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of the
DHAMMA

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2506 B.E.

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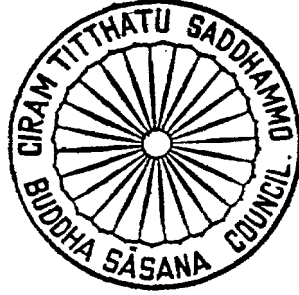


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EDITORIAL

WHAT BUDDHISM IS

1

The teaching founded by Buddha is known, in English, as Buddhism. It may be asked— who is the Buddha? Buddha is one who has attained Bodhi; and by Bodhi is meant wisdom, an ideal state of intellectual and ethical perfection which can be achieved by man through purely human means. The term *Buddha* literally means *enlightened one*, a *knower*. It is the name of honour bestowed on the sage Gotama who attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Buddhagaya in India.

Gotama was born the son of an Indian king on the border of modern Nepal 623 years before Christ. The wise men of the kingdom foresaw that he would become either a Universal monarch or a Buddha, and his father, wanting him to be a Universal monarch, kept him utterly secluded from all unpleasant things, so that he might not become wise by seeing life. But on three successive days, while on his way to the royal park, Gotama saw an old man, a sick man, and a corpse, and thus he learned that men— all men—must suffer and die. On the fourth day he saw a monk; from this he understood that to learn the way of overcoming man's universal sorrow he must give up worldly pleasures. Accordingly, in his twentieth year, he renounced his kingdom and became an ascetic.

Gotama wandered about the countryside, a seeker after truth and peace. He approached many a distinguished teacher of his day, but none could give him what he sought. He strenuously practised all the severe austerities of monkish life, hoping to attain Nibbāna. Eventually his delicate body was reduced almost to a skeleton. But the more he tormented his body the further away he was from his goal. Realizing the futility of self-mortification, he finally decided to follow a different course, avoiding the extremes of pain and indulgence.

The new path which he discovered was the Middle Way, the Eightfold Path, which

subsequently became part of his teaching. By following this path his wisdom grew into its fullest power, and he became the Buddha.

2

As a man Prince Gotama, by his own will, love, and wisdom, attained Buddhahood—the highest possible state of perfection—and he taught his followers to convince that they might do the same. Any man, within himself, possesses the power to make himself good, wise, and happy.

All the teachings of the Buddha can be summed up in one word: Dhamma. It means truth, that which really is. It also means law, the law which exists in a man's own heart and mind. It is the principle of righteousness. Therefore the Buddha appeals to man to be noble, pure, and charitable not in order to please any Supreme Deity, but in order to be true to the highest in himself.

Dhamma, this law of righteousness, exists not only in a man's heart and mind, it exists in the universe also. All the universe is an embodiment and revelation of Dhamma. When the moon rises and sets, the rains come, the crops grow, the seasons change, it is because of Dhamma, for Dhamma is the law of the universe which makes matter act in the ways revealed by our studies of natural science.

If a man will live by Dhamma, he will escape misery and come to Nibbāna, the final release from all suffering. It is not by any kind of prayer, nor by any ceremonies, nor by any appeal to a God, that a man will discover the Dhamma which will lead him to his goal. He will discover it in only one way—by developing his own character. This development comes only through control of the mind and purification of the emotions. Until a man stills the storm in his heart, until he extends his loving-kindness to all beings, he will not be able to take even the first step toward his goal.

Thus Buddhism is not a religion at all, in the sense in which the word is commonly understood. It is not a system of faith or worship. In Buddhism, there is no such thing as belief in a body of dogma which must be taken on faith, such as belief in a Supreme Being, a creator of the universe, the reality of an immortal soul, a personal savior, or archangels who are supposed to carry out the will of the Supreme Deity. Buddhism begins as a search for truth. The Buddha taught that we should believe only that which is true in the light of our own experience, that which conforms to reason and is conducive to the highest good and welfare of all beings. Men must rely on themselves. Even though he may "take refuge in the Buddha," the expression used when a man pledges himself to live a righteous life, he must not fall victim to a blind faith that the Buddha can save him. The Buddha can point out the path, but he cannot walk it for us.

The truth which the Buddhist sees when he looks around him is the truth of cause and effect. Every action, no matter how insignificant, produces an effect; every effect in its turn becomes a cause and produces still further effects. Thus we live in an unbreakable chain of volition. It is meaningless to inquire for a First Cause. A First Cause is inconceivable; rather, cause and effect are cyclical, and this universe when it dies and falls apart will give rise to another universe, just as this one was formed from the dispersed matter of a previous universe. This is the principle of dependent origination (*Paṭiccasamuppāda*). The origin of the universe, like that of every individual person or thing in it, is dependent on the chain of previous causes, which goes on and on in an endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

What of the soul? The Buddha taught that there is no soul or self, and he used the metaphor of the cart. If you take away the wheels and axles, the floorboards and sides, the shafts, and all the other parts of the cart, what remains? Nothing but the conception of a cart, which will be the same when a new cart is built. So the uninterrupted process of psycho-physical phenomena moves from life to life. Each life passes instantaneously in death to a new life, and the new life is the effect of the causes in the old life. A candle flame at this instant is different from the flame that burned an instant ago, yet the flame is continuous.

Thus in the chain of interdependent causation all phenomenal existence is constantly changing. The elements combine and recombine with no underlying substance, or soul, to give them permanence. This is the Wheel of Life. The main cause of the restlessness, the suffering, which is the lot of beings turning on the Wheel of Life, is craving or selfish desire for existence, and it is this desire which sets the life force in motion. Desire is manifested in action. This action, called *kamma*, is in reality volition or will power, which is responsible for the creation of being.

3

In this universe in which nothing is permanent all being are governed by *kamma* or the *kammic* force. *Kamma* means action. In its general sense, *kamma* means all good and bad actions. *kamma* refers to all kinds of intentional actions whether mental, verbal or physical, that is, all thoughts, words, and deeds. In its ultimate sense *kamma* means all moral and immoral volition.

Kamma, though it activates the chain of cause and effect, is not determinism, nor is it an excuse for fatalism. The past influences the present, but does not dominate it. The past is the background against which life goes on from moment to moment; the past and the present influence the future. Only the present moment exists, and the responsibility for using the present moment for good or ill lies with each individual.

Every action produces an effect; it is cause first and effect afterwards. We therefore speak of *kamma* as "the law of cause and effect." If you throw a stone into a pond, the ripples spread out to the shore, but that is not all, for the ripples return inward until they touch the stone again. The effects of our actions come back to us and as long as our actions are done with evil intent, the waves of effect will come back to us as evil. But if we are kind and keep ourselves peaceful, the returning waves of trouble will grow weaker and weaker until they die down and our good *kamma* will come back to us in blessing.

In the world around us there are many inequalities in the lot of man—some are rich, others are poor, some live full lives, others die young, etc. According to Buddhism, the inequalities which exist are due, to some

extent, to environment--which is itself shaped by cause and effect--and to a greater extent to causes, that is kamma, which are in the present, the immediate past, and the remote past. Man himself is responsible for his own happiness and misery. Thus kamma is not fate nor destiny nor blind determinism. Man has a certain amount of free will; he can modify his action and affect his future. Each act, whether mental or physical, tends to produce its like. If a man does a good deed or thinks a good thought, the effect upon him is to increase the tendencies to goodness present in him.

The understanding of kamma gives us power. The more we make the doctrine of kamma a part of our lives, the more power we gain, not only to direct our future, but also to help our fellow beings more effectively. The practice of good kamma when fully developed, will enable us to overcome evil and even to overcome kamma itself, thus bringing us to our goal, Nibbāna.

The principle of dependent origination and the law of kamma provide the background for understanding the nature of rebirth. According to Buddhism, death is "the temporary end of a temporary phenomenon." It is not the complete annihilation of the being, for although the organic life has ceased, the kammic force which hitherto actuated it is not destroyed. Our physical forms are only the outward manifestation of the invisible kammic force. When the present form perishes, another form takes its place according to a good or bad volitional impulse--the kamma that was the most powerful at the last moment before death.

At death the kammic force remains entirely undisturbed by the disintegration of the physical body, and passing away of the present consciousness creates the conditions for the coming into being of a fresh body in another birth. The stream of consciousness flows on like a river which is built up by its tributaries and dispenses its water to the countryside through which it passes. The continuity of flux at death is unbroken in point of time; there is no breach in the stream of consciousness, and therefore there is no room whatever for an intermediate stage between this life and the next. Rebirth takes place immediately.

The present being, present existence, is conditioned by the way one faced circumstances in the last and in all past existences.

One's present character and circumstances are the result of all that one has been up to the present, but what one will be in the future depends on what one does now in the present. The true Buddhist regards death as a momentary incident between one life and its successor and views its approach with calmness. His only concern is that his future should be such of that the condition of that life may provide him with better opportunities for perfecting himself.

Buddhism teaches that with the practice of concentration and meditation the memory can be trained. By meditation and mind-culture one can acquire the power to see one's rebirth as a link, or succession of links, in a chain of births; one can also acquire the power of looking back into one's previous lives. Not only this, but Buddhism goes further and teaches that with the attainment of Nibbāna in this life itself, through enlightenment and true wisdom, one can reach the end of this chain of rebirths.

4

Nibbāna, the state to which all Buddhists aspire, is the cessation of desire and hence the end of suffering. Nirvana in Sanskrit means "the blowing out." It is understood as the extinguishment of the flame of personal desire, the quenching of the fire of life.

Among Westerners Nibbāna is often thought of as a negative state, a kind of "nothingness." But in the Buddhist scriptures it is described in positive terms, the Highest Refuge, Safety, Emancipation, Peace, and the like. Nibbāna is freedom, but not freedom from circumstance; it is freedom from the bonds with which we have bound ourselves to circumstance. That man is free who is strong enough to say, "whatever comes I accept as best."

Nibbāna is the dying of the kammic force. The Buddhist ascends to Nibbāna through many stages of the Middle way, the path of wisdom, morality, and control. There is not space enough here even to mention these phases or the various aspects of the regimen recommended by the Buddha in his vast scriptures; but it may be taken for granted that the life of the conscientious Buddhist is full and rich. Through the cycle of rebirths he ascends, he perfects himself, he conquers his cravings through wisdom and love.

Slowly the kammic force ebbs away, the flame dies down.

At the root of man's trouble is ignorance, and in this Buddhism agrees with the main traditions of both Greek and Hebrew thought. The primal state of life is ignorance, from which arises desire, and this sets the Kammic force in motion. Hence the way to Nibbāna lies through knowledge, and we come again full circle to Dhamma, the Buddha's teachings. For in Dhamma, as truth, lies release from ignorance and desire and perpetual change, and the Buddha has shown us the way to truth.

5

What, then, is Buddhism? Ultimately Buddhism, although not strictly speaking a religion, is a systematic exercise in spirituality, certainly one of the greatest ever conceived. It offers the individual a means by which he may fulfill himself through understanding, reaching eventually the plane of the supra-person. Nibbāna in life, the peace which "passeth all understanding," is the conquest of life, the discovery of the permanent in its flux of psycho-physical accidents and circumstances. The Buddhist believes that through meditation and mental culture he can follow the Buddha through the successive stages of enlightenment and achieve at last the perfect wisdom which surmounts all need.

But by no means all Buddhists are monks or adepts. What does Buddhism mean for the ordinary person going about his work in the world? All through the Buddha's teaching, repeated stress is laid on self-reliance and resolution. Buddhism makes man stand on his own feet, it arouses his self-confidence and energy. The Buddha again and again reminded his followers that there is no one, either in heaven or on earth, who can help them or free them from the results of their past evil deeds. The Buddhist knows that

the powers of his own mind and spirit are enough to guide him in the present and shape his future and bring him eventually to the truth. He knows that he possesses a strength which is ultimately unsurpassable.

Moreover, Buddhism points unequivocally to the moral aspect of everyday life. Though Nibbāna is amoral, in the sense that final peace transcends the conflict of good and evil, the path to wisdom is definitely a moral path. This follows logically from the doctrine of Kamma. Every action must produce an effect, and one's own actions produce an effect in one's own life. Thus the Kammic force which carries us inevitably onward can only be a force for good, that is for our ultimate wisdom, if each action is a good action.

This doctrine finds its highest expression in *metta*, the Buddhist goal of universal and all-embracing love. *Metta* means much more than brotherly feeling or kindheartedness, though these are part of it. It is active benevolence, a love which is expressed and fulfilled in active ministry for the uplifting of fellow beings. *Metta* goes hand in hand with helpfulness and a willingness to forego self-interest in order to promote the welfare and happiness of mankind. It is *metta* which in Buddhism is the basis for social progress. *Metta* is, finally, the broadest and intensest conceivable degree of sympathy, expressed in the throes of suffering and change.

The true Buddhist exercises *metta* toward every living being and identifies himself with all, making no distinctions whatsoever with regard to caste, colour, class, or sex.

Thus Buddhism is the organizing force which gives coherent meaning to the lives of millions of people. It is the dominant order of thought and action in Burma, and in much of the rest of the Orient as well.

THE BEST APPROACH TO BUDDHISM FOR THE WEST

By

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

It is stupendous task to study the Buddha Dhamma, the text of which is written in Pāli. Pāli so far as the spoken word goes, is almost a dead language. Even in Burma where the study of Abhidhamma is greatly patronised and widespread, the Pāli scholars, as well as the “depositories” of scriptural texts, do not speak the Pāli language among themselves. There can be no doubt that Pāli during the time of the Buddha was a popular spoken language among other languages of India. It was a highly literary language at the time. Even to this day a student of the Pāli language will find its grammatical and philological rules still intact with special emphasis on phonetics, which are indispensable ingredients to a refined and polished language.

From the following five words it will be clear how typically condensed the Pāli language is. They are *Attadīpa*, *attasaraṇa*, *Anaññasaraṇa*, *Dhammadīpa* and *dhammasaraṇa*. Translation runs thus: Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge unto yourselves. Betake yourself to no other refuge. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Hold fast to the truth as a refuge.

DIFFICULTY OF TRANSLATING PĀLI

On this translation by an eminent Pāli scholar, Sir Charles Eliot, in his book on Hinduism and Buddhism remarks: “This is Rhys David’s translation and excellent both in English and as giving the meaning. But the five Pāli words compel attention and inscribe themselves on the memory by virtue of a monumental simplicity which the five English sentences do not possess. “It may be pointed that controversy still goes on up to the present day as regards the correct translation of these five Pāli words that are used so artistically and effectively in their special context. To understand the literary excellence and poetic beauty of Pāli, the following passage of

appreciation by sir Charles Eliot is quoted: “The art of composing short poems, in which a thought, emotion or spiritual experience is expressed with a few simple but pregnant words in the compass of a single couplet, was carried by the earliest Buddhists to a perfection which has never been excelled.” Again in genuine appreciation of the literary ingenuity and profundity of religious thought and emotion expressed in the Dhammapada the author goes on; The Dhammapada is the best known specimen of this literature.....The whole work combines literary beauty, depth of thought and human feeling to a rare degree. Not only is it irradiated with the calm light of peace, faith and happiness but glows with sympathy, with the desire to do good and help those who are struggling in the mire of passion and delusion.

