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July 1959 C.E.



THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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Translated by the Department of Pāli, University of Rangoon

“WHAT LEADS THEM ON THEY KNOW NOT”

by Myanaung U Tin

(Broadcast from Burma Broadcasting Service on 26th May 1959)

Fourteen years ago we saw the end of the Second World War. Today we are faced with a grave situation, a situation that might, sooner or later, lead to a global conflict, although there is a general awareness that it could mean destruction of civilization.

There are dissensions and conflicts all over the world. What is all this about? Why can't people live in peace, with freedom and happiness? In the *Tika* section of the *Anguttara Nikāya*.¹ the Buddha teaches us that because “people are ablaze with unlawful lusts, overwhelmed by depraved longings and obsessed by wrong doctrines,” they encounter three traditional destroyers: war, famine and pestilence.

It is said that the feudal social structure in a general sense, gave way to a capitalist society two hundred years ago. The capitalist system is, in turn, yielding place to yet another form of society, which is described by some people as socialist. It seems clear that we are standing on the intersecting lines between two worlds, one dying and another struggling to be born. This birth might take place in our life-time. No matter what its name is, the new society will then grow, decline and fall. The law of change operates ever, and nothing lasts forever. Whatever society they belong to, so long as “people are ablaze with unlawful lusts, overwhelmed by depraved longings and obsessed by wrong doctrines”, they are bound to be pestered by war, famine and pestilence.

We know that there are several kinds of war: small wars and big wars; cold wars and hot wars; civil wars and wars with external enemies. We have been through the last World War, and we have seen the horrors of war. Famine stalks in the world because of failure of crops or over-population or both. Pestilence raises its head in the wake of war or famine. Influenza of a virulent type that broke out in

the year 1916 killed more people than the casualties, all told, of the First World War which lasted four to five years. It was believed to have originated on the French battle-front and that, obviously, during the war. Influenza of a milder type girdled the globe in 1957, and that when there was no war. It was supposed to have started on the Pacific West Coast and science does not know its cause. Famine and pestilence still persist in spite of the tremendous strides science has made in combatting them. On the other hand, progress of science makes it possible to wage war on a global scale, and helps the world population to increase at an alarming rate.

The Buddha not only makes a correct diagnosis of the troubles affecting mankind but also prescribes the remedy. The trouble with average men or worldlings is that they are much too conscious of self or ego.

The Buddha teaches us to cultivate four attitudes of mind: loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. These four are known as *Brahma Vihāra* or Sublime States of Mind. (*Dīgha Nikāya* 13).² They provide in fact the answer to all situations arising from social contact. They promote human brotherhood against the forces of egotism. The Buddha teaches us in the *Metta Sutta, Sutta-Nipāta*:³

‘Just as a mother looks after her only child
Even at the cost of her own life,
So should one cherish boundless love
And goodwill towards all beings.’

In short, the Buddha advocates universal brotherhood, transcending all class, national, racial and religious barriers. In such a universal brotherhood, people will not only suppress egotism but positively foster altruism. In his book ‘The Outline of History’ H.G. Wells writes. “The Teaching of history is

strictly in accordance with the teaching of the Buddha. There is no peace or happiness, no righteous leadership or kingship unless men lose themselves in something greater than themselves.”

Because of egotism, intolerance and separatist tendencies, worldlings indulge in dissensions and conflicts, bringing about untold misery to themselves as well as to others. To illustrate this point, I can do no better than relate the story of the monks of Kosambi, who caused a schism in the Buddha’s Order.

A certain monk was accused by another of having committed a certain offence, an offence not of a serious nature. He did not think it was an offence. The latter insisted that it was, and, gaining as partisans his comrades and intimates, suspended him. The comrades and intimates of the suspended monk sided with him. The Buddha reasoned twice with both factions to prevent a schism, but to no avail. Then the Buddha related to them the story of King Brahmadata of Banaras who, once upon a time, annexed the kingdom of Kosala to his empire and put to death the king and queen of Kosala. While the king and queen of Kosala were being paraded from cross-road to cross-road they saw their son Prince Dīghāvu, incognito, among the people. The father spoke thus: ‘Do not you, dear Dīghāvu, look at the long or look at the short, for wrathful moods are allayed by non-wrath.’⁴ The people thought that the king of Kosala was mad and was talking gibberish.

Later, Prince Dīghāvu contrived to get into the service of King Brahmadata. One day, while hunting in the forest, the king lost his way, being attended only by Prince Dīghāvu who was no more to him than a willing servant. The King felt tired and fell asleep. Prince Dīghāvu, wishing to avenge his parents’ death, drew his sword twice from its sheath. His father’s words came back to him each time and he replaced his sword in its sheath. At that moment, King Brahmadata saw in a dream that the son of the King of Kosala attacked him

with a sword; frightened and agitated, he suddenly got up. The king related his dream to his young attendant, and the young attendant replied, ‘I am Prince Dīghāvu, that son of the king of Kosala. You have done us much mischief. You annexed our kingdom. You have killed my parents. This could be a time when I could show my wrath.’ King Brahmadata said: ‘Grant me my life, dear Dīghāvu.’ The prince readily complied with the king’s request, and the king, in turn, promised not to take any revenge.

When they got back to the palace, the king asked the prince to explain his father’s words. Prince Dīghāvu said: ‘Do not look at the long’ means do not prolong enmity. ‘Do not look at the short’ means, do not hastily break with a friend. ‘Wrathful moods are allayed by non-wrath means, my parents were killed by a king, but if I were to deprive the king of his life, those who desired his welfare would deprive me of my life. But now that I grant you your life, you, in turn, grant me my life: thus is wrath settled by non-wrath.’ King Brahmadata was so pleased that he gave back the kingdom of Kosala to Prince Dīghāvu, and his own daughter into the bargain. Concluding the story, the Buddha said: ‘Now, monks, if such is the forbearance and gentleness of kings who wield the sceptre, who wield the sword, let your light shine forth so that you who have gone forth in this dhamma and discipline which are thus well taught, may be equally forbearing and gentle.’ Thus the Buddha reasoned with the monks for the third time but in vain.

Then the Buddha thinking: ‘These foolish men are as though infatuate, it is not easy to persuade them’, spoke these verses:⁵

When all in chorus bawl, none feels a
fool,

Nor though the Order is divided, thinks
otherwise.

With wandering wits the wiseacres range
all the field of talk

With mouths agape to full extent, *what leads them on they know not.*

People do not discern that here we straitened are (in life, in time)

But they who herein discern, thereby quarrels are allayed.’

On the same day the Buddha set out for Parileyya forest where he stayed alone for some time.

We are told that the dissension among the monks spread to their lay-followers, dividing the city or kingdom into two hostile camps, causing great misery not only to the monks and their lay-followers but to the entire city or kingdom. However, in course of time, when the two contending parties realised their folly, they resolved their differences and lived in peace and harmony. Then the Buddha came back to them.

Similarly, the world is now divided into two powerful blocs with almost powerless neutrals existing, as the Burmese proverb says, like tufts of grass between two fighting buffaloes. In these straitened circumstances, straitened in time, straitened in life, the only way out is to lose ourselves in something greater than ourselves. In other words, we

should realise our own limitations and, endeavouring to rise above selfish considerations, make combined efforts to prevent, as far as lies in our power, the coming of the three traditional destroyers: war, famine and pestilence, as also to lay bricks for building up a universal brotherhood.

Remember we are all brothers.

1 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Tikanipāta Pāḷi, 2-Dutiya Paññāsaka, 6-1-Brāhmaṇa Vagga, 3-Aññatara Brāhmaṇa Sutta, Pg. 156, 6th Synod Edition.

2 Dīgha Nikāya, Sīlakkhandda Vagga Pāḷi, 13-Tevijja Sutta, Brahmaloaka-magga-desanā; pg. 234, 6th Synod Edition.

3 Khuddaka Nikāya, Sutta Nipāta Pāḷi, 1. Uraga-vagga, 8. Metta Sutta, versa 149, pg. 301. 6th. Synod Edition.

4 Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga Pāḷi, 10-Kosambakakkhandhaka, 272-Dīghāvu vatthu, pg. 490. 6th Syn. Edition.

5 Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga Pāḷi, 10-Kosambakakkhandhaka, 274-Pācinavaṃsa-dāyagamanakathā, pg. 496, 6th Synod Edition.

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KAMMA AND REBIRTH

by Nyanatiloka Mahāthera

When beholding this world and thinking about the destinies of beings, it will appear to most men as if everything in nature were unjust. 'Why,' they will ask, is one man rich and powerful, but another poor and distressed? Why is one man all his life well and healthy, but another from his very birth sickly or infirm? Why is one man, endowed with attractive appearance, intelligence and perfect senses, while another is repulsive and ugly, an idiot, blind, or deaf and dumb? Why is one child born amidst utter misery and amongst wretched people, and brought up as a criminal, while another child is born in the midst of plenty and comfort, of noble-minded parents, and enjoys all the advantages of kindly treatment and the best mental and moral education? Why does one man, often without the slightest effort, succeed in all his enterprises, while another fails in all his plans? Why can one man live in luxury, while another man has to live in poverty and distress? Why is one man happy, but another unhappy? Why does one man enjoy long life, while another in the prime of his life is carried away by death? Why is this so? Why do such differences exist in nature?

These questions are satisfactorily answered by Buddhism. Of all the aforesaid circumstances and conditions constituting the destiny of a being, none can, according to the Buddha's teaching, come into existence without a previous cause and the presence of a number of necessary conditions. Just as, for example, from a rotten mango seed never will come a healthy mango-tree with healthy and sweet fruits, just so the evil volitional actions, or *Kamma*, produced in former birth, are the seeds, or root-causes, of evil destiny in a later birth. It is a necessary postulate of thinking that the good and bad destiny of a being, as well as its latent character, cannot be the product of mere chance, but must of necessity have its causes in a previous birth. According

to Buddhism, no organic entity, physical or psychological, can come into existence without a previous cause, i.e. without a preceding congenial state out of which it has developed. Also never can any living organic entity be produced by something altogether external to it. It can originate only out of itself, i.e. it must have already existed in the bud, or germ, as it were. Besides this cause, or root-condition, or seed, there are still many minor conditions required for its actual arising and its development just as the mango tree besides its main cause, the seed, requires for its germination, growth and development further conditions such as earth, water, light and heat. Thus the true cause of the birth of a being, together with its character and destiny, goes back to the *Kamma*-volitions produced in a former birth.

There are three factors necessary for the rebirth of a human being, that is, for the formation of the embryo in the mother's womb. They are: the female ovum, the male sperm, and the *kamma*-energy, *kamma-vega*, which in the Suttas is metaphorically called '*gandhabba*,' i.e., 'ghost,' This *kamma*-energy is sent forth by a dying individual at the moment of his death. Father and mother only provide the necessary physical material for the formation of the embryonic body. With regard to the characteristic features, the tendencies and faculties lying latent in the embryo, the Buddha's teaching may be explained in the following way: The dying individual, with his whole being convulsively clinging to life, at the very moment of his death, sends forth kammic energies which, like a flash of lightning, hit at a new mother's womb ready for conception. Thus, through the impinging of the *Kamma*-energies on ovum and sperm, there arises, just as a precipitate, the so-called primary cell.

The process may be compared with the functioning of the so-called air-vibrations

produced through speech, which, by the impinging on the acoustic organ of another man, produce a sound, which is a purely subjective sensation. At this occasion no transmigration of a sound-sensation takes place, but simply a transference of energy, called the air vibrations. In a similar way, the *kamma*-energies, sent out by the dying individual, produce from the material furnished by the parents the new embryonic being. But no transmigration of a real being, or a soul-entity, takes place at that occasion, but simply the transmission of *kamma*-energy.

Hence we may say that the present life-process (*uppattibhava*) is the objectification of the corresponding pre-natal *Kamma*-process (*kamma-bhava*), and that the future life-process is the objectification of the corresponding present *Kamma*-process. Thus, nothing transmigrates from one life to the next. And what we call our Ego, is in reality only this process of continual change, of continual arising and passing away, moment after moment, day after day, year after year, life after life. Just as the so-called wave that apparently hastens over the surface of the ocean, is in reality nothing but a continuous rising and falling of ever new masses of water, each time called forth through the transmission of energy, even so, closely considered, is there in the ultimate sense no permanent Ego-entity that passes through the ocean of *Samsāra*, but merely a process of physical and mental phenomena takes place, ever and again being whipped up by the impulse and will for life.

It is undoubtedly true that the mental condition of the parents at the moment of conception has considerable influence upon the character of the embryonic being, and that the nature of the mother may make a deep impression on the character of the child she bears in her womb. The indivisible unity of the mental individuality of the child, however, can in no way be produced by the parents. One must here never confound the actual productive cause—i.e., the preceding state out of which the later state arises—with the contributing influences and conditions from

without. Even if it were really possible that the new individual, as an inseparable whole, was begotten by its parents, twins could by no means ever exhibit totally opposite tendencies. In such a case, children especially twins, would, with positively no exception, always be found to possess the same character as the parents.

