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EDITORIAL.

THE FUNCTION OF HUMAN MEMORY

*Long, long be my heart with such memories fill'd!
Like the vase in which roses have once been distill'd;
You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.*

—Thomas Moore.

THIS verse simply gives a vivid illustration showing the powerful retentive memory born of a strong mind.

Our mental faculty operates in the vast field of different objects in consecutive movements with great rapidity. A question here arises as to why people cannot recollect incidents and occurrences that took place in the previous existences. Both this question and the answer therefor belonging to the psychic phenomena deserve careful scrutiny.

Centered in our heart and spread throughout our physical systems, there exists the innermost force of mind which is identified in Buddhism as the evolution current (*Jivitindriya*). This force is the repository in which all our impressions accumulate.

In regard to this characteristic, the force of evolution acts like extremely delicate modelling wax. All reflections appearing on our six sense organs, eye, ear, nose, tongue, touch and heart get meticulously recorded in the evolution force in the form of impressions. The evolution current travels through life with time, and carries with it the impressions formed in this manner.

As an illustration, when a visual image enters the evolution force, the impression remains in the form of a picture of the sight; if it is a sound, the impression remains in the form of a record of the sound; if it is a taste, the impression remains in the form of an exact record of the same taste; if it is a sensation of touch, the impression remains in the form of a record of the same sensation; and if it is an emotion such as love or hatred, it remains in the form of a record of the same emotion. They all are connected with six senses or *Āyatana* in Buddhism.

Most of our experiences involve the activity of a number of sense organs and, sometimes, an experience might even involve the activity of all the six of them. Whatever the number of sense organs that become active in our experiences, the evolution current receives impressions from all of them and preserves them in deposit in our order.

The mechanism of memory, however, consists of reviving these impressions and reading back the records. When we are remembering an incident we experienced, the mind process is to bring back on the different sense organs faint reflections with the aid of which we experience the same incident in a faint way. In other words, when we are remembering an incident, what we act is to recollect back the records of our mind and thus experience the same incident over again.

In this way, persons with strong minds receive impressions accurately and also their freshness will last for long periods. But those with weak minds, form very feeble impressions and, it is not easy for them to revive. Such persons often tend to forget their experiences easily.

Even strong impressions entering into deposit in a strong evolution force are liable to be obliterated from the mind with the passage of time. This happens because of the records of impressions getting submerged as a result of subsequent impressions. For this reason, fresh impressions can be read back easily and the old impressions are difficult to be recalled. When an impression in deposit with the evolution current is revived, it has the effect of refreshing the mind and therefore, those impressions we revive frequently remain in our mind in fresh form for long periods.

An impression entering into deposit with the evolution current of our mind can never be erased completely. They remain in permanent record and even after several thousands of years it is possible to revive them if we develop a mind sufficiently strong for the purpose. It is with such strength of mind that the Buddhas and Arahats could give all the details of their past lives. This knowledge is termed *Pubbe Nivāsa Ñāna*.

Those impressions entering the evolution current of our mind as a result of our thoughts and deeds of action, enter in the form of seeds to grow and bear fruition, but, even after production of result the impression does not get obliterated. We think in terms of colours, sounds, tastes, and other sensations; and in the same way we also remember by reviving in our sense organs the different sensations we experienced in the past. But, everything depends on our mental life productive of absolute purity and strong memory.

'The Evils of Anger

By

Rev: Bhikkhu U Kumāra

ANGER is the most obstinate of all the diseases. We must first of all know all and everything concerning anger, the evils and miseries as well as the benefits and advantages of patience, Love and Compassion. Weigh all the pros and cons of the evils thoroughly before we set out to meditate. It is always possible that moral education will help us to understand it better. Morality isn't much of a hope, but is there a better one?

Perhaps there is a more important benefit to be won by the cultivation of Universal Love and the patience and tolerance. If patience is the mother of virtue, then Love may claim the same relationship. Love is indispensable to the purification of mind from Anger. Therefore, cultivate the habit of Love to all beings in general and to enemies in particular. Anger refuses one's own welfare as well as others. If one has not been able to subdue anger in the past there is no reason why he should not do so now. So long as there is anger in our lives there can be no peace of mind or joy. In other words, we are injuring ourselves whenever there is a feeling of anger. Hostile emotion dwells in the subconscious mind in the guise of different forms and often it is the cause of ulcers and cancerous growth within the internal organs.