The above quotations clearly show that the whole Buddhist world is greatly indebted to the Pāli scholars and writers of the West for their pioneer works on Buddhism. If it had not been for their works, the world would not see the West taking so much interest in Buddhism as it is today. In this connection it may be pointed out how difficult is it to interpret a foreign language such as Pāli, which deals so much with metaphysical and abstract ideas. For instance the word “*Saṅkhāra*” one often comes across in Pāli Texts, is not easy to translate into English. Its import is immense, for it comprises eighty-nine types of mind, fifty-two kinds of mental tendencies and eighteen out of twenty-eight (*rūpas*) of matter. In other words it means and includes all that we can see, hear, smell, taste, touch and ideate with our six sense organs. In point of space it covers four neither planes, one human world, the six planes of Gods above and twenty abodes of Brahmas totalling thirty-one spheres of existence. Now what is the equivalent of this word in English? Here the

remarks made by Mr. Rhys Davids in the Pāli-English Dictionary may be quoted to properly understand the situation. He says: "*Saṅkhāra* is one of the most difficult terms in Buddhist metaphysics in which the blending of the subjective-objective view of the world and of happening peculiar to the East, is so complete, that it is almost impossible for occidental terminology to get at the root of the meaning in a translation."

However immense the import of this word. *Saṅkhāra* is, there is yet another word whose import and applicability is much larger and wider both in point of time and space. This word is "*Dhamma*". It means and includes "*Saṅkhāra*", "*Nibbāna*" and "*Paññatti*" the realm of names and conventions. Nay, it goes further, it means and includes millions and millions of universes that have gone by and are now no more; it means and includes millions and millions of universes that are now existing; and it means and includes millions and millions of universes that are to come into being in the future. In the light of what has been said above it must be admitted how difficult is it to interpret a language that was in vogue two thousand five hundred years ago but it is no more a popular spoken language at the present day.

USE OF PĀLI COMMENTARIES

Here comes the use of Pāli commentaries which take into consideration the cultural and educational backgrounds of the times as well as the usages and modes then prevailing. The commentator often points out that a word which appears under different contexts has different and divergent meanings depending upon whom and under what circumstances the particular word in question was addressed or used. Greatly condensed in its import and applicability as the Pāli language is, it is not easily susceptible to clear interpretation. It may appear somewhat baffling to a beginner but an ardent student of Pāli under wise guidance finds all Pāli words have precise meanings and insignificance. No doubt foreign works on Buddhism are helpful but it is not every book written in a foreign tongue that goes deep enough to reach the spirit or core of the religion. It naturally devolves upon the peoples of Buddhist countries to find out the correct approach to Buddhism for foreigners and non-Buddhists so that

they may understand the essential doctrines and the spirit of Buddhism without an involvement of strenuous study and in as short a time as possible. The whole of the teaching of the Buddha is strikingly voluminous. It has been recited and embodied in Texts at the Sixth Buddhist Synod in Rangoon during 1954-56 and the commentaries numbering about 51 Volumes have also been recited.

THE AGE OF SCIENCE

The twentieth century is truly the age of science. Atoms, nuclear fission or fusion, rockets, outer space, electronics are popular words in daily use by all educated persons. Tremendous strides have been made in all fields of human activities by the discoveries of science during the last fifty years. It is predicted that in two decades, the achievements of science would be far more spectacular and sweeping. Even now the discoveries of science have caused upheavals in many old, traditional and dogmatic system of faith. In this huge struggle for survival, Buddhism remains scathless up to the present day. Buddhism, the oldest of the three great international religions of the world, does not find itself necessary to modify or alter any of its fundamental doctrines to bring it in line with the spirit and discovery of the ever-changing times. In the face of colossal changes everywhere, Buddhism remains unshakeable and firm. A non-Buddhist may probably like to ask why Buddhism stands to the test of time. The answer is simple. The fundamental doctrines of Buddhism are laid on deep and broad-based Universal Truths of nature, and as Universal Truths they endure for all time. Buddhism, in one sense, may be called the religion of science, not because it is an evolution of science, but it is the only religion that receives so much support and confirmation from its discoveries. One typical example is the discovery of flux. Scientists now agree and say that everything is moveability and nothing else. This clearly supports the Buddhist doctrine of process, that is, everything is arising and ceasing only, a principle expounded by the Buddha two thousand five hundred years ago. The main purpose of meditation in Buddhism is to visualize the flux of life. And visualization of the flux of life is the main gateway to Nibbāna. Surely it is not an exaggeration when it is said, modern scientists have the key in their possession for

the realization of Buddhist Nibbāna. The most appropriate approach to Buddhism for the Western mind is through science—the flux of life.

LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE

Having said something on the achievements of science it is equally important that the limitations of science should also be mentioned so as to gauge the situation correctly. The remarks made by Dr. John Borbeck, Professor of Physiology, are of special interest: He said; “More and more we hear talk about the limitations of science. But science is not the only way to get information. Many fields of human experience are not susceptible to scientific analysis. Modern science no longer speaks about laws. What used to be called a law, now spoken of as a high probability.” Even in this twentieth century the doctrinal principles expounded by Gautama Buddha two thousand five hundred years ago are far ahead of modern science.

These few questions may be of interest to modern science.

- (1) Has modern science found anything that is not a compound ?
- (2) Has modern science found anything that is not conditioned by a cause or causes ?
- (3) Has modern science found anything that remains without change for ever ?
- (4) Has modern science found anything that can be called a causeless cause ?

The Buddha in enunciating his doctrinal principles has answered these questions in the negative. The fact that the Buddhist principles are far ahead of the findings of modern investigations is acknowledged by Huxley. He said: “It is a remarkable indication of the subtlety of Indian speculation that Gautama Buddha should have seen deeper than the greatest of modern idealists”.

UNREALITY OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD

It is a widespread belief of the average man in the reality of the outside world. Now modern science by its discovery of the principle of flux has clearly revealed the unreality of the outside world. We have no hesitation to say that modern science has done a signal service in the cause for the proper understanding of the Buddha Dhamma by the West. Everything is instability, restlessness and impermanence (*anicca*), so it's suffering (*dukkha*); and because it is suffering there can be no ever-lasting entity such as ego or soul (*anatta*). Now we have come to the crux of the whole matter. The West through the principle of universal flux has got the key to the correct appreciation of the three characteristics of the Buddha Dhamma which constitute the Grand High Way leading to Nibbāna. Now with wisdom added to knowledge it may reasonably be expected that the day is not far off when the scientists of the world will unanimously acclaim that, after all, by their discoveries they have come to unfold the fundamental principles of Buddhism, for the objective of Buddhism and that of science is the same — the search for truth.

PĀLI AND BUDDHISM

By

Sayadaw U Thittila, Agga Mahā Paṇḍita

Pāli is the original language in which the Buddha spoke and all the Buddhist scriptures were written. The serious student of Buddhism is undoubtedly to derive more advantage from the knowledge of Pāli than from the knowledge of any other language. In the first place, he thereby gains access to the vast stores of a noble literature. The advantage of being able to read the original Buddhist scriptures called *Ti Piṭakas* or three baskets of the canon, which have been estimated by some English translators of them to be eleven times the size of the Christian Bible, and the commentaries on them, is incalculable.

It is true that most of the Buddhist scriptures and some of their commentaries have been translated into many Asian languages and also some European languages and that those translations were honest attempts to get at the truth. Unfortunately, however, some of them are totally incorrect or misleading or at the very least, ambiguous. The English rendering, for example, of the Pāli words, *sati* (attentiveness) by insight, understanding or reason; *nāma-rūpa* (mind and matter) by image and ideal; *saṅkhāra* (karma-formations, 50 mental properties or conditioned things) by tendencies or conceptions and *Nibbāna* (extinction of greed) by annihilation or nothingness, are some of the worst interpretations by some western scholars. The Italian proverb that translators are traitors is worth remembering in this regard.

The readers who rely on such mistaken terms have often misunderstood the true meaning and the true nature of such fundamental principles of Buddhism as the Eightfold Path, the Four Noble Truths, the *Paticcasamuppāda*, the Five Groups of Existence and the doctrine of *Anatta* which is the essence of the whole teaching of the Buddha. The Dhamma is, therefore, should only be described by those who have not only confidence in it but also a proper knowledge

of Pāli. Otherwise the writer is likely to miss the true nature of it which alone makes the teaching a living thing capable of swaying the lives of men. Without this vital point his effort is bound to be not only futile but harmful to the teaching.

Probably no religion has suffered so much in this respect as Buddhism. In the first place, Buddhism is an oriental religion which was quite unknown to Europe a hundred years ago, and its discovery was so gradual that the whole of its scriptures have not been properly translated. Of the commentaries on the scriptures, scarcely any prominent part except the *Dhammapada* and *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* has been translated into any European languages. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that some western writers misrepresented Buddhism in the most grotesque manner.

Among the Western writers on Buddhism there were some who had no intention of doing justice to Buddhism but were only concerned with showing that it was a heathen religion and inferior to the existing faith of the West. There were also others who were not only friendly but had a good intention and yet often took a distorted, one sided view, for the simple reason that their knowledge of Pāli and Buddhism was inadequate. As a result there have been some extraordinary mixtures of misconceptions and queer ideas or, in some cases, of Theosophy and Hinduism that have passed for Buddhism in the West.

The English language in the world of ideas is so impregnated with the Christian view of life that it has, in many cases, no equivalent ideas to the Buddhist ones. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to convey Buddhist ideas through the medium of the English language which has no perfect equivalents for the words required by them. The word "*bhikkhu*" for instance, although its Pāli meaning is a very simple one, has no English equivalent that exactly conveys the

meaning of it. It is often mistranslated as a beggar or priest or monk. As he does not beg in the true sense of the word he (bhikku) is not a beggar. Neither is he a priest, because he does not act as a mediator between God and man. Nor is he strictly a monk, since he is not bound by any vows. As a result, in the books on Buddhism in English the Western reader will come across a great

number of Pāli words retained for that reason.

This being the case the serious Student who genuinely wishes to gain an understanding of the profound teaching of the Buddha, should be prepared to take a little trouble to acquaint himself with its essential key-words or to acquire such working knowledge of Pāli as will enable him to understand the sublime Dhamma in its true light.

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A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO BUDDHISM

By

U Thein Nyun

There are many lay Buddhists and non-Buddhists who like to have a basic understanding of Buddhist principles and practice. But it seems that the approach to the subject is wrong and by no means scientific. What is generally done is to read several books on Buddhism and gather information from those learned in the Buddhist Texts. It is more or less theoretical self-study in a superficial, haphazard way. Very soon facts are met with which appear to be preposterous, incredulous and entirely out of the range of accepted beliefs and conceptions. This is found to be strikingly the case with the educated. As a result, interest in the study wanes and though persevered with for some time, the fundamental principles are not grasped and everything seems to be puzzling and in a hopeless muddle. Nevertheless, opinions are rashly formed and derogatory remarks are made about Buddhism to the utter annoyance of the majority of Buddhists. Of course, anyone is at liberty to hold personal opinions about any subject under the sun but, unless qualified, it is not proper that these opinions be made public with an air of authority. It has to be realised that it takes years of serious, persistent and proper study of a new subject—both theory and practice—before definite and reliable conclusions can be drawn about it.

For example, a layman learning about an outstanding discovery by an eminent chemist will not be able to appreciate the significance attached to the discovery nor will there be any admiration and respect for the intellectual qualities of the discoverer. Especially in these days when rapid strides are being made in the different fields of science, it is impossible to keep up-to-date with the advances in any scientific subject. So that the facts of discovery may even be taken with a grain of salt. But a chemist, who has specialised in this particular branch of chemistry in which the discovery was made—being thoroughly acquainted with its principles and practice—will find it highly significant and have

unbounded admiration and respect for the discoverer. So it is with Buddhism. The Buddha did not invent anything. He discovered the plain Truths of Existence. Truths that have been there for all time but which the populace were entirely ignorant. So that only those who have arrived at a practical knowledge of Buddhism can really appreciate the Buddha's Teaching and pay true homage and honour to The Buddha instead of mere lip-service. The Buddhist Texts say that only when His Teaching is known that The Buddha is known. And just as the discoverers are often commemorated by appending their names to the scientific laws and principles so discovered, such as Faraday's Laws of Electrolysis, Einstein's Relative Theory, so also are the Truths discovered by The Buddha given the appellation of Buddhism, or more correctly, Buddha Dhamma.

II. The Need For A Teacher

What, then, is the proper procedure to be followed by one who desires to acquire practical knowledge of a scientific subject in the quickest possible way? The first thing to be done is to seek a specialist on the subject or a scientist who had received the requisite practical training under him and then serve a period of apprenticeship under one of them. The scientist would not waste time in unnecessary details but go right to the heart of the subject and devise suitable practical courses to be followed. As one earnestly seeking knowledge he would strive his level best to follow instructions carefully with every confidence that he will succeed in getting a true and complete picture of the subject. And if he is going to take it up as a professional career and must earn his livelihood as soon as possible, there is no time to lose in other personal matters. This can be illustrated by the example of a person who is not financially well-off but is convinced that soapmaking is a thriving industry and that it is a good means of earning his livelihood.

He, therefore, spends part of his money as fees for his training by a soapmaker. He must get to know the right formula and the practical methods of soap manufacture as quickly as he can. He cannot be bothered with finding out who manufactures the ingredients, how they are made and where they come from. All that he cares at the moment is to be able to prepare good soap all by himself.

In the same way if a person sincerely desires to have a practical understanding of Buddhism he must approach a true disciple of The Buddha who has grasped the essential doctrines of Buddhism. It would take very long if the study were to be made by himself and even then he may not get the right perspective or observe the true relations between the facts of Buddhism. The Texts emphasise the fact that it is, indeed, very fortunate to be born in the human world during the Buddha period (*Buddha Sāsana*) when The Buddha's Teaching is still in existence. At such an opportune time a Buddhist should not spend too much time and effort in worldly affairs but strive his utmost to get at the basic Teaching in order to dispel his illusions. The urgency in the matter is well demonstrated by the example of a man shot in the chest by an arrow. His immediate task is to pull out that arrow as quickly as he can in order to save his life. He could not be bothered with wondering who shot the arrow or the direction from which the arrow came or the kind of arrow that was used.

III. The Teacher Of Buddhism

The vital importance of the right teacher of Buddhism is expressly stated in the Buddhist Texts. On one occasion when Ānanda stated that a person had reached half-way to deliverance by meeting the right teacher, the Buddha went further than that by saying that almost complete deliverance is attained. The reason for this, in the writer's opinion, is that the true seeker after deliverance is in real earnest and absolutely sincere about it and only needs to know the correct methods from the right teacher. Such seeker has the right psychological attitude expressed by the positive, autosuggestive phrase, "I can and I will". Thus the study of Buddhism should be taken up with the sole objective of putting into practice the true Buddhist principles and not out of mere curiosity. But how can the true teacher of

Buddhism be found? In the first place it is, indeed, very difficult to know who is the right teacher, for it is not possible for him to publicize his attainments in practical Buddhism as in the case of the scientists. The latter can show concrete results by conducting experiments in front of an audience or describing the experiments in appropriate scientific journals for others to test. As a matter of Buddhistic etiquette the true disciple of the Buddha is not even allowed to mention the fact to the public at large. One reason is that, since it is not possible to correctly judge a person of higher attainments than oneself, there will be many disbelievers who will profane the Virtuous One by doubting his word. On the other hand, there will be charlatans who will make capital out of it as there are many simple, pious people of easy credence who will shower gifts on them just for the sake of the worldly merits that would supposedly be acquired. But there is really no need for anyone to proclaim the results achieved by the practice of Buddhism as he knows for certain the degree or stage which he has reached. It is like the case of a lunatic who, having cured himself of the disease, knows for certain that he is no longer mad. Whereas, the onlooker and the lunatic in the asylum are not quite sure of themselves. And this is the only occasion when a person can honestly bestow a degree on himself—an Ariyan degree—and one that need not be and cannot be conferred by others. It is the only kind of degree that all Buddhists should strive for.