At all times, and probably in all the countries on earth, the belief in ever and again being reborn, has been held by many people; and this belief seems to be due to an intuitional instinct that lies dormant in all beings. Many great thinkers too have taught a continuation of life after death. Already from time immemorial there was taught some form of metempsychosis. i.e., ‘transformation of soul’, or metamorphosis, i.e., ‘transformation of body,’ etc., for instance, by the esoteric doctrines of old Egypt, by Pythagoras, Empedocles, Plato, Plotinus, Pindaros, Vergil, even by the African negroes.¹ Many of the modern thinkers too teach a continuation of the life process after death.

The great German scientist Edgar Dacquè, in his book called ‘The Primeval World, Saga and Mankind,’ speaking about the widespread belief shared by all peoples of the world in a transmigration after death, gives the following warning: “Peoples with culture and acquaintance with science, such as the old Egyptians and wise Indians, were acting and living in accordance with this belief. They lost this belief only after the rise of the naively realistic and rationalistic Hellenism and Judaism. For this reason it would be better, concerning this problem, not to assume the bloodless attitude of modern sham-civilization, but rather adopt a reverential attitude in trying to solve this problem and grasp it in its profundity.”

This law of rebirth can be made comprehensible only by the subconscious ‘life-stream,’ in Pāli, *bhavanga-sota*, which is mentioned in the *Abhidhamma-Piṭaka* and further explained in the commentaries, especially the *Visuddhi-Magga*.² The

fundamental import of *bhavanga-sota*, or the subconscious life-stream, as working hypothesis for the explanation of the various Buddhist doctrines, such as Rebirth, *Kamma*, Remembrance of former births, etc, has up to now not yet sufficiently been recognized, or understood, by the Western scholars. The term *bhavanga*, or *bhavanga-sota*, is similar to, though not entirely identical with what the modern psychologists, as Jung and others call Soul, or the Unconscious, which however, in no way signifies the eternal soul-entity of Christian teaching but refers to an ever-changing subconscious process. This subconscious life-stream is the *sine qua non* of all life, and in it all impressions and experiences are stored up, or better said, appear as a multiple process of past images, or memory pictures, which however, as such, are hidden to full consciousness, but which, especially in dream, cross the threshold of consciousness and become fully conscious.

Professor William James (whose words are retranslated here from the German version) says: "Many achievements of the genius have here their beginning. In conversion, mystical experience, and as prayer, it co-operates with religious life. It contains all momentarily inactive reminiscences and sources of all our dimly motivated passions, impulses, intuitions, hypotheses, fancies, superstitions; in short, all our non-rational operations result therefrom. It is the source of dreams, etc."

Jung, in his 'Soul Problems of the Present Day,' says; "From the living source of instinct springs forth everything creative." And in another place: "Whatever has been created by human mind, results from contents, which were really unconscious (or subconscious) germs." And "The term 'instinct' is of course nothing but a collective term for all possible organic and psychic factors, whose nature is for the greater part unknown to us."

The existence of the subconscious life-stream, or *bhavanga-sota*, is a necessary postulate of our thinking. If, whatever we have seen, heard, felt, perceived, thought, externally

or internally experienced and done, if all this, without exception, were not registered somewhere and in some way, be it in the extremely complex nervous system or in the Sub-conscious or Unconscious—then we would not even be able to remember what we were thinking the preceding moment; and we would not know anything of the existence of other beings and things; would not know our parents, teachers, friends and so on; would even not be able to think at all, as thinking is conditioned by the remembrance of former experiences; and our mind would be a complete *tabula rasa* and emptier than the actual mind of an infant just born, even of the embryo in the mother's womb.

Thus this sub-conscious life-stream, or *bhavanga-sota*, can be called the precipitate of all our former actions and experiences, which must have been going on from time immemorial and must continue for immeasurable periods of time to come. Therefore, whatever constitutes the true and inmost nature of man, or any other being, is this subconscious life-stream, of which we do not know whence it came and whither it will go. As Heraclitus says "We never enter the same stream. We are identical with it, and we are not," just as it is said in the *Milinda-Pañha* : "na ca so, na ca añño,"³ neither is it he nor is it another one (that is reborn)." All life, be it corporeal, conscious or subconscious life, all life is a flux, a continual process of becoming, change and transformation. No persistent element is there to be discovered in this process. Hence, there also is no permanent Ego, or personality, to be found, but merely these transitory phenomena. About this unreality of the Ego, the Hungarian psychologist Yølgyesi in his 'Message to the Nervous World' says:

"Under the influence of the newest knowledge the psychologists already begin to realize the truth about the delusive nature of the Ego-entity, the mere relative value of the Ego-feeling, the great dependency of this tiny man on the inexhaustibly many and complex working factors of the whole world. The idea

of an independent Ego, and of a self-reliant Free Will: these ideas we should give up and reconcile ourselves to the truth that there does not exist any real Ego at all. What we take for our Ego-feeling, is in reality nothing but one of the most wonderful *fata-morgana* plays of nature, etc.” In the ultimate sense, there do not even exist such things as mental states, i.e., stationary things. Feeling, perception, consciousness, etc. are, in reality, mere passing processes of feeling, perceiving, becoming conscious etc., within which and outside of which nothing of a separate or permanent entity lies hidden.

Thus a real understanding of the Buddha’s doctrine of *Kamma* and Rebirth is possible only to him who has caught a glimpse of the Impersonality, or *anattā*, and of the Conditionality, or *ida-paccayatā* of all phenomena of existence.⁴ Therefore it is said in *Visuddhi Magga* XIX “Everywhere, in all the realms of existence, the noble disciple sees only mental and corporeal phenomena kept going through the concatenation of causes and effects. No producer of the volitional act or *Kamma* does he see apart from the *Kamma*, no recipient of the *Kamma*-result apart from the result. And he is well aware that wise men are using merely conventional language, when, with regard to a Kammic act, they speak of a doer, or with regard to a *kamma*-result, they speak of the recipient of the result.

‘No doer of the deeds is found,
No one who ever reaps their fruits;
Empty phenomena roll on:
This is the only right view.’
‘And while the deeds and their results
Roll on and on, conditioned all,
There is no first beginning found,
Just as it is with seed and tree.....’
‘No god, no *Brāhma*, can be called
The maker of this wheel of life:
Empty phenomena roll on,
Dependent on conditions all.’⁴

In *Milinda-Pañha* the King asks Nāgasena:

‘What is it, Venerable Sir, that will be reborn?’

‘A psycho-physical combination (*nāma-rūpa*), O King,’ is the answer.

‘But how, Venerable Sir? Is it the same psychophysical combination as this present one?’

‘No, O King. But the present psycho-physical combination produces wholesome and unwholesome volitional activities, and through such *Kamma* a new psycho-physical combination will be born.’⁵

Since in the ultimate sense, or *paramattha-vasena*. there is no such thing as a real Ego-entity. or Personality, therefore one cannot truly speak of the rebirth of such or such an individual. What actually happens here, is that a psycho-physical process, which is cut off at death, continues immediately thereafter somewhere else, in strict conformity to causes and conditions.

Similarly we read in *Milinda-Pañha*, Chapter III:⁶

‘Does, O Venerable Sir, rebirth take place without transmigration?’

‘Yes, O King.’

‘But how, Venerable Sir, can rebirth take place without passing over of anything? Please illustrate me this matter.’

‘If, O King, a man should light a lamp with the help of another lamp, does in that case the light of the one lamp pass over to the other lamp?’

‘No, Venerable Sir.’

‘Just so, O King, does rebirth take place without transmigration.’

Further in *Visuddhi-Magga* XVII it is said:

‘Whosoever has no clear idea about death, and does not know that death consists in the dissolution of the five groups of existence (i.e., corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, consciousness); he thinks that it is

a person, or being, that dies and transmigrates to a new body, etc. And whosoever has no clear idea about rebirth, and does not know that rebirth consists in the arising of the five groups of existence, he thinks that it is a person, or being, that is reborn, or that the person reappears in a new body. And whosoever has no clear idea about the *Samsāra*, the round of rebirths, he thinks that a real person wanders from this world to another world, comes from that world to this world, etc. And whosoever has no clear idea about the phenomena of existence, he thinks that the phenomena are his Ego or something appertaining to the Ego, or something permanent, joyful, or pleasant. And whosoever has no clear idea about the conditional arising of the phenomena of existence, and about the arising of kammical volitions conditioned through ignorance, or *avijjā*, he thinks that it is the Ego that understands or not understands, that acts or causes to act, that enters into a new existence at rebirth. Or he thinks that the atoms or the Creator, etc., with the help of the embryonic process, shape the body, provide it with various faculties; that it is the Ego that receives the sensuous impression, that feels, that desires, that becomes attached, that again in another world enters into existence. Or he thinks that all beings are coming to life through fate or chance.’

‘A mere phenomenon it is, a thing conditioned,

That rises in the following existence.

But not from previous life does it transmigrate there,

And yet it cannot rise without a previous cause.’

‘When this conditionally arisen bodily-mental phenomenon (the foetus) arises, one says that it has entered into (the next) existence. However, no being (*satta*), or life-principle (*jīva*) is there that has transmigrated from previous existence into this present one and yet this embryo could not have come into existence without a previous cause.’

This fact may be compared with the reflection of one’s face in the mirror, or with the calling forth of an echo by one’s voice. Now, just as the image in the mirror or the echo are produced by one’s face or voice without any passing over of face or voice, just so it is with the arising of rebirth-consciousness. Should there exist a full identity or sameness between the former and the later birth, in that case milk never would turn into curd; and should there exist an entire otherness, curd never could be conditioned through milk. Therefore one should admit neither a full identity, nor an entire otherness of the different stages of existence. Hence *na ca so, na ca añño*: “neither is it the same, nor is it another one.” As we have said above: all life, be it corporeal, conscious or subconscious, all life is a flowing, a continual process of becoming, change and transformation.

To sum up, we may say:

There are in the ultimate sense no real beings or things neither creator nor created; there is but this process of corporeal and mental phenomena. This whole process of existence has an active and a passive side. The active or causal side of existence consists in the *Kamma*-process (*kamma-bhava*). i.e., wholesome and unwholesome (good and evil) *Kamma*-activity, while the passive or caused side consists in *Kamma*-results, or *vipāka*, the so-called Rebirth or Life-process (*uppatti-bhava*), i.e., the arising, growing, decaying and passing away of all these kammically neutral phenomena of existence.

Thus, in the absolute sense, there exists no real being that wanders through this round of rebirths, but merely this ever-changing twofold process of *Kamma*-activities and *Kamma*-results takes place.

The so-called present life is, as it were the reflection of the past one, and the future life the reflection of the present one. Or, the present life is the result of the past *Kamma* activity, and the future life the result of the present *Kamma* activity. Therefore, nowhere, is there to be found an Ego-entity that could be

the Performer of the *Kammic* activity or the Recipient of the *Kamma*-result. Hence, Buddhism does not teach any real transmigration, as in the highest sense there is no such thing as a Being, or Ego-entity, how much less a transmigration of such an one.

In every man, as already mentioned, there seems to lie dormant the dim instinctive feeling that death cannot be the end of all things, but that somehow a continuation must follow. In which way, however, this may be, is not clear to him.

It is perhaps quite true that a direct proof for rebirth cannot be given. We have, however, the authentic reports about children in Burma and elsewhere, who sometimes are able to remember quite distinctly events of their previous life. And how could we ever explain the birth of such prodigies, as Bentham who in his fourth year could read and write Latin and Greek, or as Stuart Mill who at the age of three read Greek and at the age of six wrote a History of Rome, or as Babington Macaulay who in his sixth year wrote a compendium of World History, or as Beethoven who gave public concerts when he was seven, or as Mozart who even before his sixth year had written musical compositions, or as Voltaire who read the fables of Fontaine when he was three years old. Is it not reasonable to assume that all these prodigies and geniuses who for the most part came from illiterate parents, should not already in previous births have laid the foundations to their extraordinary faculties?

How could we further explain that a child of righteous and bodily and mentally healthy parents and ancestors, sometimes immediately after his birth, shows characteristics and tendencies of a criminal type, perceivable by the shape of the skull, by facial expression, by the mental attitude, and behaviour recognizable to phrenologists, physiognomists or psychologists?

We may, therefore, rightly state that the Buddhist doctrine of *Kamma* and Rebirth offers the most plausible explanation for all the

variations and dissimilarities in nature, as discussed earlier.

Buddhism teaches that, if in a previous birth the bodily, verbal and mental *kamma*, or volitional activities, have been evil and low thus have unfavourably influenced the subconscious life-stream (*bhavanga-sota*), then also the results, manifested in the present life, must be disagreeable and evil; and so must be the character and the new actions induced or conditioned through the evil pictures and images of the subconscious life-stream. If the beings, however, have in former lives sown good seeds, then they will reap good fruits in the present life. It is said (M. 135): 'Owners of their *kamma*, or volitional actions, are the beings, heirs of their *kamma*, the *kamma* is the womb from which they have sprung, *kamma* is their friend and their refuge. Whatever *kamma* they perform, wholesome or unwholesome, *kusala* or *akusala*, they will be the heirs of their *kamma*.'

