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360.978.4998
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No. 4

2501 B.E.

October 1957 C.E.



THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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THE EDITOR,
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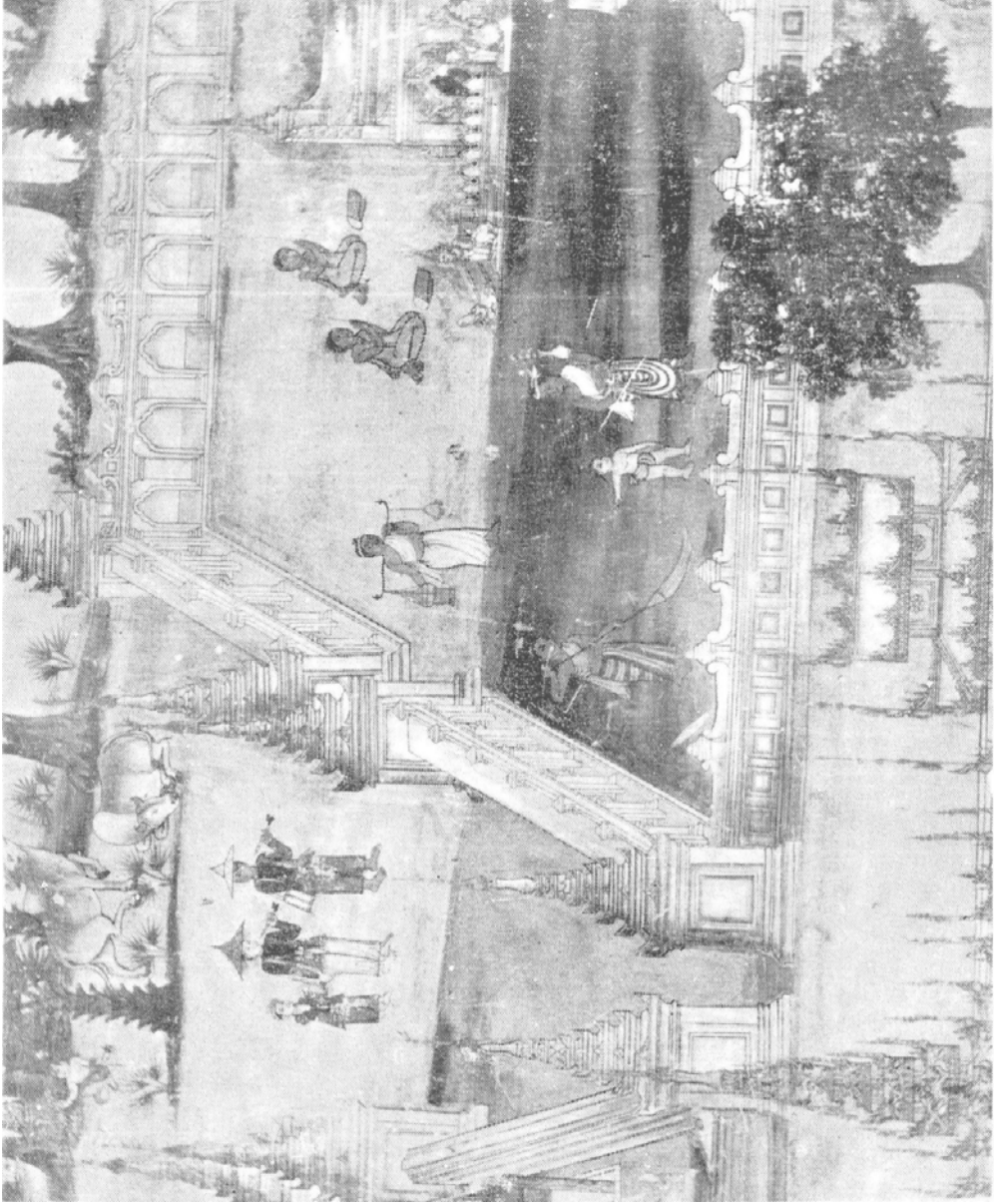
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Fresco painting on the southern side of the inner walls of the Eastern entrance at Taungthaman Kyauktawgyi Pagoda, Amarapura.

BUDDHIST PAINTING IN BURMA

By

Thiripyanchi U Lu Pe Win, M.A.

The earliest paintings extant in Burma belong to the Pagān period beginning from the 11th century C.E., but inasmuch as an earlier school of architecture and sculpture was active since the 5th century, there is no doubt about the existence of an art in Burma in pre-Pagān times. Time and climate have destroyed whatever remained of the ancient architecture which used wood as its material, and with those religious edifices might have perished the first native representations in colour and sculpture of Buddhist legends. The paintings at Pagān are executed on the walls of masonry temples, and just as different types of religious architecture extend beyond the historic epoch of the Pagān dynasty, so also the remains of Buddhist paintings represent a long period of more than seven centuries, thus offering the various aspects of the history of art of the well-known Buddhist centre, Pagān, which virtually is the history of art in Burma.

The ruins of Pagān cover an area of nearly seventeen square miles. Among the thousands of monuments in different stages of decay are square hollow temples the interior of all of which seem to have originally been decorated with paintings. Today we find fairly preserved a good number of the mural paintings to enable us to form an accurate idea of the scope and capacity and also the method of execution of them. Contemporary lithic inscriptions also contain many allusions to the art of painting which afford us ample evidence of the technique and the extent to which this popular practice was promoted during the Pagān period.

Technically speaking, these mural paintings are not frescoes in the strict sense

of the term. As the plaster of the walls is allowed to dry before applying the background of white lime wash, preparing the outlines and filling in the colours, the method is actually that of tempera painting as is still practised in the present day. Very few of the early paintings therefore survive today in their original charm of colour. A characteristic feature of these mural paintings is the outlining of all forms with a clear black line and, rarely, with red, and the absence of perspective and shading in the earlier period is discernible. Yet most of them are of absorbing interest as they fulfil the primary object of telling edifying stories in an attractive way and producing works of art which are epic in character rather than artistic in the modern sense.

The reign of Anôrathā¹ who first united the whole of Burma, synchronised with the advent of Theravāda Buddhism to Pagān. The king, a champion for the propagation of the pure faith, resorted to all means by which to rouse the religious fervour of all his subjects. The result of the powerful influence exercised by the doctrine of the Buddha on the minds of the people was the efflorescence of an art dedicated to the glorification of the Master's life. The theme of the paintings on the walls of the temples is therefore religious in character and mostly centres round the Buddha, incidents from the life of the Buddha and the Jatakas.² These afforded vivid representations and illustrations to supplement the teachings of the elder monks to their students at the religious institutions or colleges.

¹ 1044-86 C.E.

² Stories of previous lives

The style of the Pagān paintings shows strong South-Indian influence in the earlier stage and the technique of the Varendra school of Bengal can be traced in the paintings of 12th-13th century. But Burmese art was inspired to a great extent by Burmese nature and religious teaching so that the fully developed paintings at Pagān in particular and in the whole country in general indicate no traces of foreign elements.

The rulers of Pagān were benevolent despots, but in religious matters they tolerated the existence of various sects of Hinduism and the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism which flourished side by side with the purer faith for some time after the latter's introduction to Upper Burma. This is evident by the presence in not a few temples of paintings of Bodhisattvas and their embracing saktis³ and other non-Theravādin themes, Hindu, Tantric or Mahāyānist.

At the Patothamyā temple, one of the earliest structures of 10th-11th century C.E. may be seen Indian figures on the begrimed walls. A royal personage with a crown, halo, ear-ornaments and drapery and a bearded musician beating a pitcher-like drum, bear all semblance of Indian features. The temple also contains large panels of painting depicting scenes from the Buddha's life. They have become much blurred owing to the ravages of time, but enough remains to show that these paintings were the work of no mean artist. There is a greater precision in the proportions of each figure than in the case of later period paintings. Below each scene is a legend in Mon in archaic type of characters. Traditionally, the Patothomyā is said to have been built by King Taungthugyi (931-964 C.E.) but it is not yet possible to confirm that date. From the style of the

paintings and the epigraphs below the panels we may safely assign the temple to a date not later than the 11th century C.E. Two of the noteworthy scenes here are the Foretelling of Siddhattha by Rishi Kāla Devīḷa and the performing of the Twin Miracles by the Buddha. The male royal personages are invariably represented with large cloaks covering the whole body, on which are shown patterns of geometrical design. The facial expressions seem to represent the characteristics of Indians.

Another contemporary temple, the Nat-hlaung Kyaung stands a few hundred feet to the east of the Patothamyā. The Nat-hlaung Kyaung is the only Hindu temple now extant at Pagān. The interior walls of the temple are painted with figures, now mostly obliterated, of Vishnu seated with his devotees. The outlines of a few may still be traced and the attributes, namely, the cakra, conch, lotus club or sword are distinguished in the case of images with four hands. These wall paintings must be contemporaneous with the building and the sculptures of the Ten Avatars in the niches of the outer walls.

A unique example of a series of painting reflecting the influences from three sources, namely, Brahmanism, Mahāyānism and Theravāda may be noticed at the Abēyadāna Temple at Myinkaba, Pagān. The temple was built by Kyanzittha (1084-1112 G.E.) and consists of a sanctum with an arched corridor running around it. The only entrance to the sanctum is on the north. In a band around the inner face of the outer walls of the corridor, and placed at a height of about seven feet above the floor level, there may be noticed, in panels simulating mountain caves, many figures of Mahāyānist gods and goddesses, both in their peaceful and fierce forms, as well as images of Bodhisattvas. The erotic representations of the Tantric sect are, however, totally absent here. The Bodhisattvas, arranged in three rows, one above the other, have two arms each and the

³ *Sakti* is the female organ or female force worshipped by the Tantric branch of the so-called 'Mahāyāna' (an attempt to combine Buddhism with other teachings). Here *sakti* is symbolised as female counterparts of 'Beings striving for Buddhahood'.

attributes they carry are lances, clubs, cakras, daggers, swords and books, without any sign of Tantric character in them. There is no writing below the figures and it is difficult to identify them but for their attributes in their hands by which Vajrapānī, Padmāpānī, Avalokitesvara and Mañjuśrī are distinguishable among them. Added to the figures of Bodhisattvas are the representations of a monk, an ascetic and other Mahāyānist deities. On the inner walls of the corridor are small circular panels between the niches for sculptures. Each panel has a Brahmanic god painted on it and the representations of Brahma, Siva and Vishnu each on his own mount are discernible. The panels on the porch, however, illustrate scenes from the Jātakas and each scene is explained in a legend in Mon in addition to attaching the number of the Jātaka represented. The arrangement of the Jātakas follows very closely that given in Fausböll's edition of Jātakas, and it is remarkable that the same is met with in many other temples at Pagān.

Unlike the Abēyadāna, the Nagayon Temple built by the same king, Kyanzittha, contains mural paintings solely devoted to Theravāda Buddhism. The plan of the building is similar to that of Abēyadāna though it carries an elegant superstructure. The Nagayon also houses some of the earlier stone sculptures representing scenes from the Buddha's life. The porch of the temple is adorned with paintings depicting incidents from the Buddha's life, his lents, sermons, miracles and conversions. These are fully explained in Mon legends below the scenes which enable us to identify the illustrations easily. Among the noteworthy pieces of art executed on the walls are scenes showing a deva beseeching the Buddha to preach the Mangala Sutta; Dipankara's prophecy to Sumedhāpaṇḍita; preaching of the Mettā Sutta; the Twin Miracles of the Buddha; Devadatta's attempts to kill the Buddha;

Kusa Jātaka, Chaddanta Jātaka, Mahāsutasoma Jātaka, etc.

The Kubyauk-kyi Temple at Myinkaba is another structure wherein orthodox Theravāda paintings are predominantly exhibited. Built about 1113 C.E. by Rājakumar in solemn and revered dedication to his father, Kyanzittha, the temple assumes the traditional early type of a square structure with a dark sanctum encompassed by a corridor lighted through perforated windows. The vaulted hall faces east. Inside the hall and corridor are paintings depicting the Vimānavatthu. The main block is ranged around in nine rows with the 547 Jātakas, each fresco carrying a Mon legend below it. One of the most popular scenes from the Buddha's life, namely the Descent from Tāvatisa,⁴ is a remarkable feature exhibited therein. This temple is not devoid of Mahāyānist painting. In the outer porch is a fairly large panel painted with the figure of a ten-handed Bodhisattva attended by seated *saktis*. This is presumably a later accretion.

The Loka-Ôkshaung Temple at Pagān, though built later than the Abēyadāna and Kubyauk-kyi, portrays figures of Vishnu on its walls. Some of the mural paintings of Pagān are not contemporary with the buildings which they decorate. The Kyanzittha cave temple at Nyaungoo, east of Pagān, is one of the examples of this category. Here, some of the paintings pertain to the earlier period of the Pagān dynasty and some figures of secular character seem to have been executed as late as the Mongol invasion of Pagān in 1287 C.E. The building is traditionally assigned to Kyanzittha. One of the frescoes depicts the footprint of the Buddha on which may be noticed the entire absence of the numerous symbolical figures

⁴ An abode (world) of Devas where the Buddha preached the Doctrine especially to that Being who was His mother, Queen Māyā, in her preceding existence.

usually found on such a representation. Scenes of local incidents are of much interest. The figure of a venerable lady wending her way to a Buddhist shrine has much the same prominent facial characteristics as the drummer from a painting found on the wall of the Patothamyā. These forms and expressions convince us of the antiquity of the first series of paintings. Another series represents several Mongol types. Some of the inner walls of the cave are ornamented with a variety of well-executed frescoes which on the whole are very well preserved. All do not represent Mongol personages but those that do were probably painted during the Mongol invasion of the city. One represents a Buddha seated in European fashion on a high chair, his feet resting on a lotus. Another shows a seated Buddhist monk holding a rosary and his dress indicates that he is a Chinese. A Mongol officer seated on a low wooden stool and a Mongol soldier in the act of shooting with bow and arrow certainly show strong Central Asian influence.

The Aloyi-gū, a small square hollow temple south of the Pagān-Nyaungoo road, is one of the earlier structures with peculiar features of mural paintings. The vaulted roof is decorated with lotus and flowers and numerous small Buddhas enclosed in circular designs. The paintings on the walls depict Buddhas preaching Suttas as indicated by the Mon legends below. The most interesting series is a row of the last twenty-eight Buddhas under their respective Bodhi-trees. The description under each painting enlightens us with the name of the Buddha and the nomenclature of the tree in Old Mon, the importance of this lies in its being the only specimen in that language.

Jātaka scenes fill the walls of many a temple built throughout the Pagān dynasty and the Kubyauk-kyi near Wetkyi-in village figures prominently in this respect. Each scene here is painted in a small square panel

very neatly delineated in rows on rows of the vast wall of the eastern vaulted hall. The legends which are in Burmese give the title of each Jātaka and mention the main character depicted in the scene; thus, *Jambu Jat, sacpai nat* signifies the Jambukhādaka Jātaka, the main personage represented being identified as the tree-spirit.

In the temples of late 12th century and 13th century C.E. we find that the art of painting has reached a high level of Burmanisation. The scheme of colouring becomes more complex and many contemporary inscriptions record the decoration of temples with colourful paintings on the walls and especially on the ceilings. The Old Burmese word *kyak-tanuy* which often occurs in the Pagān epigraphs undoubtedly refers to the interior of the vaulted roof painted with a multiplicity of medallions in variegated colours each of which contains a small seated Buddha, though possibly the term was originally applied to a canopy above the central image of a temple. Lamp black is obviously used to draw the outlines and to fill in certain details. The use of other materials, namely, orpiment, vermilion, lac and chalk is also mentioned in the inscriptions. The paintings executed during post-Kyanzitha period may be found in the Thayambū, Lokahteikpan, Theinmazi and Panethāgū temples at Pagān, the Thetkyāmuni and Kōndawgyi temples at Nyaungoo and in almost all the lesser temples in Minnanthu area. The walls are covered not only with the Jātaka scenes but also the eight miracles of the Buddha and scenes of the mansions of the blessed from the Vimānavatthu. The Thetkyāmuni contains scenes from the life of Āsoka, the Convenor of the Third Buddhist Council, and the advent of Mahinda to Ceylon. Portrayal of the last twenty-eight Buddhas, from Tanhānkara onwards, under their respective Bodhi trees is also a very popular theme, and not a few of the paintings show the traditional Burmese cosmography.