It is a duty of a Buddhist to daily share and share the merits he has gained. Rather than invoke the principles to govern acts, we will also recommend to adopt the moral attitude of the Blessed One. On one occasion, the Buddha said, "If a man foolishly does Me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from Me; the fragrance of goodness always comes to Me, and the harmful air of evil goes to him."

A foolish man learning that the Buddha observed the principle of great Love which commands to return good for evil, came and abused Him. Buddha was silent, pitying his folly.

The man having finished his abuse, the Buddha asked him, saying "Son, if a man declined to accept a present made to him, to whom would it belong?" And he answered: "In that case it would belong to the man who offered it."

"My son," said the Buddha, "You have railed at me, but I decline to accept your abuse, and request you to keep it yourself. Will it not be a source of misery to you? As the echo belongs to the sound, and the shadow to the substance, so misery will overtake the evil-doer without fail. The abuser made no reply, but went away ashamed, but he became a faithful follower of the Blessed One.

According to Buddhism there is no holy war nor a just cause for war. He who sets out for war must be prepared to be killed by enemies for that is warrior's destiny, and if his fate should overtake him, he, nevertheless, has no reason to complain. But he who is victorious, ought to be aware

of the consistency of the Immutable Law of Kamma from which nobody can escape. His success may be great, but, however great it may be, the wheel of life may turn again, and throw him down into the dust. If a conqueror restrains himself, suffocates all the hate in his heart, lifts up the vanished foe and speaks to him "Come now and make peace and let us be brothers!" he will carry off a victory that is no temporary success for its fruit will be everlasting. He who causes war is always to be blamed.

The only war that is justified is the war against ignorance, hatred and greed that bind and fetter human life.

When the mind is filled with anger, one is inclined to see and magnify and grasp at certain things and to react with bitter violence. If the mind was filled with love the very same things would be seen in quite a different light and the reaction would be friendly. In another explanation, a man who cherishes love will not hate another even if he is treated badly, nor will he do him harm. If a man is pure in heart, he will see no evil, hears no evil, think no evil and will go free. A man who is truly courageous, like venerable Tissa will not be afraid, nor will he react by violence, being humble-hearted and wise-minded.

A great love must be sedulously cultivated with purity of heart and life. It takes no little time to bring this divine state near enough to perfection. One's attainment depends in a large measure upon the stage one has arrived in the development of higher virtues, that is to say, by the abolition of evil impurities, hatred and delusion. On the whole, the spiritual enlightenment comes through great love, great sympathy, and with perfect wisdom comes perfect compassion. Nevertheless, the essential fact remains, that if a devotee, persistently, at all times, standing, walking, sitting or lying, as long as he is awake—endeavours to put his heart into this sense of love, compassion, joy and equanimity, it will be the means of making himself immune from fire, poison, sword, etc. He who lives in the cultivation of love towards all beings on earth and heaven will enjoy eleven advantages, viz:-

1. He sleeps in peace and
2. In peace does he awake.
3. He sees no evil dream.
4. He is beloved by men and
5. To beings who are not men.
6. The angels watch over him.
7. Neither fire, nor poison, nor sword works any harm to him. Nor bombs by any means.
8. His heart is quickly composed.
9. The aspect of his countenance is calm.
10. He dies unbewildered.
11. If he does not attain Nibbāna, then he is sure of rebirth in the Brahma World.

(Translation by Mr. Rhys David).

Advantages, in fact, do not come from another; they can be attained only by individual proper effort, depending upon nothing else. As long as

a man has realized the sense of love, fire, poison, sword, etc. cannot work harm to him. The virtues are not attached to personality of the man in question, but to the actual presence of love that he is called up in his heart. It is like the case of a man who is holding a vanishing root of Supernatural power. So long as it is actually in his hand, no other ordinary person will be able to see him. The virtue, then, will not be in the man, but in the root itself.

In other words, no harm, whatever, have any power over the man, while his mind concentrates or practises upon love, for love will protect him from all dangers. Love is the best shield, the best weapon, and the best coat of arms.

