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The Light of Buddha

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JUNE 1962.

NUMBER 6.

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CONTENTS.

Editorial.	Page.
The Essence of Vinaya. <i>Rev: U Kumara.</i>	5.
"How is self Realization Influenced by a Cold War?" <i>William Pulley.</i>	10.
Buddhism and Mental Life. <i>U Hla Maung B A., B.E.S.</i>	14.
Satipaṭṭhana Vipassanā Meditation at Thathana Yeiktha, Rangoon. <i>Myanaung U Tin.</i>	18.
Abhidhamma (3) <i>U Hla Maung M.A., M.S., B.L...</i>	23.
Is your Body Really yours? <i>U Pe Than B.A., B.L., I.F.C.A.A.</i>	28.
Catechism of Buddhism. <i>U Kin Maung Dwe.</i>	32.
Journey into Silence a sydney woman found peace in the saered hill of Buddhist Burma. <i>Clem Clevenson.</i>	38.

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EDITORIAL.

FOR the purpose of our review, no clarification can be more precise and authentic than the actual words of the Buddha in relation to the death of Moggalana. Soon after the tragic incident, the monks assembled inside the Veluvana monastery and during the long discussion, they mournfully pronounced "Moggalana the Great met his death unworthy of him."

At that moment, the Buddha arrived and He related the bad antecedent of the deceased in one of his previous existences. It was stated that when Moggalana was formerly a high caste youth of Benares, he happened to murder his blind parents at the instigation of his wife who wanted to get rid of them. Having enticed the aged couple to visit some relatives, he carried them in a cart. On reaching inside a forest, he raised a false alarm that the robbers were coming. His blind parents then advised him to flee after leaving them to their fate. He got down from the cart and pretended to run but soon he returned altering his voice and uttering the yell of a highway man. Next he attacked and beat them to death with his stick and buried the dead bodies inside the forest.

This is only the gist of the whole story given in the early Buddhist Scriptures in full detail.(1) In this connection, the Buddha further declared:

"O monks, the fruit of this one deed of Moggalana was a torment in hell for many thousands of years and death by pounding in numerous existences as suited the nature of his crime. Moggalana's death is suited to his evil Karma."

(1) *Buddhism in Translations (Waren)* Pp.224-225.

This illustration is intended to convey that the unabating pressure of the past Vipaka being stronger and more powerful than the good Karma, Moggalana was unable to resist the former with the result that he was forced to yield and succumbed to death so helplessly even in his final existence.

The Karmic Law also prescribes the most serious offences the commission of which can never be condoned. They are called **Pañcānandriya Kamma** in the following order:

(1) Patricide (Pitughataka), (2) Matricide (Matughataka), (3) Killing a Saint (Arahantaghataka), (4) Causing schism in the Holy Order (Sanghabeda) and (5) Causing blood to flow from the foot of the Buddha (Lohituppada).

They are so grave, the effect of committing any of these is most fearsome and unrelenting as the greatest sin with no way to escape. The actual working of the resultant-effect (Vipaka) cannot be seen with an ordinary human vision as it lies within the sphere of the Buddha who alone can discern with his celestial vision (dibbacakkhu) and the power of knowing previous existences (Pubbenivasa ñāna) which are the factors of Enlightenment.

Another interesting question involving a debatable point may be raised in this form:

“If Moggalana, so powerful an Arahant had to suffer for his previous evil Karma (Vipaka), then why Angulimala the former ruffian and murderer of Savaithi should get absolution for his sins after attaining Arahantship up to the time of his Parinibbana?”

Now, from the biographical accounts of the two Saints, one can easily find a vast difference in a gravity of offences committed by each of them. For better understanding of the foreign students of Buddhism, it may be necessary to recount, in brief, the life history of Angulimala.

It was in the 20th year of His Enlightenment that the Buddha converted a most notorious outlaw under the following circumstances. Angulimala whose original name was Ahimsaka came out of a respectable family of Brahman councillor Antaka and his wife Matani in Savatthi. Soon he turned out to be an illustrious and favourite pupil of his teacher in school. Unfortunately, his associates getting jealous of his outstanding merits concocted a false story of love intrigue with the teacher's wife. This eventually alienated the sympathy and affection of the teacher who, contrived to do away with Ahimsaka by ordering him to fetch a thousand fingers as a present. With great reluctance, Ahimsaka repaired to a forest and started cutting the fingers of those whom he came across. During this nefarious adventure, he transformed himself into a gruesome figure with a garland of fingers which he hung round his neck. Hence he was given the name of Angulimala. After he had collected all but one, he happened to meet his mother who came to break the news of his impending arrest by the King's army. In his firm resolution to get the last finger, he did not

flinch even to chase his mother and cut her finger. It was at this juncture that the Buddha appeared on the scene all of sudden to subdue him.

On seeing the Buddha, he dashed out with a tremendous outburst of speed to cut his finger. The Buddha by the exercise of his supernatural power made Angulimala misapprehend that the Buddha was even faster than himself and could not be captured. While chasing, Angulimala was so much spent and exhausted that he could not run any more. He then said, "Don't be afraid. Why you run so fast?" and the Buddha simply replied "I am standing still and I do not move."

Angulimala then enquired:

"As thou goest, thou sayest 'I stand still'
And to me who stand, thou sayest 'Thou standing not'
I ask you, Monk, this question:
How standest thou still and I stand not?"

The Buddha replied:

"I stand still, Angulimala, in every wise;
Towards all living things have I laid aside violence
But thou to all living things art unrestrained
Therefore, I stand still and thou standest not."

Realising his great blunder, Angulimala dropped his sword and expressed his willingness to become a monk. He was instantly admitted into the Order wherein he attained Arhatship in due course. The Buddha taught him a **Paritta** that would help to relieve a woman of hard delivery in time of confinement. The belief in the efficacy of this '**Angulimala Paritta**' still persists to the present day in many Buddhist countries.

So, it seems clear that Saint Angulimala's past career was dissimilar to that of Moggalana in the sense that there was no indication of harbouring of grave evil Karma falling within the purview of **Pañcā-nandriya**. Of course, there might be several deaths due to his misguided action in the present life, but the real motive behind the crime was to collect human fingers as directed by his preceptor. In addition, these offences do not fall under **Pañcā-nandriya** which are serious enough to be deprived of all hopes for extenuation even though counter-balanced by good Kamma of the past. As the matter stands, Angulimala's vain attempts to cut the fingers of his mother and the Buddha as aforesaid could be condoned by virtue of his attainment of Arahathship after Ordination. Moggalana's case, on the other hand, presents no mitigating circumstances being aggravated by Vipaka born of **Pañcā-nandriya** as explained above.

During the Buddha's time, the most notable person who committed patricide was King Ajatasatthu of Rajagaha who killed his father Bimbisara. Next, Devadatta created schism in the Buddhist Order and he caused injury to the Buddha by hurling a big rock from mount Gijjakuta. For these evil deeds falling under **Pañcā-nandriya** Kamma, he was being swallowed by earth. These interpolations are simply meant to vindicate the grave consequences attached to **Pañcā-nandriya** which can never be condoned.

Analogous instances are to be found in Christianity in which some great Apostles had to give up their lives at the Cross. Just as the whole Christendom bemoans over the death of these Apostles, so also the Buddhist world laments for the loss of saint Moggalana who met his death ignominiously in a manner unworthy of his glory and greatness. Still a divergence of opinion exists between the theistic doctrines and Buddhism on this point. According to Buddhism, Moggalana's demise however, bears no signification to wash the sins of mankind by atonement, but due to the effect of evil kamma or Vipaka which has brought about his fatal end,

The Western concept of 'martyr' and the idea of 'vicarious atonement' do not occur in Buddhism which teaches the practice of self-control, self-reliance, self-purification and self-perfection exhorting to 'work out one's own salvation, with diligence.' As each stands on his own merit or demerit, good or evil, none can purify another. Therefore, it is said, 'Blessed are those who follow the path of virtue' quite independent of any divine power or outside influence.'

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THE ESSENCE OF VINAYA.

By

Rev: U Kumara, Thaton.

(Continued from May Issue)

TRADITION says, in Anguttara that five hundred monks having learned necessary subjects of meditation from the Blessed One, went and took up their residence in a peaceful garden belonging to a headman's mother. It was pleasantly situated. They agreed among themselves to enter into meditation each at the foot of a tree, and to beat the gong when necessity arises.

The old lady of the garden brought breakfasts for them, and seeing only one monk, asked the reason; and she was told of the understanding amongst themselves. The gong was struck and the monks came in deep thought, looking down. She then said: "Are there quarrels among you?" "No. We devote our time to meditation" replied the monks.

The old lady besought them to instruct her on the discipline of meditation and training and they instructed in all the processes.

Women are carefree; and the aged in particular live in retirement. And soon she attained the state of "Anāgāmin", the goal of returning only once more to rebirth. Persons of that attainment possess supernatural powers of reading the minds of others at a distance, like telepathy. She tried to ascertain the cause of monks' delay in gaining the summit of perfection and found that they needed congenial food (one out of the four congenialities) and she accordingly prepared various dishes in agreement with their relishes and presented them. This done, the holy men reaped the fruit of saintship, flew to Buddha's monastery through the air and said to Him thus: We are favoured with food of an excellent appetite and gained the saintship quickly.

A young Bhikkhu, hearing this had a desire to go to the same place, asked the essential subjects of meditation from the Blessed One and went there. He walked on foot and as the journey was too tedious he was desirous of sweet drink to be brought by the old lady; and, indeed, she did bring it and offered him. At breakfast time, as he was much wearied with the fatigue of the previous day, had no inclination to roam about for alms and wished the lady to bring breakfast for him; and, sure enough, she brought it. He said: "I might be caught if any unworthy reflection be made be made by me" This caused him extreme uneasiness, that he could stay no longer but went back and told the Omniscient Being about it. The latter advised him to return to the same place and be careful to guard, "Hiri Ottapa"-Shame and fear. He, too, won the saintship in a short time.

"Shame and fear" are really one in essence. They can safely be recommended to all as a powerful aid to carry out successfully the method of controlling the mind and its acquisition.

The young saint felt a thinking: "This old lady has remarkably administered to all my wants like my relation. What was she to me?" He found out that she was his wife in one of the existences and even attempted his life. How wicked was she?

The old lady requested him to make further consideration; and perceived that they were husband and wife; and in that union she sacrificed her life for his sake. Such is the message from garden to house.