Fine paintings, the technique of which parallels that of the Ajanta frescoes, may be seen in the Thambūla temple at Minnanthu. The building was erected in 1255 C.E. by Princess Sumlūla, the daughter of King Kyazawā, and wife of king Uzanā. It is square in plan with a corridor running right round the central square pile which supports the *sikhara*⁵ above. On one side of this pile is a large recess containing a seated figure of the Buddha in the earth-touching attitude. On the face of the cubical mass surrounding this recess, is a splendid fresco representing the assault of Mara's hosts to oust the Buddha from his seat. The diversity of the figures pressing in disorder on their onward march, the life infused into the attitude of each of them and the size of the painting which, representing one scene, covers several square yards, renders it one of the most remarkable paintings in Burma.

Close to the Thambūla temple are two noteworthy structures, the Payathonzu and the Nandamañña which contain well preserved frescoes distinctly Mahāyānist and Tantric in character.

The former consists of three distinct small square buildings with narrow passages leading from one to the other. This is a unique feature in Burma. The interior walls are covered with frescoes quite peculiar and unlike any other as yet found. They represent that phase of religion so much abhorred later when the pure Theravāda Teaching had been firmly established at Pagān. The walls, minsters and the vaulted ceilings are all covered with floral motifs in which mythical monsters, animals, birds and human figures are cleverly interwoven. A striking feature is the portrayal of Bodhisattvas mostly in worldly dresses, embracing their female counterparts; others are seated with one or two *saktis* sitting on their knees. The painting on the westernmost portion of this

structure is left unfinished and the scenes are merely outlined, which indicates that the work of decorating the interior of the building had to be abandoned, presumably due to the outbreak of a civil strife or to the Mongolian invasion of Pagān close to the end of the 13th century C.E.

The Nandamañña is only a few hundred yards away from the Payathonzu. The frescoes therein, still better preserved, are also Tantric in character, and in some instances of an unspeakable eroticism. The temple was built in 1248 C.E., according to an inscription within its precincts. Minnanthu was no doubt one of the strong-holds of one of the sects of Mahāyānism, and this is borne out by the fact that it is only about one mile distant from Thamati which is the traditional centre of Ari monks⁶ who indulged in grossly immoral practices. The presence of Tantric frescoes in the Nandamañña temple indicates that Northern "Buddhism" was still extant at Pagān in the 13th century. In fact it was actively promoted side by side with Theravāda Buddhism as is evidenced by a few scenes in the same temple depicting the performance of the Twin Miracles by the Buddha, and the birth of Siddhattha.

After the fall of the Pagān dynasty, the artistic life went on but with diminished vigour. However, when peaceful periods were ushered in during the late 17th century and early 18th century C.E. the traditional art was revived with the royal patronage from the later capitals of Ava and Amarapura. Thus in some of the buildings at Pagān we find fresh frescoes which have been painted with purely Burmese ideals. The UPāli Sīmā (ordination hall) assigned to the second quarter of the 13th century has its walls adorned with frescoes belonging to early 18th century. The scenes here represent not only the incidents from the life of the Buddha but

⁵ A pinnacle.

⁶ A Mahāyāna sect.

also the circumstances under which the last twenty-eight Buddhas renounced the world. In conformity with the utility of the building is a scene showing the rehabilitation of a monk who has committed an offence that can be expiated only by undergoing penance, the ecclesiastical ceremony for which has to be performed strictly in accordance with the Vinaya rules in an ordination hall. Lively scenes portraying the Jātakas as well as the secular life of the day are painted on the inner walls of the Ānanda Ōkkyauṅ, a brick monastery close to the venerated Ānanda Temple at Pagān. The building and the frescoes are contemporaneous, dating back to 1775 C.E. The Sūlamani Temple built by King Narapatisithu (1173-1210 C.E.) also contains frescoes executed in the late 18th century. Typical of the latter period, the scheme of painting here is delineated in horizontal panels from the floor level to the frieze, the upper panels being devoted to religious themes while the lower ones portray contemporary secular life and infernal scenes and animals.

The paintings at the UPāḷi Sīmā, the Ānanda Ōkkyauṅ and the Sūlamani temple are peculiarly striking in that the variety of subjects is fairly large and the narration of Jātakas and incidents from the Buddha's life

is comprehensive and continuous. The highlights of social and economic developments are discernible in the lively secular scenes which pronounce the artistic originality of the period. As far as the themes and forms of expression are concerned the Burmese painting then had, in fact, reached the pinnacle of success.

Similar contemporary Burmese frescoes may be seen in many religious buildings other than at Pagān. The Tilokaguru cave temple at Sagaing, the Taungthaman Kyauktawgyi at Amarapura and the Pogalon temple at Shwezayan near Mandalay are repositories of fine frescoes of 18th and early 19th century C.E.

The Pagān frescoes afford scholars a unique opportunity of interpreting the early Buddhist images and throw much light on the religious history of Burma. Later paintings are equally valuable in that they present a faithful interpretation of Burmese life and thought. If anyone argues that the Burmans have not advanced very far in the art of painting, it may be pointed out that the motive of ornamentation and decoration is solely dedicated to religious devotion and the forms of expression are rarely the product of conscious effort exclusively towards that end.

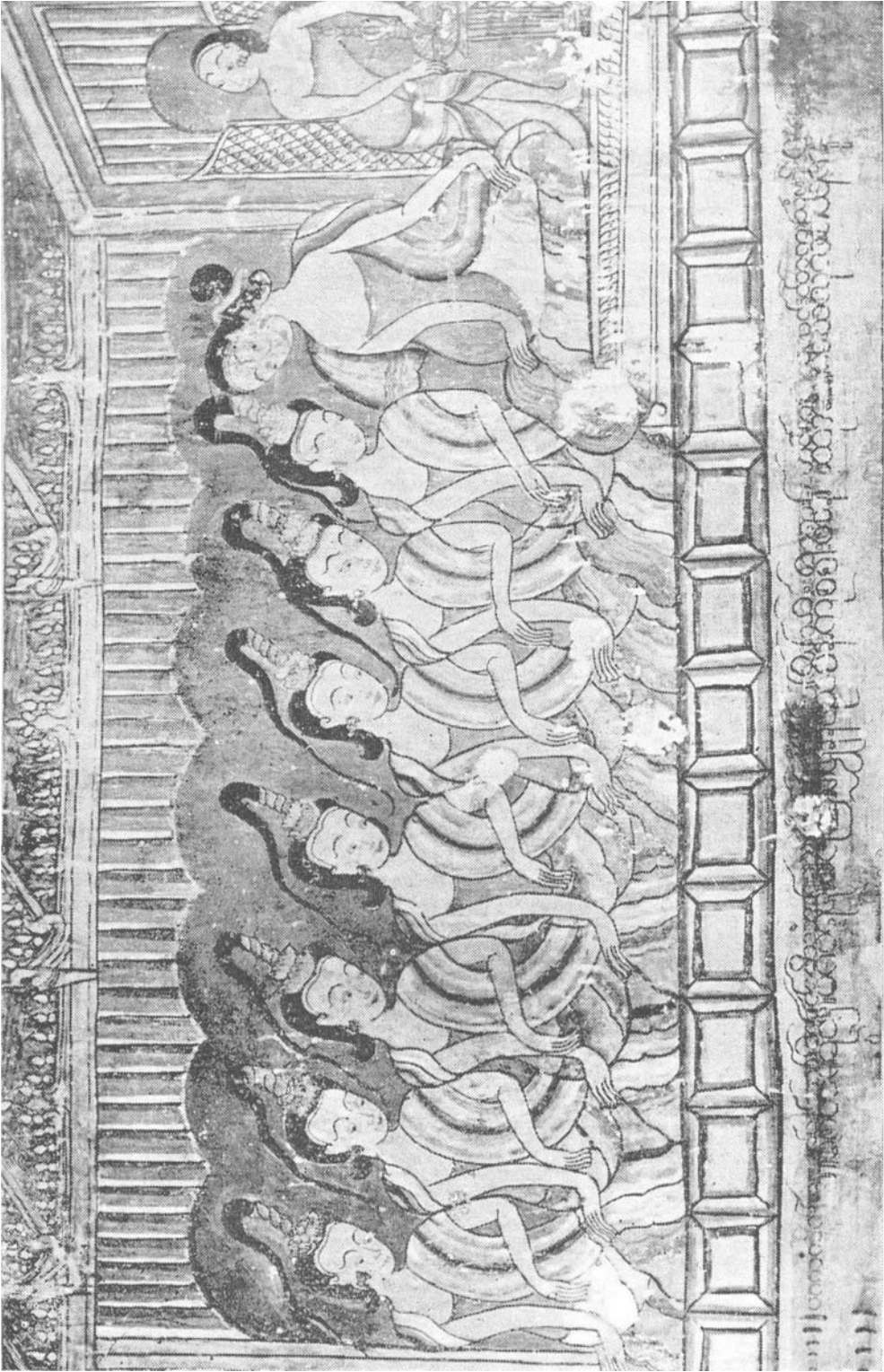
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For him who hath renounced them utterly,
 Chains of illusion as to self or soul
 Exist no more. Scattered are all such bonds.
 He, rich in wisdom, hath escaped beyond
 Conceits and deemings of the errant mind.
 He might say: "I say"; "they say"; "it's mine".
 So saying, he, expert in usages
 of men, 'ware of the worth of common names,
 Would speak merely conforming to such use.

Samyutta Nikāya.



Painting on the inner walls of Ānanda Okkyaung Monastery, Pagan.

INFLUENCE OF BUDDHISM ON THE BURMESE PEOPLE

David Maurice

Correspondents have often asked what has been the influence of Buddhism on the people of this country. To really evaluate the effect of Buddhism on the people of Burma, one would have to perform the impossible and peep back through time—twenty-five centuries of time—to see what the Burman was before he became a Buddhist. Even then, one would only see what the Burman was before he became a Burman, for to separate a Burman from Buddhism is another impossibility.

Therefore one well may ask: 'Did the Burman accept Buddhism so long ago because he was fitted temperamentally or is the temperament of the Burman the result of centuries of Buddhism?' There would be a deal of truth in either proposition.

If we look at our blunt and sturdy citizens on our northern borders, 'the rough wood from which the Burman has been carved' as one fanciful western writer termed some of them, we find them somewhat like Shakespeare's soldier: 'Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel' but with an innate sense of decency and of justice under a rough exterior, and with a high degree of logical common-sense also. These are Buddhist virtues and I am thinking, nevertheless of some of these brothers who have for centuries been animists but to whom now, with the extended facilities of our newly-won freedom, we are taking the Teaching of the Omniscient Buddha.

Though it is something new and strange to them it nevertheless jibes in well with their own temperaments and it changes their natures not so much to a different kind, though it does that too, but to a

higher degree. All Burmans must have been very much like that in the olden days.

Before discussing the Buddhist virtues which are in many cases now the Burmese virtues, I should at once avoid the charge of flattery by saying that, like all peoples, the Burmese have their failings as well as their good points. As was first remarked very many years ago, they are practically all Buddhists but not yet all Buddhas.

The Buddhist Teaching is so very much a part of the Burmese way of life. Even in folk-lore we find elements of the Buddhist Jātaka stories intertwined, and centuries of sitting at the feet of pious and learned monks have given even the humblest a little of the flavour of the Great Teaching. The Order of Buddhist Monks, the Sangha, is a great democratic body, the first real democracy (using the word in its best sense) that the world has known; and every Burman at some time in his life, be it for a shorter or a longer period, takes the vows and dons the Yellow Robe.

Small wonder is it then that in every dwelling, be it in rich man's house or peasant's hut, there is some evidence of the Master. It may be a more or less elaborate shrine with gold images, or a cheap lithograph pasted to the bamboo wall. It may be well-kept and tended with loving care or not so well looked-after, but always the Buddha's benign Teaching is evidenced by some token. Small wonder then is it also that in every Burman's life there is some practical evidence of the influence of that Teaching.

On the weekly Buddhist Fast-days many of the elders go to monasteries and pagodas to take special fast-day vows. The younger people go less often, nevertheless quite a few do go; and all, for all of these

reasons, are influenced by the Buddhist virtues.

Although only a percentage of the people of Burma are able to discuss Buddhist Philosophy, nevertheless the philosophy of Buddhism has had an influence on all, and basic to this is the great Teaching, first given to the world by the Omniscient Buddha: “As I am, so are they; as they are, so am I.” thus one should identify oneself with all that lives, and should not kill nor hurt any living being.⁷ That was given more than 2500 years ago; and we find the same idea exactly 2000 years ago, enunciated in Palestine by the great and saintly Rabbi Hillel: ‘Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you.’ and repeated by Jesus Christ some decades later.

It is this teaching that has influenced Burma greatly. Fielding Hall in his ‘Soul of a People’ notices the great tolerance of Burmans, and this is to be attributed largely to philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, and self-culture and the following of this ‘Golden Rule’. Fielding Hall says

‘A remarkable trait of the Burmese character is their unwillingness to interfere in other people’s affairs. Every man’s acts and thoughts are his own affairs, think the Burmans; each man is free to go his own way, to think his own thoughts, to act his own acts, as long as he does not too much annoy his neighbours. Each man is responsible for himself and for himself alone, and there is no need for him to try and be guardian also to his fellows. And so the Burman likes to go his own way, to be a free man within certain limits; and the freedom that he demands for himself, he will extend also to his neighbours. He has,

a very great and wide tolerance towards all his neighbours, not thinking it necessary to disapprove of his neighbours’ acts because they may not be the same as his own, never thinking it necessary to interfere with his neighbour as long as the laws are not broken.’

Fielding Hall goes on to say: ‘We Westerners are for ever thinking of others and trying to improve them We are sure that other people cannot but be better and happier for being brought into our ways of thinking, by force even if necessary. We call it philanthropy. But the Buddhist does not believe this at all. Each man, each nation, has, he thinks, enough to do managing his or its own affairs. Interference, any sort of interference, he is sure can do nothing but harm. *You* cannot save a man. All dispositions that are good, that are of any value at all, must come spontaneously from the heart of man. First he must desire them, and then struggle to obtain them; by this means alone can any virtue be reached. This, which is the key of his religion, is the key also of his private life. Each man is a free man to do what he likes, in a way that we have never understood..... This tolerance, this inclination to let each man go his own way, is conspicuous even down to the little events of life. It is very marked, even in conversation, how little criticism is indulged in towards each other. Of all the lovable qualities of the Burmese, and they are many, there are none greater than these—their light-heartedness and their tolerance.’

I’ve quoted that at length because there has been some misunderstanding of their attitude in the West and because I think Fielding Hall came very close to finding the key to their religion and their way of life.

⁷ Dhammapada, 129, 130; Saṃyutta Nikāya, Veḷudvāra-vagga.

Another Westerner who was struck by Burmese tolerance and goodwill, Allan Bennett, who became the Bhikkhu Ānanda Metteyya, quotes a verse of the Dhammapada which is also well known among all people in Burma: 'To abstain from all evil; to fulfil all good and to purify the mind—this is the Teaching of the Buddhas'.⁸

He sees in this Teaching and their understanding of it, the key to much of their character. He points out that the first truth herein: 'To abstain from all evil' is the negative side, the adherence to and following of the Precepts to abstain from killing, from taking what is not given, from sexual impurity, from lying or harsh speech, from partaking of intoxicants; and the second truth, 'to fulfill all good' is the positive. He says: 'Never was there a people more generous, more full of charity than this; it has been the wonder of every author who has truly gained an insight into the hearts and lives of this most fascinating race. All the land is covered with tokens of their charity, from the golden glory of the vast fabric of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda at Rangoon—gilded all over at intervals of a few years, at a cost of lakhs of rupees, by voluntary offerings of the people—to the village well, or Monastery, or rest-house for chance travellers; down to the little stand containing a few vessels of clear, cool water, which even the poorest can set up by the roadside and keep daily replenished for the benefit of thirsty passers-by'.