Without a strong religious foundation of love and purity of heart peace will never be established in the world. The Blessed One has turned the Wheel of Righteousness through the Four Fundamental Precepts of love, compassion, Joy and equanimity. So long as our friends shall practise and teach the fourfold Bramavihāra Dhamma, which sets men free from ill-will, cruelty, envy and lust respectively, will brotherhood become a complete realization. It is praised by the wise and conducive to better appreciation of various points of view. The contemplation of love should start from the individual to the whole community, from one quarter of the world to the other and so gradually extending to the whole world, including all beings from the lowest to the greatest.

The purpose of these meditations is not merely a spontaneous exhibition of emotion, but a sustained and positive mental attitude of service, good-will and friendship, which should be manifested in word, thought and deed. It represents the inner values of mankind in relation to his society. If people fail to respond, it will be their own fault, their own ignorance before the world.

Anger has such marked ferocity resembling a venomous viper, which has been beaten. It is also like a rust in its effect. Heat comes into being and flames into existence from the friction and concussion of the same sticks of wood; while anger, having arisen inwards destroys the self-same person. When a person is in fury the whole frame of his body is agitated. Like all persons subject to violent seizure by the emotion of rage he is liable to do all kinds of distasteful and dangerous things, for which he usually repents later. The fact did not occur to him while he was in fury.

There is nothing like patience in gaining the love of an enemy. It is the greatest intellectual and material power, while love is the vigour and power of the mental element.

Mental waste is more costly than material waste; and it is up to us to suppress in ourselves all evil qualities not productive of goodness and cultivate within ourselves the best of the condition of heart. By the practice of righteousness it will in due course become habit and eventually form a character.

“He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me, he robbed me, in those who harbour such thoughts, hatred will never cease, hatred will only cease in those who do not harbour such thoughts”.

A DISCOURSE ON THE BASIC PRACTICE

OF

THE SATIPATTHANA VIPASSANĀ

By

*The Ven'ble Mahasi Sayadaw
Agga-maha-pandita*

*Translated by U Pe Thin,
Mahasi Yogi*

(Continued from April issue)

AS regards 'thoughts, imaginations, etc.' it may be mentioned that depending on mind-base there arise a series of mental activities, such as, thinking, imagining, etc. or to speak in a general sense, a series of mental activities arise depending on this body. In reality each case is a composition of matter and mind: mind-base or body is matter while thinking, imagining, etc. are mental. In order to be able to distinguish matter and mind clearly, one should make it a point to observe incessantly all sensations and mental functions as 'thinking, imagining, etc.' in each case.

After having carried out the practice in the manner indicated above for a time, there may be an improvement in *Samādhi*. One will notice that the mind no longer wanders about but it remains fixedly on the object to which it is directed. At the same time the power of noticing has considerably developed. On every occasion of noting he notices only two processes of matter and mind: a dual set of object and mind which makes note of the object is thus coming into existence.

Again on proceeding further with the practice of contemplation for some time, one notices that nothing remains permanent but everything is in a state of flux. New things arise each time: each of them is noted every time as it arises: it then vanishes. Immediately another arises, which is again noted and which then vanishes. Thus the process of arising and vanishing goes on, which clearly shows that nothing is permanent. One is therefore convinced that 'things are not permanent', because it is noticed that they arise and vanish at every time of noting. This is *Anicca-nupassana-ñāna* (Insight of impermanency).

Then one is also convinced that 'arising and vanishing are not desirable'. This is *Dukkhanupassana-ñāna* (Insight of illness). Besides, one usually experiences many painful sensations in the body, such as, tiredness, feeling hot, painful, aching, and at the time of noting these sensations he generally feels that this body is a collection of sufferings. This also is *Dukkha-nupassana-ñāna* (Insight of illness).

Then at every time of noting it is found that elements of matter and mind occur according to their respective nature and conditioning, and not according to one's wish. One is therefore convinced that 'they are elements: they are not governable: they are not person or living entity'. This is *Anattanupassana-ñāna* (Insight of impersonality).

On having fully acquired this knowledge of *Anicca*, *Dukkha*, *Anatta* then the maturity of *Magga Ñāna* and *Phala Ñāna* takes place and realization of *Nibbāna* is won. By winning the realization of *Nibbāna* in the first stage, one is freed from the round of re-birth in the unhappy life of lower existence. Everyone should, therefore, endeavour to reach the first stage as a minimum measure.

