure.

Conclusion

On the base of the 13 elements of inanimate matter, the unit of mind, by the use of its forces, brings into being the 15 life elements and constructs for itself and by itself, its vehicle of material life. In such vehicles, each unit of mind travels through its spans of material existence.

The manner in which the 28 elements of matter occur and substances are formed, and how exactly life conceives and develops, etc. have to be discussed in sufficient detail to make

this study complete. But before we penetrate into those regions of knowledge, there is some more ground to cover. As the various phenomena in this universe are a matter-mind continuum, it is also essential to know more as to what the mind is like in order to understand the whole process of the universe.

Now that we have come to know something about the elements of matter, when we have gathered sufficient details about the mind and how it operates, the comprehension of the exact process of life and the universe would become both fascinating and easy.

Leaving the discussion of the elements of matter at the present stage, therefore, we shall take up the consideration of the details pertaining to the mind after which we would become competent to discuss the whole problem taken in its complete form. The next two chapters need to be studied as methodically and carefully as possible.

CHAPTER 4

FEATURES OF THE MIND

MAN is in motion; all the other beings in the universe are in motion. Man in his business of life, and the other beings in theirs, strive to satisfy their respective wants. All that activity is motion. The dry leaves fall and tender leaves spring, the roots stretch far and deep for food and moisture, and branches spread high and wide for air and sunshine and in this way the plants are in motion. The entire system of life everywhere in the universe is thus in motion.

Universe is Wholly Motion

Light from the stars and planets is in motion. The gusts of wind and streams of oceans are in motion. Each shower of rain is a motion and the grains of sand and dust that sunshine, rain, and wind force to lower elevations, cause, slowly but surely, the motions of rocks and mountains. The Earth as a unit is in motion, and the sun, the moon, and all the stars in the heavens are constantly keeping to their respective motions. The whole physical universe too is thus regularly in motion.

The various kinds of motion are a familiar feature of the universe; they are part of the universe; they are the universe. Any comprehensive study of the universe, therefore, involves a careful study of all kinds of motion, and this basic knowledge we must here acquire.

Subsidiary Elements are Not Motions

Matter, when consolidated, can be observed; and when consolidated matter is in motion, motions can be observed.

We measure the speeds of different motions and calculate their strengths and forces. We have experienced so many kinds of motion and are, even as we are studying this book, in the experience of so many different motions, that there is no need to prove the existence of motions. Let us, therefore, take up the scrutiny of these motions.

In the last chapter, when we analysed the sense organs, we noted their respective functions. Colour projective element (vanna gocara rūpa) is all that the reflective element of the eye (cakkhu pasāda rūpa) can observe; sound projective element (sadda gocara rūpa) is all that the reflective element of the ear (shotra pasāda rūpa) can observe; smell projective element (gandha gocara rūpa) is all that the reflective element of the nose (ghāna pasāda rūpa) can observe; taste projective element (rasa gocara rūpa) is all that the reflective element of the tongue (jivha pasāda rūpa) can observe; and the touch projective element (phassa gocara rūpa) is all that the reflective element of touch (kāya pasāda rūpa) can observe. Colour projective element is not motion; sound projective element is not motion; smell projective element is not motion; taste projective element is not motion; and touch projective element is not motion.

Mind Can Discern All Motions

The five organs, eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch, therefore, cannot discern motion, but, with their aid, the mind discerns motions of every kind. The mind is the only organ that discerns motions. Every motion is discernible to the mind and the sense organs merely assist the mind to discern them. We remember that the centre of the mind is the heart, and, therefore, we may say that the heart is the physical organ that can discern motions. The presence of motions may, however, be felt through any other points of the physical body. This is because the mind is spread throughout a person's physical life system.

Waiting by the roadway, we might observe a vehicle in motion. It appears from one direction, comes towards us, goes past us, and disappears in the other direction. By the observation of this long chain of actions of the vehicle, our mind forms the notion that a vehicle is in motion.

In forming this sensation about the motion of the vehicle, three organs took part: two physical organs and the mind. The eye reflected the colour projective element in the vehicle appearing and disappearing at various points of the road, and by the calculations of the various points it appeared on the road, the mind formed the sensation that the vehicle was in motion. Similarly, the ear reflected the projective sound element which reached our ear with varying intensity and from varying directions throughout its passage, and by calculating the degrees of intensity and the directions from which the sound appeared, the mind formed an impression that the vehicle was in motion.

Sense Organs Aid the Mind

The act of the motion of the vehicle itself the eye never saw, all that it saw being the formations of colours in the arrangement and order of a vehicle appearing at an infinity of points along the course of the road in such an order of sequence that it gave the mind the reasons to form the impression that the vehicle moved in a particular direction and in a particular order. Similarly did the ear not hear the motion; it only heard the sound. The other environment sense organs are also incapable by themselves of discerning motions, but with the aid of them the mind is capable of doing so.

Thus the organ which can test the universe of motion is the mind. The universe is, itself, all motion, and this fact has to be understood by a closer analysis of the universe of atoms.

Matter and Motion

We may, in a way, analyse the entire universe into two distinct quantities: matter and motion. The universe of matter is the universe discernible to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch. In this universe is included the universe of colour, shape, etc. and, in all, it includes the entire material universe. The other part of the universe is the universe of motion, and in this division is the universe which only the mind can discern.

The universe of matter is the universe of atoms, and when we studied atoms in the second chapter (Elements of Inanimate Matter), we noted how the units of elements existing in each atom disperse and turn into units of action. These units of action are motions. What is practicable with one atom is possible with all the atoms of the universe, so that, the entire volume of the universe of atoms, *i.e.* the entire material universe, is reducible completely to motions.

Conversely analysing, we found that atoms consist of motions and, therefore, it is obvious that the universe of atoms is also a universe of motions. From whichever angle we may consider, we arrive at the same conclusion, namely, that the universe of matter is also a composition of motions. Thus, in the last analysis, both the universe of matter and the universe of motion turn into one: universe of motions.

Mind is a Motion

Units of mind are motions travelling in this universe of motions. In the infinite universe of motions, the motions of the units of mind reign supreme, for all units of matter, which as we have seen are also motions, are subject to the control of the units of mind.

Motions can be discerned only by motions, and the mind, being a motion, discerns other motions. The mind also can discern its own motion, the motion of the mind itself. But it is necessary for the motion, which discerns other motions, to be superior in force to the motions it discerns. The mind of the human being, fortunately, being amongst the highest in strength, is capable of discerning all motions existing in the universe.

Mind Never Solidifies

We must understand correctly the features of motions. Mind being a motion, and matter too being motions, nothing is so commonplace to us as motions, but, at the same time, nothing is also more difficult to comprehend than motions.

The units of mind never consolidate in the manner of the units of matter. Whereas the latter join together in the formation of atoms, the units of mind never join any other units of mind in a state of merger. The units of mind only grasp into their hold units of matter, but, even in that state, the units of mind never consolidate with any units of matter. The units of mind thus preserve, in all circumstances and at all times, their individualistic form as loose units of motion. As the motions are not discernible to the environment sense organs, the presence of units of mind is never observed through our organs of eye, ear, nose, tongue, or touch.

Identifying Units of Mind

The only way, therefore, to ascertain the presence of units of mind is to watch the behaviour of consolidated matter, but even that is difficult because in apparent dead masses of consolidated matter, there may exist weak units of mind which may only have sufficient strength to clasp such tiny bundles of

matter as are not discernible to our sense organs even if they were to be aided by instruments. The observation of the presence of stronger units of mind, however, is easy, because, if they travel in the material form, they will carry, normally, a bundle of matter sufficiently large to be discernible, and, thus, the sense organs can detect their presence. There are also other difficulties. Some of the units of mind may not carry a material frame at all or the material frames they carry may be so thin that our sense organs may not be able to discern them.

The units of mind, the presence of which our senses can normally observe, are those objects of matter in which we popularly say that there exists "life". The tests we apply to ascertain the presence or absence of life are confined to the observation of motions. We are accustomed to the motion of inanimate matter. Any object which moves against these laws of motion of inanimate matter, we suspect, has life present within the sphere of its influence. This test is rather primitive, but sound to some extent.

Mind is Stronger than Matter

The motion of any single unit of mind is more powerful than the motion of any single unit of matter. Most of the units of mind we are familiar with are so powerful that they can overwhelm large numbers of units of matter, but, normally, each unit of mind, when taking a material frame, clasps such numbers of units of matter as it has the strength to control and, therefore, each unit of mind in a material frame finds it possible to move about its mass of matter away from the ordinary laws of inanimate matter.

The surest and the most commonly applied test is to ascertain the presence of life by the examination of the reflections on the sense organs. We ascribe life to animals because they satisfy

both tests; and also the organs of matter they develop in their body closely resemble the physical organs, in both shape and functions, that man himself develops and utilizes in his physical system.

Mind has No Material Qualities

We must note that these tests to ascertain the presence or absence of life are inadequate because life may exist anywhere and in any form. Wherever there exists a unit of mind, there exists life. This is the correct rule to follow, but it is useless to us because we discern life only when matter in sufficient concentration to produce discernible colour and shape comes into the hold of a unit of mind. We might note that life in forms other than material forms exists but we have no need, at the present stage, to dwell at length on such life because this study can proceed further without that consideration.

Whilst the correct way to describe the mind is to say that it is a motion, and motions themselves being so difficult to describe, we may get on to our subject by saying that the mind is an invisible light. It is, however, quite wrong to call the mind a light, as light has colour, shape, heat, etc. whereas the mind has none of these. Let us, therefore, imagine a light which carries none of the material qualities and proceed, fixing our notion of the mind to such a light.

Speed of the Mind

When we studied the elements of matter in the second chapter (Elements of Inanimate Matter), we learnt the process of repetition of elements: three currents springing into activity in rotation and causing their birth, existence, and death. A similar, but more complicated, process is at work in each unit of mind.

The pulsating process which occurs in the units of matter occurs 17 times faster in units of mind, the speed of repetition of each unit of mind being about 3,000,000,000,000 per the duration of a flash of lightning. Although this would appear to us to be a very tiny period, when measured by points of time, the duration of each beat of mind even in each of the various phases of rotation is a very considerable period.

During the course of its motion from inception to cessation, each beat of mind forms itself into 17 distinct waves. We must comprehend the manner of the formation of these 17 waves and, in order to do so, it is necessary, in the first instance, to study the various forces of the mind that cause the formation of these waves.

Common Currents of the Mind

Inherent permanently in each unit of mind are 7 major currents which cause the continuous flow of the 17 waves in each beat of mind. Each of these currents performs a specialized task and, in performing thus, each current mixes closely with all the other currents of the mind. Together, these seven currents move in the cycle of birth, existence, and death of the beats of mind and, therefore, their flow of energy appears, in one respect, similar to the manifestation of material energy through the currents of birth, existence, and death present in the units of the four great abstract elements.

While being subject to the continuous repetition of birth, existence, and death, each of these seven currents also produces on its unit of mind a force which governs the quality, strength, and function of the unit of mind as a whole. Before we examine the forces thus produced, we shall proceed to examine these 7 currents sufficiently in order to comprehend their features and performances.

As these currents exist in all units of mind and travel through every beat of each unit of mind, they are collectively referred to as the common currents of the mind (sabba citta sādhārana). It is with due regard to the function of each of these currents that their names have been fixed, and the following are their translations:—

(1) the current of coalescence and survey (phassa)
(2) the current of condition (vēdanā)
(3) the current of distinction (saññā)
(4) the current of intention (cetanā)
(5) the current of decision (ekaggatā)
(6) the current of evolution (jīvitindriya)
(7) the current of recollection (manasikāra).

Functions of Common Currents

The task in which the current of coalescence and survey specializes is to bring together all the forces of the mind and to determine the direction of the course of travel of the unit of mind. The current of condition brings each beat of mind into three stages of feeling: pleasant (sukha), painful (dukkha), and neutral (upekkha).

The current of distinction makes each unit of mind different from all other units of mind so that absolute likeness of any two units of mind is thus prevented. Because of the effects of this current, the identification of the various units of mind becomes possible.

The current of intention maintains the mind in a state of alertness. Remaining mixed in all parts of the mind, it makes the mind extremely sensitive and prone to receive reflections. The next current, the current of decision, assists the mind to assume a particular state by eliminating the many distractions to which it is subject.

The current of evolution, a knowledge of which will be of special importance to us in the latter stages of this study, has three principal functions:—

(1) to ensure the continuance of the repetition process of the mind,
(2) to act as the repository of the mind, and
(3) to maintain the release of the forces of the mind at correct strength.

The current of recollection is the accounting unit of the mind, and by its mechanical process, it maintains a perfectly accurate and up-to-date balance of the mind's accumulations. Its function is to direct the forces of the mental entities towards the object in view.

Rotation of the Wheel of Mind

All the 7 common currents of the mind intermix and intergrip so thoroughly that in every part of the mind all the seven currents are present. By the joint forces of the common currents the waves of the mind are formed. The two currents, the current of coalescence and survey, and the current of condition, prepare the way for the progress of the mind; the current of distinction preserves the individuality of each unit of mind; the current of decision brings the mind into a state of solidarity; the current of evolution reinforces the strength of the mind to continue in existence and regulates the flow of the energy of the unit of mind; and the current of recollection counts, adds, and subtracts the various formations of impressions from the stocks of impressions which units of mind gather during the course of their progress over various fields.

The process of repetition in the mind is the same as that operating within the units of the four great abstract elements and, for this purpose, the forces of birth, existence, and death

of each unit of mind spring in the evolution current. The energy of each unit of mind tends to continue without causing any intervening breaches, but the operation of the repetition process hampers such continued progress. During the course of the mind's progress, the forces of repetition operating in the evolution current causes it to rotate in the cycle of birth, existence, and death and, as we have stated, this process of rotation is very rapid, being about 3,000,000,000,000 per each duration of a flash of lightning. In each of these rotations, the 6 other common currents of the mind and the two remaining forces of the evolution current make an effort to resist, and, in consequence, the waves of the mind spring: and 17 of these waves spring regularly during the course of each rotation.

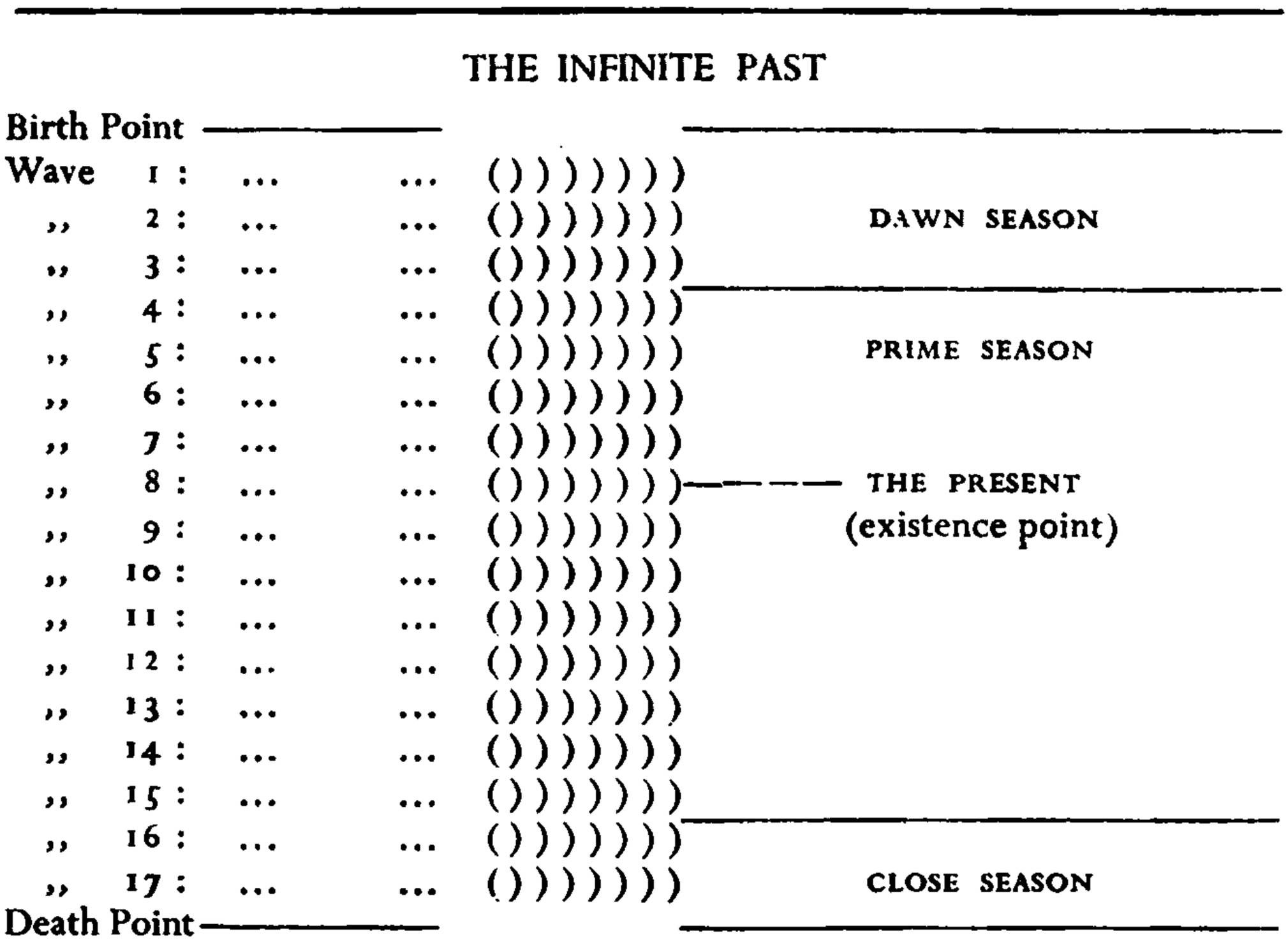
The rotation of the cycle of birth, existence, and death operating in the evolution current is so continuous that the remaining forces of energy in the common currents of the mind constantly keep vigil in their effort to conserve their energies. The constancy of the vigilant activity of these forces, causes the flow of the 17 waves of the mind to continue their constant rhythmic motion. The most difficult section in the cycle of birth, existence, and death lies between death and birth, for the progress from death to birth causes all the energies to shrink completely and, therefore, demands the utmost strength of the unit of mind. Because of this reason, a few waves occurring immediately before the point of death and about 3 waves occurring immediately after each fresh birth of each unit of mind remain firm and concentrated, whilst the waves occurring in between are free and, consequently, they become very sensitive to action.

Phases of a Beat of Mind

On the basis of this phenomenon the Buddha has determined three seasons or phases through which each beat of mind travels.

The three waves occurring immediately after the birth of a beat of mind belong to the dawn season (uppāda), the next 12 waves belong to the prime season (ṭhiti), and the last two waves are in the close season (bhanga). The speed and order of the occurrence of these seasons in the mind and the manner in which these seasons pass off, are constant throughout the universe. These seasons, as we shall find in analysis, are the final divisions of all the seasons and epochs in the universe.

It would be helpful to illustrate the manner of the beat of the mind and the 7 common currents and their 17 waves with the aid of a simple diagram. The following is, therefore, presented to aid the reader :—



Mathematically, the duration of a wave of each beat of mind is about 1/51,000,000,000,000 (*i.e.* 1/3,000,000,000,000÷17) of the duration of a flash of lightning. The length of the

dawn season, which is only 3 waves of each beat of mind is about 1/17,000,000,000,000; the duration of the prime season which is 12 waves is about 1/4,250,000,000,000; and the duration of the close season which is two waves is about 1/25,500,000,000,000 part of the duration of about the period of a flash of lightning.

Repetition Force of the Evolution Current

We must clearly note that it is in the same manner as the currents of birth, existence, and death operate in the units of the four great abstract elements, which cause their beats at measured rate and thus perpetuate their process of repetition, that the forces of birth, existence, and death springing in the evolution current of each unit of mind cause the beats of mind. In the mind, too, these three forces spring active in rotation and perform their respective tasks in relay order. No sooner is the activity of the birth force complete, than the existence force takes over, and as the existence force comes to its end, the force of death takes over. With the conclusion of the task of the force of death, springs the force of birth and it promptly and effectively produces a fresh beat of mind. The process of repetition thus continues.

The 7 common currents bring to bear in each repetition of the beats of the mind all their intrinsic characteristics. Whilst the evolution current brings to bear its forces of birth, existence, and death, each current also brings to the beat of mind its full measure of force. As the beats of the mind are caused, therefore, the 7 common currents also preserve their regularity of manifestation and strength of energy at a level in keeping with the joint forces of the unit of mind.

Continuous Flow of Mental Force

These 7 common currents of the mind and the 17 waves which they turn out in each of the mind's beats occur in the mind of

every being. They have occurred in the mind of each being throughout the infinity of past, they are occurring at present, and they will occur in future. But the intensity and force of these waves differ from person to person, and, in the case of each person, from time to time.

We reckon the periods of time in the universe by reckoning the distance of time between different events. The birth of a beat of the mind is an event and the death of the same beat of mind is the invariable event linked to it. The length of time between the birth and death of a beat of mind is, therefore, a definite measure of time—a period. This period is the shortest period of duration of life in the universe; all spans of life longer than this period are multiples of this period.

Periods of Time and Seasons

Each period of a beat of mind has three different seasons: birth season (dawn), existence season (prime), and death season (close). These three seasons of dawn, prime, and close, being the three stages of the shortest span of life, are the shortest seasons occurring in the universe.

On the base of the infinitely contracted points of time, *viz.* the present, all periods and seasons extend, and their existence stretches along the infinitely extended lengths of time, *viz.* past and future. The infinity of time causes the definiteness of periods and seasons, and on each short period and season are based the longer periods and seasons.

On the base of the shortest period of definite time, which is the duration of a beat of the mind, develops each period of life existence; on such periods of life existence, develops each historical period; on historical periods develops each physical period; and on physical periods, develops each universe period (kappa).

Similar are the seasons. On the base of the three shortest seasons of the universe, the dawn, prime, and close seasons of the beat of the mind, develop the three seasons or stages of childhood, youth, and old age of all beings, and, expanding the seasons in this manner, we could arrive at both the shortest and the broadest seasons of the entire physical universe.

The age and existence of the universe is, as a whole, determined on the basis of the dawn, prime, and close seasons of the beat of the mind. We shall understand the effects of the forces of the mind on the physical universe when we have to consider this subject in our sixth chapter (Conception of Material Life).

Basic Units of Time

The duration of the mind season (cittakkhaṇa) is the basic unit of time on which the Buddha has developed his calculations and, therefore, in the Buddha's table of time, the mind season is treated more as a unit of time.

To facilitate computation, the mind season or mind moment (cittakkhaṇa) is taken in the Buddhist table of time as an exact 1/3 of the duration of a beat of the mind, *i.e.* about 1/9,000,000,000,000 part of the duration of a flash of lightning. On this unit of time, the table of time develops into the duration of a beat of the units of elements of matter as follows:—

3 mind moments:	1 beat of mind
17 beats of mind:	1 beat of matter.

This is the only regular, constant, and exact table of time. All the tables of time that are in common use are based on arbitrary periods of time. The duration of the flash of lightning is an arbitrary period of time, adopted by the Buddha in his

explanation of the universe, because no period of time sufficiently short and exact was familiar to his audience at his time. We may well argue that the exact durations of the different flashes of lightning differ according to the distance and the intensity of each flash. By the term "the flash of lightning", the Buddha merely meant the shortest period of time which the average human being can imagine.

No Calendar is Perfectly Constant

The periods of time based on the performances of the lunar system, are also equally unreliable. The length of the lunar year is not the same throughout time. The lunar year on our planet, the Earth, is different from the lunar year on other planets.

The length of the lunar year on the Earth in, say, two million years from now, will be far different from the length of the lunar year during the present era. Thus the length of the lunar year differs from era to era and from planet to planet. In the same manner, the life time of beings differs from era to era and from planet to planet, and, consequently, the gaps of time between the various events in each life time differ too.

The Only Constant Phenomena

The duration of the beats of mind and the periods of the beats of matter remain meticulously constant in whichever era or on whichever planet they may revolve and, hence, the beats of the mind and the beats of the units of matter are the only constant phenomena which serve as dependable measuring rods to determine all other phenomena in the universe. We have learnt that the universe is everywhere a revolving phenomenon and in it the unit of mind is the fastest and the most constant revolving

unit and, therefore, to measure the universe with, nothing definite is available which is finer and more accurate.

It must not be mistaken that the beats of mind in the higher beings revolve faster and the beats of mind in the lower beings revolve slower. The speed of revolution of the beats of mind in any being is the same, the apparent variations being a matter of difference in the capacity of the individual units of mind. The energy of the units of mind differs from unit to unit and, hence, the force of the beats of mind and the strength of the 17 waves which each beat forms vary, but the speed of the revolutions and regularity of the flow of the 17 waves never vary.

So far as the rapidity of the beats of the mind is concerned, therefore, there is no difference at all between man and animals. But the forces of the waves of the beats of mind between man and animals differ extensively. In animals, the waves are formed sufficiently strong to sustain them in animal life; but in man, the waves of the mind are formed in sufficient strength to sustain man in human life and activity. Here lies the sole difference between man and the animals.

Strength of Mind at Conception

The 17 waves which the 7 common currents of the mind form in each beat of mind repeat the same strength and characteristics as the first wave in the first beat of mind which occurred at the conception of each species of life. Thus, the first wave in the first beat of a unit of mind that operates in the conception of a human being, is of sufficient force to sustain a human frame and continue in human activity. So long as the unit of mind taking conception in this manner remains in each material formation, the conception force continues, and the waves it generates continue at conception strength.

The strength of the first wave in the first beat of mind in each being is conditioned by the sum of impressions which that unit of mind carried to the last wave of the last beat of mind in the preceding existence, and, therefore, in one sense, the first wave of the first beat of a unit of mind in a new material life is the same as the last wave of the beat of mind that immediately preceded it in the preceding material existence. However, as the first wave of the first beat of mind in each material existence contains the force necessary to kindle life in the first atom of conception and, as the same wave at the same strength keeps on repeating itself in all the beats of mind that follow, it has been identified by the name: life wave (bhavanga).

Continuous Flow of Life Waves

All the 17 waves which spring from the 7 common currents of the mind are of equal strength, being equal to the first wave of the first beat of the unit of mind in each life formation. The strength of these life waves, however, is only sufficient to maintain each physical system in dormant life, and, therefore, the presence of these life waves is not even felt by the beings in whose physical self they occur. The life waves occur ceaselessly in every beat of mind beginning as they do from the first moment of conception and ending only at the last point of time of death of each physical being.

We have thus to bear in mind that life waves have occurred and are occurring during all periods of time including even the periods when we are apt to forget that life itself exists in us. These life waves occur as much when we are asleep or lying unconscious in any dormant state as when we are awake and about in our conscious life. It is essential to remember the existence of these life waves in regular and measured flow in every being and throughout all time.

Mind's Passage Through Time and Space

A further feature of the mind that must be comprehended is the exact sphere of its existence. We must, in this connection realize that the waves of the mind do not exist in the same manner as the waves of matter. The waves of the mind flow along both time and space in the same manner as the waves of matter, but in the flow of the mind along space, there does not occur a trail or any mark which would indicate to our environment senses the course of the travel of the mind and its waves. The flow of the mind along time is the same as the flow of the units of abstract matter. At any given point of time, only an extremely thin cross-section of a wave of the beat of the mind, exists, and this thin tissue of the mind continuously keeps on changing its position along the extreme edge of the strict "present" which is the point of time contracting infinitely.

The flow of the mind in space is simultaneous and each wave of the beats of mind, too, spreads in exact simultaneity. When a wave of the beat of a unit of mind is at its crest, it is at crest all over the physical system covered by the mind, and when each wave recedes, it is at ebb simultaneously all over too.

Where the Mind of a Material Being Exists

The space confines of a unit of mind in material beings is limited to the volume of the physical frame that each being comprises. Therefore, in us, human beings, no part of our mind exists beyond ourselves. But within ourself, *i.e.* within our physical frame, the flow of our mind is extremely thorough. Every live cell in our physical body is filled with our mind, suffused with our mind, penetrated through our mind, and gripped by our mind. The mind thus existing in us beats, and the 7 common currents form the waves. The motions of the mind being simultaneous, the entire physical system in us gets simultaneously moved in this process.

The birth, existence, and death of the beats of the mind, the 7 common currents of the mind, and the 17 life waves which they generate, thus occur only within our physical system. All motions that the mind causes spread quite simultaneously to every physical part of us. The resulting effect is that life elements spring in our physical systems as was described in the last chapter.

Life Without Feeling

Neither the life waves, nor the life elements, by themselves, are capable of doing any other function than maintaining the entire physical life system in a state of dormant life as, for instance, when we are asleep. There does not exist any discernible feeling in such life, and, if life were merely that, we probably should not have felt at any time that we were actually living.

Although there exists the fullest life in the type of existence, we have so far described, the only life that we, the material beings in the universe, can understand and value is the life of feeling—the life of the sense organs.

How Sensations Spring

The sense organs, by themselves, cannot discern sensations; they need the co-operation of the unit of mind. If, for instance, our mind does not co-operate with our sense organs, the sense organs are incapable of doing anything. However, the mind flowing at life wave strength is sufficient to give the requisite co-operation to the sense organs. When, therefore, the necessity for such co-operation arises, the mind turns out extra currents and forms stronger waves. The analysis of the features and performances of these extra currents and the stronger waves makes us understand how and why the life of feeling in each of us works.

The 7 common currents of the mind, although they have the strength only to cause life waves, which can preserve each being in a state of dormant life, are, nevertheless, keeping constant vigil throughout the physical system. The 7 common currents spread throughout the physical system and they, by nature, are extremely sensitive and in the sense organs they are the most sensitive. The sense organs, we noted in the chapter on Life Elements, comprise an extremely subtle surface polish of reflection, and, when any polish of the projective element related to each sense organ is mirrored on it, the common currents, existing in the sense organs, become sensitive and thus more active.

Increased Activity of Common Currents

In such a situation, the seven common currents force into the organ which received the reflection six additional currents, which, really, are the by-products of the seven common currents. With the aid of these six additional currents, and supplemented by their forces, a local increase of strength of the waves of mind revolving in the sense organ occurs. We must distinctly note that this increase of strength is only local, for the waves of increased strength occur only in the organ concerned and, in the other parts of the body, the waves continue at the normal dormant strength.

The increase of the strength of the waves does not occur throughout all the waves of each beat of mind. The strength increases progressively and ebbs precipitately at the end, and only a few of these waves, *i.e.* towards the centre of the beat of the mind, reach the requisite degree of strength to receive any reflections. The 17 waves passing over the sense organ during each beat of mind develop in varying strengths: some in the stage of initiation of strength, some at maximum strength, and the last two waves at receding strengths.

Progressive Development of Contact Waves

Of the 17 waves, the first normally occurs at life-wave strength. The activity of the wave of increased strength begins at the second wave, which vibrates the life wave and, therefore, is known as the vibration wave (bhavanga calana). The third wave causes the actual deviation from the normal course of the life wave and is described as the deviation wave (bhavangupaccheda). These three waves bring into prime activity a series of the following waves:—

the fourth wave:	avajjana (attraction wave)
the fifth wave:	viññana (consciousness wave)
the sixth wave:	sampatichana (determination wave)
the seventh wave:	santirana (decision wave)
the eighth wave:	votthapana (contact wave).

The fourth wave springs attracting the reflection and this attraction wave (avajjana) turns the mind in the direction of the object and opens its cover to receive the reflection of the presence of the projective polishes. At the fifth wave, the consciousness wave (viññana), the mind begins to be aware of the presence of the projective polishes. Then there follows the sixth wave, the wave of determination (sampatichana) and the seventh wave, the wave of decision (santirana). At the eighth wave, the wave of contact (votthapana), the mind receives the reflection of the projective polishes present.

๗. Recurrent and Receding Mental Waves

The receipts of the mind's reflections which began at the eighth wave, the wave of contact, recurs in the 7 waves that follow, for these waves repeat at equal strength to the wave of contact. These waves, for the sake of convenience, are termed recurrent waves (javana), although they, in all respects, are contact waves.

When the end of the fifteenth wave, which is a recurrent wave, is reached, the beat of the mind finds itself approaching the end of its existence and, therefore, at the sixteenth wave, the recurrent reflective force of the wave becomes too weak. Hence, the sixteenth wave begins to ebb. The force of the ebb continues to the seventeenth wave until, finally, the beat of the mind sinks completely to spring again in a fresh beat of mind and with a fresh series of waves.

Currents of Supplement

The formation of the reflection waves on the sense organs is the result of the 6 additional currents which spring to increase the strength of the 7 common currents of the mind. As these 6 currents spring to supplement and thus raise the strength of the common currents, and as their occurrence is essential to the formation of reflective waves, there being no reflections possible on the sense organs without them, it would help us to note their functions too.

The six currents of supplement (pakinnaka) mix with the 7 common currents of the mind and each of them supplies an additional force in the region of the sense organ where they spring, so that, the section of the mind present with it is cleared of the obstacles that lie against receiving reflections. As in the case of the common currents of the mind, these supplementary currents, too, have each a specialized function, which, in brief, are as follows:—

(1) the sub-current of deliberation (vitakka) moves the mind to concern itself about the presence of projective elements.

(2) the sub-current of examination (vicāra) moves the mind to inquire into the presence of projective elements.

(3) the sub-current of determination (adhimokkha) moves the mind to persevere with its examination of the projective elements.

(4) the sub-current of effort (viriya) moves the mind to gather further strength to proceed with examination of the projective elements.

(5) the sub-current of pleasure (pīti) supplies the mind compensation for the continued determination and effort, thus causing it to intensify further the flow of the currents of supplement.

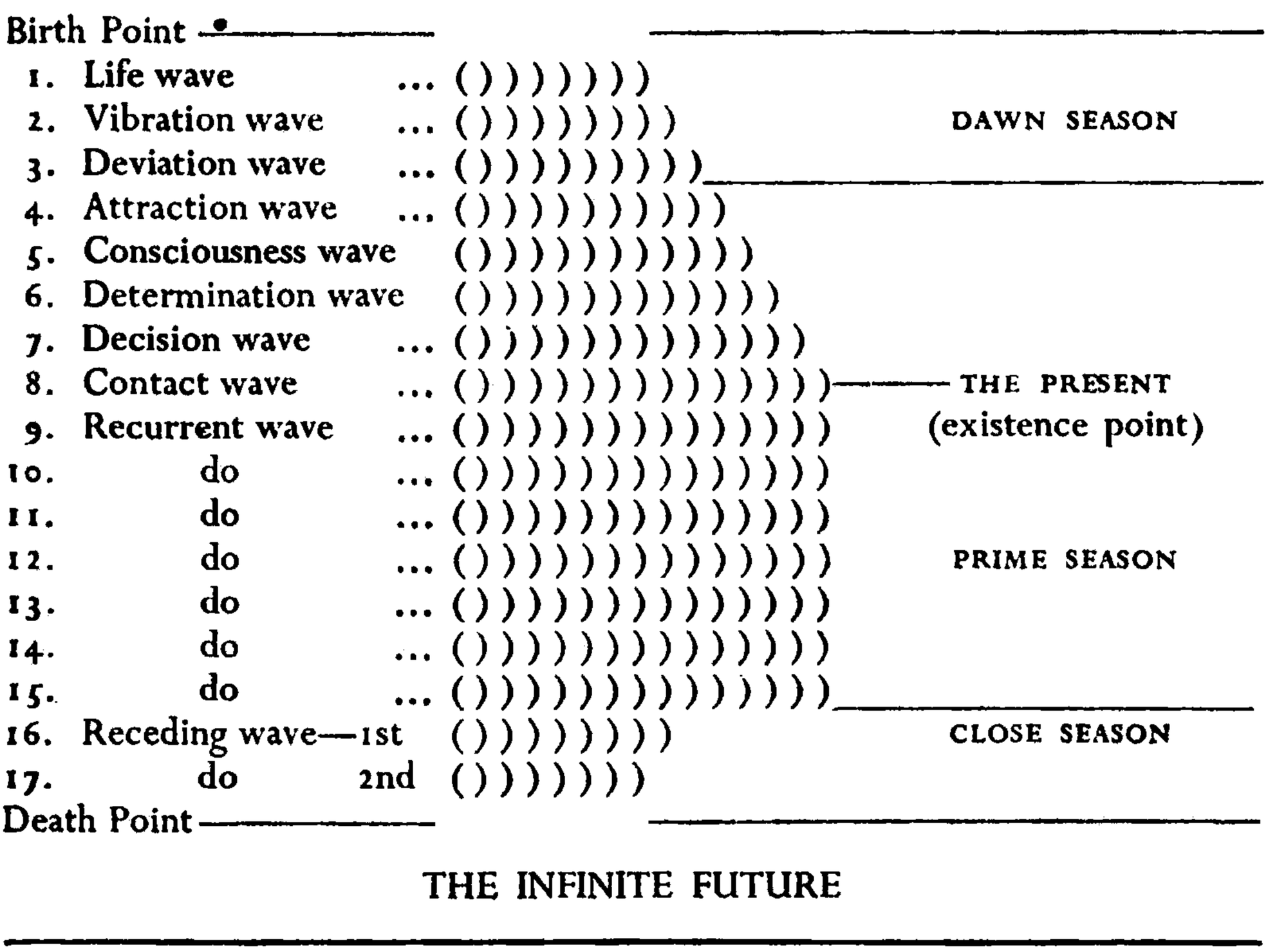
(6) the sub-current of consent (chanda) moves the mind to agree to the reflection of the projective elements.

We would note that the functions of these 6 sub-currents have some semblance to the formation of the first six waves of increased strength which occur in the reflective beats of mind. These currents spring in the same order as they are mentioned above, and their respective presence in active force, causes successive reflective waves of intensified and increased strength until, at the first contact wave, they release their maximum strength. These maximum strengths continue in all the recurrent waves and in the two final waves they ebb and disappear completely with the beat of the mind.

Reflection Waves in a Beat of Mind

We may now expand our diagram of the dormant beat of mind in order to assist us to understand this phenomenon more thoroughly. It must, however, be fully comprehended that, in the following diagram, the illustrations of the waves of the beats of mind and the currents of mind represented are purely

symbolic, and that they should be studied without forming any misconception in this respect:—



It is very important that we should comprehend the basic features of the 17 waves occurring in each of the beats of the mind in order to understand the process of life, feeling, and thought. We must particularly note that for the purpose of the preservation of life itself in each physical frame, the formation of life waves in the beats of the mind alone is adequate, whilst the production of strong reflective waves is essential for the purpose of causing feelings and thoughts.

Defilements and Purity

The mind, in its contents, is a mixture of impressions of defilements and purity. Deposits of these impressions are

present in varying proportions and they affect the mind in two different ways. The presence of impressions of defilements blur the light of the mind; the impressions of purity increase the light with additional brightness and lustre.

Both kinds of impressions, defiling and pure, exist in the minds of all beings. In the normal human being, the defiling impressions present in his mind, blur all the life waves in his mind so much that the entire brightness and light of the mind lie hidden behind them.

It is usual in all units of mind for defilements to come atop purity, and, because of this reason, such impressions of purity as exist in the human mind are concealed in the core of the mind, the shades of defilement covering them. The shades of defilement obstruct the activity of the pure mind, and the operation of the waves of reflection pushes the defilements aside temporarily. The core of the mind thus springs to the surface for a while.

Effects of Defilements

The intensity of the shades of defilement varies from being to being. Whilst in the lower beings, such as the animals, these defilements are in thick formation, the defilements present in the normal man are very slight. Man's mind is more pure than it is defiled, so that the activity of the waves in exposing the inner mind is made very much easier, quicker, and effective. The lower beings find this process difficult, slower, and ineffective, because the shades of defilement their inner minds have to penetrate are more intensively formed and, therefore, require more effort to penetrate through.

Even among human beings, there exists a variation in the intensity of the presence of deposits of shades of defilement,

but the difference between the average intensity and the two extremes of highest and lowest intensities is so slight, that it is almost negligible.

The difference between the prudent and the foolish, the learned and the illiterate, the prodigy and the dunce—if one ever is competent to make such pronouncements—is to be found in the degree of the presence of these shades of defilements. The prudent, the learned, and the prodigy, have less defilements in their minds and, therefore, the defilements clear from their minds easily and thus the exposure of the inner mind is more rapid. But in the case of the foolish, the illiterate, and the dunce, the inner mind is covered by thicker coats of defilements and, hence, to clear them is difficult, with the result that the inner mind springs to the surface less rapidly.

Two people may look at the same picture, yet one of them sees a fraction more in it than the other. Similarly, two people may read the same book, but one of them gathers more information from it than the other. The variation of the intensity of the shades of defilement causes such differences. These differences between any two human beings, however, is very slight; it is merely because the variation itself between any two beings of the same species is very slight.

Pure Mind is Covered by Defilements

In life waves occurring in beats of mind, the shades of defilement keep on gathering to the surface, so that the pure mind remains concealed within. It is only the pure mind that is powerful enough to receive reflections and, when the pure mind remains thus obscured, the sense organs do not function. And without the aid of the sense organs, the mind does not cause any thinking, or passions, or emotions.

The filaments of the common currents of the mind, however, whilst causing the formation of life waves, spring to the sense organs continuously. Being very sensitive, they kindle the flow of the six currents of supplement, and develop additional forces, whenever the presence of a discernible projective polish element is located.

Exposure of the Inner Mind

The effect of the flow of the six currents of supplement is to remove the shades of defilement from the inner mind where purity concentrates, each current in its respective order removing a shade of defilement and thus causing a clearer wave to spring forth. In six distinct successive stages, the currents of supplement uncover the traces of defilement from the mind, and when the stage of contact wave is reached, the inner powerful mind gets exposed. The exposure continues through each of the 7 recurrent waves, and, thus, for 8 tiny moments, the inner mind reflects the projective polish element in its presence.

As the end of the beat of the mind draws nigh and the close season sets in, the forces of the six currents of supplement collapse. The waves recede and with them the shades of defilement return, covering and obscuring the inner mind completely again.

A Succession of Reflections of the Same Kind

We have learnt how infinitesimal the period of the duration of a beat of the mind is. The eight fine moments in it, during which the inner mind is exposed to the projective polish element present, are so short that even the human being is incapable of making out anything so soon. There, however, exists a tendency

in the mind with the aid of which the various beings receive their reflections.

When once a beat of mind forms reflective waves, it is a common tendency for the mind to follow it up with a long stream of beats of mind in each of which the same kind of reflective waves spring. This chain-like springing of beats of mind with reflective waves continues in our minds throughout the duration of each of our thoughts or feelings. The number of reflections we receive in this manner becomes so enormous and the rapidity with which they pour forth is so fast, that we tend to forget the gaps that lie between the reflections. The continuity of feelings on our sense organs, therefore, is similar to the feeling of reality we get of the continued appearance of an actor on the cinema screen.

Mind is an Agent of Reflection

The chief amongst the features of the mind is the luminosity of its lustrous surface. This lustre is dimmed by the shades of defilement, and brightened by the traces of purity. In beings, such as the human being, the lustre of the inner mind only is adequate to attract reflections, and the manner in which this lustre springs to the surface, after cutting through the shades of different defilements which cover them, must be fully comprehended.

A characteristic of all agents of reflections is that the object of reflections are drawn towards them. When, for instance, we reflect an object on a mirror, the picture of the object enters into the mirror, the mirror itself remaining still. The mind, being principally an agent of reflection, functions in a similar manner. When the mind reflects an object, the reflection itself is absorbed into the mind; the mind does not stretch to the object to receive the reflection.

Mind Absorbs Reflections

When we think of an object lying, say, one hundred miles away, it is merely a reflection of the object entering our mind that we feel. We must not suppose that our mind stretches the one hundred miles and establishes contact with that object in order to receive the reflection.

When we are looking at an object, there begin to spring in all the beats of mind which form in our mind at the time, the six currents of supplement and, consequently, contact waves and recurrent waves begin formation on our sense organ, the eye. Through each of these contact waves and recurrent waves the inner reflective mind in us gets exposed and it absorbs a large number of reflections of the object. Each exposure of the inner reflective mind, through each of the contact waves and recurrent waves, brings into the mind a picture of the object in the same manner as a camera takes in a picture on each exposure of the film.

Sensations Do Not Occur Simultaneously

Whilst the contact waves may develop in any part of one's physical system, never does the mind develop contact waves on two different sense organs or two different parts of the physical system, simultaneously. The mind allows only one reflection at a time and, therefore, the formation of contact waves is also confined to only one point of the physical system at a time. Where contact waves do not develop, the life waves maintain their rhythmic action.

When the mind forms contact waves on the eye, for instance, everywhere else only life waves exist; when contact waves are on the ear, everywhere else only life waves exist; when contact waves develop on the nose, everywhere else only life waves

exist; and when on any particular point of the organ of touch contact waves develop, everywhere else only life waves exist.

Life Waves Continue Even When Contact Waves Occur

This phenomenon should be thoroughly comprehended, and on no account should we suppose that contact waves occur spreading throughout the entire physical system or throughout the entire mind. Nor should we suppose that life waves cease to exist when contact waves develop. What really happens is that when a sense organ becomes active, such life waves as, at the time, are passing over that organ progress into contact waves, the same waves running through the other parts of the physical system remaining at life-wave strength.

The manner in which the life waves and contact waves are formed, and the precise bounds within which each unit of mind remains confined during its existence as a material being, are factors that need our careful consideration. We may, for purposes of further elucidation, adopt a simple imaginary illustration to demonstrate both.

Let us assume that we have the image of a natural living being sculptured of an absorbent stuff like, say, chalk. If we soak this chalk image in water and hold it in such a way that the normal laws of nature such as evaporation, gravitation, etc. do not play their respective parts, our observation would be greatly facilitated. The water, under such circumstances, would penetrate into all parts of the image without altering its shape and volume. Considering that the chalk in this image represents the material form, and the water, which the chalk absorbed and spread throughout its system, to be the mind, we can form an idea of the manner in which the mind is spread throughout each physical being.

Giving the Mind a Shape and Size

Since the mind does not extend to regions beyond its physical system, and as the mind is to be found all over each person's physcial system, we may, if we might ascribe any shape to the mind, describe the mind as having precisely the same shape as its physical system.

We may thus say that the shape of the mind of man is the same as that of each man and the mind of different animals and other beings assume their respective shapes. As the water in our illustration would penetrate into every part of the image and would not penetrate into regions outside the image itself, the mind of each being remains penetrated into every particle of its live physical system, but never penetrates into any region outside its live physical system.

Illustrating Defilements and Purity

In order to illustrate the waves of the mind, it is necessary for us to imagine the chalk of our image to be a kind of crystalline material which is both transparent and reflective. To soak this image we must now take a liquid compound of two oils of different strength: one a heavy and clear substance, and the other a light, shady, and crude liquid of the opposite quality.

For this illustration, we have further to assume that the whole image is a separate gravitational field, where the heart is the base of its centre of gravity and the other five sense organs as developing, occasionally, temporary gravitational forces.

To represent our flesh, blood, and bones we have now the transparent crystalline material; to represent our mind, we have the liquid compound, which, in turn, consists of the crude light oil, representing the defilements of our mind and the heavy, clear spirit, representing the purity or merits of our mind. In

regard to the oil compound, we must assume that the properties of the two oils comprising it are such that they clasp each other in an extremely tight grip, but that they never fuse together completely in a state of definite merger.

Defilements Spring to the Surface

Filling the entire physical system of this image, the compound liquid spreads, but owing to the different strengths of the two liquids, one tends to gather at the centre whilst the other tends always to spring to the surface. The heavy and clearer liquid thus remains confined to the inner regions of the image most of the time, and the lighter and shady oil keeps on springing to the surface equally frequently. If the mind were at rest, this situation would consolidate, but, as we have learnt, the mind never ceases its regular motions of beats.