He and other Westerners are struck, too, by the truth of the closing sentence of the Text, 'To purify the mind'. Here is something in which Buddhism differs from every other religion and system of thought.

To purify the mind, without thinking of any permanent unchanging 'self' and without thinking in terms of 'after death nothing', is to put the onus for everything squarely on a man himself. This makes him, or tends to make him, self-reliant and individualistic in the best sense. This it is that tends to preserve the Burman against materialist, regimented ideologies.

Under the heading of 'to purify the mind' we have the three signs characteristic of all being as our starting proposition. These are Impermanence, Suffering and Impersonality. Every Burman repeats this formula if not daily then at frequent intervals. They cannot fail to have impressed the national character, as indeed they have, with a clearer, wider vision of the universe. Superficially it might appear and has appeared to some superficial observers, as gloomy. Actually it has made them the happiest people in the world. There is a goal which we all may reach, by our own efforts, sooner or later. Morality brings us closer, immorality sets us further back. But all depends on ourselves. This accounts for much of their attitude, their helpfulness and at the same time refusal to interfere, their loving-kindness to all. It comes out in their welcome to all, of any class or creed or colour, to come and eat with them, in the water-vessels for thirsty passers-by, in the good wishes towards all. They have their murders, mainly crimes of sudden passion, they have their thefts—they have their crimes, they are but humans like all races—but running through their lives are golden threads of love and knowledge, the knowledge that the other fellow is like them and suffers like them, and these threads make their life really a 'many-splendoured thing'; and it is Buddhism that has given them these threads to weave into their lives.

⁸ Dhammapada, 183. Quoted in "THE RELIGION OF BURMA".

A GUIDE TO THINGS AS THEY ARE

By Sithu U San Thein,

(Translated from *The Burmese* by the Editors of 'The Light of the Dhamma'.)

You have made some advancement in the attainment of Perfections in your past existences during the Sāsanas⁹ of the Buddhas in this world-cycle and the previous ones. Had it not been for this, you would have no belief or confidence in the Teaching of Gotama Buddha. You sense some mental impulse to such confidence arising in your mind. The reason for your possession of such a mentality is because of your repeated progression in your past existences and the resultant effects of this. It is now time for you to make to grow these seeds of Pāramitās (Perfections) which you have in hand.

The Light of the Sāsana is shining more brightly than the rays of the sun. Let all the people who have advanced sufficiently in the Perfections, whether they are big or small, quick-witted, of mediocre intelligence, or dull, receive the Light of the Dhamma while the Buddha-Sāsana exists, allow the seeds of Pāramitās to blossom, and strive their best to become the real disciples of the Buddha.

COMPASSION OF THE BUDDHA

The Buddha gave His Teaching through great compassion to allow those who have advanced sufficiently in the Perfections to inherit it. His compassion for all beings was of the same degree. The compassion which He had for His son Rahūla or for Yasodharā, Rahfūa's mother, did not exceed the compassion He had for any other being.

For a period so long that it is not within the range of thought, during which world-

systems arose, perished and decayed, the Compassionate One strove to attain Omniscience by which He could bring the worldlings from the world of unsatisfactoriness, and lead them to Freedom. Countless times had the Buddha-to-be sacrificed his health, his life, his property and his wife and children in fulfilling the Pāramitās. Yet the 'Omniscience' he gained far outweighed these sacrifices. Did he undergo so much pain and trouble merely to attain his own Freedom? No. During his Sumedhā existence, if he wished, he could have become a fully purified Arahat and attained Nibbāna, but as he desired to save fellow beings from this Saṃsāra (Round of Rebirth), he made a solemn declaration in the presence of the Buddha Dipaṅkarā that he would strive to become a Buddha and having undergone much suffering he advanced sufficiently in the Pāramitās. How great was the Buddha's compassion is clearly discernible. While there are people who have advanced sufficiently in the Pāramitās in the past existences, it is now time for them to follow the Teaching of the Buddha, practise it and realise it, so as to become the real heirs of the Buddha.

The late Venerable Ledi Sayadaw once pointed out "Even if persons have advanced sufficiently in the Pāramitās, present day people who are *aniyata-neyya-puggala* (persons who must be instructed and who are not "men of spiritual genius") are able to attain Freedom, only when they strive with utmost diligence, so that they are fit to attain Freedom. During the lifetime of the Buddha, Mahādhana the son of the banker, passed his time enjoying sensuous pleasure during his early youth,

⁹ Periods during which Teachings of the Buddha exist.

and when he grew up he had no time to pay his homage to the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha, not to speak of attaining Freedom. When the Buddha saw this state of affairs, He spoke to Ānanda ‘This banker’s son, had he become my follower during the first period of his life, would have become an Arahāt and attained Parinibbāna in this very life; or had he become a monk in the Order during the second period of his life, he would have become an Anāgāmin, and on his death he would be reborn in Suddhavāsa Brahma Plane where he would attain Parinibbāna; or had he become a monk in the Order during the third period of his life, he would have become either a Sakadāgāmin or Soṭāpanna and would never be reborn in the Four Lower Worlds.’ Even if a person be of the *paccima-bhavika* type (one in whom exists the possibility of attaining Freedom in this very life), he will not attain if he indulges in sensuous pleasures and neglects the further striving. Again, if for the unwholesome actions done by him in this very life, he were to be reborn in the Apāya state of suffering and were to remain there for a great length of time, he might have no opportunity to encounter the next Buddha, the Buddha Metteyya. After that, too, he might be in world-cycles in which no Buddha would arise, and wait uncountable ages for an opportunity to hear a Buddha’s Teaching, just as the banker’s son who had an opportunity to attain Freedom during his lifetime missed that opportunity.

Now in saying that the light of the Buddha-Sāsana is shining more brightly than that of the sun, ‘the light of the Sāsana’ means ‘the light of *yathābhūta pañña* (penetrating knowledge of the truth)’. These realities or truths cannot be seen with the naked eye. A person who possesses ‘the eye of wisdom’ will be able

to realise these truths, or see things as they really are, much more than he sees the brightness of the sun with his naked eyes. Just as it would not be right for a blind person to say that there are no sun, moon and stars, because he is not able to see them with his eye, it would not be proper for one to say that the Sāsana does not shine, because he is not able to see the light of the Sāsana.

The light of the Sāsana is shining brilliantly and is doing good to those who have ‘eyes of wisdom’ and to those who are trying to acquire the ‘eyes of wisdom’. Since people possess different degrees of knowledge, at present we have different grades of the ‘practices of the Dhamma’ which the Buddha so compassionately taught for the people to practise and attain knowledge grade by grade. A person of no wisdom sees all things wrongly owing to hallucinations. It is therefore highly important to cultivate this higher knowledge in order to dispel these hallucinations.

In order to understand it better, let us discuss the word “gratefulness”, for example. About thirty years ago a certain Ko Nyo Thee of Upper Burma and another person Ko Mya Gyi of Lower Burma earned their living by jointly trading in a boat along the river. One day the boat was caught in a gale on the wide river and capsized. Both Ko Nyo Thee and Ko Mya Gyi fell into the river. Ko Mya Gyi knew how to swim; but as Ko Nyo Thee could not swim and was thus helpless, Ko Mya Gyi, with the greatest difficulty, helped Ko Nyo Thee towards the river bank, thus saving his life. Twenty years later, Ko Mya Gyi, in order to avoid the dangers of war, went to his old friend Ko Nyo Thee’s place in Upper Burma and resided there as a war refugee. Ko Mya Gyi was rich and so had brought some jewels and personal

property with him, whereas Ko Nyo Thee was poor. During the troubled time, Ko Mya Gyi greatly relied on his old friend Ko Nyo Thee, and at the same time was very anxious about the security of his valuable properties. People are tempted to become greedy during a period of unsettled government, and Ko Nyo Thee had at times attachment for Ko Mya Gyi's properties through his *lobha* (greed). During such a war time it was very easy to get rid of Ko Mya Gyi under pretence of an attack by robbers etc. and get all of his valuable properties. Looking with the eyes of hallucination, they were good to look at, valuable and would command a great rank in wealth and position. These thoughts were born of delusion. He was not able to see the 'gratitude'—the kindness which Ko Mya Gyi had done him some 20 years before. As that 'gratitude' was not of a tangible nature, he had not been able to store it. While Ko Nyo Thee had a greedy eye on Ko Mya Gyi's properties, his 'eye of wisdom' was blind. Then, owing to a certain impulse, he suddenly remembered the incident when his life had been saved by Ko Mya Gyi. At first this cognition was very feeble. When he contemplated on the inherent qualities of Ko Mya Gyi in that respect, the greed that obliterated the real qualities of gratitude gradually waned. Ko Nyo Thee then paid more regard to his benefactor Ko Mya Gyi and treated the latter better than before. A band of insurgents came to the district and Ko Mya Gyi, being very uneasy in mind about his personal properties, one day early in the morning went to a place not very far from his temporary residence carrying the bundle containing his jewels. Thinking that none was present in his neighborhood he dug a hole near a big tree and hoarded his properties there. At that moment Ko Nyo Thee, who happened to be nearby, saw Ko Mya Gyi's movements. When later the

insurgents attacked their village they had to leave the village and run away for safety. Ko Mya Gyi had to take refuge in a Buddhist rest-house together with Ko Nyo Thee, and there he was taken ill. One day when Ko Nyo Thee went to the village to look at the condition of his house, he went to the place where Ko Mya Gyi had hidden his treasures. He unearthed them and had a look at them. The jewels were very beautiful and very valuable. But when he mentally weighed them in the 'balance of wisdom', the 'gratitude', which could not be seen with the eye but could be realised only by means of wisdom, became heavier than the valuable properties. This showed that Ko Nyo Thee could overcome greed in that respect. Without leaving the properties in an insecure place, Ko Nyo Thee brought them to Ko Mya Gyi, and they then kept them in a new and more secure place. Ko Mya Gyi later on recovered his health and his properties were also intact. While the properties remained in Ko Mya Gyi's hands as valuable things, to Ko Nyo Thee they seemed to be a poison, and this incident shows the importance of 'the sense of gratitude'. This is only an instance to show how important a single Dhamma such as 'gratitude' is. There are many and higher units of Dhamma, and in order to see them as they really are, it is now time to practise the Dhamma and thus increase our power of understanding the Truth step by step.

Ko Nyo Thee had knowledge enough to know the Truth to some extent. Thus, he did not get the precious jewels, but obtained a priceless Dhamma which was more valuable. Persons who are able to understand the truth more than Ko Nyo Thee, possess various grades of 'ascending' knowledge. Those who do not understand as much as Ko Nyo Thee possess various grades of 'descending'

ignorance. Although the resultant effects of *dāna* (almsgiving), *sīla* (morality) and *bhāvanā* (mental development) clearly exist in this world, different persons view these from different angles; that is to say that the grades of knowledge of these persons in relation to *dāna*, *sīla* and *bhāvanā* also vary according to their respective calibre. These variations are by way of 'ascent' and 'descent'. Although jewels and precious things which we see with our eyes are said to be beautiful, useful or valuable, naturally their values are not equal. For example, Maung Pyu and Maung Ni had each ten thousand kyats, one having gained them lawfully and the other illegally, Though, in ordinary parlance, their values might be equal, the amount that was procured lawfully would carry more real weight than that obtained illegally.

The rays of the Sāsana are radiating the Realities. Those who have gradually seen things as they really are, step by step, have reached the highest step and got rid of *dukkha* (suffering) and finally attained *santi-sukha* (Absolute Peace—*Nibbāna*). The Buddha-Sāsana now exists as an instrument to differentiate between the Real and the Unreal. The Buddha-Sāsana does not appear as a mere religious creed; it is the Truth, of universal application, leading to Enlightenment after allowing us to eradicate all grades of ignorance, thus paving the way to the field of Enlightenment. Only when one realises the wrong, step by step, will he be able to realise the right, step by step. Only if one sees things as they really are, will he be able to dispel ignorance, and go steadily towards Realities. The end of all the Supramundane knowledges is Omniscience.

During the lifetime of the Buddha, when Vakkali gazed at the various

supernormal physical characteristics of the Buddha and the halo round His body, and was inspired with great admiration, the Buddha declared: 'Vakkali, one who does not see the Dhamma does not see me; one who sees the Dhamma sees me also. You have not seen me in the Ultimate sense. Only when you practise the Dhamma taught by me and realise it yourself, will you be able to see me in the Ultimate sense. You will then be able to realise the inherent qualities of the Buddha and have strong faith in them.' The real meaning of this Declaration is that only by following the Teaching of the Buddha and practising it, could Vakkali reach the stage where he could realise the truth. In the matter of paying one's veneration to the Buddha, Vakkali should be ranked among the foremost. Though he possessed such a high mundane morality, his wholesome action in this respect was not sufficient to allow him to realise the truth. He abandoned his inferior type of merit, and having practised the Dhamma to his utmost, finally attained Freedom. This is an important point to note.

If one is not able to see the light of the Sāsana and realise the Dhamma just as the Noble Ones did, it is certain that for him the world of suffering will be lengthened. By whatever means one may try to enjoy sensuous pleasures, he is sure to experience the Unsatisfactoriness of life'. However wealthy and high-ranking a person may be, brought up in the lap of luxury, it is evident that his enjoyment is not a pleasure in the Ultimate sense, since this too must pass. The Dhamma alone can lead one to see things as they really are, realise the origin of *dukkha*, and attain absolute peace.

SAMSĀRA

Anamatagga-samsāra means 'Round of Rebirth', the beginning of which is

unattainable to thought. The Mind and Body have arisen and vanished, all the elements dying and being reformed in rapid succession in the past existences, do so in the present existence, and will, too, do so in the future existences. Let me give you an example. Follow it with your mind's eye. Suppose there is an instrument which can be propelled continually for days, months and years. Send it up to the sky; when will it come to a final destination? Will it reach the end of the journey after it has travelled ten million miles, one billion miles or more than that? Will it approach a destination? Again, in your mind's eye, send several of such instruments in all directions in such a way that there is not a single interspace. Now, after these instruments have travelled for a hundred years, can you say that they will be nearing their destinations? Or is the destination nearer than it was 50 years earlier? Can you call the place whence you sent these instruments as the starting point of this infinite expanse of space? What is the starting point and what will be the destination? When did it start and when will it stop? These are the things to be considered in connection with time and space.

Will you take the time of your birth in this very life as the beginning or take the time of your death after enjoying sensuous pleasures, as the end? The sphere of 'Unsatisfactoriness of life' with its space and time will not come to an end; nor will they approach the end. The sphere of suffering (*dukkha*) is becoming wider and wider and the end becomes farther and farther away. Worldly pleasures are *dukkha* because they are not permanent. If they were permanent, we would not grumble; but as they are impermanent, we shall have to work out our own salvation with diligence. Most beings having

delusively taken time and space as one complete whole, wandered in the Round of Rebirth, the beginning of which is both unattainable to thought, by arising at times in a Happy Course of Existence and at others in an Unhappy Course of Existence. Though a billion of existences might have been passed, do you think that you will get out of this Round of Rebirth?