In the Middle Length Sayings of the Buddha (*Majjhima-Nikāya* 135) a Brahman raises the problem:⁷

'There are men who are short-lived, and those who are long-lived; there are men who are very sick, and such that are healthy; there are men who are hideous, and such that are beautiful; there are men who are powerless, and such that are powerful; there are men who are poor, and such that are rich; there are men who are of low family, and such that are of high family; there are men who are stupid, and such that are intelligent. What then, Master Gotama, is the reason that amongst human beings such inferiority and superiority are found?'

The Blessed One gave the reply:

'Owners of their *Kamma* are the beings, heirs of their *Kamma*, the *Kamma* is the womb from which they have sprung. *Kamma* is their friend and refuge. Thus

Kamma divides the beings in high and low.’

In *Anguttara-Nikāya* (III. 40), it is said:

‘Killing, stealing, adultery, lying, slandering, harsh speech and empty prattling, practised, cultivated and frequently addicted to, will lead to states of misery, the animal-world or the realm of ghosts.’ Further: ‘Whoso kills and is cruel, will either go to hell, or if reborn as a man, he will be short-lived. Whoso tortures other beings, will be afflicted with disease. The hater will be hideous, the envious will be without influence, the stubborn will be of low rank, the indolent will be ignorant.’ In the reverse case, a man will be reborn in a heavenly world; or, if reborn as a man, he will be endowed with health, beauty, influence, riches, noble rank and intelligence.

Dr. Grimm, in his book ‘The Doctrine of the Buddha’, tries to show how the law of affinity may at the moment of death regulate the grasping of a new germ. He says: ‘Whoso, devoid of compassion can kill men, or even animals, carries deep within himself the inclination to shorten life. He finds satisfaction, or even pleasure in the short-livedness of other creatures. Short-lived germs have therefore some affinity for him, an affinity which makes itself known after his death in the grasping of another germ, which then takes place to his own detriment. Even so, germs bearing within themselves the power of developing into a deformed body, have an affinity for one who finds pleasure in ill-treating and disfiguring others.

‘Any angry person begets within himself an affinity for ugly bodies and their respective germs, since it is the characteristic mark of anger to disfigure the face.

‘Whoever is jealous, niggardly, haughty, carries within himself the tendency to grudge everything to others, and to despise them. Accordingly, germs that are destined to

develop in poor outward circumstances, possess affinity for him.’

Here it is desirable to rectify some wrong applications of the term *kamma* prevailing in the West. *kamma* comes from the root *kar* to do, to make, to act, and thus means ‘deed, action.’ In Buddhist usage, *kamma* is a name for wholesome and unwholesome volition or will (*kusala*-and *akusala-cetanā*) and the consciousness and mental factors associated therewith, manifested as bodily, verbal or mere mental action. Already in the Sutta-texts it is said: *Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadāmi, cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti kāyena vācāya manasā*. i.e.: “The will (*cetanā*), O Monks, do I call *kamma*. Through will one performs *kamma* by means of body, speech or mind.” Thus *kamma* is volitional action, nothing more, nothing less. From this fact result the following three statements:

1. The term *Kamma* never comprises the result of action, as many in the West, misled by theosophical writings, wish this term to be understood. *Kamma* is wholesome or unwholesome volitional ‘Action,’ and *kamma vipāka* is the ‘Result’ of action.

2. There are some who wrongly consider every happening, even our new wholesome and unwholesome actions, as the result of our prenatal *Kamma*. In other words, they believe that the result again becomes the cause of new results, and so *ad infinitum*. Thus they are stamping Buddhism as fatalism; and they will have to come to the conclusion that, in that case, our destiny never can be influenced or changed, and no deliverance ever be attained.

3. There is a third wrong application of the term *Kamma*, being an amplification of the first view, i.e., that the term *Kamma* comprises also the result of action. It is the assumption of a so-called joint *Kamma*. i.e. a mass-*kamma*, or group-*kamma*, or national-*kamma*. According to this view, a group of people, e.g. a nation, should be responsible for the bad deeds formerly done by this so-called ‘same’ people. In reality, however, this present people may

not consist at all of the *kammic* heirs of the same individuals who did these bad deeds.

It is of course quite true that anybody who suffers bodily, suffers for his past or present bad deeds. Thus also each of those individuals born within that suffering nation, must, if actually suffering bodily, have done evil somewhere, here or in one of the innumerable spheres of existence; but he may not have had anything to do with the bad deeds of the so-called nation. We might say that through his evil *Kamma* he was attracted to the miserable condition befitting to him. In short, the term *Kamma* applies, in each instance, only to wholesome and unwholesome volitional activity of the single individual. *Kamma* thus forms the cause, or seed, from which the results will accrue to the individual, be it in this life, or hereafter.⁸

Man has it in his power to shape his future destiny by means of his will and actions.. It depends on his actions, or *kamma*, whether his destiny will lead him up or down, either to happiness or to misery. Moreover, *Kamma* is the cause and seed not only for the continuation of the life-process after death, i.e., for the so-called rebirth; but even in this present life-process, our actions, or *Kamma*, may produce good and bad results, and exercise a decisive influence on our present character and destiny. Thus, for instance, if daily we practise kindness towards all living beings, men as well as animals, we will grow in goodness. Hatred, and all evil actions done through hatred, as well as all the evil and agonizing mental states produced thereby, will not easily rise again. Our nature and character will become firm, happy, peaceful and calm.

If we practise unselfishness and liberality, greed and avarice will become less. If we practise love and kindness, anger and hatred will vanish. If we develop wisdom and knowledge, ignorance and delusion will gradually disappear. The less greed, hatred and ignorance (*lobha, dosa, moha*) dwell in man's heart, the less will he commit evil and unwholesome actions of body, speech and

mind. For, all evil things, and all evil destiny, are rooted in greed, hate and ignorance; and of these three things ignorance, or delusion, *moha*, or *avijjā*, is the chief root and the primary cause of all evil and misery in the world. If there is no more ignorance, there will be no more greed and hatred, no more rebirth, no more suffering.

This goal, however, in the ultimate sense, will be realized only by the Saint (*Arahat*), i.e., by one who, for ever and all time, is freed from these three roots; and this is brought about through the penetrating insight, or *vipassanā*. into the Impermanency, Unsatisfactoriness and Impersonality, or Egolessness of this whole life-process, and through the detachment from all forms of existence that results from that insight. As soon as greed, hate and ignorance are fully and for ever extinguished, the will for life, tenaciously clinging to existence will come to an end. There will be no more rebirth, and there will have been realized the goal shown by the Enlightened One, namely: extinction of all rebirth and suffering. Thus, the Saint (*Arahat*) does no more perform any *kamma*, i.e., wholesome or unwholesome volitional actions productive of renewed existence. Though the Holy One, or *Arahat*, is certainly not inactive and all that he does, speaks and thinks is commonly called 'good', yet it has not the least trace of attachment, pride or self-assertion.

What is called the character of man, is in reality the sum of the subconscious tendencies produced partly by the prenatal, partly by the present volitional activity, or *Kamma*. These tendencies may, during life-time, become an inducement to wholesome or unwholesome volitional activity, or *Kamma*, by body, speech or mind. If, however, this thirst for life rooted in ignorance is fully extinguished, then there will be no new rebirth. Once the root of a coconut tree has been fully destroyed, the tree will die off. In exactly the same way, there will be no entering again into a new existence, once the life-affirming three evil roots, i.e., greed, hate and ignorance, have been for ever destroyed. Here one should not forget that all

such expressions referring to a personality as 'I,' 'He,' Holy One' etc, are merely conventional names for an impersonal life-process.

In this connection it should be mentioned that, it is merely the last volition just before death, *marañāsanna-kamma*, that determines the nature of the immediately following rebirth. In Buddhist countries, it is therefore the custom to recall to the dying man's memory his good actions performed by him, in order to rouse in him a happy and pure state of mind, as a preparation for a favourable rebirth. Or, his relations let him see things (robes or other offerings) which they, for his good and benefit, wish to offer to the *Sangha*, saying: 'This, we shall offer to the *Sangha* for your future good and welfare.' Or they let him hear a religious sermon, or a recital of a *Sutta*, very often the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

In Visuddhi-Magga XVII⁹ it is said that, at the moment before death, there will, as a rule, appear to the memory of the evil-doer the mental image of any evil deed, or *Kamma*, formerly done; or there will appear before his mental eyes an attendant circumstance, or object, called *Kamma-nimitta*, connected with that bad deed, such as blood, or a bloodstained dagger, etc.; or he may see before his mind an indication of his imminent miserable rebirth, *gati-nimitta*, such as fiery flames, etc. To another dying man there may appear before his mind the image of a voluptuous object inciting his sensual lust.

To a good man there may appear before his mind any noble deed, or *kamma*, formerly done by him, or an object that was present at that time, the so-called *kamma-nimitta*; or he may see in his mind an indication of his imminent rebirth, or *gati-nimitta*, such as a heavenly palace, etc.

In the Chinese version of the Mahāyāna text *Bhavaśāstra-kṛānti-Sūtra* (ed. by Aiyaswāmi Sāstri) it is said in a similar way: "When, at the end of life, the mental consciousness is about to disappear then all the actions that have been performed, appear in front, just as the image of

the beautiful female that has been seen in dream appears before the man, when he remembers her after awakening from sleep. Thus, O king, when the consciousness (at death) has disappeared and the future consciousness is born, it is born either amongst men, or gods, or beasts, or ghosts, or in the states of misery. Immediately after the future consciousness arises, O king, a (new) series of thought (*citta-santati*) belonging to the future arises to enjoy the resultant fruits which are to be enjoyed. O king, there has never been anything that can transmigrate from this world to the future world. But the fruit of action may be obtained in rebirth. You ought to know, O king, that when the former consciousness disappears, it is called death. When the future consciousness arises, it is called birth. When the former consciousness, O king, disappears, there is no place where it goes away to. When the future consciousness arises, it comes not from any place."

In the discourses (*Suttas*) of the Pāli Canon, three types of *Kamma*, or volitional actions, are mentioned, with regard to the time of their bearing fruit, namely: 1. *Kamma* bearing fruit at life-time (*diṭṭhadhamma-vedanīya-kamma*), 2. *Kamma* bearing fruit in the next life (*upapajja-vedanīya-kamma*), 3. *Kamma* bearing fruit in later lives (*aparā-pariya-vedanīya-kamma*).¹⁰ The explanations of this subject are too technical for this brief introduction into the subject. They imply the following: What appears as a single act of sense perception or mental cognition, actually consists of a series of consecutive thought moments performing different functions in that cognitive process. The phase of that process where volition is produced consists of a number of impulsive thought moments, or *javana-citta*, which are flashing up, one after the other, in rapid succession. Now, of these impulsive moments the first one will bear fruit at lifetime, the last one in the next birth, and those between these two moments will bear fruit in later lives. The two kinds of *Kamma* bearing fruit at life-time and in the next birth, may sometimes become ineffective, or *ahosi-*

kamma. *Kamma*, however, that bears fruit in later lives will, whenever and wherever there is an opportunity, be productive of *kamma*-result; and as long as this life process is rolling forward, this *Kamma* never will become ineffective.

The *Visuddhi-Magga* divides *Kamma*, according to its functions, into four kinds: Generative *Kamma*, Supportive *Kamma*, Counteractive *Kamma* and Destructive *Kamma*, which all may be either wholesome or unwholesome, good or evil.

‘Generative,’ or *janaka-kamma* is the *Kamma* which predominated at the moment of death and conditioned the present existence. It functions from the moment of birth and continues to generate, during the succeeding life-continuity, corporeal and neutral mental phenomena, such as the five kinds of sense-consciousness, and the mental factors associated therewith, as feeling, perception, sense-impression, etc.

The ‘Supportive’ or *upatthambhaka-kamma*, supports, according to its nature, the agreeable or else disagreeable phenomena arising during life time, and aids their continuance.

The ‘Counteractive,’ or *upapīlaka-kamma*, counteracts, according to its nature, the agreeable or else disagreeable phenomena produced by generative *Kamma*, and does not allow them to continue.

The ‘Destructive,’ or *upaghātaka-kamma*, destroys the weaker *kamma* and admits only its own agreeable or else disagreeable *kamma*-results.

In the Commentary to *Majjhima-Nikāya* (No. 135), Generative, or *janaka-kamma*, is compared with a farmer sowing seed; Supportive, or *upatthambhaka-kamma*, with the irrigating, manuring, and watching the field etc.; Counteracting, or *upapīlaka-kamma*, with the drought that causes a poor harvest; Destructive, or *upaghātaka-kamma*, with a fire that destroys the whole harvest.