Due to the effect of the beats of the mind, the two oils never cease to mix together. The normal tendency, however, still works, for, a larger proportion of the heavy and clear spirits of purity gathers at the centre whilst a thick coat of the light and shady defilements constantly keeps gathering over the surface. The latter formations conceal the brightness of the inner substances of purity and, hence, the entire system gets subjected to the effects of the defilements.

Mind-Matter Construction of Life

We may now advance a step further with our illustration and consider the oil compound of our image to be a subtle mechanism, existing in a single unit and revolving in the cycle of birth, existence, and death at the almost incredibly high speed of about 3,000,000,000,000 complete turns per the duration of the tiniest computable period of time—the flash of lightning.

Within the sphere of the operation of this wheel, the crystalline substance of our image, existing in an enormous number of units of motion, revolves in the manner of the hour hand of the clock at a speed 17 times slower, *viz.* about 176,470,000,000 complete turns per the period of about the duration of a flash of lightning.

Considering the wheel of the oil compound to be the mind, and the wheel of the crystalline substance to be matter, we have a picture of the mind-matter construction of our life. Forcing the perpetual constancy of the turns of the wheel of the mind are the forces of birth, existence, and death occurring in the evolution current of which we have learnt in this chapter, and, in like manner, the three currents of birth, existence, and death of which we learnt in our chapter two (Elements of Inanimate Matter), force the continuous constancy of the turns of the wheels of matter.

Operations of the Six Currents of Supplement

In order to illustrate the waves of the mind and the manner of the operation of the sense organs, it is necessary for us to ascribe a few more features to our image. Whilst the crude oil springs to the surface, concealing the pure oil of the centre, we shall assume that it partially consolidates covering the volume of the crystalline structure and the inner formations of the oils of purity with extremely thin and elastic tissues. Seven such tissues, like seven fine skins, develop to cover each person's sensual self.

The inner mind must spring to the surface, if the senses are to be formed, and the six currents of supplement assist the mind in this task. On the reflection of the respective projective elements on the sense organs, the six currents of supplement,

in their due order, become active and one by one they cut through the tissues of defilements.

Exposure of the Inner Mind and Repetition

As we have already learnt, during the turn of each complete cycle, the mind forms itself into 17 regular waves. The first wave is weak and nothing happens. At the second wave one tissue is cut; and at the third wave a further one; and this operation continues until at the seventh wave the inner mind penetrates through 6 of the tissues.

The seventh tissue, however, is not penetrated, but it is of clearer formation and, therefore, its presence does not shade the inner mind. The exposure of the inner mind thus effected continues through the next 7 consecutive waves of the mind. In other words, the exposure lasts for 8 moments of mind wave periods. On reaching the sixteenth wave, all the six currents of supplement lose their strength to hold the tissues of defilements apart and hence due to the elasticity of these tissues and the inherent forces of the mind, they close completely obscuring the inner mind.

At the following beat, however, the whole process repeats itself, and in this manner a chain exposure of the inner mind results. With the aid of billions and trillions of such repeated exposures, the inner mind receives reflections and thus feelings occur.

We must remember that, even whilst the life system is completely covered by the tissues of defilements, the 17 waves, referred to, occur. But they do not cut through the tissues and, hence, the presence of such waves is not ordinarily discernible. These waves, however, occur ceaselessly and spread out to every part of our life system including all our sense organs.

Shifting the Gravitational Centre from Heart Temporarily

We have learnt that the gravitational centre of the mind is the heart, and it remains so almost all the time. However, when any other sense organ is subject to exposure, the gravitational centre shifts temporarily and establishes itself on that organ for the duration of the exposure. The moment such exposures cease, the gravitational centre moves to the heart again.

Thus, towards each point of exposure of the inner mind, the gravitational centre of the mind moves. An important feature of this phenomenon, we must remember, is that the gravitational centre of the mind moves only to one point at each time; it never moves to two or more points simultaneously. It is, therefore, impossible for us to feel the presence of the various senses together, as the sense organs never spring sensations simultaneously.

Feelings of Intermittent Sensations

We can either be doing nothing or be doing only one thing at a time and, similarly, we can either be without thinking at all or, if we do think, we can think of only one thing at each point of time. It is, however, possible to transfer our work from object to object and transfer our thoughts from wave to wave extremely rapidly.

It very often happens to us that the chain exposures of the inner mind occur in us intermittently in a number of different sense organs, or even that short streams of chain exposures alternate in every sense organ of ours.

We may illustrate these alternative streams of chain exposures by taking the practical instance of a man eating his food, in the

company of his friend whom he likes very much. The colour of the food and plates causes contact waves in his eye. Talking to his friend causes contact waves in his ear, and, probably, the consciousness of the presence of his friend kindles his heart and causes contact waves in his heart. The smell of the food produces contact waves in his nose. The touch of the furniture, crockery, food, etc. causes contact waves in the organ of touch. The touch of the food by the tongue and the reflection of the taste of the food cause contact waves on his tongue.

No Two Sensations Occur Together

Although all the six sense organs are involved in this illustration, no two sensations come to that man at the same time. At a moment he is looking, he is not experiencing any other sense. At a moment he is hearing, he is not experiencing any other sense. At a moment he is smelling, he is not experiencing any other sense; at a moment he is tasting, he is not experiencing any other sense; at a moment he is touching, he is not experiencing any other sense; and at a moment he is feeling the pleasantness of the company of his friend, he is not experiencing any other sense.

But the mind of this man may have divided the flow of the streams of chain exposures and determined their occurrence in such an intermittent manner that every few seconds during his stay in that position, he may have experienced the presence of the waves of sensation in all his six sense organs, the duration of each kind of sensation being determined according to the intensity of the attraction caused by the objects of reflection that each sense organ reflects.

Heart Absorbs All Sensations

Even whilst the sense organ of the heart releases the gravitational centre of the mind to effect the exposures on the

five environment sense organs, the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch, temporarily, it maintains pulling the gravitational centre towards it. In consequence, whenever the exposures on the environment sense organs develop sensations of heavy strength, the heart absorbs them completely and begins to function independently. Weak sense reflections developing on the environment sense organs, however, disappear before they reach the heart.

The forces of the exposure of the inner mind are the most intense in the sense organ of the heart. The chain repetition of the exposure lasts longer in the heart and the sense of perception it ejects is extremely keen.

Environment Sense Organs Aid the Heart

The exposures of the inner mind occurring in the heart normally begin with the aid of one or more of the five environment sense organs, but when once they are kindled, they can continue without their aid. When in action, the sense organ of the heart also can force the formation of sensations on any or all of the five environment sense organs.

We must not assume that actual physical contact is always necessary for the sense organs to become active. We may cause the activity of our sense organs by the process which we popularly name as "thinking". Thinking consists of visualizations on our sense organs. Very often these visualizations are merely repetitions on our sense organs of the experiences these sense organs were subject to in some past periods.

Thinking and the Sense Organs

In each flash of thinking, there occurs a subtle reaction on our sense organs. When, for instance, we think of an object

we have seen, a faint reflection of the object springs in our .nner eye; when we think of a sound we have heard, a faint reflection of the same sound springs in our inner ear; when we think of a smell we have experienced, a faint reflection of the same smell springs in our nose; when we think of a taste we have had, a fa nt reflection of the same taste springs in our tongue; and when we think of a sense of touch we have felt, a faint reflection of the same sense of touch springs on our organ of touch.

In order to comprehend the process of thinking, it is essential to examine carefully the effects of thinking on the sense organs. We think in terms of colours, sounds, smells, tastes, hotness or coldness, hardness or softness, fullness or emptiness, or passions and emotions. In each of these waves of thoughts we bring into activity its respective sense organ. Whether we visualize a situation or whether we actually experience it, there is this effect on the sense organs, the difference being only a matter of the degree of intensity. When we are thinking of the taste of food for which we may have a particular partiality, our mouth secretes saliva. This is merely because we have to exert the sense organ of the tongue, in provoking our thoughts about the taste of food.

We Think in Terms of Reflections

When we are thinking of the future, we are, similarly, thinking in terms of our sense organs. When we are planning or working towards achieving a particular result, we plan and work in an order which is dictated to us by the faint reflections which spring in our inner sense organs.

In thoughts, very often, more than one sense organ spring reflections. When we are thinking of a vehicle in motion, two of our sense organs, *viz.* the eye and the ear, take part. When we think of a dinner we had had or we would wish to have with

some of our friends, we probably bring to activity all our sense organs: when we think of the colour and the arrangements of the tables and our friends, our eye springs to activity; when we think of the music we heard, or would wish to hear at the dinner, our ear springs to activity; when we think of the smell of the food and flowers we found or would wish to find, our nose springs to activity; when we think of the taste of the food we ate or would wish to eat, our tongue springs to activity; when we think of the cool air, the crockery, and soft food made available or would wish to be made available to us at the dinner, our organ of touch springs to activity; and, similarly, when we think of the pleasant company of our friends, our heart springs to activity.

Thinking is a Function of Sense Organs

We must, in this manner, realize that the process of thought is essentially a function of our sense organs. Whether we are reading a book, solving a problem in mathematics, planning to build a house, or thinking out the invention of an elaborate and ingenious technical device, it is always the sense organs that spring to assist us in our thinking.

In man's normal thinking, the heart does not, very often, play any important part. This is purely because very many people scheme their activities without any kind of passion for them. What important part the heart plays in man's thoughts, however, can best be judged by observing the activities of some of the persons who are moved by their hearts. We may cite, in this connection, the instances of the honest politician, the ardent missionary worker, and the sincere lover.

Owing to the fact that man usually indulges in passionless thinking, the notion has come to stay that the head plays the

most important function in all thinking. This notion, however, can easily be explained.

A Deep-Rooted Deception

In the head, *i.e.* the region above the neck, are permanently fixed in man four out of the five environment sense organs. The four sense organs, the eye, ear, nose, and tongue are all fixed around the head and the fifth sense, *viz.* touch, also spreads to all regions of the head. In thoughts where only these five sense organs are provoked, it appears to us as if all our thinking occurs in the head.

Most visualizations of reflections do not reach as far deep as the heart for, being weak, they fade out half way; but all reflections penetrate the respective sense organs and travel towards the heart. In this manner, many flashes of thought penetrate intermittently into the different sense organs and travel towards the inner regions of the mind. This gives us the feeling that the entire process of thinking is fixed at the regions in the centre of the head. This feeling is a deception, which, as in many other instances, has resulted from the feebleness of man's faculties for the observation of swiftly moving phenomena of the universe. This feeling, perhaps, is the deepest rooted deception because the mind is the swiftest moving phenomenon occurring in the universe.

Functions of the Brain

The brain, undoubtedly, has a very definite physical function in maintaining the environment sense organs and controlling our movements, but, so far as its attachment to the mind is concerned, it has no particular significance.

The mind's travels, being simultaneous, are beyond speed. Mind also penetrates through all forms of matter, be it substances

or space. Not much assistance from our physical self, therefore, is needed by our mind, the only organs the mind utilizes being the six sense organs: the heart, eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch, the heart taking the primary place amongst them.

Sensations of Defilements and Purity

Before we conclude this chapter, it is necessary for us to differentiate between the various kinds of senses to one or the other of which our sense organs are invariably drawn on each of their exposures.

We have learnt that the contact exposures of the mind occur on the various sense organs as a result of the extra forces which the 6 currents of supplement bring on the waves of the mind. Most of the exposures of the mind on the environment sense organs fade where they spring and thus do not cause any appreciably forceful reaction on the mind, whilst some of the exposures penetrate direct into the heart, the very core of the mind. Whatever the intensity and depth of their penetration, all exposures of the mind penetrate deep into the mind. These penetrations cause the mind to develop a glow which flashes radiations inwardly in the mind causing reactions that fall into two opposing classes—defilements (akusala), and purity (kusala).

It is only when our sensations develop sufficiently to fall into one or the other of these two classes, that we begin to discern the presence of feelings. We may, therefore, deduce that all our feelings are either feelings of defilement or feelings of purity.

Classification of Defilements and Purity

There are altogether 39 different glow effects developing in the mind, and of them, 14 are classified into the group of

defilement currents, and the balance 25 belong to the group of currents of purity.

Naming them as usual after the chief characteristic of each of these effects, the Buddha identified them in the following order:—

25 Mental Factors of Purity

MENTAL FACTORS OF GENERAL GOOD (SOBHANA-SADHARAN

1. Confidence (saddha).
2. Mindfulness (sati).
3. Shamefulness towards foolish or evil action (hiri).
4. Fearfulness towards foolish or evil action (ottappa).
5. Loving charity (alobha)
6. Loving sympathy (adosa)
7. Equanimity (tatramajjhatā)
8. Tranquilization of actions of body (kāyapassaddhi)
9. Tranquilization of actions of mind (cittapassaddhi)
10. Lightness of mental properties (kāyalahutā)
11. Lightness of mind (citta lahutā)
12. Softness of mental properties (kāya mudutā)
13. Softness of mind (citta mudutā)
14. Fitness of mental properties (kāya kammaññatā)
15. Fitness of mind (citta kammaññatā)
16. Proficiency of mental properties (kāya pāguññatā)
17. Proficiency of mind (citta pāguññatā)
18. Physical uprightness (kāyujjukatā)
19. Mental uprightness (cittujjukatā)

MENTAL FACTORS OF ABSTINENCE (VIRATI)

20. Correct speech (sammā vāca)
21. Correct industry (sammā kammanta)
22. Correct livelihood (sammā ājīva)

MENTAL FACTOR OF INFINITE KINDNESS (appamañña)

23. Universal sympathy towards all beings (karunā)
24. Universal desire for others' well being (muditā)

MENTAL FACTOR OF ILLUMINATION

25. Knowledge, as opposed to ignorance (pañña).

14 Mental Factors of Defilement

1. Ignorance (moha)
2. Shamelessness towards foolish or evil action (ahirika)
3. Fearlessness towards foolish or evil action (anotappa)
4. Turbulence (uddachcha)
5. Greed (lobha)
6. Wrong perception (dhitti)
7. Conceit (māna)
8. Hatred (dosa)
9. Jealousy (issā)
10. Stinginess (macchariya)
11. Repentance (kukkucca)
12. Sickliness of body (thīna)
13. Sickliness of mind (middha)
14. Indecision (vicikicchā).

The manner in which the radiations of the effects of defilements and purity mix in the formations of our thoughts and how they act and react on us will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

MIND, AND ITS STATES

We have seen that the mind is entirely a collection of forces. The strength of the mind is its ability to receive and produce reflections, and this strength varies from being to being. The difference in the strength of the mind amongst beings is due to the incidence of varying proportions of defilements and purity which remain accumulated in their minds. Before we enter into the discussion of the main topic envisaged in this chapter, we have to consider the manner in which the forces of defilement and purity enter the mind, how they differ in intensity, and why they cause variations amongst the different units of mind. It is necessary for us, for this purpose, to study a few more qualities of the mind.

Even the weakest mind has a subtle strength to record and preserve whatever reflections are produced on it. So far as its strength to record impressions of reflections is concerned, the mind acts like extremely delicate modelling wax. This is a force which is so sensitive and precise, that even the most minute detail of each reflection gets meticulously reproduced. All reflections reproduced thus enter in the form of records into the deposits in the evolution current, which is the innermost force of the mind.

Counteracting Mental Reflections

A reflection entering the evolution current has usually to encounter the forces which exist in the evolution current as a result of the records of previous reflections. If in the evolution

current of a unit of mind, deposits of the forces of purity exist in predominating proportions, more reflections of purity would enter it with undiminished force; but if a reflection of defilement were to enter it, the force of the reflection of defilement would diminish appreciably as it is entering the evolution current. This characteristic operates conversely too: if our evolution current has deposits of defilements in predominating proportions, a fresh deposit of defilement would enter it without any diminution of force; but if a reflection of purity were to enter such a mind, the force would be considerably diminished when settling into deposit.

Even after encountering the opposing forces, intensive reflections have enough strength left behind to enter into deposit in the evolution current in active form, and such deposits enter and settle in the evolution current in a self-determined order of precedence.

The forces of actions of weak reflections of defilement, however, are often completely nullified as a result of the accumulated deposits of purity; and conversely too, the forces of actions of weak reflections of purity are nullified by the forces of strongly settled deposits of defilement. But where reflections of purity and defilement counteract each other, a variation occurs in the balance of strength of the evolution current of the mind.

When, for instance, the accumulated forces of purity in the evolution current cause the obliteration of the force of a reflection of defilement, a proportionate reduction of the forces of purity in deposit results. A weak reflection of defilement, therefore, whilst not entering the evolution current at its own force, reduces or consumes a measure of the existing deposits of purity. And, similarly, even the weakest reflection of purity has the effect of reducing a measure of the existing deposits of defilement, because defilement is reduced to the extent that it is counteracted by the deposits of

purity. All reflections on our mind, therefore, change our mind towards a state of either purity or defilement.

Process of Mind's Continuum

In the last chapter (Features of the Mind), we referred to the 52 different forces constituting the mind. 7 common currents of the mind (sabba citta sādhārana) remain active at all times and, amongst them, the current of force known as the evolution current (jīvitindriya) brings to bear the most overwhelming force. On the strength of the evolution current, depends the strength of all the other currents; and on the strength of the other currents depends the strength of the evolution current. There exists a mutual relationship between the evolution current and the other currents: the evolution current gives the strength for the other currents to spring, and the other currents give strength to the evolution current to exist. The interdependency of the evolution current and the other currents causes the process of the mind's continuum.

Reflections of both kinds, purity and defilement, integrate in the evolution current, and according to the quantity of each kind present, the strength of the evolution forces adjusts itself. No two beings carry evolution currents with exactly identical deposits, and, hence, no two beings have evolution currents of exactly equal strength.

Variations in Strength of Mind

We remember what we stated in the last chapter in regard to the manner in which the mind operates. The evolution current causes the formation of the other six common currents, and together, they cause the formation of the six currents of supplement. The joint forces of all these 13 currents cause the formation of the 39 different currents of sensations or feelings

belonging to the two kinds, namely, purity and defilement. The currents of purity numbering 25 in all, and the currents of defilement numbering 14 only, mix in different combinations in the formations of our thoughts and feelings.

Each wave of current of purity produced in our mind, sends into the evolution current an impression of reflection of its own kind, and each current of defilement produced too, sends into the evolution current an impression of reflection of the same kind as itself. The forces thus entering the evolution current get subjected to the forces of counteraction; and according to the nature of each reflection, a variation in the strength of the evolution current results. As the strength of the evolution current is manifest in all the other currents, the intensity of our sensations varies in keeping with the strength of the evolution current.

The entry of deposits of defilement weakens the evolution current, whilst the entry of deposits of purity strengthens it. If in a given beat of mind, there occur more currents of purity than defilement, or if there occur only currents of purity and no currents of defilement, the reflections such currents take to the evolution current will have the effect of increasing the strength of the evolution current. This results in the evolution current which continues into the next beat of mind being of comparatively increased strength, and, in consequence, the strength of the currents of purity and defilement which spring depending on it, becomes stronger too.

Continuous Balance of Mind's Forces

In this manner, the evolution current of our mind is continuously subject to decreases and increases of strength at every moment of time, and as it passes from one beat to the next a completely fresh balance is carried and a different strength is

established. As the entire system of the mind is dependent on the strength of the evolution current, and as the mind as a whole strikes a new balance and assumes a new force at each point as it passes through time, the force and intensity of our thoughts vary from moment to moment of time.

The variation of the force of the mind between a short period of time, say an hour or a day, may perhaps not be quite apparent to us, but to what magnitude this process may change the strength of our mind may be fully noticeable when we consider the extent of the differences it causes us during the course of a longer period such as a full life time.

Differences of Opinions

Thus, from moment to moment, each unit of mind has a different balance of deposits of purity and defilement in its evolution current. Depending on the balance of deposits of purity and defilement remaining in the evolution current, each unit of mind has a different strength of mind; and depending on the different degrees of strength of mind, each of us produces in our minds thoughts of different intensities. Owing to the differences of intensities of our thoughts, we form amongst us opinions which are different from one another. The differences of opinion amongst various beings, therefore, exist and all such differences are due to the incidence of the diversity of the strengths of minds, and the consequent incidence of the diversity of the intensities of thoughts.

A dozen persons looking at the same object see it in a dozen different ways, each differing from all others, some minutely and others considerably. The same is true of a single person looking at the same object a dozen different times—he sees it in a dozen different ways, although the difference may not be considerable. These differences are due to the diversity of the

strength of the evolution current of the mind among different persons, and, in the case of the same person, the differences are due to the diversity of the strength of evolution at different times.

The adjustment of the strength of the evolution current of each unit of mind at each point of time occurs with such automatic precision and efficiency, that no necessity exists for any external control either by nature or other agency. Each unit of mind is propelled through time by the force of its own evolution current, adjusted in strength by the force of its own evolution current, and directed over space also by the force of its own evolution current.

Consumption of Mental Forces

The forces of the evolution current are appreciably consumed in the course of its passage through time. The mind is subject to the rapid and continuous revolutions in the cycle of birth, existence, and death, and the force necessary for this operation springs from the evolution current. The higher the level of life in which a unit of mind is maintained, the more are the forces that its evolution current has to expend. Continuation in life causes depletion of the forces in the evolution current, but, as it expends, it also generates fresh forces from the fuels of purity and defilement which it carries.

The strengths brought to bear on the mind by the deposits of purity, and the weaknesses brought to bear by the deposits of defilement, regulate every move of each unit of mind over space. According to the strength of purity, each unit of mind is attracted towards a higher plane of existence, and according to the weaknesses of defilement, each unit of mind is drawn towards a lower plane of existence; the two counteracting forces yield to each other and at last, the evolution current of our mind halts at a point appropriate to its balance of strength.

When we discuss the manner of conception of life in our next chapter, we shall go into this subject more fully, but for the present it is necessary for us to understand that the units of mind, according to their balance of purity and defilement, settle at various points of space in different planes of existence. Which point of space, what plane of existence, and for how long a duration of time, are factors which depend on the strength of the evolution current of each unit of mind, according to the accumulations of purity and defilement.

Where Individuality Lies

Even as the different units of mind are thus settling in different planes of existence at different points or areas of space, there exists the diversity of strengths, and the individualistic character and peculiarities amongst the different units of mind are maintained.

Those units of mind where the weight of purity is greater, are born as higher beings, in a suitably congenial atmosphere of space; and those units of mind where the weight of defilement is greater, are born as lower beings in an atmosphere appropriate to such beings. There exists a wide variety of beings to be found between the uppermost and the lowermost planes of existence, but even amongst the members of each species the diversity of the mind prevails.

The mind has a definite bearing on the formation of our bodily self, and the diversity of strength between different units of mind is reflected in the bodily structure. Even in the same species of beings, every single member is different from all others. A superficial survey may not reveal this fact, but a meticulous scrutiny would always prove this truth. This is merely the physical manifestation of individuality; the real individuality lies in the variation of the deposits in the mind and the consequent variation in the strengths of the mind.

How Mental Deposits Increase

We have stated that purity and defilement are the two kinds of deposits in our mind. These deposits do not remain stationary. They travel with the mind as it rolls along space and time, and whilst doing so, the deposits of each kind grow into increased strength.

We must not imagine that the impressions of the reflections of purity and defilement go into deposit with the evolution current of the mind in the manner of goods going into deposit in a warehouse; they rather enter the mind as seeds enter a fertile field. From the moment these deposits enter the mind, they begin to grow; and they grow in a feverish state of rivalry.

Seeds and Fruits of Mental Impressions

At any given point of time, present or past, the deposits of the seeds of purity and defilement are so vast in number, and so various in the different stages of growth, that a crowded growth is always found available in the evolution current. A seed of purity may grow overtaking the growths of all seeds of defilement, and, conversely, a seed of defilement may spread out its growth covering all the growths of purity. Each growth on reaching maturity bears fruit: a growth of purity bears pleasure; and a growth of defilement bears pain.

There is a vast number of deposits of impressions in our mind, and each of them is in a process of growth. Each impression is striving its utmost to grow overtaking all the other growths in the evolution current, but the strongest seeds of impressions reach maturity before others and bear fruit. Meanwhile, the less strong seeds of impressions remain growing into more and more strength and, when their degree of strength reaches above all others, they fructify, suppressing and delaying the fruition of all other growths.

For the evolution current of each unit of mind to take in the seeds of purity and defilement, and for it to bring into bearing the seeds thus taken in, there exists only the same source, namely, the currents of purity and the currents of defilement. When the seeds of purity are causing the effects of fruition, the currents of purity appear in active form and through them the entire system of the mind is brought into a state of pleasure; and, when the seeds of defilement are in fruition, the currents of defilement appear in active form and, through them, the entire system of the mind develops itself into a state of pain.

Effects of Mental Action and Reaction

Thus, the same currents of purity and defilement bring into being two different effects on our mind: they cause the formation of fresh impressions, which enter the evolution current of our mind in the manner of seeds; and they also provide the medium for the impressions thus entering the evolution current to fructify. Our sensations and feelings which move us to action (kriyā) create impressions that remain in our mind in the form of seeds; and the effects of fruition of such seeds or impressions which had entered our mind on previous occasions bring to our present mind sensations and feelings in a state of passive pain or pleasure, and these are reflections of reaction (phala).

While the effect of the impression of an action entering the mind is to cause the deposit of a seed of impression in the evolution current of the mind, the effect of a reflection of reaction is to remove from deposit in the evolution current the force of the seed of impression that bore it. So that, when we have suffered a pain, the seed of impression of defilement which fructified so as to cause that pain would lose its force, and, similarly, when we enjoy a pleasure, the force of the seed of purity which fructified to give us that pleasure would be lost from the deposits in the evolution current of the mind.

All sensations and feelings occurring in our mind fall broadly into two groups: sensations and feelings of action, and sensations and feelings of reaction. The sensations and feelings of action bring into the mind impressions in the form of seeds which settling in the evolution current of the mind grow and fructify, thus forming sensations and feelings of reaction. We must be able to understand the difference between the two types of sensations and feelings, as otherwise it would be difficult to grasp the truth of the process of life which is popularly known as the law of kamma. Our thoughts are constituted by our sensations and feelings; sensations and feelings of action bring thoughts of action, and sensations and feelings of reaction bring thoughts of reaction.

Mind Does Everything

Whilst we are in life, our body is constituted of mind and matter. For the body to exist, the various forces of the mind must remain within it; the moment our body is without the forces of the mind, it is dead. Thus, life means mind. Our body cannot preserve its different organs, or move its bulk without the active co-operation of the mind. There exist the forces of our mind behind all our moves. All that we do is what our mind does; our body cannot do anything on its own. But we cannot observe what the mind does because the mind, being a motion, is invisible; all that we observe, therefore, is what the body does, because body has colour, shape, and other qualities which make observations with our environment sense organs possible.

When we see a man, it is a superficial notion we form with the aid of our eyes; when a man appears before us what we in reality observe is a unit of mind draped in matter of different colours and shapes in such an order that our mind recognizes the

presence of a human being. When we hear a person speaking, what we actually do is to observe the expression of thoughts in his mind which he conveys to us by utilizing the forces of his mind to cause motions of the elements to produce a series of familiar sounds. We must, therefore, remember that whatever task anyone might do, it is always his mind that does it; the body is merely an instrument or a tool utilized by the mind. The lunatic is moved by his mind as much as any sane person; animals and insects are moved by their minds as much as all human beings. And, as we shall fully discuss later, the universe itself is moved by the joint forces of the individual and separate units of mind circulating within it.

Thoughts of Action and Reaction

Owing to the feebleness of our faculties of perception, we cannot observe the mind itself; only when matter which is subject to the control of the mind, is in motion, can we observe the mind. By watching the behaviour of matter, we can observe the mind at its work, and this being the only method available to us, let us differentiate between thoughts of action and thoughts of reaction by utilizing this method.

Thoughts of action bring a person into an active state; thoughts of reaction bring a person into a passive state. Every time we are moved into a state of bodily activity, thoughts of action occur in our mind; and every time we are moved into a state of resignation or bodily passiveness, the thoughts occurring in us are thoughts of reaction. Every thought of action carries into the evolution current of the mind an impression in the form of a seed, and every thought of reaction removes from the evolution current of the mind a measure of the forces in its existing growths.

In our life, passive thoughts are more numerous than active thoughts; we are living mostly resigned in inactivity; we are,

in fact, very little active. Even whilst we are at work in an office or in a factory, our real activity of mind is confined to a few periods of very short duration. We live in a subconscious state even whilst we are working. In the midst of our work a few conscious moments occur intermittently, and the active mind springing during these conscious moments discharges a flash of force compelling the body to move.

After forcing the body to a habit of motion, the flash of active force recedes and the mind continues in subconsciousness. A further flash springs to stop the task when it is at its end, and in this manner, the active thoughts exist in all our bodily actions; but it is only through a very few moments that they really last. At all other times, the mind is only in a passive state, and, therefore, only thoughts of reaction occur in it.

Full Conscious Life

It would be interesting to many of us to contemplate how very short a period we live in fully conscious life. A third part of our life is spent in sleep, which is a state of subconsciousness. Even when we are awake, we live only a few moments in full consciousness. A correct estimation of our full consciousness, or the proportion of the duration of full consciousness to our entire life time is difficult to be fixed; but, if we were to examine ourselves carefully, we would realize that our average daily conscious life would not add up together to more than a few minutes.

The moments of fully conscious life are so short that they appear and disappear in flashes of very short duration and it is only their vibrations that our sensations can pick up. We are moved to action in a flash, we stop in a flash, and in between is habit.

Fields of Purity and Defilement

Consciousness of mind is the fruition of reactions. Consciousness can cause a person pain or pleasure; it alone cannot cause a person to act. Consciousness makes the grounds in the fields of the mind soft, and at a pitch of full consciousness the grounds become so soft that the inner currents of mind find it possible to penetrate and bring into activity their forces.

We remember our discussing that there are 39 different inner currents remaining dormant in the mind: the 25 currents of purity with benevolence (alobha), loving charity (adosa), and knowledge (amoha) leading amongst them; and 14 currents of defilement with greed (lobha), hatred (dosa), and ignorance (moha) as the most important.

Whenever the mind turns into consciousness in a passive state, the currents of purity and defilement become active and bring the mind into a state of purity or defilement. The conscious mind where more currents of purity become active turns into a state of purity; and the conscious mind where more currents of defilement became active turns into a state of defilement. For purposes of easy comprehension, we shall refer to these states of purity and defilement in the mind as fields of purity and fields of defilement.

In the flash of conscious mind which develops into a field of purity, the currents of benevolence, loving charity, and knowledge appear in active force. One of these three forces appears with overwhelming energy and influences the condition of the entire field of the mind. The other currents, too, appear in less energetic form and add their energy and, in the end, a force of immense strength gathers into the mind. This force, when it is at its greatest strength, causes our body to move. The forces of the vibrations which follow it keep our body active for some time and, by the observation of the behaviour

of the body, therefore, the fact that the mind existing in it is at active strength will become apparent to an outside observer.

How Impressions Enter the Mind

When a flash of conscious thought of purity is occurring, our mind, whilst passing through its normal beats, forms waves of active thoughts of reflections (javana) and, through each of these reflections, the mind receives an impression in the form of a picture of the situation. These impressions enter the evolution force of the mind, and remain fixed to it and travelling along with it in the form of a seed. If our mind is powerful enough, it is possible for us to read back these impressions from the mind. This is what is popularly known as memory. Lapse of time, however, may cover these impressions with so many fresh impressions that our mind may not be sufficiently strong to read them back. Because of the inadequacy of the strength of our mind, we cannot penetrate through an overgrowth of impressions when thickly formed.

The flashes of conscious mind developing into fields of defilement cause the currents of greed, hatred, and ignorance to spring into active force. One of these three currents assumes full dominant force and, in its most developed moment, the energy focussed becomes sufficient to move the body into action. Given appropriate objects are available to give expression to their feelings, and aided by the forces of the currents of consent, these flashes of conscious mind move the body to perform the desired deed of evil action. The body thus brought to motion continues in action until its vibrational force subsides.

The normal process of the mind operates, in the meanwhile, causing the formation of deposits of impressions, the impressions

being carried into the mind through gaps of the thoughts of reflections, which occur in the mind throughout the duration of the flash of consciousness. These deposits of impressions of defilement take up their position with the other deposits in the mind, and in due course, they mature and fructify.

Consciousness Without Activity

Full consciousness of our body may often occur without leading us into bodily activity. If consciousness brings us only pain, it merely means the burning away of the fruition of a growth of past defilement and, therefore, we are the richer by that suffering, because the accumulations of defilements in the evolution current of the mind would be lessened. If, on the other hand, consciousness brings us only pleasure, it is invariably due to the flow of the fruition of a growth of past impression of purity, and we are, hence, the poorer by that spell of enjoyment.

Mental and Physical Action

It also often happens that consciousness leads us to mental activity without leading us into bodily activity. To illustrate this we shall examine the case of a person enjoying the pleasures of abundance. The pleasure of abundance is the flow of the fruition of the growths of past impressions of benevolence in our mind. Enjoyment of abundance, reduces the strength of mature forces of the impressions of benevolence remaining in deposit in the evolution current of the mind. Prolonged enjoyment of abundance results in considerable exhaustion of charges of purity of benevolence, and, ultimately, the point arrives when the evolution current of the. mind will have no strength of mature forces left to maintain the person concerned in the state of abundance any longer.

Whilst enjoying the pleasures of abundance, if a person were to be sympathetic towards the other persons and beings who are less fortunate, it has the effect of increasing the duration of his pleasure. Such an attitude of mind would often lead to the performance of actual physical acts of benevolence. Even if it does not lead to physical action, the development of active thoughts of benevolence and sympathy alone is adequate to form and enter into deposit in his evolution current, fresh seeds of purity for future fruition.

Effects of Greed on Abundance

A person in the enjoyment of the pleasures of abundance may also develop in the midst of his pleasures currents of defilement such as greed, hatred, and ignorance. Many who are in abundant circumstances are often drifted away from their pleasures by the occurrence of the currents of defilements. These beings succumb to greed; the more they have the more they wish to receive. Their ambition knows no bounds. Greed begets hatred, and both greed and hatred are the products of ignorance. These three forces of defilement, *viz.* greed, hatred, and ignorance often lead those afflicted into committing physical acts of crime and violence.

The appearance of greed, hatred, and ignorance in one's conscious mind, brings one instant suffering, for the sensations of defilement are always painful. Even if a person's thoughts of greed, hatred, and ignorance may not lead him into actual physical action, the mere production of them in his mind has the effect of retarding his life in a two-fold manner, namely, by the loss of his present pleasures, and the reduction of his future pleasures. Active thoughts of defilement, even though they do not lead to physical action, carry into the mind seeds of impressions of defilement, which grow and fructify in the mind, thus impairing the happiness of his future.

Mind's Current of Reason

We, human beings, are superior to the animals and other lower beings, because the current of reason existing in our mind is capable of being developed into active strength. We can distinguish between good and evil. This current of reason known popularly as mindfulness (sati), appears in active strength very frequently in the human mind, but the misfortune is that we do not utilize its strength often enough to our advantage. Whatever thinking we do, and whatever habits of self-control we have become accustomed to, have accrued to us as a result of the active operation of this current of reason and applying it advantageously.

The current of reason springs in active strength even amongst the members of some species of animals and some of them even use its forces correctly—we often come across well disciplined animals with considerable self-control. But amongst the beings living on this Earth, man alone has the current of reason adequately developed for regular and constructive use.

If our current of reason is adequately developed, it should stand sentry at the entrances to the mind. It should stay on the alert and arrest the formations of currents of defilement, and, whilst doing so, it must respectfully entertain the currents of purity and admit the maximum of impressions of purity into the evolution current of our mind. To the extent that the strength of the current of reasoning in our mind is developed, we are disciplined; and to the extent that the current of reasoning is undeveloped, we behave without character.

In other words, if our powers of reasoning are developed and if we are putting them to profitable use in conducting our life, we live in a higher state of life; and if our powers of reasoning are undeveloped and if we do not use the benefits of whatever reasoning powers we may have in conducting our life, we are, in real effect, living in a lower level of existence.

Where Education Must Lead

As education develops the powers of reasoning in our mind, we may say that an educated person has the current of reasoning in his mind developed. The development of the powers of reasoning or education should bring us not merely the ability to distinguish good from evil, but it must also lead us to reason out and understand convincingly why good is good, and evil is evil.

Correct reasoning or mindfulness is the second amongst the currents of purity, and, when we consider the influence it bears on all the other currents of the mind, we may justly say that this current is the foremost. The methods of developing the forces of this current are many and varied. Regular meditation and concentration (bhāvana) is the quickest method: education may be another; but the best suited to the average layman is a habit of intelligent questioning of the truth about what each experiences in life.

Intelligence is a Responsibility

Mindfulness is a blessing and is an essential force for advancement, but it is a blessing only to those who use it with wisdom (paññña). Mindfulness sharpens the forces of all the other currents of mind and, so far as mindfulness is applied to the development of currents of purity, mindfulness brings us very great benefits. Our forces of mindfulness, however, can also be mishandled.

If, for instance, with the aid of the forces of mindfulness, we develop currents of defilement, the harm of the defilement thus admitted into the evolution current of the mind is extremely fierce. Mindfulness, therefore, is a force with a double edge, and whichever way it cuts, whether towards our advantage in

forming thoughts of purity, or towards our disadvantage in supporting the formation of thoughts of defilement, it always cuts deep.

By whichever name we may refer to it, whether as education, reasoning power, or intelligence, mindfulness is a great responsibility. If we are advanced in mind and are with reasoning power, or in other words, if we are mindful of what we do, we cannot escape the understanding of the nature of our actions, both as we are doing them and after we have done them. If the actions we do are good actions, the evolution current of our mind gets quickly enriched as a result of the additional benefits of mindfulness.

If, on the other hand, our actions are evil actions, mindfulness causes the evolution current of our mind to absorb fierce and intensive impressions of defilements. Mindfulness, therefore, when applied to evil actions, causes a very speedy degeneration of the strength of the evolution current of our mind. To those people who are more bent towards evil action, ignorance certainly is bliss, for in the world of the mind ignorance is a fairly effective mitigating circumstance.

Pain, Pleasure, and Active Thoughts

We have stated that our conscious life is of very short duration. We know that pain and pleasure are effects of reaction, and that by themselves they do not move us into bodily action. Reflections of reactions appear in strength in our conscious mind and prepare fields in the mind suitable for currents of active thoughts to spring. Whenever these currents of active thoughts appear in the mind, the current of evolution absorbs their impressions. These impressions take seed in the evolution current of the mind. They germinate, grow, and, on maturity, fructify forming currents of thoughts of reflections of reaction.

The effect of reflections of reactions is to consume the charges of energy accumulated from the growths in the evolution current of the mind.

We must clearly understand the difference between thoughts of action and thoughts of reaction; and also the manner in which these thoughts cause variations of the strength in the evolution current of the mind. The forces of our mind which make or tend to make our body move are thoughts of action, and passive pain and pleasure appearing on our mind are thoughts of reaction. The effect of thoughts of action is to add seeds of purity or defilement to the evolution current of the mind; and the effect of reflections of reaction, *i.e.* pain or pleasure, is to consume and remove the forces of the seeds of purity or defilement in deposit from the evolution current of the mind.

Different Stages of the Mind

We may now proceed to a comprehensive examination of the various types of impressions of actions and the reflections of reactions, which carry their subtle effects into the evolution current of the mind. In order to facilitate this, it is necessary for us to understand the various stages through which the mind passes as a result of the operation of the forces of mindfulness, during the course of the different thoughts that occur in all human beings.

The 7 common currents which run at active strength through all waves of the mind, both active and dormant, are not felt by us in the form of sensations. Nor are the 6 currents of supplement felt by us in the form of sensations, even when they occur in our mind at active strength. These 13 currents, by themselves, are incapable of producing any sensations, but they gather adequate force of energy to produce active currents of purity and defilement. The force of these 13 currents produce

25 different currents of purity and 14 different currents of defilement.

States of Defilement

The 25 active currents of purity produce in our mind 25 different sensations of purity; and each of the 14 currents of defilement produces a sensation of defilement. The currents of purity and defilement mix in different proportions in the formation of the different sensations we experience, and each sensation thus formed moves the evolution current of the mind into a distinct state. According to the type of state of perception reached at each wave of sensation, the impressions of the reflections of thoughts of action or the impressions of the reflections of effects of reactions, occurring in the mind vary.

The effects of reaction formed in the mind by the 14 currents of defilement, bring the mind into three distinct states: (1) the state of greed (lobhamūla), (2) the state of hatred (dosamūla), and (3) the state of ignorance (mohamūla). If our mind develops into any one of these three states of defilement, there occur active currents of defilement, and seeds of defilement enter the evolution current of the mind. If these currents appear in the mind but ebb before moving us into bodily activity, only weak seeds of defilement enter our evolution current of the mind. These seeds, according to their strength, germinate, grow, and in due course fructify.

Decisive Factor is Intention

The intensity of thoughts varies according to the strength of the evolution current of the mind. A person with developed mindfulness, or reasoning power, has an evolution current of great strength, and the intensity of thoughts occurring in a person with such development is proportionately more. The

state of mindfulness reached by the various beings varies from one being to another, and, therefore, the intensities of thought developed by different beings vary from one to another too. Between two persons committing an act of violence, the intensity of greed, hatred, and ignorance brought to bear by one of them, will always differ from the intensity of thought occurring in the other.

Each one thus develops a different intensity of thought and, consequently, each deposits in the evolution current a different seed and, therefore, each reaps a different harvest. In the same act of violence in which two persons take part, one may develop severe impressions of defilement whilst the other may not develop any impressions of defilement at all. This is because the former brought to bear deep and violent intentions, whilst the other participated only physically and did not give the act of violence his mental approval.

People who encourage murder, for instance, bring into deposit in the evolution current of their mind equal, and sometimes worse seeds of defilement than the murderer who commits the physical act of murder. Even though we may not participate physically in the commission of evil deeds, we may form in the evolution current of our mind seeds of impressions of defilement by merely feeling satisfied with the evil deeds other people do. Where a community of persons commits evil deeds, seeds of defilement enter the evolution current of the mind of every member. Both those who physically execute or put into operation the commission of evil deeds, and those who merely support an evil policy mentally are thus affected with equal intensity.

Evil Action and Consciousness

If our power of reasoning is sufficiently developed, our inner consciousness demands that we should conduct ourselves in a

definite manner of behaviour. When we are about to commit an evil action, our inner consciousness throws itself across the path. This is evidence of mindfulness, and if we act against these subtle dictates of right mindfulness, the resulting defilement entering into deposit in the evolution current of the mind accumulates in greatly multiplied force. Intelligence or reasoning power becomes a burden to those committing evil deeds.

Defilements turn out to be extremely severe if evil actions are committed deliberately and intentionally, inspite of the full knowledge of consequences, and after cool calculation (somanassa sahagata diṭṭhigata sampayutta sasaṅkhārika). The defilements of the least severity are those resulting from evil actions committed casually, on sudden provocation, without premeditation, information, or calculation (upekkhā sahagata diṭṭhigata vippayutta asaṅkhārika). All defilements fall into an infinity of grades within these two.

States and Grades of Purity

The 25 currents of purity bring the mind into three distinct states, which are in effect, the direct opposite of the three states of defilement. The states of mind which the currents of purity produce are: (1) the state of benevolence (alobha), (2) the state of loving sympathy (adosa), and (3) the state of knowledge (amoha).

According to the intensity of the thoughts of purity, the strength of the impressions of reflections caused in the evolution current of the mind varies. Our powers of reasoning greatly increase the strength of the impressions, by stimulating our inner consciousness to appear at each of our good actions and clearing the path for the impressions of purity to enter the evolution current of the mind freely.

The reflections of purity cause the most forceful impressions when performed intentionally, with the full knowledge of the benefits, and after careful consideration (somanassa sahagata ñāṇasampayutta asaṅkhārika), and reflections of purity are the least forceful if the currents of mind forcing such thoughts of action occur casually, without premeditation, knowledge, or consideration (upekkha sahagata ñāṇavippayutta sasaṅkhārika). All impressions of purity, too, fall into an infinity of grades within these two.

Unsubmissive Mental Impressions

The opposite forces of deposits of impressions counteract in the evolution current of the mind, but it is only the weak impressions that are subject to such effects. The forces of a weak impression of defilement get usually destroyed and removed from the mind on the entering into the evolution current of the mind of a strong impression of purity and, conversely, the forces of weak impressions of purity are destroyed and removed from the evolution current of the mind on the entering of strong impressions of defilement. If strong impressions of purity exist in our evolution current of the mind, the forces of a weak impression of defilement may get destroyed even as it enters the evolution current of the mind, but, in this process, a measure of the charge of purity in proportion to the strength of the impression of defilement getting destroyed, is consumed. The same process occurs when strong deposits of defilements destroy a weak impression of purity entering the evolution current of the mind.

There are, however, very strong impressions of reflections, both of purity and of defilement, which would not submit to this force of counteraction in the evolution current of the mind. Even in the face of very strong impressions of reflections of the

opposite class, these impressions persist in existing in the evolution current of the mind. Such impressions cannot be removed by any process other than after maturity when they have born fruit. The impressions of such strength, belonging to both classes, purity and defilement, are very rare, and, in the average human being, formations of such strong impressions do not occur.

Proportion of Accumulations in Mind

The process of elimination of the forces of the impressions of purity and defilement by the force of counteraction and the struggle of the balance impressions of purity and defilement for persistent existence and growth, result in an infallible and automatic system of maintaining the exact balances of the forces of purity and defilement in each unit of mind. This system of self-balancing occurs in the forces of the evolution current, which as we know maintains its existence at active strength throughout time. This force of evolution brings up the accurate balance of deposits of defilement and purity promptly from point to point of time, and from beat to beat of the mind.

On the balance of impressions of purity and defilement running with the force of the evolution current in any unit of mind, depends the force with which the whole mind exists. An evolution current with a large accumulation of impressions of purity and a smaller accumulation of impressions of defilement, is more powerful and produces a stronger force than an evolution current with large accumulations of defilement and less of impressions of purity.

Effects of Defilements and Purity

It is necessary, at the present stage of this study, to refer to the effects caused on the mind by the entry of deposits of

impressions of purity and defilement. When impressions of reflection of defilement occur on the evolution current of the mind by the active appearance of the currents of defilement, the forces of the evolution current are reduced. The forces of these impressions of defilement reduce the strength of the evolution current because it is the characteristic nature of all impressions of defilement to cause the forces of the evolution current to be burnt, darkened, and shrunk. The forces of the entire evolution current of the mind is weak to the extent of the presence of impressions of defilement in the evolution current, and to the extent impressions of defilement enter the evolution current.

Impressions of reflection of purity on entering and mixing with the forces of the evolution current, cause an advantageous variation by increasing the strength of the evolution current which, in turn, increases the strength of the forces of the mind as a whole. The impressions of purity add to the forces of the evolution current fresh forces of health, cleanliness, refreshment, and brightness. Our mind as a whole becomes more powerful to the extent to which fresh impressions of purity enter the evolution current of our mind.

Pain and Pleasure Deplete Mind's Forces

The reactions of the impressions of purity are the reflections of the sensations of pleasure. These may be either in the active or in the dormant form. The reaction of the fruition of the impressions of defilement, on the other hand, produces on our mind the sensations of pain. The present sensations of pleasure and pain, therefore, are the reflections of reactions of our past impressions of purity and defilement.

The effect of the sensations which become discernible to us only as pain or pleasure on our mind is to consume the growths

in the evolution current of the mind, and, as such, it reduces the stocks from the forces in the evolution current. Pain and pleasure deplete the stocks of forces in the evolution current, but the remaining forces of the evolution current adjust the deficiency promptly by expanding the existing growths or receiving fresh seeds of impressions of purity or defilement, and thus fill the resulting vacancy.

Thus, the immediate result of pain or pleasure is the depletion of existing stocks of forces from the evolution current of our mind. By the amount of pleasures we enjoy, we reduce the existing accumulations of growths of purity in the evolution current of our mind; and, by the amount of pain we suffer, we reduce the existing accumulations of growths of defilement in the evolution current of our mind.