No, you will not; far from it. Even if more existences be passed in the future, Freedom will be far, far away too. The animal world, ghost world, demon-world, hell, worlds of men, Devas and Brahmās are all involved in Saṃsāra, the beginning of which is beyond the range of thought. Whether the light emitted from the sun and reflected from the moon, stars and other shining celestial bodies exists or not, in the Ultimate sense, the world is covered with the darkness of ignorance. One plane of existence is interrelated with another by way of space and time. It is for this reason that a being who took rebirth in one plane will take rebirth in another plane after his death; in one existence he was reborn in a noble family, and in another in an ignoble one. If he has performed a great many wholesome actions, he will arise in the worlds of men, Devas and Brahmās and if he has performed unwholesome actions he will arise in the 4 Lower Worlds. The worlds of men, Devas and Brahmās are connected with the 4 Lower Worlds; because all these planes are involved in Saṃsāra. Men, Devas and Brahmās on their dissolution or death may arise in the Lower Worlds, and those in the Lower Worlds may, on their death, arise in the higher planes. When a world system comes nearly to an end, all beings except some who hold very wrong views are reborn in the world of men where they have to practise *Samatha-bhāvanā* (Development of mental concentration),

and after death they arise in the Brahmā-planes. Even these Brahmās on their death may again be reborn in the lower planes. Although aeons may come and go, time and space are never destroyed, and they will always be governed by the principle of “arising and vanishing”. Even if a being has been reborn in the planes of men and Brahmās for a billion times will he be approaching the portals of emancipation? Certainly not. Even if he has been reborn as virtuous men and Devas for a hundred million times, will he be nearing the real *sukha* (Happiness)? No, he will still be far away and because of his delusion there exists the possibility to be reborn in the 4 Lower Worlds in his future births.

Thus we find that both in the lower and higher planes of existence there are time and space. Is the life-span of a man, Deva or Brahmā long? It is infinitesimally short if it be compared with ‘*anamataḅga*’ (the beginning of which is unattainable to thought).

From the above explanations we can clearly see how great the Compassion of the Buddha was. The Omniscience which the Buddha attained after fulfilling His Pāramitas with great sacrifices, enabled Him to show to the world a Path leading to the Extinction of Delusion and Suffering. He taught that all suffering and all rebirth is produced by Craving, and that by practising the Noble Eightfold Path, Craving, which is the cause of suffering and rebirth, can be extinguished. By Buddha-Dhamma only will one be able to get rid of *dukkha* (suffering). You should now see that the ordinary wholesome and unwholesome actions cannot help one to get rid of *dukkha*, and so contemplating the benefits of the Sāsana, one should practise the Dhamma so as to dispel all cravings and attachments and to realise Nibbāna.

Therefore, in this *anamataḅga-samsāra*, it is highly important to realise the Dhamma while we are still so fortunate as to be able to see the light of the Sāsana, in order to pass over the boundary of the sphere of *dukkha*, rather than to try and achieve power and glory.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH

If one possesses a knowledge that penetrates the truth, he will be able to dispel evils. Some people say: ‘Everybody seems to have some knowledge of the Dhamma, and yet they are foolish; they still follow sensuous pleasures in the “Spheres of Greed”, in spite of their knowledge of the Dhamma’. Here, ‘knowledge’ does not relate to ultimate truths, but it relates to Conventional truths. For example, a child in his infancy plays with faeces discharged by him as pleasurable things and does not consider them abhorrent.

But when grown up, he sees the faeces as detestable things and does not touch them, taking care not to get his body dirty. So seekers of truth when their ‘Eyes of Wisdom’ become clearer and clearer avoid evils step by step according to their degrees of knowledge, and practise the Dhamma so that they may achieve higher grades of knowledge. Just as a person who has put on new and better clothes will keep himself away from dirty objects which will spoil his clothes, those who reach the ‘Sphere of the light of the Sāsana’ have extended their light of vision to a wider and wider degree and they have left behind them the ‘Sphere of Ignorance’. It is highly important to exert oneself to realise Ultimate truth, and not to be content with the conventional, general knowledge.

Some people are under the impression that the practice of the Dhamma is advantageous only to the practiser, and has nothing to do with the welfare of other

beings. They say so because they do not comprehend Suffering and other delusive phenomena. For example, vultures are creatures of foul type. They take bloated corpses as agreeable things and live on them with the greatest pleasure. If one could possibly say to them: 'Friends, the dead body of the dog which you are now eating, is bad indeed, and is much to be abhorred. The existence in which you arise is really low'; would you call that man selfish? If some of these vultures, realising their condition, gave up the filthy food and tried to find more wholesome food, would you call those birds selfish?

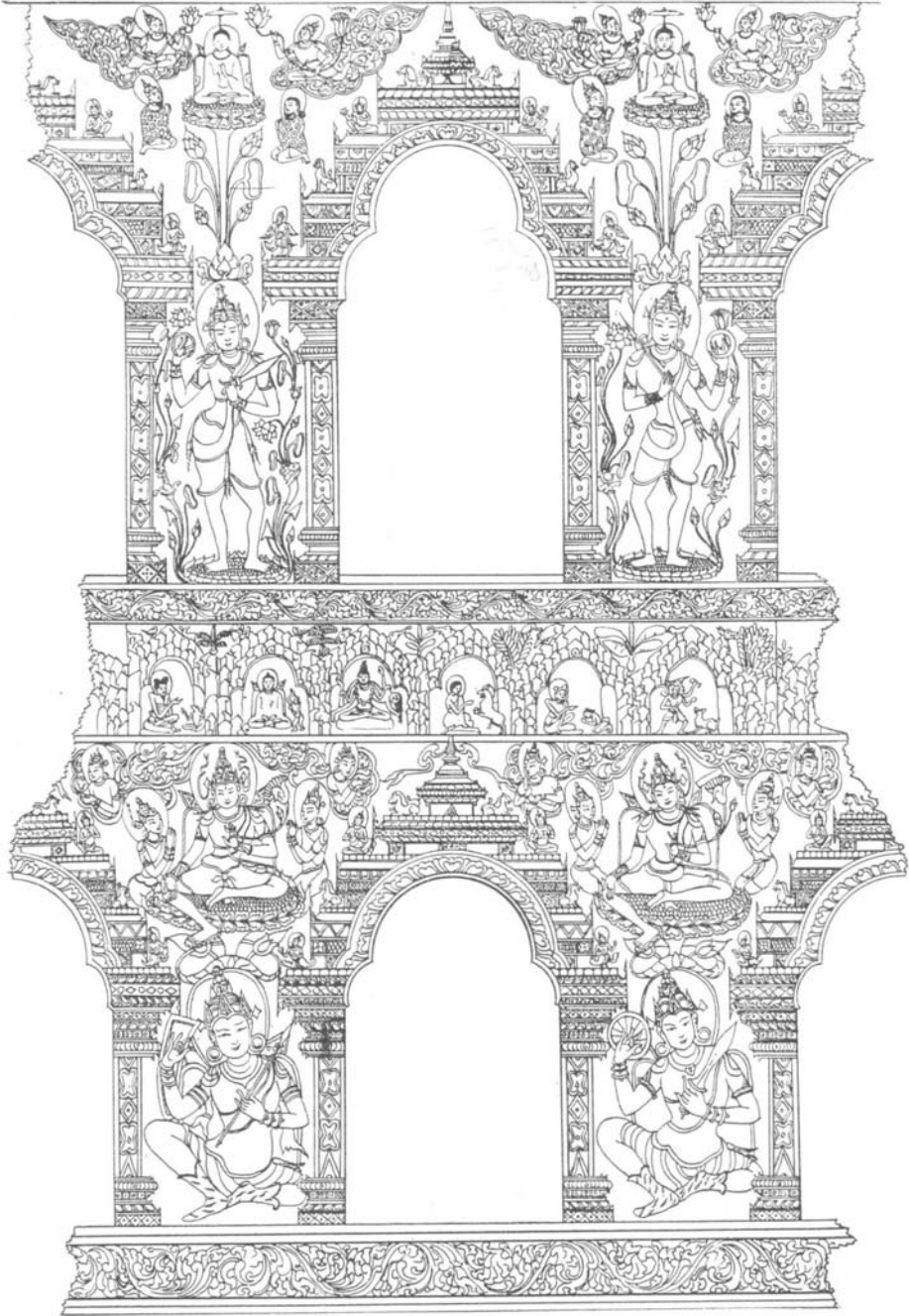
The act of striving to get out of the sphere of 'wrong' and arrive at the 'right', is very certainly not a selfish act, but will be important to those who have realised their error in the sphere of 'wrong'. Just as the saying 'If a tree be splendid, ten thousand birds can take refuge in it', the distinguished benefactors who realise the truth by climbing the ladders of knowledge, cause their disciples and followers to climb up the ladder of knowledge step by step, by practising the Dhamma.

Although we say that the Buddha-Sāsana will last for another 2500 years, we are able to come within its light only while we arise in the world of men, or, if we consider more deeply, only when we possess a virtuous mind and practise the Dhamma. It means that as the period in which one is able to come in contact with the Buddha-Sāsana is very short, we should strive to practise the Dhamma with zeal and fervour and without wasting time.

During that period also, it is highly important that in practising the Dhamma, one is able to reach the topmost. It is a grievous loss if one makes a mistake by whiling away the time without practising to realise the truth.

In the Buddha-Sāsana there really exists the opportunity of practising the Teaching of the Buddha, which is able to put an end to all Suffering and which can bring Absolute Peace to the practiser. Pariyatti (Learning of the Doctrine) exists as the trunk root of the Sāsana and we have the opportunity to practise the Dhamma. This practice is called *Paṭipatti* Sāsana. The knowledges pertaining to the Holy Paths and the Fruitions thereof exist, because one is able to attain them by *Paṭipatti*. Only the Omniscient Buddha is the Knower of All Things. He knows in the Ultimate sense. The Buddha's disciples, Arahats knew the mental and physical phenomena as they really are, but did not know all things in the manner of the Buddha. They knew things by degrees, and their knowledge cannot be compared to the Buddha's Omniscience which is infinite, boundless and not within the range of thought. The Buddha having attained the highest insight-knowledge was able to eradicate all defilements along with their natural dispositions. As regards the Arahats they are able to eradicate the defilements only, but are not able to dispel some of their individual dispositions. Anāgāmins are not yet able to eradicate Conceit, Inclination to Existence in higher realms, and Ignorance. Sakadāgāmins and Sotāpannas are not yet able to dispel *kāma-rāga* (Sensuality), *paṭigha* (Ill-will), Conceit, Inclination to Existence, and Ignorance. Although they cannot dispel all these latent inclinations they have come out of 'darkness' into the light. As they are emerging out of ignorance and have entered the sphere of knowledge, they are able to enjoy safely the essence of the Dhamma which is the heritage of the Sāsana. They become the real disciples of the Buddha, and will be reborn in higher and higher realms, where they will attain Nibbāna.

(To be Continued)



Mural painting on the southern wall of the inside of Abhèyadāna Pagoda,
Myinkaba, Pagān.

THE BUDDHA'S DAILY LIFE ¹⁰

By F.L. Woodward. M.A.,

Ah ! When the Lord of the World went forth to beg,
 The gentle winds made smooth the ways before Him,
 The clouds poured down their waters on the dust
 And from the sun's hot rays protected Him.
 The breezes wafted flowers to His path,
 Raised were the ruts and hollows of the road,
 Smoothed the rough places, and where'er the Lord
 Trod, even was the ground and soft; thereon
 Sprang lotus-flowers to receive His feet.
 No sooner had He reached the city-gates
 Than all the six-rayed brilliance of His form
 Raced here and there o'er palaces and shrines
 And decked them as with yellow sheen of gold
 Or with a painter's colours. Then the beasts,
 Birds, elephants and horses, one and all,
 Gave forth melodious sounds, and all the folk
 Crashed loud the drums; lutes twanged and instruments
 Of divers sounds; tinkled the women's jewels
 And by these tokens did the people know
 'The Blessed One has entered now for alms.'
 So donning their best robes and finery
 And taking perfumes, flowers and offerings
 They issued from their houses to the street,
 And worshipping the Blessed One therewith
 Some said 'Lord ! Give us ten monks for to feed.'
 And some, 'Give twenty,' some, 'Lord Give a hundred!'
 And then they took His bowl, prepared a seat,
 And eagerly their reverence displayed
 By placing choicest food within the bowl.
 Now when the meal was done, the Blessed Lord
 With nice discrimination of their minds
 And dispositions, taught each one the Doctrine.
 Thus, some were 'stablished in the Refuges,
 Some in the Precepts Five, some reached the Stream,
 While others would attain the Second Path,
 And some the Path of No-Return, and some
 Became established in the Highest Fruit,
 Were Arahats and left the world. Thus showing
 Such kindness to the folk the Lord would rise

¹⁰ Being a literal and metrical version of Buddhaghosa's Sumangala-vilasini, (1.45) or Commentary on the Dīgha Nikāya of Sutta Piṭaka.

And, to His dwelling-place would wend His way.
 And there when He arrived He sat Him down
 On a fair Buddha-mat they spread for Him,
 And waited till the monks their meal had eaten.
 This done, the body-servant told the Lord,
 And to the scented chamber He retired.
 Such were the duties of the morning meal.
 These duties done, in the scented chamber sitting,
 On a seat made ready, He would wash His feet.
 Then, standing on the jewelled stairs that led
 Unto the scented chamber, He would teach
 The gathering of monks and thus would say
 ‘O monks. Apply yourselves with diligence!’
 For rarely comes a Buddha in the world,
 And rarely beings come to birth as men
 Rare the propitious moment and the chance
 To leave the world and hear the Doctrine true!
 Thereat some one would ask the Blessed One
 For meditation-lessons, which He gave
 Fit for each man’s peculiar bent of mind.
 Then all would do obeisance and depart
 To places where they spent the night or day
 Some to the forest, some to the foot of trees,
 Some to the hills, some to the heavens where rule
 The Four Great Kings, or Vasivatti’s heaven.
 Then going to His room, the Blessed One
 Would lay Him down and rest there for a while,
 Mindful and conscious, on His right side lying,
 Like a lion; till, His body now refreshed,
 He rose and gazed forth over all the world.
 Then came the folk of village or of town
 Near which He might be staying, they who gave
 The morning meal, garbed in their best, and brought
 Their offerings of flowers and scents. The Lord,
 His audience thus assembled, would approach
 In such miraculous fashion as was fit;
 And, sitting in the lecture-hall prepared
 On the fair Buddha-mat they spread for Him,
 He taught the Doctrine fit for time and season,
 And seasonably bade the people go.
 Then all would do obeisance and depart.
 Such were the duties of the afternoon.
 These things all done, He left the Buddha-seat,
 Entering the bath-house, if He wished to bathe
 And cool His limbs with water there prepared
 By His body-servant, who fetched the Buddha-seat

And spread it in the scented room. The Lord,
 Donning His double tunic orange-hued
 And binding on His girdle, threw His robe
 Over the right shoulder and thither went and sat
 And stayed retired, in meditation plunged.
 Then came the monks from this side and from that
 And waited on the Blessed One. Some asked
 The solving of their doubts, and some would beg,
 For meditation-lessons, others a sermon.
 Thus answering, teaching, preaching, would the Lord
 Spend the first night-watch, granting their desires.
 Such were the duties of the first night-watch.
 When the duties of the first night-watch were done,
 The monks would do obeisance and depart.
 Then came the Gods of the ten thousand worlds,
 Seizing the chance of questioning the Lord,
 Were it but single words of letters four.
 He, answering those questions, passed the night.
 Such were the duties of the middle watch.
 Into three parts the last watch He divided
 And forasmuch as, since the morning sitting,
 His body would be tired, He spent one part
 In pacing up and down to ease His limbs.
 Then going to the scented room the Lord
 Would lay Him down and rest there for a while,
 Mindful and conscious, on His right side lying,
 Like a lion. But in the third He rose and sat,
 Gazing with Buddha-eye o'er all the world,
 To see if any man, by giving alms,
 Keeping the Precepts, or by deeds of worth,
 Under some former Buddha took the vow
 Himself to be a Saviour of the world.
 Such were His habits of the last night-watch.

'I, friend, have not given up the things of the present to pursue that which involves time. Nay, I have given up that which involves time to pursue the things of the present. Things involving time, friend, as the Exalted One hath said, are the pleasures of sense, full of ill, full of anxiety; that way lies abundant disaster. A thing of the present is this Discipline, not involving time, inviting to come and see, leading onward, to be regarded by the wise as a personal experience.

Saṃyutta Nikāya.

WHY AND HOW WE CELEBRATE DHAMMACAKKA DAY

Broadcast from the BBS by Venerable U Thittila, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, on Thursday the 11th July, 1957, Full Moon of Waso.