It has already been explained that the actual method of practice in Vipassanā Meditation is to note or to observe or to contemplate the successive occurrences of seeing, hearing, etc. at six points of sense-doors. However it will not be possible for a beginner to follow up all successive incidents as they occur because his *Sati*, *Samādhi* and *Ñāna* are still very weak. The incidents of seeing, hearing, etc. occur in a split second. Seeing seems to occur at the time of hearing; hearing seems to occur at the time of seeing; it seems the both seeing and hearing occur simultaneously; it seems that three or four incidents of seeing, hearing, thinking and imagining usually occur simultaneously; it is not possible to distinguish which occurs first and which follows next because they occur so instantaneously. In actual fact, seeing does not occur at the time of hearing nor does hearing occur at the time of seeing. Such incidents can occur one only at a time. A Yogi who has just begun the practice and who has not sufficiently developed *Sati*, *Samādhi*, and *Ñāna* will not, however, be in a position to observe all these incidents singly as they occur in serial order. A beginner need not therefore follow up many things, but he should start with a few things. Seeing or hearing occurs only when due attention is given. If one does not pay heed to any sight or sound, one may pass the time mostly without any occasion of seeing or hearing. Smelling occurs rarely. Experience of taste occurs only at the time of eating. In the cases of seeing, hearing, smelling and tasting, the Yogi can note them when they occur. However body-impressions are ever present: they usually exist quite distinctly all the time. During the time that one is sitting, the body-impressions of stiffness or the sensation of hardness in this position are distinctively felt. Attention should therefore be fixed on the sitting posture and a note made as '*sitting, sitting, sitting*'.

Sitting is an erect posture of body consisting of a series of physical activities which are induced by the consciousness consisting of a series of mental activities. It is just like the case of an inflated rubber ball which maintains its round shape through the resistance of the air inside it: so is the posture of sitting, in which the body is kept in an erect posture through the continuous process of physical activities. A good deal of energy will be required to pull up and kept in an erect position such a heavy load as this body. People generally assume that the body is lifted and kept in

the position by means of sinews. This assumption is correct in a sense because sinews, blood, flesh, bones are nothing but material elements. The element of stiffening which keeps the body in an erect posture belongs to the material group and arises in the sinews, flesh, blood etc. throughout the body like the air in a rubber ball. The element of stiffening is *Vāyo-dhātu*. The body is kept in the erect position by the presence of *Vāyo-dhātu* in the form of stiffening which is continually coming into existence. At the time of heavy drowsiness one may drop flat, because the supply of new materials in the form of stiffening is cut off. The state of mind in heavy drowsiness or sleep is *Bhavaṅga*. During the course of *Bhavaṅga* mental activities are absent, and for this reason the body lies flat during sleep or heavy drowsiness. During waking hours strong and active mental activities are continually arising, and because of these three arises a series of *Vāyo-dhātu* in the form of stiffening. In order to know these facts it is essential to note attentively as '*sitting, sitting, sitting*'. This does not necessarily mean that the body-impressions of stiffening should be particularly searched and noted. Attention need only be fixed on the whole form of sitting posture, that is, the lower portion in a bending circular form and the upper portion in an erect posture.

It will be found that the exercise of observing a single object of sitting posture is too easy and does not require much effort. In the circumstances *Viriya* (effort) is less and *Samādhi* (concentration) is in excess, and one would generally feel lazy to carry on the noting as '*sitting, sitting, sitting*' repeatedly for a considerable time. Laziness generally occurs when there is excess of *Samādhi* and less *Viriya*. It is nothing but a state of *Thina-middha*. More *Viriya* should be developed, and for this purpose the number of objects for noting should be increased. After noting as '*sitting*', the attention should be directed to a spot in the body where the sense of touch is felt and a note made as '*touching*'. Any spot in the leg or hand or hip where a sense of touch is distinctly felt will serve the purpose.

For example.....After noting the sitting posture of the body as '*sitting*', the spot where the sense of touch is felt should be noted as '*touching*'. The noting should thus be repeated on these two objects of *sitting posture* and *the place of touching* alternately, as '*sitting, touching: sitting, touching: sitting, touching*'.

The terms *noting* or *observing* or *contemplating* are used here to indicate the fixing of attention to an object. The exercise is simply to note or observe or contemplate as '*sitting, touching*'. Those who already have experience in the practice of Meditation may perhaps find this exercise easy to begin with, but those without any previous experience may find it rather difficult to begin with.