Thus it is most difficult to meet the right teacher of practical Buddhism and particularly so, when he leads a quite, unassuming way of life. The seeker has to have proper judgment in the matter. For that reason he should first listen to sermons preached by various teachers in Buddhism to find out who presented the practical teaching in a reasonable and systematic manner. Then he must serve period of apprenticeship under that teacher absorbing all the principles propounded and putting them into practice as instructed. As a dutiful pupil there must be sole confidence and trust in the practices that are followed. Of course, it is seldom that the right teacher is met at the first contact but apprenticeship should not be given up too readily.

If after a suitable period, no progress is discernible or there is nothing more to be learnt, another must be sought. This procedure is repeated with other teachers.

In this way knowledge of the various practices in vogue will be acquired, the result of which will be that a more correct judgment can be made in the selection of the next teacher. There is no other way out. Patience and perseverance have to be exercised. But all the time there must be that deep yearning to meet the right teacher. It must remain the one dominant idea and with the honest belief in the adage, "If you wish hard enough and long enough, wishing will make it so".

There is no gainsaying the fact that the right teacher will be met with in due course of time. And with the knowledge acquired under his constant tutelage together with one's innate abilities, the pupil will surpass the teacher in some respects. This is the scientific approach that has to be followed in order to master a subject. There are many accounts related in the Buddhist Texts of the Virtuous Ones who finally arrived at Truth with the right teacher after painstakingly serving as pupils under various teachers. But human nature, being what it is, the majority regard themselves as masters or teachers and act as such without going through any kind of pupilage. So it is the very few who know how to serve as pupils and have acted thus that turn out to be masters or teachers in the true sense.

IV. The Right Teacher Of Buddhism

In the writer's opinion the introductory talk that would be given by the right teacher of Buddhism, thoroughly acquainted with the scientific method of thought and work, would be along these lines. First of all he would give the pupil an idea of the theoretical principles relating to practical Buddhism and then indicate how these principles are to be applied in practice. It would be stated that Buddhism is a Doctrine of Analysis (*Vibhajja-vāda*), just like the sciences, but that it is radically different in this important respect that the subject of analysis is oneself, that is, things that are subjective and internal and NOT the objective, external world. For how could analysis of external objects be relied upon when the analyst does not know himself? And what use would there be in knowing other things instead of oneself? It would be like accepting *in toto* an analytical report under the signature of a person with no scientific qualifications appended to his name. So Buddhism lays particular stress on the analysis, in the first place, of the one who is going to perform the analyses of external objects. For the

analyst has to make himself competent to conduct the analyses correctly in order to arrive at the true nature of the external world. Otherwise he would be attached to his illusions, prejudices and preconceived ideas and so prepare a false and partial analytical report.

That is why Buddhism provides methods of analysing oneself in order to determine the elements within and also methods of removing undesirable impure elements when these are found. It is just like a chemist who, on analysing a substance, finds impurities present in it and then employs chemical methods of purification in order to remove such impurities. For he knows that it is only by the use of pure substances that the experiments will proceed in the right way. The presence of impurities in the substances will interfere with the experiments and bring about unknown side reactions. So also a Buddhist, if he but knew, would never like to have anything to do with the impurities in himself and would do his level best to get rid of them by applying Buddhist methods of purification. Only by analysing oneself and becoming pure that a Buddhist is competent to analyse the external world to find its true nature. And when this is found there is no earthly reason for the Buddhist to be attached to himself and his surroundings. This is how deliverance is gained. The Buddha had so completely purified Himself that He came to know the true nature of everything, both visible and invisible, manifested and unmanifested.

So Buddhism has to be studied more like chemistry than any other science. It will be seen that the subjective, internal things—found by analysis of oneself—consist of elements, though, here again, they are different from the chemical elements in that they are mere abstract qualities and NOT concrete substances. But this does not seem absurd when it is considered that science has its own abstract laws and principles which govern the nature and interaction of substances. The properties of these abstract elements, their methods of identification and the relations existing between them are given in the Buddhist Texts and must be properly studied in order to apply them in the practical detection of these elements. It is similar to the detection of elements discovered by chemists. They studied the elements and described their properties. By making use of these properties other chemists are able to detect them. For ex-

ample, if a chemist is asked to find out whether the gas in jars is hydrogen or not, he will carry out tests on the gas to find out if the properties agree with the properties of hydrogen that he knows. If it does, the gas can not be anything else but hydrogen. The chemist is so positively sure of this as the true disciple of the Buddha is with the abstract elements as mentioned earlier. Also, the Buddhist terminology must be technically understood and not just the superficial meanings. This goes a long way towards getting a good grasp of Buddhism. So is it with the technical vocabulary of a science and when these terms are lost the science no longer exists. The Buddhist terminology goes into oblivion with time and Omniscient Buddhas revive it. That is why outside the Buddha-period, except for Pacceka Buddhas who know intuitively but cannot express the terms, no one can gain deliverance as the proper terms do not exist for the detection and removal of the impure elements in oneself. It will be realised how impossible it would be to detect abstract elements without knowing how they are termed.

The teacher will also impress upon the pupil the basic need for the practical observation of the abstract physical and mental elements that constitute what is conventionally known as 'self'. The explanations and instructions with regard to the practical techniques will be given as progress is made.

It is because of the ignorance of these elements in a practical way that greed, conceit and delusion arise. These are the causes of all (1) hankering after worldly pleasures, (2) insatiety and (3) diffusion over all objects of sense ideas, family, and a multitude of things. This is a wild goose chase for, because of its divergent character, there is no ending to it. Whereas, by a practical knowledge of the elements—the primary things—illusions of permanency, prosperity, personality and pleasure will be dispelled and there will be a gradual withdrawal which will finally end by convergence to a point. But it must be borne in mind that simply muttering the facts, "I am not I, but only physical and mental elements" or "Everything is impermanent, suffering and soulless" will lead to no where. These are the practical conclusions arrived at by the Buddha and the Virtuous Ones and were to be practically realised as such by all good Buddhists. This would lead the teacher to mention the stages that have to be gone

through for transforming theoretical knowledge into personal, practical knowledge. The example would be given of the beginner in chemistry. First of all a theoretical knowledge of the common elements and compounds will be acquired. The physical and chemical properties of these substances and elementary laws and principles underlying the changes brought about by the interaction of these substances will be studied. But this does not suffice for a proper understanding of chemistry since it is a practical subject. So the next step is to go into a chemical laboratory and carry out experiments to observe the properties of the substances and thereby get some practical idea of the subject. The experiments should not be carried out mechanically as instructed by the teacher. The reason and purpose of the experiment must be thought about. With the simple experiments there would be no difficulty in getting the proper results. The beginner must be made to realise that facts are not to be taken for granted but should be put to the test of experiment. In certain cases such as the silver coin test for sulphates, the coin is seldom stained black in the first experiment. Reasons for the failure are sought; the demonstrator is requested to provide the information and the experiment is then repeated. Only when the knack of performing this test is known that the black stain is produced for the first time. But this does not mean that it is the end of the experiment. Far from it. For there is the final step of carrying out this test in the right manner repeatedly till there is no doubt about producing the black stain every time. Only now can it be said that practical knowledge of the test is acquired. The very same systematic steps have to be followed in the study of practical Buddhism.

The first stage when the theoretical principles of Buddhist practice are learnt is known as theoretical knowledge (*Suta-maya-ñāṇa*). The second stage when the facts are chewed and digested with regard to the application of the theoretical knowledge together with the actual practices and modifications till the correct method is acquired is known as applied knowledge (*Cintā-maya-ñāṇa*). This is not just meditating but includes practice on oneself, making up deficiencies by reasoning or assistance from the teacher till the right method is obtained. The third and final stage when the right practice

is repeated till the correct result is obtained every time and with the absolute certainty that there will not be a relapse is known as practical knowledge (*Bhāvanā-maya-jñāna*). This is the scientific way of arriving at personal, practical knowledge where the knowledge of others is made one's own. This is the most important aspect of practice, for although the theoretical principles of practical Buddhism be given by the best of teacher, it will remain theoretical knowledge unless the steps outlined above are followed to make it practical knowledge. Of course, the degree or rate at which success is achieved depends on the natural aptitude and industry of the pupil just as it is in the case of the sciences.

The teacher would then mention that from this introductory talk the pupil would come to realise that Buddhism is not a religion in the sense that facts and statements have to be accepted on faith. Of course, as in the sciences, there has to be some confidence in the practice that is being carried out and in the results to be achieved, that is, purity and peace of mind, here and now, and not in the hereafter which can take care of itself. As the practice is persevered with and tangible results are attained, greater confidence is acquired. In fact unshaken confidence in the Teaching is the special attribute of the Sotāpanna, the Virtuous One, who has entered the path of deliverance. Buddhism invites everyone to come and test it in the way any science is tested. The Buddha did not make it compulsory for His adherents to accept and believe all that He had expounded but to put them to the test of experiment. And if there was no interest or it was not thought to be worth studying they could go their own way without any fear of eternal damnation. Lastly, the teacher would make the pupil clearly understand that Buddhism is the science which deals with the facts of existence as they are found and quite in contrast with the other "—isms" which are systems of hypothesis or beliefs originating from one man or a group of men where party policy has to be followed rigorously by one and all or they will suffer the dire consequences. There fore, calling Buddha Dhamma as Buddhism is a misnomer.

V. Practical Instructions of the Teacher

The teacher would first give the basic theory with regard to practice and then provide an example of how the practice is to

be carried out. He would make it plain to the pupil that:—(1) many facts and ideas to be recounted will be new and unintelligible (2) considerable thought and attention would have to be given to them and (3) all doubtful points in this connection should always be cleared up. The teacher would then state that only geniuses can practically realise all the facts and ideas given in a stanza or a discourse and that the common run of people have to resort to meditation and repeated practice in order to achieve effective practical results and, even then, for many, this would be of no avail. At the start of the instructions the teacher would reveal the necessity for having a clear idea of what abstract quality or property really means. For abstract qualities are the elements in Buddhism. And, as example of an abstract quality, heat would be mentioned. When a body, no matter by what name it is called, is touched, it is found to be either hot, cool, cold, and so on, which are simply varying degrees of heat. This is the physical manifestation of the abstract elemental quality of heat which is inherent in all things known as matter. It is the element which preponderates in what is called fire. Another example is the abstract quality of extension, that is, occupation in space. Tri-dimensional extension gives rise to the idea of a solid body. So when a body, no matter what it is called, is touched, it is found to be either very hard, hard, soft and so on, which are just varying degrees of hardness. This is the physical manifestation of the abstract elemental quality of extension which is also inherent in all things known as matter. It is the element which preponderates in what is called earth. Similarly, there are the elements of cohesion and motion which preponderate in water and air respectively. As a matter of fact the elements, earth, air, fire and water, which were supposed by the ancients to be the foundation of matter—the Four Great Essentials of Matter in Buddhism—are in reality not the concrete substances for which they were taken but the abstract qualities respectively of extension, motion, heat and cohesion. There are four other abstract qualities, visibility, odour, taste and nutritive essence which are the elements inherent in so-called physical matter. These abstract qualities or properties are elements because each has its own intrinsic characteristic which cannot be converted into another characteristic and cannot be further subdivided into other characteristics.

These abstract qualities are invisible, formless, without location and not individualistic as they are common to all things known as matter. They manifest themselves only when the proper conditions are satisfied, and then they cannot be prevented from arising but cease when the conditions no longer exist. In the case of the qualities mentioned above, heat is the condition and since this exists for all time as weather or season, they are manifested all the time. But there are times where artificial heat is applied to a solid body which then changes to liquid state—a physical change—where the abstract quality of cohesion then preponderates. It would then be mentioned that these abstract qualities are truly abstruse but not absurd since their manifestations can be experienced by one and all. It would also be emphasised that only when these facts and ideas about abstract qualities are correctly grasped that the pupil will be well on the way to a proper understanding of Buddhism.

Now take the case of a chemist studying a substance. The usual procedure is to determine the physical and chemical qualities or properties of the substance in order that it can be recognised and distinguished from other substances which have their own sets of physical and chemical properties. For example, the substance known as sulphur is found to be a pale yellow solid with no taste and smell; it burns with a violet flame giving off heat and forming a gas known as sulphur dioxide which has a pungent smell; it reacts with many other substances called carbon, chlorine, hydrogen, silver, copper when the proper conditions are satisfied. As explained earlier, hardness and solidity are due to the quality of extension which is manifested along with the qualities of heat, motion, cohesion and so on. With regard to the yellow colour, the quality is visibility but when comparison is made a distinction is drawn between colourless and coloured and the latter is again distinguished as yellow as distinct from blue, green etc. With regard to the qualities of taste and smell, these are not pronounced and are therefore faintly perceptible. Such abstract physical qualities are always manifested and, in fact, it is because of them that the substance called sulphur is easily identified and distinguished from other substances. But when dealing with the chemical properties or qualities, it is found that they are not manifested all the time, for example, the property of com-

bining with oxygen, carbon, chlorine and so on is manifested only when the specific physical conditions are fulfilled. The chemical quality in each case is inferred from these various chemical reactions.

Now, the practical study of what is called oneself is closely akin to the practical study of a chemical substance; the only difference being that physical and mental properties are studied instead of physical and chemical properties. Here again, mental properties, like the chemical properties manifest themselves only when the proper conditions are satisfied. There are twenty-seven physical qualities or properties of the so-called human being, either male or female. Some of these are; extension, cohesion, motion, heat, visibility, odour, taste, nutritive essence, visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactile senses; intimation by body; intimation by speech. It has to be understood, however, that there are four conditions required for the manifestation of these properties, namely:-(1) weather (heat) (2) nutriment (3) mind (4) kamma. The first two are well-known and need no explanation but the manifestations of intimation by body and that by speech, for example, are due to the mind and the manifestations of the senses, for example, are due to kamma. This is explained in order to show that the manifestations of physical qualities are brought about by other factors and not by heat (weather) alone. There still remains much more to be said about these physical qualities but this will suffice for the present.

Then there are fifty-three mental qualities or properties as, for example, consciousness, feeling, perception, volition, attention, greed, conceit, anger, envy, selfishness, worry, distraction, perplexity, amity, mindfulness, pity, appreciation, knowledge.

These mental properties, like chemical properties, are manifested only when certain conditions are present. For example, if a beautiful object (imagined as such) is seen, a smile appears and expressions such as "How beautiful?", "How nice!" are muttered. This is the manifestation of feeling—a pleasant, agreeable feeling—which is an abstract mental quality. Again, when one meets a person who has betrayed one's trust or caused one grievous hurt, there is a change in features. A scowl appears, and the blood tingles with rage, and so on. This is the manifestation of the mental pro-

perty of anger which, in this instance, may be regarded as comparatively mild. But if words of abuse are uttered, it has become more active or violent; and if bodily harm is done to the person, then this manifestation of anger is most violent and may be compared to an explosive chemical manifestation. Thus the so-called human being is composed of these abstract, elemental physical and mental qualities. But, as mentioned before, such qualities are invisible; formless; not man, woman, I, self, ego, since they are not the special attributes of just one individual (so-called) but are common to all; devoid of a creator since they arise only with the fulfilment of certain conditions and, when so arisen, can never be controlled. This is the principle of *Anatta* in the Buddha Dhamma.