Almost all religions have the same teaching of the minor moralities of 'Be good and do good'. These moralities are very necessary but nevertheless they will not get one permanently out of this whirlpool of existence. They will take us to a heaven, but no heaven is permanent. Buddhism has this teaching of morality, and indeed it was the Buddha who first gave the full teaching of morality, as morality is accepted to-day by most great religions.

But the Buddha gave something very much more, something which makes the Buddha Dhamma so very much more than a system of ethics. The Buddha showed the Way, the only way, out of this morass of Suffering.

Immediately after His full Enlightenment, He surveyed the world with the eye of Omniscience and saw how sunk were beings in the Ignorance and Craving from which He had escaped. He hesitated to teach, but then realised that there were some 'whose eyes were only lightly covered with dust' who would listen and understand and make the effort to attain Enlightenment.

He therefore considered to whom He should first tell the glad tidings and saw that of His former associates, His most recent companions were still living and to this group of five ascetics He went and delivered His first sermon exactly two thousand, five hundred and forty six years ago.

This short sermon gives the whole Teaching of the Buddha in brief and may be regarded as the very foundation of the Teaching. It is as follows:—

The Discourse of setting in motion the Wheel of the Doctrine.

Thus have I heard: at one time the Lord dwelt at Banares at Isipatana in the Deer Park. There the Lord addressed the five monks:—

“These two extremes, Bhikkhus, are not to be practised by one who has gone forth from the world. What are the two? That conjoined with passions and luxury, low vulgar, common, ignoble and unprofitable; and that conjoined with self-mortification, painful, ignoble and unprofitable.

“There is a Middle Way, O Bhikkhus avoiding these two extremes, discovered by the Tathāgata—a path which opens the eyes and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nibbāna.”

And what, Bhikkhus, is that Middle Path which gives Vision, which gives Knowledge, which causes Calm, Enlightenment and Nibbāna?

Verily it is this Noble Eightfold Path, that is to say:

RIGHT VIEW, RIGHT AIM, RIGHT SPEECH, RIGHT ACTION, RIGHT LIVING, RIGHT EFFORT, RIGHT MINDFULNESS, RIGHT CONTEMPLATION.

This, Bhikkhus, is that Middle Path which gives Vision, which gives Knowledge, which causes Calm, Insight, Enlightenment and Nibbāna.

Now this, Bhikkhus is the Noble Truth about Suffering:

Birth is Suffering, Decay is Suffering, Sickness is Suffering, Death is Suffering. To be conjoined with things which we

dislike, to be separated from things which we like—that also is Suffering. Not to get what one wants—that also is Suffering. In a word, this Body, this fivefold Mass which is based on Grasping, that is Suffering.

Now this, Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth about the Origin of Suffering

It is that Craving that leads downward to birth, along with the Lure and the Lust that lingers longingly now here, now there, namely, the Craving for Sensual pleasure, the Craving connected with *Sassata-dit̐hi* *i.e.*, the belief in an eternal life, the Craving connected with *Uccheda-dit̐hi* *i.e.*, the belief that there is no future existence. Such Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth about the Origin of Suffering.

And this, Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth about The Ceasing of Suffering:

Verily it is the utter passionless cessation of, the giving up, the forsaking, the release from, the absence of longing for, this Craving.

Now this, Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth about the Way leading to the Ceasing of Suffering. Verily it is the Noble Eightfold Path, that is:

RIGHT VIEW, RIGHT AIM, RIGHT SPEECH, RIGHT ACTION, RIGHT LIVING, RIGHT EFFORT, RIGHT MINDFULNESS, RIGHT CONTEMPLATION.

At the thought, Bhikkhus, of this Noble Truth of Suffering, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, Bhikkhus, “This Noble Truth of Suffering is to be understood”, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, Bhikkhus, “This Noble Truth of Suffering has been understood”, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

Again, at the thought, Bhikkhus, of this Truth of the Origin of Suffering, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, Bhikkhus, “The Origin of Suffering must be put away,” concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

So also at the thought, Bhikkhus, “The Origin of Suffering has been put away”, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

Again, at the thought, Bhikkhus, of this Noble Truth of the Ceasing of Suffering, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, Bhikkhus, “The Ceasing of Suffering must be realised,” concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, Bhikkhus, “The Ceasing of Suffering has been realised”, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

Finally, Bhikkhus, at the thought of “This Noble Way leading to the Ceasing of

Suffering”, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, Bhikkhus, “The Way leading to the Ceasing of Suffering is to be developed”, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

At the thought, Bhikkhus, “The Way leading to the Ceasing of Suffering has been developed”, concerning things unlearned before, there arose in me Vision, Insight, Understanding; there arose in me Wisdom, there arose in me Light.

Now so long, Bhikkhus, as my knowledge and my insight of these thrice-revolved twelvefold Noble Truths, in their essential nature, were not quite purified,—so long did I not profess to have attained Supreme Enlightenment in this world, together with the Devas, the Māras, the Brahmās, among the hosts of recluses and Brahmins, of devas, and mankind.

But so soon, Bhikkhus, as my knowledge and my insight of these thrice-revolved twelvefold Noble Truths, in their essential nature, were quite purified,—then, Bhikkhus, I declared that I have attained Supreme Enlightenment to the world and Devas, Māras and Brahmās, and with regard to the hosts of recluses and brahmins, of devas and mankind.

And now Knowledge and Insight have arisen in me, so that I know, “Sure is my heart’s release. This is my last birth. There is no more becoming for me.”

This First Sermon has been elaborated and the development of the Sangha and the necessity to make all things clear, gave rise to many Sermons, to the Vinaya Rules and to the philosophical Teaching, the Abhidhamma.

Nevertheless, the First Sermon remains as the very foundation, a clarion call to all ‘whose eyes are but lightly covered with dust’ to penetrate the veil of illusion.

In recognition of this and of the beginning of the Great Teaching, we celebrate today as ‘Dhammacakka Day’.

The Sermon is chanted, laymen make visits to Pagodas and Monasteries and offer lighted candles and incense and flowers in respectful homage and gratitude for the Teaching and make offerings to the monks.

The Bhikkhus dedicate themselves anew to their great work of practising the steps of the Way, of undertaking with new resolve the strict Discipline, of Learning and of Teaching and of Practising Vipassanā-bhāvanā the Right Contemplation which leads to Insight and Enlightenment.

All orient their minds once again to the Great Teaching and its great purpose, utter and final release from this weary round of rebirth.

As one downsmitten by impending sword,
As one whose hair and turban are aflame,
So let the brother, mindful and alert,
Go forth, leaving soul-fallacy behind.

Samyutta Nikāya.

MUNDANE VERSUS SUPRAMUNDANE KNOWLEDGE

U Khin Moun

To appreciate the true meaning of the super-science of Gotama Buddha it is essential as a first step to realise the difference between mundane and supramundane knowledge. We shall therefore begin with the study of the methods used for the acquirement of mundane knowledge up to the highest stage attainable by worldly persons. If we take as an example, ordinary water that is known to everybody, we usually find it in two different states, i.e., in the form of ice when it is very cold and in the form of liquid if it is not very cold. We can see, smell, taste and touch the solid ice and the liquid water. This is the primary state of our mundane knowledge. But those who are not given the opportunity to learn elementary science will hesitate to believe that water is present around our bodies in the form of moisture, because they cannot see, taste, smell, or touch it, although this phenomenon is fully understood as a fact even by children, when they have studied primary science.

This is how we acquire our worldly knowledge step by step till we attain the highest possible stage. We are born with deep-seated ignorance that has to be dispelled gradually by acquiring right knowledge. We are also born with eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind, and from childhood till death we gain experience and learn to know things external to us with the help of these sense organs.

But I would like to mention that the object of this simple illustration is not only to show the gradual acquirement of worldly knowledge but also to point out the nature of our mental inertia or resistance or tendency to refuse to believe the truths which we have not yet

understood. It is the human weakness that arises from inherent ignorance. This weakness was displayed more glaringly during our primitive stage when our forefathers went to the extent of killing deep thinkers for telling truths which they could not understand. Another peculiar nature of this weakness is its tendency to believe untruths as demonstrated by our superstitious beliefs before the development of scientific knowledge. Ignorance has an affinity for untruths. Due to this inherent mental resistance we usually find it a hard task to force ourselves to believe the truths that lie beyond the range of our sense perceptions. If we were deprived of facilities for the development of our faculty of understanding, we should be no better than our forefathers who killed the deep thinkers for revealing truths.

Nevertheless, as a result of the concerted efforts of scientists, many truths that cannot be detected by our sense organs have been discovered. Let us take for instance the discovery of electronic radiations. Their existence was unknown when first experiments were carried out. People would have ridiculed James Maxwell and Heinrich Hertz, if they had failed to find the hidden phenomena of electromagnetic waves thus substantiating their assertions. But we now find that we are surrounded on all sides by powerful electronic waves radiated from a large number of wireless transmitting stations all over the world. In fact we cannot see, hear, smell, taste or touch them. Yet we are unable to refuse to believe the truth of their existence around our bodies because we are using them in various ways. Besides them we always have around our bodies similar natural electronic particles called

cosmic radiations. We never knew that they were in existence until the scientists had gone out of the ordinary way of thinking and taken a bold step to explore this hidden phenomenon, which has been in existence since the time of our forefathers.

These discoveries are possible because of the endeavours of the deep thinkers who have the courage to give up their preconceived notions born of narrow-mindedness. They have implicit faith in the existence of hidden phenomena, which we have not yet found.

To shut our eyes to the possibilities of unknown phenomena would be to impoverish the possibilities of human knowledge. If we rest content with our limited knowledge our advance will be at a standstill. Progress is impossible if we have closed minds. These are known facts that need no further elaboration. But they are simple, relevant facts that will help us to fully realise the importance of dispelling our narrow views and preconceived notions for a thorough realisation of the wide scope of supra-mundane knowledge. Besides that there is another more important fact that should be fully realised before we begin with the study of the Buddha-Dhamma, i.e., the limitation of mundane knowledge. If we just take one obvious fact as the basis of our study, we are in a position to judge correctly the depth of our mundane knowledge, without much difficulty. This basic fact is that all of us including the scientists and the philosophers are unavoidably stuck with gravitational force to this mass of floating earth, which is only a small particle in the scheme of the universe. We shall therefore find that this basic fact alone can give us sufficient evidence to realise that our knowledge, which we have acquired with the help of our sense organs is limited to this earth only. We can now come to a safe

conclusion that our mundane knowledge cannot go beyond this limit. No doubt our scientists with the help of their powerful telescopes are able to form a rough idea of the stars and planets, which they can know only as visual phenomena. But this is all they can do so far as the things that lie beyond our earth are concerned. None of them has reached as yet the nearest planet although they are now planning to build space ships to go there. Even if they can go there, their knowledge about the rest of the universe will not in any way be improved appreciably, because they tell us that the countless numbers of distant stars are so far from us that it will take them thousands of years to reach there even if they travel with a speed of about 186,000 miles per second.

But we know for a fact that it is utterly impossible for our physical bodies to travel with all our flesh, blood, bones, brains and sinews intact with a speed of about 186,000 miles per second. Even if we could travel with such fantastic speed it would take thousands of years to reach one of the distant stars. Furthermore we know that the size of these stars is so great that thousands of years would have to be spent to survey one star completely. It is now clear that it is absolutely impossible for us to get first hand knowledge of the nature of millions of such stars in the universe by physical means. We can now definitely say that the mastery over physical force cannot by any means help us to understand completely the phenomena of the wide universe in which our earth is floating like a very fine dust-particle compared to the enormous size of galaxies which are countless in number.

Therefore our scientists and the philosophers, the foremost leaders of thought and learning, will have to admit that their knowledge about the things in the universe is very insignificant or almost

nil. Even then the sum total of our knowledge about the phenomena which are within our reach is not direct or real or absolute as it is based on an “awareness” of differential sensory stimuli.

Now after having dispelled our preconceived notions and prejudices let us go ahead and study the supra-mundane knowledge of Gotama Buddha. We shall find that if an insignificant event such as the drop of an apple from an apple tree on to the ground could become a subject of interest to a brilliant genius like Newton to visualise this common natural physical happening as a serious subject that needed profound study and to eventually lay the foundation stones for building the mighty physical science, it is no wonder that the ever present ills of life such as old age, sickness and death should become a subject of interest to an extraordinarily gifted genius like prince Siddhattha. Just as the fall of an apple from a higher to a lower place happened to be the main cause for the appearance of the magnificent intellectual edifice in the form of modern physical science, so also the sight of the ordinary ills of human beings was the main cause for the discovery of supramundane knowledge by prince Siddhattha. The only difference between modern science and the super-science of Gotama Buddha is that the former is the beginning whereas the latter is the end.

At the age of 29 he made a really manly determination that he would by all means search for the required solution to the problems of life. He underwent an intensive course of training for 6 years under different teachers and finding that pure reason, logical thinking, philosophic imagination, ordinary meditations, asceticism and other known methods could not help him to understand the true nature of life, he finally resorted to concentration of mind to one-pointedness with strong

determination that he would keep on concentrating until he found the solutions he wanted. At last he succeeded in harnessing and developing his potential psychic powers to the highest stage by meditation and attained his unique supramundane knowledge. He then discovered the phenomena of life completely. In the light of His supramundane knowledge or insight or enlightenment He found the physical and psychical phenomena as they really are. We can get an idea of His mighty supramundane knowledge if we closely study His super-psychology that deals completely with mental process.

He revealed all His various basic discoveries in His discourses which were delivered by Him for 45 years. He left for us a complete theoretical and practical course for the attainment of supramundane knowledge. He did not keep back any “secret doctrines” for some favoured initiate. In fact His main object of acquiring the highest grade of supramundane knowledge was not only for His good but also for the good of all.

Before the attainment of supramundane knowledge, prince Siddhattha used his developed psychic powers in the same way as we are using our artificially generated electronic waves in radio communications. His developed psychic powers or energised mental forces radiated powerful thought-waves all over the universe and with the help of these energised thought-waves he could find all living beings in various forms of existence. He found that there are 31 planes of life, some living beings with physical bodies only and some with mental process only. He discovered an astounding phenomenon governing these celestial beings, i.e., their life term is very long but they are also subject to the natural process of death like human and other living beings. He then realised the

extent of the nature of death which is inherent even in the god-like beings in the higher celestial worlds. This fresh knowledge about the extent of death gave an added encouragement to find out all the more the needed remedy to cure this disease of death. But the developed or energised psychic powers could not help him to find the method to stop the process of life in 31 planes of existence.

He discovered it only when He attained His unique supramundane knowledge, which is higher than the energised psychic powers. Supramundane knowledge or insight or enlightenment is the direct penetrative realisation of the phenomenon of life by actual personal experience. Prince Siddhattha discovered the physical and the psychical phenomena and their causal relations. He also discovered that the process of arising and vanishing of physical and psychical phenomena momentarily and causally is the main cause for the manifestations of the universe in various forms of existence.

When he saw the things as they really are, he discovered the hindrances and delusions creating the problems of life and when these hindrances and delusions disappeared completely from him, he enjoyed transcendental happiness. He then had a new outlook on life. The deceptive world that we find through our sense perceptions had given way to Nibbāna of which He said 'No measuring is there of him who has disappeared, whereby one might know of him that he is not; when all qualities are removed, all modes of speech are removed also' (Sutta Nipāta 1076). That is to say, words cannot describe the unconditioned. So of this Nibbāna we can only say as the Buddha said, that it is Supreme Happiness, that it is everlasting, in the sense that it is outside time itself, and that it is unconditioned. It was this that was realised by the Buddhas and Arahats

of former times. Gotama Buddha therefore taught us that there are two kinds of happiness. The first one is mundane that is associated with sense desires, feelings, emotions, craving and grasping. Such happiness is only momentary and not real at all. It is only a gilded misery like the bait of the fishing hook. The other is the transcendental type that emerges on the realisation of the phenomena of life by a systematic course of Buddhist meditation. The momentary mundane happiness will be nothing compared with the transcendental type.