The more simplified and easy form of exercise for a beginner is this:... At every time of breathing there occur movements in the form of rising and falling of one's abdomen. A beginner should start with this exercise of

noting or observing these movements. It is easy to observe these movements because they are coarse and prominent and are more suitable for a beginner. As in schools where simple lessons are easy to learn so is the case in the practice of Vipassanā Meditation. A beginner will find it more easy to develop *Samādhi* and *Ñāna* with a simple and easy exercise.

Again the purport of the Vipassanā Meditation is to begin the exercise by contemplating prominent factors in the body. Of the two factors of mind and matter, the mental element is subtle and less prominent while the material element is coarse and more prominent. Therefore the usual procedure for a *Vipassanā-Yanika* is to begin the exercise by contemplating the material elements at the outset. As regards material elements it may be mentioned here that *Upada-rūpa* (derived corporeality) is subtle and less prominent while the *Mahā-būta* (four primary physical elements of *Pathavi*, *Āpo*, *Tejo* and *Vāyo*) are coarse and more prominent and the latter should therefore have the priority of being placed first in the order of objects for contemplation. In the case of rising and falling the outstanding factor is *Vāyo-dhātu*. The process of stiffening and the movements of abdomen noticed during the contemplation are nothing but the functions of *Vāyo-dhātu*. Thus it will be seen that *Vāyo-dhātu* is perceptible at the beginning. According to the instructions of *Satipatthana Sutta* one should be mindful of the activities of walking while walking, of those of standing, sitting and lying down while standing, sitting and lying down respectively. One should also be mindful of other bodily activities as each of them occurs. In this connection it is stated in the commentaries that one should be mindful primarily of *Vāyo-dhātu* in preference to other three. As a matter of fact all four *Mahābhutas* are dominant in every action of the body, and it is essential to perceive any one of these. At the time of sitting, either of the two movements of rising and falling occurs conspicuously at every time of breathing, and a beginning should be made by noting those movements.

Some fundamental features in the system of Vipassanā Meditation have been explained for general information (*Suta-maya-ñāna*). The general outline of basic exercises mostly will now be dealt with.

When contemplating rising and falling, the disciple should keep his mind on the abdomen. He will then come to know the up-ward movement (or rather expansion) of the abdomen on in-breathing, and down-ward movement (or rather contraction) on out-breathing. A mental note should be made as '*rising*' for up-ward movement and '*falling*' for down-ward movement. If these movements are not clearly noticed by merely fixing the mind, one or both hands should be placed on the abdomen. The disciple should not try to change the manner of his natural breathing: he should neither attempt slow breathing by the retention of his breath, nor quick breathing nor deep breathing. If he does change the natural flow of his breathing he will soon tire himself. He must therefore keep to the natural breathing, and proceed with the contemplation of rising and falling.

On the occurring of up-ward movement, a mental note calling it as '*rising*' should be made, and on the down-ward movement, a mental note calling it as '*falling*' should be made. The calling of these terms or names should not be repeated by mouth. In Vipassanā Meditation it is more important to know the actual state of object than to know it by the term or name. It is therefore necessary for the disciple to make every effort to be mindful of the movement of *rising* from the beginning till the end and that of *falling* from the start to the finish as if these movements are actually seen by the eyes. As soon as *rising* occurs there should be the knowing mind close to the movement. As in the case of a stone hitting the wall, the movement of *rising* as it occurs and the mind knowing it must come together on every occasion. Similarly the movement of *falling* as it occurs the mind knowing it must come together on every occasion.

When there is no objects of special outstanding nature, the disciple should carry on the exercise of noting these two movements as '*rising, falling; rising, falling; rising, falling*'. While thus being occupied with this exercise there may be occasions when the mind wanders about. When the *Samādhi* is weak it is very difficult to control the mind. Though it is directed to the movements of *rising* and *falling* the mind will not stay with them but will wander to other places. This wandering mind should not be let alone: it should be noted as '*wandering, wandering*' as soon as it goes out. On noting repeatedly once or twice when the mind stops wandering, then the exercise of noting as '*rising, falling*' should be continued. When it is found again that the mind has reached a place it should be noted as '*reaching, reaching*'. Then the exercise of noting as '*rising, falling*' should be reverted to as soon as these movements are clear. On meeting with a person in the imagination it should be noted as '*meeting, meeting*', and after which the usual exercise should be reverted to. Some time the fact that it is a mere imagination is found out at the time of speaking with imaginary person, and it should be noted as '*speaking, speaking*'. The real purport is to note every mental activity as it occurs. For instance, it should be noted as '*thinking, thinking*' at the moment of thinking, and as '*reflecting, planning, knowing, attending, rejoicing, feeling lazy, feeling happy, disgusting, etc.*' as the case may be on the occurrence of each activity. The contemplation of mental activities and noticing them as they occur is called *Cittanupassanā*.

