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*of the*  
**DHAMMA**

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*The* LIGHT  
*of the*  
DHAMMA

VOL. VIII

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2504 B.E.

APRIL 1961 C.E.



## THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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# EDITORIAL

## CETANĀ

### (VOLITION)

Cetanā is generally translated as “volition” or “will”. According to Psychology volition means self-conscious activity towards a determined end, manifested primarily in decision and intention.”

*Cetanā* is one of the seven *Sabba-citta-sā-dhāraṇa-cetasikas* (concomitants which are common to every act of consciousness). It has the characteristic of urging or causing to exert. Its function is to gather its associate concomitants and cause them to perform their respective functions simultaneously with it. It accomplishes its own and others’ functions as a senior pupil or a general does. It is manifested as an instructive factor, e.g., Do this; do that. Its proximate causes are its associate concomitants.

A senior pupil prepares and studies his lessons and at the same time causes the junior pupils to prepare their lessons and study them.

A general also fights the battle himself and causes his soldiers to fight simultaneously. So *cetanā* is compared to a senior pupil or a general.

In his *Āhāra Dīpanī* (Manual of Nutriment) the Venerable Mahāthera Ledi Sayadaw elaborately expounded the immense power of *cetanā* as follows: “The *dhmma* which incessantly urges or causes the mind and its associate concomitants to become restless and chase various kinds of objects is called *cetanā*. Try to discern that mind is restless and ever fleeting. When one encounters an object of *lobha* (greed), it is *cetanā* which drags that *lobha* out and invariably directs it towards the object of greed. It also urges or causes one to enjoy sensuous pleasures. Similar processes take place in the cases of *dosa* (hatred) and *moha* (delusion).

“Worldlings naturally possess very little *cetanā* in respect of *saddhā* (faith), *paññā*

(wisdom), *dāna* (almsgiving), *sīla* (morality), and *bhāvanā* (mental concentration). As regards them it urges, drives or causes the mind in a dilatory manner and not very quickly. There has to be a lot of external means or support, such as reflecting on the dangers of arising in hells, and the advantages of performing wholesome volitional actions for *cetanā* to urge or drive the mind towards them, because mind delights in evil.<sup>1</sup> When *cetanā* has to cause a person to go to a place where he desires to go very much, it acts very quickly; but if it has to cause him to go to a place where he does not like to go, it acts very slowly.

“There are fifty kinds of concomitants<sup>2</sup> in *Saṅkhārakkhandha* (Group of mental formations), and the relation between *cetanā* and the remaining forty-nine concomitants may be explained by the following example:

“Suppose in a harbour there are forty-nine barges fully loaded with goods, and there is only one big steamer, which has to tow these forty-nine barges from one riverine port to another. Now the spectators on the bank of the river may say: ‘This steamer has towed such and such a barge and gone to the mid-stream and will call at such and such a port.’ Similarly, *cetanā* sometimes drags *lobha* out and unfliningly drives it towards the object of greed. Sometimes it drags *dosa* out and unfliningly drives it towards the object of hatred. The cases of the remaining forty-nine concomitants of *Saṅkhārakkhandha* may be considered likewise.”

“*Vedanā* and *Saññā* perform their functions in their respective fields, but they are not able to cause other concomitants to perform their respective functions simultaneously. Hence

<sup>1</sup> Dhammapada, verse 116.

<sup>2</sup> Fifty-two concomitants except *vedanā* and *saññā*.

*cetanā* is the predominating factor in every action.”

When any action of thought, word, or body, takes place, *cetanā* marshals its concomitants to perform their respective functions. Thus all actions of beings are determined by this *cetanā*. Therefore it is even called kamma.<sup>3</sup>

In the Nibbedhika Sutta<sup>4</sup> the Buddha declares: “By action, Bhikkhus, I mean volition. It is through volition or self-instigation or incitement that a man does something in the form of deed, speech or thought.”

*Cetanā* arises in connection with *rūpa* (matter), *sadda* (sound), *gandha* (smell), *rasa* (taste), *phoṭṭhabba* (physical contact) and *dhamma* (ideas or mental objects) and incites (and conducts) actions with reference to them.

Actions incited (and conducted) by *cetanā* may be physical, verbal or mental; they may be good or bad; and they will produce good or bad results.

In the first link of the Dependent Origination “*Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā* (Through Ignorance, Kamma formations arise)”, actions, which *cetanā* incites (and conducts) are divided into three classes according to their qualities—viz:—

1. *Puññābhisankāra* (kamma formations of merit),
2. *Apuññābhisankāra* (kamma formations of demerit),
3. *Āneñjābhisankhāra* (kamma formations of the imperturbable).

They are also divided into three other classes according to their bases—viz:—

1. *Kāyasaṅkhāra* (the bodily kamma formations).
2. *Vacīsaṅkhāra* (the verbal kamma formations), and

3. *Cittasaṅkhāra* (the mental kamma formations).

Wholesome volitions in the Sensuous Sphere (*Kāmāvācāra*) and the Form Sphere (*Rūpāvācāra*) culminating in *dāna* (almsgiving), *sīla* (morality) and *bhāvanā* (mental concentration) are *Puññābhisankāra*.

Unwholesome volitions are *Apuññābhisankāra*.

Wholesome volitions in practicing mental concentration in the Formless Sphere (*Arūpāvācāra*) are *Āneñjābhisankhāra*.

Volitions connected with physical action are called *Kāyasaṅkhāra*.

Volitions connected with speech are called *Vacīsaṅkhāra*.

Volitions that arise only in the mind (and not connected with the bodily and verbal functions) are called *Cittasaṅkhāra*.

So in the Bhūmija Sutta<sup>5</sup> the Buddha declares: “Where there have been deeds *Ānanda*, happiness and ill arise in consequence of *Kāyasañcetanā* (bodily volition). When there has been speech, happiness and ill arise in consequence of *Vacīsañcetanā* (verbal volition). Where there has been mental action happiness and ill arise in consequence of *Manosañcetanā* (mental volition).

This volitional act does not cease at the biological death of a being, but it acts as a condition to the arising of a new existence immediately after the death-proximity in the present life. It ceases only when the being eradicates all defilements and attains *anupādisesa-nibbāna* (*Nibbāna* without the constituent groups of existence remaining).

In the Dependent Origination, the second link is *Saṅkhāra paccayā viññānaṃ*” (Through Kamma formations, Consciousness arises).

In this connection the Venerable Mahāthera Ledi Sayadaw explained as follows:—

<sup>3</sup> This is a Figure of Speech called Metonymy.

<sup>4</sup> *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, *Chakka Nipāta*, *Mahāvagga*, *Nibbedhika Sutta*, p. 359, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>5</sup> *Samyutta Nikāya*, *Nidāna-samyutta*, *Bhūmija Sutta*, p. 275, 6th Syn. Edn.

“In the aforesaid statement— ‘This volitional act does not cease at the biological death of a being’, that volition can cause the arising of a new existence only when it is accompanied by *taṇhā* (craving)<sup>6</sup>

For example, fill the barrel of a gun with some gun powder and also fill the remaining space of it with dust. Shoot the gun at the other side of the river so that the particles may reach there. But it will be seen that the particles instead of reaching the other bank get scattered in the air as soon as they leave the mouth of the barrel. Why? Because there is no cohesion among the dust particles. Again, moisten the dust and make the dough into strong pellets. Then put these pellets into the barrel and shoot the gun at the other bank. This time, the pellets will not only reach the other bank, but will also destroy all objects that they may hit. Why? Because there is cohesion among the dust particles.

Similarly, volition of Arahats resembles the dust particles which are devoid of cohesion. Volition is present whenever there is bodily, verbal or mental action; but as that volition is not accompanied by *taṇhā*, at the end of each impulsive moment, it completely disappears without leaving any trace and without transforming it into *kamma*. As regards the volitions of worldlings and *sekhas* (Noble Learners), they resemble the pellets which possess cohesive power; volition produced by bodily, verbal and mental action, having binding power, does not disappear at the end of each impulsive moment, but helps to form a new seed for the arising of a new becoming in the form of *kamma*. To endear oneself as “My self”, “My mind” or “My volition” is naturally *taṇhā* which is invariably bound up with pleasure and lust. This shows how volition is accompanied by craving in causing a being to arise in a new existence.

<sup>6</sup> There are three kinds of *taṇhā*, They are:—(1) *Kāma-taṇhā* (sensual craving), (2) *bhava-taṇhā* (craving for existence), and (3) *vibhava-taṇhā* (craving for self-annihilation).

Non-causal or static consciousness is characteristic of the Buddha and His Arahats only. Their non-causal volition (*kiriya-citta*) does not modify the character ethically one way or another because it is now subject to good conditions—*hetus*)—namely, *alobha* (detachment), *adosa* (amity), and *amoha* (absence of illusion), and is entirely free from the latent evil tendencies (*anusayas*).

So in Putta-maṃsa Sutta,<sup>7</sup> the Buddha declares:

“*Manosañcetanāya bhikkhave āhāre pariññāte tisso taṇhā pariññā honti: tīsu taṇhāsu pariññātāsu ariyasāvakaṃsa natthi kiñci uttari karaṇīanti vadāmi.*”

[O Monks. I declare that *Manosañcetanāya āhāre* (mental volition as a relating factor) should be fully comprehended.<sup>8</sup> When that mental volition (as a *paccayadhamma*) is fully comprehended, the three cravings are fully comprehended. When these are well comprehended, I declare that there is nothing further that the Holy One has to do.]<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Samyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga, Putta-maṃsa Sutta, p. 324, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>8</sup> There are three kinds of *Pariññā* (Comprehension), namely,

- (1) *Ñāta-pariññā* (Comprehension of the nature of things);
- (2) *Tiraṇa-pariññā* (Comprehension of their characteristics, such as *anicca* (Impermanence), *dukkha* (Suffering), and *anatta* (Selfless-ness);
- (3) *Pahāna-pariññā* (Comprehension culminating in their complete and final cessation).

<sup>9</sup> Because he becomes an Arahats through complete and final cessation of the three kinds of cravings



## ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

(A talk by Myanaung U Tin broadcast from B.B.S.  
on 12th December 1960)

A couple of months ago I attended the funeral of a friend of mine. When it reached the cemetery, the grief-stricken wife wailed to me, "Ah! Couldn't you do anything for your beloved friend?" I was completely taken by surprise. What could I say? Nevertheless, I was instantly reminded of what the Buddha said to Kisa Gotami who besought Him to restore life to her dead child. "It is the constant lot of beings, for the King of Death, like a great flood sweeping away all beings with their desires unfulfilled, hurls them into the ocean of painful existence."

That night I lay awake for several hours. I switched on the light and read the Dhammapada. I agree with Bhikkhu Kassapa's appraisal of this book: "To me it is the best single book in all the wide world of literature. For forty years and more it has been my constant companion and never-failing solace in every kind of misfortune and grief."

Regarding affections, the Buddha teaches thus: (verses 210-213 of the Dhammapada).

"Consort not with those that are dear, nor ever with those that are not dear; not seeing those that are dear and the sight of those that are not dear, are both painful.

"Hence hold nothing dear, for separation from those that are dear is bad: bonds do not exist for those to whom naught is dear or not dear.

"From endearment springs grief, from endearment springs fear; for him who is wholly free from endearment there is no grief, much less fear.

"From affection springs grief, from affection springs fear; for him who is wholly free from affection there is no grief, much less fear."

Before I proceed, I may point out that the Pāli word for endearment is *pīya*, and that for affection is *pema*, and these two words should not be confused with *mettā*, rendered into English as loving-kindness, as distinguished

from love. Love is sensual and loving-kindness is spiritual. "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." Clearly, what the Buddha emphasizes is that one must not become a slave of endearment, affection and attachment.

As I say, I lay awake for several hours. I noticed that my friend passed away with a sardonic smile on his face. He was a man with a strong sense of humor, which English writer Milnes defines as "the just balance of all the faculties of man, the best security against the pride of knowledge and the conceits of imagination, the strongest inducement to submit with a wise and pious patience to the vicissitudes of human existence." So, my friend's last sardonic smile, reminds me of the four lines Professor G.H. Luce once recited to me.

"Life is a joke:  
All things show it.  
I thought so once;  
Now I know it."

My late friend had some remarkable qualities of head and heart. Intelligent, no doubt, he was, and he was also capable of expending much energy when engaged in anything he was interested in. However, fortune deigned not to smile upon him as often as he deserved. Perhaps, he was too honest and frank to be successful in life. Worse still, he was misunderstood for his intellectual aloofness and pensive moods. American writer Lerner's lines in "My Fair Lady" may well fit in with a description of him.

"A pensive man am I  
Of philosophic joys;

Who likes to meditate, Contemplate,  
Free from humanity's mad, inhuman noise."

Of course, my friend was not free from human frailties but, this much can be said honestly of him, that he was never an unscrupulous fellow who was out for achieving his desire or ambition by hook or by crook. He often said, with Joseph Conrad, that "All ambitions are lawful except those which climb upward on the miseries or credulities of mankind."

In the words of Bhikkhu Nārada, I may reiterate some of the problems that perplex the minds of all thinking men. "We are faced with a totally ill-balanced world. We perceive the inequalities and manifold destinies of men and the numerous gradations of beings that prevail in the universe. We see one born into a condition of affluence, endowed with fine mental, moral and physical qualities, and another into a condition of abject poverty and wretchedness. Here is a man virtuous and holy, but, contrary to his expectation, ill-luck is ever ready to greet him. The wicked world runs counter to his ambitions and desire. He is poor and miserable in spite of his honest dealings and piety. There is another vicious and foolish, but accounted to be fortune's darling. He is rewarded with all forms of favors, despite his shortcomings and evil modes of life.

According to Buddhism, this unevenness of the world, this inequality of man is due to our own *kamma*, or, in other words, to our own inherited past actions and present deeds. We ourselves are responsible for our own deeds, happiness, and misery. We build our own hells. We create our own heavens. We are the architects of our own fate. In short, we ourselves are our own *kamma*."

The Buddha teaches us: "Every living being has *Kamma* as its own, its inheritance, its cause, its kinsman, its refuge. *Kamma* is that which differentiates all living beings into low and high states."<sup>10</sup>

Buddhism attributes these variations in life to *Kamma*, but it does not assert that everything is due to *Kamma*. However, time does not permit of a discussion of other factors.

My late friend was a great believer in the doctrine of *Kamma*. Whenever he encountered any misfortune, he would say with a facetious smile, "I am paying up another debt." And then he would read aloud a few relevant lines from Sir Edwin Arnold's "The Light of Asia".

"The Books say well, my brothers! each man's life  
The outcome of his former living is;  
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,  
The bygone right breeds bliss.

"If who liveth, learning whence woe springs,  
Endureth patiently, striving to pay  
His utmost debt for ancient evils done  
In Love and Truth alway.

"If making none to lack, he thoroughly purge  
The lie and lust of self forth from his blood;  
Suffering all meekly, rendering for offence  
Nothing but grace and good.

"If he shall day by day dwell merciful,  
Holy and just and kind and true; and rend  
Desire from where it clings with bleeding roots  
Till love of life have end:

"He—dying—leaveth as the sum of him  
A life-count closed, whose ills are dead and quit,  
Whose good is quick and mighty, far and near,  
So that fruits follow it."

My late friend often remarked that nothing could be more wrong than to believe in the dictum: "The end justifies the means."

He would then quote four verses from the *Dhammapada* (Nos. 119 to 122):

"Even an evil-doer sees good so long as evil ripens not; but when it bears fruit, then he sees the evil results.

"Even a good person sees evil so long as good ripens not; but when it bears fruit, the good one sees the good results.

"Despise not evil, saying, 'It will not come nigh unto me;' by the falling of drops even a water—jar is filled; likewise the fool, gathering little by little, fills himself with evil.

<sup>10</sup> *Majjhima Nikāya*, *Uparipañāsa*, *Cūlakammavibhaṅga Sutta*, page 243, 6th Synod Edition.

“Despise not merit, saying, ‘It will not come nigh unto me.’ even by the falling of drops a water-jar is filled; likewise the wise man, gathering little by little, fills himself with good.”

We have a Burmese saying:

One visit to a funeral is as good as ten visits to a monastery, which means that one learns much more from a stark reality than from several sermons.

One cannot help but be reminded of Shakespeare’s lines:

“All the world’s a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players,  
They have their exits and their entrances  
And one man in his time plays many parts.”

Let us for instance consider the Big Names of the Second World War. Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo who shook the world for a number of years could not now even turn in their graves. Stalin and Franklin Roosevelt had made their exit, leaving behind them the mighty power they wielded. Winston Churchill who fears no man dreads in his old age the caprices of the English weather and so takes refuge often in the Mediterranean region. Chiang Kai-shek no longer rules on the mainland but learns and yearns on an island. Harry Truman appears to be still much alive and kicking, but sooner or

later he will be unhappily remembered, perhaps, only as the man who ordered the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the year 1945 C.E.

In all times and climes there appear on the stage so-called great men. As Shakespeare put it, “Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them.” But they too, like the common run of men, are made of mortal clay.

One will recall the lines of Thomas Gray:

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth ever gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour:  
The paths of glory led but to the grave.”

*Kamma* means in its ultimate sense, the meritorious and demeritorious volitions. Buddhism stresses not only good ends but also good means. Rebirth is the corollary to the doctrine of *Kamma*. So it behooves every one of us to cultivate meritorious volitions and eschew demeritorious ones in all our pursuits, be they for private interest or for public benefit, because

‘Who toiled a slave may become anew a Prince  
For gentle worthiness and merit won;  
Who ruled a King may wander earth in rags  
For things done and undone.’”

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U KYAW HLA,  
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# SHOULD THE USE OF PĀḲI BE ESCHEWED IN DHAMMADŪTA WORK IN THE WEST?

*Being a broadcast talk from B.B.S. by U Sein Tun, I.C.S. (Retd.)*

*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa.*

The remark has not infrequently been heard that the use of PāḲi words and PāḲi quotations in the work of disseminating the Buddha's teachings in the West is a hindrance to people newly inclined towards the Buddha Sāsana, and that as such writers and speakers on the Buddha Dhamma should eschew the use or the introduction of PāḲi into their speeches and writings as much as possible. There are indications that this view is gaining ground not only among men and women doing Dhammadūta work in the West but also within the domestic frontiers of Buddhist countries. With the introduction and increased popularity of 'Western Education' in these Buddhist countries, hitched as this education is to all available forms of employment in the urban areas, PāḲi has not only become a strange language to the rising generation of young Buddhists. but there has developed an actual distaste for it in the minds of most youths who have been trained towards an enthusiasm only for the more conventionally utilitarian and fashionable objects which are called modern science.

But, if the Buddha Sāsana is to endure— if "*Ciraṃ Tithatu Saddhammo*" (May the 'Doctrine of the good' endure for a longtime) is to become a reality—PāḲi must be preserved and an enthusiasm for it must be cultivated. PāḲi is the language of the Buddha in the sense that it is the language of the Tipiḡaka in which the Buddha's pristine teachings are enshrined. Anybody, therefore, who is enthusiastic about the Buddha Dhamma—who wishes to get as near to the personality of the Buddha as he can—who wishes to imbibe as much of the spirit of the Buddha's teachings as is possible—must as a first step, develop an affinity (a love) for the language in which the

Buddha's teachings in their oldest and most original forms are available for us moderns who comprise the posterity.

A distaste for PāḲi—for the Buddha's own language as it were—means in the least a subconscious distaste for the Buddha himself. If that sub-conscious tendency is suppressed by a conscious intellectual effort, yet that effort without the cultivation of the enthusiasm lacks an inner and more permanent realization and thus the pursuit of the Buddha Dhamma is not likely to be more than ephemeral.