Now we are in position to study with open mind the nature of supramundane knowledge of Gotama Buddha. Since, however, we have not yet discovered by ourselves the wonders of potential psychic powers we may not be able fully to appreciate their possibilities. Nevertheless we can get an idea of them if we compare them with physical force latent in various material resources. We know that as a result of continuous and intensive research the hidden power of physical force was discovered, and through being able to control it by means of ingenious devices we can make good use of it in various ways to help us to live a better life. At the same time we all know the wonders of certain physical waves, which travel with a speed of about 186,000 miles per second. Like physical waves the thought-waves also travel but they travel with much higher speed. If we just think for a moment about a particular star our thought-waves reach there almost instantaneously although it will take thousands of years for the swiftest physical waves to travel that distance. The difference in speed between thought-waves and physical waves is immeasurable. But just like a blind, deaf and dumb person, the ordinary thought-waves radiated by undeveloped mental process have no power to get first-hand

knowledge of the particular star in question.

We shall now study the nature of energised thought-waves or psychic powers generated by developed mental process and if we take physical science as an analogy we can appreciate the possibilities of such hidden phenomena. It is a known fact that the advancement of physical science is greatly due to the discoveries of Maxwell, Faraday, and Einstein and it is also a known fact that at bottom of everything in electricity and radio is a field. When something occurs at one point in space because something else happened at another point with no visible means by which the “cause” can be related to the “effect” we say that the two events are connected by a field. This wonderful phenomenon, which is apparent in radio communications can help us to realise the possibilities of many things which we have not found as yet. As a matter of fact all of us have latent psychic powers and it is up to us to try and develop them by proper methods to realise their possibilities. Certain psychic powers manifest as intuition, that is attained by one who deeply concentrates his mind on a particular subject. Wonders of even a flash of such intuition will be appreciated by studying the biography of Albert Einstein, the foremost scientist, who shaped the course of scientific thought and research to an extent that nobody before his time could touch. He told us that he had discovered his theory of relativity in the light of intuition and not with the help of pure reason and logical thinking. That kind of intuition is somewhat akin to developed psychic powers. Just like physical waves, the thought waves also radiate in quanta of thought-moments with much higher frequency than that of physical waves. The Buddhist psychology teaches us that a trillion thought-moments arise and vanish

in a finger-snap or split-second whereas the frequency of physical quanta is stated to have been seventeen times slower than that of a thought moment. Like the physical field, the mental process also has a mental field and Gotama Buddha attained his psychic powers with the help of the mental field. We also know that telepathy or mental communication will not be possible if there is no mental field.

Psychologists are beginning to realise that all our activities including wonderful achievements by ourstanding personalities are the manifestations of nothing more than the mental process. Men who work with their heads and men who work with their hands must alike depend on their efficient mental process, which is, without any doubt, the driving force that keeps us going. The science that studies mental process is gradually gaining ground and is now recognized as an essential study connected with all human activities. Psychology has been so extensively applied in several institutions and organisations that “psychological effect” has become a common expression everywhere.

We are on the threshold of a new era, when psychic powers will be properly understood and extensively utilized effectively for the good of mankind and I would even venture to predict that side by side with the learned Buddhist scholars, our psychologists, scientists and the philosophers will have to play the part of the leaders of the forthcoming movement to usher in the new era.

To the psychologists and scientists, the Buddha Dhamma can give a reasoned morality and a reason for morality, and the necessary guidance to understand their findings and to help them to use these findings both efficiently and ethically, in the highest sense.

THE MESSAGE OF GOTAMA BUDDHA

U Ba Htu, B.J.S. (Retd.)

Gotama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, was born in the year 624 B.C. on the borders of what is now Nepal in Oudh Province.

In point of age, therefore, most other religious systems are young when compared with this venerable religion. After 25 centuries of its noble dispensation, Buddhism today surpasses in the number of its adherents and the area of its acceptance, any other form of religion.

In fact more than one-third of mankind daily repeat the formula 'I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha'. Forests of flowers are daily laid before the images of the Buddha and upon his stainless shrines by fervent devotees in exaltation of the sterling attributes of His Buddhahood, the attributes which He had perfected in millions of the past world Kappas.¹¹

The embryo Buddha had the necessary qualifications and accomplishments to attain Nibbāna millions of Kappas back when he was hermit Sumedha but, actuated solely by the desire to show light to humanity which was bound to the ever-revolving wheel of Samsāra, he took upon himself the vow to become a Buddha. Having voluntarily taken the awesome vow, the vow which could not be fulfilled by a feeble, vacillating mind, but only by a firm, resolute and a lofty one, he started building up the ten "Pāramitās" or Perfections and in the course of their fulfillment throughout the slow and tedious round of millions of World Kappas he inflicted upon himself terrible

austerities and there was no sacrifice that he did not make or suffering that he did not willingly undergo. Having gone through those vicissitudes for innumerable World Kappas, He attained Enlightenment, Supreme Knowledge and Wisdom and thus finally blossomed forth as the Omniscient Buddha incomparable in glory and unrivalled in wisdom. The past, present and future opened out before Him and there remained nothing hidden from His intuitional vision.

The Omniscient Buddha had shed all traces of Kilesas, i.e., moral filth and corruptions, and had thereby become immaculately clean in his thoughts, words and actions. Having thus purified his mind, he remained ever serene, composed and clear and imbued with the highest form of loving-kindness and compassion for all living creatures. In an enthusiastic outburst in praise of the Buddha an eminent scholar of Buddhism writes:— 'There was never an occasion where the Buddha flamed forth in anger, never an incident when an unkind word escaped his lips. He had vast tolerance for His kind. In short, throughout the canonical works of Buddhism there is no record of a single act or word by the Buddha which mars the perfect purity and tenderness of His mind.'

The Dhamma enunciated 2500 years ago by the Buddha has stood the test of time and up to this day it has naught to fear from the advance of science in any way. In matters where science still fumbles, the Buddha had declared 'Sabbe Saṅkhārā Aniccā', 'All compounded things both corporeal and incorporeal are impermanent.'

The first principle that life is impermanent is comprehensive in the

¹¹ Kappa An æon; a cycle; an inconceivably long space of time.

sense that it comprises both animate and inanimate objects. The Buddha says, 'In this phenomenal world nothing stays and everything moves incessantly towards disintegration and destruction and when the contributory causes for its existence are exhausted it entirely ceases to exist.' When an ardent disciple of the Buddha reaches that stage and sees that incessant changes are taking place in the "Dhātu" of mind and matter uncontrolled by any outside agency and that these Dhātu are simply affirming their intrinsic characteristics, then there arises in him a poise, a calmness, a serenity of mind which makes life all the more pleasant and refreshing.

The second principle that life is suffering is apparent only to a person who is not content with the superficialities of life but delves deep beyond the surface of things in general. It becomes clear to such an ardent follower of the Buddha that the sum total of life consists of a round of pains and pleasures—ups and downs only, and that it is commonly the lot of man to suffer the aches of life, the stings of love and loss, the fiery fever and the agony of abominable diseases. This eternal law of Kamma may be compared to the fixed arithmetic of the universe. There is no 'Being' to show favour or frown to anyone; but good for good, and ill for ill is the inexorable rule of nature.

Therefore the Buddhist exerts himself to perform meritorious deeds in this life with the belief that goes to the core of his heart that there will be as good then as now. We come to the third doctrine of Buddhist selflessness or Non-Egoism. The Buddha says there is no self in life. We can prove the truth of this doctrine of selflessness by relating it to present day conditions. It must be admitted by all thinking men that the excessive display of self or egoism by individuals as well as by

nations is the root of the world's unhappiness today. To be highly egoistic is to be like a huge creature that has grown no eyes. It is blind to the needs and reality of other persons. Self or egoism does not exist long by itself. It gives birth to an undesirable twin known as "Pride and Prestige". We suppose that the world did not need two wars in one generation to become aware of the vacuity and the transitoriness of wealth, power, pride and prestige.

Two world wars taught the most secure and the most arrogant of us that if wealth, power, pride and prestige are all we care for, they can vanish in no time.

If we earnestly desire for peace, however urgent things may seem, a great mental renaissance must precede any effectual reorganization of the world. A change in the minds of men must be made by adopting the universal principle of *Mettā*, stainless unbounded loving-kindness and compassion for all living creatures as preached by the Buddha. In the all-pervading glow of the Buddha's compassion and loving-kindness, there are no distinctions of castes or creeds, high or low, pure or vulgar, friend or foe, but he sees them as being a combination of mind and matter only and as such they equally form objects of His great compassion. The Buddha's compassion is not confined to human beings only but extends to lower forms of life as well; thus the compassion of the Buddha knows no bounds. In short when practised to the right degree by any person, the potential qualities of *Mettā* rise above all natural and artificial barriers. The powers of *Mettā* are unique. It is found to be the most effective weapon to disarm hate, suspicion and distrust. Reactions to *Mettā* are immediate and far-flung. Its reciprocity among human beings is marvellous and it is common knowledge

that even the lower animals reciprocate the sentiment of our love and tenderness for them.

The Buddha enjoins us to send out thoughts of love not only to beings who are on amicable terms with us but also to our enemies as well, so that they may be free from animosity, from want, from cares and anxieties and that they may enjoy peace and happiness as we all wish to.

We must say that the world is suffering from a terrible malady. It is heaving for breath with the greatest effort and pain. It is time for the world physicians to decide if they will prescribe the right medicine for the burning fever to subside, or whether they will prescribe the usual time-honoured specific, the application of which this time would surely aggravate the disease and bring about a condition of raving madness. It is not yet too late, nor beyond the state of correction. Materialism with its multitudinous glamour and deceptions gives fuel to the ever-burning flames of greed, pride and delusion, in Pāli known as Taṇhā, Māṇa, Diṭṭhi. Ways and means should be sought for peaceful coexistence of the peoples of the world, and in so doing, the unfailing specific prescribed by Gotama Buddha, the greatest physician the world has ever known, should be adopted by all nations irrespective of their ideologies. This unfailing specific for curing human ills and averting disastrous upheavals is Mettā and Mettā alone. The Buddha practised it during his life time and through it, tamed and won over His enemies.

The old reformers of the middle ages dreamed of creating Utopias on earth, but history records that they lacked the wherewithal to translate their ideals into practice. Modern science has made tremendous advances in all fields of human activity and latest discoveries show that many human needs can be drawn from the air we breathe. With the rapid control of the elements by man it will not be long before he will be able to turn a desert into a garden. The twentieth century man takes pride in his civilization both cultural and material, and it would be a mere negation of that civilization if the nations were again to resort to arms as a means of solving the various outstanding issues amongst them, the use of which on two previous occasions has left the world with more intricate problems for solution. The wounds and scars of the two wars still remain, thus reminding the peoples of the nature of atrocities and the extent of damage done both physically and mentally. Wars should therefore be avoided under all circumstances. With the powerful weapon of science in hand, it appears to us that great and rare opportunities lie before the leaders of thought and leaders of nations to do a distinct and single service in the cause of humanity by adopting Gotama Buddha's doctrine of Mettā as their yardstick for solving problems in the highest level of international relations. Then they will have won not only immortal fame but also the fervent gratitude of millions of people of the world and there will surely be a long and lasting peace.

“I have preached the truth without making any distinction between exoteric and esoteric doctrine; for in respect of the truths, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher who keeps something back.”

Mahāparinibbāna Sutta

THE ESSENTIALS OF BUDDHISM

RIGHT VIEWS

THE NECESSITY OF RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

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

“For, my friend, in this very body, six feet in length, with its sense impressions and its thoughts and ideas, I do declare to you, are the world, and the origin of the world, the ceasing of the world, and likewise the Way that leads to the ceasing thereof.”

—(*Anguttara-Nikāya, Catukka-pathama Paṇṇāsaka, Rohita-vagga.*)

In the profound words of this declaration lie the essentials of Buddhist philosophy. A right approach and a right understanding is required to see the truth in and behind these essentials. Buddhism is a regulated way of life grounded on a sane and mellow philosophy which keeps itself within the bounds of reason and probability and which leaves certain subjects as unprofitable, since they are not conducive to the realisation of Nibbāna.

It insists on starting with Right Views. One should not get into the wrong train if one wants to reach one’s destination. If Truth—man’s final goal and good—be the destination, we should sit in the carriage of Morality. Then, through continuous progress from station to station our train should carry us to our destination. To all reasoning people life must appear as a journey, the end of which must depend on how we set about it, theoretically and practically.

If we regard Truth and Wisdom as our highest good and goal, then we ought to assume that our starting point is something opposite, that is to say, our starting point is ignorance. Yes, ignorance or non-appreciation of the Four Noble Truths.

Also, an unawareness of the need for following the Eightfold Noble Path. To get out of the mesh of Ignorance and misleading worldly knowledge, Right Views are essential. Of course, Right Views will be strangers to people without moral steadfastness, and Wisdom will not come to those who are not sobered down by morality and tranquilised by integration of thought or mind.

To taste the full flavour of Buddhist wisdom, one should convince oneself of Rebirth as a view which is not only within the bounds of probability and reason but also as a view right and sound.

As against Rebirth there is the belief in only a single terrestrial life without any repetition. Whether this belief flows from a belief in God as arbiter or in pure chance as an alternative, it is a case of arbitrariness. It offends the sense of evolution, and we can see no redeemable reason in either of the alternatives. All the great religions of the world preach of a life hereafter, either in bliss or in misery. But of a life “before”, these religions, except Buddhism, conveniently, fancifully and egoistically place it in the “breath” of a Creator. Buddhism takes a midway position and says there is for each life a kind of natural and formative beginning provided by a discernable cause, and also that there is a very long, but indefinable period of continuity of life in flux and change. It refuses to fix the duration in definite terms and says there have been countless worlds and existences for each life. Therein it sees life’s enormity of flux and change—an enormity spelling sorrow.

We shall not go into the undeniable fact that the tradition of life after life or rebirth formed a part of the long-standing beliefs of all ancient races until the one life theory somehow or other, was grafted upon the believers of Western theology or of Mechanical Materialism. The two great Eastern religions have nurtured the tradition of rebirth, which is as old as the human race itself. There is nothing unnatural or unscientific about rebirth. It is not a mere superstition with us but a belief founded on conviction. Our Arahats, whose minds can reach and abide in the higher planes of consciousness, can recall their many previous births distinctly. Our system of mental development which enables Arahats to visualize their rebirths is nearly a closed book to the Western mind which fights shy of giving up the mundane or of renouncing false and flattering views of “culture” and “progress.”

Buddhism stands or falls on the actuality of rebirth. In fact the very first utterance made by the Buddha at the supreme moment of gaining Enlightenment at the foot of the Bodhi tree was a paean of triumph over rebirth. Sir Edwin Arnold in “The Light of Asia” has expressed this memorable utterance in beautiful poetic language, which, owing to its ornamentation, is not a literal translation. But the main ingredients are there.

“Many a house of life
 Hath held me—seeking ever him who
 wrought
 These prisons of the senses, sorrow-
 fraught;
 Sore way my ceaseless strife!
 But now,
 Thou builder of the Tabernacle—Thou!
 I know Thee! Never shalt thou build
 again

These walls of pain,
 Nor raise the roof-trees of deceits, nor
 lay
 Fresh rafters on the clay;
 Broken Thy house is, and the ridge-
 pole split!
 Delusion fashioned it!
 Safe pass I thence—deliverance to
 obtain.”

The Buddha’s discourse was to a group of five ascetic truth-seekers from whom He had parted some time before He had attained to Buddhahood. The first discourse was on the Four Noble Truths.

After expounding these truths the Buddha again declared His joy of deliverance from rebirth in these words:

“Thus the fruit of knowledge and vision
 arose in me;
 Unshakeable and sure is the deliverance
 of my mind;
 This is my last birth.
 There is no more Becoming for me”.

From these it is evident that rebirth and its cessation are the beginning and end of the Buddha’s teaching. Cessation from rebirth depends upon taking the Right View that life, by the very nature of its repetition is suffering. It also depends upon treading the Noble Eightfold Path towards mental equanimity, tranquility and the ultimate peace of no more birth.

Rebirth may take place in any one of thirty-one planes according to the quality and value of one’s previous existences, that is to say, on the quality of thoughts and deeds in the preceding series of persons’ life.