The teacher would now state that the manifestations of these physical and mental properties must be practically observed within so-called self by directing the mind inwards, that is, they have to be sought within as they are subjective elements. This is not easy for the beginner in practical Buddhism as the mind has become so habituated to looking outwards to external things. The pupil, therefore, would be provided with an example of how to observe these subjective physical and mental elements for training in the practice.

The teacher would first give a practical example of thought-experiences that often pass in the mind and then analyse them to show the manifestations of subjective mental qualities.

When an object is seen or is represented in the mind attention is directed towards the object and the mind then recalls the many associations with that object. And, especially during reverie, a never-ending succession of associated images appear concerning the past-reviving memories, or the future-building castles in the air. On such occasions good and bad thoughts about these various images arise. This reverie is broken only when something turns up to distract the attention.

In order to give a clearer idea of what is meant, the teacher would illustrate it by the example of a person—who had got into the right mood for daydreaming—reclining on an easy chair and thinking of a class-mate he had read about in the newspaper. The mental image of the class-mate, represented

in the mind, will recall many incidents of the past including the pleasant times they had together in school. Other incidents and thoughts that will probably spring up in the person's mind are: (1) the many occasions he lent money to his class-mate when the latter used to run out of pocket but never caring whether the debts were paid or not. He would now feel elated over the fact that he is of a charitable nature and observe that it was one good trait in his character, (2) the various times he used to help out his class mate so willingly with mathematical problems but would cleverly put off his requests for help in chemistry with the result that he always stood lower in the class. He now despises his class-mate for meanness in this respect and wishes that he had not taken so much pains over him, (3) how high and mighty his class-mate would be feeling with the present promotion to a high office.

He would then comment that some people have all the luck in the world. For the fellow was not much better off intellectually at school and yet, look at him now, in that high-salaried post while he is still struggling as a lowly paid clerk.

Then, when the person woke up from his reverie he would think none the worse for it. The teacher would point out that this is a good example of the mind directed outwards and that the person was unaware of the fact that he had actually committed both good and evil mental actions or - according to the Buddha Dhamma—moral, wholesome or skilful and immoral, unwholesome or unskilful mental actions which would produce their effects just as chemical actions do.

To prove this the pupil would be asked to refer to (1) where the subjective, moral mental property of pleasurable interest (*pīti*) is manifested with the elation over the performance of charitable deeds, (2) where the subjective, immoral mental property of anger (*dosa*) is manifested with the class-mate's despicable meanness and (3) where the subjective immoral mental property of envy (*issā*) is manifested when the good fortune of the class-mate is envied. In the case of (2) and (3) the result produced is agitation of the mind. Of course, the teacher would remark that these subjective mental elements are never manifested singly but are always accompanied by or associated with other mental elements. For such elements are

incapable of leading a separate existence of their own. It would also be added that these associated elements cannot be observed individually but only that element which is predominant. It is just like a chemical reaction where the main product is readily recognised but the other minor products due to side reactions are not easily detected. So when statements are made such as "This man is greedy", "He is storming with rage", "He is filled with envy", it must be understood that there is no personality so afflicted on those occasions but that they indicate the subjective manifestations of the predominant mental properties of greed, anger and envy along with their respective associated mental properties.

The pupil would then be told that the subjective elemental property of mindfulness should be called into play to avoid immoral mental actions which arise from the mind turning outwards to external, sensual objects. As a practical exercise the teacher would say that it would be good to retrace, as much as possible, step, by step, the associated thoughts and ideas that arose during reverie right up to the point from where they had all started. It would then be observed that undivided attention was paid to the mental image of the class-mate which was the object of the subject comprising consciousness

and its mental concomitants. The pupil must be aware of the fact that whenever any object appears in the mind, either through the senses or by representation on reflection, at least two things come into existence, namely:- the object itself and the subject made up of physical qualities together with consciousness and mental concomitants.

It needs to be stressed that the subject is NEVER the self, person or individual as it is generally believed. For the mind is so used to directing itself externally to objects that the subject is either ignored or its true nature is not perceived. That is why it is so essentially important to direct the mind inwards to the subject in order to find out the real nature of the so-called self. The first subject is then made the object of another manifested subject which includes knowledge as one of its mental concomitants. In this way the mind no longer dwells on sensual objects but on physical and mental properties which can then be practically studied. It is just like the chemist dealing with molecules and atoms. This practice is known as "insight" (*Vipassanā*). As in chemistry the theoretical knowledge of these elemental qualities and their methods of identification must be first acquired to enable them to be detected practically.

(*To be continued*)

BUDDHIST IDEALS OF GOVERNMENT

By

Gunaseela Vitanage

Buddhism like any other religion lays emphasis on spiritual values rather than on material ones; on detachment from things of the world rather than on attachment to them; on the religious side of life rather than on the secular side of it. Buddhism does not, however, neglect the material, the secular and the worldly aspects of life altogether. In fact, there is a Discourse in the Buddhist Scriptures, that has been called the *Gihi Vinaya* or Code of Discipline for Laymen, wholly devoted to the householder's life.* It sets out in detail the layman's duties towards his neighbours and also the methods of disciplining himself to be a good and useful citizen. The Buddhist Scriptures also set out certain norms of conduct for rulers as well as for subjects. They also contain references to various forms of Government prevailing in India at the time, and, significantly, the Buddha's own words expressing his preference of the democratic form of Government.

It must be remembered that the Buddha was born into a society which, comparatively speaking, was politically advanced, and which through the ages had developed certain very sound ideals of Government. In the *Manu Neeti* or the Code of Manu, the Hindus already had laws hallowed by time to guide them in their civic duties. Incidentally, "Manu", like Moses of the Bible, was the mythical lawgiver of the Indian people. These laws discussed not only the rights of the rulers, but also their duties towards their subjects. They also discussed the obligations of the subjects towards the rulers and also their rights. It is, therefore, necessary to have some idea about the Hindu views of government if we are to appreciate the Buddhist ideals of government.

"Matsya Nyāya"

The Hindu ideas of government were based on a theory called "The Matsya Nyāya", literally meaning the "Law of Fish".

The term "Matsya Nyāya" can be more appropriately rendered into English by the expression the "Law of the Jungle." "Why should there be Governments in the world at all?" "Why should there be some men to rule over other men?" "Why should there be laws which men were required to obey on pain of punishment?" The Hindu thinkers answered these questions by pinpointing a fundamental law of nature: "The Matsya Nyāya", the law whereby the small fish becomes the prey of the big fish. Government, rulers and laws are necessary to prevent this natural law from operating in human society. Remove the Government, remove the rulers and remove the laws, and human society will degenerate into a state of anarchy in which the stronger will destroy the weak. "If there is no rule of law", says the *Manu Samhita*, "the strong would devour the weak like fishes." "If there is no ruler to wield punishment on earth" says the *Mahabharata*, "the strong would devour the weak like fishes in water. It is related that in the days of old people were ruined through sovereign-lessness, devouring one another like the stronger fish preying upon the feebler."

It will be seen that this Hindu theory of government was based on a belief in the innate depravity of man. If there is no strong authority to keep men under control, the stronger would destroy the weaker, just as the big fish destroy the small fish in the sea. Government, rulers and laws become necessary to prevent this "Matsya Nyāya" operating in human society.

This theory of Government naturally led to the corollary that there must be a controlling authority, and that authority must be vested with power to inflict punishment or, *Danda*.

The Hindu monarch was thus enjoined to adopt "Caturōpāya" or the four - fold

* Sigalovāda Sutta.

policy in ruling over the people: *Sāma*, *Dāna*, *Daṇḍa*, *Bheda*. *Sāma* means peace: the wise ruler must maintain peace among his subjects. *Dāna* means Charity: the wise ruler must be charitable. *Daṇḍa* means punishment: the wise ruler must punish the wrong done according to the gravity of the crime. *Bheda* means creating division where necessary: the wise ruler must bring about differences among his subjects in order to make his position secure. In other words, he must adopt the "Divide and Rule" policy.

Amity

The Buddha differed radically from the Hindu view that *Matsya Nyāya* is the basic law of nature. He certainly saw the struggle for existence that was so evident in life but this he attributed to man's ignorance rather than to his innate depravity. The Blessed One also saw that man was ever ready to live in peace and amity with his fellow beings, to co-operate with his fellow beings, and even to sacrifice himself for the sake of his fellow beings, provided he was properly guided. In the Buddha's view it was not discipline imposed from above or external authority that was necessary to control man, but self-understanding and inward discipline.

The law of the jungle was certainly not universal even in the jungle. There was amity and co-operation even among the animals in the jungle - as the Buddha points out in several *Jātaka* stories.

Owing to this fundamental difference in outlook between Hinduism and Buddhism, we see that Buddhism lays little or no emphasis on Authority (*Bala*) or Punishment (*Daṇḍa*). For example, we observe that instead of the *Caturopāya* or the Four-fold policy of *Sāma*, *Dāna*, *Daṇḍa*, *Bheda* of the Hindus, the Buddhist Scriptures speak of the *Catus-Sangraha Vastu* (Pāli: *catu - sangaha - vatthu*), or the Four Ways of Treating Subjects. They are, *Dāna* or Charity; *Priya-Vacana* or kindly speech; *Artha Cariya*, or the spirit of frugality and of service, and *Samanātmata* or equality.

Thus according to Buddhism the virtuous King should practise *Dāna* or Charity. Charity here includes not only the alms given to the poor but also gifts given to those who serve the monarch loyally. The virtuous King also must practise *Priyavacana* or, kindly speech. He must on no account use unkindly or harsh words towards anyone.

The king also must cultivate *Artha Cariya*. The word *Artha Cariya* has been interpreted to mean the spirit of service as well as the practice of economy and living the simple life. The good King or ruler also must cultivate *Samanātmata* or equality. That is, while retaining the exalted position of the ruler, he must consider himself in no way superior to the least of his subjects, and he must also learn to dispense justice to his subjects without fear or favour. The righteous monarch must also learn to treat everyone equally.

Dasa Rāja Dharma

In the *Dasa - Rāja - Dharma* or The Ten Royal Virtues, the Buddhist ideal of Kingship is further elaborated upon. The Ten Royal Virtues are *Dāna*, Charity; *Sīla*, Morality; *Pariccāga*, munificence; *Ajjavan*, straightforwardness; *Majjavan*, Gentleness; *Tapam*, Restraint; *Akkodho*, non-hatred; *Avihinsā*, non-violence; *Khanti*, Patience, and *Avirodhatā*, friendliness and amity.

Dāna in this context means giving of alms to the needy. It is the duty of the King to look after the welfare of his needy subjects, and to give them food, clothing and other wherewithals.

Sīla here means morality. The monarch must so conduct himself in private and public life as to be a shining example to his subjects.

Pariccāga means the grant of gifts to those who serve the monarch loyally. By the grant of gifts, not only does the monarch acknowledge their efficient and loyal service, but he also spurs them on to more efficient and more loyal service.

Ajjavan - The Monarch must be absolutely straightforward. The good king must never take recourse to any crooked or doubtful means to achieve his ends. His *Yea* must be *Yea*, and *Nay* must be *Nay*.

Majjavan means gentleness. The monarch's straightforwardness and rectitude that often will require firmness, should be tempered with gentleness. His gentleness will keep his firmness from being over-harsh or even cruel; while his firmness will keep gentleness from turning into weakness. A harmonious balance of these two qualities is essential not only for a ruler but for all leaders of men.

Tapam means the restraint of senses. The ideal monarch is the one who keeps his

five senses under strict control, shunning indulgence in sensual pleasures.

Akkodha means non-hatred. The good king must not harbour grievances against those who injured him, but must act with forbearance and love.

Avihimsa means non-hatred. The Monarch should not indulge in games where killing is resorted to, or cause injury to any being. He must practise non-violence to the greatest possible extent that is reconcilable with the duties of a ruler.

Khanti means patience. The King must conduct himself with patience, courage and fortitude on all occasions. In joy and sorrow in prosperity and in adversity, in victory and defeat, he must conduct himself with calmness and dignity without giving in to emotions.

Avirodhatā means non-enmity, friendship. The king must cultivate the spirit of amity among his subjects, by himself acting always in a spirit of amity and benevolence. It will be seen that Avirodhatā is in this context opposed to Bheda — the Divide and Rule policy in the Hindu statecraft.

The Buddha also laid emphasis on the fact that the evil and the good of the people depend on the behaviour of their rulers; and for the good of the people he set out these Ten Royal Virtues to be practised by the rulers of men.

Simple though this looks to us, it must be viewed from the point of view of contemporary society where the Brahmin hierarchy divided the society permanently into various castes, and gave religious sanction to that division. No doubt the Buddha had in mind the claims of the Brahmins that they were a unique people being "twice-born" once in the natural way and again from the shoulder of the Creator himself.

Equality

The Buddha's rejection of caste and class was not merely theoretical. He admitted men of all castes into the Order. Upāli, a former barber, Sunīta a former Chanḍāla found honoured places in the Order.

The Buddha says: "Monks, just as all the great rivers, that is to say the Ganges, the Jammu, the Aciravati, the Sarabhu, the Malī, on reaching the great ocean lose their former names and identities and are reckoned

as the great ocean, similarly the Kshatriya, the Brahmana, the Vaisya and the Sudra, after entering this Sāsana lose their former identities, and become the members of one Order."

The Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien, Yuan Chang and Itsing tell us that these democratic and equalitarian concepts were still fostered in India centuries after the Great Decease of the Buddha.

"Oriental" Despotism

The constant reference by Western writers to Oriental Despotism has created the impression in the English reader's mind that until the advent of the Europeans there was no good or popular government in Asian lands and that with rare exceptions like the reign of Asoka it was a case of despotic monarchs tyrannising over a helpless people. The study of both Hindu and Buddhist literature shows that among the Indian Rulers there were certainly not more (and probably less) pleasure-seeking despots than among their Western counterparts. Ancient Indian society was, no doubt, feudal—but it was also a co-operative society. The type of oppression of the peasant by the Lord as was witnessed in France before the French Revolution was never seen within the boundaries of Hindu or Buddhist India.

Story of Ummadayanti

The story of Ummadayanti in the Jatakamālā illustrates this point very well.

The Bodhisatva was once born into the Royal family of the Sibis and in due time became the king of the Sibis. One day while touring the city with his retinue he saw Ummadayanti, one of the most beautiful women among the Sibis and fell in love with her at first sight. But to the chagrin of the King he learned that Ummadayanti was already married. He also learned that the husband was no other than Abhiparaga, one of the officers of the Royal household itself.

The king felt quite ashamed of his sudden passion for a woman who was married, and kept the knowledge of it to himself, and tried his best to extinguish the flame of love which arose in his heart.

The King thus suffered in silence because of the love he had for Ummadayanti. Abhiparaga, however, came to know about the King's condition and the reason for it. One day he

approached the King while he was alone and broached the subject in a most tactful way. Abhiparaga told the King that he was very well aware of the reason for the King's poor condition and suggested to the King most respectfully that the King accept Ummadayanti as his consort.

The King was confounded and was stricken with shame. The secret love that was gnawing his heart was now known to the husband of the very woman whom he loved. And, here he was himself offering her to him, his king, because of the love and devotion Abhiparaga had for him.

"No, no," said the King, "that may not be. I would lose my merit and would know myself to be immoral. Further my wicked deed would be known also to the public".

Abhiparaga argued again and again with the King with a view to convincing him that he was doing no wrong in accepting Ummadayanti from his hands.

The king finally said, "No doubt, it is your great affection for me that prompts you to the effort to promote my interest without considering what is right and wrong on your side. But this very consideration induces me the more to prevent you. Verily, indifference as to the censure of men cannot at any rate be approved."