PāḲi is part and parcel of the Buddha Dhamma as we know it today. Therefore, if PāḲi disappears, the chances are that the Buddha Dhamma will also speedily disappear or will speedily become corrupted. The Buddha Dhamma still flourishes in its pristine purity within the various Therāvadin countries today, because there exist within these countries an unbroken line of devoted and disciplined disciples of the Buddha, the Buddhist Saṅgha, who (as *Sāsanadāyajja* or caretakers of the Dhamma) have dedicated themselves strictly to the cause of preserving the PāḲi texts on the one hand and preventing unauthorized interpolations, and erroneous interpretations on the other.

It must be admitted that the task of disseminating Buddhist knowledge among a people is first best done in their own mother tongue, if a hearing is to be obtained. To go and speak to a racial group about what is to them a strange and exotic way of life, with the intention of inducing them to adopt that way of life, in a language which they do not understand. and which may actually alienate their feelings, is to invite failure from the very beginning.

But, the Buddha Dhamma, if it is a religion, is not a religion that seeks converts for the purpose of obtaining converts alone. Nor is it a religion whose adherents would or should feel happy about going no further than securing converts or so-called converts. The Buddha Dhamma is no more than a teaching that indicates the way to Nibbāna, and it differs from the other teachings in this fact alone. If there are apparent differences of spirit and approach in regard to charity, morality, goodwill, and the other lower stages of effort and observance between the Buddha Dhamma and the other teachings, they are the outcome of the unparalleled nature of the Buddhist aim, Nibbāna. Nibbāna transcends explanation either in conventional language or other modes of conventional illustration. But it is so unique in experience and so worthy of attainment from the Buddha's point of view that it merits an attempt to tell the world that it exists, and to induce all those who have the seeds of willingness in them to try to attain it. *Ehipassiko* (come and see yourself personally) is one of the six qualities of the Dhamma. No dissemination of the Buddha Dhamma is therefore complete, or worthy of the task, without the attempt to instill the worthiness of Nibbāna as the ultimate goal and final aim.

Unique individuals who are Future Buddhas form the resolution to attain Buddhahood for the sole purpose of showing the way to Nibbāna, and not merely to make men more moral, nor merely to cultivate more loving-kindness, nor merely to develop their physical and mental powers. In a world where morality is at a discount, where *mettā* is a rare quality, where mental distraction is a common trait, to try to disseminate *sīla*, *mettā*, and *samādhi*, are highly worthy acts, but if the work is to stop there, or if the work cannot be carried further until the aim of Nibbāna can be presented, there is no special need for the world to know the Buddha Dhamma.

The world would not be a fit place for the habitation of human beings, if there were a lack of teachers and leaders of men ready and able to show what constitute right modes of

conduct. Such leaders appear from time to time, and from place to place, according to circumstance. In the world today, there are many worthy movements, even if no account is taken of the established religions such as Christianity, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, and Confucianism. If it were merely a case for the improvement of moral behavior of love and goodwill, and of worldly mental development, then Buddhists, as humanitarians, have their work cut out for them in their own home countries, their own home towns, and their own home villages. They would be rendering better service to their fellow men if they began their work at home and confined themselves to that sphere. It is because the Buddha Dhamma offers the unique goal of Nibbāna that the justification for the propagation of the Buddha's doctrines to the world arises, and Buddhists carrying out the work of Buddha's ambassadors would fail in the sole purpose of their tasks if they omit to present the path to Nibbāna.

And Nibbāna can be appreciated only by those people whose minds are already attuned to a certain extent towards Nibbāna, both intellectually and emotionally. The real Buddha Dhamma—Nibbāna and the Path to Nibbāna—are not easy doctrines to propagate. The majority of mankind are not ready to accept them. That is why the Buddha said. "*Dullabhā saddhā sampatti*" (It is difficult indeed to acquire a fullness of faith in the 'doctrine of the good'). There are (or there may be) in every country one in a hundred, or one in a thousand, or one in a million, who are ready to receive the message of the Buddha, and who but await the opportunity. If these can be found, and the message conveyed, the aim is fulfilled. It would not make the task of picking out these rare individuals any the easier if ready concessions are to be made to popular or mass feelings, and thus make the 'rare' indistinguishable from the 'common'.

A reasonable principle that emerges from these arguments is that even though the propagation of the Buddha Dhamma is undertaken in the initial stages through the

medium of English or any other local language. Pāli should be judiciously introduced from quite an early stage, and the increased use of it should be gradually developed so that an affinity for the Buddha's language is evolved and perpetuated.

Here in Burma, we teach our children the "*Itipi so bhagavā*"<sup>11</sup> which enumerates the Nine Supreme Qualities of the Buddha, from quite an early age. We teach them the "*Svākhāto bhagavatā dhammo*" which enumerates the Six Supreme Qualities of the Dhamma, and the "*Suppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakaṅgho*" which enumerates the Nine Supreme Qualities of the Saṅgha. all in Pāli. We teach them set formulas whereby to request for and establish themselves in the *Ti-saraṇa* (Triple Gem) and the *Sīla* (Morality). These are the minimum Pāli that every Burma Buddhist youth knows. The practice has waned to some extent in urban families of English education with a liking for western modes of habit in recent years, and according as it has declined so have signs of estrangement, distaste, and even disrespect for the visible emblems of the Buddha Sāsana. appeared.

In large numbers of cases, a knowledge of the Pāli stanzas is not even accompanied by a knowledge of their translations. From the intellectual point of view, the difference between a parrot-like repetition and a knowledge of the meanings in conventional language appears significant and important. But what is important is to acquire an inner realization of the Dhamma, a realization that can only come through specific practice. An intellectual grasp may form part of that practice, but an intellectual grasp by itself does not lead very far on the Path to Nibbāna. What seems to be more important is the acquisition of an initial affinity for the Buddha Dhamma, an affinity that will serve as the motivating agent to higher efforts which the Dhamma teaches.

There is a Pāli word called '*Saddhā*' which is very important. It has been translated into English as 'faith' or 'belief'. Buddhists are not satisfied. They insist that the Buddhist meaning of '*Saddhā*' is very different from the 'faith' engendered by the adherents of the other religions. I have met Buddhists who have stoutly maintained that the Buddhist variety of '*Saddhā*' is 'faith accompanied by wisdom', though it appeared to me all the time that the stalwarts of this interpretation lacked the very wisdom that they said was a necessary part of the Buddhist '*Saddhā*.' Buddhists do not like to admit that the faith they have in the Buddha, His teachings, and His disciples, is not different from the faith of the followers of the other religions. Yet there are millions who call themselves Buddhist, whose faith in the Buddha is not different, and who throughout their lives never transcend, nor have attempted to transcend, the stage of blind faith. If it be said that in the Buddha Sāsana it is possible to acquire a faith accompanied by wisdom, they would be nearer the truth. But an adequate idea of the Buddhist concept of '*Saddhā*' and its different stages cannot be attempted in a few words. Yet this is what many Buddhists propagating the Buddha Dhamma in foreign lands appear to be still doing.

'*Saddhā*' is important because the Buddha said in the Saṅgīti Sutta of the Pāthikavagga Dīgha Nikāya.<sup>12</sup>

*Paññā padhāniyaṅgāni, idhāvuso bhikkhu saddho hoti, saddhati Tathāgatassa bodhiṃ, itipi so bhagavā, araham sammāsambuddho, vijjācaraṇasaṃpanno, sugato, lokavidhū, annutaro, purisadammasārathi, satthādevā-manussānaṃ, buddho bhagavā, etc.*

(These are five essential qualities of effort. First, faith in the Tathāgatha, faith in His Wisdom that penetrates the truth, faith that he is an Arahāt, etc.)

The faith that the Buddha mentioned here is in the initial stages necessarily of the order of

<sup>11</sup> See Ñānamoli's Visuddhimagga, p. 206, et. seq. See the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 27.

<sup>12</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, Pāthika-vagga Pāli, 10. Saṅgīti Sutta, p. 198, 6th Syn. Edn.

blind faith. But it is not static. It can and must be developed until *ñāṇa* or wisdom arises. This is not the place here to enter into a lengthy dissertation into the various stages of faith mentioned in the Pāli Texts. It has been introduced here to show the subtle and unique shades of meaning possessed by many Pāli words. How then can the propagators of the Buddha Dhamma expect a clear and adequate comprehension of the unparalleled Buddhist

concepts if they are to acquiesce easily to the *ñāṇa vippayutta* (Disconnected from knowledge.) inclinations of would-be Buddhists, who if they persist would never transcend the stage of being pseudo-Buddhists?

*“Ciraṃ Tiṭhatu Saddharnmo”*

(May the ‘Doctrine of the good’ endure for a long time!)

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## THE PEERLESS PHYSICIAN

By

*Dr. C.B. Dharmasena, N.B., B.S. (Lond.)*

“Subject to birth, old age, disease,  
Extinction will I seek to find  
Where no decay is ever known,  
Nor death, but all security”.<sup>13</sup>

The Buddha was the peerless physician. He it was, who recognized the fatal malady affecting all sentient beings, to which he gave the name *Dukkha* or *Suffering*. It constitutes the first of the Four Noble Truths described by him. The Diagnosis is not difficult for the expert psychiatrist, who however has an extremely difficult task before him to convince his ‘patient’ that he is really ill.

*Avijjā* or *Ignorance*, and *Taṇhā* or *Craving* are the *Root Causes* of the disease; this is the second of the Four Noble Truths.

*Dukkha Nirodha* or *Cessation of Ignorance and Craving* constitutes the Prognosis; and this is the third of the Four Noble Truths. The prognosis is excellent provided the necessary effort to acquire the details of the prolonged, and difficult course of treatment is forthcoming, and the treatment itself is carried out with enthusiasm, with diligence, with constant mindfulness, and with wisdom. The cure once achieved is complete and permanent, without complications, and without the possibility of a relapse.

*Dukkha Nirodha Gāminī Paṭipadā* or *The Noble Eightfold Path* is the detailed Course of Treatment which leads to the cessation of all suffering. It forms the last of the Four Noble Truths.

### Symptoms and Diagnosis

The key to the diagnosis of this universal malady is offered to us by the Buddha when he says,<sup>14</sup> “Four things, O monks, nobody can bring about, no ascetic, priest, or heavenly being, no god nor devil, nor anybody in this world. And what are these four things? That that which is subject to Decay may not decay—that which is subject to Sickness may not fall sick—that that which is subject to Death may not die—that those evil, impure, frightful, and pain-bestowing actions, which ever again and again lead to rebirth, old age and death may not bring results”. The Buddha in his very first sermon<sup>15</sup> after his Enlightenment and on many other occasions<sup>16</sup> said “Now, this, O Bhikkhus, is the Noble Truth of Suffering—Birth is suffering, decay (ageing) is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, to be united to the unloved is suffering, to be separated from the loved is suffering, not to receive what one craves for is suffering, in brief the five Aggregates of attachment are suffering”. All conditioned things are impermanent, because of their continued rise and fall and change; what is impermanent is painful because of continued oppression, for the pain commencing to be felt in anybody posture adopted at the moment is concealed by repeated change into a fresh position.<sup>17</sup> The knowledge that all conditioned

<sup>14</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya IV. 182.

<sup>15</sup> Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga Pañcavaggiyakathā, p. 14, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>16</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, Mahāvagga Pāli, 9. Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta, p. 231, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>17</sup> Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli’s Visuddhimagga, p. 747, paras 6, 7.

The five aggregates are impermanent. Why? Because they rise and fall and change, or because of their non-existence after having been. Rise and fall and change are the characteristic of impermanence; or mode

<sup>13</sup> Buddhism in Translations by Warren: The Story of Sumedha V. 18.



things are transient and are therefore subject to suffering is the pivot on which Buddhism rests. Buddhism has no meaning except for those who feel that all life is transient and therefore painful, which observation stands in natural contrast to freedom from pain, to blessedness regarded as something changeless, i.e. Nibbāna.

## Cause

The Root Causes of this malady besetting all sentient beings are ignorance (*Avijjā*), and Craving (*Taṇhā*); Ignorance being an outstanding cause of *kamma* (action) that leads to unhappy destinies.<sup>18</sup>

“The man who lives for sensuous joy,  
And findeth his delight therein  
When joys of sense have taken flight.  
Doth smart as if with arrows pierced”.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand Craving for becoming is an outstanding cause of *kamma* that leads to ‘happy’ destinies in various heaven worlds.<sup>20</sup>

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alteration, in other words non-existence after having been, is the characteristic of impermanence. Those same five aggregates are painful (*dukkha*) because of the words “what is impermanent is painful”. Why? Because of continuous oppression. The mode of being continuously oppressed is the characteristic of *dukkha* (pain).

Those same five aggregates are not self because of the words, “What is painful is not self”. Why? Because there is no exercising of power over them. The mode of insusceptibility to the exercise of power is the characteristic of not-self.

The Characteristic of *anicca* is concealed by the Concept of Continuity (*santati-paññatti*); the characteristic of *dukkha* is concealed by the four modes of postures (*iriya-patha*); and the characteristic of *anatta* is concealed by the Concept of Compactness (*ghana-paññatti*).

<sup>18</sup> Nānamoli’s Visuddhimagga, p. 602, para 39.

<sup>19</sup> Buddhism in translations by Warrens, Ch. 26. c.

<sup>20</sup> Nānamoli’s Visuddhimagga, p. 603, para 40.

## Prognosis or Cure

The above view of life may make the unthinking reader conclude that Buddhism is a pessimistic and melancholic religion which hinders effort. But this view is a very superficial one, the very antithesis of the truth. for the Buddha has not only given the diagnosis of disease, but an infallible remedy as well. The patient is told that he has an operable cancer, or is suffering from early Pulmonary Tuberculosis. He is further told that a definite cure is available. In these circumstances after the patient gets over the initial shock of his discovery is he not likely to consider himself lucky that his illness has been discovered in time, and will he not thereafter co-operate with enthusiasm, and with optimism in the carrying out of his treatment? It is this optimistic expectation and calm assurance that keeps the Buddhist happy and serene in his surroundings and makes it possible to include Joy (*Pīti*), as one of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment found in Buddhism. In dealing with the *Causal Law Formula* in terms of Happiness the Buddha states,<sup>21</sup> “Suffering (understood as change and transiency) leads to Confidence (*Saddhā*); Confidence to Joy (*Pāmojja*); Joy to Rapture (*Pīti*); Rapture to Tranquillity (*Passaddhi*); Tranquillity to Happiness (*Sukha*); Happiness to Concentration (*Samādhi*); Concentration to Knowledge and Vision of things as they truly are (*Yatthā-bhūta Nānadassana*); the Knowledge and Vision of things as they truly are to Disgust or Repulsion (*Nibbidā*); Disgust to Detachment or passionlessness (*Virāga*); Detachment to Deliverance (*Vimutti*); Deliverance to the Extinction of Passions (*Khaya-ñāṇa*.” The above text clearly points out “How every tear can become a tutor”, how suffering and sorrow may ultimately lead to Sainthood, Deliverance, and Happiness, even as Kisā Gotamī<sup>22</sup> in her distress went about asking for medicine for her dead child, until

<sup>21</sup> Saṃyutta Nikāya. Nidāna-vagga Saṃyutta, Dasabala-vagga, Upanisa Sutta, p. 267 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>22</sup> Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā, p. 270, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

she came to the Buddha, who told her that she did well to have come to him for medicine, and requested her to go to the city and bring a mustard seed from a house, where no one had died. She was cheered at this simple request, and readily went round from house to house asking for the mustard seed which, however she could not procure under the conditions specified. She thereupon realized the truth that death was common to all, and that the Buddha in his compassion had sent her round to learn the truth, which she did to such good effect that she reached then and there the first stage of Sainthood, and reached Arahathship not long after. How very different to this is Tennyson's attitude to the death of his friend, as expressed in the following lines:—

“One writes, that ‘Other friends remain’,  
That ‘Loss is common to the race’” . . .  
“That loss is common would not make  
My own less bitter rather more.”<sup>23</sup>

We have in these two different attitudes towards sorrow a beautiful illustration of the truth that the results of sorrow depend solely on the attitude that one takes towards suffering and pain; sorrow merely experienced is pain and suffering, whilst on the other hand sorrow understood, through meditative contemplation is change and transiency leading to Disgust, to Passionlessness to Detachment, and finally to Deliverance. This is the fundamental difference between the hasty critic of Buddhism as a pessimistic religion, and the one who makes a genuine effort to understand sorrow. The Buddha does not deny that there is pleasure derived through the senses, but he warns us,<sup>24</sup> that such pleasures are temporary, and quite insignificant by comparison with the numerous dangers and perils involved in the indulgence in sense-pleasures. Further in the Bahuvédaniya Sutta,<sup>25</sup> whilst admitting that there is happiness in sense-pleasures, the

Buddha adds that there is other happiness more excellent, and more exquisite than this happiness which may be enjoyed by the one who relinquishes the coarse pleasures of the senses, and by meditative development of Concentration (*Samādhi*) attains the first *Jhāna* (Absorption or Musing), and thereafter seven further grades of happiness, each one more excellent, and more exquisite than its predecessor *e.g.*, the second, third, and the fourth *Rūpa-jhānas* (Absorptions of the Fine-material sphere), and the first, second, third and fourth *Arūpa-jhānas* (Absorptions of the Immaterial sphere). Still further in the Aṭṭhakanāgara Sutta,<sup>26</sup> in reply to a question repeated over and over again by the householder Dasama of Aṭṭhaka, as to whether there is any one thing pointed out by the Buddha, whereby if a bhikkhu dwells diligent, ardent, and self-resolute, his mind is freed, and he attains the destruction of the *āsavas*, and the matchless security from the bonds, the Venerable Ānanda answers in the affirmative and adds, “A bhikkhu detached from the pleasures of the senses, detached from unskilled states of the mind enters and enjoys the Happiness, excellent and exquisite of the first *Rūpa-jhāna*. of the second, of the third, or of the fourth *Rūpa-jhāna*, or likewise he enters and enjoys the more and more exquisite Happiness of the *Arūpa-jhānas*, or likewise he dwells having suffused the whole world, everywhere, in every way with Loving-kindness (*Mettā*), with Compassion (*Karunā*), with Sympathetic joy (*Muditā*), or with Equanimity (*Upekkhā*); and attains the freedom of the mind that is Loving-kindness, that is Compassion, that is Sympathetic joy, or that is Equanimity. Having reached any one of these high states the bhikkhu by reflection comprehends that the Happiness of each one of these states, however excellent, however exquisite it may be is effected, is thought out, is impermanent, and is liable to stopping. Firm in this conviction the bhikkhu attains the

<sup>23</sup> In Memoriam, Alfred Tennyson. VI.

<sup>24</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli, Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta, p. 118; 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>25</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Gahapati-vagga. 9. Bahuvédaniya Sutta, p. 59, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>26</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Gahapati-vagga, 2. Aṭṭhakanāgara Sutta, p. 12, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

matchless security not yet attained from the bonds”]; in other words the thoughtful disciple, although he enjoys the bliss of *Jhānas* in this life, assesses such Happiness at its true worth, and does not hanker after rebirth in the Celestial worlds, which will make him wander from the straight path, away from his final goal of *Nibbāna*. Buddhism is unique in that the Happiness provided for those who reach their goal may be experienced by the one who so wishes it, here and now in the state known as *Phala-samāpatti*, without the necessity to wait until his death.

“This too is an attainment which  
A Noble One may cultivate;  
The peace it gives is recorded as  
Nibbāna here and now’.

### Treatment

Whatever definition critics may give to the words religion and philosophy it is certain that Buddhism is a way of life, to be lived energetically, and actively, from day to day, and not a subject for mere academic study, discussion or debate: for the Buddha is the all-compassionate healer, and we are his patients. His only concern is to cure his patients, and not to satisfy their curiosity, or solve for them the riddle of the universe. Accordingly his main concern is firstly to convince his patient that he is really ill, and that his illness is of a serious nature. This is no easy task.