Another illustration is this: the rebirth of Devadatta in a royal family was due to his good Generative *Kamma*. His becoming a monk and attaining high spiritual powers, was a good Supportive *Kamma*. His intention of killing the Buddha was a Counteractive *Kamma*, while his causing a split in the Order of monks was a Destructive *Kamma*, owing to which he was born in a world of misery.

It lies outside the scope of this short exposition to give detailed descriptions of all the manifold divisions of *Kamma* found in the Commentaries. The main purpose of this essay is to emphasize that the Buddhist doctrine of Rebirth has nothing to do with the transmigration of any soul or Ego-entity, as in the ultimate sense there does not exist any such Ego or I, but merely a continually changing process of mental and corporeal phenomena of existence. Further, to point out that both the *Kamma*-process and Rebirth-process may be made comprehensible only by the assumption of a subconscious stream of life underlying everything in animate nature.

1 And by the Australian aborigines who could have had no physical contact ever with any of the preceding.

2 *Visuddhimagga*, 17-Paññābhūmi-niddesa, *Saṅkhārapaccayāvīññānapada-vitthāra kathā*, pg. 181-183. 6th Synod Ed.

3 *Khuddaka Nikāya*, *Milindapañha Pāli*, 2-Milinda pañha, 2-*Paṭisaṅdahana Pañha*, 1 *Dhamma Santati añha*, pg. 40, 6th Synod Ed.

4 *Visuddhimagga*, 19-*Kaṅkhāvitarana Visuddhiniddesa Paccayapariggaha-kathā*, pg. 273, Para 689, 6th Synod Edition.

5 *Khuddaka Nikāya*, *Milinda Pañha Pāli*, 2-Milinda Pañha, 6-*Nāmarūpaekattanānatta Pañha*, pg. 46. 6th. Synod Ed.

6 *Khuddaka Nikāya*, *Milinda Pañha Pāli*, 2-Milinda Pañha, 7. *Añakāya Saṅkamana Pañha*, 5-*Asaṅka manapatisandahana Pañha*, pg. 74, 6th Synod Edition.

7 Majjhimanikāya, Uparipaṇṇāsa Pāḷi, 4-Vibhatiga Vagga, 5-Cūḷakammavibhaṅga Sutta, pg. 243, 6th Synod Ed.

8 The Pāḷi term *vipāka*, which generally is translated by ‘effect’, or ‘result’, is not exactly identical with these two English terms. According to the *Kathāvatthu*, it refers only to the *kamma*-produced *mental* results, such as pleasurable and painful feeling of the body and all other primary mental phenomena; while all the corporeal phenomena, such as the five physical sense-organs, etc., are not called

vipāka but *kammaja* or *kammasamuṭṭhāna*, i.e. ‘*kamma*-born’ or ‘*kamma*-produced’.

9 Visuddhimagga, 17-Pañābhūminiddeśa, Saṅkhāra-paccayā-viññāpada Vitthārakathā, pg 181, Para 623, 6th Synod Ed.

10 Visuddhimagga, 19~Kaṅkhāvitaraṇa-visuddhi niddeśa, Paccayapariggaha Kathā, pg. 235-236, 6th Synod Ed.

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THE PRACTICE OF
LOVINGKINDNESS¹

(*Mettā*)

As taught by the Buddha in the Pāḷi Canon

Compiled and Translated from the Pāḷi

By

ÑĀṆAMOLI BHIKKHU

INTRODUCTION

The word ‘love’—one of the most compelling in the English language is commonly used for purposes so widely separated, so gross and so rarefied, as to render it sometimes nearly meaningless. Yet rightly understood, love is the indispensable and essential foundation no less for the growth and purification of the individual as for the construction of a peaceful, progressive and healthy society.

Now love can be considered in two principal moods: that of lovers for each other, and that of a mother for her child. In its spiritualised form, love can draw its inspiration from either the one or the other. Spiritual love idealizing the love of lovers is often conceived as a consuming flame, and then it sometimes aspires to purification through torture and the violence of martyrdom. But spiritual love that looks for guidance to the love of a mother for her child uplifts itself to the ideal of the pure fount of all safety, welfare and spiritual health (and a mother best serves her child if she guards her own health). It is this latter kind which the Buddha takes as the basis for his teaching of universal love.

Where Greek distinguishes between sensual *eros* and spiritual *agape* English makes do with only the one word ‘love’. But the Pāḷi language, like the Sanskrit, has many words covering many shades of meaning. The word chosen by the Buddha for this teaching is *mettā*, from *mitta*, a friend (or better the ‘true friend in need’).

Mettā in the Buddha’s teaching finds its place as the first of four kinds of contemplation designed to develop a sound pacific relationship to other living beings. The four are: *mettā*, which will be rendered here henceforward by ‘loving-kindness’, *karuṇā*, which is ‘compassion’ or ‘pity’, *rnuditā*, which is ‘gladness at others’ success’, and *upekkā*, which is ‘on-looking equanimity’. These four are called Divine Abidings (*brahma-vihārā*), perhaps because whoever can maintain any one of them in being for even a moment has lived for that moment as do the Highest Gods (the *Brahma Devā*).

In the Buddha’s teaching these four Divine Abidings, the ‘greatest of all worldly merit’, if practised alone, without Insight into the true nature of existence, can lead to rebirth in the highest heavens. But all heavenly existence is without exception impermanent, and at the end of the heavenly life-span — no matter how long it may last — the being dies and is reborn according to his past actions. This is because some craving for existence (for being or even non-being) and some sort of view of existence that is not in conformity with truth still remain latent in him, to burst out again when the result of his good actions is spent. And where he will be reborn after that is unpredictable though it is certain that he will be reborn.

The Buddha’s teaching of Insight is — in as few words as possible — the training in knowledge and seeing of how it is that anything, whatever it may be whether objective or subjective, comes to be, how it acquires existence only through dependence on

conditions, and is impermanent because none of the conditions for its existence is permanent; and how existence, always complex and impermanent, is never safe from pain, and is in need of a self — the will-o'-the-wisp idea, the rainbow mirage, which lures it on, and which it can never find; for the comforting illusion of permanence in self-identification has constantly to be renewed. And that teaching also shows how there is a true way out from fear of pain. In its concise form this is expressed as the Four Noble Truths: the Truth of Suffering, the Truth of Suffering's Origin (craving or need) the Truth of Suffering's Cessation (through abandonment of craving), and the Truth of the Way leading to Suffering's cessation. These four Truths are called the teaching peculiar to Buddhas (*Buddhānam sāmukkamsika-desanā*) since the discovery of them is what distinguishes Buddhas.

The Way (the fourth Truth) is also called the Middle Way because it avoids the two extremes of sensual indulgence and of self-mortification. Its eight members are: Right View, Right Intention, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. The practice of Loving-kindness alone will give effect in some measure to all the members except the first: but it is only with Right View (without self-deception) that *nibbāna* can be reached. Right View gives insight into the real nature of existence of being and non-being, with all its mirages and deceptions, and it is only with its help that the practice of Loving-kindness is perfected, lifted out of the impermanence of even the highest heavens, and directed to the true cessation of Suffering.

That true cessation comes with the elimination of deception by wrong view and with the exhaustion of the stream of craving in its two forms of lust and hate. This Extinction of lust, hate and delusion, is called *nibbāna*.²

The discourses that follow show (in that order) the wretchedness of all anger and hate (there is no righteous anger in the Buddha's

teaching), the rewards of loving-kindness, the practice of loving-kindness as a meditation and contemplation, its result in rebirth, the seeing of all things and all existence as impermanent, suffering, not-self, that is needed in order to have a vision in conformity with truth, without which the first stage of unshakable deliverance cannot be reached (for it is with this insight into how being comes to be that it is seen why the price of birth and life, even in heaven, is death), and lastly the attainment of Arahatsip, by which all lust, hate, and delusion, are overcome, lust for being and even for non-being cured, and rebirth ended for good.

But first, before coming to these discourses, some details from the meditation manual, the *Visuddhimagga* or 'Path of Purification', will not be out of place.³

Mettā (loving-kindness) is defined as follows: 'Loving-kindness has the mode of friendliness for its characteristic. Its natural function is to promote friendliness. It is manifested as the disappearance of ill-will. Its footing is seeing with kindness. When it succeeds it eliminates ill-will. When it fails it degenerates into selfish affectionate desire.'

The *Visuddhimagga* recommends going to some quiet place, where one can sit down in a comfortable position. Then, before starting the actual meditation, it is helpful to consider the dangers in hate and the benefits offered by forbearance: for it is a purpose of this meditation to displace hate by forbearance and besides, one cannot avoid dangers one has not come to see or cultivate benefits one does not yet know. Then there are certain types of persons towards whom loving-kindness should not be developed in the first stages. The attempt, at the outset, to regard a disliked person as dear to one is fatiguing, and likewise trying to regard a dearly-loved friend with neutrality, and when an enemy is recalled anger springs up. Again it should not be directed towards members of the opposite sex, to begin with, for this may arouse lust. Right at the start, the meditation of loving-kindness should be developed towards oneself

repeatedly in this way: ‘May I be happy and free from suffering’ or ‘May I keep myself free from hostility and trouble and live happily’ (though this will never produce the full absorption of contemplation). It is by cultivating the thought ‘May I be happy’ with oneself as example, that one begins to be interested in the welfare and happiness of other living beings, and to feel in some sense their happiness as if it were one’s own: ‘Just as I want happiness and fear pain, just as I want to live and not to die, so do other creatures’. So, one should first become familiar with pervading oneself as example with loving-kindness. Only then should one choose someone who is liked and admired and much respected. The meditation can then be developed towards him, remembering endearing words or virtues of his, and thinking such thoughts about him as ‘may he be happy.’ (In this way the full absorption of contemplation, in which the word-meditation is left behind, can be attained.) When this has become familiar, one can begin to practise loving-kindness towards a dearly beloved companion, and then towards a neutral person as very dear, or towards an enemy as neutral. It is when dealing with an enemy that anger can arise, and all means must be tried in order to get rid of it. As soon as this has succeeded, one will be able to regard an enemy without resentment and with loving-kindness in the same way as one does the admired person, the dearly loved friend, and the neutral person. Then with repeated practice, *jhāna* absorption should be attained in all cases. Loving-kindness can now be effectively maintained in being towards all creatures, or to certain groups of creatures at a time, or in one direction at a time to all, or to certain groups in succession.

Loving-kindness ought to be brought to the point where there are no longer any barriers set between persons, and for this the following example is given: Suppose a man is with a dear, a neutral and a hostile person, himself being the fourth; then bandits come to him and say ‘We need one of you for human sacrifice’,

now if that man thinks ‘Let them take this one, or that one’, he has not yet broken down the barriers, and also if he thinks ‘Let them take me but not these three’, he has not broken down the barriers either. Why not? Because he seeks the harm of him whom he wishes to be taken and the welfare of only the other three — ; it is only when he does not see a single one among the four to be chosen in preference to the other three and directs his mind quite impartially towards himself and the other three that he has broken down the barriers.

Loving-kindness has its ‘enemy within’ in lust, which easily gains entry in its wake, and it must be well guarded against this. The remedy for lust is the contemplation of ugliness (in the body) as in the *Satipaṭṭhāna* (*Dīgha Nikāya* Sutta 22 ⁴ and *Majjhima Nikāya* Sutta 10 ⁵). Its ‘enemy without’ is its opposite, ill-will, which finds its opportunities in the intervals when loving-kindness is not being actively practised. (Full details will be found in Chapter IX of the *Visuddhimagga*).

In many discourses the Buddha lays emphasis on the need to balance contemplative concentration with understanding. The one supplies the deficiencies of the other.

Concentration alone lacks direction: understanding alone is dry and tiring. In the discourses that follow the simile of a mother’s love for her child is given. Now the incomparable value of a mother’s love, which sets it above all other kinds, lies in the fact that she understands her child’s welfare — her love is not blind. Not love alone, nor faith alone, can ever bring a man all the way to the cessation of suffering, and that is why the Buddha, as the Supreme Physician, prescribes the development of five faculties in balanced harmony: the faculties of faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration, and understanding.

So concentration of love in its highest form — the form that only the Buddha and no one else has given it —, seen as a means to the end, becomes absolutely purified in one who has gained personal experience of the ‘supreme safety from bondage (*anuttaraṃ*

yogakkhemaṃ)', which is *nibbāna*, as the ultimate welfare of beings. For he knows from his own experience that their welfare is only assured permanently when suffering has been diagnosed, its origin abandoned, its cessation realized, and the Way maintained in being. Then he has verified the four Noble Truths for himself and can properly evaluate beings' welfare.

'Bhikkhus, it is through not discovering, not penetrating to four truths that both you and I have been trudging and travelling through the roundabout of rebirths for so long' (Dīgha Nikāya, Vol.II. p. 90⁶). For the benefit of all those who have not yet done this, the way has been discovered and pointed out by the Buddha and its practicability attested by the Arahats.