The King continued, "The evil and good the people do depend on the behaviour of their rulers. For this reason, and taking into account the attachment of my subjects, I shall continue to love the Path of the Pious above all in conformity with my reputation.

"As the herd goes after the leading bull in any direction, whether the right one or the wrong one, following his steps, in the very same manner, the subjects imitate the behaviour of their rulers without scruple and undauntedly".

"You must take also this into consideration."

"If I should lack the power of ruling my own self, say, into what condition would I bring this people who long for protection from my side.

"Thus considering and regardful of the good of my subjects, my own righteousness and my spotless fame, I do not allow myself to submit to my passion. I am the

leader of my subjects, the bull of my herd."

The Buddha in this story showed how a King should conduct himself. Firstly, he must put his private passions aside in the interest of the people. Secondly, he must always pay heed to public opinion. Thirdly, there must not be any divorce between his private life and his public life—both must be without blemish.

Fourthly, he must always be regardful of the good of the subjects.

Fifthly he must give the correct leadership in all matters to the people.

Elsewhere the Buddha says that whether a nation is just and good depends on the conduct of the rulers.

"Monks, when the Ruler of a country is just and good, the Ministers become just and good. When the Ministers are just and good, the higher Officials become just and good. When the higher Officials become just and good, the rank and file become just and good. And, when the rank and file become just and good, the people become just and good."

It was a belief among the Buddhists that even rains came in due season when the Rulers are just and good.

Democracy

Having said so much about the ideals of Kingship in Buddhism, we must ask ourselves whether Buddhism considers Monarchy itself as the ideal form of Government. During the Buddha's time there were a number of great Kingdoms in India, such as Magadha and Kosala. There were also a number of democratic states at the time. The Buddha has definitely expressed himself in favour of the democratic form of government and also expressed the view that it was a form of Government which was conducive to the stability of society.

Referring to the preparations made by King Ajatasattu to attack one of these democratic principalities - that of the Vajjians, the Buddha said:

"Ānanda, have you heard that the Vajjians regularly assemble together in large numbers?"

"I have heard so," said the Venerable Ānanda.

“Well Ānanda, so long as the Vajjians assemble regularly and in large numbers, just so long may the prosperity of the Vajjians be looked for and not their decay”.

“So long, Ānanda, as the Vajjians assemble in harmony and disperse in harmony; so long as they conduct their business in harmony; so long as they introduce no revolutionary ordinance or break up no established ordinance, but abide by the law; so long as they honour, revere, esteem and worship the elders among the Vajjians and deem them worthy of listening to; so long as the women and maidens can go about without being molested or abducted; so long as they honour, revere, esteem and worship the Vajjian shrines, both the inner and the outer; so long as they allow not the customary offerings given and performed, to be neglected; so long as customary watch and ward over the holy men that are among them is well kept, so that they may have free access to the realm and having entered may dwell pleasantly therein, just so long as they do these things, Ānanda, may the prosperity of the Vajjians be looked for and not their decay”.

That Buddhism helped greatly in the evolution of democratic forms of Government in ancient India is borne out by what Marquess Zetland, a former Viceroy of India, says in his Introduction to the book “Legacy of India”. Lord Zetland says:-

“We know indeed that political science—Arthashastra in Sanskrit—was a favourite subject with Indian scholars some centuries before the Christian Era. The Social Contract as the origin of Kingship is discussed in the now famous work attributed to Kautilya, the Chief Minister of Emperor Chandragupta, about the year 300 B.C. And it would seem that the people who contracted for a king in these early days did so in order that there should be some external authority capable of ensuring that the laws and regulations of the various corporate bodies which had come into existence, were respected. “The King,” wrote Yajñavalkya, “must discipline and establish again on the path of duty all such as have erred from their own laws, whether families, castes, guilds or associations”. It is notable that the tendency towards self - government evidenced by these various forms of corporate activity received fresh impetus from the Buddhist rejection of authority of the priesthood and further by the doctrine of equality as exemplified by

its repudiation of caste. It is indeed to the Buddhist books that we have to turn for an account of the manner in which the affairs of these early examples of representative self - governing institutions were conducted. And it may come as a surprise to many to learn that in the Assemblies of the Buddhists in India two thousand or more years ago are to be found the rudiments of our own parliamentary practice of the present day. The dignity of the Assembly was preserved by the appointment of a special Officer—the embryo of “Mr. Speaker” in our House of Commons. A Second Officer was appointed whose duty it was to see that when necessary a quorum was secured, the prototype of the Parliamentary Chief Whip in our own system. A member initiating business did so in the form of a motion which was then open to discussion. In some cases this was done once only, in others three times, thus anticipating the practice of Parliament in requiring that a Bill be read a third time before it became law. If discussion disclosed a difference of opinion the matter was decided by the vote of majority, the voting being by ballot”.

In the context of the knowledge we now have about the democracies in ancient India, the Buddha’s appreciative reference to the Vajjian Republic is most significant.

As Lord Zetland says, the Buddha’s doctrine of equality made a profound impression on the social and political life of the Indian people—and the influence lasted for nearly 14 centuries.

In the Sutta Nipata, we find the following statement of the Buddha :

“Vasettha (he replied), I will expound
To you in gradual and very truth
Division in the kind of living things.
For kinds divide! Behold the grass and
trees.

They reason not, yet they possess the mark—
After their kind; for kinds indeed divide.
Consider then the beetles, moths and ants,
They after their kind too possess the mark.
And so four-footed creatures, great and
small

The reptiles, snakes, the long-backed
animals,

Fish and pond-feeders, water-dwellers,
Birds and the winged creatures, fowls of
the air,

They after their kind all possess the mark;
For kinds divide. Each after his kind
bears

His mark. In man it is not manifold.
Not in the hair, or head or ears or eyes,
Not in the mouth or nose or lips or brows,
Not in the throat, hips, belly or the back,
Not in the rump, sex organs or the breast
Not in hands or feet, fingers or nails,

Not in the legs or thighs, colour or voice,
Is mark that forms his kind, as in all else,
Nothing unique is in men's bodies found;
The difference is in men is nominal."

Twenty centuries before the revolutionaries of France raised the standard of "Liberty, Fraternity and Equality", the Buddha had enunciated these very values as essentials of good Government!



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PERSONALITY-BELIEF MUST BE TACKLED FOREMOST

By

Myan-aung U Tin

In the very first sermon, Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya V, the Buddha teaches us that craving is the origin of suffering, and of the cycle of rebirths. "What, O bhikkhus, is the origin of suffering? It is that craving which gives rise to ever fresh rebirth, and bound up with pleasure and lust, now here and now there, finds ever fresh delight. It is the craving for sensual pleasures (*karma-taṇhā*), the craving for existence (*bhava-taṇhā*), and the craving for annihilation (*vibhava-taṇhā*).

Craving must, therefore, be eradicated with a view to breaking up the cycle of rebirths, but we should bear in mind that craving is always associated with wrong views. Of all the wrong views, the most deluding is Personality-belief (*sakkāya-dīṭṭhi*) or Ego-illusion (*atta-dīṭṭhi*).

There are ten fetters (*saṃyojana*) tying beings to the wheel of existence: (1) Personality-belief, (2) Sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*) (3) Clinging to mere rites and rituals (*sīlabata-parāmāsa*), (4) Craving for sensual pleasures, (5) Ill-will (*vyāpāda*), (6) Craving for fine material existence (*rūpa-rāga*), (7) Craving for immaterial existence (*arūpa-rāga*), (8) Conceit (*māna*), (9) Restlessness (*uddhacca*), (10) Ignorance (*avijjā*).

Of the four kinds of the Noble Ones (*Ariyās*), or of those who have attained various stages of holiness, a stream-winner (*sotāpanna*) has got rid of (1) Personality-belief, (2) Sceptical doubt, and (3) Clinging to mere rites and rituals.

A Once-returner (*Sakadāgāmi*) has also overcome (4) and (5) in their grosser form.

A Non-returner (*Anāgāmi*) fully freed from (1) to (5).

The Holy-One (*Arahatta*) has eradicated all the ten fetters.

On this point, reference may be made to *Mahāli Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya, I, 6.*

Now it has become clear that first and foremost personality-belief must be tackled. Personality-belief is of two kinds: (1) Eternity-belief (*sassata-dīṭṭhi*) is the belief in the existence, of a persisting Ego-entity or Personality, existing independent of the physical and mental processes, and continuing even after the so-called death, (2) Annihilation-belief (*uccheda-dīṭṭhi*) is the belief in the existence of an Ego-entity or Personality as being, more or less, identical with the physical and mental processes, and which, therefore, at the dissolution of death, will come to be annihilated.

Personality-belief is the belief that in one or the other of the five groups of existence (*khandha*) there is a permanent entity.

The ignorant worlding (*puṭhujjana*) views

A (1) corporeality as the self, (2) the self as having corporeality, (3) corporeality as being in the self, (4) the self as being in corporeality;

B (5) feeling as the self, (6) the self as having feeling, (7) feeling as being in the self; (8) the self as being in feeling;

C (9) Perception as the self, (10) the self as having perception, (11) perception as being in the self, (12) the self as being in perception;

D (13) mental formations as the self, (14) the self as having mental formations, (15) mental formations as being in the self, (16) the self as being in mental formations;

E (17) consciousness as the self, (18) the self as having consciousness, (19) consciousness as being in the self, (20) the self as being in consciousness.

Abhidhamma, Dhamma-saṅgaṇī; Nikkhepa-kaṇḍa

The Buddha teaches us that both the Eternity-belief and the Annihilation-belief are wrong views. In the ultimate sense, of

as absolute truth, (*paramattha-sacca*)—there is only a process of continually arising and immediately thereafter disappearing physical and mental phenomena. Personality, ego, individual, man, etc., are all nothing but mere conventional terms (*vohāra-vacana*). The Buddha has summed up all the physical and mental phenomena of existence in five groups, which appear to the ignorant worldling as his Personality or Ego.

These five groups of existence are also commonly shown under two heads: (1) corporeality and (2) the remaining four as Mind.

In the second sermon, *Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta*, (*Saṃyutta Nikāya XXI*), the Buddha teaches, “Whatever there is of corporeality, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, whether past, present or future, one’s own or external, gross or subtle, lofty or low, far or near, there one should understand according to reality and true wisdom: this does not belong to me, this am I not, this is not my ego.”

The Venerable Nyanatiloka writes: “*Anatta* doctrine is the central doctrine of Buddhism, without understanding which a real knowledge of Buddhism is altogether impossible. It is the only real specific Buddhist doctrine, with which the entire Buddhist Structure stands or falls. It has been clearly and unreservedly taught only by the Buddha, wherefore also the Buddha is known as the *Anatta-vādī*, or Teacher of Impersonality. Whosoever has not penetrated this impersonality of all existence, and does not comprehend that in reality there exists only this continually self-consuming process of arising and passing bodily and mental phenomena, and no separate Ego-entity within or without this process, he will not be able to understand Buddhism, *i.e.*, the teaching of the Four Noble Truths in the right light. He will think that it is his Ego, his Personality, that experiences the suffering, his Personality that performs good and evil actions and will be reborn according to these actions, his Personality that will enter into *Nirvana*, his Personality that walks on the Eightfold Path.”

Thus it is said in *Visuddhi Magga* (*XVI* and *XVII*)

‘Mere suffering exists, no sufferer is found;

The deeds are, but no doer to the deeds is there;

Nirvana is, but not the man that enters it;
The Path is, but no traveller on it is seen.”

“Whosoever is not clear with regard to the conditionally arisen phenomena, and does not comprehend that all the actions are conditioned through ignorance, etc. he thinks that it is an ego that understands or does not understand, that acts or causes to act, that comes into existence at rebirth that has the sense impression, that feels, desires, gets attached, continues and at rebirth again enters a new existence.”

So it is imperative that we must tackle this Personality-belief or Ego-illusion first and foremost. How shall we get rid of this wrong view? In other words, how shall we realize the truth of impersonality?

The Buddha said (*Aṅguttara Nikāya, ii, 46*): “In this very one-fathom long body along with perceptions and thoughts, do I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the end of the world, and the path leading to the end of the world.” Here the term world is applied to suffering, and the end of the world means the cessation of suffering—no birth, no ageing, no decaying, no death, no rising up elsewhere in rebirth.

In this one-fathom long body we must find the Four Noble Truths. The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* teaches us how to practise body-contemplation, feeling-contemplation, consciousness-contemplation and mind-object-contemplation. Of the four contemplations, the Venerable Ānanda advises us to practise that of consciousness with a view to destroying Personality-belief. The same advice is also given in *Samohavinodanī* Commentary by the Venerable Buddhagosa, the author of *Visuddhi Magga*.

There are six kinds of consciousness: eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness and mind consciousness. Wherever it arises, there it ceases. The Venerable Nārada explains this point most admirably in “Buddhism in a nutshell.”

“According to Buddhism mind is nothing but a complex compound of fleeting mental states. One unit of consciousness consists of three phases—arising or genesis (*uppāda*) static or development (*thiti*), and cessation

or dissolution (*bhaṅga*), Immediately after the cessation stage of a thought moment there occurs the genesis stage of the subsequent thought-moment. Each momentary consciousness of their ever-changing life-process, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions to its successor. Every fresh consciousness consists of the potentialities of its predecessors together with something more. There is, therefore, a continuous flow of consciousness like a stream without any interruption. The subsequent thought moment is neither absolutely the same as its predecessor---since that which goes to make it up is not identical nor entirely another---being the same continuity of *Kamma* energy. Here there is no identical being but there is an identity in process.

“Every moment there is birth, every moment there is death. The arising of one thought-moment means the passing away of another thought-moment and vice-versa. In the course of one life-time there is momentary rebirth without a soul.

“If there is no soul, what is it that is reborn? One might ask. Well, there is nothing to be reborn. When life ceases the Kammic energy re-materialises itself in another form. Birth is the arising of the psycho-physical phenomena. Death is merely the temporary end of a temporary phenomenon.

“Just as the arising of a physical state is conditioned by a preceding state as its cause, so the appearance of psycho-physical phenomena is conditioned by causes anterior to its birth. As the process of one life-span is possible without a permanent entity passing from one thought-moment to another so a series of life-processes is possible without an immortal soul to transmigrate from one existence to another.”

One who practises contemplation of consciousness is right earnest, with real diligence for a continuous length of time, is bound to see things as they really are. (*yathābhūta-ñāna*). The Personality-belief or Ego-illusion, mainly dependent upon consciousness of six kinds, will wear away thinner and thinner until it tears to pieces. That Personality exists only in an empirical sense and not at all in the ultimate sense will become clear. With the insight into impersonality (*anatta*) comes also the insight into imper-

manence (*anicca*), and suffering (*dukkha*), the three characteristics of existence. This insight will lead to revulsion or dispassion (*nibbidā ñāna*), ending up in the realisation of the path (*magga ñāna*).

Even after the attainment of the first stage of holiness, there will still be craving for sensual pleasures. Craving for fine-material existence, and craving for immaterial existence, but the stream-winner has once and for all destroyed Personality-belief, Sceptical Doubt and Clinging to mere rites and rituals, go from the Downfall and assured of attaining the perfect wisdom.