Because they have no practical knowledge in Vipassanā Meditation people are generally not in a position to know the real state of mind. This naturally leads them to the wrong view of holding mind as person, self or living entity. They usually believe that *Imagination is I: I am imagining: I am thinking: I am planning: I am knowing, and so forth*. They consider that there exists a living entity or self which grows up from childhood to the age of manhood. In reality there does not exist a living entity, but there does exist a continuous process of elements of mind which occurs singly at a time and in succession. The practice of contemplation is therefore being carried out with a view to find out the actual fact.

As regards mind and the manner of its arising, the Buddha stated in *Dhammapada* as follows:-

*Duran-gamam Eka-caram A-sariram Guha-sayam.
Ye Cittam Samyamessanti, Mokkhanti Mara-bandhana.*

“*Duran-gamam* = Used to go to far-off object”.

Mind usually wanders far and wide. While the Yogi is trying to carry on with the practice of contemplation in his meditation cell he often finds out that this mind usually wanders to many far-off places, towns, etc. He also finds that mind can wander to any of far-off places which have been known previously at the very moment of thinking or imagining. This fact should be found out with the help of contemplation.

“*Eka-caram* = Usually occurs singly”. Mind usually occurs singly and one after another in succession. Those, who do not perceive this fact, believe that one mind exists in the course of life or existence. They do not know that new minds are always arising at every moment. They think that seeing, hearing, etc. of the past and those of the present belong to one and the same mind, and that three or four acts of seeing, hearing, touching, knowing usually occur simultaneously. These are wrong views. In actual fact a single new mind arises at every moment. This can be perceived on gaining considerable practice. The cases of *imagination* and *planning* are clearly perceptible. *Imagination* vanishes as soon as it is noted as ‘*imagining, imagining*’, and *planning* also vanishes as soon as it is noted as ‘*planning, planning*’. These instances of arising, noting and vanishing appear like a string of beads. The preceding mind is not the following mind. Each is separate. These facts are perceptible personally, and for this purpose one must proceed with the contemplation.

“*A-sariram* = Incorporeal”. Mind has no substance and no form. It is not easy to distinguish it like matter. In the case of matter the structure of body, head, hands and legs is very prominent and is noticed easily. If it is asked what is matter it can be handled and shown. As for mind it is not easy to describe, because it has no substance and no form. For this reason it is not possible to carry out laboratory analytical experiments of mind. However one could fully understand if it is explained that *the knowing of an object is mind*. To understand the mind minutely it is essential to contemplate the mind at every time of its occurring. When the contemplation is fairly advanced the mind’s approach to its object is clearly comprehended. It appears as if each is making a direct leap towards its object. In order to know the true manner of mind the contemplation is thus prescribed.

“*Guha-sayam* = Stays in the cave”. Because this mind usually comes into existence depending on mind-base and other sense-door situated in the body it is said that it stays in the cave.

(To be continued).

BRIEF EXPOSITION ON PRACTICAL INSIGHT-MEDITATION FOR ATTAINMENT OF "The Path"

By

*The Venerable Mohnyin Sayadaw,
Agga Mahā Pandita*

(Continued from April issue)

Section Five

Quick success through correct system of practice

(Reliance on the texts and perseverance is necessary).

Question: How is the textually correct method to be put into practice?

Answer: The Paramattha import of Nāma and Rūpa lies in the 'characteristics and modes' by which each functions.

These characteristics are co-equivalent with their intrinsic nature. Wishing to help insight into the impermanent nature of Nāma-rūpa, the Commentators direct the yogi to scrutinise and introspect 'the characteristics and modes' because of their truth-revealing nature.