“For in the fatness of these pury times  
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,  
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him”<sup>27</sup>

The task becomes still more difficult if his patient is a young adult, enjoying good physical health, and is well provided with the comforts of life; for in such an event the symptoms of his illness are hardly noticeable; moreover there are long periods of apparent remissions in between such symptoms as may occasionally strike him as abnormal.

“Sorrow disguised as joy,  
the hateful as the loved,  
Pain in the form of bliss  
the heedless overwhelms.”<sup>28</sup>

In these circumstances the chances are that he will not even see a physician until the disease is far advanced. Secondly the Buddha inspires in his patient hope, confidence, and enthusiasm born of personal knowledge, and conviction that a complete cure is definitely possible, although prolonged, difficult, irksome, and perhaps painful. He explains the necessity quite early in the course of his treatment of acquiring as clear a conception of his illness, and the outlines of its treatment as is compatible with the current level of each patient’s understanding, and of periodically improving upon that knowledge, so that the patient may follow this difficult course of treatment uninterruptedly, intelligently and with enthusiasm throughout the various stages into which it is divided. Over and over again, and in various ways suited to the intelligence of his particular audience the Buddha emphasized the basis of his doctrine as consisting of these Four Noble Truths:— The Noble Truth of Suffering, of the Origin of Suffering, of the Extinction of Suffering, and of the Path leading to Extinction of Suffering. Numerous are the occasions on which the Buddha uttered the following words:<sup>29</sup> “It is through not understanding these four Noble Truths, O brethren, that we have had to wander in this weary round of rebirths, both you and I”; and “By not seeing the Noble Truths as they really are, long is the path that is traversed through many a birth; when these are grasped, the cause of rebirth is removed, the root of sorrow uprooted, and then there is no more birth”. The necessity for this emphasis even during the lifetime of the Buddha was amply demonstrated, for he had, on various occasions

<sup>28</sup> Nikāya, Udāna Pāḷi, 2. Mucalinda-vagga, 8. Suppavāsā Sutta, p. 93, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>29</sup> Dīgha Nikāya Mahāpaninibā Sutta, Ariyasacca-kathā, p. 77, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>27</sup> Hamlet III. iv (153-155)

to send for a disciple, who had misunderstood his doctrine, and was spreading heretical dogmas, and point out to him his error. Even today we find well-meaning Buddhists stating that the Four Noble Truths are a great stumbling block in the way of non-Buddhists accepting the gospel of the Buddha, and even suggesting that they do not form a part of the original gospel, but are a later accretion by the monks. Says the Buddha,<sup>30</sup> “One thing only do I teach, that is sorrow, and escape from sorrow”; and again,<sup>31</sup> “Just as the mighty ocean is of one flavor, the flavor of salt; even so, O bhikkhus, the Doctrine is of one flavor, the flavor of deliverance.” There is certainly no room for ambiguity, or cause for misunderstanding in the above language. Further the Buddha has always emphasized that a man can only reap what he himself has sown, whilst on the other hand he was not bound to reap all he has sown; for says the Buddha in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*,<sup>32</sup> “If anyone says that a man must reap according to his deeds, in that case there is no religious life, nor is an opportunity afforded for the entire extinction of sorrow.” The Buddha has therefore made it clear that vicarious sacrifice by another can never secure one’s salvation, and that on the other hand any kind of fatalism or predestination has no place in the doctrine. Medical and scientific men, who have been trained to observe, will not find the teaching of the Buddha likely to do violence to their training, or their habit of drawing scientific deductions from their observations, for in Buddhism there is no Divine Power, or Divine Revelations, nor is there a belief in dogmas, or in supernatural occurrences necessary for the ‘patient’ to commence his treatment, nor is the result of the treatment dependent on the caprice and approval of a Divine Being. The following lines<sup>33</sup>,

“Strong Son of God, immortal Love.  
Whom we, that have not seen thy face  
By faith, and faith alone, embrace.  
Believing where we cannot prove”

have no place in Buddhism, nor do the following words cause by any misgiving, or hold any terror for the Buddhist:<sup>34</sup>

“Though justice by thy plea, consider this  
That in the course of justice none of us  
Should see salvation”

for the Buddha guarantees a lasting cure for every one of the patients, who persists in his course of treatment, not as a result of his intervention, except as a guide who merely shows the way;<sup>35</sup> nor as the result of any Divine Grace; but only as the logical consequence of the treatment followed by the patient himself.

The beginner in Buddhism is attracted to the Buddha even as a sick man, who hears of others being cured goes to the physician, and makes up his mind to follow the course of treatment prescribed by the latter, even though at first his faith in the physician may not amount to much. Faith in Buddhism really begins with knowledge based on probable evidence; it develops with progress in morality (*Sīla*), and increases rapidly with progress in concentration (*Samādhi*), until complete confidence is gained only through progress in meditative development of Understanding (*Paññā*). The Buddha does not expect from his followers a blind respect, or admiration for himself, or for his doctrine. Says the Buddha,<sup>36</sup> “Do not accept anything on the mere fact that it has been handed down by tradition, or just because it is in one’s scriptures, or merely because it agrees with one’s preconceived notions, or because the speaker seems to be a good and respected person, and his words should be accepted; when *Kalāmas*, you know

<sup>30</sup> *Majjhima Nikāya*, i. 140.

<sup>31</sup> *Khuddaka Nikāya*, *Udāna Pāḷi*, 5. *Soṇa-vagga*, 5. *Uposatha Sutti*, p. 141, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>32</sup> *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, *Tika-nipāta*, XI. 249.

<sup>33</sup> In *Memoriam*, Alfred Tennyson, the opening lines.

<sup>34</sup> Merchant of Venice. IV. 1 (197-200).

<sup>35</sup> *Dhammapada Verse* 276.

<sup>36</sup> *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, *Tika-nipāta*, 2. *Mahāvagga*, 5. *Kesamutti Sutta (Kālāma Sutta)*, p. 189, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

for yourselves these things are moral, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the wise; these things when performed and undertaken conduce to well-being and happiness, then do you live acting accordingly"; and again, when Upāli, a celebrated follower of another religious teacher was once so pleased with the exposition of the Buddha's doctrine that he wished to become a follower, the Buddha cautioned him with the words,<sup>37</sup> "Of a verity, householder, make a thorough investigation. It is well for a distinguished man like you to first make a thorough investigation". Upāli's admiration at this unexpected request expressed itself in the following words "Lord, if I had become the follower of another teacher, his followers would have taken me round the streets in procession proclaiming that such and such a millionaire had renounced his former religion and embraced theirs. The more pleased am I with this remarks of yours"; or again questions the Buddha,<sup>38</sup> "A man comes by a great stretch of water, and sees no way of crossing to the opposite shore, which is safe and secure, and so he makes an improvised raft out of sticks, branches, leaves, and grass, and utilizes it to cross over to the opposite shore. Suppose now, O bhikkhus, he were to say 'this raft has been useful to me, I will therefore put it on my head and proceed on my journey', will he be doing what should be done with the raft?" "No, Lord", say the bhikkhus in reply; and the Buddha himself gives the obvious answer, and adds "Even so, O bhikkhus, the doctrine taught by me, is for crossing over, and not for retaining".

*The doctrine of the Buddha is clearly meant for daily practice, and not for mere academic discussion, nor for storing in a museum for relics, as a mark of veneration and respect for its founder.* As two final illustrations of the fact that the Buddha did not expect a blind

admiration for himself, or for his doctrine may be mentioned the following admonition to his bhikkhus, "Brethren, if outsiders should speak against me, or against the Doctrine, or the Order you should not on that account either bear malice or suffer heart-burn, or feel ill-will, for if you feel angry and displeased you will not be able to judge how far that speech of theirs is well said or ill"<sup>39</sup>: and his unique declaration, made by no other founder of a religion to the effect that any one of his disciples may if he so desires become a Buddha himself.

The *essence of the treatment* consists of the Noble Eightfold Path (*Aṭṭhangika-magga*), which forms the last of the Four Noble Truths. No attempt is made in this essay to give anything more than the briefest reference to each of the eight links of the path, which consists of:—

*Wisdom (Paññā)*

1. Right Understanding (Sammā-ditṭhi)
2. Right Thinking (Sammā-samkappa)

*Morality (Sila)*

3. Right Speech (Sammā-vācā)
4. Right Action (Sammā-kammanta)
5. Right Livelihood (Sammā-ājīva)

*Concentration (Samādhi)*

6. Right Effort (Sammā-vāyāma)
7. Right Mindfulness (Sammā-sati)
8. Right Concentration (Sammā-samadhi)

*Right Understanding* is the penetration of the truth of the universality of suffering, its origin, its cure, and its treatment. *Right Thinking* is three-fold: thoughts free from sensuous desire, from ill-will, and from cruelty, e.g., thoughts of renunciation of sensuous desires (*nekkhama*), of loving-kindness (*mettā*), and of compassion (*karuṇā*). *Right Speech* is abstention from lying, tale bearing, harsh talk, and foolish babble. *Right Action* is abstention from killing, stealing, and

<sup>37</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Majjhima Paṇṇāsa. 6. Upāli Sutta, p. 35, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>38</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇāsa Pāli, 3. Opamma-vagga, 2. Alagaddūpama Sutta, p. 182, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>39</sup> See Brahmajāla Sutta published by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council. See The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. III, No. 2.

unchastity. *Right Livelihood* is abstention from livelihood that brings harm to others. Right Effort is the effort of avoiding or overcoming evil and unwholesome things, and of cultivating and developing wholesome things. *Right Mindfulness* is mindfulness and awareness on contemplating the body, feelings, mind, and mental objects. *Right Concentration* is one-pointedness of the mind, which eventually may reach the *jhānas* (absorptions or musings).

The Buddha, the all-compassionate physician, has explained to us in various ways suited to the mental capacity of each one of us the serious illness that we are suffering from, and how its dangerous symptoms are often masked. He has explained the cause of this illness, and he has told us that an infallible remedy exists. Further he has explained to us the details of his treatment, and has given us the prescription. *It is up to us to study the nature of the treatment offered us, to reason it out, and then take the remedy ourselves.*

The Buddha has spoken of three grades of Wisdom, *i.e.*, by learning (*sutamaya paññā*), by reasoning (*ciñtāmaya-paññā*), and thirdly by meditative development (*bāvanāmaya paññā*). The first two grades come under the term knowledge, whilst it is only the third grade that may be correctly classified as understanding. The ‘taking of the remedy’

consists of the gradual development of knowledge, side by side with faith and devotion (*saddhā*), so that neither of these faculties is in excess of the other (*Indriya-samatta*), for excessive faith with deficient wisdom leads to blind and perhaps foolish belief, whilst excessive wisdom with deficient faith leads to cunning. One cannot conceive of any other system of treatment, which has been so thoroughly analyzed, so clearly explained, and apparently so reasonable as to fit in with our own observations. Let those of us who are not satisfied with things as they are accept tentatively the remedy offered by the Buddha as a working hypothesis, until we gradually prove to ourselves that the hypothesis fits in with each one of our limited observations. Let us thereafter increase the number of our observations by utilizing the appropriate instruments for the purpose, *e.g.*, by meditative development of Understanding, so that each fresh observation that is found to agree with the tentative hypothesis may add to our confidence, and ultimately convert what was at the beginning merely a working hypothesis into a well-established fact *i.e.*, convert Knowledge into Understanding; for this is the only means by which the remedy offered by the Peerless Physician, for this universal malady of *Dukkha* may be utilized successfully.

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## TWO STAGES OF NIBBĀNA

By

*U Khin Moun.*

[This article does not represent Buddhist doctrine; it is only one man's fanciful musing. —Ed.]

What is that Nibbāna, which was actually discovered or rather re-discovered by Gotama Buddha? At the outset I would mention that the Buddhist *Nibbāna*, which can give real peace and happiness to anybody, who realizes it without the distinction of caste, creed or color, and which is not at all like the heavens of other religions is not a mere implicit theory deduced by logical thinking. It is an obvious fact that can be found explicitly by anybody in the same way as any student of, say, chemistry can realize personally the properties of chemicals and the natural laws governing their behaviors by practical work, of course, after learning the theory. Theory, practical work and realization constitute the logical course for the students of the Buddhist Super-Science just like the ordinary science courses. We shall thus find that the real *nibbāna* can never be realized by pure reasoning, dialectical thinking and speculative imagination—the creators of unverifiable metaphysical conceptions, which are undoubtedly the obstacles in our way to the realization of Nibbāna.

After all *nibbāna* is just a name, or term or word or sounding to indicate a certain findable fact. If, therefore, we try to make only an etymological study of it, like what some scholars are doing now, we shall never find the fact, as it really is, no matter how we hair-split the meaning of the word in the linguistic philosophical sense. Hence the difference between the shadow and the substance.

Considering, however, the rapid advance of the scientific knowledge, which has, to a great extent, dispelled the deep-rooted dogmatism and superstition born out of ignorance, I would say that we are rather better placed now to explain the properties of *nibbāna* more convincingly. We know that ignorance or low

power of understanding that breeds misconceptions of various kinds is our greatest enemy. Therefore, the Buddha immediately after the attainment of enlightenment wondered whether He should proclaim his highly intricate scientific discoveries simply because of the extremely low power of understanding of almost all the people of his time. We all know that when he started His mission on the request of Sahampati Brahma he really had had an up-hill task to dispel superstition and ignorance by very patiently explaining the scientific laws governing the processes of nature in the language understood by the people of his time. It shows that to study the subject in question dispassionately, we shall have to keep our minds open by forgetting, if possible for ever, the traditional beliefs, mythological concepts and other preconceived notions. I should also like to mention that before we make a study of the actual properties of *nibbāna* it is necessary to appreciate firstly the limitations of mundane knowledge and secondly the story of the scientific discoveries of Gotama Buddha.

We shall, therefore, begin by trying to get a clear idea of the present stage of mundane knowledge. Let us find out the effect of Francis Bacon's famous aphorism, *i.e.*, knowledge is power. Knowledge really has become an ostensible power, which manifests prominently as a highly developed power of understanding relating particularly to physical nature. Our scientists have proved it and there is no need to elaborate their achievements which are well known. But with due respects to all learned persons I must mention that our knowledge about the things in general is very little. At the same time if we assess our knowledge about the properties of physical nature, we are competent to say that we know something about it. I say "something", because our leading scientists tell us that they will

know more about short-lived particles when their liquid hydrogen chamber now under construction is ready for use together with their latest and the largest atom smasher, which has a capacity of about 32 billion electron volts for generating proton to proton collision process. They also tell us the truth that they are exploring only matter's outermost fringes. When they get the results from the proposed experiment, they expect to find many more puzzles. That is about the highest and the latest knowledge so far acquired by our top-most scientists about physical nature. This stage of knowledge should therefore be assessed as only "something" and nothing more.

If, however, we take a step further, we shall find that our knowledge about the working of the mental or conscious process is almost nothing. In this connection I must mention that for not understanding the science of conscious process as discovered by Gotama Buddha, we are not competent to overcome our animal emotional feelings, that give rise to all kinds of social evils. Surely hard thinking is not necessary to realize that we, the so-called human beings are the embodiments of the resultant-producing mental forces, such as, selfishness, greediness, jealousy, hatred, revengefulness, cruelty, destructiveness, and even self-destructiveness. Indeed, we have the scientists to find the working of the physical forces inside the atoms, but unfortunately we do not have universally recognized scientists, to find the working of mental forces inside us. I have never heard about the existence of the systematically organized institutions especially in the West for research to discover the higher science of mental process that can elevate the animal-man to the level of real human-man. On the other hand it is really a tragedy to find that some of our speculative thinkers, instead of enlightening the people to attain the right understanding to solve the problems of life, have propounded their dialectical theories very elaborately by using mass psychology as their instrument to gain their selfish ends. No doubt, their ideological slogans have wonderful power to infuse enthusiasm in the unthinking

minds, which generally have no power of understanding to foresee the boomerang effects that will emerge by the translation of these attractive slogans into practical politics. Consequently individual as well as collective anti-social activities are increasing, I should say; by geometric ratio. Although we are proud of being a species of gregarious animal with a bit of tameness of civilization, actually we are not quite civilized enough to live together happily like our very young brothers, the tiny little ants. We have often said that we are in a paradoxical situation of poverty in the midst of plenty. Actually we are in a situation of poverty, slavery and ignorance in the midst of plenty, liberty and enlightenment. Man hates man, man kills man and man is the only animal that is hostile to its own kind. Why are we in such a state of affairs? The only and the straight answer is because of our low standard of mundane knowledge. This glaring fact is often described by our Western thinkers by stating that the knowledge so far acquired with the help of our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, faculty of thinking and reasoning as compared with what actually exists is about in the proportion of a single drop to all the water in an ocean. These are the basic stern facts to show the limitations of our mundane knowledge.

After getting an idea of the limitations of mundane knowledge we should know something about the faculty of the energized or developed mental force or energy, which is the key to open the door to find an entirely new field of human knowledge, which should be searched for by the modern scientists and philosophers alike. Mental energy like physical energy has two properties, *i.e.*, kinetic and potential. The Western psychologists engaged in the study of different aspects of mental phenomena are now concentrating on the research relating more or less to the kinetic mental energy only. So far I have not heard about their discovery of the new field of knowledge in the light of the energized potential mental energy. I would, therefore, like to mention that, if properly developed or



energized, the potential mental energy will be transformed into powerful kinetic or active mental energy, which emanates energized thought-radiations of differing frequencies in the mental field according to the stages of developed potential mental energy in just the same way as the transformation of mass into physical energy in the ratio of  $E = MC^2$  (186,324X186,324 = 34,716,632,976.) It shows that a very little mass could become a vast amount of physical energy, which we are using as atomic or nuclear energy. Similarly the energized potential mental energy will become powerful mental radiations with much higher speed than the physical energy. The behavior of the developed potential mental energy is also like the behavior of electronic radiations, which we now use in radio communication even in the outer space. We know that the electronic radiations travel with the speed of light, *i.e.*, 186,324 miles per second. Energized mental radiations also travel like electronic radiations but they travel with the speed of thought. When we think about a distant galaxy, which is at a distance of several thousands of light years away from us, our thoughts reach there almost instantaneously. It shows the immeasurable speed of thought radiations as compared with the speed of physical radiations. Furthermore the developed potential mental energy has no time barrier. It can go back to the past and it can also go to the future like the time machine imagined by H.G.Wells. But we must not forget that our normal or ordinary thought waves or radiations have no power to communicate our sense impressions like the energized thought waves. To make it more clear the normal thought radiations may be compared with the High Frequency carrier waves of the transmitted radiations, while the developed potential mental energy may be compared with the modulated waves which are the combination of low frequency sound or picture waves and the high frequency carrier waves. If, therefore, we are able to develop our potential mental energies by a suitable method to attain a certain frequency, we shall, without any doubt,

be able to find the entire universe and its past, present and future inhabitants just as we can now see and hear the happenings in distant places with the help of our electronic devices, which are only physical contrivances.

We can now say that we have a dim glimpse of the possibilities of the human power and knowledge. But we shall get a clear idea of these possibilities when we begin to study the story of the unique discoveries of Gotama Buddha. Here is the story. Life, as is well known, is nothing else but a bundle of problems. Prince Siddhattha, the embryo-Buddha, who did not believe in the contemplative knowledge and the deities worshipped by the speculative philosophers of his time, very seriously took up the problem of life as a scientific problem to be solved by himself as a realist without in any way depending upon any outside help. He detested the metaphysical ideas, such as, the reality, the absolute, the whole, and so on, although he had to learn about them by tradition when he was young. He was interested only in the hard facts faced by each and every living being at all time, everywhere, *i.e.*, old age, sickness and death, which nobody can escape, no matter what station of life he may be in.