Advantage of Pleasure and the Risk When in Pain

A person enjoying pleasure which, as we have stated, is the reaction of his past thoughts of purity appearing in fruition upon maturity, is very advantageously placed to perform more and more acts of purity, thus enabling him to send into deposit with his evolution current more and more fresh seeds of purity. When the growths of purity which bring his present reactions of purity, or pleasure, are exhausted these fresh seeds may grow and ripen producing further fruits of purity in the form of further pleasure. This procedure of sowing whilst reaping, if adopted by a person, results in a never-ending procession of periods of pleasure for him. Just as we need not be afraid to eat our corn if we sow sufficiently in the meantime to gather in order to meet our future demand, so we need not be afraid to enjoy our present fortunes, if we only sow enough to reap sufficiently in the future.

A person suffering from pain, which is what defilements turn out to be on their fruition, is very precariously placed in life.

When a person is in pain, it is very difficult to perform good actions. Such a person's mind is preoccupied with the pains of the moment, and, therefore, he has not the time nor the inclination to think of good actions or to perform them. The beings struggling through periods of pain, usually attempt to wriggle out and escape from their suffering but, in doing so, they often exceed their safe limits. There is often the tendency in such beings to being afflicted with states of mental frenzy. The currents of greed, hatred, and ignorance remain constantly strong and appear with active force on the slightest provocation in such beings. They are, therefore, more susceptible to doing evil actions and to devoting their time to evil thought. Pain thus, brings us a double disadvantage: immediate suffering and the risk of being drawn towards the formation of deposits of fresh defilements, which fructifying in the future will cause us further suffering in the future.

Variation of the Course of the Mind

The general tendency in existence is for pleasure to facilitate the formation of purity, and for pain to facilitate the formation of defilement. But this tendency can be varied by each individual according to the manner in which he handles his situations. A person may be in pleasure, but if he is lacking in rational understanding, he is more likely to indulge in thoughts and deeds of greed, hatred, and jealousy. Persons of this type are devoid of the protection of the forces of right mindfulness and, consequently, the forces of greed and hatred operate freely, culminating in the end in the formation of a vast gathering of seeds of defilement in the evolution current of their minds. The forces of these defilements, in addition to cutting off their periods of pleasure abruptly, fructify causing them suffering in the future.

A person living in pain, who understands and utilizes his mind's forces of right mindfulness, would try to calm his suffering

without forming greed or hatred in his mind. In spite of the pain, such a person would try to be sympathetic towards others and, if nothing reasonable could be done to remove or reduce his pain, he would understand the nature of the pain and bear it. He would thus try to forget his pain; and whilst thinking well towards others, if he finds himself in a position to be of use to someone, he would give his assistance. A person of this type converts his pain to pleasure, and lives happily in his pains, which is his immediate blessing. For his after-benefit, he gathers into the evolution current of his mind a large accumulation of seeds of purity which reduces considerably the duration of his existing spell of pain, and also brings him happiness in the future on his present impressions of purity fructifying.

Nature of Fruits of Mental Impressions

Seeds of a species produce growths and fruits of the same species; so do the seeds of the impressions of purity and defilement produce growths and fruits. The seeds of impressions of the purity of benevolence, for instance, produce reactions in the form of pleasures of abundance and well-being. In like manner, the seeds of impressions of the defilement of hatred produce reactions in the form of pain of pangs of fear, timidity, weakness, and subjugation.

An infinity of grades of reflections of impressions belonging to both classes, purity and defilement, settle themselves in the evolution current of our mind in the form of seeds which grow and fructify. Each of these seeds has a force peculiar to itself, and develops growths and fruits which are similarly peculiar. It is, therefore, impossible to identify seeds of purity and defilement by any definite description; they can, however, be graded into broad categories such as greed, hatred, jealousy, benevolence, loving sympathy, etc. according to the type of passions and emotions occurring in our mind. From the type of sensations

we feel when an impression enters our mind as a seed, we can reasonably predict the type of both the growth and fruit of reaction, but we must examine carefully the exact intensity of the impression if we are to guess how forceful the reaction would be.

Mind's Line With Time

There is only one force in our mind which is strictly of the same strength amongst all beings. This force is the ever-active motion of birth, existence, and death that exists mixed in the evolution current. This same force at a lesser strength exists even in each of the units of matter. This force exists fixed internally in every unit of mind and matter, and the force in each unit is a separate force quite unconnected with any other force of the universe.

Besides causing the process of birth, existence, and death, this force performs the function of maintaining each unit at correct line with time. There does not exist any variation in this force due to evolution, and forces of purity and defilement cannot accelerate or retard its progress. It is a force beyond all external control; it is not subject to evolution or retrogression and it never varies its speed; it has a charge of motion of its own, a regular charge of equal intensity at all times. This force of birth, existence, and death is the infinite pendulum of the clock of the universe which, appearing uniformly with every being and everything, moves every being and everything in the universe in uniform order along time.

Mental Reactions Mature Slowly and Last Long

Accumulation of impressions of purity and defilement occurs instantaneously on the impact of each impression in our evolution current, but the reactions of impressions occur in slow and

orderly succession. An impression on our mind enters the forces of the evolution current in the form of a seed, and the evolution current receives it in the manner of a fertile seed-bed. As soon as an impression appears within the evolution current, it begins to germinate, and as time lapses, it begins to grow in strength in the manner of a plant in a dense forest. This growth, if weak, remains in dormant form as an undergrowth, exerting all its forces continuously in order to appear above all other growths in the evolution current.

If the growths of impressions already existing in the mind are very forceful, the fresh impressions remain without causing the discharge of their forces in strength; but whilst remaining thus suppressed, they keep on increasing their intrinsic force. In course of time, when the overgrowths get cleared after attaining maturity and bearing fruit, the impressions growing into strength beneath find space to spread their forces, and they duly do so, as opportunity becomes available. Whilst this process is thus progressing, more fresh seeds fall into the evolution current and more growths compete amongst themselves to find expression to their forces.

The seeds of impressions enter during very tiny periods, but they grow and bear fruit over very long periods. The more intensive the impression, the faster and bigger becomes the growth. If, for some reason such as the presence of more mature growths of stronger impressions, these seeds remain suppressed from fruition in the evolution current of our mind, the growths become fiercer in proportion to the time lost. In consequence of these characteristics, the growths of impressions in our evolution current of the mind at all times are dense and, therefore, persons with deposits of sparse growths of impressions can never be found.

At every point of time, the number of impressions remaining with our evolution current in various stages of growth, is

enormous. There may be remaining in us undischarged seeds of purity or defilement which may have entered our mind millions of years ago. And, similarly, the seeds of our actions of purity and defilement which enter during our present life may remain without fructifying for many years to come. This is especially so, with weak seeds entering our evolution current, as a very long period of time is necessary for them to acquire the requisite strength to overwhelm the intensive growths of subsequent deposit.

Criminal Law and Punishment

The order of maturity, as we stated, is the same as the order of strength of the impressions. If, for instance, a person does an act of evil action such as grave crime, the seed of impression that enters his evolution current in the mind may fructify shortly afterwards in the form of his being tried in the law courts and sentenced to punishment. If, on the other hand, he is already in the enjoyment of the fruits of previous impressions of good action or purity, and if the forces of these impressions of purity are strong enough to keep underground in his evolution current of the mind his fresh seeds of defilement, he may escape the law and the sentence successfully, perhaps, by means of adopting an evasive procedure of action which may result in his favour.

The criminal who undergoes quick punishment is fortunate in that the intensiveness of the growths of the seeds of defilement he planted in the evolution current of his mind whilst committing the crime, gets removed quicker by the suffering he undergoes immediately afterwards. But the criminal who escapes the law is unfortunate, because, by keeping the seeds of defilement concealed in the evolution current of his mind for a lengthy period, he increases the ferocity of the growth and when, as they invariably do in the case of grave defilement, they bear

fruit ultimately, which may perhaps be in the next rebirth, he would suffer far in excess of what he would have suffered in this life.

The case of profits for the persons doing good actions is also governed by the same law. A person doing good actions and receiving immediate reward for its good actions, may begin to reap the fruits of his actions but, if his good actions remain unrewarded, owing to reasons such as the presence in the evolution current of his mind of opposing forces of superior strength, what ultimate benefits he would receive, even though it may be in his future rebirths, would occur in such increased form as to compensate him for the length of the deferment. This is because the seeds of purity, whilst remaining with the evolution current, keep on increasing in strength; and when the opportunity is found for them to bloom, they bloom with the increased strength.

Prompt Replenishments of Mind's Forces

The growths of impressions belonging to both varieties keep on forcing their weight constantly, striving to achieve fruition and it is always the strongest amongst them that succeeds. Weaker impressions entering our evolution current, therefore, have very little opportunity to mature and most of them descend to the level of virtual impotency and remain in the mind for very long periods—very often, even for millions of years. Each of these impressions, however, even after the lapse of millions of years, gains adequate strength owing to the process of the effect of time, and assumes overwhelming force to mature and fructify.

The vastness of the forces of impressions remaining undischarged with the evolution current in the mind is such that it is never with a deficiency of deposits to cope with the supplies

of necessary forces of reaction to cover every passage of existence through time. This deficiency does not occur because of two reasons. There are always thousands of mature growths waiting to thrust forth their fruits, and when one force consumes the charges in its growth, the other forces expand their charges, and thus prevent the occurrence of any vacuums in the evolution current of the mind, which is the repository of impressions. The fertility of the evolution current of the mind ensures an adequate growth of impressions at all times and, owing to the extensiveness of its growths, the smooth and regular continuity of the forces of life at various levels of perception is ensured.

Higher Beings and Evil Action

The natural pull of the mind is towards evil thoughts and, consequently, our natural tendency is to do evil actions. The higher the plane of existence each being is living in, the more fiercely is this force felt, so that, the human being and other higher beings are more prone to do evil actions than good actions. Whatever good actions we do are prompted by our intelligence or rational understanding, but those beings without adequate intelligence are incapable of understanding the nature of the actions they do, and they continue to do evil actions by yielding to the natural urge. Their attitude is the same towards both good actions and evil actions, but evil actions are more attractive to the undeveloped mind. Evil action on the part of man becomes fiercer because even the most untutored people know in their inner consciousness what is good and what is evil. The animals and other lower beings are at an advantage in this respect because most of them cannot differentiate between good and evil.

The impressions of defilement ensuing from the evil actions of an animal do not enter the evolution current of its mind as fiercely as impressions of defilement ensuing from similar evil

actions of man would enter the evolution current of his mind. The reason is that the animal employs less intelligence or mindfulness in committing the evil action, whilst man uses intelligence in committing evil actions. Even amongst the animals the difference in the intensities exists. The evil action of a developed animal such as the mammal is more fierce than that of a less developed animal and, as we discussed earlier, this feature is characteristic amongst human beings too.

Intensity of Evil Impressions of Thought

We can now draw a table of the patterns of intensities of evil thoughts beginning with the most advanced people. The intensities of impressions of thoughts of evil actions is the most fierce in people who are with the most developed minds. We may consider as in this category the most educated or, as we say, the most civilized people. The thoughts of evil action occurring in less civilized people carry into the evolution current less severe impressions of evil action; and the thoughts of evil action occurring in the least civilized people produce the least intensive impressions of evil thought. This process of decreasing intensities of evil impressions amongst the human beings extends to the animals and other lower beings.

The thoughts of evil actions occurring in the most developed animals carry into the evolution current of the mind of those animals fairly fierce impressions of evil action; the thoughts of evil actions of semi-developed animals produce less severe impressions of evil action; and the thoughts of evil action occurring in the animals that are the least developed, produce impressions of evil action of mild severity. On the basis of these declining intensities of impressions of evil action, therefore, we may safely infer that the ferocity of a snake devouring a fellow snake is not so fierce as a man destroying the life of another man. And the minor offences of a civilized human being against his

less fortunate brethren are as intensively unwholesome as the perpetration of a major crime by an ignorant or uncivilized human being.

Lower Beings Accumulate Less Defilement

The curve on the chart of decreasing intensities of defilements tends always to drop as low as possible, but it never reaches its utmost low levels. As a being sinks in life to lower and lower levels, the intensity of defilements, too, keeps on reducing lower and lower because, when a being sinks lower in life, the lower becomes its intelligence and hence also its capacity to produce intensive thoughts. All actions of the lowest beings are done without any appreciable thinking, and, hence, they do not form impressions of defilement in the evolution currents of their minds. Even if they do form impressions of defilement in the evolution currents of their minds owing to faint waves of thoughts they may produce—and very often feeble thoughts are applied to their actions even by the lowest beings—only very feeble impressions would be formed and major impressions of defilement are unlikely to occur in the evolution current of their minds.

The evolution current of the minds of the lower beings are crowded with large accumulations of defilement in various stages of forceful growth and when fresh impressions of weak defilement enter it, they remain dormant and unproductive. Considering all the factors, we can say that in lower beings less defilement accumulates and in the lowest beings hardly any defilement accumulates at all. The life of beings belonging to the lowest levels, therefore, does not sink to the very bottom of the plane of existence in the material universe, as the point when the entire capacity of the evolution current gets brim-full of impressions of defilement never arrives.

Rises and Falls in the Planes of Life

Although deposits of defilement cause the lowering of the levels of life of each being, defilements do not have the strength to cause the total destruction of any living being. The forces of purity in the lower beings are very slight, but the little strength they have serves to prevent the evolution current from accumulating a fully dominant charge of defilements. The total destruction of the units of mind is thus prevented and, after a long period of suffering in the lower levels of life, the units of mind will have a chance of redeeming the deposits of defilements and benefit from the charges of purity which, rising in strength, would push the unit of mind into a higher level of existence.

After long lapse of time, even the most down-sunk units of mind regain a few forces of purity. Clinging to such forces of purity the lower beings often rise to various higher levels. A few reach the summit of existence, but many fall back half-way. The various beings we meet in our life are either on this climb up to the summit of existence, or they are on their way back, having failed to reach it or having been distracted from their course. Those who are falling may fall to the very lowest levels and rise again in the very distant future, and those who are rising may reach the very summit of existence and remain there for ever. The summit of existence is safe and sound; the risk of falling back into lower life does not exist there.

There is no specific order according to which those who fall must fall very low or those who climb must climb to the very summit. One who is in the course of falling may gather strength to rise again before reaching the lowest levels of life, and similarly one who is climbing may abandon his effort and fall back. Those beings who are diligent and resourceful and who understand the process of existence always grip their hold and persevere to remain in higher life until the summit is reached; but the ignorant

beings who get intoxicated by the distractions of greed, and hatred, know not where life leads to and become susceptible to the general forces of the universe to keep life at very low levels. (We shall discuss further details of the general forces of the universe in our next chapter).

Man's Position in Life

Of all the infinity of beings in the universe, the human being is amongst the few species that have climbed the most in the up-hill travel to the summit of existence. We are near the summit and in one lap we may reach it. Even if we cannot make this life the last lap to the summit of existence, we can get on to the direct and comfortable route, travelling along which we can reach the summit before long, and avoid the risk of having to fall back from the heights we have already reached: the human life.

Our most urgent task, therefore, is to ensure that we do not fall below our present plane of existence and, for this purpose, we must comprehend the process of life and realize that each one is at the helm of his career. Each of us must realize how to steer his life clear of lower existence; he must understand the map and see that he keeps to the correct routes which will maintain him in higher life and which will ultimately lead him to his destination.

When we claim that man is superior to all other fellow beings we meet with in this world, the hard fact must be remembered that all the other beings, such as the animals, too, seem to think that their own species is the most superior for, otherwise, why should the animals fight so hard and very often so heroically to preserve their own species? This would appear to be a universal sense of vanity, each one thinking that he is the most important being in the universe, and the root cause of all the differences

even amongst men can be attributed to this sense of vanity. Man's position amongst the species, therefore, has to be examined very carefully without bringing to bear any selfishness or particularity.

High Achievement as Beings of Purity

Looking at man as an outsider would, we may say that man can justly claim the highest position amongst the species of beings living in this world. Not because of our mechanical skill which helps us to come out successful in any combat with the members of the other species, but owing to our superior powers of reasoning and our capacity to distinguish good actions from evil actions, and our ability to handle our progress in life, are we superior. Considering the handicaps in which beings of lesser evolution are involved, there is no doubt whatsoever that our evolution into human life is a definite achievement —a very high achievement indeed. And when we reflect on the fact that our human life is a level of existence that we have achieved by our own effort, which may mostly have been under very difficult circumstances during long periods in the past, we have all the reason to be happy.

It is a unit of mind with a very strong current of evolution that can develop itself into a human being. The evolution current in each human being has large accumulations of concentrated and fully mature charges of previous impressions of purity. It is the fruition of these forces of purity that has brought us the benefit of our present human existence. The Buddha has always been very specific about the height of purity in which man has been born into this world. This is evident from the fact that whenever the Buddha addressed people, he invariably referred to them as beings of high purity (sādhu).

The evolution current in the mind of man is more pure than defiled; it is near the summit of the state of highest existence,

but not at the summit. In the evolution current of man, there exist a few traits of impressions of defilement. These hamper man's progress to the summit.

Defilements are Severe in Higher Beings

When we considered the nature of impressions of defilement in beings sinking into lower stages of existence, we referred to the manner in which defilements decrease in intensity. With regard to the higher beings, the opposite of the same process operates. The human evolution current is highly sensitive to the forces of defilement, for the intensity and growth of the impressions of defilements is severe in the higher beings. The higher a being rises in its level of life, the more intensive and severe becomes the impact of defilements in the evolution current of its mind.

As the forces of the impressions of purity maintain man in his high level of life, even the feeble growths of past impressions of greed, hatred, and ignorance appear strong in his mind and overwhelm him. These prevent man from rising any farther, and often pull him down into lower levels of life. Some people succeed in extricating themselves from these forces of defilements by handling each such situation with care, but many fall victim and sink.

Counteracting Pain

As we have mentioned at different stages of this discussion, the growth of impressions of defilement can only cause us pain. Pain, by itself cannot cause further seeds of defilement in the evolution current. When such reaction occurs in our mind, a little care can prevent all harm. The appearance of the fruitions of defilement can be counteracted with the forces of

purity, and, therefore, man can even forestall the reactions of defilement by methods of practising acts of purity. The forces of most impressions of defilement can be eradicated before they appear in fruition as pain, if we adopt suitable methods for the purpose, and even if some impressions of defilement fructify in the form of active pain in us, we can suffer it diligently and minimize their effects thereby. By pursuing such methods, we can counteract the forces of the deposits of impressions of defilement already existing in the evolution current of our mind, whilst, at the same time, adding appreciably to the stocks of impressions of purity remaining with the current of evolution, and thus increase the force of our evolution current of the mind considerably.

Our task, therefore, should be to increase the accumulation of impressions of purity whilst, at the same time, liquidating whatever growths of impressions of defilement there may remain with the forces of our evolution current of the mind, thus reducing the weight of the forces of defilement. The best way to minimize the accumulations of impressions of defilement and also to increase the accumulations of impressions of purity is to acquire a rational understanding of the existence of the forces of defilement and purity. We must fully grasp the fact that pain and pleasure are the natural outcome of our past deeds and that the state of our pain and pleasure occurring in the future depends on what we are doing at present.

Understanding Pain and Pleasure

Even if we cannot fully comprehend the exact process by which pain and pleasure appear in our mind, we must, at least, be able to identify our moments of pain and pleasure. We must be able to see clearly what pains are and what pleasures are, and having thus determined them, we must proceed to act with wisdom.

Every evil act we do is usually preceded by a period of pain to us; this may be craving for the satisfaction of the environment senses, a spell of hatred towards another person, or we may be in a state of slothfulness. Such a condition of mind is always painful, but without recognizing this fact, we proceed to find temporary relief by acting without restraint. Such action sinks us farther into the mire of greed, hatred, and ignorance and brings us increased suffering.

Whenever we are drawn by our thoughts towards performing any act, we must pause a while and consider what it is that moves us, and the best way to determine this is to examine the type of sensation that is passing through our mind at that very moment. If we find that it is greed, hatred, or ignorance that moves us or that we are living in a state of mind of greed, hatred, or ignorance we must allow the sensation to fade away without allowing it to move us into action.

Obstacles to "Knowledge"

Whenever we are moved to act, whatever the type of action it may be, it is always advisable to reflect for a while and consider what we are about to do. If we find that it is pleasant sensations such as loving charity, loving sympathy, or knowledge that is moving us, a few moments of reflection would help us to perform the contemplated deed with increased intensiveness. Most of our thoughts capable of producing good deeds fade out where they rise, but if a person is sensitive to such thoughts, he can always develop many of them to cause impressions of purity in his evolution current of the mind. Thus, correct understanding or "knowledge" (amoha) helps us to increase our accumulations of impressions of purity and decrease our growths of defilement in the evolution current of our mind.

Knowledge always results from the removal of ignorance (moha) from the evolution current of the mind, but the forces

of ignorance are so deeply rooted in the evolution current of the mind of all beings that its removal is a very difficult task. The evolution current of our mind is heavily clouded by the defilements of ignorance and, the one force which can remove them is the force of knowledge. When counteracting the forces of ignorance, however, the forces of knowledge have a very difficult path to tread. Difficult obstacles such as deep-rooted convention, prejudice, habit, mental debility, and physical ill-health, often prove so insurmountable that progress of knowledge is severely affected. By the term "knowledge", of course, we must mean here only "true understanding or wisdom".

Right Mindfulness

Correct consciousness, or mindfulness (sammā sati), is the easiest method to overcome all these obstacles. For those who, for instance, harbour a sense of superiority over other beings, the consciousness of the obvious laws of nature, such as birth, development, disease, decay, and death, which occur to all, without any discrimination, brings quick realization of their actual situation. Correct consciousness also results in timely adjustments of both physical and mental conditions, thus bringing the essential strength of mind and body, without which it is impossible to reach knowledge.

Correct consciousness, in fact, is knowledge and no obstacles can remain when confronted with it. It can pierce through to the truths of our conventions; it can effectively remove our traits of prejudice; it can bring relief from our evil habits whilst improving the good ones; and it can make us strong both of mind and body. Correct consciousness is a preventive against all the evils of our mind and body, and it also provides us with the most glaring signal by following which we can achieve both present happiness, and future higher life.

A Physical Exercise

The Buddha laid so much emphasis on correct consciousness that he even prescribed physical exercises, which assist in the achievement of this end. The most popular amongst these is an exercise in breathing (ānā pāna sati) which involves the practice of being in consciousness to one's breathing for at least about five minutes daily. The consciousness of the physical act of breathing, inhaling and exhaling of air, increases the powers of one's concentration on the one hand, and it leads to improved physical health on the other.

On the physical side, a habit of occasional consciousness of breathing helps in the detection, and the subsequent removal of the defects that may be present in the manner of one's breathing. Breathing, as is now well-known to all, has a direct bearing on the purification of one's blood supply. Breathing affects the functioning of one's heart and, when the heart is working efficiently, the strength of one's blood supply improves. A strong blood supply improves the strength and efficiency of all the other organs of our physical systems, and, thus, ensures for us better physical health. Occasional consciousness of our breathing, therefore, makes us adjust our defects in breathing, and improved habits of breathing, naturally, lead us to better health and efficient physical living.

One may improve on this exercise and develop habits of occasional consciousness of the manner of the functioning of the various organs in our physical systems. We may, for instance, be conscious of the way we walk, or the way we sit. Such consciousness brings into our knowledge the presence of any defects in the way our body is functioning, and if they are of a nature which needs adjusting, the very sense of consciousness would cause in us the requisite adjustment. If our deeds were of a fairly confirmed nature, a little persistent effort on our part

would bring us into the desired good habit, and also the persistent consciousness of our defects can always strengthen our effort to remove them. But, of course, if our defects are of an irremovable nature, we must learn by correct consciousness how to put up with them.

Increasing the Strength of the Mind

The advantage to the physical system from the habits of correct consciousness of the functions of our body, are besides the greatest advantage accruing to us. Correct consciousness, even when applied to watching the functioning of our physical body, increases the strength of our evolution current in the mind. A strong mind, straightened to direct concentration, can pierce through, absorb, and hold more knowledge.

The mind, in the human being, has always the tendency to deviate from a straight course. We cannot fix our thoughts on any subject for any appreciable period of time. Even whilst we are engaged in some work, our mind always tends to be distracted. There may be nothing to disturb us, yet our thoughts would be drawn towards various directions by the forces existing within the mind itself. The more we are subject to being distracted in this manner, the more difficult it is for us to develop powers of deep thought. And the less our mind tends to be distracted, the deeper we can think, and, consequently, the wider our store of knowledge would be. Our mind's tendency to be distracted is an obstacle to the progress of our knowledge, and the benefit of correct consciousness is to remove this obstacle and make the mind strong enough to pierce through any depth for knowledge.

Correct education, contemplation, and meditation also bring about the same result. Correct consciousness is a good preliminary to those wishing to practise contemplation and meditation.

Elimination of Defilements

Our consciousness must ultimately lead us to the point when we would be aware of all the different reflections of sensations which may appear in our mind. Our consciousness must, particularly, be watchful of the various passions and emotions which appear in our heart and detect the reflections of defilements which must be controlled, and the reflections of purity which must be promoted and bolstered. The habit of correct consciousness, therefore, assists us in the elimination of defilements and the increase of our impressions of purity.

Correct consciousness helps us to form in the evolution current of our mind more of the reflections of purity which enter the evolution current in the form of seeds of purity. It also can help us to check the formation of reflections of defilement, thus avoiding the evolution current from taking into its forces any further seeds of defilement. We can, thus, cause in our evolution current a continuous elimination of the entry of seeds of defilement, and an equally continuous increase in the accumulation of seeds of purity, by utilizing the forces of correct consciousness.

Determination of Planes of Life

On entering, seeds of purity charge the evolution current with strength and power; the seeds of defilement wither it and weaken it. The evolution current existing in each material being, carries a mixture of both forces, the variation in different proportions being the only difference. On the strength of the evolution current depends the nature of the structure of the abode each unit of mind is able to construct and live in, at each of its wayside halts. If the evolution current in a particular unit of mind is adequately strong to sustain a human frame, it settles and develops to be a human being; if the strength is only

sufficient to be an animal, it settles and develops to be an animal; and if the balance of strength is what is necessary to develop into an insect, it settles into life as an insect.

Because the balance of the accumulated forces with the evolution current in our mind was sufficiently powerful to sustain us in a human frame for a period, at the moment of our conception in this world, we have been born as human beings. So long as the force which made our conception as human beings remains in us, we shall remain to grow as human beings; and when this force is exhausted we shall be dead. During our human life, various seeds of both purity and defilement have entered our evolution current, and the balance of force remaining with us at present is different. The force which made our conception as a human being is also consumed and, therefore, if we have not produced human thoughts in us and if we have not done human acts during the course of our human existence, we have little prospect of being reborn as human beings.

Different Planes of Material Life

What form of life we would be born into in our next life, depends on the balance of forces that would accumulate into the evolution current of our mind at the last point of our present existence, *i.e.* death. If the balance of forces available at the time be sufficient to our being reborn as human beings, we would be reborn so; if our forces be more than what is necessary to be reborn as human beings, we would take life in a higher plane of material existence such as a world of Deva; and if our forces be less than what is necessary for being reborn as human beings, we would be reborn into a species of animals, or if our balance of forces be very low, we would be reborn in one of the worlds of lower Apā, states of woe, hell.

A unit of mind with an evolution current charged with strong growths of impressions of purity, cannot exist in the frame of a lower being, in the same manner as a weak electric jet cannot be lit with a powerful supply of electric current. In the same manner, the mind with an evolution current weakened by the accumulations of impressions of defilement cannot exist in the frame of a higher being, as a strong electric jet cannot be lit with the power from a weak electric battery.

Effort Necessary for Higher Life

We have stated that the evolution current of the human being, although it carried into this life an immense balance of accumulated growths of purity in strength, has still a small proportion of accumulated growths of defilement. If this proportion of defilement were not existing in us at the time of our taking conception in this world, we would have taken birth in a better planet in the universe, in a better state of life. The balance of our accumulations of purity and defilement was just appropriate enough to qualify us to be born as human beings in this world; we were not better, nor were we worse. We have been born into different countries and districts, because the character in our evolution current needed such environments to allow for the free flow of the reactions which had taken their places to mature and fructify at the time we took conception.

If we aspire to be born in higher states of life, our effort has to be directed to reducing the proportion of defilement and increasing the proportion of purity with our evolution current. In spite of the vast deposits of purity with which we have been born into this world, the evolution current of our mind has brought into this life considerable accumulations of the defilements of greed, hatred, and ignorance. They remain in the form of seeds and some of them grow and bear fruit causing us spells of sensual pain. Careful and prompt attention with the

aid of correct consciousness, can cause these pains to heal expeditiously and thus our suffering could be minimized. These pains, if allowed to continue freely, would force further seeds of defilement to enter the evolution current of our mind.

Intercepting Defilements With Purity

The method of removing the defilements of greed, hatred, and ignorance is to intercept them with the charges of purity of benevolence, loving sympathy, and knowledge. Benevolence removes the defilements of greed; loving sympathy removes the defilements of hatred; and knowledge removes the defilements of ignorance. Greed and hatred are the by-products of ignorance, and benevolence and loving sympathy are the by-products of knowledge. The struggle between defilement and purity, therefore, culminates lastly into a struggle between ignorance and knowledge.

The tincture of the defilements of greed, hatred, and ignorance is so imbued with the forces in the evolution current of our mind, that it is very difficult to remove it completely. If there were appreciable accumulations of defilements in the evolution current of our mind, it is not difficult to separate out and eliminate a portion of it, but when the proportion of defilement is very much reduced, the grip of defilement becomes very tight. The lower the proportion of the contents of forces of defilement in the evolution current of our mind, the firmer becomes its clasp, the reason being that forces of defilement in greatly reduced proportions serve only as agents to bind beings to material life.

Even under such circumstances, the only remedy for one who wishes to cleanse the mind completely of all deposits of defilement, is to apply more and more charges of concentrated knowledge, and, by this means, the point can be reached when

the binding force of defilement is so reduced that its grip is no longer strong enough to bind.

Full Enlightenment

The charge of benevolence removes the binding force of the defilement of greed; the charge of loving sympathy removes the binding force of the defilement of hatred; and lastly, the charge of concentrated knowledge reduces the binding force of the defilement of ignorance. At the point when the last binding force of ignorance is breached, there occurs in the evolution current of the mind the greatest achievement ever: the evolution current will be completely cleansed of all forces of defilement. The state of full enlightenment (arahat) will be achieved.

When the last binding force of defilement is broken by ever increasing charges of more and more purity, the mind becomes so charged with purity and, therefore, so powerful, that all the last traits of defilement in the evolution current is completely burnt in the power of purity. No tincture or even the debris of the defilements would thus be there in such a current of evolution and, as without a base tincture of defilements no fresh seeds of defilements can occur, the evolution current of the mind would have completely eliminated not only the forces of defilement it thus far carried, but also the root cause of all future formations of fresh seeds of any defilement.

Nibbana

The unit of mind with its evolution current cleansed in this way would gather the maximum charge of purity, and, if we succeed in achieving such a state of mind, we can remain in that state throughout the infinity of time. We would then have no pain or suffering as the causes of all pain and suffering would no

longer be there. There would not be any risk of being born in a lower life for the defilements that pull us into a lower life would no longer accumulate. Then we commit no acts of defilements, nor do we need to accumulate any more charges of purity.

This state of life is a life without defilements, and, therefore, it is a life without pain and suffering. It is life brim-full of purity and, therefore, it is life of maximum pleasure. There are no discriminations in life in that state, there are no masters and servants, and there are no fortunates and unfortunates. All who attain that state of life are masters and fortunates. They are equal in every way and their pleasures are the same. That serene state of life, is the supreme state of existence. It is the peaceful plateau at the summit of life from which no one falls again to the vicissitudes that life has below. It is the state of Nibbāna, the everlasting blossom, the flower of life and mind.

CHAPTER 6

CONCEPTION OF MATERIAL LIFE

THE knowledge we have gathered by studying the preceding five chapters is sufficient for us to proceed to the examination of the manner of the incidence of life and the universe. We have dealt with the basic units of existence in the universe—the units of matter and mind—and our task now is to see how these units weave together in the formation of the intricate webs of the material universe.

The four great abstract elements, abstract earth (pathavi), abstract heat (tejo), abstract water (āpo), and abstract air (vāyo) can never be made, nor can they be destroyed. We may be able to make a material object or substance, and also we may be able to destroy any material object or substance. But no force in the universe can produce fresh abstract elements nor can any force in the universe destroy them. It is necessary to comprehend this fundamental truth.

Production and Destruction of Objects

By assembling a number of pieces of wood in a certain order we, for instance, can produce a table. The material object, the table, is certainly something that we produced, but we did not produce the wood, except by cutting the tree and bringing it into our workshop. It is, in fact, the tree which produced the wood. The tree itself did not produce the wood from blank nothing. The tree, in the course of the production of its wood, absorbed elements from its environment and received into it certain quantities of abstract earth, abstract water, abstract

air, and abstract fire. It is, therefore, true to say that abstract earth, abstract water, abstract air, and abstract fire produced the wood and the part played by the tree itself was merely to assemble the various abstract elements which reached its sphere of influence in such an order and proportion as to produce the wood.

The four great elements, therefore, supplied the raw material to build the material structure of the piece of wood with which we made our table. The table we made can also be destroyed, or, even if we were to leave it to itself, it will gradually decay and disappear. Although the table we made decays and disappears, the elements which constituted the wood in the table do not decay or disappear completely from the universe. The different elements of the piece of wood may disappear from our observation, but all of them remain intact in the universe and, as the table decays and disappears from our observation, the elements constituting the piece of wood migrate into other fields, such as its immediate atmosphere. The same thing happens even if we were to destroy the table by burning it. The elements of the wood of the table, in other words, cease to remain in combination as wood, but migrate into the substances of the environment and, very often, the elements settle back into the form of the substance in which they existed before they came within the influence of the tree.

Destruction Follows Production

There are two processes by which all material objects in the universe come into existence; they are either made by man or other beings such as the animals and the insects, or they are formed by themselves. Man makes his houses, implements, and tools, and, similarly, animals and insects make various material objects, *e.g.* ants and bees construct elaborate quarters for their residential and storage purposes. All that man makes, man

himself can destroy; or, given the opportunity, the animals and insects will destroy whatever man is able to make. If what man makes is not destroyed either by himself or by the animals and insects, its destruction will come, on the operation of natural causes, after due lapse of time.

Similarly, the various material objects produced by all other beings are also doomed to destruction. Man might destroy the ant-hill or the bee-hive; or they may be destroyed by some other being. If no one destroys them, atmospheric conditions will, in due course, cause their destruction. The material objects that man makes, as well as all the material objects that other beings in the universe make, are invariably destined to a common end, namely, destruction.

Two-Fold Effect of Production

All our activities involve a two-fold effect on the universe. In our task of making the table, we had to deprive a tree of its wood. The production of the table, therefore, caused a two-fold effect: we caused an increase to the world of one material object, the table, and in doing so, we also caused a reduction to the world of an existing material object, the wood from the tree. In other words, by our making the table, the world has at one point one table more, but at another point the world has lost a supply of timber. These are the two effects of our single act of production of the table.

The brick manufacturer who makes bricks from the clay he digs out from his garden would see the two-fold effect of his activity at close range. For each brick he manufactures, he enlarges the cavity in his garden. If this person were to manufacture a large stock of bricks, he would not only be left with a large heap of bricks, but he would also be left with a deep cavity in his garden. What this brick manufacturer desires is a large

stock of bricks and, we shall assume, he does not need a cavity in his garden. But he cannot make bricks without at the same time making the cavity in his garden. This manufacturer has only one object, *i.e.* making bricks, but he cannot achieve his object without, at the same time, causing the formation of another object, namely, the cavity in his garden.

The effect of concentrating matter at any particular point, is the creation of a vacuum at some other point. When, therefore, we are making our various material objects, we are also causing the formation of certain converse effects. The cavity in the garden of our brick manufacturer is liable to disappear after due lapse of time as much as the bricks he made. There is, therefore, one regular and invariable natural condition: whatever is made, or whatever is formed, ends always in destruction or dissolution.

Phenomena With and Without Origin

Our material system, the body, has been formed in different stages, and the mere fact that it is thus formed, causes its decay to follow in different stages. That we have been born into this material state of life, is the reason that we must, sooner or later, die out of this material state. Each beginning is invariably linked to an end. Man begins by birth; therefore he ends by death. This Earth and the universe have a beginning and, therefore, it follows that they must also have an ending. Whatever has a beginning, whether it is a material object, a material system of a being, or a material universe, is always linked to an ending, and no amount of ingenuity by any being can alter this law of existence in the universe.

There also exist in the universe certain things which have no beginning; the things which have no beginning can have no ending. These things never came to be, and, therefore, they

will never cease to be. These things are the infinite factors of the universe and amongst them are the four great abstract elements: abstract earth, abstract water, abstract air, and abstract heat. The abstract elements have never been made nor can they ever be made or formed and, therefore, the abstract elements can never be destroyed, nor will they ever become destroyed or dissolved by themselves.

Subject to their continuous process in the cycle of repetition, the four great abstract elements exist throughout all time. They have existed throughout the infinity of the past, they are existing throughout the present time, and they will keep on existing throughout the infinity of the future time. These elements are indestructible, because they are uncreated or unformed. Their existence will not end, because their existence never began. These conditions are characteristic of all infinite phenomena in the universe.

Indestructibility of the Elements

The process by which rain occurs is now fairly well-known. The sky produces water out of the abstract elements which the sky absorbs from the surface of the Earth itself. The sky may also absorb certain small quantities of abstract elements from other planets and stars as well in the course of its production of water. Besides absorbing the abstract elements and re-assembling them to form the substance known to us as water, no part of the sky can produce abstract elements themselves. All the water that falls on Earth in the form of rain, dew, and snow from the sky consists of abstract elements that the sky absorbs and not what the sky produces by itself. In all the water we see circulating over this Earth, there does not exist a single unit of abstract element that has been produced. Each unit of abstract element is constituted with infinite existence. There are no

beginnings or endings to abstract elements and all that we could observe is their circulation.

Water as we learnt in the second chapter (Elements of Inanimate Matter), is a substance and not an element within the meaning of this study. The substances, like material objects, can be made or they can form themselves. All substances behave in the same manner as material objects; they are invariably subject to destruction or dissolution.

We must understand that the destruction or dissolution of material objects and substances does not cause the destruction of the abstract elements constituting them. The destruction of a material object or substance merely means the disintegration of the various abstract elements which combined to form the material object or substance. When, for instance, a substance like water becomes destroyed, the abstract elements which constituted the water migrate into other substances, or if there are no substances available for these elements to merge with, they would continue to exist independently in the form of energy.

When a substance like water is destroyed in our atmosphere, the elements constituting it would enter other substances such as air, earth, or fire. Although we observe superficially that water on destruction disappears in our atmosphere, the abstract elements continue to exist in other substances; it follows, therefore, that it is only possible to destroy the material combination, namely, the substance, taking shape and size as water, and it is impossible to destroy the basic abstract elements constituting the substance of water itself. This is so in the case of all other substances as well.

Elements Cannot be Created

In the same way as abstract elements cannot be destroyed, it is impossible to make or cause the formation of any new units of

abstract elements. We cannot, for instance, make water from absolute nothing. If we were to make water, we must, in the first instance, have the basic abstract elements essential to make water. If we assemble the correct proportion of the units of abstract water, abstract air, abstract heat, and abstract earth, the substance we refer to as water could be produced, but without this process it would be impossible to produce the substance of water.

We may produce any substance, or any material object, by bringing together the units of abstract elements in their due proportion. In other words, we may weave the four abstract elements together and produce any desired fabric, but without the aid of the fibres of the four great abstract elements, neither the threads nor the fabrics we desire could ever be made. We could only weave the threads from the existing fibres, but we cannot ourselves produce these fibres, nor can we destroy them. When we assemble a fabric of a material object with the aid of the fibres which exist in the form of the four great abstract elements, we may certainly claim the fabric to be our creation and also we may claim ownership of the fabric. We cannot, however, on this account, claim that the fibres with which we made the fabric are also our creation. Since we cannot lay any claim to the production of the fibres, we can only take credit for assembling the fabric from the fibres.

The four great abstract elements could be assembled and kept bound together for a considerable period of time in the form of a substance. But additional units of abstract elements cannot be made, nor do the units of abstract elements wear out whether they remain in the combination of a substance or whether they remain free. The units of the four great abstract elements, however, circulate, often forming one kind of substance at one point and another kind of substance at another point. They never remain in any of the substances permanently.

Destruction of Material Objects

All material objects that may be produced, all material substances there may be formed, and the entire material universe itself are, sooner or later, subject to destruction. The destruction of a material object causes only the destruction of the combinations of the substances in the material object; it does not cause the destruction of the abstract elements constituting it. The destruction of a material substance causes only the destruction of the form of the material substance; it does not cause the destruction of the abstract elements constituting it. And the destruction of the material universe causes only the destruction of the formation of the material universe; it does not cause the destruction of the abstract elements constituting it.

In like manner, the destruction of the human bodily form, which invariably occurs in every instance, merely means the destruction of the human bodily form and not the destruction of the abstract elements constituting the human bodily form. It is the same with the other beings. The destruction of the bodily form of any being does not involve the destruction of the abstract elements constituting it. All abstract elements continue to exist in spite of the destruction of material objects, beings, or substances. The destruction of each material form merely means the movement of the abstract elements from a given combination and settling in some other combination or existing in their independent and individual form.

The total destruction of the material universe, therefore, can never occur. The present material universe may be destroyed—and it is bound to be destroyed—but the abstract elements constituting it will never be destroyed, so that, after a long lapse of time, the same units of abstract elements would gather together and cause the formation of an entirely new material universe. The different material universes arise by themselves

in space, but it is the same units of abstract elements which, going on for ever and ever, make them. These abstract elements never cease to exist and, therefore, the basic material substance for the formation of new universes remains absolutely undestroyed.. When each material universe collapses, the units of abstract elements remain in the form of free energy distributed evenly over space.

We must remember that although the behaviour of the units of the four great abstract elements is demonstrable in the laboratories of the modern experimental scientists, it is impossible to destroy any abstract elements or to construct any fresh supplies of abstract elements in the science laboratory. All that is done and could be done in any experimental laboratory is to process the different abstract elements and thus cause them to display their intrinsic qualities more and more intensively.

Circulation of Abstract Elements

Just as rain is caused by a process of circulation of the four great abstract elements, the travel of heat is also a process of circulation. The sun is not producing any fresh supplies of heat; all the heat that the sun holds is what it has gathered together from its environment. Just as the oceans gather more water from rain and rivers whilst submitting themselves to the process of evaporation, the sun, whilst radiating its heat in various directions, also gathers into it more heat from the neighbouring planets and stars.

All the heat that pours from the sun on to this Earth does not accumulate on the Earth itself. If that were to happen, this Earth within a short period would turn to be a blazing ball of fire. The fact that this Earth maintains a constant temperature indicates that the heat it receives from the sun is radiated away either to the other planets or back to the sun itself. All units

of abstract elements are, in this manner, subject to circulation, but during the course of their circulation even between planets and stars, they neither produce more units of abstract elements, nor do they become destroyed and thus diminish the existing numbers.

Sequence of Infinite Phenomena

Material objects can be constructed, and, with the ability to handle the requisite forces being available to us, it is not impossible for us even to construct an entirely new planet or an entirely new star. But what is constructed becomes destroyed. We cannot construct abstract elements, neither can we destroy them. This is because abstract elements are never made and are impossible to be made. If they were made or if they could be made, it would also have been possible to destroy them. The mere fact that abstract elements cannot be destroyed, prove the fact that these abstract elements are unmade and also that they are impossible to be made.

The things that are unmade or the things that are impossible to be made cannot have any beginning. If a thing were made, the act of making it, is its beginning. Or, if a thing is possible to be made, the fact that it is possible to make it indicates that it is also possible for it to have a beginning. The mere fact that a thing is without beginning, indicates that it is also without any ending. This is the natural law of all infinite phenomena of the universe.

We must remember that amongst the 28 different abstract elements we learnt of in our chapter two, only the four great abstract elements (mahā bhūta) and the sky element (ākāsa rūpa) exist in the conditions of infinity. The other 23 elements are not infinite elements. These are the subsidiary elements which occur by the combination of the four great abstract elements

and which disappear on the disintegration of the four great abstract elements. These subsidiary elements, therefore, have beginnings and endings. They are the products of the four great abstract elements, and as such they are subject to destruction. The four great abstract elements and the sky element are not products, and, therefore, they are not subject to destruction. These five elements, in short, are infinite phenomena and they have infinite characteristics, namely, being beginningless and consequently without an end, unmade and consequently not producible.

Mind is Without an Origin

The mind is also an infinite phenomenon and since the mind is not discernible to the environment sense organs, it is difficult to understand its behaviour. We cannot, for instance, put the modern science laboratory to much use in testing the mind, but, since our mind itself is a great laboratory, we are able to proceed with the examination.

Like all other infinite phenomena, the mind has no beginning and, therefore, it has no ending. New units of mind cannot be made, nor can the units of mind existing be destroyed. The units of mind come from infinity like the units of the four great abstract elements and the sky element, and the units of mind are proceeding towards infinity also like the five infinite elements. No force can make them, nor can any force destroy them.

Units of Mind Circulate Like Matter

Just as the four great abstract elements circulate from substance to substance, the mind also circulates from life to life. Just as the four great abstract elements cannot remain in any formations of substances perpetually, the mind too, cannot

remain in any formations of substances perpetually. The reason is that every material formation is a beginning and every beginning is always linked to an ending. The mind which settles into a material life, therefore, cannot remain in the same structure perpetually; it must, sooner or later, abandon it.

The mind is a force more powerful than any of the four great abstract elements and even the weakest unit of mind is several times more powerful than the strongest unit of abstract element. This brings the mind to a position of supremacy amongst all the infinite units of existence in the universe. The mind maintains this supremacy, and the forces of the units of mind keep all the units of elements in control.

The outstanding difference between the units of mind and any of the units of matter is that the units of mind are subject to variations in their strengths, whereas the strengths of the units of elements remain always constant. Each unit of abstract heat, abstract earth, abstract water, or abstract air, always has the same degree of force. Time does not make any variation to the forces of the units of abstract elements, so that, whatever the period of time, whether in the past or in the future, the strength of each of the units of the four great abstract elements remains precisely the same. Time neither adds to their strength nor does it reduce their strength.

Influence of Time on Mind

The mind, however, is subject to variations in strength from period to period of time. The strength of the mind is subject to increases and decreases, and each unit of mind maintains a balance of strength. This balance of strength varies amongst the different units of mind and, even in the same unit of mind, at different points of time. We have discussed the cause of this variation in the last chapter and we have also dealt at length with

the various functions and processes of the mind. We shall, therefore, proceed to discuss the effect of these variations and processes on the beings concerned and also on the universe as a whole.

Each unit of abstract element has only a definite degree of force. A unit of abstract heat has a definite degree of hotness; a unit of abstract water has a definite degree of the effect of flow; a unit of abstract earth has a definite degree of weight and hardness; and a unit of abstract air has a definite degree of the effects of expansion. If in a given substance, more heat exists, it means that more units of abstract heat exist in it; if a substance is of liquid nature, it means that more units of abstract water exist in it; if a substance is heavy and hard, it means that more units of abstract earth are present in it; and if a substance is of an expanded nature, it means that more units of abstract air exist in it.

Increasing the Strength of Substances

The strength of the forces of abstract elements does not increase within the units of abstract elements themselves. If it is necessary to increase the strength of the effects of a particular element, the only method is to increase the number of units of elements and thereby bring together a large number of units of abstract elements of the same kind; thus the effect of the element could be increased. If we wish to increase heat in a substance, the method is to add to the substance more units of abstract heat. This may be effected by placing the substance over a fire and thus making the substance to absorb some of the units of abstract heat from the fire into the substance.