Lord Buddha told a story of the past, an event in His own previous life, which explains the doctrine on "Hiri Ottapa", as a repetition or as a paralled case, Once upon a time Bodhisatta was born to the Chief Queen. In due course another son was born to the same queen.

The king had an acute sore in one of his right fingers. The pain was intense and the king was unable to sleep. The younger queen put the finger in her mouth when the sore burst and the king fell into a profound sleep. The queen swallowed the matter so as not to disturb the sleep. When the king awoke he was highly delighted to learn how the sore had been cured and how the queen swallowed the matter and offered her a boom: to be chosen. She accepted the offer but put it off for a time. When her son grew up, she went to the king, and said to him, "My Lord, you promised a boon. Will you give it to me now?" Choose, lady, "said he." "My Lord," "quoth she," Give my son the kingdom." The king snapped his fingers at her: "My two sons shine like blazing fires: would you kill them, and ask the kingdom for a son of yours?" She fled in terror to her chamber.

The king thought within himself: * Women are ungrateful and treacherous. This woman might get my sons murdered." So he sent for his sons, and told them all about it, saying: "My sons if you live here some mischief may befall you. Go to the woodland and when I am dead, then return and inherit the kingdoms with belongs to your family." They promised, and after taking leave of their father, went forth from the palace. The son of the young queen too will go with his two brothers, and bade his mother and father farewell.

These three brothers departed amidst a company of people; but they sent them back. And when at last they reached a pleasant spot, the Bodhisatta felt thirsty sent his half-brother to fetch water. He found a lake which was guarded by a monster. Wethawun Nat is the king of all monsters and the spirits of the trees. To make the story short, the guardian of the lake was permitted by the Wethawun Nat to eat any one unable to answer the doctrine of "Deva Daha." The monster questioned the prince as to the meaning of it; and the prince replied "It is heaven and earth "Wrong," said tue monster, took him as a prisoner. The younger price was sent out again; and the same question was put and his answer was "Sun and moon." He too was seized.

As they had been out too long, Bodhisatta set out to the same place and observed foot-prints of going down the lake but no marks of climbing and concluded that his brothers had been detained here. The monstar persuaded him to go down but he refused: and when the question of "Dewa Deha" was asked he preached eloquently the doctrine of "Shame and fear." It was with gratitude that the monstar presented one of his brothers for acceptance. The Bodhisatta said: "Give me my half-brother, if you please." "Why don't you ask your own brother?" said the guardian of the lake. If I did, every one would say that he had been killed by us. then the monstar restored back all his brother? The subsequent event is not relevant and their description need not be made.

As an instance of two other disciplines of Vinaya, it is related in the story of Yeda, who awoken with noble aspiration to lead a holy life under Buddha, an All-Wise Teacher. He went about inquiring the training of a monk. The first Bhikkhu, who was studying Abhidhamma, gave an exposition of the profound knowledge of the same, the second, who had taken great interest in the Vinaya, revealed the ecclesiastical disciplines, rules and regulations of a monks, and the third, who was contemplating on the ten stages of impurities leading onwards to the disgust of the body, said: "My man, I seek salvation in solitude in the tranquility of a cemetery, where there are corpses. There is in the Quiet dwells Wisdom. As I behold the corpses I learn Wisdom, and feel the transience of every earthly things. That which has the quality of dissolution is dissolved. All impermanent existences are of this nature."

With unsatisfactory thoughts new and stirring in his mind, Yada went to the Glorious Buddha and said: "I am too old to study these enormous scriptures."

"My son," said the Blessed One, you need not be troubled to all these teachings, but cultivate the strictest fidelity both in speech and in deed. In another words, one should develop the discipline of a monk by restraining his bodily act and sins in words.

The whole of Vinaya contains instructions not to deviate from the condition of a monk, either by word or by deed, but there is none concerning with mental discipline; and although the guiding principles involve suggestions for outward behaviour it is essentially subjected to a mental discipline, that leads through the restraint of physical desire, the encouragement of thoughtfulness the practice of mental discipline to a self-realization with one's own mind.

"Monastery is a reformatory" I would say so far as those who are born of evil proclivity. Vinaya teaches unity and brotherhood and makes no distinction between high and low and disregards the worldly barrier whereby men are separated from each other. It humbles the pride of men when all classes are admitted into the fold on terms of equality. A personal experience will cure him of false pride and teach him to appreciate the culture of the humble. There are men who have been condemned by the world; and to set aside such people would mean them free to do their worst and would be the worst, The Vinaya can awaken the minds of these people to the truth that wrong-doing brings in its train suffering and

remorse. They have every opportunity to strive for honesty and justice will not fail, their understanding will be increased and their success will be permanent. One thing which they did not suspect is certain, that they are no longer the same men; all is changed in themselves. Living in the shadow of sanctum and having been in the same environment they began to emulate the ideals of the holy men and cannot help to live accordingly.

Full of hindrances is the household life, very free the life of medicant. What had been reckless in their youths had been reformed in manhood. In the whole life they have never been disciplined under the holy Order of the Blessed One, the Chief of all sages and the Bringer of Happiness. They must go out every morning begging for alms. They do so through necessity and not through vanity. They know the time to be silent, and they also know the time to speak. The Vinaya teaches that in exercising their will for good or evil they are the makers as well as the partakers of their destiny, and points out the way by which in time they should obtain release from mortal existences and enters the source of light.

The Vinaya's aim has been to seek for purity and to free a monk from evil stain. A sin like a hair-tip shows on him like a dark cloud in the sky. He must find for himself the path to reach felicity. As a matter of fact, a yellow robe, the emblem of saintship, deserves to be worn by one who is free from sinful taint.

The food ought to be vegetarian, simple and pure, since true Buddhist holds all life holy. The first precept which a Buddhist promises every day of his life is not to kill, nor encourage others to kill, nor approve of others killing. Flesh-eaters must kill living creatures in order to cook them into all manner of dishes. Better a hundred nay a thousand times than such food as ours though it be vegetation, grasses, etc. for our fare harms us not, and is a pledge that our lives will not be cut short. The Devas are high in favour of vegetarian diet and cannot come hear the meat-eaters. If we survey the life of All-pitying Master in His embryonic stage of development we find that He invariably lived on harmless diet of vegeterianism, but when His Lordship has reached the end He set before Him there was no need for any restriction. He woul naturally accept all kinds of food presented by all classes of people.

A monk is supposed to retire to a solitary place and fix his mind upon the miseries and sorrows of the world, and awaken the sentiment of pity for all the distress ones and those creatures on land, in sky and in water. How can that concentration bring any good result when he is eating their flesh?

It has been laid down in Sagata Vagga Samyutta Palidaw: In a great feast, goats, pigs, fowl, birds are slaughtered for the purpose of curry, All Buddhas, Saints and holy men should not approach this feast and beg for alms."

Then again, in No: 76, Anguttara Pali: "Either the goats, either the buffaloes or the bullocks or the various kinds of fish, birds, prawns, etc- killing without compassion in eating the flesh of these creatures without sympathy and consideration in partaking along with meals as delicious curry is not endowed with a noble mind those who desire

to attain the exalted truth will abstain from eating the flesh and will not even accept as alms." In any case, we should treat these animals with the kindness they deserve.

The dispensation of women is limited to one thousand years. The first priestess was Queen Prajapati, Buddha's foster-mother, who after the death of His father, wished to be ordained. Buddha at first refused with her request, but on the intercession of His favourite disciple Ananda, He granted the request, on condition that they would accept eight weighty regulations in addition to these accepted by the Order - eight Weighty Regulations making them subject to the Order, it shall be reckoned to them for ordination. Ananda went out to the Queen and told her all as she stood patiently with the wearied women. They said: "O Venerable Ananda, we take up these weighty regulations not to be transgressed while life last."

To Ananda, The Blessed One, said, "It is not expedient to permit women to embrace religious state. He realizes the great danger to the Order of Monks owing to the admission among men of our women. What is the reason? To allow them to interfere too much means an evil; which is likely to develop in the long run. His Lordship took great care to codify Bhikkhu-Vinaya to prevent all scandals and to shield its good name; and the most perfect discipline prevailed among men and scandals were almost unknown.

This brief summary can give only an outline of the discipline of Vinaya which reveals how important and how valuable are to those who desire to train a Holy life.

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"HOW IS SELF REALIZATION INFLUENCED BY A COLD WAR?"

By

William Pulley

Author's Note:

This, and the articles to follow are offered in Buddhist perspective. They will be directly aligned with the best to be found in psychology, biology, genetics and the mental-sciences, hoping to create some synthesis between philosophy and science.

SELF REALIZATION DEFINED:

IT should be mentioned at the outset that the term 'self-realization' is a most abused and misunderstood thing. Broadly speaking, it was meant to convey the idea of a better understanding of the "self" and to perhaps mean also a development of freedom from ignorance and illusion, in part or fully realized. Religions and philosophies have used the term loosely to include their own dogmas and doctrinal views. Other outlook places the term in the category of the reflective life where it is exposed to both mystical and occult influences. Another element sees self-realization and its fruit as something without fixed format or plan, that slowly builds enlightenment according to the individual's capacity for wisdom, insight and tolerance. At a higher level, self-realization is completely removed from religious or doctrinal associations, recognizing no attachments that tend to retard a complete break with greed, hate, ignorance and illusion. This approach is made through the meditative life and makes possible a more full 'awareness' of the arising and control of conscious and unconscious thought through the technique known as "Mindfulness."

The definition of self-realization commonly used by the 'theistic' mind, applies directly to the intercession of gods, saints, avatars, etc., through whose strength a goal is said to be reached. Because this type of self-realization is not influenced or endangered by the cold-war, it is not a part of our central theme. The self-realization we do wish to define and clarify, represents a phase of life that has outgrown tendencies to depend upon 'external guidance' (of gods, saints, avatars, etc.) and to find within one's own being and consciousness, freedom from mental-suffering and the meaning of birth, growth and death. This self-realisation is the out-growth of intellectual, moral and meditative practice, focusing on those *causes* of mental suffering that must be known before freedom from mental suffering can be realized. This outlook assumes full responsibility for the action one takes in life, seeing all action mental and physical as bringing reaction for reward or punishment.

Self-realization implies much more than superficial intellectual understanding of mental and physical phenomena. It implies a type of intellectual freedom that allows the individual moral and personal liberty

to go beyond the barriers of religious or mass-concepts without fear of reprisals or compulsion such as is found in a cold-war influence. Under the cold-war compulsions, the patterns of thought are definitely moulded to fit ideological or political expediencies. This is psychologically conditioned to influence the mass-concept. Liberty in this case, takes the shape of conformity. To conform is to find a type of liberty that is condoned by the cold-war. To refuse is to find obstacles and even violent opposition. The development of psychological compulsion is not focused on the unfoldment and enlightenment of the individual; its concentration is fixed upon a limited or "two-valued" ideology, adjusted to the ever changing patterns of politics and economic movement. Just that and no more.