Craving for sensual pleasures is destroyed at the third stage, craving for fine-material existence and craving for immaterial existence are destroyed at the final stage. By now it should have been made patent that we must endeavour to destroy Personality-belief first and foremost. When Personality-belief has been utterly destroyed, craving that remains with a stream-winner is bound to wear thinner and become less gross. Even a *yogī* or *yogāvacara* (one devoted to mental training or application of mindfulness) does not yield to craving as he is intent on discarding wrong or evil views, which are declared as utterly rejectable for being a source of wrong and evil aspirations and conduct and liable at times to lead man to the deepest abyses of depravity as it is said in *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, I, 22 and 23.

By far the majority of beings are possessed with eternal-belief, but there are others like materialists, who are engrossed in annihilation-belief. In this article, our attention may be confined to the Buddhists only. The Buddhists are the believers in the Middle Way, the way between two extremes: eternity-belief, and annihilation belief, and yet in practical life many a Buddhist behaves hardly any better than an eternalist for the simple reason that *anatta* (non-Ego) has not been comprehended. The Buddha teaches, “This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my Ego.” The average Buddhist, however, clings to the notions: “This is mine, this am I, and this is my Ego.” It is these three wrong notions or obsessions (*papañca*) that are responsible for the round of rebirths: craving (*taṇhā*), conceit (*māna*) and *diṭṭhi* (wrong view).

Rarely, adherents of annihilation-belief are found among the Buddhists. Of course, those of the present generation,

young members mostly but also old ones, who have been influenced by materialist ideologies, might have possibly given themselves away to that belief, but their number is not so big. If they do not change their belief, they would have no hope of coming back to the Middle Way, which leads to the cessation of suffering.

Nevertheless it must be mentioned here that even among sincere Buddhists *Nibbāna* is confused with annihilation. In *Khandha Samyutta* text is related the story of Yamaka Thera, who said that an Arahāt was annihilated at death. Other Elders told him that his view was wrong, but he insisted that was what the Buddha taught. The Elders reported the matter to the Venerable Sāriputta, who took pains to explain the point at issue to Yamaka Thera. When Yamaka saw that there was no individuality or personality within or without five groups of existence, he realised that it was not the death of an Arahāt really but the extinction of these five groups, resulting in the cessation of suffering, and there was no question of annihilation. Accordingly he overcame the annihilation-belief and became a stream-winner forthwith, and also attained successively the higher stages.

This story is, indeed, an eye-opener to us. Although the Buddhists are not nihilists, they cannot possibly understand what *Nibbāna* is unless and until they comprehend the *Anatta*-doctrine. This is not the place to treat more of *Nibbāna*. Suffice it to say, once more, that

“*Nibbāna* is, but not the man that enters it;

The Path is, but no traveller on it is seen.”

Now, the practice of contemplation of consciousness must be further explained. Whatsoever consciousness arises and disappears, it must be contemplated. The preceding moment of consciousness must be noted by the succeeding one. The contemplation is *magga* (path), the arising and disappearance is *dukkha* (suffering). No chance must be given to any defilement (*kilesā*) to come between the two consecutive moments of consciousness, and if no defilement arises, the origin of suffering (*samudaya*) has been

nipped, as it were, in the bud, and the cessation of suffering (*nirodha*) is attained.

The Buddha enjoins upon us to strive on with diligence. If the *yogi* should apply his right mindfulness earnestly and constantly, he will develop his insight into the mental process, the series of fleeting mental states. Notwithstanding the right effort, if any of the defiling aberration arises, be it greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*) delusion (*moha*), that must be noted promptly. It will be seen that the arising is followed up immediately by dissolution. No evil thought must be allowed to repeat. Should any of the opposites of the three defiling aberrations; *alobha* (disinterestedness), *adosa* (amity) and *amoha* (wisdom), arise that moment of consciousness must also be noted.

Contemplation of consciousness, it must be stressed, does not preclude other three contemplations. As the *yogi* strives on, he will come to a moment when he will realize fully the truth of impersonality and emptiness of all forms of existence. Then he will be freed from Personality-belief in both forms: eternal-belief and annihilation belief. The texts state that there are sixty-two wrong views. Whatever their number may be, the utter destruction of personality-belief or ego-illusion means that all these wrong views have been uprooted.

In conclusion, the story of Brahman Aggi-vaccha's interview with the Buddha may be related. (*Majjhima Nikāya II*): The Brahman put several questions, one after another, and the Blessed One replied, “That is a wrong view”. Thereupon the Brahman asked the Blessed One, “What, then, is your view?” The Blessed One replied, “Aggi-vaccha, I have got rid of all the wrong views.” Aggi-vaccha requested the Blessed One to explain to him what He had realized. The Blessed One said, “Corporeality arises and disappears, and so do feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness.” Aggi-vaccha asked, “Wherefore do you hold such a view?” The Blessed One replied, “This is the Right View. It leads to the destruction of three obsessions that are responsible for the round of rebirths namely: craving, conceit and wrong views. The obsessions having been utterly destroyed, there would be no more rebirth and suffering.”

BRAHMA VIHĀRA OR THE SUBLIME STATES

By

Nārada Thera

MAN is a mysterious being with inconceivable potentialities. Latent in him are both saintly characteristics and criminal tendencies. They may rise to the surface at unexpected moments in disconcerting strength. How they originated we know not. We only know that they are dormant in man in varying degree.

Within the powerful mind in this complex machinery of man are also found a storehouse of virtue and a rubbish heap of evil. With the development of these respective characteristics man may become either a blessing or a curse to humanity.

Those who wish to be great, noble, and serviceable, who wish to sublimate themselves and serve humanity both by example and by precept, and who wish to avail themselves of this golden opportunity as human beings, endeavour their best to remove the latent vices and to cultivate the dormant virtues.

To dig up precious gems embedded in the earth men spend enormous sums of money and make laborious efforts, and sometimes even sacrifice their lives. But to dig up the valuable treasures latent in man, only persistent effort and enduring patience are necessary. Even the poorest man or woman can accomplish this task, for wealth is not an essential prerequisite to the accumulation of transcendental treasures.

It is strange that the vices latent in man seem to be almost natural and spontaneous. It is equally strange that every vice possesses its opposite sterling virtue, which does not however appear to be so normal and automatic, though still within the range of all.

One powerful destructive vice in man is anger (*dosa*). The sweet virtue that subdues this evil force and sublimates man is loving-kindness (*mettā*).

Cruelty (*himsā*) is another vice that is responsible for many errors and atrocities

prevalent in the world. Compassion (*karunā*) is its antidote.

Jealousy (*issā*) is another vice that poisons one's system and leads to unhealthy rivalries and dangerous competitions. The most effective remedy for this poisonous drug is appreciative joy (*muditā*).

There are two other universal characteristics that upset the mental equipoise of man. They are attachment to the pleasurable and aversion to the non-pleasurable. These two opposite subtle forces can be eliminated by developing equanimity (*upekkhā*).

These four sterling virtues are collectively termed in Pāli *Brahmavihāra* which may be rendered Modes of Sublime Conduct, Sublime States, or Divine Abodes.

These virtues tend to elevate man. They make one divine in this life itself. They can transform man into a superman. If all try to cultivate them irrespective of creed, colour, race or sex, the earth can be transformed into a paradise where all can live in perfect peace and harmony, ideal citizens of one world.

The four Sublime virtues are also termed Illimitables (*appamaññā*). They are so called because they find no barrier or limit and should be extended towards all beings without exception. They embrace all living beings including animals.

Irrespective of religious beliefs, one can cultivate these sweet virtues and be a blessing to oneself and all others.

Mettā

The first Sublime State is *Mettā* (Sanskrit—*Maitri*). It means that which softens one's heart or the state of a true friend. It is defined as the sincere wish for the welfare and genuine happiness of all living beings without exception. It is also explained as the friendly disposition, for a genuine friend sincerely wishes for the welfare of his friend.

“Just as a mother protects her only child even at the risk of her life, even so one should cultivate boundless loving-kindness towards all living beings” is the advice of the Buddha.

It is not the passionate love of the mother towards her child that is stressed here but her sincere wish for the genuine welfare of her child.

Mettā is neither carnal love nor personal affection, for grief inevitably arises from both.

Mettā is not mere neighbourliness, for it makes no distinction between neighbours and others.

Mettā is not mere universal brotherhood, for it encompasses all living beings including animals, our lesser brethren and sisters that need greater compassion as they are helpless.

Mettā is not political brotherhood or racial brotherhood, or national brotherhood, or even religious brotherhood.

Political brotherhood is confined only to those who share similar political views, such as the partial brotherhood of Democrats, Socialists, Communists, and so forth.

Racial brotherhood and national brotherhood are restricted only to those of the same race and nation. Some nationalists love their race so much that sometimes they ruthlessly kill innocent men, women and children because they unfortunately are not blessed with blond hair and blue eyes. The white races have a particular love for the white skin, the black for the black, the yellow for the yellow, the brown for the brown, the pale for the pale, the red for the red. Others of a different complexion are at times viewed with suspicion and fear. Very often to assert their racial superiority they resort to brutal warfare, killing millions by mercilessly raining bombs from the sky above. The pathetic incidents of the Second World War are striking examples which can never be forgotten by mankind.

Amongst some narrow-minded peoples, within the wider circle of their ancient nations, there exist minor circles of caste and class where the so-called brotherhood of the powerful oppressors is so limited that the oppressed are not even permitted to enjoy bare human rights merely because of the accidents of birth or class. These oppressors are to be pitied because they are confined to their water-tight compartments.

Mettā is not religious brotherhood either. Owing to the sad limitations of so-called religious brotherhood human heads have been severed without the least compunction, sincere outspoken men and women have been roasted and burnt alive, many atrocities have been perpetrated which baffle description, cruel wars have been waged which mar the pages of world history. Even in this supposedly enlightened twentieth century the followers of one religion hate or ruthlessly persecute and even kill those of other faiths merely because they cannot force them to think as they do or because they have a different label.

If, on account of religious views, people of different faiths cannot meet on a common platform like brothers and sisters, then surely the missions of compassionate world teachers have pitifully failed.

Sweet Mettā transcends all these kinds of narrow brotherhood. It is limitless in scope and range. Barriers it has none. Discrimination it makes not. Mettā enables one to regard the whole world as one's motherland and all as fellow-beings.

Just as the sun sheds its rays on all without any distinction, even so sublime mettā bestows its sweet blessings equally on the pleasant and the unpleasant, on the rich and the poor, on the high and the low, on the vicious and the virtuous, on man and woman, and on human and animal.

Such was the boundless Mettā of the Buddha, who worked for the welfare and happiness of those who loved Him as well as of those who hated Him and even attempted to harm and kill Him.

The Buddha exercised mettā equally towards His own son Rāhula, His adversary the Devadatta, His attendant Ānanda, His admirers and His opponents.

This loving-kindness should be extended in equal measure towards oneself as towards friend, foe and neutral alike. Suppose a bandit were to approach a person travelling through a forest with an intimate friend, a neutral person and an enemy, and suppose he were to demand that one of them be offered as a victim. If the traveller were to say that he himself should be taken then he would have no mettā towards himself. If he were to say that anyone of the other three persons should be taken, then he would have no mettā towards them.

Such is the characteristic of real mettā. In exercising this boundless loving-kindness oneself should not be ignored. This subtle point should not be misunderstood, for self-sacrifice is another sweet virtue and egolessness is yet another higher virtue. The culmination of this mettā is the identification of oneself with all beings (*sabbāttatā*), making no difference between oneself and others. The so-called "I" is lost in the whole. Separatism evaporates. Oneness is realised.

There is no proper English equivalent for this graceful Pāli term *Mettā*. Goodwill, loving-kindness, benevolence and universal love are suggested as the best renderings.

The antithesis of mettā is anger, illwill, hatred, or aversion. *Mettā* cannot coexist with anger of vengeful conduct.

The Buddha states—

"Hatreds do not cease by hatreds; by love they cease."

Mettā not only tends to conquer anger but also does not tolerate hateful thoughts towards others. He who has mettā never thinks of harming others, nor does he disparage or condemn others. Such a person is neither afraid of others nor does he instill fear into any.

A subtle indirect enemy assails mettā in the guise of a friend. It is selfish affection (*pema*) for unguarded mettā may sometimes be assailed by lust. This indirect enemy resembles a person who lurks afar in the jungles or hills to cause harm to another. Grief springs from affection but not from mettā.

This delicate point should not be misunderstood. Parents surely cannot avoid having affection towards their children and children towards their parents; husbands towards their wives and wives towards their husbands. Such affection is quite natural. The world cannot exist without mutual affection. The point to be clarified here is that unselfish mettā is not synonymous with ordinary affection.

A benevolent attitude is the chief characteristic of mettā. He who practises mettā is constantly interested in promoting the welfare of others. He seeks the good and beautiful in all but not the ugliness in others.

Attendant blessings of mettā

1. He who practises mettā sleeps happily. As he goes to sleep with a light heart free from hatred he naturally falls asleep at once. This fact is clearly demonstrated by those who are full of loving-kindness. They are fast asleep immediately on closing their eyes.

2. As he goes to sleep with a loving heart he awakes with an equally loving heart. Benevolent and compassionate persons often rises from bed with smiling faces.

3. Even in sleep loving persons are not perturbed by bad dreams. As they are full of love during their waking hours, they are peaceful in their sleeping hours too. Either they fall into deep sleep or have pleasant dreams.

4. He becomes dear to human beings. As he loves others, so do others love him.

When a person looks at a mirror with a smiling face, a similar face will greet him. If, on the contrary, he looks with a wry face, he will see a similar reflection. The outside world reacts on one in the same way that one acts towards the world. One full of faults himself is apt to see the evil in others. The good he ignores. An English poet has put it beautifully:

"I looked at my brother with the Microscope of Criticism
And I said, "How coarse my brother is!"
I looked at him through the Telescope of Scorn
And I said, "How small my brother is!"
Then I looked in the Mirror of Truth
And I said, "How like me my brother is!"

Why should we see the ugliness in others when there is evil in the best of us and good in the worst of us? It would be a source of pleasure to all if we could see the good and beautiful in all.

5. He who practises mettā is dear to non-humans as well. Animals are also attracted to him. Radiating their loving-kindness, ascetics live in wild forests amidst ferocious beasts without being harmed by them.

"Dwelling on the mountain slopes", says the Buddha, "I drew to me lions and tigers by the power of loving-kindness. Surrounded by lions and tigers, by panthers and buffaloes, by antelopes, stags and boars, I dwelt in the forest. No creature was

terrified of me, neither was I afraid of any creature. The power of loving-kindness was my support. I thus dwelt upon the mountainside."

6. Owing to his power of mettā he becomes immune from poison and so forth unless he is subject to some inexorable Kamma.

As Mettā is a constructive healthy force it has the power to counteract hostile influences. Just as hateful thoughts can produce toxic effects in the system, even so loving thoughts can produce healthy physical effects. The scriptures state that a very generous and devout woman named Suppiyā, who had a wound in her thigh, was healed on seeing the Buddha. The peaceful thought vibrations of the Buddha and the woman combined to produce this salutary effect.

When the Buddha visited His birthplace for the first time His son Rāhula, who was only seven years of age, approached Him and spontaneously remarked, "O ascetic, even your shadow is pleasing to me." The child was so much dominated by the Buddha's mettā that he deeply felt its magnetic power.

7. Invisible deities protect him because of the power of his mettā.

8. Mettā leads to quick mental concentration. As the mind is not perturbed by hostile vibration one-pointedness can be gained with ease. With mind at peace he will live in a heaven of his own creation. Even those who come in contact with him will also experience that bliss.