If it is necessary to add any other effect to a substance, the only method is to cause the addition of a supply of units of abstract elements by a suitable process so that the desired result

may be obtained. Similarly, if we desire to eliminate certain effects from a substance, it is necessary for us to remove some of the units of abstract elements already existing in the substance; or it may be necessary for us to remove some kinds of abstract elements and add some other kinds of abstract elements.

Maximum Strength of Elements

We have, therefore, to bring about the requisite variation in the proportion of the contents of units of abstract elements in order to increase or decrease the forces of effects of elements in a substance. We cannot produce any variation in the strength of a substance merely by attempting to increase or decrease the strength of the individual units of abstract elements. It is impossible to increase or decrease the strength of abstract elements themselves. By the change of proportion of the different abstract elements, however, the strength of a substance can be varied.

If we wish to procure the maximum strength of the abstract elements, our process should be to eliminate from each kind of abstract element the effect of the other three kinds of abstract elements. In this way, we could obtain the highest potential strength of each kind of abstract element in its most concentrated form, but if we require to bring about a force of even greater strength, the only process available is to increase the number of abstract units until the desired force is obtained.

In other words, when we place two units of abstract heat in their naked form together, we can obtain a maximum force of heat twice as powerful as one unit of abstract heat; and if we place a million units of abstract heat together and eliminate from them all other kinds of abstract elements, the force of the heat would increase to a maximum of a million free units of abstract heat. The process is the same with regard to the other three abstract elements, too.

Computing the Strength of Mind

This process, however, cannot be applied to the units of mind. We cannot put two units of mind together and produce a force twice as powerful as one unit of mind. Similarly, a million units of mind would not produce a force exactly one million times greater than any one particular unit of mind. The reason is that each unit of mind has a different strength and the addition of two units of mind would add together two different forces of mind. It often happens that the force of a single strong unit of mind is more powerful than a million weak units of mind. The force of the mind of a human being, for instance, is greater than the aggregate force of billions and trillions of units of mind of bacteria.

It is in respect of the strength of mind, therefore, that the main difference between the units of abstract elements and the units of mind exist. Whereas each unit of the four varieties of abstract elements is of equal strength, the strength of the units of mind varies from one another so much that of all the infinity of units of mind in the universe, not one unit of mind could be found to agree exactly in its strength with any other. The simple process of multiplication can give us the strength of any number of units of abstract elements, but if we were to add the total strength of a large number of units of mind, even if we could assess correctly the strengths of such units of mind, it would have to be accomplished by as many steps of addition as there are units of mind the strength of which we may wish to compute.

Merger of the Mind With Matter

The sky element prevents the complete fusion of the different units of elements, but they merge with each other in the manner we illustrated in our second chapter. On every merger of the

four great abstract elements, subsidiary elements such as the projective elements of colour, taste, and smell, are formed, and complete substances discernible to our environment sense organs solidify. But the units of mind do not merge with other units of mind in this manner.

Units of mind do not merge with other units of mind at all. Each unit of mind preserves an individual existence at all times. In the material universe, however, the units of mind merge with units of matter and, although such merger produces additional subsidiary elements of matter, it does not produce anything of a nature discernible to the environment sense organs.

In each unit of abstract element, there exist the currents of birth, existence, and death and the strength of these three currents is the same in all units of elements. In each of the units of mind, however, there exists a total of 52 different currents; and each unit of mind produces currents of a strength which are different from the currents produced by all other units of mind.

Abstract Elements and Environment

The environment, in which a unit of mind exists, bears the effect of reducing or increasing the strength of the unit of mind. But, whatever the environment in which a unit of matter may exist, no effect whatsoever occurs to its strength. A unit of mind existing in a good environment may be drawn towards good actions and thus increase its strength; or a unit of mind existing in an unwholesome environment may be drawn towards evil actions thus causing a decrease of strength. But a unit of abstract element is not influenced by the environment in this manner. A unit of abstract heat, for instance, may exist in the sun but its strength would in no way diminish or increase by its remaining in the sun. Even when a unit of abstract heat appears

on this Earth, having migrated from the sun, the same strength of the unit of abstract heat is retained.

We may, however, imagine that the strength of a unit of abstract heat on the Earth is mild and the same unit of abstract heat when it existed in the sun was more fierce. We must remember that the apparent mildness of heat in the atmosphere of the Earth is due to factors such as the reaction of the other three abstract elements, namely, abstract water, abstract air, and abstract earth. The heat that we commonly experience reaches us in the form of a substance, and, therefore, its force is modified by abstract water, abstract air, and abstract earth. No heat from the sun reaches the level of the atmosphere we live in, in the abstract form. Although the heat we receive from the sun is modified as a result of the reaction caused on it by the forces of other elements, the intrinsic strength of every unit of abstract heat is maintained.

In their process of repetition, the units of mind rotate in the cycle of birth, existence, and death at the very high speed of about 3,000,000,000,000 times per the duration of a flash of lightning. The units of abstract elements rotate in the same cycle 17 times slower, *i.e.* about 176,470,000,000 times per the duration of a flash of lightning. We must remember this difference in the speed of repetition carefully, as it facilitates our understanding of the process of development of the material life systems.

Matter and Mind at Cross Purposes

We may note here a further difference between the units of abstract elements and the units of mind. All the units of abstract elements have the tendency to remain aloof from substances, and to exist independently. The ideal state towards which the units of abstract elements tend to move is the formation of a

homogeneous distribution of matter throughout space in the universe. The units of mind, however, hold as many units of abstract elements as possible in the development of material life s stems.

The process of material life consists of the merger of one or more units of abstract elements with a unit of mind. We must remember that in the merger, the different units do not fuse together completely and that the individuality of the various units is always preserved. In the formation of a material life system, the unit of mind is more active than the units of abstract elements, and, consequently, the unit of mind brings to bear more force.

Life's Material Mass and Limit

The tendency of the unit of mind is to gather into its hold as many units of abstract elements as it has the strength to control and, therefore, if the unit of mind were powerful, it would gather into its system a very large number of units of abstract elements. When the limit of strength is reached, the unit of mind ceases to take in additional units of abstract elements; but the units of abstract elements would not remain still—they escape frequently from the hold of the units of mind. In order to make up for the losses in this manner and also in order to supply any additional units of abstract elements required, the unit of mind keeps on absorbing more and more units of abstract elements; and as more new units are taken in, more units of abstract elements in the hold of the unit of mind keep on escaping. A system of circulation of abstract elements thus ensues.

Just as a man who wishes to build a house would not spend all his capital in purchasing as many bricks as possible, a unit of mind would not expend all its energies in collecting into its hold as many units of abstract elements as it has the strength to

hold. A unit of mind always reserves a part of its energy for providing the various other necessary amenities to make its material structure a comfortable place. A developed unit of mind with great energy, such as the unit of mind developing into a human being, would make its material structure as large as is really necessary. The rest of the forces of the unit of mind would, therefore, be available for the purposes of developing the various sense organs. Sufficient resources of energy to enable the human being to focus his sensations with as much strength as possible, would also be always kept available.

Central Point of Infinity

When examining infinite phenomena, it is very difficult to choose a point to begin at. If we were examining something finite, our task would not have been very difficult; for in that case, there would be a beginning and, therefore, the most appropriate and convenient point to begin any examination of it, would be at the beginning itself. But in an infinite phenomenon, there is no beginning at which one could begin one's examination. There is, therefore, only one point where any examination could begin, and that is the "present".

Each of us is composed of two kinds of infinite quantities, namely, the unit of mind, and the units of the four great abstract elements of matter. Each of us, therefore, is an entity of infinite phenomena, and any comprehensive examination of ourselves should begin at the point of the present. We must understand what we are at present and, afterwards, we could work our way back and understand our past, and we could also work our way forward and understand our future. If we understand correctly what we are, our task in understanding what we were, and what we would be are very greatly facilitated.

The first thing that strikes us when examining our "present" is the state of utter flux in which our life is existing. We would

feel as if we were looking out of the window of an express train rapidly moving across strange land. So many things appear before us and the next moment, they disappear from us. We can faintly remember the little things we experienced five minutes ago, but what is going to appear before us in five minutes more, is all such a gamble that we often cannot even guess what it would look like.

Flux of the "Present"

Looking at ourselves in this manner, we soon realize that this life is an illusion; we soon realize that we are nothing but a bundle of various elements of matter in a unit of mind and that both matter and mind keep moving on and on ceaselessly. We realize the real nature of the individual who is known to us and whom each of us refers to as "I" and "myself", the "I" and "myself" whom we always try to satisfy, but who can never be satisfied. Looking backwards through time, we would see the darkness of the illusion we have travelled through in the past; and looking forward through time, we would see the uncertainty of the illusion we have to travel through in the future. This is one of the ways to understanding the real nature of life and the universe.

We have, however, taken up the discussion of the nature of life and the universe in the technical way. By watching the present alone it is not possible for us to understand all the details we need to illustrate here. Our choice of a starting point to begin our discussion of the infinite life we live in has to be fixed to cover a wider period of time than the period of the "present" and, therefore, we shall fix a period of a full life-time for the purpose of our examination. The details we learnt in the two previous chapters of this discussion are of particular help to us in proceeding through the next stage of this chapter and, as repetition is avoided as much as possible, we must remember

the facts we have already dealt with in conjunction with the facts we now handle.

In our last chapter, we referred to the manner in which the evolution current of our mind computes the balance of its strength at the end of each beat of mind. The accumulations of the forces of the impressions of purity and defilement are readily available in the evolution current of the mind at every moment of time. The evolution current, in other words, is always prepared with all its stocks packed up to move the mind away, from whatever abode its unit of mind may be in, with the least possible delay. In fact, the evolution current of the mind is ready to move out its unit of mind within a period of one beat of mind.

Stages in Which We Die

The death of a material being involves the separation of its unit of mind from its material body. In the case of normal death due to old age, for instance, it is possible for us to observe that the unit of mind abandons its influence on the physical system in orderly and slow stages. A person dying of old age loses successively his different environment senses, namely, eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch. The last organ to go out of action is the heart and that occurs only at the time of death.

Even in the case of the quickest death imaginable, the order in which the unit of mind releases its grip on the physical body remains the same. The unit of mind abandons its grip first on the environment sense organs of the body and it abandons the grip on the heart last. Thus, the heart is the last organ to die in our physical systems.

At the moment of death, all the forces of the unit of mind, which remain spread throughout the physical system, concentrate in the heart, and a strong wave of vision flashes out. The

maximum strength of the evolution current of the mind gets focussed in this flash of vision.

Vision of Death, and Then Exit

The various forces of impressions of purity and defilement brought forward to the beat of mind which generates this flash of vision appear at their maximum strengths. The forces of the impressions of purity cause this vision to be clear and bright whilst the forces of the impressions of defilement cause the converse effect of making this vision obscured and blurred. The two counterforces react on each other forming a vision of modified range.

This flash of vision is referred to by the Buddha as the exit thought (cuti citta). It is the final thought occurring in each material system and, as such, it is confined only to the last beat of mind vibrating in a material being. The duration of this flash of vision is so short that it is confined only to a few waves of the final beat of mind and its range varies according to the strength gathered into the evolution current of the unit of mind during that time.

Excepting the fully enlightened persons like the Buddhas and Arahats, all material beings develop this vision with greed as a predominating force. Greed, which is a product of ignorance, blurs the strength of this vision but other factors, such as the presence of appreciable deposits of impressions of purity in the evolution current of our mind, assist to produce a clearer vision.

Birth in a Fresh Plane of Existence

The exit vision mixed with the forces of greed invariably rests on a plane of material existence. If the exit thought

were assisted by the forces of purity, a stronger vision reaching and resting on a higher plane of existence would be produced but, if the exit thought were dimmed by the forces of defilements, only a weak vision extending and resting on a lower plane of material existence would be produced.

According to the strength that the evolution current of the mind produces, the exit vision thus rests on an appropriate plane of material existence and, in the meantime, the unit of mind abandons the grip on its old material system. At the end of the cycle of the beat of mind developing the exit vision, the unit of mind migrates completely to the field where the exit vision rested and there it begins to develop a fresh physical system. Thus, the old material system dies, and a new material system is born, but, for the unit of mind itself, the only change amounts to leaving an old home and occupying a new one. The unit of mind which existed in the old material system takes into its new abode all the forces and impressions brought forward in its evolution current. Our mental systems is reborn in its entirety in this manner, and no part of our physical system migrates with it.

Gap Between Death and Rebirth

The old physical system thus without the forces of its unit of mind becomes subjected to the forces of the atmosphere and ultimately dissolves. The new physical system comes into being as a result of the unit of mind concentrating and processing the units of matter gathered from the new environment. We must particularly note that in this process, there does not occur any time lag at all. The passage of the unit of mind from the old physical system to the new physical field does not occur strictly simultaneously, but the two events occur so closely one after the other that we could say that the gap of time is almost non-existent.

Distance is not a barrier to the occurrence of the processes of either the extension of the vision of death or the migration of the unit of the mind. The vision of death extends and the unit of mind migrates so fast that these occur before the lapse of even a point of time. Even if the field of conception to which a unit of mind matures were situated trillions of miles away, the location of the field of conception through the vision of death and the migration of the unit of mind to the new field complete themselves within such short time.

Origin of Material Beings

At the time of death, we experience extreme suffering, and it is in the midst of such suffering that our vision of death flashes out from the heart. Birth is also a period of suffering and, therefore, it is in the midst of suffering that we acquire the fresh field to continue in life.

Both at the time of death and whilst being reborn, we experience the worst conditions of material life and had our strength of vision been penetrating enough, we would avoid at that time coming into material life once more. But ignorance keeps our vision confined to the material planes of existence and, as such, all we could do is to choose the best out of what comes within our vision. We, therefore, stretch our vision to the highest plane of material existence coming within our vision and attach our mind to it. Since it is the force of ignorance that has clouded our vision and kept our vision confined within the material universe, the origin of material life is attributed to ignorance.

The material universe, as we have learnt, is an infinite phenomenon. It is always in an infinity of states of evolution and, therefore, the requisite fields of material evolution to accommodate any number of units of mind are never in short

supply. Room can always be found somewhere or other in the universe and due to the extreme mobility of the units of mind, even if the requisite degree of evolution cannot be found at close range in space, the vision of death would extend infinitely and settle down to a new existence as appropriately as it has the strength to live in.

Foundation of the Physical System

After extending the vision of death and holding on to a new field of material evolution, the unit of mind leaves completely its old physical system and, thereafter, the unit of mind has nothing to do with its old home.

In its new field, however, the unit of mind gets busy with the construction of its new abode. It gathers the necessary raw materials and, without any delay, it commences its building operations. If the unit of mind had developed into appreciable strength, its vision of death would have settled in the physical system of a higher material being and if the unit of mind had developed into sufficient strength to exist in a human system, the death vision would have settled in the physical system of a human being.

We have been born into this world as human beings, because the flash of the vision of death which occurred at the end of our last life, had extended and settled in the material field of human existence. The unit of mind in each of us, having abandoned its last physical system, had moved to and occupied a human system to develop as a human being.

Process of Material Evolution

Before we proceed to discuss the exact manner in which a unit of mind freshly arrived on a field of matter builds its material

body, it is necessary for us to understand the nature of the different material fields which units of mind utilize to build new physical systems.

If the force of a unit of mind seeking new accommodation is extremely low, the death vision can extend only to a field of unprocessed matter. Such a unit of mind would settle down in a unit of abstract heat and as its forces of defilements are reduced, it would begin a process of self-evolution by conditioning the unit of heat. A subsequent unit of mind which is slightly more forceful, would take over the conditioned unit of heat from its first possessor and utilizing its increased forces, and beginning from the point of evolution already reached, it would further evolve the unit of heat.

First Physical System

After this unit of heat gets processed by a large number of beings for a long period of time, it is taken over by a unit of mind which at the early stages has only sufficient strength to occupy a conditioned unit of heat, but which carries the intrinsic forces in its evolution current to cause the fruition of more forces at a later stage. The unit of mind whilst remaining in occupation of the conditioned unit of heat, develops into further strength on the fruition of forces in its evolution current, and, therefore, the unit of mind finds itself with sufficient forces to attract units of abstract water, abstract air, and abstract earth.

When this unit of mind takes into its hold units of the four great abstract elements, *i.e.* abstract heat, abstract water, abstract air, and abstract earth, their reaction on each other causes the formation of an atom. The unit of mind thus beginning to exist in an atom, processes it to meet its requirements.

On the formation of the atom, the subsidiary abstract elements emerge. The five projective elements, *viz.* colour, sound, smell, taste, and touch and the three feature elements, *viz.* birth, existence, and death appear simultaneously with the formation of the atom. The sky element emerges at the same time to penetrate through all the fibres of this atom, and thus to preserve the complete individuality of the different units of elements.

Elaboration of Physical Systems

When this unit of mind completes its span of existence, some other unit of mind which had developed sufficient strength to develop life in a physical structure of equal evolution would take over. After the material system of a being evolves to the stage of an atom, the units of mind develop most of the life elements in active form, and, particularly, the evolution element (jīvita rūpa) sets in, in sufficient strength to provide other units of mind with material forces of reproductive strength.

Sex elements too occur when a being develops into the size of an atom. But not until the physical system develops into considerable volume, do sex differentiations begin to set in. In the most elementary beings, therefore, both sex elements occur in active form. The elements in the physical systems of each of these beings have both sex forces and, hence, each being reproduces its species by itself.

Elementary Life and Reproduction

Even amongst the most elementary life, only the beings developing directly on units of abstract heat are born without the support of parents (opapātika). All the other beings benefit from the material development of parent beings. From the stage of evolution when the first atom is developed, every being

produces both sex elements and their physical systems provide the fields for the offspring to arise.

The units of mind with sufficient strength in their evolution currents to develop into beings of the size of one or more atoms, have also the force necessary to process the other life elements in their physical systems and, therefore, on the solidifying of the atoms in their physical systems, all life elements emerge. The offspring of an elementary being only acquires from the parental physical system a unit of evolution element and the rest of the units of elements required would be absorbed from the substances existing in the environment.

The evolution element (jīvita rūpa), as we learnt in our chapter three, is a life element and exists in the physical systems of all beings in the form of energy. It is produced as a result of the beating of the mind in the physical system and, therefore, it exists in every part of the body of a material being. This element is too subtle to be discernible to our environment sense organs.

Acquisition of Parental Model

The evolution element has the strength to produce an exact model of the physical system in which it exists, and even the smallest imaginable quantity of it carries all the details of the system in which it moves. A unit of mind with the strength of its evolution current sufficiently developed to acquire a parental model to construct its material form, therefore, takes into its hold a unit, which is a very tiny quantity, of the evolution element and along with it, it takes from its atmosphere, a unit of abstract heat and begins to work in producing its new abode. The process of production of its new home, as we illustrated now, consists of absorbing other units of abstract elements and holding them concentrated together and thus building a new atom. The

order in which the various units of abstract elements are assembled, andthe patterns into which they are woven together in forming the new structure, depends on the forces of the evolution elements acquired from the parent system.

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Owing to the forces of the evolution element, the new atom formed assumes the same shape and other characteristics as the material system of the being from which the evolution element was derived. This process goes on from stage to stage and from generation to generation, producing bigger and better material systems at each step.

Sex Development in Higher Beings

As the evolution current of a unit of mind becomes stronger, the material system develops. More units of abstract elements enter it and also better life elements would be produced. As more units of abstract elements enter a physical system, the mass of the physical system also increases and, in this way, the physical system keeps on increasing its mass and strength.

On the physical system attaining a certain strength, the forces of sex set in, in great strength, and a complete change occurs to the process of evolution. In the most elementary life, the substances produced in the physical system are such that both sex elements could exist in active force. In the delicate physical systems of these beings, both male and female sex elements occur in active form together. But when beings become developed, the physical systems elaborate so much that the scope for the development of both sex elements side by side in active strength becomes insufficient and, therefore, only one sex element develops in active strength and the other sex element is forced to remain at dormant strength.

Sex Characteristics

The stronger of the two sex elements develops at full active strength in the higher beings, and the weaker sex element remains undeveloped. This sex process in the higher beings causes severe repercussions all over the physical system and its reactions spread to all the organs, substances, and elements of the body. If a particular life system turns to form male sex elements, his entire physical system develops male characteristics; and, similarly, if a particular life system turns to form female sex elements, her entire physical system develops female characteristics. Sex characteristics, therefore, exist in all the organs, substances, and elements of our physical systems.

The undeveloped sex element causes a binding force all over the physical system and, particularly, the procreative efficiency of the evolution element becomes severely affected. So far as its capacity to provide the other units of mind with the models and foundations for the construction of their new abodes is concerned, the evolution element becomes ineffective. The binding force of the dormant sex element holds the forces of the evolution element so entangled to the physical system, that a foreign unit of mind arriving to settle down would not be able to break up the knot of the dormant sex element in order to take a unit of evolution element to build upon. Since the physical systems of the higher beings is conditioned by a single sex force, the evolution elements developing in them could not be utilized by a new being taking conception.

Neutralizing Sex Bondage

The binding force of the dormant sex element, however, becomes neutralized on the merger of an equally evolved evolution element developed in a physical system carrying the opposite sex element in active form. The merged evolution element

resulting thus, carries both sex elements in equal force as in the case of the physical system of a being in the stage of elementary physical existence. The evolution element is now freed from the binding force of the dormant sex element, and, hence, a fresh material being, with strength to develop according to the forces of the evolution element, could acquire a unit of the force of the merged evolution element and develop itself.

Even in the beings with sex differentiations, those of the lower growths could only provide the merger of the evolution elements and thus prepare the ground for the formation of their type of abodes by other units of mind. Most of the beings of lower growth cannot render any further physical assistance to the occupying units of mind to construct their new structures.

Reproduction of the Higher Beings

Some of the lower beings are so tiny and weak that in the process when physical merger of the evolution element takes place, they die to facilitate the new beings settling down on their evolution elements to develop. As beings advance in evolution, they develop their physical systems more efficiently and the merger of the evolution elements with the two opposite sex forces occurs without causing undue hardship to the parent beings concerned.

In the highest beings such as the human being and the higher animals, the female provides the evolution element in the necessary merged form by the acquisition and merging of a unit of evolution element from the physical system of the male of her species. Unlike in the lower beings who only provide the merged evolution element and very scanty provision, if at all, the female of the higher beings in addition to supplying the evolution element in the necessary liberated form, provides also very appreciable assistance to the new being taking conception by way of supplying shelter and food.

Food and Growth

Before we proceed to examine further details about the nature of sex, it is necessary to comprehend the process of nutrition. In this connection, we must remember the difference between food and the food element (āhāra rūpa), which we have discussed in our chapter on life elements.

Food element is the medium through which each physical system absorbs into its hold additional units of elements. And food is the substance in which the units of abstract elements exist in an easily assimilable form. The food element is a force existing in all beings and its function is to separate or sort out the various units of elements that are needed in the construction of the physical systems of the higher material beings.

When Food is a Necessity

As we have stated, the lower forms of material life take only one unit of abstract heat in the construction of the physical system. Such life remains attached to the unit of abstract heat, so long as the forces of the mind remain unevolved to reach higher life. Beings of this level of existence, do not need the active forces of the food element for they do not possess strength to grasp more units of elements.

A being evolving into higher life cannot dispense with the forces of the food element. The unit of heat, in which the being settles into material life, develops the food element if the unit of mind is adequately powerful. The food element, thus produced, would extract from the environment additional units of abstract heat, abstract air, abstract water, and abstract earth and, ultimately, the physical system would develop to be an atom. If the unit of mind in such a physical system has more force, the food element will absorb further units of the four

great abstract elements and fill its physical system with them. All the units of the four great abstract elements merge together in the formation of the physical structure.

Sources of Food

It is possible for the food element to extract all the additional units of the four great abstract elements direct from nature. But, very often, the abstract elements existing in natural inanimate substances are so tightly gripped in the substances, that the force of the food elements existing in the average being is too weak to extract them. The units of the four great abstract elements entering the physical systems of living beings, however, remain very supple and, therefore, do not consolidate as strongly as they do in natural inanimate substances.

Forces of greed permeate the units of mind as they advance in the strength of their evolution currents. When the units of mind acquire the force to build larger physical systems, forces of greed compel them to absorb as many units of abstract elements as possible by consuming the least energy. The absorption of units of elements direct from natural substances involves great expenditure of the forces of the mind. The mind, therefore, facing the problem of obtaining abstract elements with the least expenditure of its forces, searches its environments for substances where the elements are less bound together.

Suppleness of Animate Matter

The substances existing in living beings do not consolidate as fast as natural inanimate substances for the reason that the unit of mind existing in each physical system preserves the substances within its direct forces in such a state of suppleness as to cause the maximum possible manoeuvrability.

Matter circulating in the physical systems of living beings, therefore, provides the best source of assimilable substances, for the other units of mind to help their food elements to extract fresh units of the four great abstract elements. Living beings with strong forces of mind develop waves of instinct which assist in the location of substances where the units of the four great abstract elements exist in the requisite supple form. In other words, beings with strong evolution currents of mind are attracted towards the formations of substances in supple form, be it in the physical systems of other beings or amongst nature's inanimate substances.

Inanimate substances contain all the four great abstract elements which material beings require in the construction of their physical systems. But only a few of the inanimate substances hold the abstract elements in that degree of suppleness, which is suitable for the units of mind to process and absorb them through the food element. If our unit of mind is adequately strong, we ought to be able to absorb all our nourishment from the four great substances of the universe, namely, earth, water, air, and fire. Except in the case of water, —which maintains a suppleness for the units of mind to process the abstract water to our requirements—the inanimate substances in their raw form are too consolidated for direct assimilation by human beings.

Age of Discovery of Easy Food

Whilst the beings in the lowest levels of physical life take all their requirements of units of the four great abstract elements direct from space or inanimate substances, the beings who rise to higher levels of life become so intelligent that they find easier and more convenient sources of obtaining their requirements of abstract elements. The higher beings profit from the labour of other beings. Each higher being finds that the other beings

have accumulated in their physical systems substances of the suppleness which provides the most convenient source for abstract elements to build his own physical system. This discovery causes the forces of greed to appear with intensity and the desire to acquire the supple substances to build its own physical system is so great, that the higher being, although with sufficient intelligence to understand its requirements, but in ignorance of the nature of the action, takes to the unwholesome task of robbing the supple substances produced in the physical systems of other beings.

Physical strength and mental strength are always interrelated. The fact that a being has great physical strength means that it has a unit of mind of great strength. Similarly, a being with a weak physical system has a weak unit of mind. If, however, a being developing a weak physical system has adequate balances of forces of mind, it would produce mental qualities such as the environment senses and intelligence, which help to offset the physical weakness.

Why the Weak is Food to the Strong

Higher beings, such as human beings and animals, reserve an appreciable proportion of the forces of mind in producing sensations and intelligence, but the lower beings have only faint senses and intelligence, and, because of this reason, they often develop large physical systems. The forest tree, for instance, has only very faint faculties of sensation and its unit of mind has contributed the greater proportion of its forces for the purpose of building its physical system large. Man, on the other hand, develops a comparatively small physical system, and reserves for the purpose of developing sensations and intelligence a predominating proportion of the forces of his mind.

Whatever may be the factor we consider in determining the strength or the weakness of the physical systems of the various

beings in the universe, it is obvious that most beings on this Earth depend on one another for their food supplies. If the beings looking for food are strong, they kill the weaker beings for food; the weaker beings, on the other hand, either wait until the stronger beings die to feed upon their dead bodies or adopt infiltration tactics to attack the stronger beings in life and thus obtain food supplies from the stronger beings' physical systems. Even the strongest physical system, when dead, is weaker than the weakest being and, therefore, the law relating to the procurement of food may generally be stated as the stronger being feeding on the weaker being.

Physical Expansion and Replenishment

The inherent forces of greed, coupled with laziness, are the causes of the evolution of a system of life which depends for the development of its physical system on the physical systems of other beings. Each physical system is subject to the forces of the substances in the environment. The various units of abstract elements we take into our physical systems escape from our physical systems owing to their getting absorbed into the atmosphere of our environment, and the main function of the food element is to supply fresh units of abstract elements to replenish such losses. It has also the task of supplying more units of abstract elements to enable the physical system, in which it occurs, to expand where necessary.

The unit of mind existing in each living being maintains its physical structure at a certain density of matter, which is very often different from the density of matter existing in the atmosphere in which it lives. The human being, for instance, has not only to maintain a definite density of earth, air, water, and heat throughout his physical system but has also to maintain different densities in the different organs of his body. In almost

all instances, these densities differ widely from the density of matter of the atmosphere of air in which he lives.

Elements Pull Towards Homogeneity

All material substances have a tendency to spread out into a homogeneous state of density and, therefore, as we are living in the atmosphere of air, the tendency of our physical systems is to merge into a homogeneous state of density with the air we live in or the earth we walk on. The unit of mind existing in us prevents the matter within our physical systems from spreading out or more matter from outside entering in.

We continue to hold a definite temperature in our physical systems, but this temperature is almost always different from the temperature of the atmosphere. In most parts of the world, including the tropics, the temperature of the atmosphere is less than the temperature of the human physical system. There are also some countries, such as the hot deserts, where the temperature of the atmosphere is higher than the temperature of the human system. In both regions of atmospheric temperatures, the mind of the human being maintains the human physical system at a definite temperature. Whether it is the hot deserts or the polar regions, the human being maintains a definite temperature of body.

Mind Maintains Density of Matter

In maintaining the temperature of the human body, our mind has to resist the atmospheric interferences. In the hot deserts, where sometimes the temperatures rise to 120 degrees F. or more, the human mind has to safeguard its physical system from absorbing more temperature from the atmosphere. In the polar regions, on the other hand, the human mind has to prevent

its physical system from releasing the accumulated units of abstract heat into the atmosphere. The tendency, however, in both instances, is for the atmosphere to establish a temperature equal to it in our physical systems, but it is the unit of mind existing in us that prevents this becoming a reality. When we are dead, however, the unit of mind in each of us no longer exists in the physical system, so that the physical system quickly settles into a temperature equal to the atmosphere, and, ultimately, it becomes a part of the environment.

The unit of mind existing in us cannot prevent the atmospheric interference with our physical systems completely. The atmosphere is persistently attacking the units of abstract elements in the physical system, and the unit of mind is defending the units of abstract elements within its fold with equal persistence. The exertion of the atmosphere is to pull out of the physical system those units of abstract elements which are deficient in the atmosphere and to thrust into the physical system more units of abstract elements of which the atmosphere is in excess.

Atmospheric Interference With Physical Body

In struggling with the atmosphere, the unit of mind is at all times busy, but, however much it may remain alerted, the unit of mind cannot prevent a few units of abstract elements either entering the physical system or escaping from it. Since we are living in an atmosphere which is less dense than our physical systems, the tendency of the atmosphere at all times is to remove from our physical systems the accumulated units of abstract elements. Consequently, a large number of units of abstract elements, particularly, abstract heat, abstract water, and abstract earth, escape from our physical systems.

The elements thus lost have to be quickly replaced if the continuity of the physical system is to be maintained and the

food element keeps at its specialized function of processing from the atmosphere itself more units of abstract elements and despatching them to the physical system to meet its requirements. The food element can only process what is available in its immediate environment and it cannot stretch its forces in searching for more units of abstract elements, just as all that our physical organ, the stomach, can do is to digest such food as is put into it and not go or extend itself in search of food.

Digestive System and Food Element

We must here avoid any confusion regarding our reference to the stomach. Since the various organs of the human body have evolved to perform specialized functions, it is certainly correct to say that the stomach has much affinity to the life substance known as the food element, but we must remember that the food element is not confined to one physical organ alone. We may say that the food element in the most active form gathers into the organs of the digestive system, and that the same food element also spreads into all other organs of the body. Not a single live atom or molecule in our physical systems is without the food element.

No fresh units of abstract elements can enter a live physical system without being subjected to the forces of the food element. The food element is the strainer which filters the units of abstract elements before they enter our physical systems. Whether we take into the physical system fresh units of abstract elements in the normal way through our digestive system, or by some other device such as by applications of processed substances on our body, the food element is the only medium through which any fresh unit of abstract element could enter our live physical systems.

Sensations of Hunger and Thirst

In developed beings, such as human beings and animals, it is the substances admitted into the various organs of the digestive system that provide the largest single source of raw material for the food element to absorb fresh units of abstract elements. Certain quantities of abstract heat, abstract air, and even abstract water enter our physical systems through other organs of our body, but it is through the digestive system in the form of food and drink that we get into our physical systems most of our requirements of abstract elements.

The stomach, being the first organ to receive the substances we eat and drink, and also it being the first organ to be emptied in the process of digestion, the mind's signal for food, namely, the sensations of hunger and thirst, is located in it.

We would remember that amongst the five environment reflective elements, the reflective element of touch extends into every part of our physical systems. The reflective element of touch, therefore, remains extended to all the organs of our digestive system. The various substances of food and drink we take into us keep the organs of our digestive system full almost continuously. As we learnt in our examination of inanimate matter (chapter two), these substances possess the projective elements of touch which, when contacted by the reflective elements of touch present in the organs of our digestive system, produce a sensation of touch. But it is only in our subconscious mind, that we feel the sense of touch springing in the organs of our digestive system and, therefore, the various substances we take in the form of food and drink into our digestive system keep only our subconscious mind stimulated.

Stimulating Touch With Emptiness

We do not actively feel in our conscious mind the sensation of touch existing in many of our digestive organs. The organ

of touch existing in us becomes dormant and virtually inactive when persistently stimulated by the same kind of stimulus. The persistent stimulation of a sense organ causes its active sensation to sink into the realms of subconsciousness, and the reflective element of touch existing in the digestive system is so persistently stimulated by the projective element of touch existing in the food and drink which we keep these organs continuously filled with, that the sensations of touch in the digestive organs become neutralized and thus the digestive organs lose their powers of provoking conscious sensitiveness.

Emptiness, on the other hand, removes the inert sense of fullness occurring in our sub-conscious mind, and it also stimulates the sensitiveness of the reflective organ of touch in the organs of the digestive system. This sensation of emptiness is most noticeably felt in the regions of the stomach because of the fact that of all the digestive organs, the stomach is the first organ to become emptied; and the sense of the absence of the touch stimulus thus springing in the stomach occurs in the form of a pain. The reflection of this pain in our mind is the sensation of hunger we are familiar with.

Search for Food

The process of the mind then springs into full active operation. The sensation of hunger enters the inner forces of the mind in the heart and the heart stimulates the other organs to activity in order to bring about the conditions necessary to find relief from the pangs of hunger. The eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch spring in active strength; visualizations, plans, and schemes, soon follow each other in quick succession. Experiences in the past which remain in the mind in the form of impressions—memory—are revived and, in the meanwhile, the faint sensations occurring in the organs of tongue, nose, and eye soon prompt the heart to know what action is necessary to be performed in

the circumstances. Ideas occur in us, we visualize where food and drink could be had and, ere long, we would be where food and drink are available.

When the touch reflective element in our stomach becomes active as a result of stimulation by emptiness, the sensation of hunger is felt; hunger stimulates the heart into activity, and the heart in turn stimulates the appropriate environment sense organs and, in this manner, a series of visualizations occur in our mind. If suitable food and drink were available to us within easy access, the various forces of our mind would soon turn all our attention towards such directions; the mind, by previous experience, would know that such action is the answer to meet its immediate requirements. Even before we could realize the nature of our visualizations and the intricate process at work within our mind amongst different sense organs, we would be moved to eat and drink to our heart's content, thus relieving ourselves of our hunger.

If food and drink of the type we would like or in the proximity we would wish them to lie, were not available, our task becomes complicated. The pangs of hunger keep our heart continuously active in such circumstances, and the heart in turn keeps the sensual system in activity in its search for means to satisfy its requirements. As the pangs of hunger become keener, the forces of greed in the heart keep increasing too, and this process causes the entire physical and mental systems in us to move into a state of intensive activity.

Greed and Desperation

As the intensity of the hunger increases, the forces of greed would move us into such states of desperation that we may even tend to discard many things which we treasure as noble. Starvation, in other words, kindles the flames of our greed for

self-preservation on the one hand, and causes the fear of self-annihilation on the other.

The greed for self-preservation—and fear of self-annihilation is its offspring—is the greatest single force which moves all the beings in the material universe. No activity of man or any other being in the material universe can escape a certain measure of the element of selfishness. This may be the greed for self-preservation as in the above example, or it may merely be the greed for a position to bear influence over others, which itself is the greed for self-preservation appearing in a slightly remote form of expression. Hunger brings one's selfishness into its most acute intensity and, very often, beings are driven into the extremities of desperation by its sting.

How Food Problems Begin in Evolution

Air and water are the only substances available to us in this world in a form fit for direct assimilation. Air and water, therefore, do not confront us with many problems. But "food", *i.e.* both liquid and solid, we gather from the physical systems of other living organisms, does give us a great deal of worry. This food problem does not exist in some of the other planets in the universe, such as the worlds of the Devas. We have to consider here the manner in which the food problems have arisen on this Earth and also whether it is possible to effect any change in our position of mutual dependency of the various beings living on this Earth for food.

The pattern of evolution of the physical systems in all beings of lower levels is such that independent existence is almost impossible. Excepting those beings whose physical systems consist of only a single unit of abstract heat, all other beings look to one another to supply substances in processed form to construct their own physical structures. Laziness and ignorance

are the first causes which have created this situation, but, ultimately, it is the greed for self-preservation that has proved the greatest contributory factor.

Exploration and Experiment

All beings could have developed their physical systems from units of abstract elements obtained direct from inanimate substances. But most of the inanimate substances are so formed that the units of abstract elements are difficult to be extracted by the forces of food element the lower beings have evolved. As beings advance in the evolution of their life, the spirit of exploration and the desire for experiment become qualities inborn with them. When the physical system is in need of more units of abstract elements and the urge to find these elements is signalled to the mind by the sensations of hunger generated in the stomach, the mind, in co-operation with the sense organs, strives to its utmost to find new abstract elements. Although units of abstract water could be had without much difficulty from the common substance known to us as water, units of other elements such as abstract earth, abstract heat, and even abstract air are not so easily assimilable directly from the common inanimate substances.

In very low forms of life, even by going through great difficulty the units of mind process the inanimate substances and obtain all their requirements of units of abstract elements from them. The beings in the lowest depths of life, therefore, are independent of other beings and create their physical systems, however tiny they may be, by independent self-effort. The material beings of this class do not develop to more than a few atoms and their presence could be detected by our environment sense organs, provided, of course, we use instruments which are sufficiently sensitive.

Products of Others' Labour

Food becomes a major problem to all beings who evolve into physical life above the levels of elementary existence and it remains a major problem to all material beings up to the level of human beings. As the beings achieve a strength of mind to evolve into material life above the levels of elementary existence, they become so developed in instinct and intelligence as to be explorers and discoverers. The beings while evolving above elementary material life, look for easier methods of extracting units of abstract elements and they soon discover that the abstract elements packed into the living organisms of other beings are much easier to be extracted and assimilated than the abstract elements existing in inanimate substances.

Struggling in their pangs of greed and fear, these beings experiment and find that it is very fruitful for beings who are superior in strength to appropriate the substances produced in the physical systems of less strong beings. They also discover that the stronger of them could overwhelm the weaker beings and thus rob the weaker beings of their physical structures by killing them. The weaker beings who are unable to kill their food would wait until the stronger beings shed their physical structures upon death. They would then absorb into their physical systems the abstract elements from the supple substances of the dead bodies left over.

Lazy Habits and Inefficient Physique

The beings thus in evolution, after long lapse of time, develop such lazy habits and inefficient physical structures, that they become compelled to depend for some of the basic requirements of abstract elements on the substances produced by other beings. Pangs of hunger, and the consequent greed for self-preservation and fear of self-annihilation often would overwhelm these beings

and, in their states of desperation, they resort to killing one another and, in this manner, the habit of killing establishes itself as a necessary evil. A habit once formed cannot be easily got rid of, and since living beings could more readily be found than dead ones, the necessity to kill the weaker beings confronts the stronger beings, so often that, in their moments of desperation, they yield and, ultimately, it matures into a fundamental requirement in life.

As the beings of the universe become more dependent on the substances produced in the physical systems of other beings, the evolution element grows differently from its basic pattern. The evolution element deviates from its course when beings find more and more supple substances from the physical structures of other beings and, after considerable lapse of time, the pattern of the organs the evolution element produces on each physical system would have only the strength for the purpose of assimilating abstract elements from substances obtained from the physical systems of other beings. The higher material beings living on this Earth have deviated so much in their growths of evolution element that they cannot produce physical systems capable of assimilating all the requirements of abstract elements direct from nature.

Slow Evolution Into Dependency

For millions of years, our forefathers have utilized the substances produced in the physical systems of other beings in building their physical systems. This process has influenced the formation and flow of the evolution element which we have inherited and, therefore, it controls the present and future generations of our physical self. It is not possible for us to change all at once a process which has taken millions of years to evolve and, therefore, it is the hard lot of the human being to be dependent on other beings, at least

partially, in order to maintain his physical self. Our task as the most developed beings on this Earth is to see that this dependence causes the least injury to the other beings.

Thus, all material beings depend on food for the development and preservation of their physical systems. And in the case of material life above the level of elementary existence up to, and including, the human being, all life is dependent on the substances produced in the physical systems of other material beings. To material life which depends on the substances developed in other beings, food is a problem, for animate substances are limited in supply and, therefore, scarcities are bound to occur in regular alternative spells. When scarcities do occur—and they occur frequently in all planes of dependent existence—the inner forces of greed and fear appear in their most intensive form and force the various beings into committing different types of cruelty, injustice, and other forms of selfishness.

Beings Exist for Their Own Sake

We must be very cautious here, because it is most dangerous ground over which we have now to tread. We cannot conceal the fact that we, human beings, are bogged deeply in the mire of dependent existence. We depend for the purpose of sustaining our life on various forms of organic substances as food. In extracting every such substance, we become guilty of robbery or theft. Life would be impossible to the human being without causing injury to the other beings and, very often, he is confronted with the necessity to kill. Although the necessity to kill exists, it does not create a justification to kill; no form of killing is justifiable.

The position appears intolerable when we reflect on the fact that both animals and plants are included amongst the beings circulating in the universe. Even animals and plants have their

individualistic character and their craving to continue in their forms of life is as persistent as in human beings. Neither animals nor plants exist for the sake of man; they exist for their own sake.

Utilizing Organic Substances

When a plant produces a seed, it is not the intention of the plant to offer it to man so that he may feed upon it; the purpose for which a plant produces a seed is in order that the plant may continue its species just in the same manner as a human parent may bring up a child. In like manner, the animals do not produce their bodily self in order to offer it to man to be utilized for his needs. The cow produces milk to feed its calf, and it is far from the object of the cow to supply its milk for us to drink. The stag and the hare do not develop their muscles in order to provide man with their meat; it is for their own purposes that they develop themselves.

Every form of organic substance that man collects for the purpose of his food, therefore, is unjustly obtained, much against the will of the legitimate producers of these organic substances. Man, however, justifies his actions by such methods as enlisting various arguments. These arguments are sometimes fair and reasonable. We may, for instance, argue that we assisted the plant to grow and, therefore, we are entitled to receive and appropriate the excess seeds produced. We may also claim that we looked after the cow and tended it; we, therefore, argue that we have a right to receive a little milk in compensation. This type of argument is reasonable, —provided, of course, we do not carry it too far. We may, thus, justify our actions to some extent. We have, after all, helped these beings in their existence and, it should be reasonable for us to obtain something in return. There is thus no objection to the appropriation of organic substances in this manner.

Killing is Unwholesome

Looking at this problem from another angle, we may say that appropriation of organic substances developed in plant life involves us only in very negligible defilements. This is because the plants develop only very faint sensations and, therefore, very little cruelty is involved in extracting them for our use. But the same cannot be said of appropriating organic substances from the members of the animal kingdom. Excepting in the case of instances, such as obtaining a reasonable quantity of milk from a cow, every attempt to obtain substances from an animal, involves an appreciable measure of cruelty to the being concerned. Animals can feel pain and, therefore, they suffer as much as we do when they are hurt; their desire to remain in life is as keen as ours; and in evolution, animals are only a few steps below human beings. These factors make the destruction of animal life even for the purpose of the food of human beings an act of cruelty and, as such, causes defilements in the evolution current of our mind.

Plant life, however, is far below the human being in the degree of evolution and, since plants have not developed fully the faculties of the various sensations, whatever injury is done to a plant is felt very little by them. Injury to plants, therefore, does not cause any appreciable defilements and it could be said that, generally, appropriating plant life for food is less unwholesome and that killing animal life even for food is very unwholesome. Since the human organic system has evolved in such a manner as to be able to assimilate a wide range of different substances, man has the opportunity to select the fields on which to feed. Acting with wisdom, we have the opportunity to live a life free from cruelty to other beings.

Satisfying the Basic Wants

When substances which the intelligent beings utilize for the purpose of replenishing and building their physical systems

are not available in unlimited abundance, a state of rivalry and competition develops. Such conditions often force the beings who are in urgent need of food substances into states of violent struggle. The rivalry may take the form of causing more production by way of extracting or manufacturing. The productive capacity, however, is limited to the availability of raw materials that could be processed to meet requirements. We should remember, that the elements are not producible and where substances are produced, the abstract elements have to be put together for the purpose.

We depend to a great extent on the supplies of physical systems of other higher beings as raw materials for production of our physical systems; and the other higher beings depend for their physical existence on the physical systems of lesser beings, whilst the lesser beings depend on beings still less evolved, or the remains of the higher beings, for their physical existence. Ultimately, therefore, the number and size of the higher beings are linked to the availability of the other higher beings; and the supply of the other higher beings, in turn, is linked to the supply of the lesser beings. Any increase in the availability of food ultimately rests in our ability to harness into animate physical systems more units of abstract elements from inanimate substances; but this prospect does not seem very bright because there exists the process of circulation of elements, which is a persistent struggle for inanimate substances ranging amongst the planets and stars.

Limitations of Supply

If we wish to increase our production of food, we must in the first instance increase the incidence of the lesser beings. For a carnivorous being to obtain more meat, for instance, there must be an increase in the number and size of the animals whose flesh it eats. For the increase of the number and size of animals, whose

flesh carnivorous beings eat, to occur, there must be an increase in the number and size of plant life, such as grass, on which such animals depend for their existence. The increase in the number and size of plants would confront the plant community with the problems of food for the plants and the space of land required for the plants to spread out. The meat supply of the carnivorous being, in the end, ceases to increase when the point of exhaustion of plant and space supply is reached.

There is a definite measure of restriction to the growth of life in this Earth. We have settled on this Earth at a certain equilibrium and this equilibrium has settled during the course of long periods of material evolution. This Earth is settled to its equilibrium with a definite measure of mental and material force and the other planets and stars in the neighbourhood of the Earth in the universe, do not allow the material force of the Earth to increase or decrease beyond the limits of its settled equilibrium.

Material Support for Mental Forces

We have in this Earth a certain volume of substances, and only a very minute variation of this volume could be effected by the activity of the various beings living on it. As we have learnt in this chapter previously, the volume of force of mind varies from being to being. Higher beings have more force of mind and the lower beings have less force of mind.

The physical or material strength of this Earth can only support a certain definite strength of volume of mental force. So that, the greater the number of higher beings living on this Earth, the lesser the number of lower beings in it would become. In order to illustrate this clearly, we may say that if 10 per cent. of the material force of this Earth is utilized by the higher beings for their existence, the balance 90 per cent. of the material force

of the Earth would be utilized by the lower beings. If the higher beings are occupying 25 per cent., the lower beings occupy the balance 75 per cent., and, in this way, the proportion of the lower beings reduces according to the increase of the higher beings.

War Between Lower Beings and Higher Beings

Existence of the lower beings is essential for the existence of the higher beings and, therefore, when the point is reached where the lower beings are insufficient to meet the demand of the higher beings, the increase of the higher beings ceases. The lower beings and the higher beings would not remain idle at this point; each class would strive to its utmost to increase its stock and, in due course, the lower beings attack and kill the higher beings for food and thus reduce the force of their grip on the Earth; the lower beings thereupon increase in their numbers.