EVENTS THAT LED TO THE COLD-WAR:

When we make statements that oppose popular opinion, some explanation is in order. It is quite easy to recall the steps that gave birth to a cold-war since the events are already recorded history, or they repose in the newspaper files of publishers. In this case, we can omit the lengthy political development dealing with 'capitalist and communist ideology' and go directly to the reaction of the churchman in America (and elsewhere) who was first and outstandingly opposed to a "godless" state. He wrote numerous articles that appeared in hundreds of newspapers and magazines published in Western countries, violently opposing non-theistic influence and organizing his numbers tightly for the forthcoming war against the "godless". The newspaper files will reveal how the politician reacted to this concerted and powerful drive against the 'evils of being godless', taking advantage of the situation and creating a "McCarthyism" which associated godlessness with communism and by so doing, began a ten year campaign of intolerance, hatred, compulsion and intimidation. (1945-55) Quickly then, a chain-reaction of religious, political and economic 'opportunists' came upon the scene to formulate themselves (and others) into advocates of a cold-war. Behind the scenes where the 'opportunist' can be properly identified, are powerful figures and institutions whose sole interest is either power to be gained or sustained. Sadly enough, associated with these are innocent victims of circumstance who are compelled by sheer force and power of movement, to identify themselves with cold-war. The work of courageous journalists, is to point up the details in the near future if a future there is to be.

However 'natural or unnatural' it might seem to the intelligent reader, the present reactions to the cold-war influence in the West are largely directed to 'theist-non-theist' ideology. this is the "core" of the matter. It would even be accurate to say that the opposition to non-theistic growth in the West is the most basic reason for starting and sustaining a cold-war. The intelligent man is ready to admit that theistic development has surely aided humanity in its painful rise above the primitive fetters that bound him to superstition, fears, violence and hate. But in this modern day a

non-theist in a theist community is immediately labelled 'dangerous' and exposed to mass-mind intolerance. Few seem to realize that self-realization embodies the need to search beyond the limitations of theistic outlook, but because of this it cannot thrive normally in a theistic setting. This is most distressing simply because all Western countries are directly or indirectly controlled by theistic dominance, and modifying this under a cold-war is out of the question. In this regard, Western countries might take helpful guidance from the pages of history and be reminded that the Greek civilization flowered when philosophy and self-realization was allowed full expression, and died when this was denied the thinking and creative man. In a world such as ours, there is no place to run or hide, therefore self-realization has its 'back to the wall'; the individual and the group seeking expansion in educational and cultural development has the moral right to state their position in the spirit of justice and reason.

THREE AND FOUR DIMENSIONAL THINKING:

It has already been shown here that self-realization, both as a term and a way of life, is quite relative in nature. The theist mind sees its benefits and fruit with one outlook, while the non-theist sees it with another. Nor is this unnatural or undesirable. No thinking man would deny his less thoughtful brother the right to 'be different.' The 'evolution and devolution' of the individual and humankind is an unending phenomenon; what is logic and reason for one is often outmoded ideology for the other. One man can think in "three-dimensional" terms, such as black and white, good and bad, high and low, etc., which represent extremes in thought, without being able to find a reasonable compromise between these extremes. His is the limited view that grows out of several 'relatively' negative influences among which are religious bigotry, racial pride, nationalistic intolerance, etc. Modification and wise-compromise could temper this development if emotional-immaturity and sub-conscious attachment were absent.

The other man, growing in a deeper vein of insight of "four-dimensional" outlook, can range beyond extremes expressed as 'duality' high and low, right and wrong, etc., and invite good compromise in all matters. This is the man who points up the modern influence of science and shows the relative nature of all mental and physical phenomena. He tries to show how humanity has passed beyond the "absolutes" of religion and dogmatic statement, out into the more clear atmosphere of "relative values. He admits of the known fact that "a thing or condition can be both existent and non-existent," particularly when he views another fact that all conditions and things are forever changing their form and nature. 'Time and space' for example "do and do not" exist when we think in terms of their relative position in both circumstance and events. Therefore, thinking man must hold himself ready at all times to control his emotional life and find wise compromise when three-dimensional influences express violent opposition and emotional-immaturity.

Count Alfred Korzybski lends much light on this subject when he refers to three-dimensional thinking as "two-valued" guidance in his book, "Science and Sanity." Korzybski follows the historical line to show Western civilization as leaning heavily to Aristotele's two-valued guidance which says a 'thing or condition either is or is not.' This outlook is said to be condoned and sponsored by the early Christian church fathers to sustain their religious views, which influence is said to persist to this present day. The author of this scholarly contribution, points directly to the dangerous influence this exerts on our rapidly changing world which cries out for wise-compromise and a four-dimensional view on change and values.

With particular reference to cold-war propaganda and its telling effect on the human nervous system, Korzybski further says: "Politicians, gangsters, military men, etc., without any understanding of the depth of destructiveness to the human nervous systems, utilize these methods quite successfully. Magicians have studied these methods professionally, but they utilize them for entertainment; not for destruction." He also says: "These destructive methods are the bases of a 'war on nerves' and a 'war of nerves' to the point of screaming bombs, verbal distortions, the 'psychology' of deception, etc." In short, he sees cold-war techniques as leading to a break-down of public morale with the end results of neurotic impairment of mental-health. The nervous system and mental-health once broken down, does not heal as easily as the broken bodies of flesh and bone.

SUBCONSCIOUSNESS AND THE COLD-WAR:

This dreadful reaction to the cold-war is already showing itself in America if we are to properly interpret the editorial comment of "Life" magazine of January 1, 1962 (International Edition). It says in substance that the "superpatriots" are not needed to win the cold-war, and laments the rise of powerful groups springing up in many parts of the country to declare open war on 'subversives'. This tragic situation (McCarthyism) thought by some to be under control, arises again to oppose all 'peace organizations and racial or defence groups' saying that they are only fronts for subversive action. The editorial goes on to show that even high-level officials are under fire. This timely and helpful reaction of Life magazine is actually open admission that cold-war reactions in America are beginning to take an ugly form, undermining the public's mental-health and producing a greater hysteria that reflects a psychological influence leading to frustration and neurosis. When a 'hate complex' takes the form already described, victims must be found and destroyed. What chance would self-realization have in such a setting?

(To be continued).

BUDDHISM AND MENTAL LIFE.

By

U Hla Maung, B.A., B.E.S. (Retd)

(Continued from May Issue)

Part VII.

The Grand Mood of Buddhism.

The Grand March of Beginningless and Endless.
The Grand Mood of Full Tolerance and Compassion.

RELIGION, in one form or another, has been the solace mankind in the march of history. It is very sad that this grand solace is being assailed by dubious and vicious 'isms'. True Buddhists, as followers of the most compassionate and, therefore, of the most tolerant Seeker and Speaker of Truth, are bound to exalt and reverence all high ideals and noble aspirations. We sincerely rejoice that there are still many millions all over the world who can and do sincerely pray and worship in their own diverse lights.

At the same time, we are bound to follow and uphold that Grand Path of unwavering Neutrality laid down by the Blessed One. The canvas is vast and the subject matter is a great tangle. Knowing his own limitations, the writer makes this fool-hardy attempt to present, in a few pages, his wonderment at the Grand Mood and Theme of Buddhism. He begs to be excused for his short comings.

The Grand Mood (First Aspect)

It encompasses law-order, causation, time-space, matter-life-mind triune, the inanimate-the animate, and thereby, determinism counter-balanced by Kamma, and also the neutral perspective of these various factors moving and swirling, repeating and recurring, without the intervention of a God or a Cosmic Power or Purpose. Our neutralism fronts pure Materialism, Idealism or Mysticism, whether ancient or modern. We look at the grand march of time-space-events in a perspective not limited to only one Universe in the cosmos as posited by modern astronomers and evolutionists. We view things as happening in great epochs of time or Kappas. Buddhism regards the positing of a Beginning and Ending in regard to the cosmos as an 'unthinkable or *Acceintaya*'.

I shall now seek some side-light from the words of Prof. Lovell's "The Individual and the Universe" in which he says:

"I shall describe the universe which we can study with our telescopes, both those parts, which are near at hand in the Solar System and those remote regions near the observable limit at distances of a few thousand million light years. At these distances the light and radio waves become so weak that we cannot observe what lies beyond."

'These are the limits at which astronomers as scientists can give any information based on his scientific observation.

We are forced to inquire if this vast universe which we already observe represents the whole of what actually exists. In this connexion I shall evade the **philosophical difficulties** which surround the meaning of a universe which we can see only in the past. At the limit of present day observations our information is a **few thousand million years out of date**. Although our instruments probe so far out into space and so far back in time, we have no final answer to the ultimate problem of the conditions which existed when the universe was created, or indeed if there was an epoch measurable in human time-scales."

Prof. Lovell has referred to philosophical difficulties in the view point given by him. Two thousand five hundred years ago, the Buddha was distressed by clashing philosophies, and He arrived at a strict neutrality in an age, necessarily limited to large scale observation and deep thought. It was an age innocent of the detailed sciences as we have them today, but yet of profound thought-an age which spoke in terms of intangible elements and atoms. That is to say, the Buddha could discuss things only in the then-idiom of symbols, such as, the four great elements of Fire, Earth, Air, Water and also of atoms. It was the nature ripeness of the Buddha's philosophic consciousness and wisdom that enabled him to speak with world-wide vision, and, at the same time, so free from avoidable dogmatism.

So, then, in its grand and neutral mood, Buddhism speaks of a Beginningless and an Endless as regard to:

- (a) Evolution of the universe and thousands of world systems, in a sense of recurrence.
- (b) Evolution of matter-life-mind in all this vast stretch of time.
- (c) Evolution in thirty-one planes of existences
- (d) Evolution of common men to Arahats and Buddhas.
- (e) Modern of Darwinian evolution is not out of place in Buddhism.

The Grand Mood of Buddhism (Second Aspect)

The Discovery of Essence in this Multiverse of ours.