The last discourse given in this collection, in fact, shows how this personal discovery and penetration to the Four Truths can be achieved by using loving-kindness as the vehicle.

THE PRACTICE OF LOVING-KINDNESS

The Wretchedness of Anger

1. *From the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Sattaka-nipāta 60 (Spoken by the Buddha).*

Bhikkhus, seven things gratifying and helpful to an enemy befall one who is angry, whether a woman or a man. What are the seven?

Here, *bhikkhus*, an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him be ugly'. Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's beauty. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, be he ever so well bathed, and well anointed, with hair and beard trimmed, and clothed in white, yet he is ugly through his being a prey to anger. This is the first thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy:

'Let him lie in pain'. Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's lying in comfort.

Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, for all he may lie on a couch spread with rugs, blankets and counterpanes with a deerskin cover, a canopy and red cushions for the head and feet, yet he lies only in pain through his being a prey to anger. This is the second thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy:

'Let him have no prosperity'. Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's prosperity. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, he mistakes bad for good and he mistakes good for bad, and each being thus taken wrongly in the other's sense, these things for long conduce to his harm and suffering, through his being a prey to anger. This is the third thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy:

'Let him not be rich'. Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's having riches. Now when a person is angry, a prey to anger, should he have riches gained by endeavour, built up by the strength of his arm, earned by sweat, lawful and lawfully acquired, yet the king's treasury gathers (in fines) through his being a prey to anger. This is the fourth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy:

'Let him not be famous'. Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's having fame. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, what fame he may have acquired by diligence he loses through his being a prey to anger. This is the fifth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy:

‘Let him have no friends’. Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s having friends. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, the friends he may have, his companions, relatives and kin, will keep away from him through his being a prey to anger. This is the sixth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy:

‘Let him on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell’. Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy’s going to a good destination. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, he misconducts himself in body, speech and mind, and by his misconduct in body, speech and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell, through his being a prey to anger. This is the seventh thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

When anger does possess a man;
 He looks ugly; he lies in pain;
 What benefit he may come by
 He misconstrues as a mischance;
 He loses property (through fines)
 Because he has been working harm
 Through acts of body and of speech
 By angry passion overwhelmed;
 The wrath and rage that madden him
 Gain him a name of ill repute;
 His fellows, relatives and kin
 Will seek to shun him from afar;
 And anger fathers misery;
 This fury does so cloud the mind
 Of man that he cannot discern
 This fearful inner danger.
 An angry man no meaning knows.
 No angry man sees an idea,⁸

So wrapped in darkness, as if blind,
 Is he whom anger dogs.
 Someone a man in anger hurts;
 But, when his anger is later spent
 With difficulty or with ease,
 He suffers as if seared by fire.
 His look betrays the sulkiness
 Of some dim smoky smouldering glow,
 Whence may flare up an anger-blaze
 That sets the world of man aflame.
 He has no shame or conscience curb,
 No kindly words come forth from him,
 There is no island refuge for
 The man whom anger dogs.
 Such acts as will ensure remorse,
 Such as are far from True Ideals:
 It is of these that I would tell,
 So harken to my words.
 Anger makes man a parricide,
 Anger makes him a matricide,
 Anger can make him slay the saint
 As he would kill the common man.
 Nursed and reared by a mother’s care,
 He comes to look upon the world,
 Yet the common man in anger kills
 The being who gave him life.
 No being but seeks his own self’s good,
 None dearer to him than himself,
 Yet men in anger kill themselves,
 Distraught for reasons manifold:
 For crazed they stab themselves with
 daggers,
 In desperation swallow poison.
 Perish hanged by ropes, or fling
 Themselves over a precipice.
 Yet how their life-destroying acts
 Bring death unto themselves as well,
 That they cannot discern, and that
 Is the ruin anger breeds.

This secret place, with anger's aid.
 Is where Mortality sets the snare.
 To blot it out with discipline,
 With vision, strength, and understanding
 To blot each fault out one by one,
 The wise man should apply himself,
 Training likewise in True Ideals:
 "Let smouldering be far from us
 Then rid of wrath and free from anger,
 And rid of lust and free from envy,
 Tamed, and with anger left behind.
 Taintless, they reach *nibbāna*.

How to get rid of Anger

2. *From the Dhammapada, verses 3-5,⁹ and Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 128 (Spoken by the Buddha).*¹⁰

"Tis he abused me, he that beat me,
 He that worsted me, that robbed me".
 Hate never is allayed in men
 That cherish suchlike enmity.
 "Tis he abused me, he that beat me,
 He that worsted me, that robbed me".
 Hate surely is allayed in men
 Who cherish no such enmity.
 For enmity by enmity
 Is never in this world allayed;
 It is allayed by amity—
 That is an ancient principle.

3. *From the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Pañcakanipāta 161 (Spoken by the Buddha).*¹¹

Bhikkhus, there are these five ways of removing annoyance, by which annoyance can be entirely removed by a *bhikkhu* when it arises in him. What are the five?

Loving-kindness can be maintained in being towards a person with whom you are annoyed; this is how annoyance with him can be removed. Compassion can be maintained in

being towards a person with whom you are annoyed; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. On-looking equanimity can be maintained in being towards a person with whom you are annoyed this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. The forgetting and ignoring of a person with whom you are annoyed can be practised; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. Ownership of deeds in a person with whom you are annoyed can be concentrated upon thus: This good person is owner of his deeds, heir of his deeds, his deeds are the womb from which he is born, his deeds are his kin for whom he is responsible, his deeds are his refuge, he is heir to his deeds, be they good or bad; this too is how annoyance with him can be removed. These are the five ways of removing annoyance, by which annoyance can be entirely removed in a *bhikkhu* when it arises in him.

Loving-kindness and its Rewards

4. *From the Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 21 (Spoken by the Buddha).*¹²

Bhikkhus, there are five modes of speech that others may use when they address you. Their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, for good or for harm, and may be accompanied by thoughts of loving-kindness or by inner hate.

Suppose a man came with a hoe and a basket, and he said 'I shall make this Great Earth to be without earth', and he dug here and there and strewed here and there and spat here and there and relieved himself here and there, saying 'Be without earth, be without earth'; what do you think, *bhikkhus* would that man make this Great Earth to be without earth? — 'No, venerable sir'. Why is that? Because this Great Earth is deep and measureless; it cannot possibly be made to be without earth. So the man would reap weariness and disappointment.

Suppose a man come with like or gamboge or indigo or carmine, and he said 'I shall draw

pictures, I shall make pictures appear on this empty space'; what do you think, bhikkhus, would that man draw pictures, would he make, pictures appear, on that empty space? — 'No, venerable Sir.' Why is that? Because that empty space is formless and invisible; he cannot possibly draw pictures, make pictures appear there. So the man would reap weariness and disappointment.

So too, *bhikkhus*, there are these five modes of speech that others may use when they address you. Their speech may be timely or untimely, true or untrue, gentle or harsh, for good or for harm, and may be accompanied by thoughts of loving-kindness or by inner hate. Now this is how you should train yourselves here: Our minds will remain unaffected, we shall utter no bad words, we shall abide compassionate for welfare. We shall abide with loving-kindness in our hearts extending to that person, and we shall abide with our hearts abundant, exalted, measureless in loving-kindness, without hostility or ill will, extending for its object over the all-encompassing world. That is how you should train yourselves.

Even were bandits savagely to sever you limb from limb with a two-handed saw, he who entertained hate on that account in his heart would not be one who carried out my teaching.

Bhikkhus, you should keep this instruction on the Simile of the Saw constantly in mind.

5. *From the Itivuttaka, Sutta 27 (Spoken by the Buddha).*¹³

Bhikkhus, whatever kinds of worldly merit there are, all are not worth one sixteenth part of the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness; in shining and beaming and radiance the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness far excels them.

Just as whatever light there is of stars, all is not worth one sixteenth part of the moon's light; in shining and beaming and radiance the moon's light far excels it; and just as in the last

month of the Rains, in the Autumn when the heavens are clear, the sun as he climbs the heavens drives all darkness from the sky with his shining and beaming and radiance; and just as, when night is turning to dawn, the Morning Star is shining and beaming and radiating; so too, whatever kinds of worldly merit there are, all are not worth one sixteenth part of the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness; in shining and beaming and radiance the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness far excels them.

6. *From the Aṅguttara Nikāya. Ekādasanipāta 16 (Spoken by the Buddha).*¹⁴

Bhikkhus, when the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is maintained in being, made much of, used as one's vehicle, used as one's foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed, then eleven blessings can be expected. What are the eleven?

A man sleeps in comfort; he wakes in comfort; he dreams no evil dreams; he is dear to human beings; he is dear to non-human beings; the gods guard him; no fire or poison or weapon harms him; his mind can be quickly concentrated; the expression of his face is serene; he dies without falling into confusion; and, even if he fails to penetrate any further, he will pass on to the world of High Divinity, to the Brahmā world.

7. *From the Saṃyutta Nikāya, Saṃyutta XX, Sutta 3 (Spoken by the Buddha).*¹⁵

Bhikkhus, just as clans with many women and few men are readily ruined by robbers and bandits, so too any bhikkhu who has not maintained in being and made much of the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is readily ruined by non-human beings. And just as clans with few women and many men are not readily ruined by robbers and bandits, so too any bhikkhu who maintains in being and makes much of the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is not readily ruined by nonhuman beings. So, *bhikkhus*, you should train in this

way: The heart-deliverance of loving-kindness will be maintained in being and made much of by us, used as our vehicle, used as our foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed. That is how you should train.

8. *From the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Ekanipāta VI 3-5 and XX, 2 (Spoken by the Buddha.)*¹⁶

Bhikkhus, if a *bhikkhu* repeats loving-kindness for as long as a finger snap, he is called a *bhikkhu*. He is not destitute of *jhāna* meditation, he carries out the Master's teaching, he responds to advice, and he does not eat the country's alms food in vain. So what should be said of those who make much of it?

9. *From the Dīgha Nikāya, Sutta 33 (Spoken by the Elder Sāriputta.)*¹⁷

Here, friends, a *bhikkhu* might say: 'When the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is maintained in being and made much of by me, used as my vehicle, used as my foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed, ill will nevertheless still invades my heart and remains'. He should be told:

'Not so. Let the worthy one not say so. Let him not misrepresent the Blessed One. It is not good to misrepresent the Blessed One. The Blessed One would not express it thus'. Friends, it is impossible, it cannot happen, that when the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is maintained in being and made much of, used as one's vehicle, used as one's foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed, ill-will can invade the heart and remain; for this, that is to say, the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness, is the escape from ill-will.

Loving-kindness as a Contemplation

10. *Mettā Sutta. From the Sutta-Nipāta, verses 143-52 (Spoken by the Buddha.)*¹⁸

What should be done by one skilful in good

So as to gain the State of Peace is this:

Let him be able, and upright, and straight
Easy to speak to, gentle, and not proud,
Contented too, supported easily,
With few tasks, and living very lightly,
His faculties serene, prudent, and modest
Unswayed by the emotions of the clans;
And let him never do the slightest thing
That other wise men might hold
blameable.

(And let him think:) 'In safety and in bliss

'May creatures all be of a blissful heart.

'Whatever breathing beings there may be,

'No matter whether they are frail or firm,

'With none excepted, be they long or big

'Or middle-sized, or be they short or small

'Or thick, as well as those seen or unseen,

'Or whether they are dwelling far or near,

'Existing or yet seeking to exist,

'May creatures all be of a blissful heart.

'Let no one work another one's undoing

'Or even slight him at all anywhere;

'And never let them wish each other ill

'Through provocation or resentful thought.'

And just as might a mother with her life

Protect the son that was her only child,

So let him then for every living thing

Maintain unbounded consciousness in being.

And let him too with love for all the world

Maintain unbounded consciousness in being

Above, below, and all round in between,
 Untroubled, with no enemy or foe.
 And while he stands or walks or while he
 sits
 Or while he lies down, free from
 drowsiness,
 Let him resolve upon this mindfulness:
 This is Divine Abiding here, they say.
 But when he has no trafficking with
 views,
 Is virtuous, and has perfected seeing,
 And purges greed for sensual desires,
 He surely comes no more to any womb.

11. *Methodical Practice: from the Paṭi
 sambhidāmagga*¹⁹ (traditionally ascribed to
 the Arahāt Sāriputta).

The heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is practised with unspecified extension, with specified extension, and with directional extension.

That with unspecified extension is practised in five ways as follows: May all creatures be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.²⁰

May all breathing things ... all beings ... all persons ... May all those who are embodied be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

That with specified extension is practised in seven ways as follows: May all women be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss. May all men ... all Noble Ones (who have attained the Noble Path) ... all who are not Noble Ones ... all deities ... all human beings ... May all those in the states of deprivation be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

That with directional extension is practised in ten ways as follows:

May all creatures in the eastern direction be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety and

may they guide themselves to bliss. May all creatures in the western direction ... in the northern direction ... in the southern direction ... in the eastern intermediate direction ... in the western intermediate direction ... in the northern intermediate direction ... in the southern intermediate direction ... in the downward direction ... May all those in the upward direction be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

May all breathing things...