During the first watch of one particular night while he was deeply engrossed in his earnest search for the hidden facts by energizing his potential mental energy, he suddenly discovered one stage of supernormal knowledge of certain frequency of energized mental radiations and with the help of this particular super-knowledge or power he could see his past lives in succession vividly just as anybody could see his or her past lives in different stages of growth from childhood to grown-up.<sup>40</sup> In this very moment he had become an exceptionally old man full of wisdom and millions and millions years of age, and experience of various kinds. He found that

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<sup>40</sup> *Pubbenivāsa-abhiññāna*: By the insight known as remembrance of previous circumstances the past history of one's self, or of another can be read. This is called Knowledge of past existences.

he had gone through the mill more than enough as it were. He had tasted the pleasures of all kinds of luxurious life. He had also burned his fingers innumerable times. He knew all about worldly life. He practically began his hard schooling when he was a hermit by the name of Sumedhā at the time of Dīpankārā Buddha. What is more he found that he had undergone a very strenuous training technically known as “The Ten *Pāramīs*”<sup>41</sup>. The most important discovery he had made is the process of life or rebirth. He then knew that the process of rebirth is a fact. But He did not as yet realize the working of the process of rebirth. Although, at that time, he was about 35 years old according to our conventional standard of measuring the so-called time or age, he was actually a grand old man, who could tell us the story of his various lives and experience. Therefore, when he became Buddha, he once told his disciples in the *Sinsapa* grove that his knowledge when compared with what he had said and taught was about the proportion of all the *Sinsapa* leaves in the grove to the little leaves in his hand. At this juncture I should like to mention that if we can appreciate the above mentioned discoveries as true facts, we certainly shall have no difficulty in understanding his other discoveries.

During the second watch of that night he discovered another stage of super-normal knowledge or power in another band of thought wave frequency.<sup>42</sup> At this level he discovered all living beings throughout the universe and he knew all about them especially the continuity of the process of life in different planes of existence according to their good and bad deeds (*yathākammupaga*). He found that some form of higher celestial beings, who thought that they were the immortal gods on account of their long spans of life also died at

the end of their life-span. He thus realized the immense field of life-process and he considered it as an acute problem, which he would try and solve by all means. It was really a stupendous self-imposed task, that certainly would not appeal to ordinary minds. He was not satisfied with the two stages of super-normal knowledge he had acquired, and he kept on searching for the knowledge that would help him to solve all the problems of life.

At last his highly developed potential mental energy of the highest frequency helped him to attain the supramundane knowledge during the last watch of the same night. He then discovered *Āsavakkhaya-ñāṇa*.<sup>43</sup> This is the highest Supramundane Knowledge to overcome all *Āsavas* and also to attain Nibbāna.

The most important laws are technically known as (1) *Patīccasammupāda* usually rendered as Dependent Origination and (2) *Paṭṭhāna* rendered as law of relations or causal relativity, incidentally he discovered that the so-called human and other living beings are only a process of rapidly arising and vanishing of quanta of thought moments and quanta of physical particles. He also discovered that the resultant-producing mental forces, such as the feeling of like, dislike, craving, attachment anger, hatred, greediness, *etc.*, are the motive powers that energize the dynamic process of rebirth, *i.e.*, successive births and deaths with the intervening old age and sickness. When he realized the working of the chain reaction generated by the various resultant-reducing mental forces, he also discovered the principal resultant-producing mental force, that energizes the process of rebirth, *i.e.*, the feeling of craving for the satisfaction of worldly desires born out of sensuous appetites. This is technically known as “*Taṇhā*”. As soon as he knew about it, he had completely overcome it, and he found that he was the happiest man in

<sup>41</sup> *Pāramitās* or *Pāramī*: Perfections. There are ten kinds of Perfections. They are: 1. Almsgiving, 2. Morality, 3. Renunciation, 4. Wisdom, 5. Energy, 6. Patience, 7. Truthfulness, 8. Determination, 9. Loving-kindness, 10. Equanimity.

<sup>42</sup> *Dibba-cakkhu-abhiññāna*: Celestial eye.

<sup>43</sup> This is the same as the Fruition of Holiness. This is the Knowledge which eradicates all *āsavas* (mental impurities) whatsoever.

the world the moment he had freed himself from the bondage of *Taṇhā*. By becoming the Master of the working of the psycho-physical process, *i.e.*, the *Patīccasammupāda*, he realized that his life process will cease to function at the time of his death. This is how Gotama Buddha realized the two stages of *nibbāna* while he was alive, *i.e.*, (1) while alive the cessation of the arising of resultant-producing mental forces, of which *Taṇhā* is the principle agent, (2) the subsequent cessation of the dynamic life process at the time of death without leaving any residuum in the form of everlasting pure mind or universal self or higher self or *ātman* or holy spirit or *brahmā* or other metaphysical imageries.

It is now clear to us that as long as the process of rebirth is kept alive or energized by the resultant-producing mental forces, the living beings will appear with all the salient characteristics of birth, old age, sickness and death in succession like the moving pictures on the cinema screens performing emotional dramas and tragedies of various kinds that can generate laughter and tears. But it goes without saying that these characteristics are sure to disappear with the cessation of the process of

life just like the disappearance of the motion pictures as soon as the cinematograph machine stops working. These two factors are related. One gives rise to the other as chain reaction. Who can find the pictures that once appeared alive on the cinema screen? Where have they gone to? Have they joined the everlasting universal mind or spirit or soul to become one and the whole in some corner of the universe? Therefore those, whose power of understanding is blockaded by the static concepts, such as, eternalism, everlasting, oneness, wholeness, reality, *etc.* will never understand specially the second stage of *nibbāna*.

The first stage of *nibbāna* is technically known as “*KILESĀ NIBBĀNA*” or “*SĀ-UPADI-SESA NIBBĀNA*”. It may briefly be defined as the cessation of the resulting-producing mental forces emanating mainly from the worldly feelings of like and dislike. The second stage of *nibbāna* is technically known as “*KHANDHA NIBBĀNA*” or “*ANU-PĀDI-SESA NIBBĀNA*”. It may be defined as the complete cessation of all the resultant-producing mental forces including the process of rebirth.

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# THOUGHTS OF DETACHMENT FROM THE WORLD

By

*Ven. Vappo Thera*

“*Dhammo have rakkhati dhamma-cāriṃ*”.

(The Law protects him who abides in righteousness.)<sup>44</sup>

“If thou hast lost all that was dear to thee,  
Grieve not, all things are empty;  
If thou hast won a world of bliss,  
Cheer not, all things are empty;  
For joys and woes will pass away.  
Give up the world, all things are empty.”

(Sohaili)<sup>45</sup>

Wishing to live in accordance with the perfect Noble Eightfold Path consisting of Right Understanding, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration, one should know that the best way to attain this, is: inner peace and silence, unclouded by any passions, so that one's mind's eye may clearly perceive the light of the truth, the Dhamma—the Universal Law.

If, after ignorance about our own vital functions has disappeared and knowledge has arisen, one through strenuous effort has attained to such a degree of mental concentration that all conceptions, thoughts and objects have vanished into temporary oblivion, the mind and all mental faculties became stilled, and all bodily functions intercepted, then the “Suspension of Consciousness” has been reached. Such a person, just as the Buddha, may remain for days and nights without mental and bodily functions, experiencing thereby perfect peace and freedom.

This state of perfect detachment, free from any longing and craving for worldly and heavenly possessions can only be attained by such noble disciples who have overcome all attachment to sensuous objects and have won the most perfect concentration of mind.

Such a person has realized the blissful state of perfect mental purity and attained the various sublime trances of the mind; and it is impossible that the mind of such a one, when once really firmly established, may become disturbed and restless, for it is a law, that the mind, filled with bliss, is firm and concentrated.

How foolish is it to seek the worldly pleasures whilst knowing that the deliverance of mind cannot be attained in such a way. Therefore it is said:

“To the fire flies the moth  
Knows not she will die.  
Little fish bites in the hook  
Knows not of the danger.  
“But though knowing well the danger  
Of these evil worldly pleasures,  
We still cling to them so firmly,  
Oh! how great is our folly !”

Ignorance is the root of all evil things. All evil manifestations, whether they belong to the past, present or future, are conditioned through ignorance.

Freedom from suffering is the object of the holy life. Were all beings endowed with the highest wisdom, there would be no greed, anger or delusion; there would be no suffering.

Since ignorance is the root of this cycle of rebirths, is it therefore the first beginning of the world? No.

<sup>44</sup> Dhammapada Commentary. Sāriputta Thera Vatthu, Book II, p. 62, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>45</sup> A medieval Persian Mystic.

An absolute first beginning of world defies all our understanding. Only the foundation do we know, namely, the ignorance, dependent on lust, anger, torpor and drowsiness, restlessness and mental worry and doubts. These hindrances only arise when greed, anger and delusion have not been dissolved.

The temporary suppression of these hindrances can only be achieved through restraining the senses. The means for restraining the senses consist in attentiveness and clear-mindedness, based on wise reflection. This however is conditioned through faith in the Dhamma, which again can only arise whilst hearing and learning the teachings of the Buddha.

The deep understanding of the Dhamma is only attainable by association with noble friends. In this way, association with noble friends is the beginning of all good things. But such people whose association is harmful should be avoided. For this reason it is said,

“Alone we live like Brahma  
By twos we live like gods,  
By three like in a village,  
Where more, there’s noise and bustle.”

Association with noble friends leads to real wisdom regarding this world and the next one, and such wisdom dispels all misunderstanding. It is the way to Nibbāna, to that state of peace and bliss, which can never be grasped by anyone looking at Saṃsāra (round of rebirths) as a happy place to wish for. The fact of being born again and again will gladden such people as are attached to life, but the “Silent Thinker” is resolved to make an end to this Saṃsāra and not to heap up new life-producing-kamma, but to realize the highest wisdom and Nibbāna and thus reach the state of the Arahat, the Holy One, who forever is released from all bonds of pleasure and displeasure, fear and hope, grief, sorrow and despair.

Such a one has escaped from the drama of continuous relations and destructions of worlds, being ever and ever repeated with the regularity of a clock-work, without purpose

and aim. As Th. Schultze says: “The world is its own purpose, and being its own purpose is the same as being purposeless.”

If I should speak about and purpose of the world at all, I should say that the only purpose we should strive for is Nibbāna, the final weal.

May faith awaken my wisdom.  
May faith awaken my insight,  
To see things as they really are:  
Their rising and their vanishing,  
And reach the goal the Buddha taught:  
The end of birth, old age and death.

Worldly knowledge, always producing new knowledge, strikes us, with amazement and makes us hunt after it, without even being able to understand and know what things really are, and how they are.

What things are in relation to us, this is all we may know, and need to know. We do not know what matter and motion are in themselves. They are unknown qualities X and Y whose unlimited functions represent the universe.

All those beings, who have escaped ignorance and become Holy Ones, know that there exist supernormal forms of consciousness attainable only by men trained in higher morality, concentration and wisdom.

It is obvious that, when mind becomes absorbed in itself, the outer world will pass away and be no more to him.

Whoso is no more troubled by reasoning, nor by personal wish, nor by restless thinking, it is he who may attain the real and perfect inner peace and silence. And there he may hear the message of the inner voice: Escape the rapid flight of thoughts that bring no peace.

He who is much occupied, be it even about charitable works, will never come to perfect peace of heart.

The more his mind becomes emptied from all worldly thinking, the sooner he will attain the sublime states of the trances, bringing bliss and freedom to him devoted to mental culture.

The more one cultivated detachment from all worldly things, the nearer is one to peace. Therefore Goethe says:

“Weary, alas, am I of worldly bustle.  
What is the use of all this pain and lust?  
Peace, sweet peace, oh come,  
Oh come, unto my breast.”

For that reason give up the world and worldly thinking and become simple in mind. Direct your mind only to one thing: Nibbāna the Everlasting.

Overcome all thinking about this imaginary and illusory “Self”. Leave all self-thinking behind, and you will reach the most sublime.

The worldly person would contradict this and say: That puts everything upside down. Man perceives only through his senses and through perception. How could we alter the laws of nature?

Surely, the worldling, not trained in mental culture, is unable to understand the lofty heights of such a noble disciple of the Buddha who is engaged in controlling and purifying the mind.

He who has cleared his mind from all worldly and heavenly wishes, knows, what in Buddhism it would mean to be “poor in spirit”. By not clinging to anything does one become unshakable. Blessed is he who expects nothing; he will never be disappointed. To possess nothing is the best security!

Through freeing one’s mind from all wishes, hopes and longings, all troubles will vanish away, and through one’s steadfast effort one will become Master of oneself and Lord over the creation.

Thus having attained freedom through developing one’s mind one has realized one’s higher nature, and no greed, anger and delusion can ever enter one’s mind again after reaching Nibbāna, the highest Goal.

It is not in our power to know beforehand, on which day and at which hour our deliverance will be realized.

Those latent powers of Enlightenment within the depth of our inmost being, these should be developed and brought to perfection, whilst making the highest truth our refuge.

The Truth be your isle,  
The Truth be your refuge,  
Seek not for any other refuge.<sup>46</sup>

If we should obey the good latent powers and faculties hidden within us, there would be no more war, murder and torture in this world, and our whole nature would become ennobled by our deeds, words and thoughts.

“We ourselves must walk the path; the Buddhas merely teach the way.”<sup>47</sup> Remember, that to the animals men should be gods!

Hurry on to peaceful haven,  
Weary mind, why stay behind?  
Youth is subject to old age;  
Think yourself. It’s near to you.  
The most sublime will be your share  
When you have mounted wisdom’s height  
And will have reached the highest Goal!

This blissful state may not be reached as long as the mental hindrances<sup>48</sup> and fetters<sup>49</sup> in us have not yet been fully overcome, just as light and dark cannot exist together.

If the supramundane is to arise in man, the sensual lust must vanish. The more the mind is occupied with worldly affairs, the more its power vanishes, instead of being used for the attainment of Enlightenment and Nibbāna.

Scattered forces are defective. If mind is to work with full force, it must draw in all its

<sup>46</sup> Suttanta Piṭaka, Dīgha Nikāya.

<sup>47</sup> Dhammapada, verse 276.

<sup>48</sup> Nīvaraṇa: “Hindrances”. There are 5 kinds of Hindrances. They are: Sensuous Lust; Ill-will, Torpor and Langour, Restlessness and Worry, Skeptical Doubt.

<sup>49</sup> Saṃyojana: “Fetters”. There are 10 fetters tying beings to Saṃsāra namely, (1) Personality-belief, (2) Skeptical Doubt, (3) Clinging to mere Rules and Ritual, (4) Sensuous craving, (5) Ill-will, (6) Craving for fine-material (rūpa) existence, (7) Craving for immaterial (arūpa) existence, (8) Conceit, (9) Restlessness, (10) Ignorance.

energies and become concentrated on one single aim.

In reality, we die every moment, little by little, with each breathing, with each twinkling of the eye, whereby a bit of our existence purely passively and vegetatively—is radiated back into the universe, as warmth and electricity.

On the other hand, enlightenment will develop in us to the degree as greed, anger and delusion are vanishing whilst walking in the Noble Eightfold Path.

Through concentration on breathing, *i.e.*, ‘Watching over In and Out-breathing,’ the noble disciple of the Buddha, training himself in morality, concentration and wisdom, will safely attain within a short time the final and the highest goal: perfect silence, calmness and peace—that realm where there is no birth, decay and death, and where sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair have reached extinction.

How happy is the mind, free as a bird in the air moving in its own realm decided for ever to cast off all worldly ballast, like a balloonist, in order to reach higher regions.

One should attain to that immediate intuition—transcending worldly knowledge, that only may arise after ignorance has vanished, and whereby all our understanding will become ennobled with superhuman wisdom.

And thus through apparently remaining in quite a passive state, mind gradually is becoming more perfect and stronger than by performing outward active work.

This so-called passive state requires the utmost effort and restraint of all sense-impulse in order to neutralize their activities. This ‘passive activity’ may be called “poverty in spirit”—for in such a state a man has no more desire to speculate, to know, or to possess.

“What to this world is pleasant.  
Shall please me never more.  
What to this world is grievous

Shall grieve me never more  
Do disregard the others who disregard  
you!”

Insight into the transitoriness of all phenomena, and knowledge that there is no unconditioned, unchangeable, immutable, absolute, self, ego, or soul to be found, this leads to extinction of all clinging to life, to the end of this cycle of rebirth and death, to Nibbāna.

Now, how does one attain insight into this Egolessness and utter emptiness of existence?

“The disciple, when perceiving a form with the eye,—a sound with the ear,—an odor with the nose,—a taste with the tongue,—an impression with the body,—an object with the mind,—he knows, when there is greed, anger or delusion in him: “In me there is greed, anger and delusion. “If there is no greed, anger or delusion in him, he knows:

“There is no greed, anger and delusion in me”.

Thus with regard to his six-fold sense-activity, understanding that each moment of consciousness is only of momentary duration, existing no longer than a flash of lightning, the noble disciple knows, that the so-called “I” does not exist longer than perhaps the billionth part of a second; hence the Ego, such as the ordinary person imagines, does not exist after all.

“Nothing pains me more at all I do or neglect to do, than having to look at the world like the common run of the people, because I know scientifically that they see it in a wrong way.” (Lichtenberg)<sup>50</sup>

Neither is corporeality the “Ego” or personality, nor yet may feeling, perception, mental formation, and consciousness be called the “Ego”.

<sup>50</sup> George Christophe Lichtenberg 1742-1799 German physicist and Satirist, Professor at University of Gettingen.

It is just as the different component parts, as axle, wheels, etc., when fixed together after a certain fashion, in a conventional way are called a “cart” though, when examining them part by part, no cart can be discovered as a separate “entity”.

Or, if wood and other materials are joined in a certain way, the enclosed space is called a “house”, but exactly speaking there does not exist any separate house-entity apart from the various materials.

Or, if we put fingers and thumb in a certain way together, it is called a “fist”.

Or, if certain things, as the resonance box and so on, are joined together in a certain way, we call this a “lute”.

Or, if we see the general in command with his soldiers, horses, *etc.*, we call the whole an “army”.

Or, the whole of the ramparts, houses, gates, *etc.*, we call a “town”.

Or, trunks, branches, leaves, appearing in a certain natural arrangement, are together called a “tree”—but if we examine all the distinct parts one by one, we cannot discover any tree at all.

Just so, when the five constituent groups of existence are present, we use the conventional term “Being”, “Person”, *etc.*, though when examining all the different parts, one by one, no “Being”, or “Person”. *etc.*, can be discovered which could give any foundation to such views as “I am”, or “I”.

“Are you still the same now, as you were as a child or a young man?”

Did not whole regions of reminiscences and sensations of the body drop from your mind?

Could you prove in yourself one single moment where your mind was not feeling and thinking in dependence upon time, space and body?

Which part and which standard of this something will you then save for that eternity? (cf. Immermann, *Epig.*)<sup>51</sup>

In the highest sense there exist only corporeal and mental phenomena.

Those endowed with such knowledge are called: “Knowers of things as they really are” (*yaṭṭhā bhūta*).

There the Buddha stands forth as the greatest liberator of mankind, for He is turning the mind of men from this calamitous Ego-illusion, from this cause of all greed, anger and delusion, of all evil and suffering.

Mm without prejudice can experience this truth of Egolessness by himself, according to reality, without belief, without depending on anyone else.

Knowledge, according to reality, does not reveal itself to men through the help of prayers or outward ceremonies, not through logical reasoning and also not through asceticism, but solely by steadfast perseverance and by following the Noble Eightfold Path: “but one should beware of the slightest failures and steadily go on, step by step.”

Deeds of greed, anger and delusion will never produce heavenly and human beings and states of happiness; they only will produce hellish beings, the animal kingdom, the demons, the world of evil spirits and other states of suffering.