Before taking up my theme I shall quote some gems of modern thought. These gems will light us on our way. Such illumination is very helpful in the face of the high optimism of the materialist scientist for whom 'the unknown' is vague nonsense. The materialist is more than certain that a fuller and completer knowledge of Matter is within man's reach, and this knowledge will bring about a new millenium. We do not support the Unknowable in the sense of an Inscrutable Power behind the dynamic phenomena of life - mind-matter-life (the triume). Our position is that the ultimate nature of the three must remain unsolved. We do say that these have Knowable features and characters as well as their unknowable side.

Thought-gem No.1. (George Santayana). "The world comes to us dripping with the qualities of the senses through which it has flowed, and the past comes down to us through a memory treacherously coloured with desire. Only one thing seems certain to him and that is the experience of the moment - This Colour, this Form, this Taste, this Odor, this Quality. These are the REAL WORLD and their perception constitutes 'The Discovery of Essence.' How Buddhistic".

Gem No.2. (William James). He is in favour of a multiverse as compared with a universe. The cosmos is not a closed and harmonious system; it is a battle ground of cross-currents and conflicting purposes. It shows, with pathetic obviousness, as not a universe but as a multiverse. A monistic world, in which we play the parts assigned to us by an omnipotent deity or a primordial nebula is a Dead World. (How Buddhistic)

James trenchantly states: "I firmly disbelieve myself that human experience is the highest form of experience extant in the universe. I believe rather that we stand in much the same relation to the whole universe as our canine and feline pets do to the whole human life. These pets take part in our domestic scenes of whose significance they have no inkling. They are merely tangent to curves of history, the beginning, ends and forms of which pass wholly beyond their ken. So we, too, are tangent to the wider life of things." Such are the words of a Pragmatist, who occupied himself "with the excellencies and not the duration of our natures". He wished that there was a philosophy which offers the universe as an **adventure** rather than scheme. In the next aspect we shall present the multiverse as a setting for the Great Adventure of Buddhahood.

James opines that ordinary human experience is not the highest extant in the universe. Buddhism shows that we can rise beyond the common-clay level and real, in a higher plane, with the Beginning, Ends and Forms of what pass before us.

(These gems are from Will Durant's Story of Philosophy).

The Grand Mood (Third Aspect).

Man becomes a Buddha.

Is Divinity the End-product of evolution?

Evolution not a one-direction closed process.

We usually proceed from the particular to the general and from the near to the far-off. So let us open with R.S. Alexander's eye-opening theory. In the nineteen-twenties, he and another brilliant man, Mc. Taggart, attempted to construct a metaphysics accounting for all that exists - an attempting of the impossible.

Alexander, fallaciously treating Space-time as a Substance, sets out to erect a very subtle kind of thin Matter. Why are we making reference to such a theory? We do so (1) because stand on an independent, neutral, A-metaphysical ground, (2) because Alexander approached the Buddhist view at one very important point.

To be short: Alexander in his "Space-Time and Deity (1921) started the formulation of a universe under the scheme "differentiation" - differentiation from lower to higher. His differentiation proceeds as follows: Space-Time into Matter, then into Life, then into Mind and ultimately into Deity as the final stage, which the triune (matter-life-mind) are continually struggling and striving to attain. According to him Deity is the End-product, not the origin and beginning as in the orthodox theologies, and an undifferentiated Space-Time is instead the source of all becomings. We say that Alexander approaches somewhat near to our A-metaphysical doctrine, but we do not erect a Deity as a beginning or as an End. We do maintain, as he does, that the triune is ever struggling to attain an End, open and possible to mankind, namely, the attainment of Arahatship and Buddhahood, after circulatory evolution in the thirty-one planes, if the physical world may be viewed in forty-one shelves, why not the mental kammic world in thirty-one planes?

Two Avenues.

This leads us to two avenues. The first avenue is regarding the position or force of Determinism (Niyama) as seen by Sir J. Jeans. The famous astrolger quotes R. S. Alexander's theory of step by step evolution to Deity with whom Determinism becomes nil. Jeans says that Alexander divides the world into levels (planes) which are at different stages of evolution.

First level: Space-Time which is under full determinism.

Second level: Atoms, under less determinism.

Third level: Life, with its urges and pushes, under lesser determinism,

Note: Life has so many grades and therefore various kinds of developments occur, and thereby soften down determinism, making Choices possible.

Fourth level: Man (acme and epitome of biological evolution); ever making choices, is loosely bound by determinism of Nature, but, because of his voluntary actions, is, on the other hand, held by the Kamma of actions and thoughts.

Fifth level: Man is again graded into mental and knowledge levels. We have the ignorant and uncultured; the educated and the cultured; men of great intellect and character, geniuses, saints, Arahats and the Buddha, grade by grade, lessening the sway of Determinism and Kamma until these forces operate no more. This is the more true the more we realise 'that the spring of our actions are thrust on us by our pasts.'

Note 1. I have oriented James without offending the spirit of this thinking.

Note 2. I must also state that Buddhism, whatever it is, does not subscribe to the theory of Emergence or to Bergson's 'Creative Evolution': Buddhism is to be taken as it is the treatment of Actuality.

SATIPATTHĀNA VIPASSANĀ MEDITATION AT THATHANA YEIKTHA, RANGOON.

Part II.

*(A talk by Myanaung U Tin broadcast from Burma Broadcasting Service
on Monday, the 22nd January 1962)*

ON the 27th November 1961, I gave a talk from here on Satipatthāna Vipassanā Meditation at Thathana Yeiktha. I have already dealt with the preliminary discourse of Mahāsi Sayadaw, in which the method of practising Satipatthāna Vipassanā Meditation is explained to the new disciples on their arrival at Sasana Yeiktha.

In this talk, I propose to give more information about the meditation course as well as about Thathana Yeiktha.

There are five sets of rules and regulations for the guidance of Meditation Instructors and the disciples. They relate to (1) Bhikkhu Meditation Instructors, (2) Laymen Meditation Instructors, (3) Bhikkhu disciples, (4) Lay disciples, and (5) Management and maintenance of Discipline. For want of time, I shall be able to deal only with the rules and regulations relating to lay disciples and maintenance of discipline at the Centre and that briefly.

A lay disciple is allotted a room by the warden-in-charge. The Centre is divided into two parts, one for Bhikkhus and laymen and the other for nuns and laywomen. Two separate buildings with modern conveniences are set apart for those who come from overseas or abroad, one for men and the other for women.

A lay disciple is required to observe Eight Precepts, one of them being voluntary abstinence from taking any solid food after midday until next dawn. Apart from six hours, at the most, for sleep, the rest of twenty-four hours should be spent in Vipassanā Meditation. Reading, writing, and purposeless talking are to be avoided: Visitors are not disallowed but must be reduced to a bare minimum, and none is allowed between 12 noon and 5 p.m.

The meditation course varies from a minimum of 6 weeks to approximately 10 weeks, depending on the progress of the disciples. Free accommodation is provided, but food is obtainable at a reasonable rate per day. Food is not strictly vegetarian but vegetarian food is also available. Some disciples have their food sent from home, some take their food at the meal hall as paying guests, and others, particularly woman disciples, cook their own food. Yogi Aid Society provides, free of charge, a weekly ration of uncooked rice and wood fuel to any yogi who is willing to receive it. All the kyaungs and houses are furnished with electric lights, running water and other modern conveniences. Each kyaung or house is under the control of an assistant warden, responsible to the warden-in-charge, as also to the Presiding Sayadaw.

Sāsana Yeiktha is run by Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Organisation but management and maintenance of discipline are in the hands of Mahāsi Sayadaw and his Senior Monk Disciples. From its inception, some 15 years ago, Thado Thiri Thudhamma Sir U Thwin has been the President of the Organisation. Prime Minister U Nu and several prominent persons have been most closely associated with the Centre. Because of this high patronage, there has been a misconception in certain quarters that Sasana Yeiktha gives priority to those of so-called higher social standing and guests who come from abroad. Nothing is farther from the truth. As a matter of fact, admission to the Centre is determined solely on the disciples' sincerity of purpose, irrespective of social standing, race or nationality. While primarily for Buddhists, non-Buddhists in real earnest for meditation are also welcomed.

It may be pointed out that one of the rules is that the disciples undergoing training are required to present themselves daily at the appointed time at the fixed place for the purpose of examination of their experiences in practical meditation. This daily examination or interview is most essential in that the slightest deviation of a disciple from the right track can be detected at once and his or her steps will be righted forthwith. Instructors can also know the progress or otherwise of the disciple and accordingly give words of advice, explanation and encouragement. Instructors note down in their books important particulars relating to each disciple, and when they are satisfied with his or her progress they recommend him or her to Mahasi Sayadaw for hearing the final discourse, in which the Sayadaw explains in detail the sixteen stages of insight leading to Magga Ñāṇa, Phala Ñāṇa and Nibbana, as also the qualities of a Sotāpanna. In conclusion, he advises the listening disciples to determine by their own experiences the stage they have reached, and that, if they feel they have not successfully finished the course, they should continue their efforts for achievement, but, on the other hand, if they feel that they have realised the truth, they should behave in a manner befitting a Sotāpanna. The Sayadaw emphasises that the decision of status can be made by nobody save the Buddha, but the disciples who have actually realised the truth know for themselves that they have done so, and they will entertain no more doubts or perplexities but possess Right View, the view that will remain unshakable forever. It may be observed that Sotāpannas are at the lowest rung of Ariya ladder, and since they have not yet reached the final goal, they too must strive on with diligence as enjoined upon by the Buddha.

Sāsana my three months' stay at Sāsana Yeiktha I was not allowed to read any book or journal. However, before I left the Centre I came upon a book by Rear Admiral E. H. Shattock of the British Navy, with the title "An Experiment in Mindfulness." He was at the Centre in 1957. He is not a Buddhist but is interested in Buddhist meditation. I also got an old copy of "The Middle Way", the journal of the Buddhist Society of London, which contained an article on "Satipaṭṭhāna Meditation Centres in Burma" by Colin Wyatt who was at Sāsana Yeiktha in 1957. He is a Buddhist.

For the benefit of those who come from abroad for a course of Buddhist meditation as well as for the benefit of the Western-educated Burma nationals, I propose to cull a few passages from the book and the article I have just mentioned. I am reproducing them because from my own experiences I know that their views are sound.

I quote Admiral Shattock first. He writes: "We need to do two things: to cultivate the feeling of abstracting ourselves from an outside world into an inner seclusion where security is self-generating and strength is in acquiescence rather than in activity; and to develop a permanent insulation from the shocks and tensions of modern life."