The following stanza from “Thera-gāthā” will be helpful to the understanding of the nature and course of rebirth in the various planes and the attendant joy felt by

an Arahāt on his release from the field of Becoming or Saṃsāra.

“Through countless ages I have been devoted to the body,
This is the last of them as this living conjunction,
The round of rebirth and death; there is now no more coming to be of it.
In the round of existence, I came to the hell-world.
Again and again I came to the realm of the shades,
In suffering born from the wombs of animals of various kinds I lived for long.
A man I became, too, very well pleased;
To the heaven world I came now and again;
To the form-worlds, to the formless worlds;
To the realm of neither perception nor non-perception;
All Becoming well seen as without substance, put together, unstable and changeable.
Having seen this complete Becoming of myself, heedful, I have attained Peace!”¹²

How strikingly the stanza brings out the truth that this universe subsists and maintains itself as a process of continuous Becoming. As each little atom is a miniature solar-system each life is also the mirror of the universe of Becoming. Such thought and insight may be staggering but that which is of the truth of nature must be holy.

The Buddhist’s fear of Becoming is the greater in degree as the greater grows his mature realisation of life’s tribulation in the ocean of Saṃsāra. Is such fear to be

lightly dismissed as pessimism? On the contrary it represents the most courageous facing of a staring and staggering truth. Equally courageous and high-minded is the optimistic conviction that one by one’s own effort, along the way pointed out by the Buddha, will be able to declare “there will be no more birth for me”. Well, this of course, is possible because, as the Arahāt in the closing lines of the above stanza has said:

All Becoming is well seen to be without substance, a putting together, which is unstable and changeable.

The Buddhist belief in the formation and existence of life on 31 planes should not be regarded as merely mythical or mystical. We are more and more frequently hearing talk of life on Mars and other planets in scientific circles. Physicists of the present day have been preoccupied with pursuing the atom, both in its theoretical and practical aspects, and they have now discovered, in addition to the electron and all its associates, what they call “the Ghost of the atom.” On the other hand, Buddhism has been pursuing the ‘mental’ atom, as it were at the expense of the ‘material’ atom for 2,500 years, and has thus attained the highest degree of knowledge of life and mind.

Take also into consideration the ancient Greek theory of the atom, slightly different from ours. For example, the teaching of Epicurus (341-270 B.C.) He taught that atoms in perpetual motion were always giving rise to new worlds and these were always tending towards dissolution and towards a series of creations. Epicurus did not accept the doctrine of inevitable fate and he did not also believe in divine intervention in the universe. What is remarkable is that he rejected fatalism (as we Buddhists do), while accepting the

¹² Psalms of the Brethren, P.T.S. edition.

atomic views of his predecessors. He was able to explain that fatalism (which he believed to be as deadly to man's true welfare as current superstition) was not a necessary consequence of his atomic theory. In the movements of the atoms he introduced a sudden change in direction which rendered their aggregation easier and thus the law of destiny was broken. This theory of the "free" action of electrons in certain cases (accepted in modern physics) is on a par—it must be emphasised—with our Buddhist Doctrine that the course of Kamma can be changed and broken.

Our Buddhist views and the almost contemporaneous views of the great Greek minds are not so crude as they may seem on a superficial examination and some of these ancient views show a remarkable similarity to the theories of a number of physicists and astronomers, as admitted by those who have made a comparative study of the subject.

More than one scientist has deplored the fact that the atomic theory of the ancients did not receive general acceptance. This was due to the influence of Aristotle, whose philosophy was largely responsible for influencing European thought for more than a thousand years, and whose dominance delayed the progress of science in many ways. The atom in fact remained almost forgotten in Europe until the 19th century when the theory came back to life, and the atomic theory, which now fixes our horizons, was placed on a sound basis. Much earlier than Epicurus, Democritus maintained that the atom was divisible; this squares with the splitting of the atom at the present day. Buddhism, in its turn, maintains that the atom is divisible until the atom is no more conceivable as atom but as a principle of Energy (Dhātu) expressing itself in the

form or guise of solid-heat-gas-liquid. These four "Dhātu" constituents are always present in every form of matter. This represents a difference of idiom between the ancient Buddhist and the modern view of matter.

Had not Aristotle shut out the atom from the European mind for so long and had Europe given study to the mental atomism of India a thousand years ago or earlier, the belief in rebirth on thirty-one planes might now be as strong in the West as in the East.

By way of an analogy I should like to point out how two eminent British scientists have been thinking and speaking of the universe in terms of forty-one shelves. This is what Professor Blackett, F.R.S., has to say about it in his talk about different worlds in continuation of the talk given by Sir William Bragg, O.M., F.R.S.

"Many speakers in this series of talks have referred to the admirable idea of the late Sir William Bragg of demonstrating the different orders of size in the world by means of a row of shelves, each shelf representing a magnitude of ten times smaller than the next above. It has been left to me in this talk to raise the question 'Is there a lowest shelf, or do the shelves continue downwards to smaller and smaller sizes indefinitely?' And if one asks this question, one can hardly avoid asking the closely related one 'Is there a top shelf or do the shelves go on upward, representing larger and larger things indefinitely?' No one is quite sure of the answer to these two questions, but I will risk being wrong by saying that there probably is both a top and a bottom shelf.

“What are the objects on the lowest shelf? You have already heard about most of them from Professor Cockroft and from Dr. Allibone. The fundamental particles—electrons, protons, neutrons—out of which the physical world around us is made, all seem to be rather less than one millionth of a millionth of a centimeter in size. They thus belong to the thirteenth shelf down. Still smaller particles may perhaps some day be discovered. But at the present time it looks as if the size of these electrons and protons is the smallest size that can exist at all. In some obscure way, when one gets down to the size of an electron, one has got down to the smallest size that has any meaning.

“Now comes the question of ‘How large is the Universe?’ The upper shelf (if it exists) can contain only one object, the largest object that it is possible to imagine, and that is the Universe itself! We are not sure how large the Universe is. But it is clearly larger than the distance of the farthest things we can see. Some nebulae, clusters of many millions of stars, have been proved to be about one hundred million light

years, that is, one hundred million million million centimeters distant from the earth. It is possible that the Universe is at least ten times larger than this.

“Hence we have twenty-seven shelves up, which with the thirteen down and the one in the middle makes forty-one shelves.”

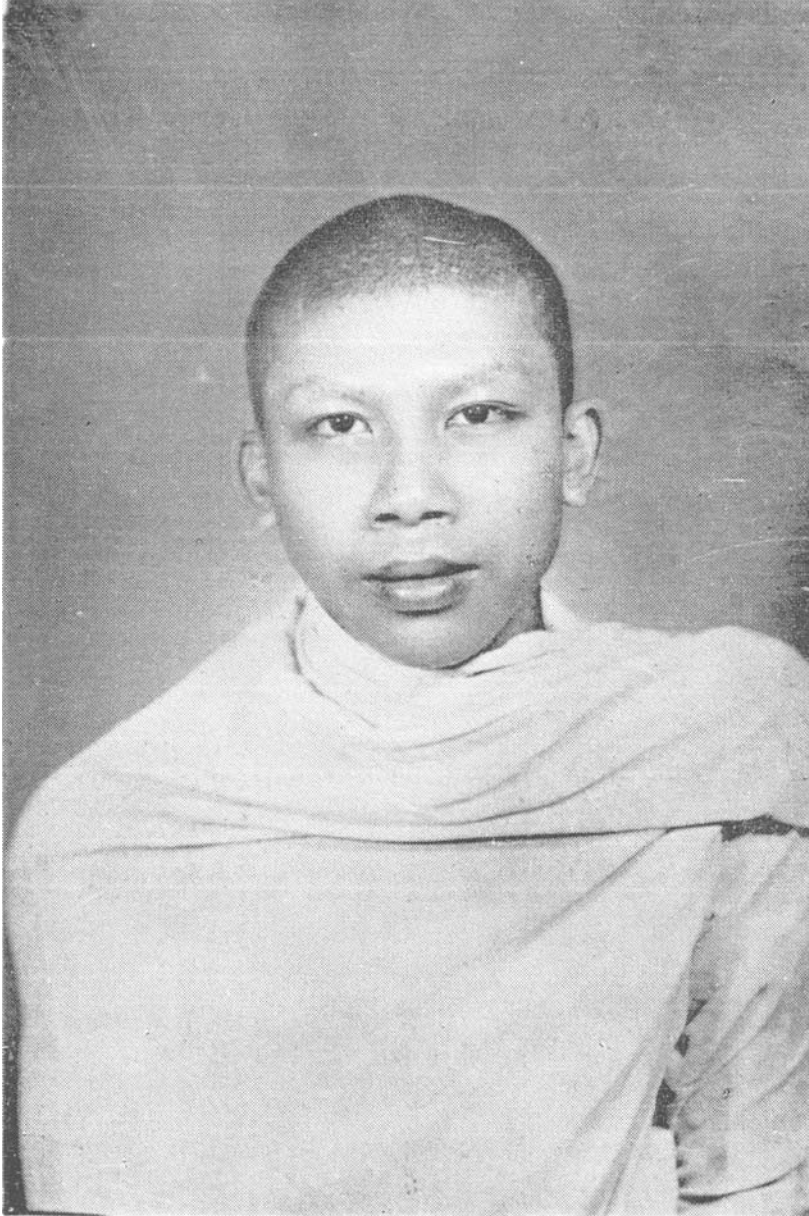
The lesson of the analogy is that the Buddhist view of life on thirty-one planes, according to grades of mind, is a discernable and accepted fact when mental science is developed in the Eastern way.

We feel that, at this stage, we should make a pause in our exposition of “Right Views”. We have discussed rebirth in the Universe of “Becoming” and shown that rebirth goes on in thirty-one planes. Rebirth has been presented as Sorrow and the cessation of rebirth as Bliss. The cessation of rebirth depends upon the right understanding of the Four Noble Truths which become clearer and clearer as we make the right effort to tread the Eightfold Noble Path until it becomes complete realisation. A clear understanding of Kamma and the causal laws of origination of birth will comprise, with other Right Views, the Essentials of Buddhism.

‘Again, Vāseṭṭha, if this river Akiravatī were full of water even to the brim, and overflowing. And a man with business on the other side, bound for the other side, making for the other side, should come up, and want to cross over. And he, standing on this bank, should invoke the further bank, and say, “Come hither, O further bank! come over to this side!”

‘Now what think you, Vāseṭṭha? Would the further bank of the river Akiravati, by reason of that man’s invoking and praying and hoping and praising, come over to this side?’

Tevijja Suttanta.



Bhikkhu Preah Korou Viriyamuni (Thach-Prang) Indapañño.

NOTES AND NEWS

Buddhism in Cambodia

Bhikkhu Preah Korou Viriyamuni (Thach-Prang) Indappañño.

Of all the countries of Asia where Buddhism flourishes, Cambodia is one of the most prominent. Though the country is small and the population is only a few millions, Cambodia has a very well-organised Sangha (Order or Monks).

Watered by the river Mekong which flows right through the country, Cambodia is bounded on the North and West by Thailand and on the Southwest by the Gulf of Siam. Phnom-Penh, the capital city and seat of the Royal Government, has a population of about five hundred thousand. As most of the countries of Asia, it is an agricultural country, and its chief exports are rice, timber, cotton and dried fish.

The Sangha of Cambodia is in two Nikāyas (sections which both follow the pristine Buddhism of the Pāli Canon) namely, Mahānikāya¹³ and Dhammayutta Nikāya. In the former Nikāya there are more than two thousand six hundred monasteries whereas in the latter there are only about ninety.

According to the latest census there are more than eighty thousand bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras in the country. The Dhammayutta Nikāya was introduced from Thailand, and this body consists of about two thousand bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras. The Mahānikāya claims to be more advanced in Pariyatti Sāsana (the learning of the Doctrine).

All the bhikkhus and sāmaṇeras in the Mahānikāya are under the leadership of

His Holiness Samdach Preah Mahā-Sumedhādhipati (C.N.) Jotaññāno, the Sangharājā of Cambodia, who presides over the huge temple of “Wat Unnalom” in the capital city. Although His Holiness is now more than seventy years old, he devotes a great deal of his time every day to his duties pertaining to the Sāsana. He has been thrice to Burma to participate in the deliberations of the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā which was held at the great sacred cave in Rangoon from May 1954 to May 1956 C.E. In appreciation of his valuable contributions towards the Sangāyanā in particular and to the Sāsana in general, the Government of the Union of Burma conferred on him the title of “Abhidhaja-mahāraṭṭhaguru”, the highest ecclesiastical title in Burma, in May of this year.

Each monastery in Cambodia has its own Dhammavinaya and Pāli classes. As do all devout Buddhists, Cambodians visit the temples on Uposatha (Fast) Days to take the Precepts and listen to discourses on the Dhamma.

CHURCH AND STATE

It is necessary for every layman to undergo a training in the study of the Vinaya Rules, for at least three or four months before taking ordination, and any layman who seeks ordination either as a sāmaṇera or bhikkhu must have a testimonial from a Government official that he bears a good character. In Cambodia it is not possible for anyone who has committed a serious crime to enter the Sangha. After taking the ordination, a new bhikkhu is given by his preceptor an identity card or certificate

¹³ Not to be confused with the so-called ‘Mahāyāna Buddhism’.

which bears the name of his preceptor, the candidate's name in the Order, and the time, date and place of his ordination. It is the duty of every bhikkhu or sāmaṇera to carry this card with him wherever he goes. If a bhikkhu is found to be doing something that should not be done by him, a policeman asks for his card and interrogates him. He is then, in the case of a minor misdemeanour, sent to his preceptor who admonishes him to refrain from doing anything that is detrimental to the sāsaṇa in the future. For these reasons an immoral bhikkhu or sāmaṇera is almost unheard of in Cambodia.

Whenever bhikkhus or sāmaṇeras move about they always wear their robes properly. They are never to be found smoking in the streets or in public. It is very rare that one comes across a bhikkhu who roams about the town buying things or visiting football matches, cinemas or theatre houses. Bhikkhus in Cambodia devote a great deal of their time to the study and practice of the Dhamma, for they realise they have entered the Order for this and no other purpose. A strong public opinion also acts as a deterrent to those who might break the Vinaya Rules.

In every province or district there is a Mahāthera who is an authority on the Vinaya rules. If any dispute arises between bhikkhus or monasteries, this Mahāthera usually acts as an arbitrator. If the dispute is beyond his power to settle, he forwards the case to the Minister of Religious Affairs who has a number of competent and learned Mahātheras to assist him in such matters. The case goes before the Sangharājā only when all the previous attempts at settlement fail.

At present there are over 300 Pāli Elementary Schools in Cambodia. The

course is for three years and is divided as follows:—

1st year: Pāli Grammar.

2nd year: Translations of Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā (Pubbabhāga, Dutiyabhāga, Tatiyabhāga and Catutthabhāga).

3rd year: Translations of Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā (Pañcamabhāga, Chatthamabhāga, Sattamabhāga and Atthamabhāga).

Practice in delivering discourses on the Dhamma in Cambodian.

Practice in relating stories from the Dhammapada Commentary, Vinaya, Dictation in Cambodian, Arithmetic.

The Graduate of a Pāli Elementary School is offered the title of “Mahā Pariyatti Pathamavijjā” by the Royal Government of Cambodia.

The Pāli Superior School, the highest seat of Buddhist learning in Cambodia, is situated close to the Royal Palace in the heart of Phnom-Penh. The curriculum is as follows:—

1st year: Translation of Mangalattā-dīpanī (4 volumes), Exercises in speaking Pāli Grammar, French, Arithmetic and Sanskrit.

2nd year: Translation of Visuddhimagga (Pathamabhāga and Dutiyabhāga), History, Geography, Science, Essay writing in Pāli, Pāli Grammar, Geometry, Arithmetic, Sanskrit, Practice in speaking Pāli and French.

3rd year: Translation of Visuddhimagga (Tatiyabhāga), History, Science, Geography, Geometry, Arithmetic, French, Written essays on Pāli, Sanskrit.