Deeds of selflessness, good-will and wisdom will never produce hellish beings, the animal kingdom, the demons the world of evil spirits and all other states of suffering; but they will produce heavenly and human beings and states of happiness.

Greed, anger and delusion—these three main evil impulses make man blind, eyeless, ignorant, destroy his insight, produce pain, and do not lead to peace.

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<sup>51</sup> Karl Lebrecht Immermann 1795-1840; German dramatist and poet in “Die Epigomen”.



“Overwhelmed with greed, anger and delusion, with mind ensnared, man really does not understand his own welfare, nor the welfare of others, nor the welfare of both.”

“But, once greed, anger and delusion have been given up, man will aim neither at his own ruin, nor at the others’ ruin, nor at the ruin of both parties, and he will experience no mental pain and grief.”

Thus the Buddha has shown us how to obtain the highest happiness and freedom already in this present life.

What now is the highest happiness and freedom, and how is it reached?

It is the attainment of those four stages of Holiness, which already in this present life are producing unblemished happiness; they are reached by “fulfilling the rules of morality, practicing tranquility of mind, not relaxing in the practice of concentration, and by living in solitude.”

“Such holy masters and teachers of this good law, have lived in the past; and such holy goal has been realized. And the future too will have such holy masters and teachers of this good law; and such holy goal will be realized.”

None of all these numerous religions and philosophical systems will guide us so safely to the highest perfection as this Dhamma, this Law, proclaimed by the Buddha. And whoso will follow the law, will become Master of himself.

No ascetic or priest, nor heavenly being, neither god nor devil, can do away with the Dhamma, “the ever immutable indestructible law.”

For “whether Perfect Ones (Buddhas) appear in the world, it still remains a firm condition, an immutable fact and fixed law that all formations are transient, that all formations

are subject to suffering, and that everything is without an Ego-entity.”

“Behold this two-legged swivel-doll,  
Exhaling evil, filthy smell  
With putrid liquids is it filled  
And ever oozes drop by drop.”

“With such a bog-hole as one’s body  
To pride oneself full of conceit,  
And look on others with contempt:  
No greater folly can be found.”

All formations we should understand as transient, and death as waiting for us, just as a murderer, with sword drawn, standing before us.

### **My Earnest Wish:**

Henceforth no more shall my heart find pleasure in this world, no more shall my heart become attached to this world, no more craving shall be present in me.

The clear perception of egolessness and impersonality of all phenomena shall ever be present to me, thoughts of “I” and “Mine” shall vanish, all hindrances and fetters disappear, and my knowledge shall unfold, so that I may come to understand all the conditions and all the phenomena conditioned thereby.

Only in Nibbāna shall find my heart’s longing the final haven of rest, and all evil tendencies shall vanish. I with pure and cheerful heart go down on my knees before the Holy, Fully Enlightened One, who has led me to the Noble Path, leading to Nibbāna.

“Someday I shall be able  
To follow the Dhamma’s sway,  
Then all the evil powers  
Will shrink from me away.  
The deepest veneration  
I’ll ever have for Him,  
Who show’d escape from sorrow  
From life, so void and slim.”

—Dr. Paul Dahlke.



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## BUDDHIST MENTAL THERAPY

By

*Francis Story*

*The Anāgdrika Sugatānanda*

It has been estimated that one out of every four persons in the world's great cities today is in need of psychiatric treatment, which is equivalent to saying that the percentage of neurotics in present-day civilization runs well into two figures.

This high incidence of personality disorders is believed to be a new phenomenon, and various factors have been adduced to account for it, all of them typical features of modern urban life. The sense of insecurity arising from material economic discord; the feeling of instability engendered by excessive competition in commerce and industry, with booms, slumps, redundancy and unemployment; the fear of nuclear war; the striving to 'keep up' socially and financially with others; the disparity between different income levels combined with a general desire to adopt the manner of life of the more privileged groups; sexual repression which is at the same time accompanied by continual erotic titillation from films, books and the exploitation of sex in commercial advertising, all these and a host of subsidiary phenomena related to them are characteristic of our age. Not least among them as a disturbing influence is the need to feel personally important in a civilization which denies importance to all but a few.

Each of these is doubtless a potential cause of psychological unbalance, and taken all together they may well be expected to produce personality maladjustments of a more or less disabling nature, particularly in the great capitals where the pressures of modern life are felt most acutely. The widespread emotional unbalance among the younger generation, which has developed into an international cult, with its own mythology and folklore and its

own archetypal figures symbolic of the 'beat generation', seems to substantiate the belief that we are living in an era of psychoneurosis.

Yet it is necessary to review this startling picture with caution. We have no statistical means of judging whether people of former days were less subject to neuroses than those of the present; The evidence of history does not entirely bear out the assumption that they were. Patterns of living man change radically, but human nature and its themes remain fairly constant in the mass. When Shakespeare, in the robust and full-blooded Elizabethan era, drew his picture of neurosis in Hamlet he was drawing from models that had been familiar from classical times and could doubtless be matched among his contemporaries. Greek and Roman history records many outstanding cases of behavior which we now recognize as psychotic, while the Middle Ages abounded in symptoms of mass neurosis amounting to hysteria. The fear of witchcraft that held all Europe in its grip for three centuries was a neurosis so prevalent that it constituted a norm, while almost the same may be said of the more extravagant forms of religious behaviorism characteristic, of that and later periods. The extraordinary Children's Crusade of 1212, when thousands of children from France and Germany set out on foot to conquer the Holy Land for Christendom, and never returned, is one example. Here the influence of a prevailing idea on young and emotionally unstable minds is comparable to the international climate of thought which in our own day has produced the 'beat generation'. There is no strict line of demarcation between a religious ecstasy and a nihilistic expression of revolt, as we may learn from Dostoyevsky, himself a neurotic of no mean stature. The private mystique of the neurotic may be caught

up in the larger world of mass neurotic fantasy, where it adds its contribution to a world that is apart from that of its particular age but which reflects it as in the distortions of a dream. Because of this, the neurotic is often found to be the spokesman and prophet of his generation. Facilities of communication have made this more than ever possible, creating a mental climate of tremendous power that knows no barriers and can only with difficulty be kept within the bounds of the prevailing norm. Adolph Hitler turned a large section of German youth into psychopaths, firstly because his personal neurosis found a response in theirs, and secondly because he was able to communicate it to them directly by means of radio, newspapers and other modern media of propaganda. At the same time, the unstable personality of the neuropath drew support and an intensification of its subliminal urges from the response it evoked in countless people who had never come into personal contact with the source. The real danger of neurosis today is its increased communicability; people are in contact with one another more than they have ever been before. The tendency to standardize, undesirable in itself, has the further disadvantage that it too often results in the wrong standards being accepted. Epidemic diseases of the mind are more to be feared than those of the body.

But those who are inclined to believe that personality disorders are a phenomenon of recent growth may draw comfort from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*. There we have a compendium of cases of individual and collective neuroses gathered from all ages, and showing every variety of hallucinatory and compulsive behavior ranging from mild eccentricity to the complete alienation from reality which is classed as insanity. Psychopathic degeneration, criminality, alcoholism, suicidal and homicidal tendencies are as old as the history of mankind.

Nor is there any real evidence that people living in simpler and more primitive societies are less prone to psychological disturbances than those of modern urban communities. The

rural areas of any European country can show their proportion of neurotics in real life no less than in fiction, while in those parts of the world least touched by Western civilization the symptoms of mental sickness among indigenous peoples are very common and are prone to take extreme forms. Where an inherent tendency to confuse the world of reality with that of dreams and imagination is worked upon by superstitious fears, morbid neurotic reactions are a frequent result. The psycho-somatic sickness produced by the witch-doctor's curse, which so often culminates in death, is even more common than are the mentally-induced diseases of the West that are its counterpart.

In one respect primitive societies are superior to those of today, and that is in the preservation of initiation ceremonies. These give the adolescent the necessary sense of importance and of 'belonging'; they served as tests which justify the place in tribal life that the initiate is to take up. By their severity they satisfy the initiate that he is worthy. Initiation rites have survived to some extent in the boisterous 'ragging' given to new arrivals in most institutions for the young, but they have no official sanction and do not confer any acknowledged status. To be psychologically effective an initiation ceremony must be either religious or in some way demonstrative of the new manhood or womanhood of the initiate. It then dispels feelings of inferiority and the self-doubtings which are a frequent cause of neurosis, and sometimes of delinquent behavior in young people. Primitive societies, however, have their own peculiar causes of mental disturbance and it is a mistake to suppose that they are superior in this context to more sophisticated social structures.

The fact is that more attention is given to minor psychological maladjustments today than was the case in former times, and departures from the normal standards of behavior are more noticeable in civilized than in primitive societies. The instinct to run to the psychiatrist's couch has become a part of contemporary mores. It is true that modern life

produces unnatural nervous stresses; but strain and conflict are a part of the experience of living in any conditions. There has been merely a shifting of the points of tension. The more man is artificially protected from the dangers surrounding primitive peoples, the more sensitive he becomes to minor irritants; yet man in a completely safe environment and free from all causes for anxiety—if that were more than theoretically possible—would be supremely bored, and boredom itself is a cause of neurosis. Human beings can be psychologically as well as physically over-protected, and the civilized man falls a prey to psychological conflicts brought about by situations which are much less truly anxiety-producing than those that menace the lives of primitive peoples every day. Habituated by education and example to expect more of life than the human situation gives him any reason to expect, the modern man feels the impact of forces hostile to these expectations more keenly than he need do. Modern commercial civilization is continually fostering and propagating desires which all men cannot satisfy equally, and desire artificially stimulated only to meet with frustration is a prime cause of psychological disorders. Herein lies the chief difference between our own and former eras. There is also the need for periods of true relaxation which many people deny themselves in their desire to be continually entertained.

The systematic study of abnormal psychology began with the work of J. M. Charcot in 1862. Closely following upon that the advent of psychoanalysis brought the subject of personality disorders into prominence. There then came a breaking down of the distinction which had formerly been made between normal and abnormal psychology, and the two became merged in what is now called dynamic psychology. It was found that the obsessions and compulsions of neurosis are not something distinct from the ordinary modes of behavior but are only extreme and sharply-defined forms of the prejudices and habit patterns of the 'normal'

person. In defining abnormality it has become the custom to place the line of demarcation simply at the point where the extreme symptoms make some form of treatment necessary for the person who deviates persistently from the average standards of his group. Thus 'normal' and 'abnormal' are purely relative terms whose only point of comparison is that provided by the generally-accepted habit patterns of a particular group. If the group itself is collectively abnormal its units must be considered 'normal', with the result that we are compelled to make reinterpretation of what is meant by these terms of reference.

All behavior is a form of adjustment, and this is true equally of behavior that is socially acceptable (the 'norm') or socially unacceptable. It is really the active response of a living organism to some stimulus or some situation which acts upon it. The ways in which certain persons deviate from normal standards in behavior are nothing but individual ways of meeting and adjusting to situations. This new way of regarding the problem is of the utmost importance, particularly when we come to examine the Buddhist system of psychology. In Buddhism, all modes of consciousness are seen as responses to sensory stimuli and these responses are conditioned by the predetermining factors from past volition. For example, where one person sees an object and is attracted to it, whilst another is repelled by the same object, the cause is to be found in mental biases set up in the past. All reactions, furthermore, are conditioned by a universal misapprehension of the real nature of the object as it is cognized through the senses.

There is therefore a common denominator of misunderstanding which takes the form of collective delusion; it constructs the world of sensory apperceptions and values out of the abstract world of forces which is the actuality of physics. Where there is in reality nothing but processes and events, an ever-changing flux of energies, the mind construes a world of things and personalities. In this world the

human consciousness moves selectively, clinging to this, rejecting that, according to personal preferences of habit and prior self-conditioning. The consciousness-dominating factor known to Buddhism as *Avijjā* (nescience), *Moha* (delusion) or *Vipallāsa* (misapprehension) is essentially a condition of mental disorder, a hallucinatory state. The Pāli axiom *Sabbe puthujjanā ummlattaka*,<sup>52</sup> “All worldlings are deranged”, indicates that the whole purpose of Buddhism is to apply mental therapy to a condition which, accepted as the norm, is in truth nothing but a state of universal delusion.

The *Puthujjana* or ‘worldling’ who is thus described is the average man; that is, all human beings except those who have entered on the four stages of purification, the *Sotāpanna* (Stream-enterer), *Sakadāgāmi* (Once-returner), *Anāgāmi* (Non-returner) and *Arahant* (Saint). The *Puthujjana* is characterized by mental actions of craving for states which are impermanent, subject to suffering, devoid of reality and inherently impure. These he wrongly imagines to be permanent, productive of happiness, invested with self-existence and pleasurable. His hankering for them is accompanied by mental biases (*āsavas*), mind-defiling passions (*kilesa*) and psychological fetters (*saṃyojana*), which in Buddhism are seen as the root causes of wrong action and consequent unhappiness. What we call the ‘norm’ is an average balance of these mental factors and their opposites, in exactly the same way that a state of normal physical health is merely the ‘balance of power’ between the various classes of bacteria in the body. If one class of bacteria gains ascendancy over the others it begins to have a destructive effect on the living tissues, and a state of disease supervenes. Psychologically, an increase in any one of the mental defilements constitutes the change over from a normal to an abnormal psychology. Since all ‘worldlings’ are deranged, what we are concerned with in

dynamic psychology is the degree of derangement and its underlying causes. This is the case also in Buddhist psychology.

Freudian psychoanalysis works on the assumption that when the origin of a personality disorder is known its influence on unconscious motivation will automatically disappear. Freud endeavored to trace all psychic traumas to experiences in infancy or early childhood, and made the libido the basis of his system. His work opened up many hitherto unsuspected areas of personality and made a great contribution to our knowledge of the subject. But the defects of Freud’s theories can be understood in terms of his system, for he tended to exaggerate certain motives unduly, and in deliberately searching for these he worked on a method of personal selectivity that was bound to become apparent to Jung and others among his successors. His therapeutic methods may also be questioned, for the conflicts engendered by unconscious motivation do not always cease when the original cause of the trauma is brought to the surface. For this and other reasons psychotherapy has not so far produced the benefits which were once expected of it. In many cases the most it can do is to enable the subject to come to terms with himself and ‘live with’ his condition. The limited nature of its success is indicated by the need to resort to physical treatment for cases that have passed from neurosis to psychosis, such as electro-convulsive therapy for acute depressive moods, insulin injections for the early stages of schizophrenia, frontal lobotomy for prolonged anxiety states and the use of the class of drugs known as tranquillizers which act upon the vegetative interneurotic circuits of the brain.

In contrast to the expedients of Western psychiatry, Buddhist mental therapy aims at total integration of the personality on a *higher level*. Since craving is the root cause of suffering it is necessary to diminish, and finally, extinguish, craving. But desire is also the mainspring of volition, so the first stage of the process must be the substitution of higher objectives for the motivations of the libido and

<sup>52</sup> Cf. Visuddhimagga Vol.II, page 208, line 13, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

their offshoots. The libido-activated urges must give place to the consciously-directed motives of the *Adhi-citta*, or higher mind. It is here that Buddhism introduces a point of reference which Western psycho-therapy has been unable to fit comfortably into its theories—the field of ethical values.

The discarding of many conventional and religious moral attitudes, on the ground that they are for the most part contingent and arbitrary, has left the psychologist without ethical determinants in certain important areas of his work. Whilst accepting as the norm the standards of contemporary life he has not been able to work out any universal basis on which what is 'right' and what is 'wrong' in some aspects of human conduct can be established. The defect has been a serious handicap in the treatment of anti-social and delinquent behavior, for the psychiatrist confronted with examples of deviationist and unacceptable behavior finds himself unable to decide on what authority he is setting up as the 'norm' a standard which he knows to be mostly a product of environment and social convenience. Clinical diagnoses and moral judgments do not always point in the same direction.

Buddhist ethico-psychology cuts through the problem by asserting boldly that the measure of immoral behavior is simply the degree to which it is dominated by craving and the delusion of selfhood. This at once gives an absolute standard and an unchanging point of reference. It is when the ego-assertive instinct overrides conventional inhibitions that behavior becomes immoral and therefore unacceptable; it is when the over-sensitive ego fears contact with reality that it retreats into a fantasy of its own devising. The neurotic creates his own private world of myth with its core in his own ego, and around this his delusions of grandeur, of persecution or of anxiety revolve. Neurosis then passes imperceptibly into psychosis. The ordinary man also, impelled by ego-assertiveness and the desire for self-gratification, is continually in danger of slipping across the undefined

border between normal and abnormal behavior. He is held in check only by the inhibitions imposed by training. The attainment of complete mental health requires the gradual shedding of the delusions centered in the ego, and it begins with the analytical understanding that the ego itself is a delusion. Therefore the first of the fetters to be cast away is *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, the illusion of an enduring ego-principle.

The doctrine of non-self (*Anattā*) is a cardinal tenet of Buddhism and the one that distinguishes it from all other religious systems, including Hindu Yoga. Ever since the time of Aristotle the 'soul', the pneuma or animus which is supposed to enter the body at birth and permeate its substance, has been taken as the entelechy of being in Western thought; but Buddhism denies the existence of any such entity. Modern psychology and scientific philosophy confirm this view. Everything we know concerning states of consciousness can be postulated without reference to any persisting ego-principle. Like the body, the mind is a succession of states, a causally conditioned continuum whose factors are sensation, perception, volition and consciousness. Introspective examination of the states of the mind in order to realize this truth is one of the exercises recommended in Buddhism.

The understanding of the Buddhist principles of impermanence, of suffering (as being the product of craving) and non-ego brings about a re-orientation of mind which is characterized by greater detachment, psychological stability and moral awareness. But Buddhism points out that this is not an effect which can be obtained by external means; it is the result of effort, beginning with and sustained by the exercise of will. There must first of all be the desire to put an end to suffering, and that desire must be properly canalized into '*Sammappadhāna*', the Four Great Exertions; that is, the effort to eliminate existing unwholesome states of mind; to prevent the arising of new unwholesome states; to develop new wholesome states and to

maintain them when they have arisen. The unwholesome states of mind are nothing but products of mental sickness that derive from the ego and its repressed desires.

Here it should be pointed out that Buddhist teaching is non-violent and this non-violence is to be exercised towards one's own mind as well as towards the external world. To repress natural desires is merely to force them below the surface of consciousness where they are liable to grow into morbid obsessions breaking out in hysteria or manic depressive symptoms. Buddhism does not favor this rough treatment of the psyche, which has produced so many undesirable results in Western monasticism. Instead of repression it works by attenuation and sublimation. Visualizing the passions as fire, Buddhism seeks to extinguish them by withholding the fuel. For example, sensuality is reduced in stages by contemplation of the displeasing aspects of the body, so that there comes a turning away from the sources of physical passion. Attraction is replaced by repulsion, and this finally gives way to a state of calm indifference. Each impure state of mind is counteracted by its opposite.

Techniques of meditation (*bhāvanā*) in Buddhism are designed for specific ends, according to the personality of the meditator and the traits it is necessary to eliminate. They are prescribed by the teacher just as treatment is given by a psychiatrist: the mode of treatment is selected with the individual requirements of the patient in view. The forty subjects of meditation, known as *Kammatthāna* (bases of action),<sup>53</sup> cover every type of psychological need and every possible combination of types. Their salutary action is cumulative and progressive from the first stages to the ultimate achievement. From the beginning, the Buddhist system of self-training makes a radical readjustment within the mental process, a readjustment which is founded on the acceptance of certain essential concepts that differ from those ordinarily held. The old

scale of values, with its emphasis on the cultivation of desires, is seen to be false and a source of unhappiness; but this realization does not result in a psychic vacuum. As the old, unwholesome ideas are discarded, new and invigorating ones take their place, while the lower motivations give place to consciously-directed impulses on the higher levels of being. So the personality is molded anew by introspective self-knowledge.