"Meditation is a real practical occupation; it is in no sense necessarily a religious one, though it is usually thought of as such. It is itself basically academic, practical, and profitable. It is necessary, I think, to emphasise this point, because so many only associate meditation with holy or saintly people, and regard it as an advanced form of the pious life."

"Satipaṭṭhāna is a method of mind training initiated by the Buddha. It is simple, so simple in fact that its very simplicity turned out to be one of its main difficulties."

"In Western terms, Sāsana Yeiktha is a Staff College for mind training, and with its austere living routine and long hours of work, a pretty tough one"

"Every student had an interview from a trained monk every day, in which he reported progress and difficulties: This was very necessary, as much to prevent a student becoming discouraged through apparent lack of progress as to help him over the obstacles that would be encountered."

"The reduction of eating helped towards relaxation by giving the body less work to do in digesting and eliminating, and the intake was quite enough for the body's needs...I certainly did not feel particularly hungry or that I was suffering from lack of sleep."

"The Sayadaw warned me not to overtire myself and that strain and tension were to be avoided."

"Mahāsi Sayadaw impressed me immediately as a man of remarkable presence. I felt that here was a man of great understanding and sympathy, and one who could have no narrow conception of truth. I felt enveloped by an authority that sprang not from ordering but from being. The dignity that was so apparent in all the Sayadaws (I may repeat the words *all the Sayadaws*) was an obvious product of the lack of conflict between the physical and spiritual man, and the completeness with which their whole nature was dedicated to living in peace, and in confidence that the path they were following would lead them to release from attachment and desire and to achievement of the final goal of Nibbāna."

Now I quote Mr. Colin Wyatt. He writes:

"Let me say right away that what the average Westerner understands by the word 'Meditation' about as much resembles the real thing as playing with tin soldiers does actual warfare. To get an appreciation of the technique and application of meditation, solid concentration of periods of not less than sixteen hours a day for at least two weeks is essential."

“The study of Satipaṭṭhana Vipassanā calls for serious application by a serious student, who is willing, ready and able to withdraw entirely from the world for at least a month, preferably three or four. He must be free from present worries or business, past regrets, and with no plans or business or personal affairs brewing up in the immediate future, which may tend in any way preoccupy the mind in the present.”

“Satipaṭṭhana Vipassana is the cultivation of intense ‘awareness’ and ‘one-pointedness of mind’. Its object is the complete understanding and awareness of all mental, sensory, physical and psychological processes in the mind and body, culminating in the direct immediate realisation of *anicca* and *anatta*, of impermanence and of the non-existence of a separate self or ego.”

“The daily interview with the Master is vital for he can at once detect signs of overstrain, however well-meant, and halt them before the disciple does himself harm.”

“It (the Meditation Centre) is more like a school of applied psychology than any conventional religious school.”

“It (the Meditation System) is sound, sensible, practical and straightforward, with no mysticism or emotionalism of any sort whatsoever.”

“Language presents no problem, as the Master has an excellent interpreter who has himself studied there.” On this point, Admiral Shattock remarks, “Mahāsi Sayadaw understood most of my English; he was able to read the language well but I never heard him speak a word.”

Incidentally, it may be mentioned that there are now at the Centre two or three monks who speak good English.

Now I must also make references to what the Westerners say about the noise or din that assails the disciples at Thathana Yeiktha. Admiral Shattock writes: “Day and night were punctuated by the howling of dogs, bells, and motor horns; and during the day the continuous raucous calls of large black crows in their thousands added to the hubbub. I wondered how on earth it would be possible to meditate in that babel.”

Mr. Colin Wyatt writes, “The average Oriental is conditioned from birth to noise, and is left unperturbed by strident noises that are literally agony to Occidental ears. Thathana Yeiktha is close to several small villages, and on a main road with a small bazaar, as a result all day long the air is filled with strident canned music broadcast from rival loudspeakers..... Likewise the monks, in the kindness of their hearts, dole out rice to stray dogs, as a result of which the compound, some square half mile, is inherited by several packs totalling some fifty dogs, which sleep in the day, while the loudspeakers are blasting away, but bark, howl, yap and fight all night long. Frankly, there is more noise throughout the twenty-four hours in the average meditation centre than in Piccadilly Circus in the rush hours. The Burmese are quite unconscious of the effect this perpetual strident racket has on Western ears, and once they realise its very adverse effect they will do something about it.”

I have heard similar complaints from other Western disciples, and I have every sympathy for them. I fully agree with them that loud-speakers and barking dogs are sources of distractions. Because of them, I must confess, I nearly ran away from the Centre. However, I know from personal experiences that what in Buddhist terminology are called nivarana or hindrances are far more terrible than these distractions. There are five kinds: (1) Sensual craving, (2) Ill-will, (3) Sloth and torpor, (4) Restlessness and worry and (5) Doubts or Perplexities. Here, I must confine myself to distractions. I can do no better than quote once more Admiral Shattock. He writes: "I would find all sorts of distractions leading my mind away from the business in hand. It was necessary from the start to establish who was the master, and never let oneself willingly be side-tracked into day dreaming or other thinking. I was given instruction on how to deal with distractions at the first interview. Satipatthāna teaching takes these things, so to speak, in its stride, and when they are particularly persistent even makes use of them as temporary subjects of meditation. The effectiveness of the simple method employed soon becomes evident, and introduces the first feeling of confidence that the goal is to be won."

Now I conclude with one more quote from Mr. Colin Wyatt's article. He writes "But the Western student can rest assured that he will be welcomed, be he serious, with open arms and heart and every kindness, and there must be few peoples so happy and kindly and anxious to go out of their way to help the foreigners as the Burmese."

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ABHIDHAMMA (3)

By

U Hla Maung, M.A., M.S., B.L.

AS we have seen, there are three main divisions in Buddha's teachings. Firstly, the Sutta Piṭaka includes the popular discourses of Buddha. It is a "Conventional Teaching". Secondly, the Vinaya Piṭaka comprises rules and disciplines for the Sangha order. Finally, the Abhidhamma Piṭaka concerns itself with the teachings of the Ultimate Realities. In Pāli, the Ultimate Realities are called "Paramattha Dhamma."

This word "Paramattha Dhamma" is of paramount importance in the study of Abhidhamma, which is the most systematic exposition of the Ultimate realities.

Buddha has employed all possible methods to make those Paramattha Dhamma intelligible and clear to a willing mind.

Abhidhamma consists of seven texts or treatises, namely,

- (1) Dhammasaṅgāni
- (2) Vibhaṅga
- (3) Dhatukathā
- (4) Puggala paññatti
- (5) Kathāvatthu
- (6) Yamaka, and
- (7) Paṭṭhāna

(1) Dhammasaṅgāni classifies and enumerates the four Ultimate Realities. This text is divided into four sections. The first section deals with different types of consciousness, that is "Citta." The second section deals with matter and material qualities, that is, Rūpa. The third section is called Nikkhepa Kaṇḍha, which means the summary of the previous two sections. The fourth section is called Aṭṭhakatha Kaṇḍha. This section explains briefly about the Ultimate Realities enumerated in the previous sections.

(2) Vibhaṅga explains the Dhammasaṅgāni elaborately under eighteen heads.

Those 18 heads are:

(a) Khandha (Aggregates)

The mind and matter are explained with respect to the five Aggregates, namely, Corporeality, Feeling, Perception, Mental formations (ie. the remaining 50 mental factors), and Consciousness.

(b) Āyatana

This word is translated in different ways. It means "Sense-spheres, or bases,"

The three Ultimate Realities, ie. Consciousness, mental factors, and matter, are presented in the light of twelve sense-spheres, namely, six sense-doors, and six sense-objects.

(c) Dhātu (Elements)

Paramattha Dhammas are classified and elucidated under 18 elements, namely, element of five sense-organs of matter, five sense-objects of matter, elements of five door-consciousness, mind element, mind-door consciousness, mind-object element.

(d) Sacca (Four Noble Truths).

(e) Indriya (Twenty-two types of Controlling Faculties)

(f) Paccayākāra (Causal Relations)

This is nothing but Paṭicca Samuppada ie, Dependent Origination,

(g) Satipaṭṭhāna (Four types of Mindfulness),

(h) Sammappadhāna (Four types of Supreme Effort)

(i) Iddhipāda (Four ways of Accomplishment)

(j) Bojjhaṅga (Seven factors of Enlightenment or Insight)

(k) Jhāna (Different types of Ecstasies or Absorptions, and their Foundations towards their consummation)

(l) Appamañña (Four Illimitables, or Infinites, or Sublime States)

(m) Magga (Eight fold path)

(n) Sikkhāpada (Five Precepts)

This section deals with the most popular Five Precepts, i.e., Pañca Sīla.

(o) Patisambhidā (Four ways of Analytical expositions and knowledge, viz, the Meanings and the resultants (Attha), the Law, and the causal conditions (Dhamma), the language and composition (Nirutti), the penetrating and deep understanding (Paṭibhāna).

(p) Nāna. (Different types of knowledge arranged in groups of ones, twos, threes, fours, up to tens).

(q) Khuddaka vatthu (Abhidhamma terms of Essential tenets arranged in groups of single, twos, up to tens.)

(r) Dhamma-hadaya (Essence of Truth)

This section deals with the Paramattha Dhamma in the light of the above first five sections, Root-causes (Hetu), Nutriment (Āhāra), Sense-impressions or Feelings (Vedana), Perceptions (Sañña), Volitions (Cetanā), Consciousness (Citta). Again, they are treated according to the 31 planes of existence and the beings of those respective planes.

(Note. This section partly corresponds to the Fifth chapter of Abhidhammattha Sangaha on Vīthi Mutta or sections of planes of existence.)

(3) Dhātukathā emphasises the study of phenomena with special reference to the eighteen types of elements.

(4) Puggala paññatti is the study of different types of individuals and their attitudes and nature.

(5) Kathāvattu contains one thousand chapters. They deal with five hundred orthodox views and five hundred heretical or heterodox views.

(6) Yamaka is popularly known as "The Book of Pairs." This famous text explains the seemingly doubtful things in the form of questions and answers.

(7) Paṭṭhāna is supposed to be the most important text of the Abhidhamma. It treats "the doctrine of Relations" elaborately.

These voluminous texts explain the Four Paramattha Dhammas in every possible way, and in the minutest detail.