9. Mettā tends to beautify one's facial expression. The face as a rule reflects the state of the mind. When one gets angry the heart pumps blood twice or three times faster than the normal rate. Heated blood rushes up to the face, which then turns red or black. At times the face becomes repulsive to sight. Loving thoughts, on the contrary, gladden the heart and clarify the blood. The face then presents a lovable appearance.

It is stated that when the Buddha, after enlightenment reflected on the Causal Relations (Paṭṭhāna), His heart was so pacified and His blood so clarified that rays of different hue such as blue, yellow, red, white, orange, and a mixture of these emanated from His body.

10. A person imbued with mettā dies peacefully as he harbours no thoughts of

hatred towards any. Even after death his serene face reflects his peaceful death.

11. Since a person with mettā dies happily, he will subsequently be born in a blissful state. If he has gained the Jhānas or ecstasies he will be born in a Brahma realm.

Besides these inevitable worldly blessings mettā possesses a magnetic power. It can produce a good influence on others even at a distance and can attract others to oneself.

Once when the Buddha visited a certain city many distinguished nobles came to welcome Him, amongst whom was a nobleman named Roja, who was a friend of Ānanda. Seeing him, Ānanda said: "It is very kind of you, Roja, to have come to welcome the Buddha."

"No, venerable Sir, it is not out of any reverence towards the Buddha that I have come to greet Him. We agreed amongst ourselves that whoever would not to greet the Buddha would be fined 500 gold coins. It is through fear of the fine that I have come here to welcome the Buddha", replied Roja.

Ānanda was slightly displeased. He approached the Buddha and implored Him to preach the Dhamma to Roja.

The Buddha instantly radiated mettā towards Roja and retired to His chamber.

Roja's body was saturated with mettā of the Buddha. He was electrified, so to say, with the magnetic power of Buddha's irresistible love. Just as a calf would run after his mother he ran from cell to cell in the monastery inquiring where the Buddha was. The monks directed him to the Buddha's chamber. He knocked at the door. The Buddha opened it. In he went, saluted the Buddha, heard the doctrine, and became a convert.

Such is the magnetic power of mettā which everyone can exercise according to his ability.

On another occasion an intoxicated elephant was driven towards the Buddha in an effort to kill Him. The Buddha clamly radiated His love towards the elephant and subdued it.

A beautiful story may be cited to show how the Bodhisatta as a boy extended his boundless mettā when his own father ordered him to be killed. Young though he was, the Bodhisatta thought to himself:—

"Here is a golden opportunity for me to practise my mettā. My father stands before me; my good mother is weeping, the executioner is ready to chop off my hands and feet. I, the victim, am in the centre. Love I must all the four in equal measure without any distinction. May my good father not incur any suffering because of this ruthless act! May I become a Buddha in the future!"

In one of his previous births the Bodhisatta was once practising the virtue of patience in a royal park. The King, a drunkard, meaning to test his patience ordered the executioner to beat him and cut off his hands and feet. Still he practised his patience. The impatient King kicked him in the chest. Lying in a pool of blood, almost on the verge of death, the Bodhisatta blessed the King and wished him long life saying that men like himself never get angry.

A Bhikkhu is expected to practise mettā to such an extent that he is forbidden to dig or cause to dig the ground last insects and other minute creatures may die.

The high standard of mettā expected from a Bhikkhu can be understood by the following admonition of the Buddha:—

"If bandits brutally sever your limb from limb with a two-handled saw, and if you entertain hate in your heart, you will not be a follower of my teaching."

Such enduring patience is extremely difficult. But that is the lofty ethical standard the Buddha expects from His followers.

The Buddha Himself has set the noble, example: "As an elephant in the battlefield, withstands arrows shot from a bow", says the Buddha, "even so shall I endure abuse, for most people are ill-disciplined."

This chaotic, war-weary, restless world of today where the nations are arming themselves to their teeth, frightened of one another, where human life is endangered by nuclear weapons which may be released at any moment, is sorely in need of this universal loving-kindness so that all may live in one world in perfect peace and harmony like brothers and sisters.

Is it practically possible to exercise mettā when one is threatened with devastating bombs and other destructive weapons?

Well, what can powerless people do when bombs rain from above? Can they avert such a catastrophe?

Buddhist mettā is the only answer to such deadly bombs when one is faced with inexorable death.

If all warlike nations could be prevailed upon to substitute this spiritual mettā for the destructive weapons of materialism and rule the world not with might and force but with right and love, then only would there be genuine peace and happiness in this world.

Leaving the almost unpractical major issues aside, it is advisable to be concerned with oneself and the rest of mankind in cultivating this sweet virtue mettā to the best of one's ability.

How to practise mettā

A few practical hints are given below to practise this meditation on loving-kindness.

Mettā should be practised first towards oneself. In doing so a person should charge his mind and body with positive thoughts of peace and happiness. He should think how he could be peaceful, happy, free from suffering, disease, worry and anger. He then becomes the embodiment of loving-kindness. Shielded by loving-kindness he cuts off all hostile vibrations and negative thoughts. He returns good for evil, love for anger. He becomes ever tolerant and tries his best not to give occasion for anger to any. Himself beaming with happiness, he injects happiness into others not only inwardly but also outwardly by putting his mettā into practice in the course of his daily life.

When he is full of peace and is free from thoughts of hatred it is easy for him to radiate loving-kindness towards others. What he does not possess he cannot give to others. Before he tries to make others happy he should first be happy himself. He should know the ways and means to make himself happy.

He now radiates his loving-kindness towards all his near and dear ones individually and collectively, wishing them peace and happiness and freedom from suffering, disease, worry and anger.

Diffusing his thoughts of loving-kindness towards his relatives and friends, he radiates them also towards neutrals. Just as he wishes for the peace and happiness of himself and of his near and dear ones even so he sincerely wishes for the peace and happiness of those who are neutral to him,

wishing them freedom from suffering, disease, worry and anger. Finally though this is somewhat difficult, he should radiate his mettā in the same way towards those (if any) who are inimical to him. If by practising mettā he could adopt a friendly attitude towards those thought to be inimical towards him his achievement would be more heroic and commendable. As the Buddha advises—“Amidst those who hate let him live free from hatred.”

Starting from himself he should gradually extend his mettā towards all beings, irrespective of creed, race, colour or sex, including dumb animals, until he had identified himself with all, making no distinction what ever. He merges himself in the whole universe and is one with all. He is no more dominated by egoistic feelings. He transcends all forms of separatism. No longer confining himself to water-tight compartments, no longer influenced by caste, class, national, racial, or religious prejudices, he can regard the whole world as his motherland and all as fellow-beings in the ocean of life.

Karunā-or-compassion

The second virtue that sublimes man is compassion (*karunā*). It is defined as that which makes the hearts of the good quiver when others are subject to suffering or that which dissipates the sufferings of others. Its chief characteristic is the wish to remove the woes of others.

The hearts of compassionate persons are even softer than flowers. They do not and cannot rest satisfied until they relieve the sufferings of others. At times they even go to the extent of sacrificing their lives so as to alleviate the sufferings of others. The story of the Vyāghri Jātaka where the Bodhisatta sacrificed his life to save a starving tigress and her cubs may be cited as an example.

It is compassion that compels one to serve others with altruistic motives. A truly compassionate person lives not for himself but for others. He seeks opportunities to serve others expecting nothing in return, not even gratitude.

Who do deserve our compassion? The poor and the needy, the sick and the helpless, the lonely and the destitute, the ignorant and the vicious, the impure and the undisciplined are some that demand the compassion of kind-hearted, noble-minded men and women,

to whatever religion or to whatever race they belong.

It is an admitted fact that there is greater poverty in Asia and Africa, than in Europe, Australia and America. Some countries are materially rich but spiritually poor, while some others are spiritually rich but materially poor. Both these pathetic conditions have to be taken into consideration by the materially rich and the spiritually rich.

It is the paramount duty of the wealthy to come to the succour of the poor, who unfortunately lack most of the necessaries of life. Surely those who have in abundance can give to the poor and the needy their surplus without inconveniencing themselves.

Once a young student removed the door curtain in his house and gave it to a poor person telling his good mother that the door does not feel the cold but the poor certainly do. Such a kind-hearted attitude in young men and women is highly commendable.

It is gratifying to note that some wealthy countries have formed themselves into various philanthropic bodies to help under-developed countries, especially in Asia, in every possible way. Charitable organizations have also been established in all countries by men, women and students to give every possible assistance to the poor and the needy. Religious bodies also perform their respective duties in this connection in their own humble way. Homes for the aged, orphanages and other similar charitable institutions are needed in under-developed countries.

The beggar problem has still to be solved in some Asian countries where begging has become a profession. Beggars, at one time, were a great nuisance in China, but the new Republic has solved the problem. There do not seem to be beggars in Japan. Out of compassion for the unfortunate beggars this problem has to be solved satisfactorily by the respective Governments as the existence of beggars is an insult to any self-respecting nation.

As the materially rich should have compassion on the materially poor and try to elevate them, it is the duty of the spiritually rich too to have compassion on the spiritually poor and sublime them though they may be materially rich. Wealth alone cannot give genuine happiness. Peace of mind can be gained not by material treasures but by

spiritual treasures. It is regrettable that in a certain country which has reached almost the zenith of material progress about 10 % of the population suffer from mental diseases. Many in this world are badly in need of substantial spiritual food which is no easily obtained as the spiritually advanced are comparatively few. It is not an exaggeration to say that the spiritually poor far exceed the materially poor numerically as they are found both amongst the rich and the poor.

Even more than poverty sickness prevails throughout the world. Many are physically sick, some are mentally sick. Science provides effective medicine for the former but not for the latter, who very often languish in mental hospitals.

There are causes for these two kinds of sickness. Compassionate men and women must try to remove the causes if they wish to produce an effective cure.

Effective measures have been employed by various nations to prevent and cure diseases not only of mankind but also of animals.

The Buddha set a noble example by attending on the sick Himself and exhorting His disciples with the memorable words:-

"He who ministers unto the sick ministers unto me."

Some selfless doctors render free services towards the alleviation of suffering. Some expend their whole time and energy in ministering to the poor lepers in Africa even at the risk of their lives. Albert Sechweitzer is a noteworthy example.

Hospitals and free dispensaries have become a blessing to humanity but more are needed so that the poor may benefit by them. In under-developed countries the poor suffer through lack of medical facilities. The sick have to be carried for miles with great inconvenience to the nearest hospital or dispensary for medical treatment. Sometimes they die on the way. Pregnant mothers suffer most. Hospitals, dispensaries, maternity homes, etc., are an essential need in backward village areas.

The lowly and the destitute deserve the compassion of wealthy men and women. Sometimes servants and workers are not well paid, well fed, well clothed and more often than not they are ill-treated. Justice is not meted out to them. They are neglected and

are powerless as there is nobody to plead for them. Glaring cases of inhuman cruelty receive publicity in some exceptional cases. Many such cases are not known. These unfortunate ones have no other alternative but to suffer meekly even as Mother Earth suffers everything in silence. When the grief is unbearable they commit suicide in utter desperation.

The vicious, the wicked, and the ignorant deserve compassion even more than those who suffer physically as they are mentally and spiritually sick. They should not be condemned and despised but sympathised with for their failings and defects. Though a mother has equal compassion towards all her children still she may have more compassion towards a sick child, even so greater compassion should be exercised towards the spiritually sick as their sickness ruins their character.

The Buddha, for instance, had great compassion towards the courtesan Ambapāli, and towards Angulimāla the murderer both of whom later became His converts and underwent a complete reformation in character.

We must understand that greatness is latent in all however wicked they may be. Perhaps one appropriate word at the right moment may change the whole outlook of a person.

The Emperor Asoka perpetrated many crimes, so much so that he was stigmatized Asoka the wicked. Later the words from a young novice—"Diligence is the path to the deathless"—produced such a great change in him that he became Asoka the Righteous.

The Buddha's advice is to shun the company of the foolish. That does not mean that the good should not associate with them so as to reform them. People avoid those who suffer from contagious diseases. But compassionate physicians attend on them so as to heal them. Otherwise they might die. In the same way the wicked may die spiritually if the good are not tolerant and compassionate towards them.

As a rule the Buddha went in search of the poor, the ignorant and the vicious, but the good and the virtuous came in search of the Buddha.

Like *Mettā* (loving-kindness) *Karunā* (compassion) should also be extended without

limit towards all suffering and helpless beings, including dumb animals born and unborn.

To deny the rights and privileges of mankind on account of caste, colour, or race is inhuman and cruel. To feast on the flesh of animals by killing or causing to kill them is not human compassion. To rain bombs from above and ruthlessly destroy millions of men, women and children is the worst form of cruelty that deluded man has ever perpetrated.

Today this pitiless, vengeful world has sacrificed the most precious thing on earth—life—at the altar of brute force. Whither has compassion fled?

The world needs today compassionate men and women to banish violence and cruelty from the face of the earth.

Buddhist compassion, it should be noted, does not consist in mere shedding of tears and the like, for the indirect enemy of compassion is passionate grief (*domanassa*).

Compassion embraces all sorrow-stricken beings, while loving-kindness embraces all living beings, happy or sorrowful.

Muditā.

The third sublime virtue is *Muditā*. It is not mere sympathy but sympathetic or appreciative joy which tends to destroy jealousy, its direct enemy.

One devastating force that endangers our whole constitution is jealousy. Very often some cannot bear to see or hear the successful achievements of others. They rejoice over their failures but cannot tolerate their successes. Instead of praising and congratulating the successful, they try to ruin, condemn and vilify them. In one way *muditā* is concerned more with oneself than with others as it tends to eradicate jealousy which ruins oneself. On the other hand it aids others as well since one who practises *muditā* will not try to hinder the progress and welfare of others.

As it is with loving-kindness it is easy to rejoice over the success of one's near and dear ones but rather difficult to do so over the success of one's adversaries. Yes, the majority not only find it difficult but also do not and cannot rejoice. They seek delight in creating every possible obstacle so as to ruin their adversaries. They even go to the extent of poisoning, crucifying, and assassinating the good.

Socrates was poisoned, Christ was crucified, Gandhi was shot. Such is the nature of the wicked and deluded world.

The practice of *mettā* and *karunā* is easier than the practice of *muditā*, which demands great personal effort and strong will power.

Do the Western nations rejoice over the prosperity of the Eastern and the Eastern over the prosperity of the Western? Does one nation rejoice over the welfare of another nation? Is one race happy over the growing prosperity of another race? Does even one religious sect which stands for the cultivation of morals, rejoice over the spiritual influence of another sect?

One religion is jealous of another religion, one part of the globe is jealous of another part of the globe, one institution is jealous of another institution, one business firm is jealous of another business firm, one family is jealous of another family, unsuccessful pupils are jealous of successful pupils, sometimes even one brother or sister is jealous of another brother or sister.

This is the very reason why individuals and groups should practise sympathetic joy if they wish to sublime themselves and be internally happy.

The chief characteristic of *muditā* is happy acquiescence in others' prosperity and success (*anumodanā*). Laughter and the like are not the characteristics of *muditā* as exhilaration (*pahāsa*) is regarded as its indirect enemy.

Muditā embraces all prosperous beings and is the congratulatory attitude of a person. It tends to eliminate any dislike (*arati*) towards a successful person.

Upekkhā

The fourth sublime state is the most difficult and the most essential. It is *Upekkhā* or equanimity. The Pali term *upa* means "justly," "impartially," or "rightly". The etymological meaning of the term *upekkhā* is "discerning rightly", "viewing justly", or looking "impartially", that is, without attachment or aversion, without favour or disfavour.