4th year: Translation of Kaṅkhāvitaranī, Explanation of Vinaya, Pātimokkha, Abhidhamma, French, Sanskrit, Arithmetic, History, Geometry, Geography, Science, Hygiene, Written and oral exercises in Pāli.

A bhikkhu-student after completing his four years' course at this Institution is awarded the title of "Mahā Uttamavijjā." More than one thousand bhikkhus have graduated from the time of its inception in 1933. There are about 600 bhikkhu-students at present. There are also the Royal Library and the Buddhist Institute which were established in 1925 and 1930 respectively. Soon after the establishment of these Institutions a commission composed of the most eminent Mahātheras

in the country was formed to compare the Tipiṭaka in existence with that of other countries and revise the whole collection of the Pāli Canon. The Commission was also responsible for translating the Tipiṭaka into Cambodian so that people who did not know Pāli might have an opportunity to study the Dhamma.

Now that Cambodia is able to decide her own destiny there is every reason to believe that the Sāsana will prosper much more than ever before in this scientific age when men no longer profess a faith blindly but take refuge in it only after full reasoning and verification, since the Buddha Dhamma is the only Teaching that allows and encourages independent thinking

BURMESE BUDDHIST MISSION TO JAPAN

Many Japanese Buddhists were invited to Burma as observers to the Opening Ceremonies of the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā in May 1954 and in December of the same year when the Third Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists was held in Rangoon. Some of them, on observing that Buddhism as it is practised in Burma and other Theravādin countries is in accordance with the Buddha's Word, had the idea that it would be good to introduce the pristine teaching to Japan. As a consequence a mission consisting of 12 young men and a lady was sent to Burma by the Japan Buddhist Federation in May 1955 to study and practise the Dhamma thoroughly. Soon after their arrival the Union Buddha Sāsana Council sponsored the ordination of the youths as sāmañeras and later on as Bhikkhus. Meanwhile a Society known as "The Japan Buddha Sāsana Society" was formed with its headquarters at Tokyo for the purpose of

introducing and firmly establishing the pure teaching, Theravāda, in Japan.

This Society has such eminent Buddhists as Dr. Benkyo Shiio, President of the Taisho University, Tokyo, and Vice-president of the Japan Buddhist Federation; Dr. Tokani Sumi of the Aichi University, Nagoya; Mrs. Myosin Iisuka, President of the Kashiwa Kai; and Dr. Chitoku Morikawa, President of the Ryukoku University, as its members.

The Society asked for the co-operation and collaboration of the Union Buddha Sāsana Council in its projects. At the invitation of the Society Ven. U Thittila and Ven. U Nyanuttara were requested by the Council to go on a Dhammadūta tour to Japan in April-May 1956. Reports were received from Japan that the lectures given by these Mahātheras were very much appreciated. It was then planned to establish Dhammadūta Centres in

Matsushima, Moji and Ise-shima and in other places later. Ten Burmese Dhammācariya Bhikkhus then underwent an intensive training at the Dhammadūta College, Rangoon, in the language, history and culture of Japan to be able to go on a mission and reside at the new Dhammadūta Centres in Japan.

Bhikkhu Visuddhasaya (formerly Shinya Uchida) is a most active member of the Japan Buddha Sāsana Society.

As requested by the Society in Japan, the Council decided to bear the expenses for the construction of three Pagodas (similar in shape to the World Peace Pagoda at Rangoon) at the Dhammadūta Centres in Japan.

Second Japanese Students' Mission

For the purpose of propagating orthodox Buddhism in Japan, a batch of 17 Japanese students came to Burma in 1957 to study and practise the Buddha-Dhamma here. They have recently been ordained as sāmaṇeras and will soon be given the Higher Ordination as Bhikkhus. They are at present prosecuting their studies in Burmese and in Buddhist literature at the Japanese Dhammadūta Centre in the Jambūdīpa Hostel, near the World Peace Pagoda.

The Union Buddha Sāsana Council decided to donate K 6,00,000/—towards the construction of three Pagodas in Japan, and to depute a Dhammadūta Mission to Japan.

Accordingly a Burmese Buddhist Dhammadūta Mission was sent to Japan in June 1957. The Mission comprised the following Mahātheras:—

- (1) Ven. U Khemācāra, Union Ovād' ācariya, Veḷuvam Monastery, Bahan

Quarter, Rangoon (President of the Mission)

- (2) Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita U Pandita (Anisakhan Sayadaw)
- (3) Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita U Sobhana (Mahāsi Sayadaw)
- (4) Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita U Visuddha, Sangha Supreme Council, Kāba Aye, Rangoon (Secretary to the Mission)
- (5) Ven. U Sobbita (Kosaung Sayadaw) of Myingyan
- (6) Ven. U Kheminda, Dhammācariva, one of the Japanese Dhammadūta personnel.

The Mission left Rangoon on the 11th June 1957 and was accompanied by Justice Thado Maha Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon and Wunnakyawhtin U Saing Gyaw, an Executive Officer of the Union Buddha Sāsana Council. The Mission safely arrived at Tokyo the same evening, and at the airport was greeted by the Mayor of Moji, Mayor of Kyoto, various Buddhist organisations and lay devotees. At the airport the venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw administered the Five Precepts to the audience and the Hon'ble Justice Thado Maha Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon read a Message from the Union Buddha Sāsana Council. While at Tokyo the Mission was busy in receiving guests and discussing with them various problems relating to the propagation of Theravāda Buddhism in Japan.

The Mission visited Moji on the 13th June and was received warmly at the City Hall by the Mayor and the people of Moji. At the meeting, the mayor delivered an address of welcome and in reply the Hon'ble U Chan Htoon spoke of the Dhammadūta work during the past seven

years and of the building of a Pagoda and the consecration of a *Sīmā* (Ordination Hall) at Moji. The venerable Mahāsi Sayadaw gave the Five Precepts to the audience and the Mahātheras chanted Mangala Sutta, Mettā Sutta and Pubbaṅga Sutta. A Press Conference was held on the same day and the Mission went to the site where the Pagoda was to be constructed at Moji.

On the 14th June a religious ceremony was held at the site where a Pagoda is to be constructed. There the Mayor of Moji delivered an address wherein he mentioned that the site for the construction of the pagoda and the *sīmā* are offered to the Society by the Government, and then dug the first spadeful of sand as a ceremony. Mr. Ichihara, Vice- President of the Society sprinkled some grains of sand which were brought from the bed of the Irrawaddy near Sagaing in Burma. The representative of the Governor of Moji delivered an address of welcome and after that Ven. U Visuddha and the Hon'ble U Chan Htoon dug a spadeful of sand from the pagoda site. Thado Mahā Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon told the audience that very soon there will be seen a beautifully built Pagoda just like that of the World Peace Pagoda in Rangoon, and that people from all parts of the world will have an opportunity to pay homage to the Pagoda thus promoting the Buddha Sāsana. Then school girls recited religious verses and after setting 100 pigeons free, the ceremony came to a close.

At 9 a.m. on the same day, the six Mahātheras consecrated the site for the building of a *sīmā* according to the Vinaya rules.

Buddhist lectures

The Mission went to the Meeting Hall of the Mainichi Newspaper. The Editor-in-

chief gave an address of welcome. Then Mr. Ichihara introduced the members of the Mission to the staff of the Press. The Mayor of Moji and Ven. Visuddhasaya (Japanese monk) described the holding of the Six Great Buddhist Councils and the Dhammadūta projects in Japan. The Mahātheras also told how the Buddha-Sāsana can flourish in Japan with the co-operation and collaboration of the Theravāda Buddhists from Burma. U Chan Htoon then delivered a speech in English wherein he stated that the Teaching of the Buddha is able to bestow Peace on the people of the world, and that the Japanese people who are scientifically advanced, should follow the Buddha's Teaching and work for the prosperity of the Buddha Sāsana.

The Mission visited Kyoto on the 22nd where they were met by the Mayor of Kyoto and representatives from various religious organisations. The Mayor of Kyoto delivered an address of Welcome. U Chan Htoon in his reply stated the purpose of the Mission and what the projects are for the propagation of orthodox Buddhism in Japan. A Press Conference was held where U Chan Htoon outlined the programme and the purpose of the Mission and also stated that a Pagoda and a *sīmā* will be constructed in Kyoto under the auspices of the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council.

On the 23rd June the Mission went to Yawata by car and then went up the hill where another Dhammadūta Centre is to be established. There a religious ceremony was initiated with the lighting of candles and a offering of flowers to the Buddha. Ven. U Visuddhasaya (Japanese monk) spoke at length about the Dhammadūta works in Japan. Justice Thado Maha Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon also stated that the site chosen for the Dhammadūta Centre is

an auspicious one and that there are signs indicating that Theravāda, the pure Buddhism, will flourish in Japan. Then the Mission and the lay devotees went up the hill to the *sīmā* site which is about 2 furlongs away from the site on which another World Peace Pagoda is to be constructed in Japan.

The Mahātheras then consecrated the site and the ceremony came to a close at about 4 p.m.

The Mission then visited many other important cities and towns in Japan, met the Heads of various religious Sects, and discussed with many lay devotees the matters relating to the propagation of Buddhism in Japan. The Mission also visited many places of historic and religious interest and returned to Burma on the 2nd of July.

NEW BUDDHIST SOCIETY IN MALAYA

The University of Malaya Buddhist Society Dunearn Road Hostel, Singapore-3.

The University of Malaya Buddhist Society was formed on the 24th, November 1956 by a group of students of the University of Malaya, its aims being:—

1. to promote and propagate Buddhism, and to foster and develop the qualities of Truth, Loving-Kindness and Compassion, in accordance with the practice and teachings of Buddhism;
2. to encourage friendship and understanding among members irrespective of race and religion;

3. to sponsor debates, discussion groups, and talks by members and guest-speakers, for the above purposes;
4. to promote active participation in charitable and welfare work.

The response to the Society was encouraging and it was interesting to note that the composition of the membership very clearly reflected the religious tolerance and the cosmopolitan nature of our population for among the members were Buddhist students of many races, and non-Buddhist students of other religions such as Christianity and Islam.

VIET-NAM THERAVĀDIN BUDDHIST ASSOCIATION

As the result of hard labour for several years and with the ardent support of the devotees, the Vietnamese Theravādin group was able to found an Association under the name of Viet-Nam Theravādin Buddhist Association, which has also been recognised by the Vietnamese Government. The Association is located at Jetavana Vihāra, 610, Phan-Dinh-Phung, Saigon.

The aims and objects of the Association are to open branches all over Viet-Nam and to propagate the Buddha-Dhamma all over the country.

The following is the tentative programme of work drawn by the Association for the propagation of the Buddha-Dhamma in Viet-Nam:—

- Ordination of Bhikkhus and Sāmaṇeras,
- Translation of Pāli Suttas into Vietnamese,

Appointment of lay-instructors,
Appointment of Buddhist Youth Organisation,
Charity and mutual help etc.

A school for Sāmaṇeras and Bhikkhus has recently been established. Although the funds of the Association are somewhat meagre to subsidise the teachers and the pupils at present, it is hoped to be able to subsidise them in the future, as the Buddha-Dhamma is propagated and the number of pupils increases.

Some Suttas have already been translated into Vietnamese and they will be given free of charge to the new entrants. Young Buddhists are forming a convenient frame, and they are making periodical contributions to social organisations. The

Association is now arranging to provide a school building for the young people in the suburbs of Saigon.

This undertaking has been carried out with voluntary contributions on the part of the members who are mostly of the poorer class. Thanks to their activities, Theravāda Buddhism has become known and appreciated in Viet-Nam over the last two years, and also thanks to the moral support received from the Elders of foreign countries, particularly the Union of Burma, Ceylon and Thailand, the vital elements of our group have been developed.

May the Buddha-Dhamma endure for a great length of time!



Members of Vietnamese Theravāda Buddhist Association, Saigon. M. Nguyen van Hieu the ardent promoter of the Association is seen in the middle.

JAPANESE YOUTHS ORDAINED AS BUDDHIST NOVICES

The Sacred Cave near the World Peace Pagoda at Yegu, Rangoon, was the venue of a special religious ceremony on August 4, when 17 Japanese were ordained as Buddhist Novices in the presence of a distinguished gathering.

These 17 young Japanese came to Burma to be trained as Dhamadūtas, Buddhist Missionaries, in order to

propagate orthodox Buddhism in Japan, under a project jointly arranged by the Japan Buddha Sāsana Association and the Union Buddha Sāsana Council.

The initiation ceremony was performed by Venerable Sayadaws and witnessed by a large gathering of lay people including Hon'ble Prime Minister U Nu and other Cabinet Ministers.



Seventeen Japanese youths seen with Ovād'āzariya Sayadaws after their ordination as Buddhist Novices.

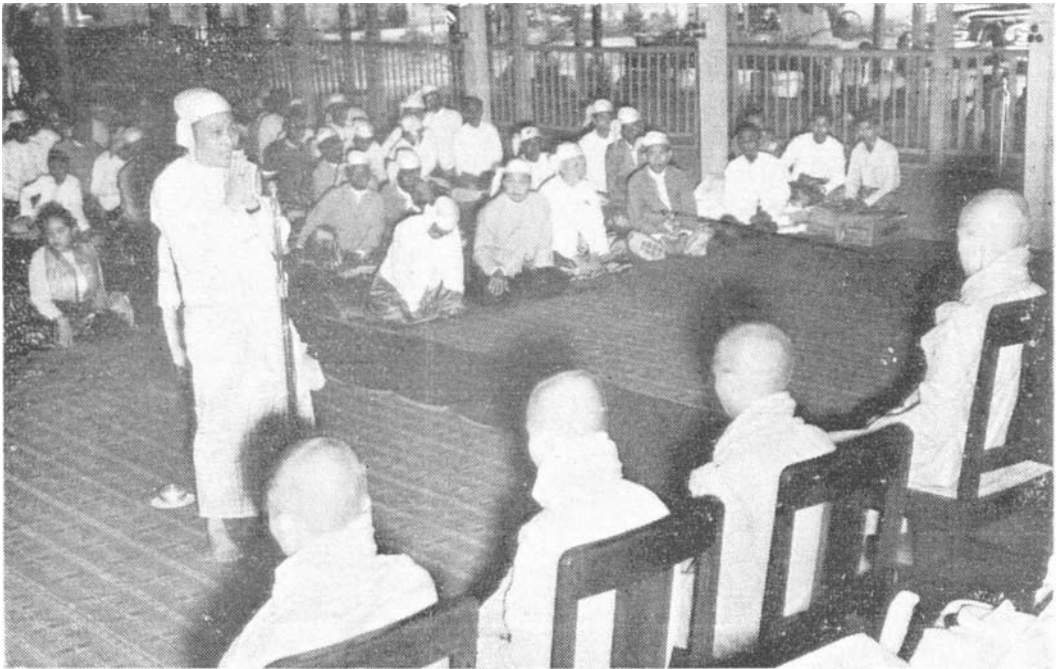
BUDDHIST NOVICES HONOURED

On the morning of August 10, the Hon'ble Prime Minister, U Nu, presented certificates and other religious gifts to 10 Buddhist Novices who passed with distinction the Third Annual Sāmaṇeras' Examination, sponsored in Rangoon by a Committee headed by the Prime Minister.

The ceremony, which was held in the reception pandal in the compound of the Prime Minister's residence, was attended by State Ovād'ācariya Sayadaws including 16 Japanese monks, who were initiated into the Theravāda Buddhist Order on August 4, the Minister for Religious Affairs U Ba Saw and other Cabinet

Ministers, the Mayor of Rangoon and representatives of Buddhist Organisations in the city.

In an address to the Sangha, U Nu said the ceremonial presentation of certificates and gifts to brilliant novices was aimed at encouraging the appearance of more and more such distinguished monks in the country. In future years, he added, such ceremonies would be held on a much more elaborate scale than this. The Government and the Buddhist public, he said, were now doing everything to promote the welfare of the Sangha in independent Burma.



The Hon'ble Premier U Nu delivering an address at the ceremony of presentation of certificates and other religious gifts to ten Buddhist Novices who passed with distinction the Third Annual Sāmaṇeras Examination.

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