The lower beings thus becoming more numerous, the higher beings consume them. As a result, the higher beings again grow up to the point when lower life is scarce. This pendulum swings back to the point when the higher beings become scarce and the lower beings become more numerous. The process repeats itself from the point when the higher beings become more numerous and the lower beings become less numerous, to the point when the lower beings become more numerous and the higher beings become less numerous. Throughout this process, a seesaw battle rages continuously amongst the lower beings and the higher beings existing in this Earth.

Pressure of Material Existence

The sensation of hunger forces the higher beings on this Earth to attack their lower brethren and in the process the higher

beings employ all possible ingenuity and cunning. The evolution of this Earth and the beings residing on it is such that it is impossible for the higher life to exist without appropriating the products of the lesser beings' labour. We cannot build a house normally without cutting down a number of plants and driving out a number of other beings from their established homes. We cannot exist a day without causing the cessation of the existence of a number of lesser beings; for the existence of each of us for a day, other beings sacrifice their lives by the thousands, hundreds of thousand, and even millions.

The higher beings do not possess in this battle of self-preservation, the sole monopoly of ingenuity and cunning. The lower beings are also bringing into battle equal, and sometimes superior, cleverness; and the lower beings often meet the higher being at his very home. From the life of the intestinal worms and the microscopic life existing within us, to the various forms of life existing in the air, water, and earth we use, the lower beings are exerting pressure on our physical systems. The lower and the higher forms of life are so well locked up in battle, each pressing down the other, and their strengths so well balanced, that victories and defeats almost alternate with each other.

Weaklings' Offensive Tactics

Neither party to this battle would yield. The higher being fights his battle as fiercely as the lower being, and, conversely, the lower being fights its battle equally fiercely. The force of the urge for self-preservation keeps both factions geared into activity at this incessant battle. The lower beings are often at an advantage because of their numerical superiority, but the higher beings offset this by employing their higher intellectual capacity. Both higher beings and lower beings are equally anxious to continue in life, and, therefore, the effort they bring

to bear at each prospect of danger to life is the maximum force that they have the strength to command.

Hunger is a danger signal stimulating the greed for self-preservation and, food being the obvious remedy to obviate this danger, each being in this Earth looks towards the others for supplies. The stronger beings prey on the weaker beings; but there are also beings who are too small to be preyed upon, and these beings prey on the stronger beings. Whilst we eat the fruits of plants and the flesh of animals in the form of food, the intestinal worms and microbes living within us eat up our physical systems as their food.

Functions of Clothing and Shelter

The most peculiar necessity of the human being is clothing, and man's need for shelter is shared only by a few other beings. We would notice that, in real effect, both clothing and shelter serve the same purpose as food. Clothing and shelter are utilized by us for the purpose of self-preservation: clothing prevents the elements of our physical systems from migrating out too rapidly or, conversely, from outside elements from migrating into our physical systems; and shelter, too, prevents the disturbance caused to our physical systems by the effects of the weather of the environment. And since the function of food is also to preserve the continuity of the elements of each physical system at their due proportions, we may consider food, clothing, and shelter as performing the same function.

In food and clothing, man is almost solely dependent on the substances produced in the physical systems of other beings. These substances are not available in unlimited quantities; nor are these substances capable of being produced in unlimited quantities. Limitation of supplies of these basic necessities prevents the achievement of an equality of distribution.

Greed for Self-Preservation

The accumulation of scarce materials by the more intelligent beings aggravates the position of general scarcity, for the other beings who need the same material have to go without the amount accumulated by the more intelligent beings. To those who accumulate, a measure of satisfaction accrues, but to those whose supplies are depleted, the greed for self-preservation and the fear of self-annihilation appear with increased intensity.

No force in the universe is as strong enough to move a being to action as the greed for self-preservation, and the force of the fear of self-annihilation which springs along with it supports it with further force to strengthen it. When possessed by these instincts, the beings sink into such depths in their despair, that they would justify to themselves the commission of any action in their efforts to remove their dangers. In the weaker beings, and even in the higher beings with weaker minds, all traits of justice, goodwill, and virtue itself are liable to sink very low in such circumstances.

Mind's Force of Gravitation

We would remember our mentioning that each being in the universe is a separate and independent gravitational unit. This fact would become obvious to us if we examine the behaviour of our own self. We are living in the gravitational system of the Earth but it is only the matter of which we are composed that is subject to its control. Our mind is not subject to the control of the gravitational force of this Earth.

The gravitational force of our mind is more powerful than the gravitational forces of matter. We could move about the weight of our bodily systems without the aid of any mechanical device and balance ourselves over the surface of this Earth

because we have the support of the gravitational force of our mind. The centre of gravity of our physical systems is the heart and, therefore, all the material forces springing in our physical systems transfer their weight on to the heart.

When we are hungry and in need of food, the entire weight of the material force thus produced comes to rest in the heart. The heart kindles the forces of the environment sense organs and, with their co-operation, the heart determines ways and means to remove the material weight of hunger from its regions as soon as possible.

The weight of our physical systems falls in the first instance on our heart and it is only ultimately that the gravitational force of the Earth is brought to bear. The occurrence of the physical gravitational systems such as the gravitational fields of planets and stars is dependent on the variations of the mental gravitational systems developed in the mental system of each of the material beings living in the universe. This fact receives further attention at a later stage of this chapter.

Burden of the Force of Sex

Hunger or any other signal of danger to the physical system invariably brings into the heart the burden of greed for self-preservation and, in the same way, the collective force of the sex elements which develop into active force in each being brings its total weight on the heart.

Next in persistence to the urge for self-preservation, the weight of the sex elements rests heavily on the heart. Hunger is the pain resulting from the mind's need to assemble more units of matter into the physical system it builds. But the weight of sex force occurs as a result of the forces of matter to find homogeneous existence.

The material structures developing in the higher beings evolve, as we have studied, with only one of the two sex elements in active force. The elements thus developed remain bound together in the pattern of male or female, according to the weight of the forces of sex impressions remaining in deposit in the evolution current of our mind. The forces of matter existing in our physical systems agitate constantly to release themselves from their bondage to a single sex pattern. This force of sex springing in all the atoms and molecules of our bodily self ultimately comes to rest in the heart, and the heart stimulates the various sensations causing us mental and bodily activity.

In the physical systems of the beings in elementary existence, such as the physical systems of beings developing into only a few atoms, this force culminates the union of the males and females in death to one or both parties; but in all other beings—*i.e.* almost all the beings coming within our normal observation—the physical systems have evolved adequately to facilitate specialized functioning, and to provide concentrations of different elements at states of intensive activity.

Continuation of the Species

The material weight of the sex element in the higher beings kindles their hearts and, although it moves their physical systems in the same manner as the physical systems of the beings in elementary existence, it only creates the requisite conditions for the merger of the active male sex elements with the active female sex elements. This facilitates the release of the full forces of the evolution element, thus forming the fields where the new beings of the same species take conception.

Sex force is essentially a material urge brought about by the attraction of each sex element to find communion with the opposite sex element, but, in its latter stages, it develops into a

sense of self-preservation when the offspring is viewed as the continuation of self. The offspring, however, is the continuation of one's material self subject to variations brought about by the forces of evolution, but it is in no way a continuation of one's mental self. The mind of the offspring is entirely distinct and quite unconnected with the mind of either of the parents. Whatever influence the parents may bring to bear on the mind of the offspring, it is as foreign to the offspring as the influence brought to bear by a teacher on his pupils.

Beings Born in Material Life

In our fifth chapter, we learnt that when each unit of mind is completely cleansed of all traits of defilement, a full charge of maximum purity results. The absence of any defilement in a unit of mind makes any further growths of defilement impossible, for the presence of a deposit of at least a tinge of defilement is essential for the formation of fresh impressions of defilement. When defilements are completely eliminated and the possibility of any further defilement being formed thus removed from it, the unit of mind remains in the highest state of development carrying the utmost charges of the forces of purity. Such units of mind commence a supreme existence of eternal bliss. The units of mind attaining this state of evolution do not need any shelter of matter, nor has matter, being inferior, the force to exist in the presence of such immeasurable power.

The units of mind which still carry burdens of defilement are so weak that the units of the elements of matter find it possible to gather around them. The elements combine, mix, and solidify around the units of mind to form the various units of life. The deposits of the impressions of greed and hatred which are fed by the forces of ignorance afford all the requisite assistance for the formation of material life. These formations, however,

are conditioned by the opposite forces, namely, the forces of purity which are present in different proportions in the units of mind, and, hence, the full forces of the growths of defilements of greed and hatred are subjected to restriction.

The type and the manner of the combinations of the elements vary according to the accumulations of the forces of impressions of defilement and purity carried by each unit of mind. Excepting those units of mind which have reached the highest state of purity of mind, such as is achieved by the Buddhas and Arahats, all the units of mind are in an infinity of states of evolution strength and, because of the presence of such infinity of states of evolution strength, there exist beings in an infinity of states of evolution.

Attributes of Selfishness

The greed for self-preservation is a universal urge common to all material beings. This is a current of mind kept in active force by the limitations of vision imposed by the clouds of obstruction formed by the forces of the current of ignorance. The effects of ignorance condition the life of all material beings and hence the range of vision of all material beings is limited to very narrow extents. The range of vision of man and all other material beings below him is limited to his immediate neighbourhood. On the average, this vision is confined to the various material affairs of this life only.

Our strength of vision to understand correctly the conditions of other planets and stars, or to understand our past and future lives is so limited that we tend to lose interest in them. We, therefore, concentrate all our attention on this Earth, and this life. In these circumstances we know only of this Earth and this life, and we naturally become attached to this Earth and this life—for how could we develop attachment towards things we do not know?

If we cannot understand the existence of past lives, we cannot visualize the possibility of future lives; and, on the other hand, if we could remember our past lives, the existence of future lives would become quite obvious. Understanding the one helps to understand the other. But our strength of vision is too clouded to revive our memory of the experiences in our past lives, with the result that we are not in a position to understand either past lives or future lives. Our vision, however, is strong enough to make us remember the experiences of the present life in this world and such memory makes us convinced of the details of the present life and the present world as realities. Our lack of memory to revive the experiences of our past lives, causes us to doubt the truth about past lives and, consequently, we also doubt the truth about future lives.

Our knowledge being thus limited to the present life, we become so attached to it that we strive to preserve it frantically. If we could remember the experiences of our past lives, we would have benefitted to a great extent, for we would then be able to see life in this world to be as temporary as all our past lives; and our attachment towards self would also be appreciably reduced if we could understand convincingly that life which ends upon death invariably begins afresh somewhere or other in the universe. We would then not be so afraid to die. The desire under such conditions would tend to be to achieve a higher life in the future. And such ambition is beneficial because it would promote in us good thoughts and good deeds, as it is only by such action that we could gather the strength necessary to be born in higher life in the future.

Sense of Limited Living

Knowledge of past lives and the ability to visualize the prospect of future lives help us appreciably to reduce our attachment to our present life and thus we could bring our greed for self-

preservation within safe limits. When we are actuated by the belief that our present life is a closed apartment without any outer continuity of past or future, the sense of greed for self-preservation becomes extremely acute and, at whatever cost, whether by fair means or foul means, we would struggle to our utmost to maintain it for the maximum period of time. Possessed by such selfishness, we are liable to be moved to commit acts indiscriminately, often bringing ourselves to commit acts of defilement.

There are lessons to learn from our knowledge of past lives; for instance, we would be able to ascribe the reasons for the various defects of our present life, but the knowledge of the details of past lives would complicate our present life if we act on such knowledge without restraint. If, for instance, we were aware of our past lives and, in the meantime, had come to know of our enemies of our past lives, or if we were to locate the wealth which may have belonged to us in a past life, we are likely to suffer by generating within us various feelings of hatred and greed. A person who is able to experience past lives, however, is so developed in mind that he would not become thus hateful or greedy.

Migration of the Units of Mind

The forces of our mind, whilst remaining within our bodily self, remain engaged in the different tasks of maintaining the physical and sensual self. Its energy, if not developed by methods of mind exercise (bhāvanā), is not sufficient for it to be extended to focus vision on past lives. But at the end of the present life, when the entire energy of the mind gets concentrated in the heart, the force becomes adequate to extend the vision outside in order to locate its next plane of existence. The forces of greed for self-preservation abandon their grip on the

physical system as soon as the vision rests on a new field of existence. At the new field, the forces of greed for self-preservation attach the vision to it so thoroughly that they force the transition of the unit of mind in its entirety to the new field.

The existence of our present life is maintained by the forces of craving for self-preservation; and the same craving for self-preservation assumes a new role when the present life is at end. It causes the flashes of death vision and keeps the vision attached to the new material field located, until it causes the entire unit of mind to migrate and revive.

Conception

On the migration of the unit of mind to the new material field being accomplished, the vision of death ebbs. The forces of the mind now turn all their energy towards the formation of the new material system. The forces of the unit of mind begin to build on its new field and the conception of a fresh material being takes place.

The gap of time between death and the fresh birth is infinitely small and the whole process of death vision takes only the duration of a few waves of a beat of mind. The combination of the unit of mind, which migrates into the new field upon death, with the elements of the new field occurs within the first wave of the repetition of the mind—this is an infinitesimal fraction of time which is about 51 billionth part of the duration of a flash of lightning. The event when a migrated unit of mind combines with the elements in a new field is, for the purpose of this study, conception. Conception, therefore, occurs within a very short period of time and is always preceded by an extremely swift vision and an equally swift migration of an external unit of mind.

In Other Planets and Stars

When we considered the features of the mind, we mentioned that a unit of mind remains confined within the physical self of each living being. The unit of mind comes into confinement within each material system at conception and it escapes from such confinement only at death, *i.e.* after extending the vision of death and migrating into a new field. Each unit of mind builds its physical structure from a very scanty base and, as such, it has to utilize all its forces during the early stages. After the physical system thus built reaches its end, the unit of mind migrates, leaving behind its old structure, and immediately begins to construct afresh a material structure for its next span of existence. This process continues without an end in the material universe.

Matter in the universe is in an infinity of states of evolution and so are the infinity of units of mind circulating in the universe. In this connection it is necessary to understand that the process of evolution is not confined to this Earth and the beings living on this Earth. Evolution takes place in all the other planets and stars. Matter in the other planets and stars evolve and, in the same way, the beings in the other planets and stars also evolve. We have, therefore, to consider the whole infinite material universe as one unit of existence in order to enable us to deduce correctly the exact nature of the universe we live in.

Process of Material Evolution

We have stated that the units of matter have no strength to evolve. A unit of abstract heat, for instance, does not either increase or decrease its force even after the lapse of billions of years of time. The other units of abstract elements also behave similarly. They cannot increase their strengths nor can they decrease them. By material evolution, therefore, we must not

understand that the forces of the units of abstract elements vary their character owing to the lapse of time.

Abstract units of elements, however, cause the formation of substances and the nature of substances varies according to the proportion in which the units of abstract elements combine in them. What material evolution we can observe on this Earth or the other planets and stars, is the evolution of the various substances and not the evolution of the abstract elements. We must also remember here that substances are concentrations of units of the four great abstract elements which have mixed in different proportions.

Mind Evolves Matter

Unlike the units of abstract elements, the units of mind are subject to evolution. The units of mind evolve according to the forces of impressions of purity accumulated in them and retrogress according to the forces of the impressions of defilement accumulated in them. The strength of the units of abstract elements never varies even after the lapse of any length of time, but the strengths of the units of mind never remain the same even for two consecutive points of time. The strength of the units of mind varies widely after a long lapse of time and the combined strength of the different units of mind is also subject to the same process of variation. This process of variation causes the evolution of the material universe, and we shall discuss here briefly the manner in which the evolution of the units of mind causes the evolution of the material substances of the universe.

Units of elementary life beginning existence in units of abstract heat develop according to their strength certain forces of life elements in their systems. On the base of these life elements other beings develop until the point when the higher beings such as man and the higher animals evolve with all the 28 different

elements of the universe developed in highly concentrated active formation.

The part played by the various beings of the universe in the evolution of the material universe consists of the action of the units of mind in the formation of concentrations of units of abstract elements and thus disturbing the formation of the material equilibrium of homogeneity of space. We have mentioned that the inherent tendency of the units of abstract matter is to disperse into space and establish a uniform density, but the units of mind prevent this state of homogeneity from occurring.

Disturbing the Equilibrium

The units of mind, as they evolve into strength, concentrate in their hold such large numbers of units of abstract matter as to cause a density far in excess of the uniform density which the abstract elements would by themselves establish. Furthermore, the units of mind gather into their hold more units of one kind of abstract elements and less of another kind of abstract elements. An infinite number of beings repeating this process at infinite points of space causes the disturbance of the equilibrium of uniform density of the material universe. The different beings, according to the strength of evolution existing in each of their minds, thus begin to concentrate matter in the formation of their physical systems, and the reaction of these concentrations causes the formation of inanimate substances, which in course of time develop into planets and stars.

As beings advance in the strength of evolution of their units of mind, they gather more units of abstract elements, and also process the units of abstract matter taken within their hold into better substances. The reaction of the beings producing better substances and thus evolving their physical structures, is the

formation of better inanimate substances around them. We must not, however, isolate a single being for the purpose of our examination and try to trace the effect he produces in the evolution of the whole material universe, for the part he plays in it may be so insignificant that it may not be fully amenable to observation. We must, therefore, consider the effect produced on the whole universe by all the infinity of beings existing in it, and by such consideration only should we attempt to understand this process.

Fields for Conception are Adequate

The beings in the universe are in different states of strength in the evolution of their minds. And depending on the degree of strength of the evolution of mind, each being produces material substances and life elements in its physical system. This process is occurring at an infinity of places all over the universe and, therefore, the material universe remains evolving into different states at different places.

The higher beings, such as man and the higher animals, settling into material existence in this world, do not begin the formation of their material body and the production of their life elements direct from the units of inanimate abstract matter. Life in the case of the higher beings, begins in a unit of abstract heat as in the case of elementary life, but the unit of mind simultaneously acquires into its hold the properties of matter in as high a state of evolution as it has the strength to hold and commence its work from. At death, when the vision of death extends out, the beings who are with adequate accumulations of evolution force in their minds to develop into higher life become attracted to and settle at a point of material evolution where the appropriate conditions for their development could be obtained.

There is always available an adequacy of fields in different states of evolution to meet the demand of the units of mind in any

station of life. Beings extending their vision towards achieving material conception can always find a suitable field. In the case of the units of mind which are still at the lowest levels of strength of evolution, the units of abstract heat provide them with the requisite ground; and in the case of higher life, the persistency of the force of sex existing in higher beings ensures the provision of a sufficiency of fields of conception.

Building the First Atom of Life

We have said that the process of conception is extremely swift; it occurs within the duration of the first wave of mind which is about 51 billionth part of the duration of a flash of lightning. Within this short period, the formation of the first atom of life also completes itself. All the ingredients of the universe join in the combination of the first atom of conception, but only a few of the ingredients appear in active strength in the first atom and the rest remain in dormant strength, but, after due lapse of time, they too become developed.

The all pervading ingredient mixing into the first atom of life, of course, is the unit of mind. The four abstract elements, namely, abstract earth, abstract water, abstract air, and abstract heat lay the foundation of this atom. The remaining nine secondary elements of inanimate matter quickly settle. Simultaneously with these, the atom, in the case of the higher beings, acquires the different elements of the animate universe; and, if the beings are settling into non-parental conception, they begin to develop the various animate elements by their own strength of mind.

In higher beings, such as the human being and the higher animals, the animate elements that develop into active strength simultaneously with the development of the conception atom are (1) the evolution element (jīvitindriya rūpa), (2) the two

sex elements (bhāva rūpa), (3) the heart reflective element (hadaya vattu rūpa), and (4) the food element (āhāra rūpa). And of the inanimate elements, abstract heat (tejo dhātu) enters the framework of the atom before all other inanimate elements.

The unit of mind thus brings together all the ingredients necessary for its first atom. The elements react on each other and ultimately coil themselves within each other and thus the construction of the first atom becomes completed. This atom develops around the unit of mind and, therefore, the unit of mind continues to remain within it, turning in its independent cycle of beats of mind.

Development of the Physical Being

During the course of the first beat of mind following conception, the first atom of the material body becomes completely assembled and solidified. At the beginning of each subsequent beat of the unit of mind, more elements are absorbed into this atom. The unit of mind thus builds its material system larger and larger, and as it enlarges, the forces of the animate elements of the conception atom emerge to regulate its structure.

The units of animate elements settling in active strength in the formation of the conception atom begin to perform their respective functions, and, particularly, the unit of abstract heat and the unit of food element become very industrious. The food element absorbs food and fuel from the environment, and the abstract heat regulates circulation and growth. The other active elements too join with these forces; the two sex elements and the evolution element provide the scheme and mould for its growth, and the heart, which is the first organ to be developed, begins to link together and control the entire structure.

When the main task is over, and after the foundation of the structure is stably laid and the shape of organs of the physical

structure has been determined, the rest of the elements begin to emerge into maturity. The environment reflective elements, *i.e.* eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch, begin to form, it is said, about 70 days after the date of the formation of the atom of conception, in the case of the human being. The being thus formed, on further maturity, sheds even its physical dependence on the parent being for existence and finally evolves into a material system similar to the material system in which it settled into conception, but with variations of slight degree.

Parental Assistance to the Offspring

Strictly speaking we cannot say that we grow a plant; we only can assist the plant to grow by providing the various conditions necessary for its growth. Similarly, a mother can only assist her child to grow; the mother cannot grow the child. The part played by the mother even at conception is limited only to assisting the new being to develop; and in the physical development of the new being itself, the mother does not and cannot participate.

At conception, the mother provides the new being with (1) the life elements, (2) food, and (3) shelter. Neither the mother, nor the father, nor both of them together can provide the unit of mind essential for the growth of the new being. The unit of mind that settles in the field of conception, appears from a foreign source, having migrated invariably from a previous existence.

The unit of mind thus settling, builds itself by profiting from whatever assistance it may receive from the parents; no outsider can build the physical structure for any unit of mind. The foreign unit of mind may have migrated from near, or from far; and from where, exactly, only persons with penetrating vision, such as the Buddhas and Arahats, can tell.

Dual Role of Abstract Elements

We may now refer to the part played by the units of abstract heat in the formation of our physical self. As in every physical phenomenon in the universe, abstract heat plays a dual part in the development of the physical systems of material beings. During the initial stages of growth, *i.e.* from the formation of the conception atom to the state of youth, abstract heat assists in the development of the physical system. But, thereafter, the same abstract heat causes old age and decay. The action of abstract heat on the physical body may be likened to the effect of heat on the paste of flour in the baking oven. The heat of the oven bakes the loaf of bread, but if the loaf of bread were not removed in time, the same heat would burn the loaf of bread it baked. Similarly, abstract heat bakes us into youthfulness and maturity, and being unable to extricate ourselves from the influence of the abstract heat, the abstract heat also makes us decay and burns us to death.

No material object or substance can develop without abstract heat; and no material being can develop its physique without utilizing abstract heat. Abstract heat is very mobile; it circulates fast and wide. Every substance and every material being utilizes abstract heat, and once abstract heat is utilized, its influence on the material system can never be checked. All material objects become destroyed either by an excess of abstract heat or by a deficiency of it, and no amount of effort can produce a stability of the proportion of abstract heat in any material object or substance; hence no material object or substance in the universe could remain constant. Abstract heat assists us in developing our material body and, therefore, it is a good servant; but abstract heat also causes disaster to our physical systems and, as such, it is a bad master.

During the first stages of the development of material beings, all elements of matter, including abstract heat, are at the service

and control of the unit of mind. But during the later stages, all elements of matter, and particularly abstract heat, revolt against the unit of mind, causing in the end the expulsion of the unit of mind from the material system. This is the danger inherent in all alliances with material forms, and no one who allies himself with matter can escape these dangers.

Heat is Busy Factor Everywhere

So much for material life, we shall close this chapter after making a few observations about inanimate existence. If we have understood the manner and methods of material life, it would not be difficult to be convinced of the manner of the incidence of all things inanimate. Abstract heat is the most busy factor in the inanimate universe as well. We learnt at different stages in this discussion how the units of abstract heat enter the various substances and also how they escape from these substances. We also stated that of all the inanimate abstract elements, abstract heat is the first to be taken within the influence of the units of mind. Whilst the lowest beings grasp only one unit of abstract heat each for the purpose of the construction of their habitations, the higher beings bring together units of abstract heat in very large numbers.

We would here recall our statement that the abstract units of elements of the universe are constantly straining to establish a homogeneous density. If the forces of matter alone were to prevail in the universe, the various masses of matter in the form of substances we experience in the universe would stretch to a point when all substances would disappear. All abstract elements would then disintegrate and exist in the form of units of free energy. No colour, shape, sound, smell, and taste would appear in such matter, and, therefore, the whole universe would turn to be an infinite sheet of blank space with nothing visible appearing in it. But the units of mind interfere with the

development of this state of blank energy, and the various material phenomena have thereby resulted.

Mind Builds and Maintains the Universe

Each of the units of mind, in its building of its material structure, grasps more of one kind of units of elements of matter, and less of another. This causes concentrations at some places and vacuums at other places. The neighbouring units of matter move to establish a homogeneous condition where vacuums are created, and the established units move out to provide room for the concentrations to exist. This process repeats itself an infinite number of times in every part of the infinite universe. Thus every part of the infinite universe is moving, developing substances at some places, and deteriorating substances at others; making stars at some places, and dispersing stars at others. As units of mind circulate in the universe, the various abstract elements circulate, and abstract heat, particularly, becomes very swift in activity. When the abstract elements circulate, the various planets and stars in space also circulate.

Each unit of mind, according to the strength of its evolution current, develops a gravitational force so as to keep in concentration a measure of units of abstract elements. Every being in the material universe which exists above levels of elementary life, contributes a measure of gravitational force to the universe. The higher beings, such as the human beings and the animals, contribute a larger measure, and the lesser beings, contribute a proportionately smaller measure. All the beings living on this Earth are contributing towards the sustenance of the gravitational force of this Earth. And if all the beings existing on this Earth, disappear from it, there would be no gravitational force on this Earth. And without gravitational force, the Earth cannot exist. Water would evaporate but rain would not fall. Heat would concentrate and, ultimately, the Earth would blow up and dissolve in space.

When Present Universe is at Its End

The Buddha's description of the last stages of the present universe amply illustrates the manner in which the material universe depends on the strength of evolution of the units of mind for its existence. A period will come, in the distant future, when the combined strength of evolution of the minds of the material beings in the universe becomes insufficient to hold the planets and stars in due position and the conditions of life in the universe becomes very difficult.

Those beings who understand the impending disaster at that time would make haste to increase the force of evolution in their minds and thus escape into a spiritual sphere of existence, but the majority would sink lower and lower in strength of evolution and, ultimately, establish themselves in elementary life.

Gravitational Deterioration and Harsh Conditions

As the combined force of evolution of the units of mind decreases, the total quantity of units of abstract matter held in their control also decreases. In other words, the units of mind lose their gravitational force to control a sufficiency of units of abstract elements, and, consequently, the planets and stars lose their strength to keep together the various substances on them. More of the substances from the planets and stars will radiate into space and disappear, and the conditions on the planets will become increasingly difficult.

Harsh climate, followed by scarcity of food makes the beings in the universe increasingly violent and cruel, and the increase of cruelty amongst the beings in the universe reduces further their strength of evolution of mind. The lower strength of evolution causes conditions on the planets and stars to deteriorate further. And when planets and stars deteriorate, the beings deteriorate; and when the beings deteriorate, the planets and stars deteriorate

and this process continues until the point when the universe loses its equilibrium and shatters itself in splinters and crashes.

Last Scenes on This Earth

The Buddha's description of the last scenes of the present universe as they would appear to a being then living on this Earth is extremely interesting. The Earth would then have its harsh climate, and the beings would be with smaller physiques and a very low morality. The standards of climate, physique, and morality descend lower and lower, and many of the beings on this Earth die and disappear. Fresh beings arriving to settle on this Earth keep dwindling in numbers and further deterioration takes place. After further lapse of time beings on this Earth are reduced to very small numbers and a period of long drought with intensive heat occurs. Owing to this drought, rivers dry up, and crops fail; and, in consequence, most of the remaining beings die and disappear.

Probably by encountering an inter-stellar cloud of water vapour, a spell of rain then begins to occur. This rain which pours down continuously for seven consecutive days, begins with slow drizzling and, at its worst, rain drops several feet in diameter fall. This rain causes floods all over, the only points escaping inundation being a few mountain tops. The floods kill a further number of the remaining beings on this Earth.

Then follows a second drought and within a few weeks all the flood waters evaporate and shortly afterwards all the oceans too dry up. By this time, the universe is in chaos and the stars are crumbling all over, and our solar system is also crumbling in a mad dash. Our solar system meets other solar systems and at its final stage, the Earth comes within the orbit of seven suns.

Fire that Burns out the Universe

The Earth at this stage is without a drop of water and her envelope of air is in tatters. It is heat all over, and the surface is burning at many places. And finally, the seven suns radiate on to this Earth so much of heat, that the whole Earth turns ablaze. After burning for a short while in this manner, the Earth blows up and ceases to exist.

In the meantime, all the other planets and stars in the universe too blow up and disappear, some in the same manner as this Earth and the others in different other ways. Ultimately, the entire universe of space becomes completely void of all planets and stars. The condition of the universe remains for some time in this confused state of blank darkness.

During the Darkness of Time

Although during this period the whole universe turns into a condition of blank darkness, no part of it gets destroyed. All the units of mind and all the abstract units of matter remain in it perfectly intact. All that gets destroyed in this catastrophe, are the various substances and the various material formations of beings. The units of abstract matter, during this period, establish the homogeneous dispersal over space towards which they always keep pulling themselves, and as in this state the units of abstract matter are too much stretched out in space to remain in atomic combinations, they exist only in the form of energy (paramattha). Since matter in the form of energy is not discernible to environment sense organs, the only way we could visualize the condition of the universe then is as space in a state of blank darkness.

Excepting those beings who escape into planes of spiritual existence (Brahma), all the other beings have, by this time,

reduced in the strength of their evolution to the level of elementary existence. They, therefore, continue their existence by taking conception in units of free abstract heat. Free abstract heat does not produce a mass and, therefore, the beings existing in them are material beings without mass. Their presence, therefore, is also not discernible to the environment sense organs.

Worst Suffering

Existence in the universe of free abstract heat is the most acute form of suffering in the universe. All the beings that enter into life in units of free abstract heat on the dissolution of a material universe, therefore, suffer intensely. As we have noted, suffering reduces the forces of defilements, and the beings remaining in such conditions liquidate most of their defilements.

After a considerable lapse of time, these beings liquidate their defilements so much, and also, in the meanwhile, whatever remnants of impressions of purity remaining in the evolution current of their mind becomes so increased in growth, that many units of mind acquire a sufficiency of evolution strength to cover their suffering physical systems of free abstract heat with a few units of the other abstract elements. When such strength is gained by these beings, they form themselves into physical structures of tiny atoms which remain floating about in space.

Rebirth of the Universe

As the strength of the forces of evolution in the minds of these beings increases further and further, the physical systems they evolve become larger, and, in course of time, clouds of such material beings appear all over space. At this stage the activity of these tiny beings disturbs the homogeneous equilibrium of the material universe, and everywhere the abstract elements

begin to move about. As the beings evolve further, planets and stars get formed, and once again the material universe gets established.

Beginning in this manner, the new universe grows, matures, decays, dies, and ends again in a catastrophic dissolution, and the process goes on without end.

Betrayal

This universe is thus the result of the co-operative effort of all the units of mind existing in the universe. Every being in the universe has performed its part in the establishment and the bringing into being of this universe. Every being in the universe according to its strength, wields an oar to move this universe and, as we are riding on it, we are also riding on the efforts of all the other beings of the universe.

But the misfortune is that all the beings that make the material universe, find themselves betrayed by the same material universe in the end. This material universe is a dangerous pet that we beings rear. All beings contribute to making this universe, and they do so with great enthusiasm and industry. But, ultimately, the very thing they made and nurtured bites them and kills them. This is the folly of rearing this venomous pet.

Escape

This pet does not give any being a measurable satisfaction, and so the wise people are cautioned against this useless pursuit. Escape from matter, the ever clinging devil that pulls all beings towards suffering all the time, and enter that peaceful and pleasant plane of existence where the inferior and low matter does not gather and existence is perfect! There will not be the cruel interferences from matter there. There will be no

formations of substances, no pulls towards defilements, no risks of births in lower forms of life, no wants, no greed, no hatred, and no ignorance.

It is all pure and untainted pleasure, the maximum happiness, fullest contentment, and everlasting joy. It is that life of non-alliance with matter, the fullest and most supreme form of life, the life with the mind charged with the maximum forces of purity to the total exclusion of all defilements, and with propulsion solely by purity. This ideal and permanent state of existence is only reached by those who purify their minds beyond the point of achievement of the state of Arahat. This existence is only for those who have reached the illumination of Nibbāna, the supreme state of perpetual bliss.

CHAPTER 7

GUIDANCE TO WISDOM

We have seen that this universe is one vast and infinite, self-winding, machine. There are wheels in it both large and small and, in each of these wheels, there run an infinity of smaller and smaller wheels.

The universe is an infinite phenomenon: it shrinks with the infinity of contraction and expands to the infinity of extension. Any section or portion of the universe is only a part of the infinite expanse of the universe, and every portion of it consists of an infinity of infinitely contracted portions of the universe. As such, we could say that even the most minute part of the universe is the whole universe in a miniature form, and the whole universe is a combination of an infinity of miniature universes. This is the fundamental truth about the formation and the structure of the universe.

What is true of the universe as a whole, is also true of all beings and man. Each material fibre of a being is a miniature form of the whole being, and, as such, each material fibre constituting a human being, is a miniature material form of the whole human being. Thus is the material construction of all beings and substances.

Flux of Mind and Matter

The smallest conceivable, and by far the most powerful, of all the wheels of the universe, are the wheels of the units of mind. Each beat of the mind is a rotation of this wheel, and we have noted that its speed is about 3 billionth part of the duration of a flash of lightning. Even whilst turning at this extreme speed, it systematically and accurately passes through

the 17 different stages, and does not miss a single point of time. The units of matter, too, revolve in the same cycle, but their speed is 17 times slower than the speed of rotation of the units of mind.

There is one constant feature in all rotations of the wheels of every unit of mind and matter: they begin, develop, exist, decay, and finally die. Although the rotations of the units of mind have a beginning, the units of mind or matter themselves never began their manifestations and, therefore, no unit of mind or matter will ever cease to exist, nor does any unit of mind or matter in the material universe ever remain unchanged. Time turns every wheel of the units of mind and matter; and, as time never remains constant, so no wheel of the units of mind or matter in the universe ever remains constant. The wheels of the units of mind and matter in the universe, therefore, keep on repeating the turns of their cycles from each beginning to its ending; and from each ending to a new beginning, closely skipping from the tip of each ending to the tip of the new beginning.

The universe, thus, is in a state of flux all over, and there is no continuance of a uniform state in any unit of mind or matter in the material universe. Although the manifestations of the units of mind and matter are in themselves without any beginning or cessation, the cycles which turn these units have beginnings and cessations—each birth is a beginning and, therefore, leads to a death which is the cessation and, conversely, each cessation or death leads to a new beginning or birth. The law is that the phenomena that begin in the universe invariably move to their end, all phenomena that end invariably cause the beginning of fresh phenomena.

This law which is common to all units of mind and matter in the material universe is also common to all substances of matter and material beings in the universe. The occurrence of a state of continuous flux is a universal law in the material

universe, and no combination of matter, or matter and mind, can ever escape from the continuous operation of this universal natural law.

Consequent on Birth is Death

In the same way as the beat of mind begins and ends and the beats of elements of matter begin and end, every substance or being that begins in this universe also ends. This is true of rocks, mountains, and all planets and stars, and this is also true of all beings, including animals and man. Birth of every form in this universe invariably leads ultimately to death; there is no way out; and the fact being that we were born in the material universe, we have no way of escape, having to face death sooner or later.

No phenomenon in this universe is permanent. Those things which we normally consider to be permanent are far from possessing any permanency. This Earth and the planets and stars in our skies are not permanent—they are in the habit of dissolving themselves in space once in about 100,000,000,000,000 years, a great universe period (mahā kappa). About 2/3 of this period has already lapsed, and the balance 1/3 still remains to run, which, when completed, will culminate in the universe invariably dissolving itself into energy in the state of blank darkness.

Some planets and stars, comparatively, are very small and their spans of duration are in most cases very short. There exist in the universe other planets and stars of much bigger size and of more solidified substances, which exist through almost incalculable periods of time. But this Earth and all the other planets and stars of whatever substance or of whatever duration they may be, are subject to the same law and they will end in dissolution in due course.

Any Length of Time is Short

We can hardly observe at first hand the rotation of the wheel of birth, development, existence, decay, and death in such large objects as planets and stars, because our own wheel, the wheel of human life, is so short. But not much visualizing is needed to appreciate the fact that even the duration of all the objects coming within our sensual observation, such as the 100 billion years of the present universe, fade into insignificance when compared with the infinity that time is.

All beings and objects existing in each of the planets and stars, are smaller wheels existing within the bigger wheel of each planet or star. The duration of each such smaller wheel varies, but in the case of the human being, it is today about seventy or eighty years. During this short period, the wheel of man turns non-stop from stage to stage: birth, development, existence, decay, and death or, as we may say, birth, childhood, youth, old age, and death. This wheel may skip over certain stages, but every beginning (birth) is invariably linked to an ending (death).

Impermanence and Unreality

Everything in the universe is temporary, and every period in the universe is insignificantly short. Names fade away at the same speed as all objects, and the history books vanish as fast as they are written. Whether it is Abraham Lincoln or George Washington, William Shakespeare or George Stephenson, Emperor Asoka or Gautama Buddha, this law is universal. Those individuals lived and died as every other being in the universe. And when they died, they left behind the echo and fragrance of their existence, but this echo and fragrance will not last for ever. It is very unlikely that this fragrance will last for another ten thousand years; it is almost certain that nothing at all of this

fragrance will be available in another one hundred thousand years; and what an insignificant fraction of time even one hundred thousand years are! Such is the nature of impermanence (anicca).

Then there is the factor of time. The past is past and it will never return; nothing is so uncertain as the future; and what really and strictly matters to all is the present. But the present travels so fast and so continuously that it is impossible to keep abreast of it. We go through pleasures and pains, enjoyments and suffering, but nothing of all these ever remains. The past is unreal, the future is unreal, and, since the present passes so fast and ceaselessly, the present is also unreal. It is to such a life of unreality (anatta) that all beings in the universe have chained themselves.

Suffering

Our life in this universe is a myth; it is a mirage; it is a dream. The past is a forgotten and bygone dream; and the future is a gamble, it is quite an uncertain dream. The present is a passing dream, a rapid and continuous flow. Nothing is permanent in this universe and, therefore, no pleasure is a pleasure in this universe. Everything is suffering.

Birth is painful and causes us suffering; development is painful and causes us suffering; disease is painful and causes us suffering; decay is painful and causes us suffering; and death is painful and causes us suffering. Life in this universe is thus woven through and bundled in suffering.

There are, besides, other forms of suffering. We cannot get all that we need in this universe and not getting what we need in this universe is painful and causes us suffering. We cannot avoid having to part from those whom we love, and parting

from those whom we love is painful and causes us suffering. We cannot avoid association with those whom we dislike, and association with those whom we dislike is painful and causes us suffering (dukkha).

Refined Taste and Higher Beings

The tastes of beings differ according to their states of living; crude life has crude tastes, and refined life has refined tastes. The tastes of crude beings, such as the animals, are correspondingly crude; and the tastes of the human beings, who are more refined than the animals, have tastes which are correspondingly refined. The tastes of civilized people are more refined than the tastes of uncivilized people. In this way develop the tastes of beings for the pleasures of life.

In contrast to the suffering of life in this universe, there exists the illumination of the supreme wisdom in the state of Nibbāna. It is the most refined form of existence, but to acquire the requisite taste for that purified supreme pleasantness, the aspirant must reach a high degree of refined existence and civilization. Without that basic achievement, it is difficult to appreciate the exact nature of pleasure belonging to the state of those who have attained Nibbāna.

Noble Eightfold Path

The path recommended by the Buddha for the refinement of future existence, and which also leads direct to the ultimate realization of the state of Nibbāna, is itself easy and pleasant to travel. A modest living, avoiding the extremes of extravagance and magnificence on the one hand, and stinginess and self-mortification on the other, is one step. This is popularly referred to as the "Middle Path" (majjhima patipadā).

Whilst keeping to this middle path, the following course of action is necessary:—

(1) Acquisition of wisdom through right understanding (sammā ditthi), and right thought (sammā sankappa)

(2) The refinement of morality by recourse to right speech (sammā vāca), right action (sammā kammanta), and. right livelihood (sammā ājiva)

(3) Conservation and development of the powers of the mind by means of right effort (sammā vāyāma), right mindfulness (sammā sati), and right concentration and meditation (sammā samādhi).

Contentment and Peace

Planned living on the lines recommended by the Buddha, besides affording human beings the prospect of realizing the state of Nibbāna, serves as a guarantee against their sinking into lower forms of life. It carries man into higher states of existence in the form of superhuman beings on this Earth, or in some of the heavenly planets where life is longer lasting, where wants and sufferings are fewer, and pleasures are more numerous.

The treading of this eightfold path also brings man and all those who live with him on this Earth instant and immediate benefits in the form of the pleasures of personal contentment and universal love, which result in peace and harmony to all concerned.

- QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
- APPENDICES

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO ILLUSTRATE THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THIS DISCUSSION AND TO ELUCIDATE SOME POINTS ABOUT BUDDHISM IN GENERAL (FROM THE AUTHOR'S BROADCASTS OVER THE NATIONAL SERVICE OF RADIO CEYLON)

QUESTION 1.

What is the best form of gaining an introduction to Buddhism ?

Answer :—

For this purpose, we should, in the first instance, read as much from the Pāli Canon as may be possible. But as the Pāli Canon consists of an enormous number of texts, we shall have to proceed with our reading according to a pre-conceived plan. The best books that the average student should study are: the Dhammapada, the Visuddhimagga, and the Abhidhammattha Sangaha.

These three books jointly are a very comprehensive text book of Buddhism. The Dhammapada is from the Sutta Piṭaka and gives us, in broad outline, the Buddhist outlook on life. It is a very popular book and is available in translation in many languages.

The Visuddhimagga, the English translation of the name is "Path to Purity", is a commentary on the entire Pāli Canon. It takes us into the higher realms of Buddhist philosophy and

gives us a vivid view of the manner and methods of life followed by those aspiring to be Arahats.

The Abhidhammattha Sangaha is a commentary on the Abhidhamma, which is the Science on which Buddhism is founded.

Sutta philosophy is mostly devoted to display examples of reactions which resulted from past actions, implying that similar actions even now would result in similar reactions in the future.

The elements of Vinaya philosophy could be gathered from reading the Visuddhimagga. It indicates to us the manner in which the full realization of the truth can be achieved. Both Sutta and Vinaya philosophy, in spite of their high reasonableness, demand a certain measure of faith on the part of the adherents.

Abhidhamma philosophy, on the other hand, explains Nibbāna without any necessity for faith. One could examine the Abhidhamma in the same manner as a scientist would examine a theory.

In addition to studying a fair cross-section of the Pāli Canon as suggested, we must also take an interest in Buddhism by way of listening to lectures, participating in discussions, and so on.

A student of Buddhism should also develop an independent and critical outlook, taking nothing for granted, and subjecting everything to test. We must, therefore, be mindful of our environment. It is useful to keep in touch with the developments in the fields of modern experimental science. Such subjects as the theory of evolution, life on other planets, Advanced Physics, Cosmology, and Physiology assist us greatly in comprehending Buddhism.

QUESTION 2.

Is there any difference between the Buddhas and the Arahats ?

Answer :—

If we consider only the ultimate benefits accruing to the Buddhas and the Arahats, we would find that there is hardly any difference. The Buddhas, on death, ascend to the perpetuity of the pleasantness and peace of Nibbāna. The Arahats, too, on death, ascend to the same Nibbāna.

There does not exist any kind of class distinction in Nibbāna, so that the Nibbāna of the Buddhas is in no way superior to the Nibbāna of the Arahats. So far as the Nibbāna they achieve is concerned, therefore, there is no difference between the Buddhas and Arahats.

When, however, we consider the short periods of material existence in which the Buddhas and Arahats live, a few differences are apparent. During the present era of human evolution, for instance, the Gautama Buddha has been the first to discover the truth of Nibbāna. His position is greatly enhanced by the fact that, in this task, he cast away many things such as princely status and comforts, which from the view point of the common observer, are acts of self-sacrifice of the highest order.

A Buddha, being, by his own efforts, the first discoverer of Nibbāna in each period of evolution, and the subsequent Arahats, being persons who are led to Nibbāna by a Buddha, the Arahats owe a debt of gratitude to Buddhas. The Buddhas, thus, are leaders of the Arahats.

The leadership of a Buddha, however, is not extended to the Arahat in the sense that a Buddha gives directions to the Arahats.

The Arahats are as much enlightened as a Buddha himself, and they too have broken the bonds of craving, hatred, and ignorance as completely as a Buddha himself. Between Buddhas and Arahats, there is nothing to conceal and there is less to search. No check on their activity is, therefore, needed.

The Buddhas respect the Arahats, as much as the Arahats respect the Buddhas. Buddhist literature has numerous instances depicting the existence of such mutual respect.

A group of persons of the character of the Buddhas and the Arahats, does not need any kind of organization, for each is as good as the other, and, therefore, no rivalry of any kind even for positions of fame and glory exists amongst them. In the community of the Buddhas and the Arahats, it matters little to each of them whether he is famous or unknown.

A further distinction is that the Buddhas take a longer course to Nibbāna than some of the Arahats. The Buddhas practise, for considerable periods, loving charity (dāna) and discipline (sīla) before taking to meditation and contemplation (bhāvana), whereas some of the Arahats take directly to meditation and contemplation and achieve enlightenment. In this way, the Buddhas suffer more, and do more, for the welfare of the others, than many of the Arahats. It is natural, therefore, that the Bhikkhus and laymen alike respect the Buddhas more than any of the Arahats.

QUESTION 3.

Why do we not remember our past lives ?

Answer :—

The discussion of this subject takes us into the depths of Buddhist philosophy. The human mind is the repository of a vast number of past impressions. These impressions are in various stages of growth and, in quality, they fall into two distinct groups: impressions of purity or merit (kusala kamma), and impressions of defilement (akusala kamma).

In the minds of all human beings, there exists a predominating proportion of impressions of purity, but there also exists in our minds a certain proportion of impressions of defilements. Whilst the impressions of purity have moved us into our present form of human life, the impressions of defilements check our progress and limit our range of activity.

The impressions of defilement present in the human being are strong enough to cloud the visions of the mind. In consequence, the range of our memory is reduced to very narrow limits.

We can hardly remember in detail an event which took place, say, ten years ago. We probably do not remember at all the various events of our early childhood. And in this way, the range of our memory is very narrow even in our present life itself.

Between the past life and the present development of our material self, lies a period when almost the total strength of the energy of the mind has been utilized in the evolution of our present bodily form. During early childhood, particularly, we spent considerable periods with our minds existing only in the bhavanga or dormant form—*i.e.* the mind developed only a few

active thoughts (javana citta) and even those thoughts were preoccupied with the problems of the moment.

This period of trial has obliterated the visions of our past lives. The mind in our present state of life is too weak, and too shaded, to penetrate through the period of dormancy into the periods prior to our being conceived in our present life.

If, however, a person has a strong mind which has the strength of vision extending to periods beyond the moment of our birth, it is practicable for him to read back events from his past lives.