ABHIDHAMMATTHA SANGAHA

As its name implies, Abhidhammattha Sangaha is the gist of the Seven texts of Abhidhamma. It is a small book, the size of which is one-hundredth of the original. It contains all the essential subject-matter of the Abhidhamma. This little book has earned the fame of being the epitome of the Abhidhamma. This little book has made invaluable contribution towards the study of Abhidhamma. In fact, Abhidhammattha Sangaha is a book of "Abhidhamma made easy." In this little book, the areas of the realities are clearly charted out, the explanations are lucid and the arrangement is unique. This little book introduces and guides the scholar into the profound subject matter of the Abhidhamma with ease and confidence. I might venture to say that without this little book, the study of Abhidhamma would have deteriorated miserably long time ago. Even now, in spite of this little book of "Abhidhamma made easy", the study of Abhidhamma is not at all satisfactory. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the author of the Abhidhammattha Sangaha.

The author of this little book of Abhidhammatth Sangaha was Venerable Anuruddhā Thera. He was an Indian monk, who belonged to Kanjeevaram (Kañcipura) of Madras District. In fact, the Venerable Thera had made an everlasting contribution towards the study of Abhidhamma. It is generally believed that the Venerable Thera wrote this little book at the request of a lay devotee, who had dedicated his life and services to the Order. His name was Nampa. He wanted to learn Abhidhamma in the easiest possible way. Hence this little book.

The Venerable Thera wrote this book while he was sojourning in the Tumūlasoma Monastery, which was built by the chief queen Soma-devi of Vaṭṭagāmani King, and the King's Chief Minister Mūla.

Most of the scholars fixed the date of Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha at about 1000 Sasana Era, that is about one thousand years after the demise of Buddha, or about 457. A.D. This book was written about 1500 years ago, and still no book can ever equal this book as "Abhidhamma-made-easy."

Arrangement of Abhidhammattha Sangaha.

The book is divided into nine sections, or chapters, namely,

1. Citta. (Consciousness).

This chapter shows all types of consciousness.

2. Cetasika. (Psychic factors or Mental properties).

This chapter explains 52 mental factors and their functions, and their composition in various permutation and combination in order to give rise to a particular attitude of mind.

3. Pakinnaka. (Miscellaneous expositions in relation to Mind, mental factors and their bases.)

This chapter presents various ways and means by which fully developed types of consciousness are classified. It shows that the consciousness is classified in relation to (1) Vedana (feeling), (2) Hetu (the six roots), (3) Kicca (fourteen functions), (4) Dvāra (Six doors of cognition), (5) Alambana (Six sense-objects), and (6) Vatthu (sense-organs of cognition).

4. Citta-Vithi (Process of Cognition, or Thought-process, or Course of cognition)

This chapter deals with the thought-processes through the six doors of cognition in detail.

5. Vithi Mutta (Types of consciousness which arise not through the six doors of cognition)

This chapter shows and explains the types of consciousness which do not arise through the six doors of cognition. There is no such course for these types as the ordinary course of cognition through the six doors.

This chapter is also known as "Bumi Pariccheda", which literally means "Different types of planes of existence." Different kinds of Kamma, which is but volitional activities, are explained in relation to different types of planes.

6. Rūpa (Matter and Material qualities)

This chapter enumerates and explains the 28 types of matter, 11 classifications, 4 generating principles, 21 groups of matter, and how and when the matter arises and ceases.

7. Samuccaya (Grouping and enumerating the Abhidhamma terms)
This chapter enumerates all the main tenets of Buddhism.

8. Paccaya (Doctrine of Relations)

This chapter contains two Systems, namely,

- (a) Dependent Origination, ie, Paticca Samuppāda (in Pāli).
(b) Paṭṭhāna-Naya, that is, System of relation and Co-relation, or Causal Relations.

This is the most delicate section of the Abhidhamma. Unless one is thorough with the foregoing books or sections, Paṭṭhāna cannot be understood at all. In fact, the knowledge of Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha is the minimum pre-requisite to understand the "Paṭṭhāna" or "The doctrine of Relations."

9. Kammatthāna (Object for the practice of meditation)

This chapter includes two sections, namely,

- (a) Samatha-Kammattthāna, and
- (b) Vipassana-Kammattthāna,

The former is popularly known as "Concentration Practices," and the latter "Meditation Practices."

Samatha-Kammattthāna has forty objects of concentration, and it leads to the suppression of the five hindrances, whereas Vipassana meditates upon the three characteristics of the natural phenomena, and it leads to the total annihilation of the five hindrances.



Corrigendum: In Vol VII, No 4, please read as shown below.
At page 1, line 11, 'cause' for 'course',
page 65, line 13, 'Yadisan' for 'Yadisma',
page 66, page 8, 'queue' for 'science',
and insert 'the' before 'All-seeing',
page 102, line 12, 'insult' for 'unsult',
page 102, line 8 from the bottom 'meditation',
for 'medition',
page 103, line 2 from the bottom delete the word
'a' before 'self-determination.'

IS YOUR BODY REALLY YOURS?

By

U Pe Than, B.A., B.L., I.F.C.A.A.,

Advocate, Moulmein.

GAUTAMA BUDDHA, though not a scientist or a medical analyst by any stretch of modern standards, dissected human body into thirty two parts.

He said, "O Bhikkhus, all things that exist from the toes upwards and from the hair downwards that go to make up the body, are repulsive and are not free from contamination. O Bhikkhus, the body is made of up head hair, body hair finger, and toe nails, teeth, water, flesh, veins, bones, marrow of bones, integument of intestines, heart, liver, membranous matter, chaff, lungs, the main intestines, the smaller intestines, new food, old food, brain, gall, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, oil, saliva, mucus of the nose, gum and urine."

Those thirty two parts are in the state of constant change and transformation. The constitution of each part is also constantly changing, though, not apparent to the naked eye. The parts are transforming from one state to another, old formations giving place to new formations and old compositions being replaced by new compositions.

The head hair which was black before later turned grey, but before it became grey, it had passed through many processes of change, transformation and composition, when ultimately it appeared as grey to the naked eye.

If that be the truth about the hair, can you call the hair your own? If you can, you must be able to prevent your black head hair from turning grey, and must at all times be able to say, "My black hair shall always remain black."

If the body is yours you must be able to say, "My body shall not decay, shall not be subject to disease, shall not perish."

If the body is yours you must be able to control its functioning and must be able to say, "My body shall remain young forever. My body shall always be fresh and lusty." If you are the master of your own fate you must be able to say, "I shall not die before attaining the age of eighty. I must live long to see my sons and daughters well of in life."

These are but false and deceptive notions incapable of being materialised, for the simple truth that-YOUR BODY IS NOT REALLY YOURS,

The thirty two parts constituting the human body can again be grouped into four main classifications, and according to Buddhism they are, "Pathavi"-earthly element, like hairs, nails, teeth, heart, liver and bones; "Apo"-watery element, like tears, sweat, blood, mucus of the nose and urine; "Tejo"- heat element, like, temperature of the body, digestive and healing power; "Vayo"-windy element, like gastric disturbances, stretching of the arms and legs, swaying of the body.

These four elements in the human body are also uncontrollable and unsubservient to the wishes and desires of an individual. They are ever changing in their compositions, transforming and reoriginating. This immutable Law of Recurring Origination was preached by Gautama Buddha as "The Fire Sermons" over two thousand five hundred years ago to a congregation of over one thousand Bhikkhus at Gaya, India. It was then that Gautama Buddha first split the organic atom which are being replaced and reformed one after another successively in the human cells and which process could not be visible to the naked eye.

Gautama Buddha, while meditating at Pupa Monastery, built by the benevolent lady, Visāka, in the Kingdom of Savatthi, His disciple, Ananda came by, and seeing the strange appearance of Gautama Buddha was completely taken aback by surprise, said;

"O, Gautama, Your bodily complexion, which was so colorful and lusty before, now no longer enjoy the same degree of freshness. Your skin which appeared shining like gold now becomes colorless with full of wrinkles, and Your veins which were invisible before now become visible. O, Gautama you have become old with the advance in age."

Gautama Buddha, hearing what Ananda said, replied;

"O, Ananda, what you said is true. Old age can be known by bodily appearance, sickness depends on bodily cleanliness and death depends on birth. O, Ananda although a man lives a hundred years or more, he cannot escape death. Death cannot and does not bypass any person. Death is ever ready to oppress, to destroy, and to overpower all beings in the Universe."

What is death?

His Eminence, the Buddhist Archbishop of Latvia, Reverend Karlis A.L. Tennisons described death as, "In death there is nothing really to be afraid of. Death will be for him only a change of experience."

"Change of experience" through death can be caused in one of the four ways; namely,

"Ayukhaya Marana"- death due to ripe old age. Mr. Ewart Gladstone, one time British Prime Minister, took great care for the upkeep of his health. He walked seven miles a day and he died at the ripe old age of ninety two.

“Kamakkhaya Marana” - death due to past misdeeds or “Kama”. Such death can come to young people who suffer from incurable diseases, like tuberculosis. They do not live to ripe old age, but due to their past evil deeds their lives are destined to be of short duration.

“Ubkayakha Marana” - death due to both old age and past misdeeds. The death of The Czar of Russia was a typical example. He was old when he died, but could have lived many more years if he were not assassinated.

“Upissedaka Marana” - death due to accident or misfortune. Victims of plane crashes belong to this category. The famous Hollywood film producer Mike Todd died in a plane crash. He could have many more years had it not been for the accident.

Death in Pali means “Marana” which connotes complete cessation of the functioning of the body, but there are instances where one part of the body becomes dead while other parts are functioning. Such cases occur when the body suffers partial attack of paralysis, the sufferer having lame in one leg or incapacitated in one hand. This is a case of “a living death” - an abortive struggle for life a fruitless attempt to sustain the body.

Sir Walter Scott, the famous English poet and writer, lived the life of “a living death.” His struggle for life affords one of the best illustrations of how uncontrollable and unsubservient the human body is.

He had fever in his infancy which threatened his life. Settled in his right leg, and so contracted the sinews as to produce a slight but live-long lameness. With disabled body, he struggled through life and became a partner in a publishing firm which later failed due to financial crisis. At the commencement of his financial troubles his wife died. The financial bankruptcy, the loss of his estate and the death of his wife presented to him a grim struggle. He undermined his constitution which had already shown signs of decay and later an increasing symptoms of brain disease set in. His medical advisers insisted that he should go on a Mediterranean voyage. He went to Malta and Naples but on his return journey by land from Rome he was struck by apoplexy and paralysis. He came to realise that no amount of human endeavor could remove his lameness, sickness, disease and decay.

His own experience had led him to believe that HIS BODY WAS NOT HIS OWN, and having perceived the truth about life, he uttered, “Naked as I enter into this world, naked I shall leave it.”