Here the term is not used in the sense of indifference or neutral feeling.

Equanimity is essential, especially for laymen who have to live in an ill-balanced world amidst fluctuating circumstances.

Slights and insults are the common lot of mankind. The world is so constituted that the good and the virtuous are very often subject to unjust criticism and attack. It is heroic to maintain a balanced mind in such circumstances.

Loss and gain, fame and infamy, praise and blame, pain and happiness are eight worldly conditions that affect all humanity. Most people are perturbed when affected by such favourable or unfavourable states. One is elated when one is praised, and depressed when blamed and reviled. He is wise, says the Buddha, who, amidst such vicissitudes of life, stands unmoved like unto a firm rock, exercising perfect equanimity.

The Jātaka states—

“Just as the earth, what e'er is thrown
Upon her, whether sweet or foul,
Indifferent is to all alike,
Nor hatred shows, nor amity,
So likewise he in good or ill
Must even-balanced be.”

The Buddha's exemplary life offers us worldlings an excellent example of equanimity.

There was no religious teacher in the world who was so severely criticised, attacked, insulted and reviled as the Buddha, and yet none so highly praised, honoured and revered as the Buddha.

Once when He went in quest of alms He was called an outcaste by an impertinent Brahmin. He calmly endured the insult and explained to him that it is not birth that makes one an outcaste but an ignoble character: The Brahmin was converted.

Inviting Him to a house for alms, a certain man entertained the Buddha with the filthiest language current in His time. He was called “swine”, “brute”, “ox”, etc. But He was not offended. He did not retaliate. Calmly He questioned His host what he would do when guests visited his house. He replied that he would prepare a feast to entertain them.

“Well, what would you do if they did not partake of it?” questioned the Buddha.

“In that case we ourselves would partake of the feast.”

“Well, good brother, you have invited me to your house for alms. You have entertained me with a torrent of abuse. I do not accept it. Please take it back”, calmly replied the Buddha.

The offender's character was completely transformed.

“Retaliate not. Be silent as a cracked gong when you are abused by others. If you do so, I deem that you have already attained Nibbana although you have not realised Nibbana”. Such is the advice of the Buddha.

These are golden words that should be given heed to in this ill-disciplined world of today.

Once a lady of the court induced some drunkards to revile the Buddha so much that Ānanda, His attendant disciple, implored the Buddha to leave the city and go elsewhere. But the Buddha was unperturbed.

Another woman feigned pregnancy and publicly accused the Buddha of having placed her in that condition. A woman was killed by His rivals and the Buddha was accused of murder. His own cousin and disciple Devadatta made an unsuccessful attempt to crush Him to death by hurling a rock from a cliff. Some of His own disciples accused Him of jealousy, partiality, favouritism, etc.

On the other hand many sang the praises of the Buddha. Kings prostrated themselves, before His feet and paid the highest reverence.

Like the Mother Earth the Buddha suffered everything in silence with perfect equanimity.

Like a lion that does not tremble at every sound, one should not be perturbed by the poisoned darts of uncurbed tongues. Like the wind that does not cling to the meshes of a net, one should not be attached to the illusory pleasures of this changing world. Like the lotus that is unsolied by the mud from which it springs, one should live unaffected by worldly temptations, ever calm, serene, and peaceful.

As with the first three virtues so also upekkhā has for its direct enemy attachment (rāga), and for its indirect enemy callousness or unintelligent indifference.

Upekkhā discards clinging and aversion. An impartial attitude is its chief characteristic. He who practises equanimity is neither attracted by desirable objects nor is averse to undesirable objects.

His attitude towards the sinner and the saint will be the same, for he makes no distinction.

Mettā embraces all beings, Karunā embraces sufferers. Muditā embraces the prosperous, and Upekkhā embraces the good and the bad, the loved and the unloved, the pleasant and the unpleasant.

NEWS

Buddhism In U.S.A.

Universal Buddhist Fellowship

By Rev. Iru Price

The Universal Buddhist Fellowship announces with deep regret the passing of our Founder and President, Rev. Leslie Lowe. He had a fatal heart attack on the night of May 12, 1962.

Rev. Lowe spent many years in the study and spread of Buddhism in the United States. He may rightfully be considered one of the pioneers of Buddhism in America. He was also internationally known as he travelled, studied and received ordination in Asia. Many articles in Buddhist magazines all over the world have carried his name as author.

The latter part of his life was devoted almost entirely to the work of the Universal Buddhist Fellowship. He built the Fellowship up to the point that it has been recognized as a Regional Centre of the World Fellowship of Buddhists for several years.

The Board of Directors of the Fellowship held a meeting in Los Angeles on the evening of June 4th to determine future plans.

Rev. Douglas Frazier, of Los Angeles, succeeds Rev. Lowe as President. Rev. Iru Price, of San Francisco, was elected as Executive Vice President. There were no other changes in the offices. Rev. Price was given charge of national and international affairs. So, all correspondence of his nature should be addressed directly to:

Rev. Iru Price, Executive Vice President
Universal Buddhist Fellowship
1136 Guerrero Street
San Francisco 10, California, U.S.A.

The original purpose of founding the Universal Buddhist Fellowship was to spread the teachings of Lord Buddha in America. We expect to continue the fine work that was started by Rev. Lowe. This will include establishing more branch organizations and accepting existing groups as affiliated organizations. As a truly national organization, we hope to be able to better spread the Buddhist teachings throughout America.



Tibetan Monastery In U.S.A.

By the Shaka Anattā Kan-Po

1. The American-Tibetan Monastery at Freewood Acres, N.J. is playing host for two years to four Tibetan Lamas, all incarnate. The four, Sherpa Trulu, Khamlung Trulku, Thartse Truku, and the Geshe Sopa Lhundrub were especially selected by the Dalai Lama to study English under the guidance of the Abbot, the Geshe Wangyal, who made a special pilgrimage to India last year, when he became an American Citizen. While there he visited the Dalai Lama and initiated the transfer of the four lamas, who arrived here about two months ago, and who are progressing very nicely with their studies.

2. The Buddhist Fellowship of New York has changed its meeting place and time to 5:30 P.M. Sunday afternoons at the world-famous Carnegie Hall. Founded over a year ago by Rev. Boris Erwit, (Shinjun Sansei, Higashi Honwanji) and the Shaka Anattā

Kanpo (Nichiren Sect) it has six other charter-members besides. These are Mr. Ted Jacobs, a Trapa at the Tibetan Monastery at Freewood Acres; Mr. C.C. Lu, Editor of the Min-Chih Journal; Dr. Richard Stoneham, Mr. Edward Flegel, Mr. Arthur Dechigny and Mr. Glen Williams. Attendance at meetings is usually about 25 and all of them are deeply interested in meditation.

3. Wesak was celebrated on May 18th at the Buddhist Academy, Riverside Drive, N.Y. under the guidance of Rev. Hozen Seki, (Jodo Shinshu). Prof. G.P. Malalasekara gave a talk on the celebration of Wesak in Ceylon; this was followed by a talk by Dr. Richard Gard on the chief aspects of Buddhism. About 80 people attended the celebration which ended up in free discussion period.

Japan Buddhists On Nuclear Tests

Statement by Japan Buddhists Federation

(1) The Japan Buddhist Federation announced officially a statement on the objection to reopening of the Nuclear tests given by the Powers in the world on April 8th 1962. The statement was sent to the chief of states through the Embassies in Japan, and also to the regional centres of W.F.B. of various parts in the world.

(2) A Buddhist memorial service for a large number of the late American-born Japanese, Nisei, was held, with the participation of 180 delegates of Nisei from various countries in the world, at the Tsukiji Honganji Temple, Tokyo, on May 6 1962 at 1:00 p.m. Rev. Kyojun Shimizudani, Vice-President of the Japan Buddhist Federation, gave a message of condolence and followed by Rev. Ryoichi Shirayama, Secretary General of the Federation, Mr. S. Iwashige, Chairman of Board of Directors of the Overseas Nisei Association.

(3) The Japan Buddhist Federation held a Buddhist funeral service for 160 victims killed by the biggest national railway accident, occurred recently, at the Mikawashima station yard, Tokyo, on 9th May 1962 at noon. The Ven. Koho Chisan, Lord Abbot of the Sojiji Zen Temple, officiated at the funeral service and nearly 50 priests, 100 laywomen and 300 worshippers attended and offered incense with a deep sadness.

(4) A welcome luncheon party of Buddhists for Mr. S. Plengvanij, Under Secretary of States of Health of Thailand, and Mr. V. Makaduangkeo, Director of the Priests, Hospital, Bangkok, was held, under the auspices of the Federation at the Restaurant Mikasakaikan, Tokyo, on 18th May 1962.

Nearly 30 Buddhists assembled therein. Both Buddhist also visited a Buddhist Hospital named 'Asoka Hospital' Tokyo,

on 17th May 1962 and they were cordially welcomed by Dr. S. Hasegawa, Director of the Hospital.

(5) The 10th Annual Conference of the All Japan Buddhists was held, under the sponsorship of the Federation, during 1 to 2 June 1962 at Higashi Honganji Namba Betsuin Temple, Osaka City, with participation of 1000 Buddhist delegates and observers from various prefectural Buddhist Associations in Japan. More than 20 proposals were moved. The Ven. Kosho Otani, President of the Federation, gave an opening address of the Conference and Mr. Masuo Araki, Minister of Education, Rev. Gisen Sato, Governor of Osaka prefecture, and H.E. Mr. Sumis Kum, Indonesian Consul General gave their congratulatory address towards the participants.

Main proposals adopted were as follows:—

- (1) We, Buddhists must teach & guide our own children, in the first place, through the great benevolence of the Buddha and make efforts continually not to allow depraved youth to appear in the community.
- (2) To establish a peaceful world with the teachings of the Buddha.
- (3) To co-operate with the rescue movement of leprosy in India by a strong cooperation of Japanese Buddhists.

(6) An election for the Member of the House of Councilors in Japan will be done on July 1st 1962. Among the candidates eight Buddhist priests and 40 believers have filed their candidacy. The Federation has recommended all of them and is making efforts towards their election.

The London Buddhist Vihāra Activities

(September 1962)

After a short Summer recess the London Buddhist Vihāra activities were resumed with a series of lectures on the Buddhist Metaphysics given by the Venerable H. Saddhātissa Mahāthera at the request of a group of English Buddhists who were interested in the deeper aspects of Buddhism.

“What the Buddha taught” was the subject of the lecture delivered by the Ven. Saddhātissa on Sunday the 2nd to a well attended audience at the Vihāra. Mid-day “*Dāna*” was offered to the monks by a group of Burmese Buddhists, which was followed by a short sermon.

On Wednesday the 5th a memorial service was held by the Royal Thai Embassy in Britain for a Thai student, Mr. Mankeo Lilabhan (age 23) who met with a car accident and died in London. After the *sanghika-dāna* a sermon was given by the Ven. Saddhātissa. The funeral of Mr. Mankeo took place at the Golders Green Crematorium on Saturday, the 8th. The *pansukūla* service was conducted by the Venerable Saddhātissa assisted by three Sinhalese monks and a German monk. The Thai community in London was present.

On Sunday the 9th the Ven. Saddhātissa gave a sermon on “What we call a being?” which was specially appreciated by those who were undergoing meditation practices at the London Vihāra.

The Full-Moon Day was celebrated on the 13th on a grand scale. After the *Buddhapūjā* and *dāna* to the Bhikkhus the ven. Saddhātissa gave a sermon.

On Friday the 14th Mrs. E. Baylis of Barnet London performed the annual memorial service for her husband, late Mr. Herbert Frederick Baylis who was a great friend of Burmese and Sinhalese Buddhists in London.

On Sunday the 16th, a stimulative and interesting lecture was given by the Ven. Saddhātissa on “Buddha’s attitude to Metaphysical speculations” which led to emerge many interesting questions from the audience.

On Monday the 17th a memorial service took place in the Vihāra for another Thai

student, Mr. Karoon Chamaraman (age 23) who met with an accident and died in Switzerland. After the *Dāna* ceremony the Ven. Saddhātissa gave a sermon on *anicca*. The service had been well arranged by the Royal Thai Embassy in London.

The Ven. Saddhātissa gave a talk on the “Misunderstanding of Buddhist views” at the Theosophical Society in England, Wimbledon, London, S.W.19 on Thursday the 20th after which he answered many questions. His talk had a stimulating effect upon his listeners. Prior to his talk he conducted a Buddhist meditation on *mettā*.

On Sunday the 23rd the Ven. Saddhātissa gave an interesting lecture on *Nibbāna*. His scholarly and stimulative talk helped the audience to understand the precise interpretation of the *summum bonum* of the Buddhist.

A commemoration services in memory of Mrs. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, the late Prime Minister of Ceylon was held at the London Buddhist Vihāra on Wednesday, the 26th. After the *Buddhapūjā* and *dāna* the service was conducted by the Ven. Saddhātissa assisted by five monks. His Excellency Mr. R.S.S. Gunawardena addressed the meeting which was presided over by the Ven. Saddhātissa “Cultivation of Buddhist *mettā* alone can unite the heterogenous elements of the population in a Buddhist country into a nation” said the Ven. Saddhātissa in course of his discourse. Former Governor-General of Ceylon, Sir Oliver Gunatillake and the Governor of Central Bank, Mr. D.J. Rajapatirana were among the participants. The flowers received for the memorial service were sent to the Brompton Hospital from where we received the following letter.”

“Thank you so much for the lovely flowers which you so kindly presented at the hospital this morning.

I am sure they will give much pleasure to the patients.”

On Saturday the 29th the Ven. Saddhātissa gave a lecture on the “Misconceptions on Buddhism” at the East Sussex Buddhist

Society, Wellington Square, Hastings. The Ven. Mahāthera answered a number of questions put by the audience.

On Sunday the 30th the Ven. Saddhātissa spoke on Meditation at the London Vihāra which was followed by the meditation practice.

A number of visitors from India, Burma, Thailand and Ceylon who were holidaying in Europe, called at the Vihāra during this month. They were greatly impressed by the activities and the serenity of the London Vihāra. Among those who paid visits to the Vihāra was a devout and pious lady, Daw Khin Nyun, the wife of the Burmese Ambassador in Belgrade. His Excellency U Sain Bwa. Daw Khin Nyun made a special offerings for the monks and the Vihāra. His Excellency Mr. Rama Prasad Manandhar former Ambassador for Nepal in Britain who called at the Vihāra on 2nd and left the following remark in our Visitors Book: "I am most happy to re-visit this

Vihāra on my holiday trip in England and to pay my respects to the good Mahāthera whose enlightening discourses I have many times listened to with great interest and edification."

The following were among those who arranged the religious services: Dr. and Mrs. Hiranva Dias, Mr. & Mrs. Jayasinha, Mr. Chalam of the Royal Thai Embassy, Mr. & Mrs. P. Buluwala, Mr. Lincoln Chandrasekara, Mr. Darvine Gunawardena, Mr. & Mrs. Lionel Samarasekara Mr. Hema Ellawala, Miss. S. Weerapperuma, Dr. & Mrs B.N.D. Fernando, Mr. R.C. Mahawatta, Mrs. C. Mutukumarana, Mrs. H. E. Senewiratne, Mrs. T.L. Lim. Mr. Tam Sim Hiang and Mr. Fritz de Zoysa.

The Ven. Nyānasāra, a German monk who was ordained by the Ven. Saddhātissa Mahāthera at the London Buddhist Vihāra left for Ceylon on the 30th of this month by the Nederland Line, Ms. J. Van Oldenbarneveldt.

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