The Buddhas and the Arahats have a very wide range of vision and they can read back not only the events of their own past lives, but they can also penetrate into the details of any other person's past lives. This is because the Buddhas and the Arahats have, by methods of mind exercise (Bhāvana), removed all impressions of defilements from their minds and thus they do not have any obstruction to the range of the vision of their minds.

QUESTION 4.

How could one understand the process of rebirth ?

Answer :—

The acquisition of a clear knowledge of the behaviour of the various components of the universe is essential for the purpose of gaining a perfect understanding of the process of rebirth. All the components of the universe are explained in detail in the Abhidhamma section of Buddhist philosophy.

The universe is the composite product of a vast number of abstract units of action or motion (kriyā). The Abhidhamma identifies them as paramattha.

These abstract units of the universe are of two kinds: abstract units of matter (rūpattha) and the abstract units of mind (nāmattha). In each living being in the material universe, there exists one unit of mind and a vast number of abstract units of matter.

The abstract units of matter mix in various proportions and grip each other in the formation of atoms (rūpa kalāpa), and a vast number of atoms weave together in the embodiment of each substance or object.

The unit of mind builds its bodily form by absorbing into its hold as many of the units of abstract elements as it has the strength to control,

Thus, the existence of our bodily form depends on the presence of rūpatthas or abstract elements of matter in our system ; and the existence of our life depends on the presence of the unit of mind with which each of us was born.

The continuity of each of the units of rūpattha (abstract element) is preserved by the process of rebirth. Three currents of forces causing the birth (upacāya), existence (jaratā), and death (aniccatā) occur in each unit of element. These forces spring in active strength in relay order and ceaselessly revolve the unit of element in the cycle of rebirth, continuing from birth to death, and from death to birth.

The units of mind, in like manner, revolve in the cycle of rebirth. A current of mind-force (cetasika) known as jīvitindriya (evolution current) ensures the smooth operation of this cycle of rebirth.

The speed of the rotation of the paramatthas in the cycle of rebirth is so swift that it is almost beyond computation. Any reasonable estimate should put this speed at many billions of cycles per second. The units of mind revolve in these cycles 17 times faster than the units of elements.

It is the same phenomenon present in the units of paramattha, that expands into various cycles of rebirth. The process of rebirth exists in matter, and it also exists in mind. The process of rebirth is occurring within ourselves at all periods and the reincarnation of life is only a mere wider cycle operating on the base of the same process.

The basic rūpatthas (the abstract elements) which combine together in forming our bodily structure do not cease to exist when we die. At death, *i.e.* when the unit of mind abandons the embodiment of matter in the body, the various abstract elements of the body migrate into other structures or substances. In other words, the continuity of the process of rebirth remains in every unit of element, the only difference being the transfer of the units of elements into other combinations.

The unit of mind, too, when it has escaped from each bodily form, does not cease to exist. It migrates into another field and continues in a fresh life. Unlike the units of abstract elements, the units of mind are subject to evolution due to the operation of the process of kamma. According to the state of evolution reached, and appropriate to the balance of accumulated forces brought forward from its previous existence, each unit of mind begins to evolve a fresh life system. This may be in this planet in human or other form, or in some other planet, or other part of the universe.

QUESTION 5.

On what basis can we differentiate between good actions (kusala kamma) and evil actions (akusala kamma) ?

Answer :—

Here again a knowledge of the features and characteristics of paramatthas is very helpful. Comprehending the manner of the operation of the mind and its different component forces assists us very much to determine this.

The human mind exists in two different conditions: dormant (bhavanga) and active (javana). When the mind is existing in dormancy, no reflections occur in our mind, and, hence, during such periods, we do not develop any sensations. When, however, the mind is in active condition, our mind receives waves of reflections and we become aware of sensations.

Sensations always occur as a result of the forces of reactions (phala) of previous actions. From amidst the waves of reflection of reactions rise thoughts of action (kamma), and these bring into the mind impressions, which, remaining deposited in the mind, take seed. In due course, these impressions grow and fructify in the form of reactions.

The type of the force which spring in a thought of action, and the degree of its intensity, are the factors which determine whether an action is good or evil.

There are 25 forces springing reflections of good action. Leading amongst them are: knowledge (amoha), loving sympathy (adosa), and loving charity (aloba). A total of 14 forces of the mind spring reflections of evil action, with ignorance (moha), hatred (dosa), and greed (lobha) taking the lead.

Depending on whether each action was brought about deliberately or in casual circumstances, the severity of all actions vary.

In order to determine whether an action is good or evil, the best method is to examine the type of forces which precipitate actions. If it is the forces of knowledge, loving sympathy, or loving charity which move our mind to action, the actions are, decidedly, good actions or actions of merit (kusala kamma). If, on the other hand, it is the forces of ignorance, greed, or hatred that moves our mind to actions, they can invariably be classed as evil actions or actions of defilement (akusala kamma).

Another method to examine the nature of actions is by the observation of reactions.

No action is possible without the consent of the mind and, therefore, the immediate effect of all actions, whether good or evil, is a sense of satisfaction. It is when reaction comes that the distinction appears. Good action brings good reaction and evil action brings adverse reaction.

By analysing the different kinds of reaction and working our way back from reactions to actions in a number of determinable typical instances, it is possible to predict, roughly, the type and intensity of reactions resulting from given kinds of actions.

Some persons lead lives of pain, whilst others live lives of pleasure. We must investigate what brought those persons pain, and what brought the others pleasure. Proceeding in this manner, we can determine the kinds of action that bring pain and the kinds of action that bring pleasure.

The Buddhist Sutta Piṭaka is mostly devoted to the analysis of actions and reactions. Aided by their penetrating vision, the

Buddhas and Arahats have mentioned in their teachings many interesting and instructive instances where beings in different circumstances suffered or enjoyed according to the nature of actions they did. A vast variety of illustrations of this type are available in the Sutta Piṭaka. When we have studied a fair number of such instances, we would be able to classify our various actions.

QUESTION 6.

Why is Bhavana so much emphasized in Buddhism?

Answer :—

The practice of Buddhism consists of developing three stages of virtue: Dāna (benevolence), Sīla (discipline), and Bhāvana (concentration, contemplation, and meditation).

Full wisdom or knowledge is the ultimate aim of all Buddhists and Bhāvana is the direct route to full wisdom. Bhāvana is mental training exercises practised to purify the mind. The mind, as we know, is the all important factor to the Buddhist.

The forces of the reflective mind tend always to spread in the directions of the environment sense organs: the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch. The mind is also covered and obstructed by clouds of defilements remaining in various stages of growth, and obscuring vision. These two conditions weaken the strength of the mind, and the purpose of Bhāvana is to remove both obstacles.

To attain higher knowledge, it is essential that we should be able to develop the habit of concentrated and prolonged thought. It is difficult, normally, to keep the mind concentrated on a particular thought even for a short period of time. The vision of the mind, therefore, does not penetrate deep enough. Persons who practise Bhāvana develop their mind so much that they can keep their thoughts undistracted for long periods.

Furthermore, when the mind is thus being developed, the clouds of defilement disappear, the seeds of defilement becoming weak and withering away.

Bhāvana, thus, benefits the mind in two ways: *viz.* by removing defilements, and strengthening the mind. At the most advanced stage of mental development by Bhāvana, the state of full enlightenment (Arahatship) is reached.

QUESTION 7.

Can we by watching a person decide whether he is doing good or evil ?

Answer :—

Whilst the manner of one's behaviour is a fair index to determine one's character, it is by no means conclusive evidence against his state of morality. The determining factor is the type of intention brought to bear and not the physical action itself. We do not have the requisite strength of mind to develop sharp penetrating vision to examine the nature of another person's intentions whilst we are examining his physical actions, with the result that we observe only the physical actions and we do not observe the manner in which the mind is performing.

The highly developed persons such as the Buddhas and Arahats have no need to examine and analyse physical actions. Their force of mind is such that when they look at a person, they see not only the physical action but they can also see the exact intention influencing the physical action. Some of the Devas living in the heavenly planets, too, develop penetrating vision to read other people's minds, and because of this reason, they are also able to make a correct judgement.

The lesser beings, such as the average human being and others, can only guess another person's character. They can speculate a judgement, and this judgement varies according to the height of vision and the state of honesty brought to bear.

A person may perform an apparent good action with an extremely evil motive. Such an action is an evil action, although the outside lay observer would take it to be a good action. Conversely, a person may perform an apparent evil action with an

extremely good motive. It is a good action, although the outsider may brand it as an evil action.

We must however remember that, generally, many good actions are prompted by good motives and many evil actions are prompted by evil motives. But this rule cannot be applied universally to all actions, for, under different circumstances, the motive may differ widely from the type of action performed.

So far as the effect of actions on the individuals is concerned, it is the motive which governs. Outsiders' opinion about a person's physical actions is of little consequence to the individual. If in an action our motive is good, we have no need to worry about what other people think of us. And, in like manner, however much other people may praise us for our deeds, it should not bring us any satisfaction if our motives are evil.

Thus, motive (cetana) is the conclusive factor in all actions. It is the motive that affects the mind and causes reactions ultimately.

The best person who can determine the motive of an action is the person performing the action himself. When we do something, we must pause for a moment and examine the nature of the motive which is moving us. The habit of constant vigilance about one's own motive in all actions is known in Buddhism as right mindfulness (sammā sati).

Having examined the nature of motive, we must decide quickly what the currents of mind (cetasika) are, which prompt it. If we find that it is greed, hatred, ignorance, or any other defiling current that operates behind this motive, we must develop effort (viriya) at once and that motive must promptly be subjected to control. In this manner, we can remove the evil motives in our minds.

If, on the other hand, in our examination with right mindfulness, we find that the currents of mind moving behind our motive are loving charity, loving sympathy, or knowledge, we should develop effort and allow that motive to move us with increased force and perfection.

QUESTION 8.

In what way could we measure the degree of force of good actions and evil actions?

Answer :—

In our last answer, it was mentioned that the motive (cetana) is the conclusive factor in determining the nature of actions (kamma). The Buddha has shown that actions get broadly divided into two grades: good actions (kusala kamma) and evil actions (akusala kamma).

There are altogether 39 different kinds of actions and of them 25 are in the grade of good action and the remaining 14 are in the grade of evil action.

The mind consists of 52 different currents (cetasika) and, of them, at any given time, only a few appear in active force. There are seven currents belonging to the grade known as common currents (sabba citta sādhārana), appearing actively in all the cycles of the mind and there are also six currents belonging to the grade known as supplementary currents (pakinnaka) which appear actively in cycles of mind where reflective thoughts (javana citta) occur.

When we experience a sensation, the currents of mind belonging to both grades, common currents and the supplementary currents, appear actively in the mind revolving in us at the time. The combined force of the 13 currents belonging to these two grades force into activity one or more of the currents of defilement or purity.

The force of an action depends on the kind of current or currents thus brought to activity. If the current or currents

brought to activity belong to the grade of defilement currents, they produce evil action. And, similarly, if the current or currents brought to activity belong to the grade of currents of purity, they produce good action.

If, however, active thoughts were to occur in us by a mixture of defilement currents and currents of purity, it is necessary to measure the degree of intensity of force brought to bear by the currents belonging to each grade. If the currents of purity brought more force than the currents of defilement, it would be on the side of good action; and if the defilement currents brought more force than the currents of purity, it would be on the side of evil action.

Whatever the currents that may spring in the mind in the production of an active thought, only one current ultimately appears with dominant force. And, since there are 39 currents which thus appear forceful, there are 39 different kinds of active thoughts which each unit of mind has the potentiality to produce.

The grading of the kinds of active thoughts has to be done in this manner.

In fixing the degree of intensity of each kind of thought, there is another factor to consider. Evil actions of the highest intensity are those performed deliberately and intentionally, inspite of the full sight of consequences, and after cool calculation (somanassa sahagata diṭṭhigata sampayutta sasaṅkhārika). Evil actions of the least intensity are those committed casually, on sudden provocation, without intention, information, or calculation (upekkhā sahagata diṭṭhigata vippayutta asaṅkhārika). Between these two grades, the degrees of force of evil actions vary.

Good actions of the highest intensity are those performed intentionally, with the full knowledge of the benefits, and after careful consideration (somanassa sahagata ñaṇa sampayutta sasaṅkhārika); and good actions of the least intensity are those actions performed casually, without intention, 'knowledge of benefits, or consideration (upekkhā sahagata ñaṇa vippayutta asaṅkhārika). Between these two grades, the degrees of force of good actions vary.

QUESTION 9.

What is the significance of offering flowers at Buddhist temples ?

Answer :—

During the time of the Buddha, it was the custom in North India to take a few flowers as a token of respect when visiting a great person. In accordance with this custom, some of the people who visited the Buddha, too, began taking flowers to the Buddha.

The Buddha had no use for the flowers, for he never wore them on his person, nor did he decorate his apartments with them. The Buddha, however, did not wish to interfere with this custom, and, therefore, the habit of the people taking flowers to the Buddha prevailed.

After the death of the Buddha, symbols were used to represent him; and later, various pictures and images purporting to resemble the physical figure of the Buddha, were erected in various parts of India to commemorate his life and teachings.

When the people had no longer the living Buddha to visit, they kept to their habit by taking the flowers to the symbols, pictures, and images of the Buddha set up in commemoration. There were also the Bodhi trees grown in commemoration of the Buddha, and the Dagobas, solid strong rooms containing relics, souvenirs, and books containing the Buddha's teaching, preserved for the use of posterity. People began venerating the Bodhi tree and the Dagoba as well, and, soon, the custom of taking flowers, and salutation, took a new turn.

The action of offering flowers as practised today, is strictly speaking, not an act of offering, for there does not exist anyone

to accept them. The Buddha is not living ; the Bodhi tree or the Dagoba cannot accept flowers.

The action of "offering" flowers today, however, has a very profound philosophical meaning. The Buddhist devotee taking flowers to the temple, derives a three-fold benefit. He performs an act of benevolence (dāna), an act of discipline (sīla), and an act of contemplation and meditation (bhāvana).

Flowers are pleasant things to possess; they are also things which we can give away without much regret. The best form of benevolence is to give a pleasant possession without regret, and when parting with the possession of a flower at the Buddhist temple, we perform an act of benevolence of high order—*viz.* giving up a pleasant possession without regret. This benefit, however, is not appreciable as some of the necessary qualities to make it a perfect act of benevolence do not exist, as for instance, a receiver, and a use for the receiver.

When performing the offering in the serene atmosphere of the Buddhist temple, the devotee develops a mind of cool calmness, and, to that extent, it is an act of discipline.

Above both these benefits, the Buddhist devotee uses the flower as an object for contemplation and meditation. It is in this respect that the devotee benefits most.

The flowers demonstrate to the world, by their beauty and their tendency for rapid decay, the stern truth of the Buddha's doctrine of impermanence (aniccā). The Buddhist devotee ponders over the flowers and thinks : "as sure as these beautiful and fragrant flowers fade and wither away, my beauty, power, and fame, too, shall fade and wither away".

This type of contemplation brings the devotee to his senses. He realizes the futility of greed, hatred, and jealousy, and

leaves the temple with a heart full of compassion and love, and with determination to be good, for, that is the path to both immediate and ultimate happiness.

QUESTION 10.

If it is possible to recollect one's previous lives by deeply concentrated thought, is it not possible for us to visit the hermits living in the Himalaya area and verify the truth of the doctrine of rebirth? (Note: this question is based on Question 3)

Answer :—

It is true that there are at present hermits who practise concentration and meditation. There are reports that some of them, particularly in India and Burma, have achieved considerable mental development. But it is not known whether at present there exists any hermit or ascetic who has reached the requisite level of mental development for the purpose of focussing in strength penetrating vision.

Even if there exist hermits with such developed minds, we cannot utilize their achievement to serve as a means to prove the doctrine of rebirth. This is because our minds are not developed sufficiently even to read another person's mind. If a hermit were to tell of our past lives, we would not be able to verify whether the hermit himself is telling the truth. We are, therefore, obliged to have faith in the hermit, if we were to accept his word.

Verification of past lives by developing penetrating vision is convincing evidence only to the persons developing such vision; it is not convincing evidence to the others. The sincerity of a hermit with penetrating vision to see through past lives, can only be tested by another hermit who has also developed penetrating vision, so that, it is impossible for the average layman to accept the word of any hermit, or even the word of the Buddhas or Arahats as fully convincing evidence.

We must here differentiate between faith (saddhā), and conviction (paññā): faith always has a degree of the element of doubt, whereas conviction is understanding free of all doubts. For the hermits and others who practise concentration and meditation and develop penetrating vision, the personal experience of the actual records of the past lives, is enough proof for them to accept fully the truth of the doctrine of rebirth. No amount of faith in what others tell them about rebirth is so convincing as this.

Whilst concentration and meditation is one method to gain an understanding to the level of absolute conviction, it is not the only method by which one could understand the truth of the doctrine of rebirth. There are different methods to suit each person's mental character, and, as there are no Buddhas and scarcely any Arahats living at present to give us personal guidance in this respect, it is necessary for us to analyse our own selves and determine the right method to understand the doctrine of rebirth.

If we were of the type of character who would meekly accept whatever a Buddha or an Arahat has said, there exists voluminous material in the Buddhist Scriptures depicting different instances of rebirth. This method is very unsatisfactory and the Buddha himself is vehemently against it. Accepting the doctrine of rebirth in this manner often brings in its train various superstitions which obstruct our way to the higher truths.

Rational understanding is best suited to the average layman. We must, for this purpose, look around us for the necessary facts. We must learn at first hand, many different conditions of life prevailing amongst our fellow beings. We must find honest and reasonable answers to such questions as: why are we more fortunate than many others, and less fortunate than some others ? why are some persons born deaf, blind, or otherwise

physically deformed? why do some beings die in their childhood, whilst others live up to a ripe old age? why are the insects, worms, snakes, and animals born into these species, and why are they not also born as human beings? Answers to these questions invariably lead us to the truth of the law of kamma. When the law of kamma is accepted, the reasonableness of the doctrine of rebirth is proved.

For those of us who are scientifically bent, there is the "paramattha" method. This is the Abhidhamma way, and we have discussed it in a recent programme.

QUESTION 11.

How does Buddhism explain the mind ?

Answer :—

The best way to define the mind is to say that it is a motion. The task of describing "motion" is very difficult because motion has no colour, shape, sound, taste, or smell. Owing to this reason, motions are not discernible to the environment sense organs : eye, ear, nose, tongue, or touch.

We may take for experiment, any motion with which we are familiar. Anything from the motion of a vehicle on the road to the motions of the stars and planets in the skies, would suit us. The various kinds of settled matter in the objects we observe change their positions according to different patterns. The environment sense organs observe the positions of such objects and the mind determines that the objects concerned are in motion.

Thus, the mind is the only organ in us which can discern motions and, therefore, the only organ which can discern the mind is also the mind itself. As such, if we desire to understand the details about the mind, we must invert the energies of our own mind towards our own mind and thus subject it to examination. It is difficult, and very often impossible, to examine another person's mind, unless one is able to examine and understand one's own mind.

Motions are the result of forces or energies. The mind is a result of 52 different forces, the chief amongst which are 7 forces that always remain together in a unit in active strength. These 7 forces are jointly referred to as the common currents of the mind (sabba citta sādhārana cetasika). A current

of force amongst them known as the evolution current (jīvitindriya) functions as the greatest single force of the mind. It is the main spring of the mind and the forces of all the other currents are subsidiary to this force.

Whilst the evolution current in our mind releases the strength necessary for the operation of the other currents, it is also subject to the forces of all the other currents. This phenomenon causes a self-perpetuating and pulsating process of existence. It also causes periodic variations in the strength of the mind.

The current of evolution brings three distinct forces to the mind: it causes the regular rotation of the mind by bringing into activity the forces of birth, existence, and death in relay order; it acts as the repository of the different charges of forces in the mind; and it systematically releases the necessary energy for the various functions of the mind.

Simultaneously springing into force and continuing with the evolution current, and repeating themselves at the extreme speed of about 3 i llion revolutions per the duration of a flash of lightning, are the six other common currents of the mind. The joint forces of all the seven common currents of the mind maintain us in dormant life, such as when we are asleep.

When, however, we are developing active thoughts or sensations, the joint forces of the 7 common currents cause six other forces of energy to spring. The total energy of all these 13 currents, viz. the 7 common currents and the 6 supplementary currents, is utilized by us to produce currents of thought or sensations. The currents of thought occur in waves of reflection (javana) and they are broadly of two types: currents of purity (kusala cetasika) and currents of defilement (akusala cetasika). According to the nature of the currents springing in us, we are

drawn into one of three different states of feeling: pleasant (sukha), painful (dukkha), and neutral (upekkha). The intensity of these currents is reflected back to the evolution current and it adjusts its strength accordingly. In this manner, the process of the continuous flow of the mind occurs through the infinity of the past, present, and future time.

The force of the mind is, generally, superior to any force of matter, but this force varies according to the deposits remaining in the mind at each time. We can climb a mountain defying the law of gravitation, because our mind is comparatively stronger, but we cannot resist if we were falling down a precipice, because our mind is not strong enough to resist so much of material force.

QUESTION 12.

What are the conditions prevailing in the higher planes of material existence taught in Buddhism?

Answer :—

There are altogether 31 planes of material existence taught in Buddhism : 4 worlds of Arūpa Jhana, 16 worlds of Rūpa Jhana, 6 worlds of Devas, 1 of Manussa or human, and 4 worlds of Apā or lower existence. The beings living in the 4 worlds of Arūpa Jhana and the 16 worlds of Rūpa Jhana, live in a state of bliss of mind. They live for very long periods of time and do not have any desire for sensual pleasures. The defect with this life is that they consume the accumulated charges of merit and, when their charge of merit is over, they fall back to lower life. This condition of life is reached only by those who have purified their minds by acts of deep thought, concentration, and meditation.

The six worlds of Devas are the planes of life, where there exists much in common with the conditions prevailing in the human world. Many Buddhists desire to be born in one of these worlds as a preliminary step towards the state of Nibbāna. Compared with the conditions prevailing in human life, there are many advantages in being born in these worlds of Devas; there is also a number of disadvantages.

Smallest amongst the six worlds of Devas and with beings who are the shortest lived, is the "Cātummahārājika". The average life expectancy of beings living in this world is about 9 million years, measured in terms of this Earth's lunar calendar. This world is often referred to as the "Visible Star". It would be interesting to investigate how this world came to be named as the "Visible Star."

The world known as the "Paranimmita Vasavatti" is the largest and living in it are the longest lived beings. The average life expectancy in this world is about 9,216 million years. The age of the beings living in the other 4 worlds vary from 9 million to 9,216 million years. Thus the longer age in these worlds is an advantage over the human beings.

The most important amongst the other advantages is the fact that the beings in these worlds have no need to eat each other for their existence. These beings are born with adequate strength of mind to process and absorb their nutrition direct from nature. They need food as much as we do, but each one can condition all the food required by self-effort, and that too, without inflicting any harm on his fellow beings.

Clothing and shelter too are found by these beings in like manner. They create all the clothing and shelter they need, merely by utilizing the strength of their minds to assemble the elements of the atmosphere to produce all their wants. These beings, therefore, have no basic economic problems. All the food, clothing, and shelter are available to them freely and plentifully.

No problems of education exist in these worlds, as these beings are also born with the requisite intelligence to continue in that life. They are clean both of mind and body, and their childhood and old age are very short, being limited to a few days only. They are thus very healthy, and, hence, health services and sanitation arrangements are unnecessary. In short, in the atmosphere of the life of these beings, everything is found and no one is in need.

As it is with us, the beings in these worlds of Devas are born into the two broad groups of sex: male and female. The normal family life exists; births occur without pain; and no one in each

family has any need to work either at home or out of doors. The latter situation has created problems in the worlds of the Devas.

All beings in these worlds spend their time in idle leisure, and, naturally, in order to spend their time, they indulge themselves in sensual pleasure. Music, dancing, and merry-making goes on incessantly, and occasionally disputes also arise, and even warfare is not uncommon. Greed, hatred, and jealousy often overwhelm them, and, but for such occasional spells of trouble, the heavens are good places to live in.

QUESTION 13.

Did Buddha know everything ? If so, could he not have given humanity the benefits of modern experimental science ?

Answer :—

The Buddhist Scriptures record a number of instances, when the non-Arahat students confronted the Buddha with the question whether he had taught everything he knew, and on every occasion the Buddha replied that the facts he knew but did not teach were far more numerous than what he had taught. Our task is to determine whether the Buddha did not divulge some of the truths he knew. For this purpose, it is necessary, in the first instance, to survey the extent of the Buddha's knowledge.

When the Buddha explained that the mind is energy, he had to explain that the whole universe itself is energy. He made it perfectly clear to everyone that all material formations and objects are unreal and that they are mere illusions the truth of which, owing to his weakness of perception, the worldly man cannot see easily.

The Buddha said that material objects can be broken only up to the point of atoms (rūpa kalāpa). And, if atoms are broken, he said, they would turn into energy. On a superficial examination, the material objects appear real, but when examined closely their shape, colour, size, and other material characteristics disappear completely leaving behind only blank energy, which only the mind is able to discern. The Buddha thus proved that it is a distorted notion we form when we consider matter in terms of colour, shape, and size and by showing matter in terms of energy, he displayed high proficiency in the science of Atomic Physics.

About the manner of the development of a human being, the Buddha began his description from the point of conjunction of a unit of mind with matter and the precise way in which the very first atom in each human system assumes size and shape. He went on to describe the forces which determine the sex of each human being and accounted for the development of the various organs in the human body. He has also given very comprehensive reasons describing why human beings grow and how they decay. From all that he has said about the physical side of the human being, it is clear that the Buddha knew everything about Physiology and Anatomy.

The Buddha as a psychologist is unparalleled, as he taught everything about the mind. The extent of the Buddha's knowledge of Cosmology and Biology can be understood if we study his discourses about the Universe and his theory of evolution. Regarding the origins of material universes, the Buddha's "Dust-Cloud Hypothesis" begins from blank energy. His eye-witness account of the universe of energy with no planets and stars existing in it; the manner in which energy consolidates forming tiny particles floating about in space; the tiny particles coming together forming into "Dust Clouds" all over the universe; and these dust clouds compressing in the formation of planets and stars; goes past the present stage of the universe into the realms of the distant future when the universe devolves and breaks up into dust clouds, and tiny particles; and when, lastly, everything turns back into energy. This process repeats itself without an end.

His theory of evolution, particularly the early and the last stages of mankind covers all modern knowledge on the subject. The Buddha's description of the worlds of Apā is in complete harmony with the modern scientists' accounts of the different conditions prevailing in the core of the Earth, the Sun, and the Stars. Of all other branches of modern science, too, the Buddha has displayed complete knowledge.

The Buddha, judging by any standard, would appear to us to be the greatest scientist of all time. All the basic facts of science were well known to him, and, had he given his mind to providing man with material comforts, he could have produced the things that modern science produces today. But he was concerned with greater things — the real happiness of man. Increasing material comfort would corrupt the human mind and bring about greater unhappiness in the world.

QUESTION 14.

Where are our good actions and evil actions recorded?

Answer :—

The mind is a unit of energy consisting of 52 different forces. Amongst these forces is a force known as the evolution current (jīvitindriya). It is with the force in this current that our actions get recorded.

All thoughts that appear on our mind are reflected to the evolution current and on the evolution current occurs an impression of the reflection. All such impressions remain accumulated in the mind and some of these impressions, if sufficiently well formed, can be read back by those beings who have developed minds. Our ability to remember past events of our life means that we are bringing to the surface of our mind the accumulated past impressions and reading them over.

If we are weak in mind we would not be able to remember much of our past, but that does not mean that we have destroyed those impressions or that they have disappeared from our mind. All impressions that occur on our mind remain unharmed with the evolution current and the fact that we cannot remember certain events merely means either that other subsequent impressions are covering them, or our mind is too feeble to bring them over to the surface to read them. Very often, both these causes contribute to our lack of memory.

Merely because we cannot remember the various events of our past life, we must not think that there is nothing existing with the evolution current. Every reflection that we form on our mind penetrates into the evolution current and forms in it a subtle impression which remains in permanent deposit.

When we do a good action, we form in our mind, a number of thoughts of good action, and each such thought is a reflection on our mind. And every such reflection carries into the mind an impression; these impressions accumulate with the evolution current. Similarly, when we do an evil action, we form in our mind a large number of evil thoughts in order to gain the necessary strength to do that action. These thoughts are also reflections which carry into the mind impressions and the evolution current gathers them, too, and preserves them as securely as the impressions of good action. We must remember that every impression we absorb into the evolution current of our mind is either an impression of good action (kusala kamma) or an impression of evil action (akusala kamma).

We must also remember that thoughts of action are only those which move, or tend to move, our body to action. The sensations of pleasure or pain we experience on our mind are not thoughts of action, nor does the mind develop thoughts of action during periods when we are in a state of subconsciousness. During periods when we are living in pleasure or pain, or subconsciousness, we are passing through times of reactions.

Moments of thoughts of action, therefore, are comparatively few in number, and even amongst them, only a very small proportion come within the degree of intensity to warrant our classifying them as good or evil. We need not bother about the large number of feeble thoughts occurring in our mind, because, although they too could be classed under the two categories, good and evil, the impressions they carry into the mind are very weak, and, therefore, they do not affect the evolution current very much.

The stronger thoughts of good actions and evil actions, however, carry into the evolution current very deep impressions, and they remain in strength in the mind for very long periods

These impressions of good and evil actions enter the evolution current in the manner of seeds, and the evolution current receives them in the manner of a fertile seed bed. Seeds of a species produce fruits of the same species; similarly, good actions grow and bear fruit in the form of pleasure; and evil impressions grow and bear fruit in the form of pain.

QUESTION 15.

Can Devas help us?

Answer :—

Devas are a species of beings belonging to a slightly higher plane of material existence than man. These Devas are born with adequate strength of mind to develop penetrating vision and, although they live far away from us, some of them are able to extend their vision even to this Earth.

The Devas who are not too addicted to indulging themselves in sensual pleasure, devote part of their time to extend their vision on our Earth and watch human beings at work. If these searching Devas manage to catch the human beings doing good deeds, they form in themselves, thoughts of delight and thereby accumulate impressions of good thoughts in their own minds.

The reason why these Devas look down towards Earth for people doing good actions is, that they have no opportunity in their world to perform an act of goodwill. This is because everyone amongst their fellow beings is so well provided with all the comforts, that there does not exist a beggar to give alms to, nor a life to save.

The only chance a Deva has to accumulate a few impressions of merit, therefore, is to watch the people who are doing good deeds, and to reflect approvingly of such work, and thus entering into their minds a few impressions of good thought. When Devas grow old and near the end of the force of the merit they were born with, they cast eager eyes on Earth in the hope that by gazing at the people doing good work, they might be able to gather a little more merit to live in the world of the Devas a short while longer.

Very often, the Devas who find themselves overpowered by other Devas, too, look hurriedly towards good people with the hope of gathering a little more merit to build up the strength to beat the rivals. One such instance occurs in the Buddhist Scriptures where it is said that in the world of the Devas of Tāvatinsa, the Sakra, who is the king of that world, found himself suddenly overwhelmed by another Deva of superior strength; thereupon, the Sakra cast his vision on this Earth and managed to gather into him a sufficiently strong charge of merit to meet the situation.

The Devas, therefore, in spite of their pleasures and plentiful supplies of material comforts, are a pitiable set of beings who very often require our assistance. The Buddhists who understand the nature of these beings, remember them whenever they do a good deed and thus add to their own good deeds further thoughts of loving charity. The addition of thoughts of loving charity increases and strengthens the force of one's good deeds. If a Deva were to glimpse a person thus thinking of the Devas, they become exceedingly delighted and such delight helps to form in their minds impressions of merit of considerable force.

By thinking of the Devas when doing good deeds, we increase the force of our own actions. This, after all, is an effort on our own part; the Devas do not take a hand in what we think. It is, therefore, not possible to say that this is a benefit that the Devas confer on us. When we analyse the whole situation more closely, it would be more correct to say that we confer on the Devas a measure of assistance. We may, in a way, say that a measure of mutual assistance exists, and whatever this may be, this assistance to either party is not very substantial.

These Devas sometimes create a few apparitions here and there. But they never do any harm to anyone; and, before

those who cannot understand them, they do not appear at all. During the time of the Buddha these apparitions appeared very often to consult the Buddha and on various other harmless errands. During modern times, they do not seem to have appeared on Earth, probably because persons like the Buddha are not available to understand them.

Devas are not in a position to interfere with the way we think or work. They cannot alter the course of our fates and fortunes; not even the Buddha can do so. The Devas can watch us; they can neither help us nor harm us.

QUESTION 16.

Does kamma condition our life at all times ?

Answer :—

In the mind of each being in the universe, there exist vast accumulations of past impressions. These impressions are of two kinds : impressions of good action, and impressions of evil action.

On every occasion when our thoughts develop into an active state, an impression enters the innermost force of our mind which is known as the current of evolution (jīvitindriya). The impressions thus entering the evolution current of our mind germinate, grow, and ultimately fructify in the mind.

Even in our present birth, up to the present time, the number of impressions that have entered the evolution current of our mind is vast. All thoughts occurring on our mind produce impressions, and the stronger thoughts such as those causing the movements of our physical body produce deep impressions.

In addition to these impressions of our present life, we have brought forward from our past lives a vast collection of impressions. Most of these impressions have remained with the evolution current of our mind for thousands, and often for millions, of years and they are, therefore, in different stages of growth.

A good proportion of the impressions of our past actions appears in full maturity in our present life, but all of them cannot discharge their forces of fruition simultaneously. Only the strongest amongst them appear in active force and the less strong mature forces remain suppressed in our mind. The less strong forces, however, keep on pressing their strength

continuously to achieve fruition, and with the aid of additional forces that the environment may supply, they often find it possible to achieve fruition obstructing and delaying the fruition of all other forces of impressions.

Our present life, for instance, has come about as fruition of a large number of past impressions of purity (kusala kamma). We may be in. the enjoyment of the best of physical health, which again is the fruition of past impressions. If in the midst of our pleasures of good health, we become the victim of a painful disease or accident, it merely means that the forces of the impressions of purity which brought us good health, has been expended and an impression of defilement has fructified to cause us the pain.

The particular area into which we have been born has been determined by the forces of kamma. We are born into a certain society, because, at the end of our last life, a number of mature impressions took position to fructify in this life, and for that purpose, the society into which we have been born has the most appropriate environment to give expression.

During our progress in life, a little effort on our part may provide all the additional forces necessary for the mature impressions of purity remaining suppressed in the evolution current of our mind to thrust forth the forces of fruition. We may, for instance, be carrying the mature impressions of purity capable of bringing us success in a particular profession. As a sign of the presence of a mature impression of such potentiality, we may have on various occasions developed the desire to attempt to enter it. If such desire were followed up with the requisite preliminary work to enter the profession, the full benefits of the impression of purity would accrue to us in the form of a very successful career. The average human being, therefore,

must very often take a hand in bringing to fruition his past good kamma.

In the same way, we may, by our lack of caution, cause the fruition of our past impressions of defilement. The additional forces of defilement caused by our negligence, for instance, would add to an existing growth of an impression of defilement in our mind and thus make it strong enough to fructify.

We may often find it difficult to ascribe the force of kamma to many of the trivial incidents in our life; but we must remember that trivial impressions too exist in the evolution current of our mind.

QUESTION 17.

How does our memory work ?

Answer :—

Centred in our heart, and spread throughout our physical systems, there exists the innermost force of mind which has been referred to in the last answer and which is identified in Buddhism as the evolution current (jīvitindriya). This force is the repository in which all our impressions accumulate.

In regard to this characteristic, the force of evolution acts like extremely delicate modelling wax. All reflections appearing on our six sense organs, eye, ear, nose, tongue, touch, and heart get meticulously recorded in the evolution force in the form of impressions. The evolution current travels through life with time, and carries with it the impressions formed in this manner.

When a visual image enters the evolution force, the impression remains in the form of a picture of the sight; if it is a sound, the impression remains in the form of a record of the sound; if it is a taste, the impression remains in the form of an exact record of the same taste; if it is a sensation of touch, the impression remains in the form of a record of the same sensation; and if it is an emotion such as love or hatred, it remains in the form of a record of the same emotion.

Most of our experiences involve the activity of a number of sense organs and, sometimes, an experience might even involve the activity of all the six of them. Whatever the number of sense organs that become active in our experiences, the evolution current receives impressions from all of them and preserves them in deposit in their due order.

The mechanism of memory consists of reviving these impressions and reading back the records. When we are remembering an incident we experienced, the mind's process is to bring back on the different sense organs faint reflections with the aid of which we experience the same incident in a faint way. In other words, when we are remembering an incident, what we do is to play back the records of our mind and thus experience the same incident over again.

Persons with strong minds receive impressions accurately and also their freshness lasts for long periods. But those with weak minds, form very feeble impressions and, therefore, their revival is difficult. Such persons often tend to forget their experiences easily.

Even strong impressions entering into deposit in a strong evolution force are liable to be obliterated from the mind owing to the passage of time. This happens because of the records of impressions getting submerged as a result of subsequent impressions. Owing to this reason, fresh impressions can be read back easily and the old impressions are difficult to be revived. When an impression in deposit with the evolution current is revived, it has the effect of refreshing the mind and, therefore, those impressions we revive frequently remain in our mind in fresh form for long periods.

An impression entering into deposit with the evolution current of our mind can never be erased completely. They remain in permanent record and even after millions of years it is possible to revive them if we develop a mind sufficiently strong for the purpose. It is with such strength of mind that the Buddhas and Arahats could give all the details of their past lives.

Those impressions entering the evolution current of our mind as a result of our thoughts and deeds of action, enter in the

form of seeds to grow and fructify, but, even after fructifying, the impression does not get obliterated. We think in terms of colours, sounds, tastes, and other sensations; and in the same way we also remember by reviving in our sense organs the different sensations we experienced in the past.

QUESTION 18.

Is the destruction of some kinds of life justifiable according to Buddhism ?

Answer :—

The Buddha has not excluded the possibility of life existing anywhere in the universe. The fact that life exists in the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat is well known to the Buddhists.

Life in this world is such that total abstinence from destruction of life is impracticable, *e.g.* we cannot prevent the destruction of life in the air we breathe in because life will be impossible without breathing.

It would certainly be ideal if we could avoid the destruction of all kinds of life, but we have to face the stark realities of this world and avoid the destruction of our own life in our attempt to be over sympathetic. The Buddha's advice to the world is to keep to the Golden Middle Path (majjhima patipadā) and to see that human life is maintained at the least cost to the other beings.

The Buddha has left rather rigid rules for the guidance of the Monks. They, for instance, are expected to filter water before drinking, which is a measure towards minimizing the destruction of life, and it is also a safety measure against disease. The Monks are asked not to break or destroy plants, because the Buddha recognized that plants have life.

The Monks, being persons who have dedicated themselves to a life of maximum purity, try to reduce the destruction of life as much as possible, but, still, absolute abstinence from destruction is impossible to be achieved. The Buddha had a good

purpose in prescribing these rules to the Monks. The Monks have retired from normal life, and they live mostly on the alms given by other persons.

To the layman, however, the Buddha has not laid any rigid rule in regard to destruction of life. Each one is at liberty to determine whether or not to destroy life, or where to draw the line. Unlike the Monk, the layman does not aspire to ascend to the state of an Arahat in this life, and minor defilements, therefore, do not cause him much harm.

There are two ways in which destruction of life occurs: unconscious destruction, as may happen when an insect gets crushed when we are walking; and conscious destruction, such as killing for food. We need not worry about unconscious destruction, because such destruction does not cause in our mind any impressions of defilement. But we have to be very heedful of all types of conscious destruction of life.

We must comprehend that all types of conscious destruction of life produce defilements in our mind. In the lay life of the human being, a certain amount of conscious destruction of life also appears very often unavoidable. For one who is confronted with such destruction of life, the first necessary step is to see that no life is destroyed without reasonable purpose.

The higher the beings destroyed, the graver the defilements become. Plant life has no consciousness, and, therefore, its destruction does not produce appreciable defilement; but higher life, such as the life of animals, cause grave defilement; and the destruction of the highest life, *i.e.* human life, causes the most fierce defilements. Before deciding to kill, therefore, one must always weigh the weight of defilement he is accumulating in his mind against the purpose for which the destruction is contemplated. One may appreciably reduce the intensity of defilements in this manner.

Considering all the factors, we may say that, since life is impossible without destruction of some kind of life or other, destruction of life for the purpose of food, and also for the purpose of preserving more worthy life, is less harmful than the destruction of life to satisfy one's hatred, jealousy, and pleasure.

QUESTION 19.

What is the Buddhist Doctrine of Dependent Origination ?

Answer :—

The various phenomena of the universe come within two broad classifications: definite phenomena and infinite phenomena. An origin exists for every definite phenomenon; but in the case of infinite phenomena, no origin is available. Time is an infinite phenomenon and has no origin; but the period we describe as a day is a definite phenomenon. It is a length of time between two events. The event which marks the beginning of the day is the origin of the day. Space is an infinite phenomenon and hence it has neither origin nor boundary. But if we enclose a definite volume of space and build a house, the house we build is a definite phenomenon and, therefore, has an origin. We may say that our conceiving the idea to build is the origin of the house.

Life is also an infinite phenomenon and, as in all other infinite phenomena, it is without origin. But man is a definite link in the process of life. There is, therefore, an origin of man. So are the other beings. Each being in the universe is a definite link in a process of life and, as such, each being in the universe has an origin.

The Buddha's doctrine of dependent origination (paticca samuppadā) is a comprehensive explanation of the origin of man and other beings in the universe; it is not an explanation of the origin of infinite phenomena such as time, space, or life. In order to understand this doctrine, it is essential that we should in the first instance understand the exact process of death, birth, and existence.

Mind, as we have mentioned on previous occasions, is a unit of energy existing spread throughout the physical system of each living being. The unit of mind each being carries beats in its physical system at a speed of about 3 billion times per the duration of a flash of lightning. At the moment of death, the unit of mind ceases to utilize its energy to maintain the physical system. The energy of the mind thus freed gathers into the heart and flashes out in a vision of thought (cuti citta).

This vision occurring in all material beings who have not destroyed their accumulations of ignorance completely, *i.e.* those who have not achieved the state of Arahat, is subject to the obstruction of ignorance. It is ignorance (avijjā) which confines our vision at death within the material universe.

The range of the vision of death of each being is varied by the forces of the impressions of purity and defilement (sankhāra). The vision of death extends out in this manner and the forces of ignorance produce greed (tanhā) which brings the vision to a halt at the highest possible plane of existence. Greed produces a force of clinging (upadāna) and with its aid, the vision of death gets strongly attached to the new field. When the last beat of the mind in a life ends, the vision is thoroughly attached to a new field, and the entire forces of the mind migrate into the new field abandoning their hold on the old physical system. On the complete migration of the unit of mind, conception (bhava) takes place. The unit of mind, thus begins to form into a new life.

At the first beat of the unit of mind (patisandhi) in the new field of existence, consciousness (viññāna) of the new existence occurs and, consequently, it gathers the various elements to cover itself. Thus, the mental and physical combination (nāma rūpa) takes place. At various stages of the development of the physical system, the sense organs (āyatana) form them-

selves. The sense organs cause sense reflections and impressions (phassa) and the sense impressions cause pain and pleasure (vedanā). In this manner, we mature into existence and continue until death

The force of matter gripped by the unit of mind at birth in building the physical system causes decay and death (jarā marana). And at death, the process we mentioned repeats and rebirth (jāti) takes place. Thus, the process of existence of all beings turns in this cycle; birth originating death, and death originating rebirth.

QUESTION 20.

Does "NAMA GOTTAN NAJIRATI" really mean "FAMOUS NAMES NEVER DIE" ?

Answer :—

All students of Abhidhamma are familiar with the usage of the word "nāma" at different levels of discussion. When we say "nāma rūpa" we invariably understand the word "nāma" to mean "mind". In its most profound sense, the word "nāma" means "paramattha", *i.e.* infinite factors of the universe. The word "gottan" means "process" and "najīrati" means "never decay or die". We can thus arrive at the meaning: "the process of the infinite factors of the universe never decay or die".

The infinite factors of the universe are the mind, the four great abstract elements, and the sky element or space. The process of these infinite factors is without any beginning and, therefore, these factors never decay or die. This interpretation of "nāma gottan najīrati", therefore, is quite appropriate, because it is an exposition of a fundamental truth repeated often by the Buddha.

If, however, we interpret the word "nāma" as "personal name" and the word "gottan" as "family", it is not possible to make any sense. None of these three words has any trace of the meaning "fame". It is a riddle as to how the word "famous" came to be attached to the interpretation. It, probably, is an interpolation on the part of those persons who liked to propagate the idea "famous names never die". We can put this interpretation to the test of Buddhist philosophy and see where it would lead us.

The Buddha had declared that all component things in the universe are subject to decay and "famous names", too, are

for this purpose, component things and they are not immune from this natural law. We may take an instance from the Buddha's own life to illustrate this. During the time of the Buddha, everybody acknowledged the fact that the Buddha was the most famous man of the time. Some even went so far as to declare that the Buddha's name is immortal. The Buddha, however, quickly stepped into the scene to rectify this error. He declared that his name was as mortal as any other object of the universe and proceeded further to state that 5,000 years was the maximum period his reputation would last.

Even if we establish a fame sufficiently strong to occupy a chapter of the history book, there is no reason at all to imagine that the history books will carry that chapter for ever. Every succeeding century will see to it that this chapter of the history book is clipped off paragraph by paragraph and, ultimately, in a few thousand years, nothing at all of the chapter of the history book will become available even to catch the scrutiny of the ardent research scholars. Thus, even the most famous name, is subject to decay and death.

In the case of the majority of us who die without entering into the notice of the historian, our names may not last even a century; and, very likely, in about ten or twenty years after our death, our names would be mere forgotten dreams in the minds of our descendants.

We may also consider here whether leaving a name has any use to the person concerned. To the outsiders who remain behind in life, of course, a famous name has many uses, but to the famous man himself, there is very little benefit. Two distinct events must coincide in order that a famous man may benefit from his fame after his death. This man must be born in a world of ghosts (preta loka) and some good natured person must perform an act of charity in his honour. In such an event,

the famous man can watch the good deed done in his honour and the sense of delight such actions produce would fill his mind with purity which helps him to be relieved of his lower existence.

In our next life, we would be too busy with the pains and pleasures of that life, and also very often we may not be born with sufficient strength of mind to look back and ruminate on our famous past lives. It is the impressions of good actions and evil actions in our life that we carry into our next rebirth; we cannot and we do not carry our honour and fame there.

To say that "famous names never die" is a misinterpretation of Buddhist philosophy.

QUESTION 21.

How could Buddhism establish peace and harmony?

Answer :—

Four main factors are responsible for all the violence and cruelty in this world : ignorance, greed, hatred, and jealousy. If the traces of ignorance, greed, hatred, and jealousy are removed from our mind, we cannot be violent, neither can we be cruel. The task of Buddhism is to develop a society where the effect of these four factors is eliminated as much as possible. There are various methods employed, and the most effective amongst them are the methods adopted to remove ignorance from our mind.

If the darkness of ignorance is not obscuring our vision, we would not be doing many of the foolish things we often do. Nothing is such a deterrent to violent action and cruelty as a realization of the fundamental truths of the universe and the understanding of the nature of the life we live. We may, for instance, consider the attitude of a society convinced of the truth of rebirth. If we are fully convinced of the process of rebirth, we cannot escape feeling that we are all birds of passage. None of us can develop the sense of "'my people", "my wealth", or "my country".

If we are convinced of rebirth, how could we describe one country as "our country" because it could well have been that, during our last life, we were born in another country and were referring to that country as "our country"? Or, in the future, we might be reborn in another country and would be referring to our present country and nation as "foreign". Considering in this manner, we would soon find us thinking of ourselves as "citizens of the world" rather than as citizens of a particular country.