May all beings...

May all persons...

May all those who are embodied...

May all women...

May all men...

May all Noble Ones...

May all who are not Noble Ones...

May all deities...

May all human beings...

May all those in the states of deprivation in the eastern direction be freed from enmity, distress and anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss ... May all those in states of deprivation in the upward direction be free from anxiety, and may they guide themselves to bliss.

12. *From the Abhidhamma Piṭaka
 Appamaññavibhaṅga* (Traditionally
 ascribed to the Buddha).²¹

And how does a bhikkhu abide with his heart endued with loving-kindness extending over one direction? Just as he would feel friendliness on seeing a dearly beloved person, so he extends loving-kindness to all creatures.

**As practised without insight in the Four
 Truths**

13. *From the Majjhima Nikāya, Sutta 99*
 (Spoken by the Buddha).²²

‘Master Gotama, I have heard it said that the Monk Gotama teaches the path to the Retinue of the High Divinity. It would be good if Master Gotama would teach me that.

‘Then listen and attend carefully to what I shall say.’

‘Even so, sir’ the Student Subha Todeyyaputta replied. The Blessed One said this:

‘And what is the path to the Retinue of the High Divinity? Here a *bhikkhu* abides with his heart endued with loving-kindness extending over one quarter, likewise the second quarter, likewise the third quarter, likewise the fourth quarter, and so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides with his heart abundant, exalted, measureless in loving-kindness, without hostility or ill-will, extending over the all-encompassing world. While this heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is maintained in being in this way, no action restricted by limited measurement is found there, none persists there. Just as a vigorous trumpeter could easily make himself heard in the four directions, so too when the heart-deliverance of loving-kindness is maintained in being in this way no action restricted by limited measurement is found there, none persists there. This is a path to the Retinue of the High Divinities.’

As practised with insight in the Four Truths

14. *From the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Catukkanipāta 125 (Spoken by the Buddha).*²³

Here, *bhikkhus*, a certain person abides with cognizance endued with loving-kindness extending over one quarter, likewise the second quarter, likewise the third quarter, likewise the fourth quarter, and so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides with abundant, exalted, measureless cognizance, without hostility or ill-will, extending over the all-encompassing world.

He finds gratification in that, finds it desirable and looks to it for his well-being; steady and resolute thereon, he abides much in it, and if he dies without losing it, he reappears among the gods of a High Divinity’s Retinue.

Now the gods of a High Divinity’s Retinue have a life-span of one aeon. An ordinary person (who has not attained the Noble Eightfold Path) stays there for his lifespan; but after he has used up the whole lifespan enjoyed by those gods, he leaves it all, and (according to what his past deeds may have been) he may go down even to hell, or to an animal womb, or to the Ghost Realm. But one who has given ear to the Perfect One stays there (in that heaven) for his lifespan, and after he has used up the whole lifespan enjoyed by those gods, he eventually attains complete extinction of lust, hate and delusion in that same kind of heavenly existence.

It is this that distinguishes, that differentiates, the wise hearer who is ennobled (by attainment of the Noble Path) from the unwise ordinary man, when, that is to say, there is a destination for reappearance (after death. But an Arahāt has made an end of birth).

15. *From Aṅguttara, Catukkanipāta 126 (Spoken by the Buddha).*²⁴

Here *bhikkhus*, a certain person abides with his heart endued with loving-kindness extending ... over the all-encompassing world.

Now whatever therein (during that state of contemplation) there exists classifiable as form, classifiable as feeling (of pleasure, pain, or neutrality), classifiable as perception, classifiable as determinative acts, or classifiable as consciousness, such ideas he sees as impermanent, as liable to suffering, as a disease, as a cancer, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien, as being worn away, as void, as not-self. On the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears (as a Non-Returner) in the Retinue of the Gods of the Pure Abodes (where there are only those who have reached the Noble Path and where

Extinction of greed, hate and delusion is reached in less than seven lives without return to this world). And this kind of reappearance is not shared by ordinary men (who have not reached the Noble Eightfold Path.)

The Arahāt

16. *From the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Tikaṇipāta 66 (Spoken by the Arahāt Nandaka).*²⁵

Thus I heard. On one occasion the venerable Nandaka was living at Sāvattṭhi in the Eastern Monastery, Migāra's "Mother's" palace. Then Migāra's grandson, Sālha, and Pekhuniya's grandson, Rohana, went to the venerable Nandaka, and after salutation they sat down at one side. When they had done so the venerable Nandaka said to Migāra's grandson Sālha:

'Come, Sālha, do not be satisfied with hearsay or with tradition or with legendary lore or with what has come down in scriptures or with conjecture or with logical inference or with weighing evidence or with a liking for a view after pondering it or with someone else's ability or with the thought "The monk is our teacher". When you know in yourself "These things are unprofitable, liable to censure, condemned by the wise, being adopted and put into effect, they lead to harm and suffering" then you should abandon them. What do you think? Is there greed?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'Covetousness is the meaning of that, I say. Through greed a covetous man kills breathing things, takes what is not given, commits adultery and utters falsehood, and he gets another to do likewise. Will that be long for his harm and suffering?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'What do you think, is there hate?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'Ill will is the meaning of that, I say. Through hate a malevolent man kills breathing things, ... 'Will that be long for his harm and suffering?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'What do you think? Is there delusion?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'Ignorance is the meaning of that, I say. Through ignorance a deluded man kills

breathing things, ... Will that be long for his harm and suffering?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'What do you think? Are these things profitable or unprofitable?' — 'Unprofitable, venerable sir.' — 'Reprehensible or blameless?' — 'Reprehensible, venerable sir.' — 'Condemned or commended by the wise?' — 'Condemned by the wise, venerable sir.' — 'Being adopted and put into effect, do they lead to harm and suffering, or do they not, or how does it appear to you in this case?' — 'Being adopted and put into effect, venerable sir, they lead to harm and suffering. So it appears to us in this case.' — 'Now that was the reason why I told you "Come, Sālha, do not be satisfied with hearsay, ... When you know in yourself "These things are unprofitable, ...", then you should abandon them".

'Come, Sālha, do not be satisfied with hearsay...or with the thought "The monk is our teacher". When you know in yourself "These things are profitable, blameless, commended by the wise, being adopted and put into effect, they lead to welfare and happiness", then you should practise them and abide in them. What do you think? Is there non-greed?²⁶ — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'Uncovetousness is the meaning of that, I say. Through non-greed an uncovetous man does not kill breathing things or take what is not given or commit adultery or utter falsehood, and he gets another to do likewise. Will that be long for his welfare and happiness?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'What do you think? Is there non-hate?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'Non-ill-will is the meaning of that, I say. Through Non-ill-will an unmalevolent man does not kill breathing things,...Will that be long for his welfare and happiness?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'What do you think? Is there non-delusion?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'True knowledge is the meaning of that, I say. Through non-delusion a man with true knowledge does not kill breathing things,... Will that be long for his welfare and happiness?' — 'Yes, venerable sir.' — 'What do you think? Are these things profitable or unprofitable?' — 'Profitable,

venerable sir.’ — ‘Reprehensible or blameless?’ — ‘Blameless, venerable sir.’ — ‘Condemned or commended by the wise?’ — ‘Commended by the wise, venerable sir.’ — ‘Being adopted and put into effect, do they lead to welfare and happiness, or do they not, or how does it appear to you in this case?’ — ‘Being adopted and put into effect, venerable sir, they lead to welfare and happiness. So it appears to us in this case.’ — ‘Now that was the reason why I told you “Come, Sālha, do not be satisfied with hearsay... When you know in yourself “These things are profitable,...”, then you should practise them and abide in them”’.

Now a hearer who is ennobled (by reaching the Noble Path), who has rid himself in this way of covetousness and ill-will and is undeluded, abides with his heart endued with loving-kindness extending over one quarter, likewise the second quarter, likewise the third quarter, likewise the fourth quarter, and so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself; he abides with his heart abundant, exalted, measureless in loving-kindness without hostility or ill-will, extending over the all-encompassing world. He abides with his heart endued with compassion...; gladness...; equanimity...; ... extending over the all-encompassing world. Now he understands this state of contemplation in this way: ‘There is this (state of Divine Abiding in me who has entered the Stream). There is what has been abandoned (which is the amount of greed, hate and delusion exhausted by the Stream-entry Path). There is a superior goal (which is Arahatsip). And there is an ultimate escape from this whole field of perception’. When he knows and sees in this way, his heart is liberated from the taint of sensual desire, from the taint of being, and from the taint of ignorance. When liberated (by reaching the Arahats Path), there comes thereafter the knowledge that it is liberated. He knows that birth is ended, that the Divine Life has been lived out, that what has to be done is done, and there is no more of this to come. He understands thus: ‘Formerly there was greed,

which was bad, and now there is none, which is good. Formerly there was hate, which was bad, and now there is none, which is good. Formerly there was delusion, which was bad, and now there is none, which is good. So here and now in this very life he is parched no more (by the fever of craving’s thirst), his fires of greed, hate and delusion are extinguished and cooled out, experiencing bliss, he abides (for the remainder of his last lifespan) divinely pure in himself’.

1 Available in booklet form from: BUDDHIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY, Kandy, Ceylon.

2 By eliminating lust, hate and delusion, one attains *nibbāna*.

3 Visuddhimagga, 9. Brahmavihāra Niddesa, Mettābhāvana Kathā., pg. 287. (6th Synod. Edition.)

4 Dīgha Nikāya, Mahāvagga Pāli 9. Mahāsatiṭṭhāna, Cittānupassanā. pg. 237. (6th Synod. Edition.)

5 Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlaphaṇṇāsa Pāli 1-Mūlapariyāya Vagga 10-Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta. p. 70. (6th Synod. Edition.)

6 Dīgha Nikāya, Mahāvagga Pāli, 3. Mahātparinibbāna Sutta, Ariya Sacca Kathā, pg 77, (6th Synod Edition)

7 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Sattaka-Nipāta Pāli, 6-Abyākata Vagga; 11-Kodana Sutta, Para 64, pg. 469. (6th Synod, Edition.)

8 Dhamma.

9 Khuddaka Nikāya; Dhammapada, Pāli, 1. Yamaka vagga 3-Tissathera Vatthu, Verses (3-5), Pg. 13-14 (6th Synod Ed.)

10 Majjhima Nikāya, Upariṭṭhāsa Pāli, 3-Suññata vagga, Para 237, pg. 192 (6th Synod Ed.)

11 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Pañcaka-nipāta Pāli, 4-Catuttha-ṭṭhāsa, (17)-(2). Āghāta vagga, 1-Āghātapati-vinaya Sutta. pg. 164 (6th Synod. Ed.)

12 Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi, 3-Opamma vagga, 1-Kakasūpama Sutta. Para 227, pg. 178. (6th Synod Edition.)

13 Khuddaka Nikāya, Itivuttaka Pāḷi' 1. Ekaka Nipāta, 7. Mettā Bhāvanā Sutta, Para 27, pg. 208. (6th Synod. Edition.)

14 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Ekādassa Nipāta Pāḷi, 2-Anussati Vagga, 5. Mettā Sutta, Para 15, pg. 542, (6th Synod. Edition.)

15 Saṃyutta Nikāya, Nidāna Vagga Saṃyutta Pāḷi, 9. Opamma Saṃyutta, 3. Kula Sutta, Para 225, (pg. 444-445, (6th Synod, Edition.)

16 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Ekaka nipāta Pāḷi, 6. Accharia saṅghāra vagga, Para 53-55 pg. 9-10. (6th Synod. Edition.)

17 Dīgha Nikāya, Pāthika-vagga Pāḷi, 10-Saṅgītisutta. Sakka, Para 326, pg. 205, (6th Synod. Edition.)

18 Khuddaka Nikāya, Sutta-nipāta Pāḷi, 1. Uraga Vagga, 8. Mettā Sutta, verses 143-152.

19 Khuddaka Nikāya, Patīsambhidā Magga Pāḷi, 2-Yugananda Vagga, 4-Metta kathā, Para 22, pg. 314. (6th Synod Edition.) and Visuddhi Magga, 9. Brahma Vihāra

niddesa, Mettābhāvanākathā, Para 255, Pg. 302 (6th Synod Edition.)

20 Pāḷi is :—Sukī attānaṃ pariharantu = (May they live in happiness and peace.)

21 Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga Pali. 13-Appamaññā Vibaṅga, 1-Suttanta Bhājanīya. 1-Metta, Para 643, pg. 284, (6th Synod. Edition.)