“In death there is nothing really to be afraid of.” Do you believe it to be true? As a Buddhist I do. A Buddhist should not be afraid of death, but must be afraid of those evil and unjust deeds which he has done before his death. This belief was shared not only among Buddhists, but also by Thomas A’Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, during the reign of Henry II of England.

When Henry II ordered his knights to murder Thomas A'Becket, the Archbishop remained unperturbed. The knights entered the Cathedral to kill the Archbishop, and one of the knights, Fitzurse, shouted, "Where is the Archbishop?" The Archbishop shouted, "I am here," and descended the steps and meeting the knights full in the face, said,

"What do you want with me?" I am not afraid of your swords. I will not do what is unjust."

Thomas A'Becket was not afraid of the "swords," for he did not move when the swords fell on his head. Maybe, to him, it was also a "Change of experience." He was only afraid of doing "what is unjust." Why? For he perceived the truth, that, evil and unjust deeds like shadows would follow him wherever he goes and in whatever existence or existences he is reborn.

Buddhism, as a religion and as a philosophy, attaches paramount importance to good or evil deeds done by man, for on those deeds depend his deliverance from suffering, and NOT to the form or matter which decomposes and perishes after death.

Antony Hay, eighteenth century craftsman and tavern keeper of the city of Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, United States of America, realising the uncontrollable and the perishable nature of the human body, made his last will and testament wherein he expressed his desire as to how his body should be buried after his death. He wrote thus.

"I desire that my body may be buried in a Plain black Pine Coffin, that my funeral be attended with no Expense, and that none of my Family put on mourning."

Why "Plain black Pine Coffin?" and "with no Expense?" the reason is obvious, for I remember what my father said when he was alive. He said,

"My son, when I die let there be only four persons to carry the coffin to the grave, for the body will be so decomposed that anybody will accept a piece of fire wood but not the dead body."

CATECHISM OF BUDDHISM.

By

*U Kin Maung Dwe.**(Continued from May Issue.)*

FROM the above it must be clear to every one that the only way to settle the religious difference is by means of the philosophy which every religion is expected to contain. Religion without philosophy is unthinkable.

Q. 58. What is philosophy then?. Is Buddhism a philosophy?.

Ans:-According to Buddhism, Philosophy is a science by which we seek to solve the problems of Life. Buddhism is a philosophy which Buddhists seek to solve the problems of Life.

Of all the problems, namely, political, social, economic, religious the problem relating to life is one that is most difficult to solve. From time immemorial, many a Great Thinkers, Seekers and Philosophers have devoted the whole of their life time for the solution of this problem, but so far none appears to have succeeded. Despite the health, wealth and happiness we obtain in this world, there are very few of us who have not seriously asked just such questions as these: What is Life? Where do I go after death? We see men striving for money, fame and pleasure, Are these really the Highest Values, or are there other values that are higher and better?. Should we not find out what the Highest Values are? We have found from our own experience in life that neither wealth, nor pleasure nor fame is the highest value. All the Great Thinkers and Philosophers have been trying to find out what the Highest Values are. In this rich and marvellous world of ours, although we have been able assess rightly the various Values, yet we always feel that there is something lacking to satisfy ours real need or aspiration. Our traditional philosophies and religious doctrines are wholly insufficient to satisfy our curiosity to know, not only what is going to happen in our present life, we also wish to know what is going to happen in our future life. This curiosity is called "Philosophical Doubts." We cannot help asking these philosophical questions, and the moment these questions are asked, there arise in us those philosophical questions.

Aristotle says:- "Whether we will philosophise or whether we won't philosophise, we must philosophise."

Wisely Edwin Wallace says;- "Consciously or unconsciously every man frames for himself a theory of the relation of the individual to the Universe, and on his attitude to that question his whole life and conduct, public and private, depend."

If we follow the history of philosophy down to the present time, we shall find how great has been the efforts of the Great Thinkers in trying to solve this most difficult problem relating to life.

Earl Russell says:-“In former days, you could believe personal immortality on a philosophical ground, namely, that the soul is a substance and all substances are indestructible. You will find this argument, sometimes more or less disguised, in many philosophers. But the notion of substance, in the sense of a permanent entity with changing states, is no longer applicable to the world. The whole question of personal immortality, therefore lies outside philosophy, and is to be decided if at all, either by science or by revealed religion.”

An Outline of Philosophy. Page 309.

The eminent scholar Mr Rhys Davids says:- “Whatever the secret, above and beyond the influence of economic condition, may have been, we know that civilization, of a kind at least, extended back in time, on the four great river basins of the Nile and the Euphrates, The Ganges and the Yellow River, not merely through centuries, but through thousands of years, if reckoned from today. Yet in each of these places-though there was a real and progressive civilization, and ideas and customs were no doubt constantly changing and growing-there was a certain dead level, **if not a complete absence of what we should call philosophic thought.** The animistic hypotheses, the soul-theories, of their savage ancestors seemed sufficient, even to the progressive races, to explain all that they saw or felt. Men varied, but never dreamed of rejecting, the soul theories. They did not even build up on the basis of them any large and general views, either of ethics or philosophy, or religion. Then sadly, and almost simultaneously, and almost certainly independently, there is evidence, about the sixth century B.C., in each of these widely separated centres of civilization of a leap forward in speculative thought, of a new birth in ethics, of a religion of conscience threatening to take the place of the old religion of custom and magic. Is there a more stupendous marvel in the whole history of mankind?. Does any more suggestive problem await the solution of the historian of human thought?. Page 230.

When this point had been reached, speculation on the basis of the soul theory could go no further. x x It was in India, and in India alone only, that a further step was taken, by Gotama the Rajput and disciples, to abandon the soul theory altogether; and to build up a new philosophy on other considerations in which soul or souls played no part at all”.

Buddhist India. Page 239. and 257.

It is a matter of supreme importance to all Buddhists to understand their own Buddhism in the light of the observations made by this eminent scholar Mr Rhys Davids who for the first time in the history of philosophy and Religion, drew a strong demarcating line with Buddhism on one side and all other philosophies and religions on the other side.

I would ask all Buddhists or persons interested in Buddhism to try and understand and appreciate these observations before they tried to understand what ‘Nibbana’ is. The first Sutta, according to the canonical

arrangement, is called "Brahmajala Sutta" in which this theory was first discussed. It is also the first question in the Katha Vatthu the 5th Book of Abhidhamma, and also the first question in the Milinda. "This Suttanta sets out in sixty divisions various speculations or theories in which the Theorisers, going out always from various forms of the ancient view of a 'Soul'-a sort of subtle manikin inside the body but separate from it, and continuing, after it leaves the body as a separate entity-attempt to reconstruct the past, or to arrange the future. All such speculation is condemned. And necessarily so, since the Buddhist philosophy is put together without this ancient idea of 'Soul'.

Introduction to the Brahmajala Sutta. Dialogue of the Buddha Page 1.

The strongest objection lies not against Soul but rather against the immortality of Soul or anything. According to Buddhism nothing including God, Brahma Soul or atma, is permanent. "Sabbe sankhāra anicca". The last words of Lord Buddha are:-

"Behold now, Brethren, I exhort you, Decay is inherent in all component parts. Work out your own salvation". This was the last word of the Tathagata.

Dialogue of the Buddha. Vol 2. Page 173.

If not anything else, there is one thing which Science has proved, namely, 'Decay is inherent in all things'.

Q. 59. How does Lord Buddha explain the Soul Theory?

Ans:- Lord Buddha considers that the world would be better, if man could gain salvation without the mediation of priests or without any reference to Soul, Atma or God. He wishes to start a religion independently of God and soul. He considers that all the speculative doctrines of Philosophy and Religion are all due to the acceptance of the immortality of Soul or God. He considers that Ignorance of this truth 'Yathā bhūtam nānam pajānāti.'

To see things in their nakedness and not to be deluded by the shackles of our senses is the foundation of Buddhism. He spent forty five years of his life by asking his disciples to dismiss the notion of 'Soul' as mere speculation and its immortality as mere imagination.

Q. 60. What are the metaphysical realities according to Buddhism?

Ans:- According to Buddhism, among the various beliefs in metaphysical Realities, the belief in permanency or immortality of God, Brahma, Soul or Atma is the most pernicious and dangerous. Lord Buddha says: "Of all the mistakes, one relating to mistaken religious doctrine, is the worst".

Anguttara Nikaya. Eka nipata para 310.

Q. 61. Explain in what manner such belief arises?.

Ans:- In trying to understand any religious or philosophical doctrines, there are two things which we must not lose sight of, namely:-1. Things that appear to be really real are not real. 2 Things that are really real are not permanent.

These are all that we have in the universe. But, according to those who believe in God and Soul, there is yet another kind, namely:-“Things that are really real but permanent or immortal. In other words, although everything in the universe is mortal or impermanent and is subject to Cosmic Law (Niyama Dhammā), yet we have another thing which is not subject to this Law of universe. They are God, Brahma, Soul, Atma, which are outside the Law. These metaphysical things, do no change although everything in this universe changes. This Belief in “Changelessness” is called “Sasata Vada.” This “Changelessness implied the “Limitedness” in operation of the Cosmic Law. the power to limit the operation of this Natural Law is vested, according to them, in the Almighty God the Creator.

Q. 62. Explain in what manner such belief in immortality is pernicious?.

Ans:- Lord Buddha, in order to denote the “Unlimitedness” of the operation of this Cosmic Law, used the word “Niyama” which means ceaseless operation in defiance of any authority. Therefore, all the religious or philosophical doctrines may be brought under these two heads, namely:-

1: Theism. Belief in the limitedness of the operation of the Cosmic or Natural Law.

2. Buddhism. Belief in the unlimitedness of the operation of the Cosmic or natural Law.

This belief in God or Soul or any other metaphysical things, is traceable to primitive age where everything we saw or felt could be explained by God or Soul. This belief has been handed down to us from generation to generation in its primitive form or with slight variation in order to make it more compatible with the discoveries of Science. The result is most lamentable.

In spite of the present height of civilization, we still have men with very high intellectual attainment, deeply immersed in metaphysical belief in God, Soul and Creation.

Nothing is more harmful to the religious foundation than belief in metaphysic. Although Western philosophy and Indian philosophy contain genuine philosophical principles, yet their weakness lies in the fact that their basic principles are allowed to rest on the shifting sands of metaphysics which are neither provable or verifiable, resulting in congeries of opinions, theories and speculations which have so much influenced the logic and reasoning of mankind.