We cannot have enemies, because our present enemies might have been our best friends during our last life, or they might be our best friends in our next life. There is also the possibility of our being reborn in the enemy camp to fight against our present allies. We cannot look down upon anyone as an outcast or menial, because the very outcast or menial might have been our forefather during a past life; or it may happen that this outcast or menial might become our parent or child or other close relative in a future life.

If we are conscious of rebirth, we would not promote any hatred, nor would we produce any dangerous situations, because we never know whether we would not be reborn to be the victims of the very hatred we promoted or the situations we produced. In short, we would not cause any harm to anyone and also we would see that we do not participate in anything which is likely to cause any suffering to anyone even in the future.

When we are considering in this manner, our attitude towards our friends, too, would become rapidly changed, for we do not know whether our present friends have not been our past enemies or whether they would not become our future enemies. We would thus refrain from being too much attached to our friends, whilst at the same time avoiding to be cruel to our enemies.

We would, ultimately, realize that the society which we live in is a most tangled mess and we would see that the only safe measure available is to adopt an attitude of equanimity. Without being too hateful towards our enemies, and without being too attached to our friends, we would thus proceed with life keeping to the middle course and extending loving sympathy (metta) to all.

When we realize the fact that life is temporary, we can bear up our occasional spells of jealousy and hatred. And, if we be

of a condition to help others, we would not hesitate to offer whatever assistance we could.

If ignorance is removed by methods of understanding the truths of life and the universe, we will realize that it is a gamble to be violent and cruel, and that the satisfaction we may temporarily receive from violence and cruelty is not worth the risk involved. The less ignorant we become, the less cruel and violent we would be.

QUESTION 22.

How does Buddhism prove that the mind is the primary factor of the universe?

Answer :—

The mind is the forerunner of all our actions. We cannot do anything without the active co-operation of our mind. Both in good actions and in evil actions, the mind takes its due part. No action is possible to us without first thinking about it; and thoughts occur only on the mind. When our mind is controlled, our physical body remains controlled; and when our mind is free, our physical body acts without restraint, giving free expression to our thoughts and emotions. The mind, thus, is the factor which controls all our actions.

Each of us is built of the forces of the mind which is in us. The world we live in is built of all the units of mind existing in the world; and the universe is built by the various units of mind existing in the universe. In this connection, it is necessary for us to understand the various forces brought to bear by the mind on the universe and, for this purpose, we must analyse the different components of the universe.

The universe consists of the material elements and the units of mind. Each person or being in the universe is a unit of mind and the elements also exist in the form of units, but they are not discernible to us until they solidify in the different substances which we experience with the aid of our environment sense organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and touch. The elements in their form as individual units, and the units of mind are discernible only to our mind, which is our internal sense organ.

The mind exists in its concentrated strength in the heart and, therefore, the heart can gather sufficient force to focus

deeper reflections. That is why our major emotions such as love, hatred, and jealousy spring in the heart. All our activities are ultimately linked to the manner in which the heart acts, and the heart cannot act without the co-operation of the mind. Mind must give its consent for any organ of its material system to act and, when the consent of the mind is withdrawn, the physical system ceases its actions.

A person's entire physical system is controlled by the forces of his mind. Without the forces of our mind, we cannot move our physical systems. The mind provides the motive power for our physical systems to perform their different functions and, in short, the mind is the force which keeps each person or being in life. The moment we are without the forces of our mind, we are dead.

The mind maintains our physical systems and also it causes the production of our emotions and thoughts. We took conception in this world with the forces of our mind and the same force of mind whirls within each of us and continues until death. Whilst remaining in our physical systems, the forces of mind spring into activity occasionally producing thoughts and emotions, and, very often, our mind remains in a passive state merely maintaining our physical systems in life.

The mind is an energy and is subject to the law of conservation of energy. It is the mind that causes the process of rebirth. If the strength of our mind were increased by the accumulation of impressions of purity (kusala kamma), we would be reborn in a higher plane of existence. If we were of weaker mind, due to the accumulation of impressions of defilement (akusala kamma), we would be reborn in a lower plane of existence. If we are well disciplined and well disposed towards life, we increase the strength of our mind. And, if we are lacking in discipline and character, we reduce the strength

of our mind. What ultimate balance of strength we may find ourselves carrying within our mind at the moment of our death, would determine invariably the plane of life into which we would be reborn.

This world and the universe evolves according to the total mental strength of all the beings circulating in them. When the total strength of the beings in the universe increases, the forces and the formations in the universe increase in number, extent, and strength; and when the total strength of the beings in the universe decreases, as happens at the end of each universe period (kappa), the universe loses its strength and, until the beings in the universe liquidate their defilements and thus gather strength to evolve the universe anew, the universe dissolves itself in space. Every Buddhist doctrine seeks to prove the supremacy of the mind in the universe and Nibbāna itself is achieved by processing the forces of the mind.

QUESTION 23.

What is Nibbana?

Answer :—

There is a state of existence which is beyond all the influences of matter. This is perpetual happiness of mental bliss, absolutely free from all kinds of suffering and not subject to the forces of decay and death.

Like all other ultimate factors of the universe, Nibbāna is only discernible to the mind; we cannot understand Nibbāna in terms of our five environment sensations. In order to comprehend the nature of Nibbāna, it is essential that we should, in the first instance, comprehend the nature of all the ultimate factors of the universe.

There are altogether 82 different factors constituting the universe and, of these, 28 come under the category of matter, and the balance 54 belong to the category of mind. By sifting the different factors belonging to both categories, we can arrive at the primary factors of the universe and, from thence, we could proceed to our examination of Nibbāna.

The elements consist of 13 elements of inanimate matter and 15 elements of animate matter. The four great abstract elements, abstract earth, abstract water, abstract air, and abstract heat; the sky or space element, the five projective elements (gocara rūpa), and the three feature elements (lakshana rūpa) are the 13 elements of inanimate matter. Animate matter consists of the five reflective elements (pasāda rūpa), the heart element, the evolution element, the two sex elements, food element, two motion elements (viññatti rūpa) and the three condition elements (vikāra rūpa).

On the combination of the four great abstract elements, the nine other abstract elements of inanimate matter emerge; and when the forces of mind are brought to bear on such a combination, the 15 elements of animate matter come into existence. It is, therefore, possible to say that the four great abstract elements are the primary elements of matter and the balance 24 abstract elements are secondary elements of matter.

We may also analyse the 54 mental factors of the universe into their primary and secondary categories. The 54 mental factors are divisible as: 1 of mind (citta), 52 of mental currents of thoughts (cetasika), and 1 of Nibbāna. Without the mind, thoughts cannot appear, and without mind and thoughts, Nibbāna cannot occur. We may, therefore, say that the mind is the primary factor amongst the 54 mental factors of the universe and the 52 currents of thoughts and Nibbāna are the secondary mental factors. Our task now is to see how the secondary mental factors result from the primary mental factor, namely, mind.

The currents of thoughts (cetasika) are merely sub-divisions of the mind and, therefore, mind and currents of thoughts have to be considered together. This leaves us with the mental factors of the universe divided into two broad categories: mind is one, and Nibbāna is the other. The word "mind" is merely the collective name given to the 52 different mental currents; a separate entity which could be distinguished as "mind" does not exist. We could, thus, confine ourselves to the examination of mental currents in our effort to understand Nibbāna.

The 52 mental currents have to be sifted according to their functions. There are 7 currents occurring at active strength continuously throughout every beat of mind and, as such, they are considered in the class known as common currents (sabba

citta sādhārana). Immediately preceding the occurrence of our thoughts or sensations, 6 other currents spring into active strength and these are known as supplementary currents (pakinnaka). The 13 currents thus springing into activity bring us 39 different sensations of which 14 belong to the category known as sensations of defilements, and the balance 25 belong to the category of sensations of purity (kusala cetasika). Of all the mental currents, only the 14 currents of defilements can be destroyed completely.

There are three currents belonging to the category of defilement currents which control the strength of the balance 11 currents of defilements. These are named the current of ignorance (moha), current of greed (lobha), and the current of hatred (dosa). In like manner, there are also three currents of purity which control the strength and incidence of the rest of the currents of purity. These are: the current of knowledge (amoha), the current of benevolence (alobha), and the current of loving sympathy (adosa).

The process of attaining Nibbāna consists of removing the forces of the currents of defilements and, of them, the most difficult currents to remove are the currents of ignorance, greed, and hatred. If all traces of ignorance, greed, and hatred are removed from our mind, the other currents of defilement cannot exist in our mind and, therefore, all the 14 currents of defilement would disappear. The mind cleansed in this manner realizes Nibbāna.

In order to remove the currents of defilements, the only method is to increase the strength of the forces of the opposing currents of purity. Loving sympathy destroys hatred ; benevolence destroys greed; and knowledge destroys ignorance.

Ignorance is the cause for the appearance of all defilements, and knowledge is causing the appearance of all currents of purity.

The primary factors amongst the 39 currents of sensations, therefore, are the currents of ignorance and knowledge.

In the mind of a person who is about to achieve the state of Arahat, *i.e.* a person who is about to realize fully the state of Nibbāna, the currents of ignorance and knowledge are locked in mortal grip. No sooner is the last bond of ignorance breached by bringing to bear the last charge of knowledge necessary for full enlightenment, than the state of Arahat is reached and Nibbāna realized. Thereafter, it is only a matter of time for the aspirant to attain the actual matterless and painless existence of perpetual happiness and bliss, which is the Nibbāna accruing to him after death.

QUESTION 24.

Was the Buddha a man with extraordinary physique?

Answer :—

All the evidence in the Buddhist Scriptures points to the fact that the Buddha was a man of ordinary physique. When we study the life of the Buddha, we come across numerous passages which support the view that the Buddha was not as tall as 27 ft. and proportionately bulky, as many people in modern times suppose him to be.

The Buddha as Prince Siddhārtha lived in the palace of his father and no traces exist either in history or in Buddhist Scriptures to indicate that any structural alterations were made to his father's palace to accommodate Prince Siddhārtha. There is no dispute at all that King Suddhodana, the father of the Buddha, was a man of common build, and, if he reared a son of such massive physical size, he would obviously have had to make considerable provision for his comfort.

There is evidence in Buddhist Scriptures that the Prince Siddhārtha rode in chariots drawn by horses and no horse chariot could accommodate a man 27 ft. tall unless specially designed. There is also the evidence of the Prince Siddhārtha's trip on horse back on the day of his great renunciation. The horse Kantaka was a horse of ordinary size and, for it to have carried the Prince Siddhārtha so deftly across over moors and streams, the Prince Siddhārtha could well have been a small made man.

After attaining the state of enlightenment, the Buddha visited various people in their homes and lived in apartments constructed according to standard type and generally took part in all activities without any inconvenience to himself and

others. When the Buddha visited Ceylon, the chronicles record that the king offered his own throne as a seat for the Buddha, but the chronicles do not say that the Buddha found this seat uncomfortable.

The notion that the Buddha was a physical giant has spread owing to the excess of enthusiasm on the part of some adherents. It could also have been that some people interpret the ancient images of the Buddha found in the various Buddhist countries too literally.

QUESTION 25.

Will there be a time when all the beings in the universe would have attained Nibbana ?

Answer :—

There is a notion amongst some Buddhists that, after a very long lapse of time, all the beings in the universe would attain Nibbāna. This notion has obviously resulted from a misconception of the characteristics of infinite phenomena.

It is true that Prince Siddhārtha Gautama, the Buddha of our current history, is one amongst a large number of Buddhas who have appeared in the past. The Buddhist Scriptures speak of the appearance of three other Buddhas (Kakusanda, Konagama, and Kasyapa) during the present universe period itself. The Buddhist Scriptures also record the names of 24 other Buddhas who had appeared in the universe immediately preceding our present universe. Going back along time across the universes which had appeared and disintegrated in still earlier times, the Buddha came across innumerable periods of Buddhas. In short, the Buddhas in the past are infinite in number.

In the future, during the course of the existence of the present material universe itself, there is one more Buddha to appear. The present universe thus has a total of five periods of evolution when Buddhas appear. After the 5th Buddha, *i.e.* Metteyya, has appeared, and his influence on the civilization of his time has ebbed, the universe in different slow stages degenerates and finally dissolves itself in space. Thus, after existing for billions of years, the present material universe ends, turning all matter into free energy.

At the end of the universe, all material beings lose their strength of evolution, but owing to the extreme suffering they

have to undergo during this period, they liquidate their defilements and regain strength of evolution. When a sufficient number of beings have gained strength of evolution in this manner, the universe builds itself over again in different stages of material evolution.

In the same manner as our present material universe, the future universes, too, evolve to the point when the civilization of beings rise to the degree requisite for the emergence of Buddhas. In the same manner as there had been an infinite number of Buddhas in the past, there will be an infinite number of Buddhas in the future. In one universe, only a very few Buddhas appear, as for instance, the present universe has only five Buddhas. Although the number of Buddhas in each universe is so small, the number of universes is infinite. Even if each universe produces only one Buddha, the universes appearing in the future are so numerous that there will be an infinite number of Buddhas appearing. There will be a never-ending chain of future universes and, in the height of evolution of each such universe, one of the beings would bloom as a Buddha.

A Buddha, as we discussed in a recent answer, is a discoverer of Nibbāna. When material beings grow up in evolution and attain a degree of intelligence such as human intelligence, it is natural for many of them to look for ultimate truths. Nibbāna is the ultimate truth of the universe, and the first person to discover this ultimate truth in each period of material evolution, is termed Buddha. No discoverer of Nibbāna keeps his discovery to himself, but takes to the task of explaining the significance of his discovery to others. Many others benefit by the revelation of such discoverers and, in fact, most of them realize the Nibbāna themselves. In this way, with each Buddha appearing, many beings attain Nibbāna.

When a person has attained Nibbāna, he does not revert to material life. In other words, for each being attaining Nibbāna,

the material universe loses one being from it for good. This process goes on indefinitely for infinite periods of time, when, during the course of infinite number of universes, an infinite number of Buddhas would discover and enter Nibbāna. Then in addition, each Buddha helps many other beings to attain Nibbāna.

The question, therefore, is whether all this depletion of beings from the material universe exhausts the supply of beings in the material universe. We may answer that the supply of beings (sattwa visa) is infinite (accintaya) and infinite quantities live, never exhausted. However much is taken from an infinite quantity, the balance left behind will still remain invariably infinite.

QUESTION 26.

What are the advantages of Buddhist ritual and is it really necessary ?

Answer :—

Buddhism is a philosophy devoted to explaining the ultimate laws of the universe and the best benefits accrue to those who make a study of Buddhism and realize by conviction these ultimate laws. A mature intellect and much leisure are needed by one who aspires to understand fully the higher Buddhist doctrines. Many persons go to the extent of retiring from worldly life and entering the order of the Buddhist Monks in order to make a thorough study of Buddhism.

Whether as a Monk or as a layman, if one has made a good study of Buddhism, and comprehended the basic truths of the doctrines, there is no need to participate in elaborate ritual. Such a person would find pleasure in a life of good discipline, and good habits would become inborn in him; he would know his responsibility and he would always do his duty.

Although the convinced Buddhist may thus dispense with ritual altogether, he still remains a person practising ritual in a more profound way. The convinced Buddhist may not display any outside signs of religious fervour. Instead of ritual, he would live the life he learnt from Buddhism and thus be useful to himself and as many of his fellow beings as possible.

The aim of Buddhist ritual is to promote good habits. It is not possible for everybody to be convinced Buddhists. Many a layman cannot find the time to learn Buddhism to the level of reaching full conviction. Children cannot grasp the higher doctrines until they are mature. Both the layman who is unable to investigate or who is too lazy to investigate, and the child who

is too immature to understand, cannot postpone to live the Buddhist way of life until they are fully convinced of the truths of Buddhism. The more mature persons in whose influence they live have to give them guidance in fashioning their way of life.

It is the duty of the persons who are convinced of the truths of life to teach what they know so that the others may themselves be convinced. If this is not possible, there is the duty thrust on them to give them the necessary guidance to enable the less intelligent to achieve intelligence later on. This is how Buddhist ritual has come into being.

The intelligent people who have actually experienced the truths appearing in Buddhism, have prescribed a certain code of behaviour to enable the less intelligent persons to acquire the same benefits immediately and to reach the same wisdom later on.

The practice of Buddhism consists of performing acts of loving charity (dāna), discipline (sīla), and contemplation and meditation (bhāvana). All Buddhist ritual is fashioned in such a way that these three objects are achieved by practising it. From the act of offering a flower at a Buddhist temple, to the act of listening to a Buddhist sermon on a full moon day, all acts of ritual that are practised by the Buddhists have only the flavour of dāna, sīla, and bhāvana.

When a person gets into the habit of loving charity he would tend to keep to that habit throughout his life; when a person gets into a habit of good behaviour he would tend to keep to that habit throughout his life; and when a person gets into a habit of thinking deep on the various subjects that confront him, he would in course of time become sufficiently wise to understand the higher truths of life.

It is difficult for any person to break a habit, and since Buddhist ritual is always conducted to promote habits of charity, discipline, and deep-thinking, participating in Buddhist ritual is beneficial and, therefore, necessary for all Buddhists. Organization of Buddhist ritual is in the interests of the preservation of the doctrine for the benefit of posterity, for, when the good habits promoted by Buddhist ritual become part of the life of a family or nation, force of habit would keep alive the good way of life, even in the face of disaster.

Although the convinced Buddhist may sometimes consider participation in Buddhist ritual as unnecessary, there is a great measure of good accruing even to himself, by visiting Buddhist temples, listening to Buddhist lectures, participating in Buddhist discussions, and generally understanding his fellow Buddhists, and helping them where possible.

QUESTION 27.

Did the Buddha and Arahats perform miracles ?

Answer :—

Any person who develops his mind by methods of concentration achieves a certain measure of psychic force. It is possible to perform certain physical actions by utilizing such psychic forces.

The Buddha and Arahats developed their minds mainly by concentration and meditation and ultimately they achieved the state of full enlightenment which is the highest degree of perfection of mind development. In the course of their mental exercises, the Buddha and Arahats acquired great psychic powers and by utilizing them they could perform many acts which to the ordinary person appeared to be wonders.

The Buddha and Arahats, however, did not utilize these psychic powers indiscriminately. It was always their method to preach the doctrine, and they found that for this purpose psychic powers were useless. They also had penetrating vision and, with its aid, they knew the exact character of their audiences. Whenever they explained a doctrine to a particular audience, they knew the exact intellectual capacity of that audience, and, therefore, they gave their sermon in a depth and vocabulary appropriate for each occasion.

During the time of the Buddha, there were many people who were practising various kinds of occult arts. Many people who took to the ascetic life during his time could perform miracles of various kinds with the aid of psychic powers they had developed. So that, a display of psychic powers was considered at that time as proof of the honesty of an ascetic. There were, therefore, some people for whom the only means

of proving the honesty of the Buddha was to display a few miracles to convince them. The Buddha has performed a few miracles to some of them, but he has always explained to them later what the real nature of his miracles were.

The Buddha and some of the Arahats had also to deal with various other types of people and often amongst them were the worst people of his time; people like murderers and robbers. These people could not be made to listen, and in order to attract their attention and thus make them to listen, the Buddha and some of his Arahats performed certain acts of miracles. These miracles have saved them a great deal of risk and time.

Buddhist Scriptures also record many instances when Buddha and Arahats have utilized their psychic powers for the purpose of travelling across space. Even inter-planetary travel has not been uncommon. The Buddha has often visited the worlds of the Devas and in fact some of the best sermons recorded in Buddhist Scriptures, are said to have been delivered to the Devas in their worlds.

It is difficult to judge by modern standards whether psychic powers could be utilized to such extent, but, when we consider the fact that all material forms are subject to the control of the mind, there would appear to be nothing impossible for a fully developed mind to perform.

The Buddha and Arahats, being persons with fully developed minds, have at their command the maximum forces of psychic power and they could well have performed the physical acts of miracles attributed to them in the Buddhist Scriptures. We must, however, remember that they had used these powers very sparingly and unless they were pressed by circumstances, they never used them. They also taught the laymen the technique of their miracles and never utilized them either to claim

preferential treatment towards themselves or to oust their competitors who were many even during the life time of the Buddha.

Display of psychic forces only causes bewilderment and fear in the minds of audiences and, therefore, after preparing certain audiences by a show of miracles, the Buddha and Arahats adopted methods of peaceful persuasion and advice.

QUESTION 28.

Why did the Buddha sometimes keep silent when asked about the universe ?

Answer :—

There are some instances occurring in the Sutta Piṭaka where the Buddha has discouraged the discussion of the geographical and cosmological aspects of the universe. A few instances also occur in the Sutta Piṭaka where, when directly confronted with geographical and cosmological questions, the Buddha preferred to keep silent.

In considering this question, it is necessary for us to remember that the Buddha had only one method of teaching and that was to teach the truth, and when people could not be satisfied with truth, he was silent. The Buddha had, for this purpose, the advantage of being able to understand the exact nature of his audiences. If the Buddha found that a subject under discussion was too much for any particular person or group of persons, he always advised them to defer their discussion and in its place he gave them a suitable topic.

The Buddha had penetrating vision, *i.e.* he could not only enter into another person's mind and examine him thoroughly, but he could also extend his vision in all directions and see how other persons were progressing. In the course of one of his investigations through penetrating vision, the Buddha came across a Monk, who had developed psychic powers to look through space, indulging in an exhausting scrutiny of the skies. This Monk had looked through space for two long weeks and the more he looked, the farther he saw; but the Monk continued expecting to see an edge of the universe.

When the Buddha saw this Monk indulging in a useless pursuit, he knew that the Monk would end himself in disaster by

attempting to see what does not exist. The Buddha, therefore, met him and explained to him his situation and advised him to take to a fruitful investigation. The Monk thereupon realized the truth that infinite phenomena, such as space and time, have no boundaries to look for.

Amongst the people who visited the Buddha for information, there were various types of persons. Some persons had settled in their own minds the answers to the questions they sought the Buddha to answer. When these persons were correct, the Buddha confirmed them; when they were wrong but were of the requisite level of intelligence to grasp the truth about their problems, the Buddha corrected them and explained the truth. But there were others whose notions were wrong, who expected only a confirmation of their own notion, and whose condition of mental debility did not permit them to grasp the truth about their own problems. Some of these people, the Buddha found, would benefit by his silence. The Buddha on such occasions kept silent, encouraging them to understand their problems by their own effort.

We must clearly remember that the reason for the Buddha's silence on some occasions was due to the exigencies of the various particular situations and not because he considered that silence was necessary on certain particular points on every occasion.

It is necessary in this connection to caution the students of Buddhism against accepting narrow interpretations of passages from the Sutta Piṭaka. Almost the entire Sutta Piṭaka has been compiled from the Buddha's explanations to particular individuals. When we are studying the Sutta Piṭaka it is necessary to bear in mind that the Buddha's word is directed at the particular audience he addressed. We must also remember that the Buddha knew the intellectual level of his audience ;

and, hence, his address, and even the vocabulary, has been fashioned to suit each particular audience.

We may generally assume that we, of the present age, are of the same intellectual level as the audience which the Buddha addressed, but there can well be passages in the Sutta Piṭaka which have been addressed to people of different intellectual levels from ours. If we happen to study a passage from the Sutta Piṭaka which has been addressed to a person or a group of persons of a different intellectual standard (citta carita) we have to be very careful, for it may be either too elementary for us or it may be too profound for us. There is also the possibility that the method of approach adopted may not be the appropriate one for us.

When studying the Sutta Piṭaka, therefore, it is always necessary to adopt the critical outlook so necessary for the successful interpretation of Buddhist philosophy. Merely because the Buddha was silent at one instance, or because it is said that the Buddha dissuaded some people from carrying out an unprofitable investigation, and even such facts have been preserved in the texts of the Sutta Piṭaka, we must not close the rest of the Sutta Piṭaka and the Abhidhamma and proclaim that "the Buddha was silent and, therefore, the problem must not be discussed". The Buddha never meant his Dhamma to be so narrowly interpreted.

There is a section of Buddhists in the world who, probably, have never had the opportunity to study the Higher Truths contained in the Abhidhamma. All that they see is the Sutta philosophy, and in it they would find only a good and rational moral science. Many Buddhists who study Buddhism in this manner, seem to think that the Buddha had put all the problems of the universe amongst "the truths he knew but did not explain". But the universe is not amongst those things he did

not explain. In fact, the universe is all that the Buddha has explained.

It is wrong to say that the Buddha did not explain the physical universe and quote in support of this view the instance in the Sutta Piṭaka when the Buddha kept silent. No student of Abhidhamma tolerates this view because the Abhidhamma is full of explanations of the universe and this explained universe does not exclude the physical universe.

Abhidhamma is the systematic and comprehensive explanation of the universe and no aspect of matter or mind is excluded from its province. Abhidhamma is the Science of the Universe and it is according to the laws of the universe as comprehensively expounded in the Abhidhamma that the rest of the Buddhist philosophy is founded. Abhidhamma is often described as "The Text Book of Medicine" and the Sutta Piṭaka is described as "The Dispenser's Register of Prescriptions". If we wish to study the Science of Medicine, we must study the Text Book of Medicine; we can only gain a superficial notion of Medical Science by studying the Dispenser's Register of Prescriptions.

Likewise, if we wish to study the real nature of the universe and the laws of the universe as explained in Buddhism, we must study the Abhidhamma, "The Text Book of Medicine"; and not merely be satisfied by reading through the Sutta Piṭaka, "The Dispenser's Register of Prescriptions".

Finally, it must be mentioned that it is a mistake to try to interpret the Abhidhamma from the material in the Sutta Piṭaka. Although the Sutta philosophy and the Abhidhamma philosophy can always be reconciled, it is only possible to interpret Sutta with the help of Abhidhamma, and it is not possible, and often very misleading, to interpret Abhidhamma with the

help of Sutta. It is a misinterpretation of the Sutta philosophy to say that the Buddha was always silent on the question of the universe. Both the Abhidhamma philosophy and the Sutta philosophy explain the universe.

QUESTION 29.

Is renunciation a necessary part of parctising Buddhism ?

Answer :—

If we interpret the word "renunciation" as "self-denial", we may at once say that it is not part of practising Buddhism. Far from taking away from the individual his pleasures of life, Buddhism seeks to bring to everyone the utmost happiness each life has the potentiality to develop.

A person convinced of the truths of the universe, however, may not indulge in certain things which to the vulgar mind would appear to be pleasures of a very high standard. A convinced Buddhist's sense of pleasure is more profound, and to him a great many conventional pleasures may appear silly.

A sense of renunciation comes through the realization of the truths of the universe. When, for instance, one realizes the truth that all component things, including oneself, are impermanent, his outlook on himself and all his sensual pleasures and pains would undergo a radical change. Such a person would develop in himself a sense of equanimity; he would neither be too attached to sensual pleasure nor would he be too worried about sensual pain. He knows that both pleasure and pain are subject to change.

Instead of excessively indulging himself in sensual pleasure or struggling to find sensual pleasure, a Buddhist must learn how to be satisfied with what sensual pleasures he has or he can reasonably get and, similarly, he must understand how to put up with pain if, unavoidably, pain were to come his way. He must, in other words, be not too enslaved to pleasure nor

should he be too timid to face pain. Practice of Buddhism consists of facing each situation calmly and doing what is good and necessary. The necessary part of practising Buddhism has been summed up in the words "avoid all evil, be good, and be of clean mind".

QUESTION 30.

What are the benefits accruing from the day-to-day observance of Pancha Sila ?

Answer :—

Pañcha Sīla consists of a solemn undertaking to one's own self to observe five rules of morality: refraining from cruelty to other beings, refraining from committing theft, refraining from sexual immorality, refraining from falsehood, and refraining from taking intoxicating drinks.

It is sufficient for a Buddhist if he understands the significance of Pañcha Sīla and accepts them in the form of resolutions to be observed. But it is more customary amongst the Buddhists to recite them aloud in suitably phrased stanzas meaning "I shall refrain from cruelty to other beings", and so on.

Whilst the important factor is to observe the Pañcha Sīla rather than to recite them, there are some points in favour of the habit of reciting Pañcha Sīla aloud. A solemn undertaking made aloud has a better effect on one's self than merely making a silent resolution. There is a tendency for us to forget easily a silent resolution, but when a public undertaking is made, even though it is to one's own self, there is a degree of greater importance attached to it, so that, one is not likely to forget it so easily.

There is also the habit of repeating the five undertakings of Pañcha Sīla as often as possible. It is customary for all Buddhist meetings to begin with the audible recitation of Pañcha Sīla. Repeating the five undertakings of Pañcha Sīla, whether as silent resolutions or in the form of public undertakings, has little effect if one does not observe the resolution or undertaking made.

Observance of Pañcha Sīla brings one the full benefits of observing Buddhism. Cruelty to other beings—and killing is its ultimate form—prevents one from forming in one's mind the defilements of hatred and greed. Refraining from committing theft prevents one from forming defilements of greed in one's mind. Refraining from sexual immorality, whilst saving one from the formation of defilements of greed, also prevents the formation of the defilements of hatred and jealousy. Refraining from sexual immorality, is also necessary in order to preserve the civilized state of society. Without the observance of sexual restraint, family life, on which human civilization is built, cannot exist, for then there is the tendency for the males to shirk their responsibility to bring up children and, therefore, the entire civilization, together with its arts and sciences, cannot exist. In other words, human society would degenerate to the level of animals.

Observance of the rule to refrain from falsehood is in many ways the most important amongst the Pañcha Sīla. There is nothing a liar cannot do and, similarly, truthfulness is a very effective preventive against all evil actions. This is especially so with those evil actions which are conventionally or legally accepted as evil actions. A truthful person would not do anything which he would be ashamed or afraid to admit, whilst a liar would do any immoral or illegal action so long as he could conceal the facts.

The observance of the rule of refraining from taking intoxicating drinks has as its advantage prevention of one's developing states of slothfulness. Consumption of intoxicating drinks, (both beverages and drugs), often has the effect of retarding one's intellectual capacity, for intoxicating drinks tend to promote ignorance. This is particularly harmful because it cuts short the time available to us to understand the higher truths of life and the universe.

QUESTION 31.

Why do Buddhists congregate at Buddhist Temples? And do they conduct prayer?

Answer :—

Buddhists are convinced that their salvation can only be worked out by their own effort. The Buddhist thus adopts an outlook on life in which he assumes sole responsibility for all deeds. He understands good and evil and he knows that sooner or later pleasure follows all good actions and that pain follows all evil actions. The Buddhist, therefore, lays out the course of his future by his present actions. By handling his present wisely and well, the Buddhist steers his life in the future into the realms of happiness and pleasure, and by handling his present carelessly and in an evil manner, he steers his life in the future into the realms of misery and pain.

It is because of his conviction in the truth of the law of kamma operating in the universe, that the Buddhist relies on his own effort in order to build up a happy future, and therefore he does not, nor has he the need to, conduct any prayer to protect his future life. If, as a result of certain evil deeds a Buddhist may have committed, a sense of fear springs in the mind of a Buddhist, he would take courage and make what effort he could to extricate himself from the evil effects by performing good deeds. He may thus cover up the reactions of the evil deeds he feels guilty of. If however the evil action is of a very grave nature, he would prepare boldly to face the inevitable reaction; he would willingly submit himself to the period of pain in punishment, and thus liquidate the consequences of his evil action.

Even in an instance where a Buddhist feels guilty of committing grave evil action, the Buddhist does not conduct prayer.

By handling his situations in a manner so as to minimize the consequences, the Buddhist always displays his sense of self-reliance.

An outsider observing a crowd of Buddhists chanting stanzas before an image of the Buddha on a full moon day may sometimes wonder whether they are not conducting prayer. If such a person takes a little more interest and examines their actions and the meanings of the stanzas they recite, this impression would soon disappear.

The few instances in which the Buddhists may appear rather noisy should not be misinterpreted. The noises sometimes made by enthusiastic Buddhists in their religious observances have really no religious significance. The beating of the drum, for instance, is not even a part of Buddhist ritual; it is merely a customary method adopted from ancient times to give advertisement to various events. Beating the drum before the commencement of preaching is meant to make the general public know of the event and it may also be interpreted as a direct invitation to anyone who wishes to attend. Ringing the temple bell too has the same significance.

It is usual for Buddhists of all ages and in all levels of social life to recite in a soft audible tone the words of the undertaking to one's own self to observe the five rules conducive to good moral character (Pañcha Sīla) and also, on occasions, it is customary to recite fairly aloud some of the stanzas of a very instructive character. The little noise the Buddhists make at the temples in this manner has its uses.

Chanting aloud the word of the stanzas relevant to Pañcha Sīla or contemplation and meditation, on public occasions, has a considerable psychological effect both on the person reciting them and the persons around who are attending the same

meeting. The mind, as we are aware, is a most unstable phenomenon working within us, and it is difficult to hold it at rest even when we are all alone. If we recite the relevant stanzas silently when we are in a crowd, there is always the risk of our mind becoming distracted. When we recite the words aloud, however, there is the tendency for the mind to get focussed on the words uttered so that the mind would not move about too far and frequently.

Another advantage of reciting the stanzas aloud is that any one who is inclined to divert his attention from the observance, particularly the little children, would get drawn into the chorus and thus all the members of a crowd would benefit from the observance. Both Pañcha Sīla and the stanzas adopted to promote concentration and meditation are, therefore, recited aloud on public occasions at the temple or outside when Buddhists meet together in congregation.

To a person whose powers of concentrated thought are weak, it is beneficial to read aloud softly the words of Pañcha Sīla even when conducting it by himself. This tends to remove any tendency to forget the good habit that keeps him reminded of the five basic conditions necessary to good living.

Although the temple is a place for contemplation and meditation, contemplation and meditation are not the sole purposes for which the Buddhists visit temples. The people gather into the temple usually on fixed days of the month such as the full moon day and the new moon day for purposes of consulting the resident Buddhist Monks on the various problems connected with Buddhism and also in order to receive expert advice on religious matters they cannot themselves solve.

In a Buddhist temple, normally, a learned Buddhist Monk gives a public lecture on a well thought out subject on the

full moon days and the new moon days. The people in the neighbourhood congregate to listen to him and, in the meantime, they take the opportunity to attend to other activities of ritual in the temple as well. So it has become customary to visit the Buddhist temples in large numbers, and conduct collective rituals and public meetings on such days.

Another factor is that it is necessary that the laymen should visit the Buddhist temples occasionally and look after the interests of the Buddhist Monks living in the temples. Many Buddhists visit their local temples independently of the temple's public programme, often with presents of fruits, condiments, and other useful goods, to inquire after the health and comfort of the resident Monks and to take advantage of a little intelligent conversation with them. The Buddhist temple being a place devoted exclusively to religious activities, has an atmosphere of calm serenity and sometimes the laymen too retire to the temple for a day or half a day and live a life of organized discipline.

As regards the habit of certain Buddhists praying to various Hindu Gods, this is a non-Buddhist practice, and prayer finds no place in Buddhism.

QUESTION 32.

Is it essential that everyone should undergo a period or asceticism in order to attain Nibbana ?

Answer :—

During the period when the Prince Siddhārtha was striving to discover the truth about life, he tried out some of the methods then in vogue. Asceticism was a popular method adopted at the time by those who wished to attain higher levels of wisdom and the Prince, being eager in his search, made a few attempts to experiment with asceticism.

For a considerable period, the Prince adopted the life of strict asceticism and maintained himself in severe discipline. He ultimately realized that it is futile to hope to achieve full wisdom by such methods. He thereupon gave up asceticism and took to developing his mind by contemplation and meditation and, in the process, he succeeded in understanding the problems he wished to solve. In other words, the Prince Siddhārtha achieved full enlightenment by deep and concentrated thinking and, although he retired into the forest in order to experiment with asceticism, he ultimately remained behind in the forest not to proceed with asceticism but because he found the solitude in the forest to be conducive to his undisturbed thinking.

Practice of asceticism, if conducted under competent guidance, however, is useful in modifying traits of obstructive characteristics which are inborn in some people. The Buddha and the Arahats, sometimes, prescribed mental exercises to certain persons who were intensively afflicted with severe mental debility so that they would develop their mind in this manner and ultimately achieve the requisite strength of mind to attain full enlightenment. Some of these mental exercises had to be

conducted under conditions of asceticism and, therefore, it is not possible to say that asceticism is totally absent in Buddhism. We must, however, remember that what asceticism was practised in Buddhism is only confined to individual cases.

Buddhism does not teach that asceticism is universally necessary for all beings in order to attain Nibbāna. In fact, anyone could avoid conducting himself in asceticism in his efforts to attain Nibbāna. By taking to asceticism, only persons of a certain mental character can hasten through the path to Nibbāna. Unless a person conducts himself under correct guidance, however, asceticism carries the risk of complete failure which may often cause him to sink himself deeper into the mire of the process of material life.

To attain Nibbāna, it is not essential that one should practise asceticism. One can always attain full enlightenment whilst remaining in normal life and there are numerous instances occurring in Buddhist literature where it is emphasized that people did achieve full enlightenment and ultimately perpetual Nibbāna without even entering the order of the Buddhist Monks.

One such instance is the father of the Buddha himself: the King Suddhodana. The King Suddhodana attained full enlightenment whilst remaining a layman and continued as layman even after enlightenment. There have been both men and women who attained Nibbāna in this manner. We could also cite the instance of that philanthropic lady, Visākhā, who, after attaining the steps of enlightenment, entered into normal married life as the wife of the nobleman, Dhanandhaya.

Most of the Buddhas appearing in the universe do not even have the necessity to experiment with asceticism. Some of them attain the state of full enlightenment and Buddhahood whilst remaining in lay life. It is predicted that Metteyya, the Buddha

due to appear in this universe in the period of evolution immediately following the present period of evolution of life, would attain full enlightenment and Buddhahood in his own home whilst remaining in lay life.

Considering all the factors, we have no need whatsoever to apprehend that, if everybody in this world were to become good Buddhists, this world would become depleted of human life. Only a very small proportion of people would be attracted to adopt asceticism and this was so even during the life time of the Buddha. The rest of the Buddhists could either attain full enlightenment whilst remaining in lay life itself, or enter the Noble Eightfold Path and attain Nibbāna in any comfortable way.

What most Buddhists at present aspire to in this life is to enter the Noble Eightfold Path so that they could avoid the risks of falling into lower states of life such as animals. As is well known to all Buddhists, the Noble Eightfold Path means leading a life of good morality, avoiding such occupations as the manufacture and trade in destructive weapons, helping the needy, and developing a deeper intellect by adopting a wider outlook on life.

Nibbāna is the same for everyone and, therefore, it matters little how we may attain it. When one progresses through the Noble Eightfold Path, one begins to see ahead clearly and, in due course, assumes complete mastery of one's future life, and rebirths. He will then decide whether to attain Nibbāna, and when, where, and how to attain Nibbāna.

Even for treading the Noble Eightfold Path, many Buddhists do not wish to conduct themselves too long in successive rebirths in human life because they find its trials and tribulations to be too severe and the conditions in which they have to procure their food, clothing, and shelter to be too cruel. They therefore hasten to fulfil the conditions of the Noble Eightfold

Path in this life itself in order to enter into higher planes of existence such as the life in the worlds of the Devas and remain there awaiting the Buddha Metteyya from whose inspiring lectures they hope to profit and attain Nibbāna. This method of attaining Nibbāna involves one neither in any asceticism nor even in the necessity to lead the scholarly life of a Buddhist Monk.

APPENDIX I

LIFE OF THE BUDDHA

IN order to illustrate the Law of Reaction (kamma) and also to describe the process of reincarnation of life (jāti), the Buddha has very often referred to his own previous lives. A large collection of fascinating and instructive stories about the Buddha's previous lives are available in Buddhist Literature and 550 such stories depicting the 550 lives he had led before he was born as Buddha are read with interest by the students of Buddhism.

According to these 550 stories, the Buddha had lived previously on this Earth itself as well as on other planets in the universe. In the form of such animals as squirrels, rabbits, and monkeys, and in the form of human beings in various positions of life, the Buddha had appeared on this Earth previously. On the other planets too the Buddha had lived various kinds of lives, and, in this way, the Buddha had a history of lives behind him extending to times beyond computation.

The character of a person gets settled only after development through a large number of previous lives and, in accordance with this general condition, the Buddha had, through many a life, conducted himself for the welfare of the others. On an analysis of the 550 lives referred to and his various other life stories occurring in Buddhist Literature, a general conclusion can be arrived at, which is that he had always put the interests and welfare of others before his own interests and welfare.

To provide a sample of one of these life stories, the Buddha was once born as Mātuposaka, and as he was sailing across the

seas with his mother, the ship foundered, throwing all on board helplessly into the water. Mātuposaka thereupon completely discarded his own safety and went to the rescue of his mother, thus taking the extreme risk. Putting his mother on his shoulder, Mātuposaka began to swim across the sea and, fortunately, his determination carried him and his mother across to safety. Thus for many lives, the Buddha had developed altruism and it was after having gathered such vast strength of character that the Buddha was born to spread his infinite kindness to all beings.

In the birth of the Buddha in the life which is most relevant to our present discussion, there did not occur anything extraordinary. Over 2,500 years ago, the Buddha was born as a human being, out of human parents, and in perfectly natural conditions.

But for the environment into which he was born, the Buddha's position at birth was that of any other human being. The Buddha was born into a Royal Family, King Suddhodana, ruler over Kapilavattu, a state in North India, being his father and Queen Mahā Māyā Devi being his mother. It was only the Royal position he assumed on his birth that raised him above the average.

The baby thus born had to face the realities of life from the very outset. Queen Mahā Māyā Devi, the mother of the Buddha, died hardly seven days after the Buddha was born, and thus the advantages of the tender care and caressings of a real mother were lost.

King Suddhodana, however, provided adequately for the upbringing of the child who was his only son and heir to his throne. Almost immediately the Queen Mahā Māyā Devi died, the King appointed a nursing mother, Prajāpati Gotami, to look after the motherless child. And Prajāpati .Gotami

honoured the trust placed on her by the King extremely well, and the child grew up in health and vigour to his father's expectations.

As it is now in many normal homes, it was more so in that Royal Family that certain celebrations should follow the birth of a child. According to the custom that prevailed at the time, therefore, there was the "naming" ceremony for which the King summoned the chief sages of his kingdom to discuss and decide on a name to be given to the child. The sages of this time were people who had cultivated occult arts, and the foretelling of future events was one of the subjects in which they specialized.

The sages, after examining the baby, decided to name the child Siddhārtha Gauthama, and, meanwhile, the sages also advised the King about the child's future. These sages expressed their unanimous opinion that the child would mature to be a great man, but they could not agree as to the particular direction in which the child would be great, *i.e.* whether he would be a great King or whether he would be a great reformer. They also did not exclude the possibility of the child developing interests in a religious field.

King Suddhodana, who apparently was not satisfied with the many religions that existed at that time (there were nearly 62 different religions competing with one another then), decided not to allow his son to enter any of the religions. Accordingly, the King advised his Ministers to exclude from the child (now Prince Siddhārtha Gauthama) any experience which would kindle in him an interest in the numerous religious beliefs that prevailed.

In carrying out this order, the King's Ministers kept the Royal Prince cut off completely from the dismal side of life,

and from the sages and ascetics particularly. The Ministers trained the Prince only to take over the responsibilities of the kingdom after his father's death, and, therefore, the Prince was given the necessary education both in literature and the arts of warfare.

Perhaps owing to the King Suddhodana's excess of precaution to prevent his son from entering a religious life, an early marriage was arranged for the Prince Siddhārtha Gauthama. The Prince, therefore, married the beautiful Princess Yasodara, and by this marriage, a son, Rāhula, was born.

The King's Ministers could not keep the Prince Siddhārtha cut off from the details of life any longer. The Prince began to experience real life step by step, and in his Charioteer, Channa, he found an intelligent person with whom he could discuss these problems.

When the Prince left the Palace in his Royal Chariot for the Royal Gardens to recreate himself, he had interesting discussions with Channa, his Charioteer. One day, they met a sick man on the way, and the Prince and the Charioteer discussed for the rest of the journey the topic of why there should be sickness in the world. On another day, they met an old man, and the topic that day was why people should grow old. On yet another day, they met a funeral procession, and the topic of their discussion that day was death. On a fourth day, they saw an ascetic and the discussion was centred on the ascetic life that day.

Thus the Prince began to grow curious about the various aspects of life, and, ultimately, at the age of 29 years, the Prince arrived at the firm and irrevocable decision to ascertain for himself the truth about life.

Everyone at that time believed that the ultimate truth about life could be ascertained only by practising asceticism, and

asceticism involves renouncing everything including one's position and family. At the time when the ambition to look for the ultimate truth about life entered his mind, the Prince had no new ideas to refute the current theories about asceticism. Hence, the Prince decided to experiment with asceticism in the first instance, in spite of the sacrifices it involved. The Prince, therefore, renounced his claim to the throne, and he renounced his. wife and family too. The Prince thus entered the forest to practise asceticism.

In the forest, the Prince met two ascetics, Alārakālāma and Uddaka-rāmaputta, and with their guidance, he practised asceticism. But soon, he found their methods unsatisfactory. The Prince left these two ascetics and, later, he met five other ascetics, whose names were:—

1. Kondañña
2. Bhaddhiya
3. Vappa
4. Mahānāma
5. Assaji

With these five ascetics, the Prince practised extremely difficult forms of asceticism which involved self-torture of the worst kind. The Prince practised asceticism in this manner, and, after suffering the extreme pains of self-torture for six years, he realized that asceticism was not likely to lead him anywhere. The Prince, therefore, left the fields of asceticism and also decided not to depend on the advice and guidance of others in furthering his end.

So the Prince left all the ascetics and began on his own to follow the method of Contemplation and Meditation, keeping to the "middle path", (majjhima patipada), *i.e.* avoiding the extremes of self-mortification on the one hand and excessive

indulgence in sensual pleasure on the other. This attempt was completely successful.

The Prince began to purify his mind by Contemplation and Meditation and as he was progressing, the defilements which remained hidden in his mind sprang up to obstruct him. Suppressing and overcoming all these obstacles, the Prince continued, and, ultimately, under a Bodhi tree, at Gaya in North India, the Prince destroyed the last fetters of defilement and attained full enlightenment. Thenceforward, he was Buddha.

After attaining full enlightenment, the Buddha remained for some time in the same vicinity of solitude mostly enjoying the bliss of full enlightenment and also taking stock of his position. He also planned out his future campaign whilst remaining there. After seven weeks, the Buddha stepped out and began his career of preaching and, on the Esala (August) Full Moon Day which followed the Buddha delivered his first sermon at Benares to the five ascetics under whose guidance and company he had lived for the major part of the six years he spent in the forest. These five ascetics were convinced of the truths the Buddha unfolded and they became the first followers of the Buddha, and were of great assistance to him in his campaign later on.

The news of the Buddha's achievement spread far and wide, and for forty five years after his achieving full enlightenment, the Buddha continued his campaign of preaching, sending missions to various parts of the country, working for the welfare of all, and, generally, assisting everyone from his father, stepmother, wife, and child, down to every stranger he met.