One defect of psychoanalysis as it is practiced in the West is that it often reveals ugly aspects of the personality before the patient is ready to accept them. This sometimes has highly undesirable side effects and may even cause disintegration of the personality. The Buddhist system of mental analysis teaches us to confront every revealed motivation in a spirit of detached and objective contemplation in the knowledge that there is nothing 'unnatural' in nature, but that an impulse which is 'natural' is not necessarily also desirable. The Buddhist who has brought himself to think in terms of the kinship of all living organisms, a concept inherent in the doctrine of rebirth, is not appalled by the coming to light of subconscious desires that are contrary to those permitted in his particular social environment. The distinction between human and animal conduct, which science has done much to prove illusory, is not sharply defined in Buddhist thought, where all life is seen as the product of craving-impulses manifesting now on the human, now on the animal level. Where sadistic or masochistic impulses exist they are viewed realistically and with detachment as residual factors of past motivation, and they can be dealt with accordingly. Terms such as 'perversion', which are already obsolete in modern psychology although they survive in popular writing and speech, have never existed in Buddhist thought. All Buddhism recognizes is craving and its various objects and degrees. Because of this, the moral climate of Buddhist thought as it concerns the libidinal impulses and inclinations is different from that of the West with its Judeo-Christian discriminations.

<sup>53</sup> See *The Light of the Dhamma*, Vol. V. No. 3, p. 14.



The distinction that craving is 'good' while that is 'bad' is foreign to Buddhism, for Buddhism is not concerned with the morality of fluctuating social conventions but with a concept of mental hygiene in which all craving is seen as a source of misery, to be first controlled and then eradicated. Thus, although its ultimate ideals are higher, the rational morality of Buddhism as it still operates in many Buddhist communities is not so destructive in its effects as the discriminative theological morality prevailing in the West. No Buddhist feels himself to be a 'lost soul' or an outcast from society because his desire-objects are different from those of the majority, unless his ideas have been tainted with Judeo-Christian influences. The Western psychiatrist who seeks to reassure a patient of this type whom he cannot 'cure' suffers from the disadvantage that he has the whole body of theological popular morality against him, and nothing can remove this devastating knowledge from his patient's mind. Hence we find that guilt and inferiority complexes, a dangerous source of psychological maladjustment, are certainly more prevalent, coming from this particular cause, than they are where standards common to antique world still survive.

It would be well if more attention were to be paid by present-day moralists to the cult of violence that has arisen as the outcome of commercially-exploited brutality and sadism in films, popular literature and most of the curiously misnamed 'comics' which give children and adolescents a morbid taste for the torture and extermination of their fellow-beings. Aggression is another instinct natural to man, but to encourage it for profit is certainly one of the true sins against humanity. Here again of course, we have nothing that is entirely new; cruelty is a prominent feature of many traditional and classic stories for children. What is new is the enormous quantity of such entertainment and the facility with which it is distributed on a global scale to create an international climate of thought and a subconscious reversal of all the standards that

civilization nominally upholds. We should not feel surprised at the psychological dichotomy it produces. Sooner or later we shall again have to pay heavily for the cult of outrage we have encouraged.

This, however, is a question of social-psychology; we are now dealing with individual psychology as it is affected by modern conditions and in the light of the Buddhistic axiom, *Sabbe puthujjanā ummlattaka*. We have already noted that the four stages of mental purification beyond the *puthujjana* state begin with the attainment of *Sotāpatti magga*, the 'path' of one who has 'entered the stream' of emancipation. This is followed immediately by *Sotāpatti-phala*, the 'fruit of stream-winning'. It is at this point that the erstwhile *puthujjana* becomes one of the four (or eight) classes of Noble Personalities. In the scheme of Ten *Samyojanas* he has eliminated the first three fetters: ego-delusion, doubt as to the truth and addiction to vain rituals which have no place in the higher endeavor. He then goes on to the next stage, that of the *Sakadāgāmi*. This is marked by the weakening of the next two fetters in the series: sensuous passion and ill-will. In the next phase of development he completely frees himself from these first five, which are called the 'lower fetters'. The remaining five fetters are attachment to existence on the higher levels of being (intellectualized existence), craving for existence on the purely mental plane (the spiritual life freed from the body), pride (the 'pride of the saint in his sainthood'), restlessness (the perturbed condition of the mind distracted by desires) and nescience. The last of these is the root-condition referred to previously; it is only eliminated in full at the last stage. The aspirant has then gained the full mental liberation of an Arahāt. While the mental and bodily formations continue to function he experiences *Sa-upādisesa-nibbāna*, or *Nibbāna* with the elements of existence still present. At death this becomes *Anupādisesa-nibbāna* or *Parinibbāna*, the complete extinction of the life-asserting, life-sustaining factors. No form of *Nibbāna* can be attained

before this last stage; the three classes of Noble Personalities that precede it gain assurance of the reality of *Nibbāna* but they do not experience the actual *Sa-upādisa-nibbāna* until all the defilements are removed. [This last sentence is contrary to orthodox Buddhist tradition. I don't know where Story got this from! —Ed.]

It is not the purpose of this article to deal with the state of *Nibbāna*, but merely to indicate the difference between the condition of the 'worldling' with his illusions and cravings, and that of the fully-emancipated and mentally healthy being. Buddhism itself is concerned more with the path than with the end, since it is the path which has to be followed, and the end must automatically reveal itself if the path is followed rightly. It is true that the goal, *Nibbāna*, is never very far from Buddhist thought; it is the motivating principle and *raison d'être* of the entire Buddhist system. But the stages on the way are our immediate concern. They involve an approach which is fundamentally therapeutic and progressive. Buddhist meditation is of two types, complementary to each other: *Samatha bhāvanā*, the cultivation of tranquility, and *Vipassanā-bhāvanā*, the cultivation of direct transcendental insight. For the latter it is necessary to have a teacher, one who has himself taken the full course of treatment, but much benefit can be obtained by an intelligent application of Buddhist ideas in the preliminary stages without a guide other than the original teachings of the Buddha. Everyone can, and should, avoid what he knows to be unwholesome states of mind; should cultivate universal benevolence in the systematic Buddhist manner; should endeavor to impress on his deepest consciousness the truths of impermanence, life-suffering and its cause, and the unreality of the ego. A period of quiet meditation, in which the mind is withdrawn from externals, should be set aside every day for the purpose. By this method Buddhism enables every man to be his own psychiatrist,

and avoids those dependences on others which so often produce further emotional entanglements in the relationship between the psychotherapist and his patient.

Any philosophy of life which does not include rebirth must be incomplete and morally unsatisfactory, and the same is true of psychological systems. Some psychological disorders have their origin in past lives; they are then often congenital and sometimes involve the physical structure of the brain or neural system. These are the psycho-somatic conditions which call for the use of surgery, drugs and the other physical treatments already mentioned. As resultants of past *Kamma* they may respond to treatment or they may not; all depends upon the balance of good and bad *Kamma* and the interaction of causes, not excluding external and material ones. But in any case, the knowledge that no condition is permanent, and the certainty that disorder will come to an end with the exhaustion of the bad *Kamma*-result, be it in this life or another, gives courage and fortitude to the sufferer. By understanding our condition we are able to master it, or at least to endure it until it passes away. This salutary understanding can also be applied beneficially in the case of those who have developed personality disorders through bad environmental influences, childhood traumas or any other cause traceable in this present life. Feelings of inadequacy, grievances against the family or social framework, emotional maladjustments can all be understood in terms of *Kamma* and rebirth. The question 'Why has this thing happened to me?' with the sense of injustice that comes from experiencing undeserved pain, is answered fully and logically by Buddhism. With that comes the beginning of an adjustment to circumstances which is in itself therapeutic. Together with this, the knowledge that one can be the sole and undisputed master of one's own future fate comes as the most effective psychological tonic and corrective that can be administered.

## THE SIMPLER SIDE OF BUDDHIST DOCTRINE

By

*Kassapa Thera (Vajirarāma, Colombo)*

When Prince Siddattha, over 2500 years ago, finally achieved his quest and, under the Bodhi Tree at Buddhagayā, gained Full Enlightenment becoming a Sammā Saṃbuddha,— his first thought was that so high an attainment as this would be beyond the capacity of mankind, and that any attempt to teach others would only involve him in weariness of body. At the Temple of Rammaka the Brahmin, speaking to the Bhikkhus, He said.<sup>54</sup>

The thought came to me, O Bhikkhus: “this Doctrine to which I have attained is profound, hard to understand, difficult to explain, rare, precious, not to be reached by mere reasoning, to be grasped only by the wise. But mankind is seized, entranced, spell-bound by its greeds. Thus seized, entranced, spell-bound by its greeds, this race of men will find it hard to understand the arising of all things through causes, and in dependence upon causes. And it is also difficult for them to understand how all the constituents of being can be made to subside, the doing away of all the bases of being, the quenching of craving, dispassion, cessation, Nibbāna. And now, should I teach this Doctrine and others fail to understand, it would only result in trouble and weariness for me.

But looking over the world with the Eye of a Buddha, the Exalted One saw that “Just as in a pond where lotuses are growing, blue, red and white, some of the plants, which have sprung up and grown in the water, do not reach the surface but grow under the water, while some reach the surface of the water, and others yet, standing clear of the water, are not touched by it,—so, looking over the world with the Eye of Enlightenment, I perceived

beings of all kinds,—lightly stained and deeply stained, intelligent and dull, good and bad, keen-witted and stupid, and some also who saw the terrors of the afterworld and the results of ill deeds.”

So the Buddha decided to teach the Doctrine, and breathed forth the words:

“Open are the doors of the Deathless to those  
Who have ears: let them repose trust.”

It is a common aspiration among Buddhists today to desire rebirth, as men, in the lifetime of the next Buddha, Metteyya; and there were large numbers of men and women who, making such aspiration in ages past, were reborn during the life time of the Buddha Gotama. Those were the lotus buds, unstained by the water, and standing clear of it, who waited but for the rising sun to open their petals in the glory of full bloom. Those were the first to “repose trust”, listen to the Master and pass through “the doors of the Deathless”,—and there were thousands of Arahats in the world.

But what of the great mass of humanity, those lotuses not yet ready for the dawn of the morrow’s sun, those whose promise of bloom was even yet embedded deep in the mud of *samsāra*’s slime? It is for such as these that the Arahats of the First Great Convocation, immediately after the Master’s final passing away, patiently rehearsed the whole of the Dhamma, thereafter known as the Tipiṭaka.

The Goal, achieved by the Arahats of the Master’s lifetime, and for hundreds of years since, may not be immediately within our reach today. But in this vast collection of teaching, our greatest heritage, there abound poems and parables, compassionate advice and direct simple appeal such as would touch any heart open to Truth’s simple message.

<sup>54</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli, 3 Oparivaggā, 6. Pāsārāsī Sutta, page 224 ex. seq. 6<sup>th</sup> Syn, Edn.

It is this that has brought countless millions to the feet of the Peerless One throughout all these centuries, and even today, more than 2500 years after that Dhamma was first revealed, yet commands the allegiance of a third of humanity.

It is the simpler side of the Dhamma,—the unchanging Eternal Law, whether Buddhas appear or not,—well declared by the Blessed One, difficult to grasp even by the wise but not beyond the understanding and appreciation of the meanest intellect, that the majority of Buddhists follows today.

“Strong limbs may dare the rugged road  
which storms,  
Soaring and perilous, the mountain’s  
breast:  
The weak must wind from lower ledge to  
ledge,  
With many a place of rest.

“So is the Eightfold Path which brings to  
peace;  
By lower or by upper heights it goes.  
The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries.  
All  
Will reach the sunlit snows.”<sup>55</sup>

There are many Suttas in our Books wherein the *Dhammassāmi*, the Lord of Truth, outlines the qualities to be acquired by the humble follower who would strive to lead a good life. But one chooses here an incident, recorded in the *Aṅguttara*,<sup>56</sup> that is a very poem of joy and domestic felicity.

The Blessed One was dwelling in the Deer-park near *Sumsumāragira*, and He visited his followers, “the parents of Nakula”. It is curious that nowhere are these delightful people mentioned by their own names: the Commentary gives no help, and perforce, only as ‘parents of Nakula’ may we know them. Both came to where the Teacher was seated,

made obeisance to the Exalted One, and *Nakulapitā* spoke thus:

“Bhante, ever since *Nakulamātā* as a girl, was brought home to me, a youth, never have I known any transgression on her part, even in thought, much less in deed. We wish, Bhante, in this life to rejoice with each other, and also to rejoice with each other in the next world.”

Then *Nakulamātā* spoke thus:

“Bhante, ever since I, as a girl, was taken home to *Nakulapitā*, a youth, never have I known any transgression on his part, even in thought, much less in deed. We wish, Bhante, in this life, to rejoice with each other, and also to rejoice with each other in the next world.”

And, to these two, the Teacher spoke:

“If, householders, both wife and husband should plan to rejoice with each other in this life and also in the next,—then indeed should both be equally *saddhāvanta* (have trustful confidence in the Triple Gem), equally virtuous, equally generous, and equally wise. Then, truly, will they rejoice with each other not only in this life but also the next.”

Here is a teaching all can easily grasp—simple and straightforward. Sow together, and similarly, and you will reap together, and similarly. If the sowing be of a high order, the reaping will also be of a high order.

As long as human nature remains what it is, men and women will marry: and marriage should be the closest companion-ship possible. No two others may aid or mar each other’s progress in the sea of life as a married couple may. They can be beneficent friends (*kalyāṇamittā*); and, of such friendship, when once<sup>57</sup> the Thera *Ānanda* asked the Master, “Is it not a half of the holy life?” the Buddha replied: “Not so. *Ānanda*! Not so. Beneficent friendship is the whole of the holy life.”

<sup>55</sup> The Light of Asia. Edwin Arnold.

<sup>56</sup> Suttanta Pitaka, *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, *Catukka Nipāta* Pāli, 2. *Dutiya-panṇāsaka*, (6) 1. *Puññābhisanda-vagga*, 5. *Paṭṭhama-jīvī Sutta*, p. 372, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>57</sup> *Samyutta Nikāya*, *Sagāthāvagga* *Samyutta Pāli*, *Kosala Samyutta*, 2. *Dutiya-vagga*, 8. *Kalyāṇamitta Sutta*, p. 87, *et. seq.* 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

The Exalted One himself is, naturally, the best “beneficent friend” a being may obtain, and next to Him, in due order, come His Disciples. But in the ideal marriage that everybody desires, the ordinary average man can visualize a happy couple, beneficent friends to each other, and aiding each other’s progress not only in this life, but in life after life to come till, at last, each aids the other to the *summum bonum* of Deliverance from all suffering.

In the Holy Books are many sermons, long and short, full of advice to the average layman. Notable amongst these is the *Siṅgālovāda Suttanta*,<sup>58</sup> known as ‘the Layman’s Vinaya’ which details correct behavior for the good layman. Excellent though all such sermons are, none can surpass the brief simple appeal of the words to Nakula’s parents, which advise the cultivation of four things: *Saddhā*, Virtue, Generosity and Wisdom.

1. SADDHĀ is a difficult word to translate. It connotes so much more than “Faith,” which is the usual English rendering, that it is best left un-translated. The simplest form of *Saddhā* is that which is seen in a child reverencing the Blessed One through His Symbols,—the relic-enshrining Dagoba, the Bo-tree that sheltered Him when He became a Buddha, and the Image that tries to picture Him in our eyes. The child’s *Saddhā* in the Triple Gem of Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha, is due to its trust in its parents who thus far have guided it safely. It approximates the average man’s “faith” in such matters as the North Pole, the Electron and the Quantum theory, none of which he is likely to prove for himself in this life. The *Saddhā* of the adult Buddhist is on a higher plane. It is the essential characteristic of Buddhist devotion, so conspicuous in the crowds that adoring move from shrine to shrine in any Buddhist land on a Vesak full-moon day.

What then is the meaning of this intense devotion, this earnest adoration? It is evidence of true Buddhist *Saddhā*. Can we analyse this *Saddhā*? Yes; and a powerful element in it is grateful Love. It is this Love that makes *Saddhā* so sublime; it is utterly selfless; it expects nothing in return, for the Peerless One has “gone beyond” and can no longer aid any cosmic being personally again. In this devotion there is naught of the fear that may move a theist, no supplication. There is only Love, selfless grateful Love.

This Love is the main moving element of *Saddhā* but its essential element is trust that becomes more and more confident as the devotee progresses in study, practice and realization, till, at last, it becomes the supreme unshakable assurance of one who knows, the Arahāt.

Both these factors, the Dhamma tells us, are worth cultivating.

Their driving power is supreme. There is nothing to equal this unique thing, Buddhist *Saddhā*. It is the spark that, tended with care, will one day burn up all impurity. And it is directed towards a man and his teaching, not towards a God. A man, who was once a man like ourselves, but whose heart blazed with a compassion, for all that suffer, such as we puny ones can scarce conceive. It was such a compassion as drove him on, sacrificing all that men hold dear, sacrificing life itself, time and again, so that he may, someday, snatch from life the solution of this riddle of an endless chain of deaths and suffering. Perfecting himself, life after life for countless aeons, He at last succeeded in his search. Under the Bodhi Tree at Uruvela he sat, in that last struggle with steeled determination,—“Let my flesh and blood dry up, my skin, ligaments and very bones,—but from this seat I rise not till Perfect Enlightenment is attained!”

He won, and in winning that last fight Prince Siddhattha became a Buddha, a Fully Enlightened One, an Omniscient and Incomparable One.

<sup>58</sup> Suttanta Piṭaka, Pāthika-vagga, Siṅgālovāda Sutta, p. 146, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

On that vey Vesak Full-moon night, attaining the deepest “One-pointedness” of mind, the Prince acquired in succession “Memory of past existences”, “Divine Sight” by which he saw beings dying and being reborn again, and Knowledge of the “Wheel of Life,”—the chain of Causes and Effects that makes up existence.

“Then, O Bhikkhus”, said He, “Myself, subject to birth, growth and decay, disease, death, sorrow and stain,—but perceiving the wretchedness of things subject to birth, growth and decay, disease, death, sorrow and stain,—and seeking after the incomparable security of Nibbāna the birthless, the free from growth and decay, the free from disease, the deathless, sorrowless and stainless.

Then I saw and knew—“Assured am I of Deliverance, this is my final birth, never more shall I return hither!”<sup>59</sup>

For 45 years thereafter the Peerless One,—compassionate, tireless, and patient,—taught “all who have ears and would repose *Saddhā*”, and His last words were:

“Look now, O Bhikkhus, I urge you:  
Transient innately are all compounds;  
With zeal work out your aim.”<sup>60</sup>

And we, ordinary average followers of that Flower of humanity bow down at His shrines today, in that specially Buddhist form of Devotion, *Saddhā*, which is not Faith indeed, so far as Faith is blind, unreasoning and based on no principle or fact in life. *Saddhā* is rather the maturer Love and Confidence, the true heart’s adoration that comes in the train of understanding, when we have gained a little of self-mastery and begin to understand the value of self-sacrifice,—when we begin to gain some glimpse of the meaning of that infinite Love that has for us resulted in some slight knowledge of the Law, our treasure.

So we heap piles of scented flowers, offer incense and lights before our Teacher’s shrine, and preface all our acts of worship and meditation with the well-known formula:—

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā  
Sambuddhassa!*

“Honour to Him, the Exalted One, the Holy One, the Utterly Awakened!”

So long as the self looms great in each of us, it seems derogatory to its vanity that one should kneel in adoration of any being, though He be the greatest on this our Earth or in the heavens beyond; it appears of little value that another should have given all His life, all of many lives, for the sake of helping life at large to find Security. But as we learn to understand that craving desires, the cause of all our sufferings, spring from this same thought of self, and how difficult each poor act of self-renunciation is, we begin to see the value of our Teacher’s long quest. Setting our puny efforts beside our knowledge of the sacrifice which this discovery of the Eternal Law involved for One, the greatest and most perfect of men, we turn with shame from the thought of our paltry efforts, so mean do they appear.