The fundamental need to postulate God, Soul and creation is to be found in every form of metaphysical belief, and with the accumulation of time, this belief has become engrained and drafted in the minds of the

people so much so that even the discoveries of science have not been able to make them totally abandon their traditional beliefs.

Again, when we compare the various views of all the philosophers, both in the East and the West, we shall find that the views are not only divergent and contradictory, but also that in some cases the same philosopher has been found to entertain at different time one wholly inconsistent with the other.

All these divergent views are due entirely to the belief in the immortality of Soul, Atma or some power or force, which are the moving causes of everything we see on the surface of the earth. Owing to the daily conflict of Science and religion, most of the religions, especially the major religions like Hinduism or Christianity, have reformulated their religious doctrines, Hinduism in Upanishads, Christianity in New Testaments, and the result is that what known as God the Creator, is now known as follows:-

1. Primum Mobile or First Mover by Aristotle.
2. Demiurgus or world builder by Plato.
3. Nous or Mind by Anaxagoras.
4. Natura Naturans by Bruno.
5. The Absolute Idea by Hegel.
6. The Absolute Ego by Fichte.
7. Pure Creative Energy by Schelling.
8. The Absolute will by Schopenhaur.
9. The Will to Power by Nietzsche.
10. The Unconscious Will by Von Hartmann.
11. The World of Soul by Fechner.
12. The Universal Will by Wundt.
13. The Unknowable by Spencer.
14. The Power that Makes for Righteousness by Mathew Arnold.
15. The Absolute Self by modern Idealist Philosophers.
16. Elan Vital by Bergson.
17. Creative Agency by William Patten.

In all these cases, though God and creation are rejected, yet all these philosophers maintain that in all organised matters, there is in and behind all this organising, a developing principle or a living force which is responsible for organization.

That developing principle is called God by Christians and Mahomedans, Brahma by Hindus, Primum Mobile by Aristotle, Demiurgus by Plato and so on.

They maintain that except Buddha and Buddhism, all the philosophers and all the religions agree that nothing can come out of nothing. Assuming that everything in this world is made out of electrons and protons, or in the case of Buddhism, pathavi, tejo, arpo and vayo, yet we will have to find out that developing principle behind these organising matters, which is responsible for the organization. They say that in every form of evolution, there is an organising principle. This new and modern outlook of

philosophy, which appears to be practical, efficient, useful, fruitful and satisfying cannot fail to satisfy the minds of modern philosophers. However, this philosophical doctrine, however reasonable it may appear to be is rejected by Buddhism on two grounds, namely:-

1. It implies the permanency of the Developing principle.
2. It implies the permanency of the organising matters.

Lord Buddha says:-“There is no heap or store of unarisen mental or material existing properties existing prior to its arising. When it arises, it does not come from any heap or store, when it ceases, it does not go in any direction. There is nowhere any depository in the way of a heap or store or hoard of what has ceased. But just as there is no store, prior to its arising of the sound that arises when a lute is played, nor does it go in any direction when it ceases.” S.IV. 197.

Visuddhimagga. Ch XX. Para 96.

Notes and News.

A CONVERT TO BUDDHISM:

'The Nation' May 22, 1962.

John Bergh, a citizen of Norway, arrived in Rangoon last Saturday to study Buddhism under the Reverend Mahasi Sayadaw.

He is now putting up at the Garden Hermitage in the compound of U Tin (Yawgi) on Kaba-Aye Pagoda Road.

After receiving the B.A. Degree from Oslo University, he took an interest in Buddhist religion and had frequent discussions with German Buddhist friends.

Later, he got in touch with Mrs. Bedi, an English woman who had been giving assistance to Lamas fleeing from Tibet, during his visit to India. It was on her suggestion that he came over to Burma to study Buddhism under the guidance of the Reverend Mahasi Sayadaw.

JOURNEY INTO SILENCE

A SYDNEY WOMAN FOUND PEACE IN THE SACRED HILL OF BUDDHIST BURMA

By Clem Clevenson

Back from a strange holiday is a Sydney woman with an experience and story that can bring you peace of mind.

She is Miss Marie Byles, B.A., of Cheltenham, one of Sydney's few successful women lawyers, who runs a thriving business with a city and suburban office.

Practical to her finger-tips, her hard-headed advice is sought on many finance problems, and trust funds worth hundreds of thousands of pounds go through her office account books.

And if she chooses to stand on her head every night—that's her own affair. As a matter of fact, she stands on her head in the morning's too—about 4 a.m., before you and I are awake.

This is part of the path to peace she found on a recent holiday trip into the sacred Sagaing Hills of Burma; to retreats where no white-man or woman had been before.

It was a journey into a self-imposed silence which, she says, brought her the greatest peace of mind of her 61 years, and gave her health that allows her to rest in relaxed poses that would draw groans from muscled athletes.

While not a true disciple, Miss Byles is as near a Buddhist, as anything.

"For a Buddhist to go to the Sagaing Hills is something like a Moslem going to Mecca," she says, "and when I casually mentioned to an Australian Buddhist that I had stayed there. I could almost feel the halo growing round my head."

Where Miss Byles stayed—she has visited Burma three times—was the Maha Bodhi Meditation Centre, an hour out from Mandalay.

MEDITATION

The purpose of Miss Byles' visit was to find peace through meditation.

How she sought and achieved it is described in her new book ("Journey Into Burmese Silence" published by George Allen and Unwin), soon to be released in Sydney.

Miss Byles lived in a little hut built out over a pool. It was furnished with a bamboo mat to sleep on.

She had a brick on which to stand her candle, a spittoon and a toilet article.

She awoke at 4 a.m. when a huge gong boomed four times across the 80 huts, performed a few Yogi exercises, had a mouth wash and a drink of hot water, then meditated until 6 a.m.

It was still dawn when she and other meditators then stumbled along a cobbled path to the communal dining hall, slipped off their sandals at the entrance and sat on mats at low round tables.

They paid respect to the instructor and monks by bowing their heads on to their hands, flat on the ground.

They then had breakfast—thin rice-gruel and black Burmese tea—no milk or sugar.

While they drank tea, it was customary to talk a little, but only about religion—not about current affairs, family, friends or business.

Back to the hut at 7 a.m. to meditate.

At 10 a.m. the gong rang for lunch—Last meal of the day. Miss Byles is a vegetarian. The Burmese ate meat. (They do not mind eating slaughtered animals although their religion precludes killing.)

From lunch until noon was a free time when the Meditators washed their longyi (a cloak) and bodies. Men and women wash in open sight by putting their dry longyi on top and slipping the wet one out from under.

From noon until 5 p.m. was a long meditation period—difficult at first, says Miss Byles, but finally one so grows into silence that the 5 p.m. bell becomes an unwelcome sound.

At 6 p.m. it was dark—and silent for the night.

Long before the 4 p.m. rising gong, Miss Byles had crept out of her sleeping-bag again—usually about 1 a.m.—and was again meditating

And all this by a respectable Sydney lady—the first woman lawyer to go through Sydney University.

It isn't as easy as it sounds. See what Miss Byles went through when she began her strict meditation in Burma:

"I did get genuinely alarmed when on the second day of meditation the body developed most uncomfortable abdominal pains—and worse. I didn't realise then that some disciples suffer actual dysentery.

"Of course, I never dreamed of mentioning these things to Instructor U Thein—no modest lady likes to talk about her internal complaints to a strange gentleman.

"I wondered if I had eaten uncooked vegetables or drunk unboiled water and contracted some terrible tropical disease. I tried doubling the daily dozen yoga exercises, massaging the stomach, all without avail.

"Fortunately on the third day I told the nun Sarana. She smiled with joy, 'Good! Good! The change is taking place already!'

"Many disciples are violently sick!

"Whatever be the explanation of these physical disturbances which come at the beginning of meditation study, they appear to be the usual thing.

RELAXATION

"One believed that even Instructors did not realise the upsets were purely psychic in origin and merely talked of 'dukkha' (pain) and the need to accept it.

"But U Thein knew very well about the cause, and could judge the meditator's progress by it.

"On the next day, almost before sitting down to meditation, and while there were still intruding thoughts, I felt a violent heart palpitation and breathlessness, as if climbing a terribly steep mountain at high altitude and at too fast a pace.

"Finally I lay down. The breaths got not merely deeper, but also slower and easier as they do when one's pace gets into rhythm on a mountain climb.

"My chattering thoughts slowly departed, and there was complete relaxation and calm.

"After lunch the same delicious relaxation came almost at once, coupled with complete stillness, perfect rest without sleep, as if lying lulled on gentle waves of the ocean of all being.

FASCINATION.

"I almost wept with the beauty and bliss of it, and it was two and a half hours before the bliss faded, after which concentration was not very good.

"During those two and a half hours there had once or twice been the faintest pain near the heart, but not enough to disturb the peace.

"The day following there was a suspicion of a shooting pain and a little itching on the skin from faint imaginary worms, but not enough to trouble.

"During a two and a half hour period of absorption, there was a sudden breaking through of a beautiful white-blue light where the third eye is said to be situated, in the middle of the forehead.

"But the very next day there were violent stabs of pain like red-hot needles and always, it seemed, on the tenderest parts of the anatomy. They got worse.

"I repeated my meditation technique and at last both the stabs and the 'worms' got fewer and fewer and finally died away.

"I turned to contemplate with greater equanimity. As I looked mentally the heart turned into a whirling top, faster, faster, faster! It seemed to be drawing the rest of the body into it. I was fascinated."

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I. "The Light of Buddha," April, 1960, Burma. This is a Special Number with 120 pages and several illustrations, including the Emperor Asoka and important modern pagodas. Of course all the articles are of high quality.

II. "The Light of Buddha", June, 1960, Burma. The Editorial on "Rebirth" is excellent. "Buddhism and Christianity," by Prof. Von. Colasenapp, presents some debatable points, and he sees similarities in the lives of the two founders, ethics and church history. For example, the most learned members of the Sangha dress quite differently from the Buddha, but where is the similarity between the simple dress of Jesus and the gorgeous raiments of the most powerful Christian priesthoods? The other articles are good.

III. "The Light of Buddha," April, 1961, Burma. The Special Annual Number. This Journal, with 120 pages, contains a great deal of valuable material contributed by such eminent writers as Nyanatiloka Maha Thera, Dr. Paul Dahike, Ven. Nyanasatta Thera, and others. Then there are beautiful illustrations of Burmese Pagodas. It is an excellent production.

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Edited by U Ba Thaw, B. A., Chairman, Editorial Board.

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