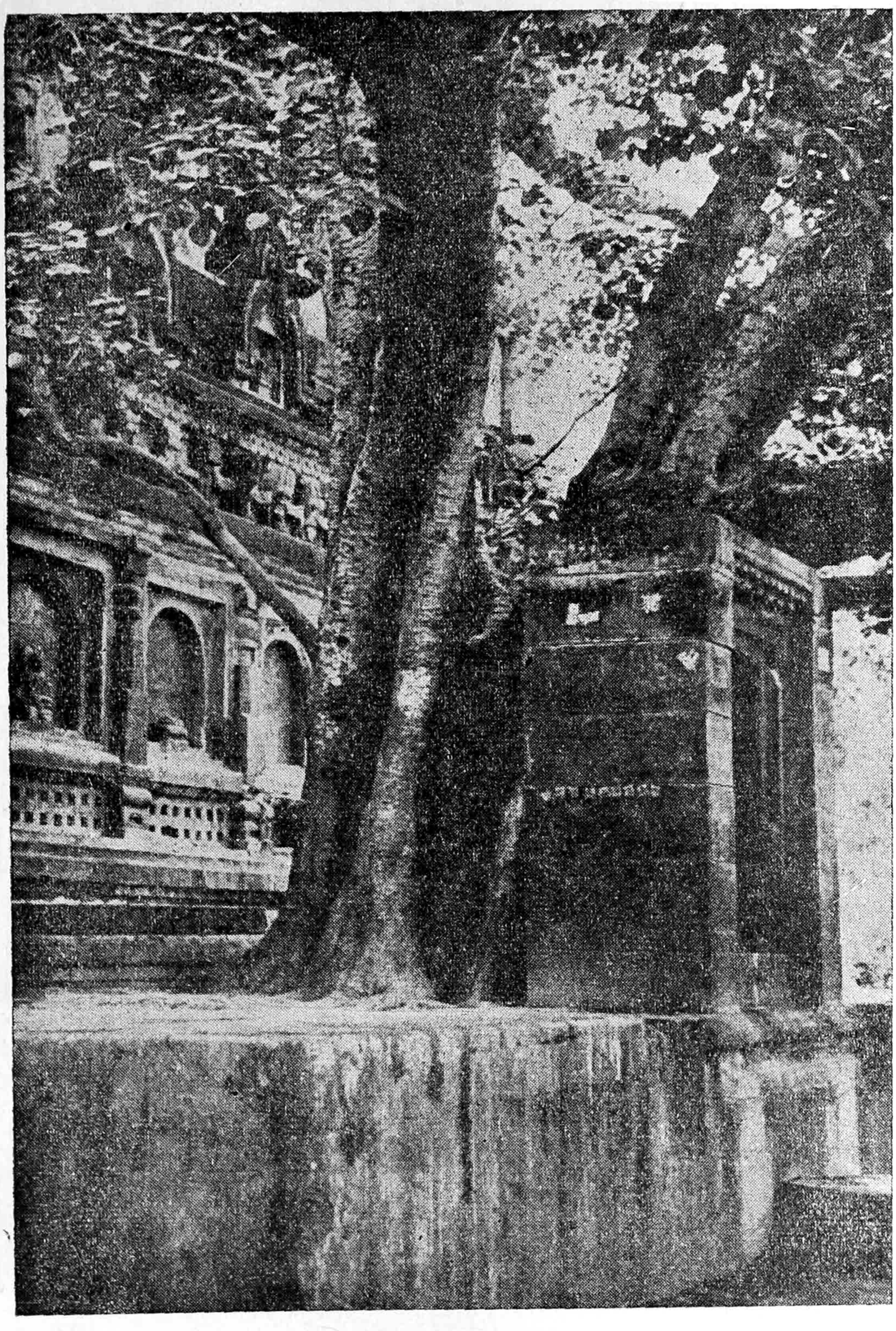
Amongst the social reforms he effected, it must be mentioned that he revolutionized the conception about women that prevailed during that time. The women were treated as slaves at that time and the Buddha, by showing the true situation,

brought all women to a par with men. The Buddha also preached vehemently against the caste and class systems which elevated some persons above others merely because of their birth or their economic affluence.

The Buddha taught the equality of men and women; and the equality of man and man. He also taught that only virtue could raise one man above any other. Thus having revolutionized the conceptions about life which prevailed at that time, and having gathered a vast number of followers to his Doctrine, and having raised a large number of persons to the level of Arahats, the Buddha passed away from this world into the state of Nibbāna at the age of 80 years.

THE BUDDHA

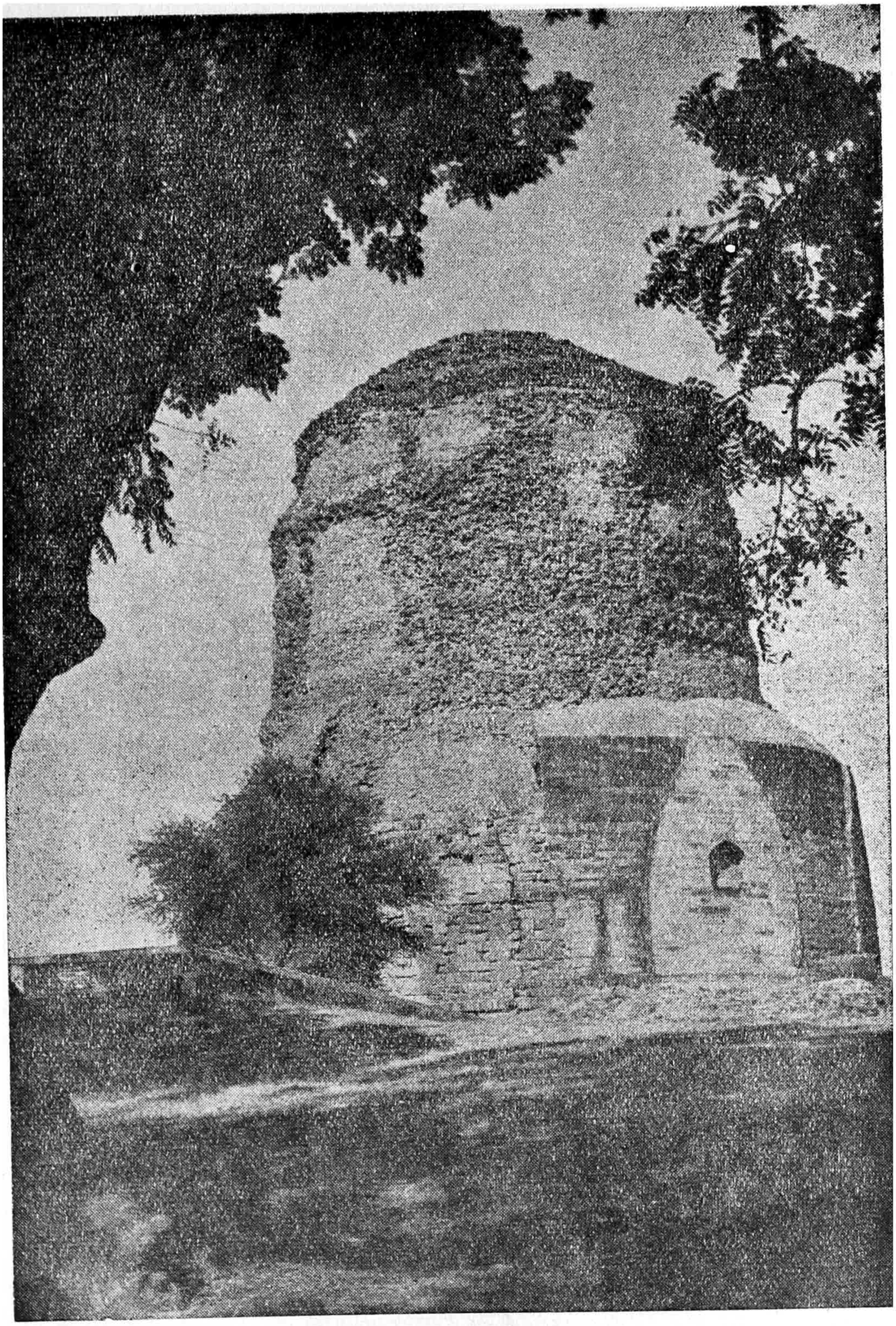
A sculpture of the Buddha. From the Gandhara School of Art, India—3rd Century, A.C. (*Photo by courtesy of the Government of India*)



THE BODHI TREE

Under this tree at Gaya, India, the Buddha attained Full Enlightenment.

(*Photo by courtesy of the Government of India*)



SARANATH

The monument at Benares, India, which marks the spot where the Buddha delivered his first sermon.

(Photo by courtesy of the Government of India)

APPENDIX 2

BUDDHIST LITERATURE

(*THE PALI CANON*)

DURING the life time of the Buddha, there did not exist the necessity to write down the doctrine he preached. This was because the Buddha had assisted a large number of Buddhist Monks and others to attain the state of Arahat, *i.e.* complete enlightenment.

By the time the Buddha was nearing his death, there were several thousand such Arahats and these Arahats knew the Doctrine so thoroughly and they understood their responsibility so well, that the Buddha had no need to take special steps to make the Doctrine endure after his death. The task of propagating the Doctrine, therefore, was left entirely in the hands of the Arahats.

Whilst every Arahat knew the Doctrine fully, most of them had also developed super-human qualities, some of them developing perfect powers of memory. These Arahats could even tread back along the course of time and thus describe from personal experience the events which had taken place in the past. This faculty for reading past events was extremely useful to the Arahats because they could experience the Buddha's own discourses even though they happened to belong to the past. Whenever the necessity arose, the Arahats used the super-human faculty to experience past events and very often they extended their vision to the discourses of the Buddha and quoted verbatim from such discourses in order to illustrate or prove a point which they wished to explain.

Since the Arahats knew the Doctrine so fully, it was not at all difficult for them to preach the Doctrine by adopting original methods, *i.e.* they could have taught the correct Doctrine to others without attributing the Doctrine to the Buddha. The Arahats, perhaps, realized the complications that would have ensued from adopting such a course. Had they done so, there would have been the risk of the general public getting divided into diverse Schools more rapidly, so that it would have led the religion into confusion. The Arahats, therefore, always emphasized acknowledgement to the Buddha for the Doctrine they preached. No Arahat has taken personal credit for the Doctrine at any time or anywhere.

The Arahats had the welfare of the general public at heart and it was in the best interests of the general public that they adopted the procedure of interpolating their sermons with quotations from the Buddha's own sermons. This caused all public admiration to be diverted to the Buddha, the Arahats keeping out of public adoration as much as possible.

Even while the Buddha was living, the Arahats adopted this procedure and, after the Buddha's death, the Arahats found that, in view of certain controversies raised by non-Arahat Buddhist Monks and lay followers, this procedure was even more important to follow. Three months after the death of the Buddha, therefore, 500 Arahats assembled at Saptapāni Guha (North India) in order to review the wealth of the Buddha's discourses and to sift, classify, and systematize these discourses for the benefit of posterity.

This assembly of Arahats, famous as the First Buddhist Council (Pathama Mahā Sangāyana) was presided over by the Arahat Mahā Kassapa and amongst the others who held prominent positions were the Arahat Ananda and the Arahat Upāli. King Ajātasatta, ruler of Maheshwara (North India), attended on the Arahats and others who participated at this assembly.

The sittings of this assembly continued for three months and the material about the Buddha's preachings it gathered was classified under three main sections (Piṭaka), *viz:*

1. The Higher Doctrine (Abhidhamma)
2. The Discipline for the Order (Vinaya)
3. The General Discourses (Sutta).

At the end of this assembly of Arahats, it was decided that a Committee consisting of all the Arahats who attended the Buddhist Council should take charge of the section embodying the Higher Doctrine (Abhidhamma). The other two Sections, being not so important, were entrusted to the care of individual Arahats. Arahat Upāli was entrusted with the Section dealing with Discipline (Vinaya) whilst the Arahat Mahā Kassapa, who presided at the Assembly, and the Arahat Ananda were entrusted with the task of preserving the Doctrine dealing with the General Discourses (Sutta).

Such was the origin of the vast collection of texts on Buddhism popularly known as the "Pāli Canon".

The following are the main Texts decided upon at the First Buddhist Council as classified into the Three Sections (Tripiṭaka) of the Buddhist Philosophy:—

(A) The Section dealing with the Higher Doctrine (Abhidhamma Piṭaka)—

1. Dhammasangaṇi. 2. Vibhanga. 3. Dhātu-kathā. 4. Puggalapaññatti. 5. Kathā-vatthu. 6. Yamaka. 7. Paṭṭhāna.

(B) The Section dealing with the Discipline of the Order (Vinaya Piṭaka)—

1. Pārājika. 2. Pācittiya. 3. Mahāvagga. 4. Cullavagga. 5. Parivāra.

(C) The Section dealing with General Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka)—

1. Dīgha Nikāya. 2. Majjhima Nikāya. 3. Saṃyutta Nikāya. 4. Anguṭṭara Nikāya. 5. Khuddaka Nikāya. (*Note:* The Khuddaka Nikāya consists of fifteen books, namely, Khuddaka Pāṭha, Dhammapada, Udāna, Itivuttaka, Suttanipāta, Vimānavatthu, Petavatthu, Theragāthā, Therigāthā, Jātaka, Niddesa, Paṭisambhidāmagga, Apadāna, Buddhavamsa, and Cariyāpiṭaka)

Generation after generation, the Arahats handed down these Texts of the Pāli Canon when, one hundred years after the death of the Buddha, the Arahats found that those Arahats who had actually moved with the Buddha himself were dwindling in numbers and that the Arahats of this class would cease to be available after some time. Ultimately they found that only one Arahat who had actually met the Buddha was available. He was Arahat Sabbakāmi, a monk 120 years of age at that time. The other Arahats, thereupon, decided to hold another Buddhist Council in order to check up the Texts of the Pāli Canon and thus to remove the controversies that were raised by some people at that time.

The Second Buddhist Council (Dutiya Mahā Sangāyana) was accordingly held at Valukārāma (North India) presided over by the Arahat Sabbakāmi. Seven hundred other Arahats participated at this Buddhist Council and amongst them were Arahat Kujjosobita, Arahat Wasabhagāmika, Arahat Sallaha, Arahat Kakandakaputta, and Arahat Revata.

218 years after the death of the Buddha, *i.e.* 325 B.C., during the time of the great Emperor Asoka, it was discovered that a

vast number of impostors had entered the sphere of Buddhist activities, and that the original Doctrine had fallen into grave jeopardy. Thereupon, with the advice of the Arahat Moggali Putta Tissa, the Emperor Asoka organized a Third Buddhist Council (Tatiya Mahā Sangāyana). Only 500 Arahats were invited to participate in it by the Emperor, but, ultimately, 1,000 Arahats attended its sittings.

For the first time under the full auspices of the State, a Buddhist Council *i.e.* the Third Buddhist Council, was conducted at Asokārāma of Pataliputta (Modern Patna in North India). This Buddhist Council, in addition to checking up the Pāli Canon, recommended to the Emperor Asoka the necessity to dislodge about 60,000 impostors. The Abhidhamma Text, the Katāvattu Pakarana, was utilized at this Buddhist Council for the purpose of dispelling the misbeliefs. After the Third Buddhist Council, the Buddha's Doctrine in its pristine purity prevailed again.

The Emperor Asoka, who was the most benevolent ruler in the present era of human history, was a devoted Buddhist. Amongst his many activities to foster Buddhism, he sent Buddhist Missionaries to various countries to propagate the Doctrine, and it was on one of these Missions that he sent his own son, Arahat Mahinda, to Ceylon.

On arrival in Ceylon, the Arahat Mahinda met King Devanampiya Tissa, ruler of Ceylon at that time, at Mihintale, and, after listening to a sermon by the Arahat, the King was convinced of the truth of Buddhism. The King thereupon provided all facilities to the Arahat Mahinda to proceed with his Missionary activities, and, ere long, almost the entire population of Ceylon turned Buddhist.

The Ceylon women of that time, too, showed such enthusiasm towards Buddhism that the Arahat Mahinda had to send word to

his father, Emperor Asoka, to provide him with facilities to establish women's organizations. The Emperor, thereupon, sent his daughter, Sanghamitta, to do Missionary work in Ceylon.

Buddhism was thus firmly established in Ceylon, and for many years, the Ceylon Arahats took over the responsibility of preserving the Buddhist tradition and of keeping the Texts of the Pāli Canon in their original condition.

But, during the reign of King Vatta Gāmini Abhaya (1st Century B.C.), the Arahats of Ceylon found themselves not only quite alone in the campaign for preserving the Buddhist Doctrine, but they also foresaw that at the end of their own generation of Arahats, the Order of the Arahats would cease.

These last Arahats, therefore, resolved to hold a Buddhist Council not merely for the purpose of checking up the Texts of the Pāli Canon, but for the purpose of carrying out the more arduous task of reducing its Texts into writing.

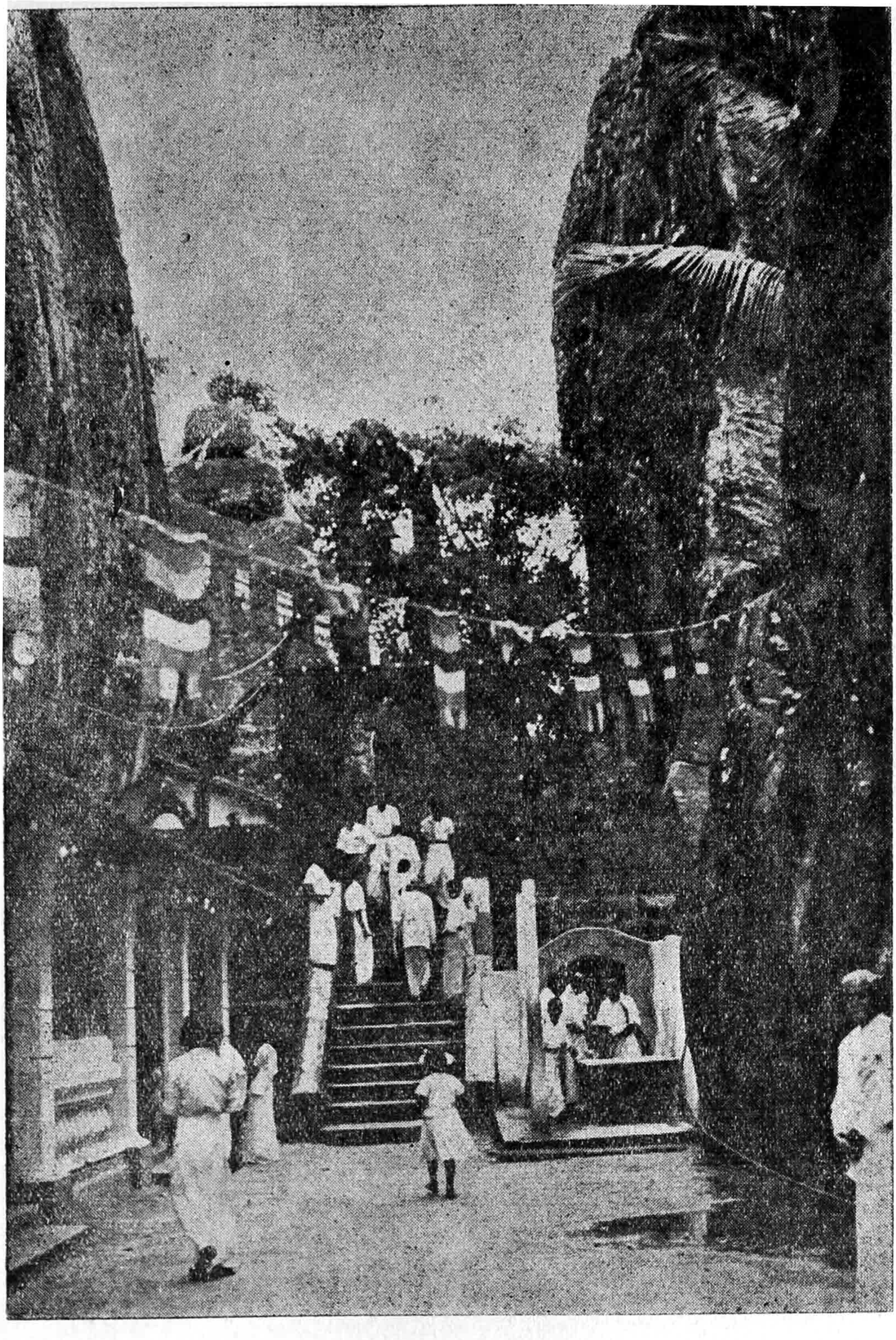
With assistance from the King Vatta Gāmini Abhaya and his ministers, the Arahats of the time sat together at Aluwihare, Ceylon and wrote down the entire Text of the Pāli Canon. This feat of writing is perhaps the greatest feat of literary endeavour ever to be undertaken anywhere. The Mahavamsa, the ancient Chronicle of Ceylon History, records this event in the words: "Since they saw that the people were falling away, met together, and in order that the true Doctrine might endure, wrote it down in books".

The last Arahats, having thus performed their duty, passed away and the responsibility of preserving the Buddhist Doctrine and the Pāli Canon fell on the shoulders of the lesser Monks, the Sangha (the Order of the Buddha). These Monks had neither the advantage of penetrating vision nor had they the

complete and full knowledge of the Doctrine which the Arahats had. They however had the advantage of the Texts written down by the Arahats themselves.

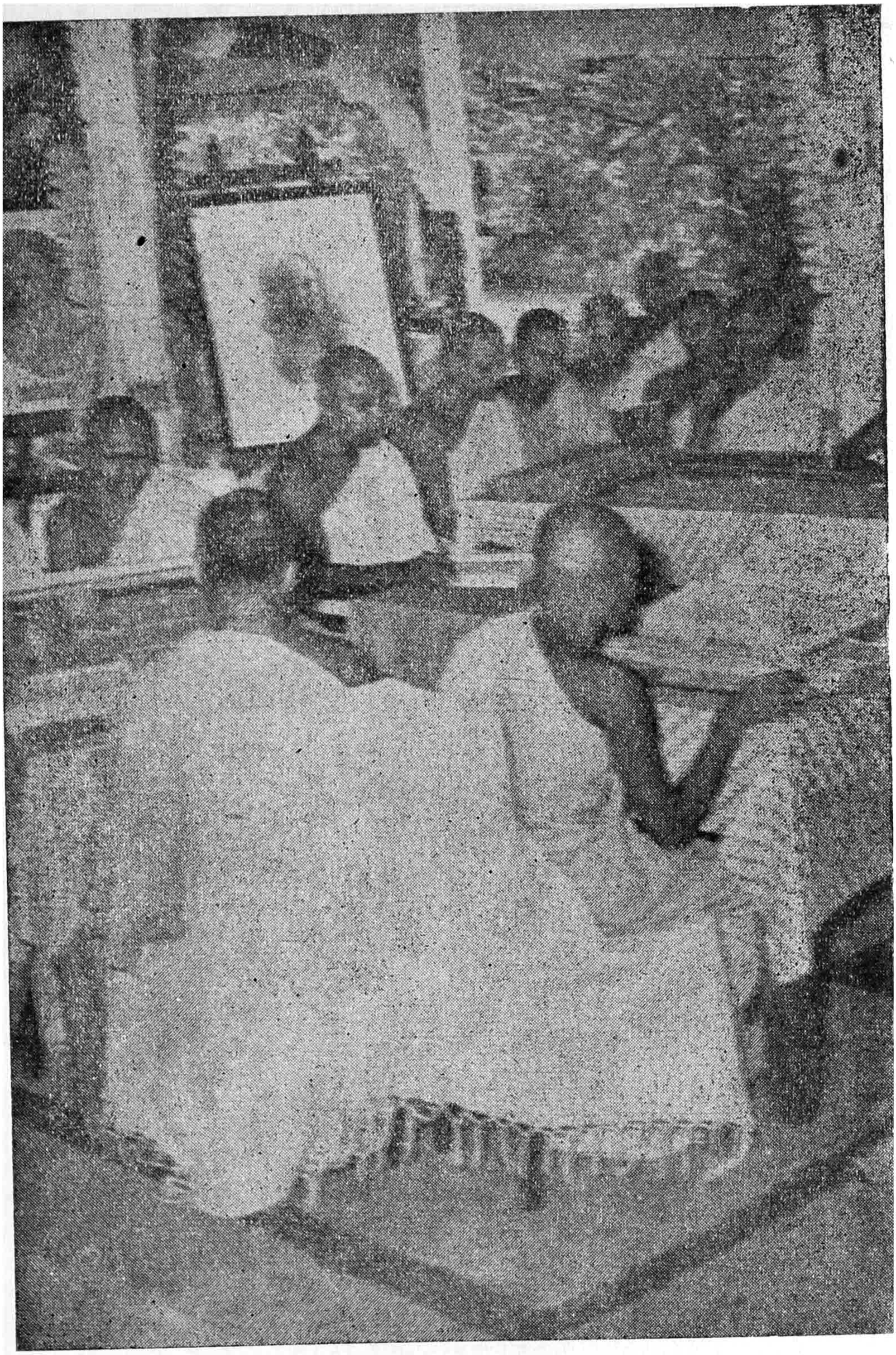
The Sangha thus took up the task of preserving the written texts in their original form as they were written down by the Arahats. And for this purpose, the members of the Sangha assembled periodically after the fashion of the Buddhist Councils of the Arahats and compared the copies of the written texts they had with the original texts as written down by the Arahats. At these Councils, all deviations from the original Texts found in the new copies were removed.

Several such Buddhist Councils conducted by the Sangha were held in the different Buddhist countries, and amongst the most recent of these is the Buddhist Council sponsored by the Government of Burma at Rangoon held in 1956 to commemorate the 2,500th anniversary (Jayanti) of the passing away of the Buddha. To commemorate the same event, a similar Buddhist Council, sponsored by the Buddhist public of Ceylon, was also held at the Vidyālankāra Pirivena (Buddhist Monks' College) at Kelaniya, Ceylon.



ALUWIHARE

Entrance to the "Cave Temple" at Aluwihare, Ceylon, where the Texts of the Pāli Canon were written down for the first time. (*Photo by courtesy of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Government of Ceylon*)



A BUDDHIST COUNCIL

Buddhist Monks of the Vidyalankara Pirivena at Kelaniya, Ceylon, scrutinizing the Texts of the Pāli Canon. (*Photo by courtesy of the Vidyalankara Pirivena, Kelaniya, Ceylon*)

APPENDIX 3

FUNDAMENTAL BUDDHIST BELIEFS

(THE SALIENT POINTS ON WHICH ALL BUDDHISTS AGREE)

TOWARDS the latter part of the nineteenth century, in view of the divergent opinions held by the two main Schools of Buddhism, the Mahāyana (Northern) School and the Theravāda (Southern) School, it was found necessary to codify the Buddhist beliefs on which all Schools could agree. Accordingly, the American Buddhist, Colonel H. S. Olcott, Founder President of the Theosophical Society, presented fourteen "Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs" as a common platform for all Buddhist Schools. They were considered in the various Buddhist countries and at a Buddhist Congress held in India in 1891 they were approved by the accredited representatives of Japan, Burma, India, Ceylon, and other countries. These fourteen "Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs" are as follows :—

1. Buddhists are taught to show the same tolerance, forbearance, and brotherly love to all men, without distinction; and an unswerving kindness towards the members of the animal kingdom.

2. The universe was evolved, not created; and it functions according to law.

3. The truths upon which Buddhism is founded are natural. They have, we believe, been taught in successive kappas, or world periods, by certain illuminated beings called Buddhas, the name "Buddha" meaning "Enlightened".

4. The fourth Teacher in the present kappa was Sakya Muni, or Gauthama Buddha, who was born in a royal family in India about 2,500 years ago. He is an historical personage and his name was Siddārtha Gauthama.

5. Sakya Muni taught that ignorance produces desire, unsatisfied desire is the cause of rebirth, and rebirth, the cause of sorrow. To get rid of sorrow, therefore, it is necessary to escape rebirth; to escape rebirth, it is necessary to extinguish desire; and to extinguish desire, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.

6. Ignorance fosters the belief that rebirth is a necessary thing. When ignorance is destroyed the worthlessness of every such rebirth, considered as an end in itself, is perceived, as well as the paramount need of adopting a course of life by which the necessity for such repeated rebirths can be abolished. Ignorance also begets the illusive and illogical idea that there is only one existence for man, and the other illusion that this one life is followed by states of unchangeable pleasure or torment.

7. The dispersion of all this ignorance can be attained by the persevering practice of an all-embracing altruism in conduct, development of intelligence, wisdom in thought, and destruction of desire for the lower personal pleasures.

8. The desire to live in material life being the cause of rebirth, when that is extinguished, rebirths cease and the perfected individual attains that highest state of peace called Nibbāna.

9. Sakya Muni taught that ignorance can be dispelled and sorrow removed by the knowledge of the four Noble Truths, *viz:*

   1. The miseries of existence ;

   2. The cause productive of misery, which is the desire ever renewed of satisfying oneself without being able ever to secure that end ;

   3. The destruction of that desire, or the estranging of oneself from it ;

   4. The means of obtaining this destruction of desire. The means which he pointed out is called the Noble Eight-fold Path, *viz:* Right Belief; Right Thought; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Means of Livelihood; Right Exertion; Right Remembrance; Right Meditation.

10. Right Meditation leads to spiritual enlightenment, or the development of that Buddha-like faculty which is latent in every man.

11. The essence of Buddhism as summed up by the Tathagata (Buddha) himself is :

    1. To cease from all evil,
    2. To get virtue,
    3. To purify the mind.

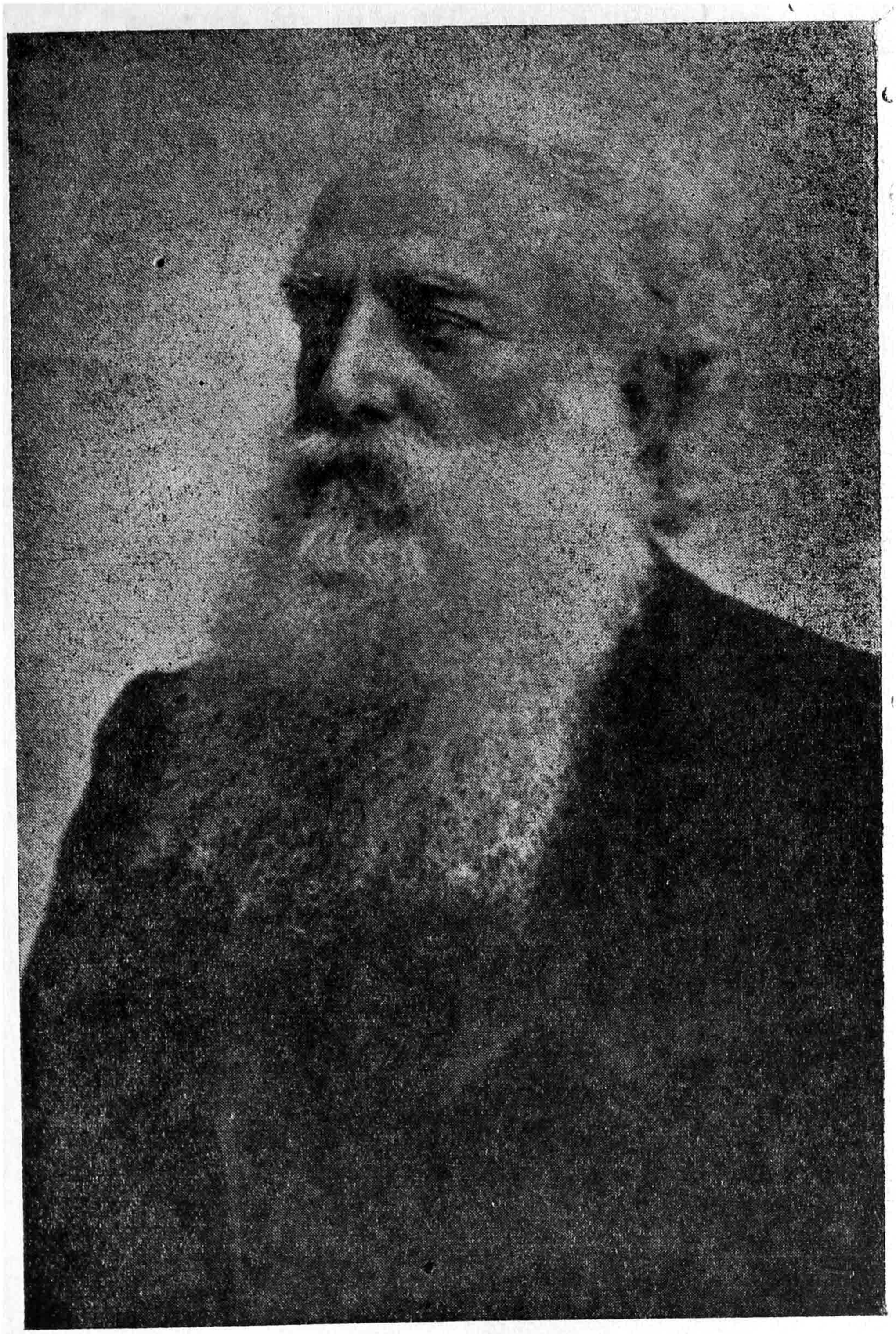
12. The universe is subject to a natural causation known as "Kamma". The merits and demerits of a being in past existence determine his condition in the present one. Each man, therefore, has prepared the causes of the effects which he now experiences.

13. The obstacles to the attainment of good kamma may be removed by the observance of the following precepts, which are embraced in the moral code of Buddhism, *viz*:

1. Kill not ;
2. Steal not ;
3. Indulge in no forbidden sexual pleasure ;
4. Lie not ;
5. Take no intoxicating or stupefying drug or liquor.

Five other precepts, which need not here be enumerated, should be observed by those who would attain more quickly than the average layman the release from misery and rebirth.

14. Buddhism discourages superstitious credulity. Gauthama Buddha taught it to be the duty of a parent to have his child educated in science and literature. He also taught that no one should believe what is spoken by any sage, written in any book, or affirmed by tradition, unless it accorded with reason.



COL. H. S. OLCOTT

The American Buddhist, whose activities in the East greatly assisted the revival of Buddhism in the Eighteen-Nineties.

(*Photo by courtesy of the American Embassy, Ceylon*)

APPENDIX 4

PANCHA SILA

(THE FIVE RESOLUTIONS CONDUCIVE TO GOOD MORALITY)

IN conducting his life, the Buddhist is advised to fulfil three basic conditions. They are :—

1. To avoid evil (sabba pāpassa akaranam)
2. To be good (kusalassa upa sampadā)
3. To purify the mind (saccitta pariyodapanam).

In order to fulfil the first condition, and also as a preliminary to fulfilling the second and third conditions, the followers of the Buddha make these five resolutions :—

1. To refrain from destroying life
2. To refrain from stealing others' property
3. To refrain from sexual immorality
4. To refrain from falsehood
5. To refrain from taking intoxicants.

As a measure to keep themselves reminded of these five resolutions, the Buddhists have, by popular convention, adopted five Pāli stanzas which embody these five resolutions. These stanzas direct the resolutions at each one personally, and they are :—

1. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi
   (I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from destroying life)

2. Adinnādānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi

(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from stealing others' property)

3. Kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi

(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from sexual immorality)

4. Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi

(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from falsehood)

5. Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi

(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from taking intoxicants)

These stanzas are recited in Buddhist homes as daily ritual, usually as the first thing in the morning or the last thing at night. These stanzas are also recited at the commencement of all Buddhist meetings and other social functions in which Buddhists participate.

One need not necessarily align himself to Buddhism or declare himself publicly that he is a Buddhist in order to take these resolutions or to keep them. The important thing is to keep these resolutions, and it may well be that a person is living a life conforming to these resolutions without the knowledge that he is living the Buddhist way of life. Even he who does so, is a Buddhist for all purposes and the benefits accruing to him will in no way be diminished as a result of his ignorance of Buddhism or of his not declaring allegiance to Buddhism.

Confirmed Buddhists, however, preface these five resolutions by three declarations which are made in a spirit of gratitude and

admiration. Beginning with a stanza in praise of the Buddha, the following declarations are made :—

1. That they accept the guidance of the Buddha
2. That they accept the guidance of the Doctrine
3. That they accept the guidance of the Order.

The relevant Pāli stanzas recited to make these three declarations are as follows :—

1. Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (I accept the guidance of the Buddha)
2. Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (I accept the guidance of the Doctrine)
3. Saṅghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (I accept the guidance of the Order).

And these three declarations are repeated twice over by the addition of the words "again" (dutiyampi) and "yet again" (tatiyampi) respectively on each occasion. The second and third recitals of these stanzas are as follows :—

THE SECOND RECITAL

1. Dutiyampi Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Again, I accept the guidance of the Buddha)
2. Dutiyampi Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Again, I accept the guidance of the Doctrine)
3. Dutiyampi Saṅghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Again, I accept the guidance of the Order).

THE THIRD RECITAL

1. Tatiyampi Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Yet again, I accept the guidance of the Buddha)
2. Tatiyampi Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Yet again, I accept the guidance of the Doctrine)

3. Tatiyampi Saṅghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
(Yet again, I accept the guidance of the Order).

The first declaration, namely, accepting the guidance of the Buddha, is personal to the Buddha, and, from it, the adherent of Buddhism benefits by generating in his mind a sense of love and gratitude. In making this declaration, one must firmly remember the fact that the Buddha, personally, is not living. All that is available of him is his Doctrine. One should not, therefore, expect any personal favours by any declaration of allegiance to the Buddha or by reciting stanzas in praise of him.

The second declaration, namely, accepting the guidance of the Doctrine, is personal to the adherent himself, because a knowledge of the Doctrine is sure to save him from the perils of life. And the third declaration, namely, accepting the guidance of the Order, is personal to the Sangha (the Order of the Buddha), who have dedicated their lives throughout the past 25 centuries in order to keep alight the Buddha's Doctrine. But for the Sangha, the Buddha's Doctrine would not have survived and, therefore, the adherent of Buddhism, whilst remembering this fact, also makes a declaration indirectly undertaking to protect and assist the Sangha, so that the Sangha could be facilitated to continue to do their good work.

The Pāli Stanza, recited by the Buddhists, in praise of the Buddha is as follows :—

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Saṁbuddhassa
(Praise be to the Perfect One, the Fully Enlightened One)

In organizing their ritual, Buddhists have adopted the full moon day of each month as a day of religious significance. On such days, it is customary for Buddhists to visit a Buddhist temple and recite the Pañcha Sīla in the form of a vow

before an image of the Buddha. Some Buddhists also make it a habit to visit their temple on the full moon day and "take" the Pañcha Sīla by getting the resident Buddhist Monk to "administer" the Pañcha Sīla to them in the form of an oath.

The Pāli stanzas of the Pañcha Sīla (the five resolutions conducive to good morality) together with the stanzas added to preface them, are reproduced below arranged in the conventional order :—

Namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā Saṁbuddhassa
(Praise be to the Perfect One, the Fully Enlightened One).

1. Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (I accept the guidance of the Buddha)
2. Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (I accept the guidance of the Doctrine)
3. Saṅghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (I accept the guidance of the Order)

1. Dutiyampi Buddhaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Again, I accept the guidance of the Buddha)
2. Dutiyampi Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Again, I accept the guidance of the Doctrine)
3. Dutiyampi Saṅghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Again, I accept the guidance of the Order)

1. Tatiyampi Buddhaṃ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Yet again, I accept the guidance of the Buddha)
2. Tatiyampi Dhammaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Yet again, I accept the guidance of the Doctrine)
3. Tatiyampi Saṅghaṁ saraṇaṁ gacchāmi
   (Yet again, I accept the guidance of the Order)

1. Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi
(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from destroying life)

2. Adinnādānā veramani sikkhāpadam samādiyami
(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from stealing others' property)

3. Kamesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi
(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from sexual immorality)

4. Musāvādā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi
(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from falsehood)

5. Surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṁ samādiyāmi
(I resolve to observe the precept to refrain from taking intoxicants.)

BUDDHIST RITUAL

A group of devotees, including Their Imperial Highnesses the Prince and **Princess** Mikasa of Japan, taking Pancha Sila and offering flowers **at the** "Temple of the Tooth", Kandy, Ceylon. *(Photo by courtesy of the "Ceylon Daily News")*

KELANIYA TEMPLE

Buddhist devotees throng the historic Raja Maha Vihara at Kelaniya, Ceylon, on a Full Moon day. (*Photo by courtesy of the "Ceylon Daily News"*)

GLOSSARY

PALI TERMS USED IN THIS BOOK

(Conventional translations are within parenthesis)

acintiya : Infinite (beyond one's ken).

adhimokkha : Mind's sub-current of determination.

adosa : Loving sympathy (amity).

āhāra rūpa : Food element.

ahirika : Shamelessness towards foolish or evil action (imprudence).

ajaṭākāsa : Stratosphere.

ākāsa rūpa : Sky element.

akusala : Defilement (consciousness of immoral kind).

alobha : Loving charity and disinterestedness (lack of attachment).

amoha : Correct understanding; Knowledge.

ānāpāna sati : Concentration on one's breathing.

anattā : Unreality.

anicca : Impermanence.

aniccatā rūpa : Death element.

anottappa : Fearlessness towards foolish or evil action (recklessness)

Apā : States of woe; Hell.

appamañña : Mental factors of infinite states of mind as amity, kindness, etc.

āpo : Abstract water.

āvajjana : Attraction wave (adverting to a new objective something that comes within one's ken or mind; to turn).

āyatana : Sense organs.

bhaṅga : Close or death.

bhava : Conception in a realm of life.

bhāvanā : Meditation and development of mind and insight.

bhavaṅga : A life wave of the beat of mind.

bhavaṅga calana : Vibration of a life wave of the beat of mind.

bhavaṅgupaccheda : Deviation of a life wave of the beat of mind.

bhāva rūpa : Sex element.

cakkhu : Eye.

cakkhu pasāda rūpa : Reflective element of the eye.

cetanā : Motive.

cetanā cetasika : Mind's current of intention (with volition).

cetasika : Factors of the mind.

chanda : Mind's sub-current of consent (desire to do).

citta pāguññatā : Proficiency of mind.

citta kammaññatā : Fitness of mind.

citta-carita : Intellectual standards.

cittakkhana : A mind moment or a unit of time of the duration of a season of a beat of mind.

citta lahutā : Lightness of mind.

cittujjukatā : Uprightness of mind.

citta mudutā : Softness of mind.

cittapassaddhi : Tranquilization of mind (serenity of mind).

cuti citta : Exit thought.

dāna : Loving charity.

deva : A plane of existence higher than that of the human beings.

dhātu : Element.

dhiti : Wrong perception (error).

dosamūla : Defilements occurring rooted in aversion or hatred.

dosa : Hate and hatred, aversion.

dukkha : Suffering ; Painful feeling.

ekaggatā cetasika : Mind's current of decision (individuality).

gandha gocara rūpa : Smell projective element.

gandha : Smell.

ghāna : Nose.

ghānappasāda rūpa : Reflective element of the nose.

gocara rūpa : Projective element.

hadaya vatthu rūpa : Element of the heart.

hiri : Shamefulness towards foolish or evil action (prudence).

issā : Jealousy, envy.

itthi bhāva : Female sex.

jarā-maraṇa : Decay and death.

jaratā rūpa : Existence element.

jāti : Birth.

javana : Recurrent waves of the mind (impulsion).

jivhā : Tongue.

jivhappasāda rūpa : Reflective element of the tongue.

jīvita rūpa : Evolution element.

jīvitindriya—cetasika : Mind's current of evolution (psychic life vitality).

kammaññatā rūpa : Element of adaptability.

kappa : A universe period. A cycle of the universe.

karuṇā : Universal sympathy towards all beings (pity).

kāya : Touch.

kāya kammaññatā : Fitness of mental properties.

kāya lahutā : Lightness of mental properties.

kāya mudutā : Softness of mental properties.

kāya passaddhi : Tranquilization of actions of mental properties.

kāyappasāda rūpa : Reflective element of touch.

kāya pāguññatā : Proficiency of mental properties.

kāya viññatti : Physical motion (bodily communication).

kāyujjukatā : Uprightness of mental properties.

kukkucca : Repentance, worry.

kriyā : Action.

kusala : Purity (consciousness of a moral or beautiful kind).

lahutā rūpa : Element of inaction (lightness).

lakkhaṇa rūpa : Feature element.

lobha : Greed.

lobhamūla : Defilements occurring rooted in greediness.

macchariya : Stinginess.

mahā bhūta : The four great abstract elements.

majjhimā paṭipadā : Not extremist: "Middle Path"

manasikāra-cetasika : Mind's current of recollection (attention).

māna : Conceit.

mettā : Loving sympathy.

middha : Sickliness of mind (torpor).

moha : Ignorance (dulness).

mohamūla : Defilements rooted in ignorance.

muḍitā : Altruism.

mudutā rūpa : Element of release (pliancy).

nāma : Mind (the immaterial factors comprising an individual).

nibbāna : Life of full purity.

opapātika : Without the support of parents.

ottappa : Fearfulness towards foolish or evil action (discretion).

pakiṇṇaka : Mind's current of supplement (particular mental properties).

pañca sīla : Five rules conducive to good moral character.

paññā : Wisdom, reasoning insight; Knowledge, as opposed to ignorance (reason).

paramattha : The ultimate form of natural phenomena. (truth in the ultimate sense).

paricchedākāsa : Atmosphere.

pasāda rūpa : Element of reflection.

paṭhavi : Abstract earth.

paṭisandhi : The first beat of mind in a new field of existence.

phassa : sense reflections and impressions (contact).

phassa-cetasika : Mind's current of coalescence and survy (contact).

phoṭṭhabba : Touch.

phoṭṭhabba gocara rūpa : Touch projective element.

pīti : Mind's sub-current of pleasure.

purisa bhāva : Male sex.

rasa : Taste.

rasa (gocara) rūpa : Taste projective element.

rūpa : Matter.

rūpa kalāpa : Atom (a group of elementary particles).

sabba-citta-sādhāraṇa : Common current of the mind (mental properties common to every act of consciousness).

sadda : Sound.

sadda gocara rūpa : Sound projective element.

saddhā : Confidence; Faith.

sādhu : Beings of high purity.

sīla : Discipline.

sammā-ājīva : Correct livelihood (abstinence from wrong livelihood)

sammā-kammanta : Correct deeds (abstinence from wrong deeds).

sammā-vācā : Correct speech (abstinence from wrong speech).

sampaṭicchana : Determination wave (recipient consciousness).

saṅkhāra : Forces of impressions or purity and defilements.

saññāṇa-cetasika : Mind's current of distinction (perception).

Santati rūpa : Repetitive element.

santīraṇa : Decision wave (investigating consciousness).

sati : Mindfulness.

sobhana-sādhāraṇa cetasika : Mental factors common to all good thoughts.

somanassa sahagata ñāṇa sampayutta asaṅkhārika : Performed intentionally, with the full knowledge of the benefits, and after careful consideration (automatic consciousness with knowledge).

somanassa sahagata diṭṭhigata sampayutta sasaṅkhārika: Committed deliberately and intentionally, inspite of the full knowledge of consequences, and after cool calculation (volitional consciousness accompanied by joy).

sota : Ear.

sotappasāda rūpa : Reflective element of the ear.

sukha : Pleasant feeling.

taṇhā : Greed; craving.

tatramajjhatā : Equanimity.

tejo : Abstract Heat.

thīna : Sickliness of mental properties (sloth).

ṭhiti : Prime or existence.

uddhacca : Turbulence (distraction).

upacaya : Birth.

upacaya rūpa : Birth element (element of accumulation)

upādāna : Forces of clinging.

upekkhā : Neutral feeling.

upekkhā sahagata ñāṇa vippayutta sasaṅkhārika: Performed casually, without premeditation, knowledge, or consideration (volitional consciousness disconnected from knowledge).

upekkhā sahagata diṭṭhigata vippayutta asaṅkhārika : Committed casually on sudden provocation, without premeditation, information, or calculation (automatic consciousness disconnected from error).

ūppāda : Dawn or Birth.

vacī viññatti : Sound motion (vocal communication).

vaṇṇa : Colour.

vaṇṇa gocara rūpa : Colour projective element.

vāyo : Abstract air.

vedanā : Pain and pleasure.

vedanā-cetasika : Mind's current of condition (feeling)

vicikicchā : Indecision (perplexity).

vicāra : Mind's sub-current examination (sustained application).

vikāra rūpa : Conditon elements.

viññāṇa : Consciousness wave; Consciousness.

viññatti rūpa : Motion elements (media of communication).

virati : Abstinence of mind from evil speech, deed, or livelihood.

viriya : Effort. Mind's sub-current of effort.

votthapana : Contact wave (deciding consciousness).

vitakka : Mind's sub-current of deliberation (initial application).

NOTIFICATION

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