Thus we see our true place, as compared with the heights of selflessness and attainment won by the Holy and Exalted. Our hearts are filled with wonder and love as we chant the ancient, beautiful Pāli Hymn:

The Buddhas of the ages past,  
The Buddhas that are yet to come,  
The Buddhas of the present age,  
Lowly, I each day, adore!  
No other refuge do I seek,  
Buddha is my Matchless Refuge:  
By might of Truth in these my words,  
May joyous Victory be mine!

This then is *Saddhā* —a Devotion, a Love and Confidence that helps us onward. Without it we can never win the fire, the power and earnestness that alone can forward our high aim. As the mists of “self” roll aside, bright and brighter yet glows the—Buddha-Beacon. “Once has One achieved, and still on earth, His

<sup>59</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Ariyapariyesana Sutta.

<sup>60</sup> Dīgha Nikāya. Mahā-vagga, Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta, p. 61, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

glory shines over the dark floods of Life's Ocean, marking the Path that each must cross to win the Peace". By understanding the Doctrine He revealed, we may surely guide our bark straight to that other shore, but the motive power, to drive our ships, is born from *Saddhā*. Therefore it is not children alone who need to kneel before the Master's Shrine and offer lowly gifts of light, flower and scent. We all need it for the mental power it alone can yield,—for none of us has finally escaped the fangs of self, and *Saddhā* is the antidote to its poison.

We too need the act of homage though its adoration is directed, not to a Person—for in Truth all personality is a dream,—but to our heart's Ideal. Thus may we ever find fresh strength and build a shrine of our own lives, cleansing our heart till they are worthy to bear that Image in an innermost sanctuary of Love. Upon that altar all of us need to offer gifts daily, gifts, not of dying lights, fading flowers and evanescent scents, but of deeds of Love, of sacrifice, and selflessness—towards those about us. These should be the Buddhist's daily offering in worship of the Perfect One. Striving to be His followers not merely in name alone, but in our hearts and lives proving that our Ideal has yet the power to call us and to guide.

And the cleansing Power of *Saddhā* will surely lead us upward, and towards our Goal. For this we have the Master's own assurance. In a sermon preached at the Jetavana Monastery, in Sāvattī, known as "The Parable of the Snake"<sup>61</sup>—an extremely instructive discourse to the Bhikkhus, after assuring the Saints of the Four Grades of the absolute certainty of their Deliverance, the Lord of Truth continues:—

"Thus, O Bhikkhus, the Dhamma has been well taught by me, made known, revealed, elucidated,—free from shoddy. And, O Bhikkhus, in the Dhamma thus well taught by

me, made known, revealed, elucidated, free from shoddy—*whatsoever Bhikkhus conform to the Dhamma, follow with Saddhā, all these are destined to Full Awakening.*"

"And, O Bhikkhus, in the Dhamma thus well taught by me, made known, revealed, elucidated, free from shoddy,—*whosoever turn to me merely with Trust and Love,—all these are destined to Heavens.*" So spake the Blessed One.

After such a clear and cheering assurance as this, there is no need to stress the value of *Saddhā* to each and every ordinary average lay-woman and man.

2. VIRTUE—The next thing to cultivate is Virtue (*sīla*).

A striking thing in the Buddha Dhamma is that here we find naught of "Thou shalt", or "Thou shalt not". When once it is realized that selfishness and self-indulgence cause all our woe, then a wise one strives for self-mastery. *Sīla* is the mastery of speech and action. Of his own free will the Buddhist "pledges to observe" this precept of virtue, and that. The minimum number of such precepts of virtue that the good Buddhist should observe is five: (1) I undertake to observe the precept to abstain from destroying the life of beings, (2) from taking things not given, (3) from sexual misconduct, (4) from false speech, and (5) from taking intoxicants.

On holy days, the earnest Buddhist observe eight precepts. In this list, instead of undertaking to abstain from only sexual misconduct, one substitutes 'all unchastity'. And the added three precepts pledge to abstain from taking food between midday and the next day's dawn; from dancing, singing, music, unseemly shows, the use of garlands, perfumes, beauty creams, and things intended to beautify and adorn; and lastly, from using grandiose and luxurious beds and seats.

All these precepts, from the laymen's minimum five to the Bhikkhu's numerous

<sup>61</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli, 3. Opamma-vagga, 2. Alagaddūpama Sutta, p. 182, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

observances of virtue, are intended to purify speech and deed, to aid self-restraint and self-mastery.

Non-Buddhists, at times, find fault with these precepts of virtue, calling them “negative”. This is due partly to ignorance of Buddhist ideals, and partly to an innate selfish tendency to interfere in other beings’ affairs which is a very common trait, both in individuals and nations. Great nations like to take up weak nations’ burdens—at a reasonable profit. The ideal of plain living and high thinking is gradually becoming obsolete. The new model is to ‘improve the standard of living’, a slogan of individuals and nations, who have much to sell and want others to buy. The fashionable tailor would like even a Bhikkhu to clothe himself stylishly. If the majority of us adopt Eastern dress it would be a bleak outlook for the fashionable tailor. It is not universal love that prompts us to help a lame dog over a stile. We are not eager to aid a maimed snake or centipede over anything, except perhaps a passage into the next world. The dog protects us and our possessions, and yet, when our self-interest demands it, we deliver even the dog to the vivisectionist.

The Buddhist wants to dominate his senses. Every one of the five senses clamors to be fed with what it likes; the eye clamors for beautiful sights, the ear for sweet music, the nose for pleasing odors, the tongue for delightful food and drink, the body for sensuous and even sensual contacts. Long have the senses done this, and long have they been pampered, till their insistence has become dominant and arrogant. And what, like an overworked tired servant, must serve these five lordly senses? It is mind. Mind, the true king, has been deposed, and mind’s servants, the five senses, have usurped its place. The Buddhist would restore to mind its sovereignty. For mind is the sole weapon wherewith we may carve our ways. The worldling’s mind is exhausted by its labors, devising ways and means to serve the usurping senses. It has no breathing space to see things as they really are, because forsooth, the taste-sense may even addle it moreover,

and blunt its keenness, with intoxicating drinks.

*Sīla* begins to remedy all this, and helps mind to study other things and to understand. The more one understands, the more one realizes the value of this *Sīla* discipline. “As hand washes hand, and foot washes foot,—so right conduct aids right understanding, and right understanding aids right conduct.”

With regard to the Buddhist precepts being “only negative values”, although one is tempted to ask what the positive is of some of them, it is well to state here that Buddhist psychology does not share this view.

Although the dominant “volitional” factor in each thought-moment of determination to refrain from killing is the factor of “abstinence”, a number of other factors, powerful amongst them being the positive factors of liberality, selfless love, and compassion, crowd around that leading factor of abstinence, making it easy for the strict observer of the first precept to practice the positive Buddhist meditations on Universal Compassion and Universal Love. So it is with each precept. *Sīla*, moreover, is not the whole tale of Buddhist effort at perfection. Every Buddhist must strive to perfect ten “highest states” (*Pāramī*). Without perfection in these he cannot hope to “enter the stream” of *Pāramī* of Alms-giving, energetic activity, truthfulness, resolution and love, to such an extent of awe-inspiring completeness as would make the hair of even the most ardent admirer of “positive virtue” stand on end. How would such a one, for instance, like to “give alms” of his own body to a starving tigress? How far will he succeed in extending love towards a man who is lopping off his limbs the while he himself is bleeding to death? One who knows, knows that Buddhist Doctrine inculcates the practice of the highest positive virtues to the highest extent possible.

And again, will the admirer of “positive virtues” prefer to live with murderers, thieves, lechers, liars and drunkards as his neighbors, or with Buddhists who abstain from all these



things? He will naturally prefer the Buddhists. Why? Because with the Buddhists he will never have causes for fear. In other words, the virtuous Buddhist gives him *Abhaya Dāna*, the positive virtue of the Gift of Freedom from Fear. And virtuous Buddhists, wherever they live, are constantly and freely giving *Abhaya Dāna* to all around them.

To a Buddhist “Contentment is the greatest wealth”. He aims at reducing his needs, not multiplying them, at controlling his senses, not indulging them. The five senses have combined to soil the lamp of mind to such an extent that, ordinarily, its light is dim and murky and things cannot be seen as they really are. *Sīla* is designed to cleanse that lamp, to purify the fouled oil, to renew the clogged wick, and wipe away the soot and dirt on the chimney, so that the lamp may glow brightly and throw light all round.

Mind is the lamp, and Virtue is the cleansing process.

3. GENEROSITY—The next quality that the Buddha advised Nakula’s parents to cultivate is Generosity (*Cāga*).

The Pāli word *Cāga* means “giving up”, renunciation, generosity, munificence.

*Cāga*, with *Saddhā*, *Sīla* and *Paññā* (wisdom) form the four Blessings (*Sampadā*) or accomplishments pregnant with promise of early Deliverance from all ill. And these same four,— *Saddhā*, *Sīla*, *Cāga* and *Paññā*, are characteristic of the *Kalyāṇa-mitta* the Beneficent Friend ‘who will aid one to attain all good. The Teacher tells us<sup>62</sup> that “he who has *Sīla* and *Saddhā* excels all stingy people in generosity (*Cāga*).”

The world thinks that treasure is acquired by hoarding and accumulating. The Buddhist ideal is just the opposite, and “*Cāga paribhāvita citta* (a heart bent on giving)”, is one of the Seven Noble Treasures (*Satta Ariya Dhana*)

*Saddhā* and *Sīla* are two others of these “Seven Noble Treasures”, and *Paññā* (wisdom), which we have yet to consider, is another.

Beings burn with the Fires of Greed, Hatred and Ignorance. It is only with the extinguishing (*nibbūto*) of these fires, through not feeding them (*aggi anāhāro*), that it is possible to achieve the bliss of Nibbāna.

Note how, again, it is those five insatiable senses that cause all this world’s woe. It is through the sateless greed of these five that even hatred springs up and all earth’s quarrels, wars and endless strife. In the Mahā Nidāna Suttanta,<sup>63</sup> the Awakened One tells us how this comes to pass.

“Thus it is, Ānanda, that through sensations (*vedanā*) comes craving (*taṇhā*); through craving comes chasing after (*pariyesanā*); through chasing after, comes acquisition of possessions (*lābha*); through acquisition, comes deciding what to do with these gains (*vinicchaya*); because of decision, comes the excitement of desire (*chandarāga*); because of the excitement of desire, comes cleaving to these possessions (*ajjhosāna*); because of cleaving, comes enclosing with boundary walls and fences (*pariggaha*); because of enclosing, comes miserly avarice (*macchhariya*) because of avarice, comes a need for keeping watch and ward over possessions (*ārakkha*); and because of this watch and ward, there comes to be the laying hold of cudgel and weapon, dispute, disunion, strife and quarrel, slander, lies and many other evil (*akusalā dhammā*).

Again the Master says: “Ānanda, were there no craving of any sort or kind whatsoever, by anyone, for anything,—that is to say, no craving for sights, sounds, odors, tastes, contacts, or ideas,—then, there being no craving whatsoever, would there, with such cessation of craving, be any appearance of clinging?”

<sup>62</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya; III 34.

<sup>63</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, Mahāvagga Pāli 2. Mahānidāna Sutta, p. 47, 6<sup>th</sup> Syd. Edn.

“There would not, Bhante”.

“And sensations cause craving. Ānanda, were there no sensations of any sort whatsoever, in anyone, for anything, that is to say, no sensations born of stimuli received by way of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and imagination, then, there being no sensation whatsoever, would there, with such cessation of sensation, be any appearance of craving?”

“There would not, Bhante”.

“Wherefore, Ānanda, just that is the origin, the cause of Craving, to wit, Sensation.”

So one has to be ever watchful with these same clamoring senses, and when we experience their insistent calls, take care that craving greed does not arise from them. Such right mindfulness is the key to the whole course of Buddhist Meditation, and ultimately opens the door to Nibbāna.

*Caḡā*, generosity and giving up, opposes the thoughts of greed. Each one of us must learn to cultivate this “heart bent on giving”. We must learn to give, give promptly,—before that ancient Greed’s after-thoughts rush in to prevent meritorious actions,—whenever the urge arises. The urge arises in one’s heart mainly from two kinds of beautiful thoughts,—thoughts of compassion (*karuṇā*) and thoughts of reverential offering (*pūjā*). Thus arises all true greedless volition (*alobha cetanā*). He who gives a little with the aim of gaining much, in this very journeying of life, is only a practitioner of usury. His heart is bent on accumulating, not in giving up.

Compassion prompts when we see a poor man in urgent need. Thoughts of reverential offering (*pūjā*) prompt when we see the greatly wise, the virtuous, the other-worldly and holy. The much misunderstood Buddhist practice of reverentially offering food-*pūjā* before the Master’s Image is of the latter kind. The Image does not eat food. The Exalted One Himself has “gone Beyond” and needs food no more. Yet, were He here, how greatly would we like to offer him such humble *pūjā* and because He has “gone Beyond”, our heart’s urge prompts

us to reverentially make such offerings before His Image. It is a pure and greedless volition, and highly meritorious.

The hospitality of people in Buddhist lands is well known. In some lands folk may say—“There’s a foreigner, heave a brick at him”—but not thus does the Buddhist treat a stranger—even after the strain of long years of exploitation and disappointment.

So long as he has aught to give, the Buddhist gives with an open hand. *Mitam-pacaya*, a “measuring cook”, one who measures just enough of the rice he cooks for guests, is the old Sinhala term of obloquy for a niggardly person. Greatness of heart in giving, and greatness of heart in accepting a gift—these are things illustrated again and again in our Books.

Once, the Peerless One was going on his round for alms, and a slave-girl offered him all she had—plain poor cakes made of waste rice-powder. She thought, “Alas! it is all I had. Will the Lord deign to eat such coarse food, He who so often is served by Mahārājās and Setṭhīs!” And the Buddha, seating Himself by the roadside there, ate those cakes, in her presence and to her unutterable joy.

Once, the noble Arahat Mahā Kassapa, on his almsround, stood before a forlorn leper. “Will he really accept food from such as I?” wondered the leper, who, yet wondering, gave of the food in his own begging bowl. As he emptied the poor food into the Great Thera’s bowl, a leprous finger, that had rotted to near self-amputation, dropped with the food into the Thera’s bowl. “Woe is me”. thought the leper, “now he will never partake of this food!” But the mighty-hearted Arahat, carefully placing that fetid finger on one side, there and then serenely ate that tainted food.

Such are the marks of real culture. Mankind today is prating much of a “new world Order”. Can there be a “new order” in hearts that yet nurture the old, old poisons of greed, hate and ignorance! The only “new order” possible is for mankind to open its eyes to actuality, to see

the Truth of the Buddha-revelation and, adopting it, bring about that revolutionary change of heart that once made the glory of Dhammāsoka's reign so great that its echoes still resound in world history.

4. The last noble quality, mentioned by the Master to Nakula's parents, was the cultivation of WISDOM (*Paññā*). And, with *Paññā*, we ordinary average folk find that we gradually leave the simpler side of Buddhist Doctrine and go towards the abstruse.

Yet, even here, there is much that, even to the less fortunate Buddhists of today, is clear and straightforward.

The Buddhist has no impossible postulates; he tries to see as his Teacher taught, "things as they really are". He looks at the world around him and sees that all, all is transitory there. He sees that what is transitory is bound to be sad. All that we love is passing away, and such parting from the loved is suffering. And we, we too are part of the passing show—with greying hair, falling and decaying teeth, disease and death looming ahead,—it is all sad. The Buddhist sees that, to what is transient and sad, one clings in vain, and in all this he can see naught of which he can say,—with assurance as to the permanent value of such statement,—"This is me, this is mine, this is a soul."

Right here, one must pause to say that too many people in this world think that the world about them really is what they wish it to be; that happiness is round the corner, even if it is not too evident in the immediate environment. Thought is too undisciplined and vague. We refuse to pursue a train of thought that seems to lead to unpleasant conclusions,—or even unfamiliar conclusions,—like the woman who, seeing a giraffe for the first time in her life, exclaimed, "I refuse to believe it!" We allow old usage, vested worldly interests, and immediate convenience to dominate our freedom of thought. We shrink from facing facts—and yet, this is precisely what we must inflexibly do. The Buddha reveals facts. To

Him there were no theories, He, the "Teacher of Gods and men", knew.

In the *Samyutta Nikāya*<sup>64</sup> we are told how, long years after the meeting already related, the aged Nakulapitā visits the Buddha once again. No mention of Nakulamātā who, perhaps, has died.

"The fairest things have fleetest end,  
Their scent survives their close:  
But the rose's scent is bitterness  
To him that loved the rose".

The old gentleman is broken-down, sick and ailing. He feels lonely and complains that rarely does he see the Exalted One:

"Let the Exalted One cheer and comfort me", he mourns, "so that it may be a profit and a blessing to me for many a long day."

To him the Lord gently replied

"True true is it, *gahapati*; disease-harassed is the body, weak and encumbered. For one, householder, hauling his body about, to acknowledge even a moment's health,— what is this but folly?

Therefore thus, say I, shouldst thou train thyself:

'Sick of body though I be, mind shall be healthy',—thus shouldst thou train thyself.'

That was all. And Nakulapitā, feeling that he had been "sprinkled with nectar," gladly welcomed these words and, rising, saluted the Exalted One and departed.

How then is one to cultivate this "healthy mind" that remains serene in spite of all? The Buddha teaches us how.

He teaches us how to sow, so that we may reap happily. Though the Highest is not immediately open to everyone, the directions are clear. The Buddha wants us to see clearly,—to see things as they really are,— not

<sup>64</sup> *Samyutta Nikāya*, *Khandhavagga Samyutta Pāli*, 1. *Khandha Samyutta*, 1, *Nakulapitu-vagga*, 1. *Nakulapitu Sutta*, p. 1, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

as we imagine or wish them to be. He tells us to objectify even ourselves,—this body, these senses, all experiences, and even mind itself.

Close investigation on these lines alone can reveal the truth that nothing cosmic lasts, that nothing cosmic affords true happiness, that nothing cosmic has an unchanging core, a soul.

Then, at long last, one SEES,—one sees the worthlessness, the filth and horror of the cosmic. One *flings* it away and, in the very flinging,—at that instant,—one intuits the HYPERCOSMIC, the Permanent, the truly Happy.

And that is what is termed “Nibbāna”, the Goal.

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## THE CREST OF THE BANNER

*Broadcast by*

*U Aung Than.*

During the Buddha's lifetime too there were wars. There can be no Real Peace in the world, there can be no paradise on earth.

We, however, know that Good begets Good and Evil begets Evil, and that Good can be performed by Thought, Word and Deed. Thoughts, even by the mere fact that they keep away evil, are good, but Good Thoughts will do more than that. They will surely lead to Good Words and Good Deeds; Good Thoughts are the essential basis of all that is Good.

In the Teaching of the Buddha there are grouped certain Suttas, selected for the Good Thoughts, Words and Deeds they lead to. Of these Suttas, generally known as the Paritta Suttas, Discourses that give protection, the Dhajagga Sutta, the discourse on the Crest of Banner, is one which gives protection from the dangers of War. The martial banner is hoisted high and the followers are enjoined to look up at it. Look up at what? At that which floats above everything and forever at the crest,—the virtues of the Buddha, the Exalted One, the Utterly Awakened; the virtues of the Saddhamma, so well expounded by the Blessed One; and the virtues of the Order of Disciples of the Blessed One, the incomparable field of merit. And such "looking up"—remembrance will give complete freedom from Fear. It is said that the recital of texts, the reading of holy writings, the listening to discourses and the like are of great merit, if done with true devotion, as they raise and fortify the courage of the follower in times of temptation, strengthen his confidence in himself and the doctrine, and promote through a developed mind, good activities which will lead in time to complete happiness.