22 Majjhima Nikāya, Majjhima Paṇṇāsa Pāḷi, 5-Brahma Vagga, 9-Subha Sutta. pg. 422. (6th Synod Edition.)

23 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Catukka Nipāta Pāḷi, 3. Tatiya Paṇṇāsaka, (13)-3-Bhaya Vagga, 5. Paṭṭhana Mettā Sutta pg. 443, (6th Synod Edition.)

24 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Catukka Nipāta Pāḷi, 3. Tatiya Paṇṇāsaka, (13)-3-Bhaya Vagga, 6. Dutiya Mettā (Sutta, Para 126, pg. 445; (6th Synod Edition.)

25 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Tikanipāta Pāḷi, 2-Dutiya Paṇṇāsaka, (7),-2-Mahā Vagga, 6-Sālha Sutta, pg. 194; 6th Synod Edition.)

26 The positive concept of Alobha, Adosa, Amoha (non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion) is, Disinterestedness, Amity and Wisdom.

RECENT APPRECIATIONS

POLAND:

From the bottom of my heart I thank you for all you have done for me having sent me every number of your splendid magazine. I want to assure you that the more I study and practise THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA the more I appreciate it. It is not exhausted by one course of study. I do my best to go through them again and again. Not only the glorious Dhamma is right but your way or putting it is so sound. A mine of Noble Wisdom.

ITALY:

I thank you infinitely, I receive regularly THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA from Vol. V. No. 4 in each there are very good articles which I should like to translate into Italian and Spanish. Can you send me all back numbers of THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA? I am getting out a new magazine in Italian and Spanish. Enclosed is a list for sample copies of English-reading Buddhist sympathisers in various parts of the world.

ONE'S OWN GOOD —AND ANOTHER'S

By U Ohn Ghine.

This is not an article about *kamma* and rebirth, but in order to explain the Buddhist attitude to life and 'Social Welfare' an introductory explanation is necessary.

Quite often friends who are not Buddhist, and even those who are but have either newly come to realise the Buddha's Teaching or are Buddhists mainly because their fathers were, find their greatest difficulty in understanding the 'long view' of Buddhism and that what the Buddha discovered and taught to men was a complete cure for the disease of life and not a mere palliative.

It is largely because they do not accept the truth of *kamma* and rebirth or only half accept it.

It is in the nature of things that *kamma* and rebirth should be so difficult of conscious acceptance. There are those who accept it because it was taught in early childhood and yet bury it below their level of conscious thought, together with half-formed fears and doubts that have arisen. There are those who will resist any seeming proof of *kamma* and rebirth since they find it so totally different to all they have heretofore been told. They will accept the most absurd and impossible things as dogma, things that are not at all susceptible of proof and can but remain dogma, rather than give the slightest credence to the idea of rebirth.

Yet, taking it just for the sake of argument as a working hypothesis; it has never been disproved and cannot be disproved and is so far the only hypothesis put forward that completely explains the facts. And it is at least the best working hypothesis there is for an understanding of man and his place in the universe.

There are those who know that *kamma* and rebirth are true but either find it impossible to say how they came by that knowledge, and therefore stand convicted in the eyes of the clever worldlings of 'self-hypnosis' and 'easy credulity', or whose knowledge, memory of previous existences, is at most valid only for themselves and still susceptible to the worldlings' view that it is self-hypnosis and imagination.

There have been many articles on *kamma* and rebirth published in the LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA from time to time and two in this issue. While such articles are only of academic interest to the man who knows that *kamma* and rebirth are of the process, and are unlikely to persuade anybody who, from early childhood, has been mentally and emotionally, particularly emotionally, conditioned to quite other 'views,' they are very helpful to those who have a faint idea of rebirth already and whose faint idea can be helped by reinforcement.

Such articles are very necessary in giving an idea of the Buddhist placement of values, and should be studied by those who find it difficult to understand the 'long view.'

When a cultured Western lady asks, in all sincerity and after surveying for a year the Burmese scene. 'Why are devout Buddhist laymen not so interested in Social Welfare as their Christian counterparts in Western countries?' or on another level, with not so much opportunity of 'surveying the scene' a Western air-pilot asks: 'Isn't it bad to escape in "Meditation" to save oneself when there is so much good needing to be done in the world?' or, on still another level, a pushing Western Association of 'good' men tries to bring Buddhist monks into 'Social Welfare' work, the difference between a palliative and a cure

must be stressed; and there must be some attempt to bridge the wide and difficult gulf of different outlook.

First of all, however, it must be stressed that there is nothing in the Buddha's Teaching against 'Social Welfare' but very much the reverse. It must also be stressed that there are many devout Buddhist laymen actively and physically (as well as monetarily) interesting themselves and engaging themselves in Social Welfare, and making a good job of it.

That is not always immediately apparent to the Western visitor who sees so much to be done and expects to see people running round 'organizing' things and other people. Here, at least in Burma, a great deal is being done, perhaps a little less noisily than it is done in some other places.

So much remains to be done in Asia, in all of Asia, not only in the Buddhist countries, because all of Asia had been disorganized by military or economic penetration, where it was not by both. But that is quite another story.

The clock cannot be put back nor can it, all circumstances considered, be speeded up too drastically, too quickly, without risking disaster. Those who know the circumstances see a very great deal being done while those who do not know think nothing is happening. The digression is necessary lest you should get a wrong idea from what follows.

It must be mentioned also that it is the Buddhist feeling of *mettā* (loving-kindness to all) that in truly Buddhist countries has ensured that there is a degree of 'Social Welfare' right 'from the grass roots' and springing from the heart, and ending in practical help that, because it is unregimented and unorganised, is not always so apparent to the casual onlooker. This is not at all to say that more of it is not needed or that it would not be better if a little better organized. But that also is another story.

BUDDHIST BHIKKHUS AND THEIR NOBLE WORK.

Before going on to consider the Buddhist outlook that colours all of the way of life of bhikkhus and laymen we should think of the duties and responsibilities entrusted to the *bhikkhus* by the Buddha. There were two, *dvedhurāni*, two burdens or responsibilities: *ganthadhura* and *vipassanādhura*.

The first of these is 'the responsibility of study' in order to learn the Teaching and be able to transmit and keep alive the Teaching. The second is the responsibility of practising Mental Development for Insight-knowledge so that the Teaching may be the better kept alive, so that the influence of one himself wholly freed may be to the benefit of many.

For the Buddha had said in the Eighteenth Discourse of the *Majjhima Nikāya*.¹

"But Cunda, that one who himself is in the mire should pull out of the mire another sunk therein,—this, verily, is an unheard-of thing. But that one himself clear of the slough should be able to lift out of the slough another foundered therein,—such a thing may well be. And that one who himself is not subdued, not disciplined, has not attained to the Extinction of Delusion, should cause others to become subdued, and disciplined, to attain to the Extinction of Delusion,— such a thing has never been known. But that one, himself controlled, trained, delivered from delusion, should lead others to become controlled and trained, lead them to Deliverance from Delusion,—such a thing may very well be."

And he had also pointed out the advantage of helping the many to a critic who thought that such a practice conduced but to welfare of oneself.²

"Now, master Gotama, he who goes forth as wanderer from this or that family from the home to the homeless life, tames only the single self, calms only the single self: leads to Nibbāna only the single self. So what I say is, thus he is proficient in practice of merit that

affects only one person, as a result of his going forth.

‘Well, brahmin, as to that I will question you. Do you answer as you think fit. Now what think you, brahmin? In this connection a Tathāgata arises in the world, an Arahat who is a Fully Enlightened One, perfect in knowledge and practice, Wellfarer, World-knower, incomparable Charioteer of men to be tamed, Teacher of Devas and mankind, a Buddha, an Exalted One. He says thus: “Come! this is the way, this is the practice, proficient in which I make known that incomparable bliss which is steeped in the holy life, by my own powers of comprehension realizing it. Come ye also! Practise so that ye too may be proficient therein, so that ye too by your own powers of comprehension may realize it and abide therein.”

Thus this teacher teaches Dhamma and others too practise to attain that end. Moreover there are many hundreds, many thousands, many hundreds of thousands of such. Now what think you, Brahmin? Since this is so, is it a practice of inert affecting only one person or many persons that is, the result of going forth.”

It will be readily understood that there is a set responsibility for a bhikkhu and it is for this that the Yellow Robe is donned. This is the highest possible service to mankind.

The first nine of the ‘twenty-one wrong kinds of occupation for a bhikkhu’ deal, seven of them with administering medical treatment of one sort or another and two with going on errands or performing duties at the behest of laymen, and naturally this precludes the type of ‘Social Service’ envisaged by the good Organisation referred to above.

It may be asked in one of those hypothetical questions that some folk love to pose; ‘If a bhikkhu saw a man dying, should he not pause and save him if he could?’ The answer is, of course, in the affirmative as the Rules were not made, as some modern rules are, to be enforced against reason and loving-kindness.

The Buddha once pointed out to a group of monks who in their intentness on gaining the ‘higher things’ were neglecting one of their number who was seriously ill that they should look after each other in such respects. He was very emphatic about this.³

However if a bhikkhu has it in his heart to go round tending the sick as an occupation, that is a totally different matter. His rules and common-sense alike demand that he disrobe and do noblest work a layman can.

PALLIATIVE OR CURE?

The position of the ‘devout Buddhist layman’ is different. He may, and very certainly where possible should do as much in public service and social welfare as he can, unless and until he feels that he can do something better. Then he will very likely, though not necessarily, become a bhikkhu.

But even here there is a difference in outlook from that of the average Western man of good will.

Nothing so highlights the difference in thinking of the ‘pure Materialist’, the devout Theist, and the Buddhist as the outlook in respect of Suffering.

A very recent controversy in England widely reported in the world press helps to make the relative positions and viewpoints clearer.

A Dr. Maurice Congley Millard reported that he gave a fatal dose of drugs, at the request of the patient, to a woman suffering from incurable cancer.

The pure Materialists said: ‘Quite right, saves the State a great deal of wasted effort and puts her out of her misery.’

The Theists were rather divided about it all. One Christian church had three views: one of its leaders applauded the doctor’s action, another disagreed and said that drugs should not be used to end life. A spokesman for the church said there was no ‘official’ view and

that 'any attempt to make one would be keenly contested.'

Other Theists had other views. 'If it were not God's Will that she should suffer' said one 'she would not suffer, and one should not interfere with God's Will.'

The logical conclusion to this seems to be that even were the cancer curable, it should not be cured; although there are others who would regard themselves as 'God's Instruments' to cure suffering. The same view extended can 'justify' those who regarded themselves as 'God's Instruments' to burn 'heretics' at the stake.

Of the pure Materialist and the Theist, it is the former who is logical. If one postulates this life ended entirely at death, then the Materialist position is the only logical and correct one. Its extension to the killing off, whether they wish it or no, badly injured, extremely weak and very old people is also correct and logical.

The Theist finds it hard to be consistent because nowhere ever has 'God,' any God, clearly and unequivocally expressed His Will in such matters.

The cancer patient, in the case in question, was stated to have 'made her peace with God' and was presumably satisfied that she would go to 'Heaven.' According to her lights, and those of the doctor if he is a fellow-believer, her position and his are logical and correct.

There are billions of thought-moments in the time it takes to blink one's eyes, so fantastically rapid is the stream of thought, and if her last thought-moment was one of peace and set on a 'heaven-state' she would, indeed, enter that state temporarily. But as to her last thought-moment, only the being she has since become would know that, possibly, but not surely for at that time it is rare for memory to be strong.

Take another angle. A recent Conference on 'Family Planning' in a thickly populated Asian country concluded that there must be 'Birth Control.' A report of this in an Asian

magazine featured several photographs of participating Westerners. It can hardly be by co-incidence that they all looked very unhappy people, though one could hardly decide whether they were unhappy because they were advocating Asian Birth Control or were advocating Asian Birth Control because they are unhappy.

It seems though that one must ask '*Cui-bono...*' '... Whose good?'

The Director for a Research in Population Problems of an American University says:

'At the beginning of what is called the atomic age our world has approximately 2,850 million people. If population were to continue to increase at the 1958 rate of 1.8 percent it would amount to nearly 6 billion at the end of the present century. In about eight centuries from now there would be one person per square feet of the world's area, including its deserts, mountains and oceans. This of course would be an impossible situation?'

'Control by Fate or Foresight'

Pascal K. Whelpton.

Another alternative that has been suggested, but which nobody has dared to emphasize, is to 'dispose of eugenically' and 'put out of their misery' all people who reach a certain age. Indeed it has only been suggested as a possibility, a necessary possibility, of the future.

In all countries men are frantically working on problems of nutrition, and of irrigating deserts and, in the Arctic, clearing laneways through ice-bound seas to make possible easier food transport and open up new country for the production of food.