### DHAJAGGA SUTTA

Glory unto Him, the Exalted Lord, the Holy One, the Utterly Awakened.

Thus have I heard:— On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at the monastery of Anāthapiṇḍika, in Jeta's Grove, near Sāvattī. Then the Blessed One addressed the Bhikkhus, saying: "O Bhikkhus!"

"Lord!" the Bhikkhus responded. The Blessed One spoke as follows:—

Long ago, O Bhikkhus, a battle was raging between the Devas and Asurās. Then Sakka, the king of the Devas of the Tāvātimsa (Heaven) said:

"If comrades, when you have joined in Battle, in you should arise fear, trembling or hair-standing-on-end, watch then, at such time, the crest of my banner. As you thus look up at the crest of my banner, any fear, trembling or hair-standing-on-end there be, would certainly disappear.

If you cannot see the crest of my banner watch then, at such time, the crest of Pajāpat Devarājā. As you thus look up at his crest, any fear, trembling or hair-standing-on-end there be, would certainly disappear.

If you cannot see his crest, watch then, at such time, the crest of the banner of Varuna Devarājā. As you thus look up at his crest, any fear, trembling, or hair-standing-on-end there be, would certainly disappear.

If you cannot see his crest, watch then, at such time, the crest of the banner of Īsāna Devarājā. As you thus look at his crest, any fear, trembling, or hair-standing-on-end there be, would certainly disappear.

Now, O Bhikkhus, in them that watch the crest of the banner of Sakka, the king of the Devas, or of Pajāpat Devarājā, or of Varuna

Devarājā, or of Īsāna Devarājā, any fear, trembling, or hair-standing-on-end there be, may or may not disappear. And why? Because, Sakka, the king of Devas, O Bhikkhus, is not free from lust, hatred, ignorance, is subject to fear, trembling, terror and running away.

But I say thus unto you, O Bhikkhus:— If, O Bhikkhus, when you have gone into a forest, to the foot of tree, to a lonely abode, fear, trembling, or hair-standing-on-end should arise in you, do remember me at that time:—

Such, indeed, is that Blessed One: Exalted, Omniscient, Endowed with knowledge and virtue, Auspicious, Knower of worlds, a guide incomparable for the training of individuals, Teacher of gods and men, Enlightened, and Holy.

As you think of me, O Bhikkhus, any fear, trembling, or hair-standing-on-end there be, would certainly disappear.

If you cannot remember me, then remember the Dhamma:—

Well-expounded is the Dhamma by the Blessed One; to be self-realized; with immediate fruit; to be but approached; to be seen; capable of being entered upon; to be attained by the wise, each for himself.

As you think of the Dhamma, O Bhikkhus, any fear, trembling, or hair-standing-on-end there be, would certainly disappear.

If you cannot remember the Dhamma, then remember the Saṅgha:—

Of good conduct is the Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One, of upright conduct is the Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One, of wise conduct is the Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One, of dutiful conduct is the Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One. This Order of the Disciples of the Blessed One, namely, these four Pairs of Persons, the Eight Kinds of Individuals, is worthy of offerings, is worthy of hospitality, is worthy of reverential salutation, is an incomparable field of merit to the world.

As you think of the Saṅgha, O Bhikkhus, any fear, trembling, or hair-standing-on-end there be, would certainly disappear.

And why? Because, O Bhikkhus, the Tathāgata is Exalted, Omniscient, free from lust, hatred, ignorance, is without fear, without trembling, without terror, and is not running away.

This the Blessed One said. The Accomplished One having said so, the Blessed One furthermore spoke as follows:—

(1) When in a forest, or at the foot of tree, or in a lonely abode, O Bhikkhus, recall to mind the Enlightened One. Fear to you there will never be.

(2) If, you cannot think of the Buddha, the Chief of the world, the Leader of men, then recall to mind the Dhamma that leads to liberation and is well-taught.

(3) If you cannot think of the Dhamma, that leads to liberation and is well-taught, then recall to mind the Saṅgha, the unrivalled field of merit.

(4) As you thus think of the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha, O Bhikkhus, fear, or trembling, or hair-standing-on-end there will never be.

In the words of the Venerable Kassapa Thera:—

“Fly high the banner of Truth.  
Preach for the teaching Pure.  
In moments when the hand of terror  
Clutches coldly at the heart,  
Think not of gods—for they too tremble.  
In times of loneliness and darkness  
When the lamp of hope burns low,  
Think not of gods—their light too passes.  
In hours of long-drawn agony  
Too-cruel for words, too deep for tears,  
Think not of gods—for they too sorrow.  
Think of the Buddha, the Conqueror!  
Think of the Dhamma, Eternal Light!  
Think of the Saṅgha, Host of Joy!  
Ariyan warrior, remember these!

**May all beings be well and happy!**

# BUDDHISM AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION

By Helmuth Von Glasenapp

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From the *Maha Bodhi Journal*, October 1960.

Ever since the 17th century when the first news about Buddhism reached Europe, that religion has always been an object of special interest to all scholars who occupied themselves with the comparative study of the world's great creeds. And this for several reasons. The biography of the Buddha has always possessed a special human touch which appealed strongly to the imagination and the sentiments of persons susceptible to heroic deeds and moving feelings. The noble principles of Buddhism have at all times won admiration from those who believe in the inherent good in man. Historians felt particularly attracted by the changing fate of a creed that had in the course of time won so many adherents in many countries of Southern Asia, but disappeared again from many places where it had flourished for centuries. It is of special interest to see what changing forms this religion assumed during the two and a half thousand years of its existence and to observe how it adjusted itself to the requirements of nations. If one considers the many features in which Buddhism exists today one cannot help saying that in this one system alone almost all ways of religious life have found their expression, from the stern, sober, calm thoughts of ascetic seekers for salvation, to the highly emotional fervor of ardent worshippers of world-redeeming saviors, and from the lofty speculations of mystics to the elaborate rites of magicians who try to banish evil spirits with the help of their spells.

From the point of view of the philosophy of religion Buddhism deserves a special interest because it makes dubious Kant's assertion that belief in God, in the immortality of the soul and in the freedom of the will are the three great essential parts of the dogmatics of every religion of a high order. Of course, the Buddha was a partisan of the "*kiriyavāda*" and a strong

opponent of teachers who like Gosāla Makkhaliputta said "There is no such thing as exertion or labor or power or energy or human strength: all things are unalterably fixed."

But concerning the other two questions Buddhism takes a stand of its own contrasting entirely with that of Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and other faiths. For Buddhism acknowledges neither the existence of permanently existing souls nor of a creator and ruler of the universe. This is a logical outcome of its fundamental philosophical conception. As a doctrine of becoming and uninterrupted flux it accepts the idea of unchangeable substances: just as, according to Buddhism, there is no matter which in itself is eternal though it may change its forms over and over again, so there cannot be an individual soul of everlasting life which takes up a new material clothing in the course of its reincarnation. And just as there is no everlasting personality so there can be no personal god, who remains as an immovable pole in the midst of changing phenomena. The only permanent force that Buddhism believes in is the law that rules the universe and, from elements of existence, forms lumps of a transitory character which dissolve again and again to be replaced by others. [I think he got a little mixed up here.—Ed.]

Although Buddhism denies the existence of permanent souls, it does not deny the continuation of individual life after death. The basic idea of its conception is that death means the end of a certain individual A, because the component parts which had united to form it dissolve, but the moral forces which a man or other being had produced during his life became the cause of a new individual B who is, so to say, the heir of the actions of A, so that he earns compensation for his good and

punishment for his bad deeds. It is, therefore, said that the new individual B is neither identical with the old one (A) nor is it different from A, because it emerges from it, just as the fire of the second part of the night is the uninterrupted continuation of the fire that burnt during the first part of it. It is not our task to deal here with the different theories of the *antarābhava* etc. which have been devised to explain or to prove this theory. In this connection it is sufficient for our purpose to establish the fact that Buddhism is in full accordance with many other religion; in the supposition of a life after death in which all acts are required. The only difference between Buddhism and other Indian religions consists in that Buddhism gives a different philosophical interpretation. In practice it is in complete harmony with all systems that accept a metempsychosis. Instead of the theory of an immutable permanent soul which forms the nucleus of the individual A in this existence and of the individual B in the next existence, it offers a different view: every individual is a stream of evanescent *dharmas* arising in functional interdependence. Every new individual existence is the flowing on of this stream.

This doctrine of reincarnation without the adoption of the belief in a persistent soul-substance has always puzzled scholars and it has been called a logical impossibility because it denies the identity of the man who has done an action and of another man on whom they were rewarded. But in truth it has quite the same metaphysical value as the theory of a wandering permanent soul. Professor T.R.V.Murti rightly says: "How does the acceptance of the *ātman*—the unchanging permanent entity—explain *kamma*, rebirth, memory or personal identity more plausibly? As the permanent soul is of one immutable nature, it cannot have different volitions when different circumstances call for different action. . . . And changing *ātman* (soul) is a contradiction in terms. No *ātman*-view has accepted nor can accept a changing self; for once we accept change of the *ātman*, we have

no valid argument to confine this change to definite periods, *i.e.*, it remains unchanged for an appreciable stretch of time and then changes. This would mean two different *ātman*s. Nor can we admit that one part of the *ātman* changes while the other part is permanent. If the changing part does not belong to the *ātman* as integrally as the other part, then we would be having a supposedly unitary entity which has two mutually opposed characteristics. This does violence to our conception of an entity."<sup>65</sup>

When the Buddha replaced the theory of a permanent soul-substance by the doctrine of a "mind-continuum" He tried to avoid the difficulties inherent in the doctrine of *ātman*. That His doctrine conceals also knotty points is evident. For, no sufficient philosophical arguments can be adduced for things which transgress the human faculty to demonstrate rationally matters that are not accessible to our limited comprehension. The belief that there is no continuation of any sort of life after the death of an individual is also not strictly demonstrable, for the theory of a matter out of which everything is produced is as equally an outcome of speculation and of a certain "Weltanschauung" as the different hypotheses concerning the soul or the mind-continuum.

Stranger still appears to most observers that Buddhism denies the existence of a creator and ruler of the world because for many religious minds, especially in the Occident, religion is synonymous with the belief in God. For this reason many theologians have said: Buddhism is a philosophical or ethical system but no religion. This, however, is very artificial subterfuge.

For, judging from its outward appearances as well as from its inner attitudes, Buddhism exhibits all the marks observed in other religions. It has places of Worship, its rites, its monasteries, and with its adherents, it calls forth purely religious feelings of devotion

<sup>65</sup> T.R.V.Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, London, 1955, p. 92.



piety, tranquility of mind, *etc.* It has its legends, relates wonders, *etc.*, and tells of visions of heaven and hell. It even acknowledges a great number of celestial beings who, although they have no eternal life, exist for centuries and may give their worshippers worldly comfort and happiness. All this makes it evident that to Buddhism the title of religion cannot be denied. This shows that the restriction of the term “religion” to the different kinds of theism is too narrow. The ancient Romans to whom we owe the “religio” were no theists but adored a great number of gods and in this respect differed not from the Buddhism of today or of former times. One can therefore only infer from this fact that theism is one of the forms of religion and that the term “religion” embraces a great number of varieties of beliefs. As Mohammedans and Christians and a great part of Hindus are theists, some historians have thought that Buddhism, being a religion of the highest order, must also be in one way or the other theistic. But this notion is refuted by the fact that leading Buddhists of today are repudiating this assumption. The President of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, Prof. Malalasekara, writes in his article “Buddhism and the Enlightenment of Man” in the *Listener* (London, 7th January 1954) that a Buddhist does not believe in a creator of the universe: “If asked ‘How did Life begin?’ he would ask in return ‘How did God begin?’” and the late Professor Takakusu, a great scholar and a pious Mahāyānist, said in his work *Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy* (2nd. ed. Honolulu 1949, p.45) “Buddhism is atheistic— there is no doubt about it.” That the Buddhists of bygone ages were also atheists can easily be ascertained from the great dogmatic works of the Pāli Canon and from the writings of the philosophers of Great Vehicle. I may refer the reader to the article “Atheism” (Buddhist, by L. de La Vallee Poussin in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* vol. 2., p.184 and to my book *Buddhism and the Idea of God*<sup>66</sup> where I

have collected passages from Mahāyāna works. To the quotations given there, may be added the *Isvara-kartrtva-nirākṛti* published by Prof. F. W. Thomas (JRAS 1903 p. 345-349).

So there can be no doubt whatever about the fact that Buddhism has been atheistic for at least two thousand years. The stalwart champions of theism eager to uphold their thesis that every highly developed religion acknowledges the existence of God are not troubled by this fact. They maintain the assertion that the Buddha did not say anything against the existence of God. But this is clearly wrong. For in the Buddha’s dialogues reported in the Pāli Canon there are several passages in which He criticizes in a most outspoken way the opinion that the world may have been created by God or may be governed by him. So He said according to *Āṅguttara-Nikāya* 3, 61, Vol. I, p.74: “People who think that the will of God (*issara-nimmāna*) allots to men happiness and misery, must think that men become murderers, thieves *etc.* by the will of God.” A similar argument occurs also in the *Jātakas* (No. 528 V p. 238; No. 543 V p. 208). In the *Brahmajāla-Sutta* (*Dīgha-Nikāya* 1.2, 2, Vol. 1, p.17) the Buddha propounds even a theory as to how the wrong belief in a creator has arisen. When the god Brahmā was born at the beginning of a new age of the world in a heaven prepared for him by his *kamma*, unconscious of his former existences, he wished to have companions. When other beings came into existence because of their *kamma* he imagined that he had created them by his will. The beings, in their turn, noticing that Brahmā existed before them thought that he had created them. So a sort of primordial monotheism originated at the beginning of the world by the error of Brahmā and the first men.

The likelihood that the Buddha was a religious teacher but did not acknowledge the existence of God is further corroborated by the

<sup>66</sup> H. von Glasenapp, *Buddhismus und Gottesidea*.  
Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften und

der Literatur in Mainz, Geistes-und Sozialwissen-  
schaftliche Klasse 1954. Nr. 8 (Weisbaden 1954.)

fact that His contemporary Mahāvīra, the *Tirthankara* of Jainas, took a similar attitude. In India the Mīmāṃsā philosophy and the classical Sāṅkhya propagated also the *anīsvāra-vāda*. But religious beliefs of this kind are not confined to India. The Neo-Confucianism of Chu Hsi also denied that a personal God rules the world, as did those ancient Greeks, Romans and Teutons for whom Fate or Necessity reigned over the cosmos and the life of man.

The thoughtful reader may ask how it is possible that so many religions dissent from an opinion cherished by so many religious heroes like Moses, Christ, Mohammed or the great Vaishnave and Saiva saints? The answer is that the idea of God is a very complex one. It combines the idea of a creator, ruler and destroyer of the universe with those of an author of moral laws, of just judge, of a helper in need and a savior of mankind. In Buddhism the same ideas are distributed among several factors. The creation, rule and destruction of the universe are ascribed to the Universal Law as are the allotment of reward and punishment according to the automatically working *kamma*. As this Law is immanent in the cosmos there is no need of a Law-giver. The revealers of this Law are the Buddhas,<sup>67</sup> Who for this reason are venerated. The transitory devas function as helpers in worldly troubles. Concerning the question of salvation the Buddhist schools differ: for some of them it can be reached only by man's own endeavors, for other schools the grace of the Buddha

Amitabha is the expedient for salvation. The feelings of devotion and reverence which the theistic religions concentrate upon God, turned towards the Buddhas as the sages Who have shown the way to Nibbāna.

So the same ideas, impulses, instincts, longings and hopes which determine the theistic religions are equally alive in Buddhism and they are, above all things, the most essential feature of all religions: the conception of awe-inspiring holiness and the sense of the holy which is different from everything profane.<sup>68</sup>

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*Hon. Secretary for Burma:*

**U KYAW HLA,**

Civil Lines,

MANDALAY.

<sup>67</sup> “*Tumhehi kiccaṃ ātappaṃ, akkhātāro tathāgatā.  
Paṭipannā pamokkhanti, jhāyino mārabandhanā.*”  
(You yourselves must strive. The Tathāgatās are only  
teachers.

The meditative ones, who enter upon the Path, are  
released from the bonds of Māra, *i.e.*, from the  
round of defilements.)

Dhammapada, verse 276,

The Buddha's final exhortation in His last Sermon,  
Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta, is “Appamādena  
saṃpādeṭha (Work out your own salvation with  
earnestness).

Dīgha Nikāya, Mahā-vagga, Mahā-parinibbana Sutta,  
page 61, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Na than Soeder blom's article on “Holiness” in the  
Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol 6, p. 731 ff.

# Notes and News

## Sāmaṇera Pabajja Ceremony

A Novitiation Ceremony took place at the Jambūdīpā Hostel, Kabā-Aye, Rangoon, on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1961. Among those present were Ven. Agga Mahā Paṇḍita Naphetū Sayadaw, Ven. Agga Mahā Paṇḍita U Visuddha, Ven. Agga Mahā Paṇḍita U Nyānuttara, Ven. U Paññādīpa, Ven. U Sīlānanda, Thado Mahā Thray Sithu Justice U Chan Htoon, Mrs. Chan Htoon and some lay devotees.

Mr. M.H. Trevor of London and Mr. Heckmann of Hamburg, Germany were ordained sāmaṇeras under the preceptorship of Ven. U Nyānuttara. The former is known as Sāmaṇera Kheminkara and the latter as Sāmaṇera Sīvankara.

U Ba Han and Company are the donors of Mr. Heckmann, and Messrs. B.T. Brothers are the donors of Mr. Trevor.

Below are the short biographies of the above two sāmaṇeras.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### Sāmaṇera Kheminkara (Mr. M.H. Trevor)

He was born in London in 1932, and received school education until 1950. From 1951-53 he served in the Army, including one year in Egypt where there was plenty of time for reflection and much solitude. He joined the Oxford University in 1953 and took his degree in French and German in 1956. He travelled in Europe and Balkan countries in 1956-60 teaching and bookselling. In January 1961 he flew to India and visited such places as Lumbinī, Buddha Gaya, Sarnath, Kasia, Nalanda, and Rajgir. He spent one week at a Buddhist school in Nepal. Since last three years he has been a Buddhist, but he held a number of similar views before his encountering the Buddha Dhamma. It was not

always easy in a non-Buddhist country to learn the Buddha Dhamma; but he was very fortunate in having a Sinhalese Mahāthera at the London Buddhist Vihāra. He is very glad to have the opportunity of coming to Burma and working in such a friendly and congenial Buddhist atmosphere. Finally he intends to return to England as a Bhikkhu.

### Sāmaṇera Sīvankara (Mr. Heckmann)

Sāmaṇera Sīvankara (Mr. Heckmann), 38 yrs. was born at Hamburg. He became a refugee from the easternmost part of Germany which was lost to Poland. The main experience of his life after changing all his former views was the Second World War, during which he was nearly 7 years as a soldier and prisoner of war in Rūma. Impermanence, suffering and helplessness were the most striking facts in that period, and since then his search for peace, quietness and charity began and it was continued till he came in contact with the Buddha Dhamma in 1957. All these years he was engaged mainly in international and national social works. Fortunately, he met highly ethical friends right from the beginning and found good teachers and good translations from Pāḷi. So his progress was quick, and he gets a sure and good foundation.

The idea of going to the East and joining the Order is a double one: to have a better chance of attaining peace, personal perfection and wisdom, and later, if possible, to give some help to people who are willing to start the long fight against greed, hatred and delusion.

### Main subjects:

His main idea is to develop Tranquility and Insight, to prosecute the comparative studies of the great mystics, and to learn more about the differences between East and West.