Men are beginning to see that without waiting for the eight centuries to pass, without waiting even for the end of this century, sufficient food for all is going to be a problem calling for solution either by a wholesale massacre, by a world government outlawing unlicensed birth, or by a concerted effort to produce more food including synthetics that

take up smaller space; and the conditioning of mankind to a smaller intake, i.e. to the digestion and efficient metabolism of a smaller bulk to maintain life. In such case there would arise again problems that would make to-day's 'good' the 'bad' of to-morrow. One, for instance, could visualise the world government overriding the 'reactionary religious scruples' of a large portion of India's population and demanding the slaughter of all cows (except those permitted to zoos) as unwieldy and inefficient wasters of food and cumberers of the earth's surface, since synthetics could be used so much better than meat, butter and milk.

This is not a digression and this is very serious: one cannot arrive at a conception of 'Good' without 'looking before and after.' It introduces the question of palliative or cure.

THE LONG VIEW.

What do you believe really? Do you really and sincerely and consistently believe 'with your whole heart' that merely by a fortuitous set of circumstances and without any volition on your part, at any time in the past, you have come to be what you are now? And are you consistent enough to believe, without any doubts, that therefore, when you die, maybe before you have finished reading this or maybe shortly after, there is nothing left behind but your rather small impact on infinity?

Or do you believe that what you are now has been due partly to your own volition and power since birth? If so, from what age? If you believe this, what percentage of your present 'personality' is due to 'you'? If 'you' is not a flux that changes moment by moment what is it?

If you believe in the coming-to-be of 'you' by chance accidents (such a very different 'you', if you look at yourself in the mirror, than the 'you' at birth) and that therefore you owe nothing to the past as far as 'you' are concerned, and that on the death of the 'you' (such different 'you', if you live a few years

longer, than the present 'you') there will be nothing left of 'you,' why are you worried enough to read this?

It is really quite important, if you are really to consider your own good and that of others, to consider it sensibly, and not merely as a heart-warming exercise between drinks.

Communists, as well as quite a few people who are certainly not Communists, make much of the idea of 'The good of the world,' and of 'Posterity'— but there was a very great deal of truth actually in the exclamation of Sir Boyle Roche: 'Posterity! Why should we consider posterity; what has posterity done for us?'

That is of course in relation to the purely materialist idea. If one postulates 'a loving Father in Heaven' and 'Brotherhood of Man,' with the loving, and only occasionally 'angry' Father, keeping an eye on His Sons from time to time, one may have a different idea.

Here one must be consistent and admit that even if one postulates such a 'Father', and the very word shows the origin and the wish, one must consider that, even granted the independent existence of a 'Father,' there are two things that follow:

(a) The 'Father' must also be a changing flux since the minds of men that 'know Him,' even the minds at their peak, the minds of the mystics in supramundane trance, are themselves a flux.

(b) It is these minds that do most of the creating and that in any case colour all they contact, so that even if the mind of man has not 'created God in its own image' it has at least draped all the attributes on a very bare skeleton.

One can see this from the fact that by all accounts 'The Father' has, like the best of men short of the arahats, a divided mind and so is slightly schizophrenic. As Goethe was constrained to write: '*Nemo contra Deum nisi Deus ipse*'—'There is nobody against God unless it be God Himself.'

So whatever extreme ‘view’ you take, either of there being nothing beyond this life or of an omnipotent ‘Creator’ who has made all things, you are unable to find any sure cure for your own ills, let alone for those of the world; and you may as easily do harm in your attempts to do good.

For a man who cannot swim at all to jump into the deep sea to ‘save’ another who is drowning is not an act of bravery but an act of foolishness. If he can swim a little and takes the calculated risk of being drowned himself but takes the risk because he has at least a chance of upholding the drowning man for a brief period until coming help arrives, he is acting bravely and wisely.

There is a story told by Voltaire of a young traveller who fell in with a strange old man as travelling companion. One evening they were charitably taken in by a poor widow who gave them lodging and fed them without charge from her scanty store. Her hospitality extended to sending her only son, a boy who would support her in her old age, as guide for part of the way.

When they came to a bridge across a rocky and swift-flowing stream, the strange old man suddenly seized the boy and pushed him off the bridge into the raging torrent below where he was dashed against the rocks and killed.

The young man exclaimed in horror and thought his old companion was a devil but the old man then appeared as a Deva and told the young man that he had repaid the widow for her kindness and hospitality by saving her from heartbreak and a horrible death, as the young boy, had he lived, would have stolen and got her into serious trouble, finally murdering her.

The reverse of this moral is that much of the ‘good’ we do has evil results and it behoves us to ‘first get wisdom’. To do this we must find out what we are. That does not at all mean that we should let our thoughts run round in circles. That way lies no release, as the Buddha pointed out:⁴

“And of his foolishness he ponders thus: ‘Have I verily been in bygone times or have I not been? What have I been in those bygone times? How have I been in bygone times? What was I before I became what I was in the far distant past? Shall I verily be in far-off days to come or shall I not be? What shall I be in those far-off days to come? How shall I be in the far-off days to come? What shall I be before I become what I shall be in the far distant future?’ The present also supplies him with matter for doubt, and he asks himself: ‘Am I now or am I not? and if I am, what am I and in what way? This present being,—whence has it come and whither is it going?’

And with such cognitions he arrives at one or other of the following six views, the which becomes his solemn and settled conviction: — either the view, ‘I have a self,’ or else the view, ‘I have not a self,’ or the view, ‘By self I apprehend self,’ or the view, ‘By self I apprehend non-self,’ or else the view, ‘By non-self I apprehend self.’ Or perhaps he adopts the view: ‘This identical self of mine, I maintain, is veritably to be found, now here, now there, reaping the fruits of its good and of its evil deeds; and this, my self, is a thing permanent, constant, eternal, not subject to change, and so abides for ever.’ But this, *Bhikkhus*, is a walking in mere opinion, a resorting to mere views; a barren waste of views; an empty display of views. All this is merely to writhe, caught in the toils of views. Held thus fast in the bonds of views the uninstructed man of the world remains unfreed from birth, growth, and decay, and death; is not delivered from sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair; in brief, he obtains no release from suffering.’

The first thing to find is that we are not ‘I’ or ‘you,’ and that can be found by realising, by fully realising, Impermanence.⁵

‘Just as, brethren, of all starry bodies whatsoever, the radiance does not equal one sixteenth part of the moon’s radiance, just as the moon is reckoned chief of them; even so is it with the perceiving of impermanence...

Just as, brethren, in the autumn season, when the sky is opened up and cleared of clouds, the sun, leaping up into the firmament, drives away all darkness from the heavens, and shines and burns and flashes forth; even so, brethren, the perceiving of impermanence, if practised and enlarged, wears out all sensual lust, wears out all lust for body, all desire for rebirth, all ignorance, wears out, tears out, all conceit of "I am."

And in what way, brethren, does it so wear them out?

It is by seeing: "Such is body, such is the arising of body, such is the ceasing of body, such is feeling, perception, the activities, such is consciousness, its arising and its ceasing.

Even thus practised and enlarged, brethren, does the perceiving of impermanence wear out all sensual lust, all lust for body, all desire for rebirth, all ignorance, wears out all conceit of "I am."

But let us see how long is the long view.

The Buddha pointed out more than two thousand five hundred years ago that there exist countless universes with their suns and planets and moons and stars, lying in every direction round this universe. This, which was 'fanciful' to the West a hundred years ago, modern science is now learning how to prove, having seen that it is sober fact.

As for time, no better 'picture' of its duration can be shown than the one given by the Buddha.⁶

'Just as if there were a mighty mountain crag four leagues in length, breadth, and height, without a crack or cranny, not hollowed out, one solid mass of rock, and a man should come at the end of every century, and with a fine cloth of Banaras should once on each occasion stroke that rock: sooner would that mighty mountain crag be worn away by this method, sooner be used up, than the aeon.

Thus long, is the aeon: of aeons thus long many an aeon has passed away, many hundred

aeons, many a thousand aeons, many a hundred thousand aeons.'

THE BUDDHIST LAYMAN AND 'SOCIAL SERVICE'.

Let us try to pull the threads together. We have seen that the world of a Buddhist *bhikkhu* is more noble and more necessary than Social Service but that Social Service is a noble and necessary occupation from the Buddhist standpoint for a dedicated layman.

A layman may be both in the world and of it. He can, and should, also, be strenuous in attempting to leave the world behind. If he is set entirely upon the higher life, he may become a *bhikkhu*, just as a *bhikkhu* who feels a greater necessity to perform Social Service than to do those things for which the Noble Order was instituted, may become a good and devout layman.

A devout Buddhist layman will first of all keep the five precepts. Even by just doing that he is setting an example to others visibly, and in more subtle ways, an example that is never without influence for good. 'They also serve who only stand and wait.'

By going further, by practising the four *Brahma Viharas*, the active, intense, radiation of loving-kindness, compassion, joy in the achievements and gains of others, and tranquillity, tranquillity for himself and others, he is influencing many for good, in perhaps too subtle a way to be realised in full even by himself.

By going further still and practising *Vipassanābhāvanā*, mental development for Insight-wisdom, he is influencing all of existence.

This practice is by no means 'escapist.' The man who lulls himself with alcohol, tobacco or even good books, good paintings and good music is thereby escaping, in some degree, from reality; but the man who is facing reality, and that is the beginning of the practice, is doing the very opposite. It is the first who is

‘negative’ and the second who takes the positive approach really. In this way, always bearing in mind ‘the long view,’ a man is doing more than he could ever do in his endeavours to be ‘his brother’s keeper.’

That does not at all mean that he should not do all that he can to help all sentient beings, physically and materially as well as in other ways. The Buddha, as usual, put it in a clear and rational way!

⁷ ‘On a certain occasion the Exalted One was staying among the Sumbha, at Desaka, a district of Sumbha.

On that occasion the Exalted One addressed the monks, saying:

“Once upon a time, monks, a bamboo acrobat set up his pole and called to his pupil, Medakathālikā, saying:

“Now, you climb the pole and stand on my shoulder.”

“All right, master,” replied the pupil to the bamboo acrobat, climbed the pole and stood on the master’s shoulder.

Then said the master to his pupil: “Now, Medakathālikā, you watch me and I’ll watch you. Thus watched and warded by each other, we’ll show our tricks, get a good fee and come down safe from the bamboo pole.”

At these words Medakathālikā the pupil replied:

“No, no! That won’t do, master! You look after yourself and I’ll look after myself. Thus watched and warded, each by himself we’ll show our tricks, get a good fee and come down safe from the bamboo pole. That’s the way to do it!

Then said the Exalted One: ‘Now, monks, just as Medakathālikā the pupil said to the master: “I’ll look after myself,” so ought ye to observe the station of mindfulness which means “I’ll ward myself.” likewise that which means “We’ll ward another.” By warding oneself, monks, one wards another. By warding another one wards himself.

And how, monks, by warding oneself does one ward another?

It is by following after, by cultivating, by making much of him.

And how, monks, by warding another does one ward himself?

It is by forbearance, by harmlessness, by goodwill, by compassion towards him. That, monks, is how he wards himself.

Monks, ye must observe the station of mindfulness which means: “I’ll ward another,” It is by warding self, monks, that one wards another.

It is by warding another that one wards himself.’

It should perhaps be explained that these ‘bamboo-acrobats’ perform various feats, such as the master balancing the pole on his chest and the pupil climbing the pole and balancing on the top. Were one to neglect for a moment the business in hand, his own side of it, it might easily spell disaster to both.

By protecting oneself well, taking ‘the long view’ and the moral outlook, the knowledge and wisdom to realise that morality and loving-kindness are the best way of guarding oneself, one guards others, influencing the world even if one is far from the world.

If one takes ‘the long view’ and lives a purely moral life with sustained loving-kindness to all, one thereby protects oneself in the best possible way, and guards others in the best possible way, influencing the world for good even if ‘far from the madding crowd’s ignoble strife.’

This can perhaps be better understood if one thinks of the times when impending danger to a loved one has been ‘felt’ though divided by distance.

All but the most extreme extroverts have had such an experience at least faintly. Mental development (Bhāvanā) strengthens that bond, extends it, and enables one to influence for good all that lives and breathes. One then, in

every way, physically, where possible as well as mentally, protects and guards other. This is the surest way to protect and guard oneself, as even the extreme extroverts are beginning to see in this shrinking world which daily becomes more vulnerable to terrible destruction.

This article has necessarily been somewhat discursive but may help you to formulate some thoughts on the real and lasting good of yourself and others, and of the Buddhist teaching thereon.

1 Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi, 1. Mūlapariyāya Vagga, 8-Sanllekha Sutta, pg 54-55, 6th. Synod Edition.

2 Aṅguttara Nikāya Tikanipāta Pāḷi, 2. Dutiyaṇṇāsaka, (6)—I. Brahmaṇavagga, 10. Saṅgāra Sutta pg. 168, 169, 6th Synod Edition.

3 Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga Pāḷi, 8—Cīvarakkhandhaka, 224—Gilānavatthu Katha, Para 365, pg. 417-418, 6th Synod Edition.

4 Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi, 1. Mūlapariyāya vagga, 2—Sabbāsava Sutta, pg. 10-11, 6th. Synod Edition.

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