The method is as follows:- Each of the orifices of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body produces a sensation, either pleasant or unpleasant, for example, a sight, pleasant or unpleasant, a sound, pleasing or otherwise: similarly with the rest. So, there are twice-fivefold (ten) cognitions termed 'dve-pancha viññānaṃ'.

Now, if the eye-organ were directed on the letters a-b-c-d, the yogi should concentrate his mind on the internal (ajjatta) factors of the seeing process. For example, the mental elements and the physical elements, which function in the seeing of the letter 'a', dissipate away and do not follow up in the process when the eye turns to 'b' and reaches it. This means that the seeing of each letter has its own physical and mental concomitants as a distinct phase.

As to how the practising yogi may, without skipping or skimming, extract full knowledge and understanding, he should contemplate and realise thus: "The constituents of my mind as well as of my body which function in the seeing of a preceding letter are distinct from the constituents which function in the seeing of a succeeding letter. By such discernment, his grasp of Anicca (impermanence) will become clear-cut and his Vipassanā insight will be like a razor-blade.

In a similar manner the yogi will be able to discriminate the distinct

phases of the functioning of the constituents of his mind-body as each phase *arises* and *passes* away. In every case, the earlier constituents subside and cease before the later constituents appear and function. This should become ingrained in the understanding so that 'All is Anicca' may be grasped.

The method demonstrated here of how the eye in the process of reading can be instrumental in instilling the sense of Anicca will, it is hoped, prove of value as a sound method. It is also hoped that those who continue to study the following pages or those who read other literature will follow the method of coupling every act of seeing with the Anicca of the constituents that contribute to or accompany such seeing.

Section Six **The Method of Insight in Seeing other Objects.**

Leaving aside letters and words, a countless number of concrete objects provide seeing for the eye. Seeing the appearance of any particular object will be similar to the seeing of the form of a letter.

The appearance in question is made up of a rapid succession of 'instants' of seeing. In this phenomenon, the constituents of mind and body, operative in a preceding instant of seeing, cannot follow up into a new instant, which has its own operative constituents. The process of each fragment of concrete object seen is accompanied by its insight counterpart.

In all the manifold phenomena of seeing, one should concentrate on the Arising and the Passing away aspect of Anicca. This practice should be followed in every case of seeing, or at least as often as can be done as part of one's meditation period.

Section Seven

Vipassanā Practice on our daily Conversation. There are thirty-two kinds of Tiracchana Katha or worldly conversation which is not *conducive* to the Fruition of Magga-Phala.

Question: How is Vipassanā practice to be based on our daily conversation, such as on political, social and other matters of worldly concern?

Answer: Participating in the thirty-two kinds of worldly talk there are three agencies (i) the talker, (ii) the listener and (iii) the voice or sound of speech. While the talk is going on, the internal nāma-rūpa constituents of these three agents operate in various modes.

What is significant about this as between the aforesaid modes of functioning of the nāma-rūpa constituents on the one hand and the Paññatti agents on the other are:- (i) the speaker is not an unchanging entity while he speaks; (ii) likewise with the listener while he listens; (iii) the sound of words also does not stand fast.

Now, the yogi could meditate on the process of changes (nāma-rūpa constituents) going on simultaneously in respect of each of the three agents, and, in this manner, by making use of worldly convention as a subject of meditation there is ample room for developing insight into Anicca.

In order that full benefit may be drawn out of random talk by others the yogi is advised thus: "Tepināma khayam gatati evam pavattapana sabbattha kammathanameva hoti." The meaning is: The speaker, the listener and the sound of speech all undergo and reach disintegration and cessation. If at the end of such conversation, Vipassanā work is done as a recompense, an all-inclusive Vipassanā kammathāna work is effected.

In addition to the above citation from the Anguttaradasa nipatta commentary, another extract from the commentary on Majjhima-pannāsa Sandakasutta is herewith given to reinforce the propriety and value of Vipassanā practice on talk other than Tiracchanakathā or talk not conducive to the attainment of Magga-phala:

"Saṭṭhakampana katva saddha pasannativa khayavayam gatativa vuttum vattati." The meaning is: "Our parents are among those who performed good and beneficial deeds and are also who have faith and devotion in the 'three gems'. Either thinking thus or thinking of them as already dead and disintegrated, it behoves us to think of them and speak about them in either of these two ways."

The intention of the text is that talk about our departed parents and relatives come under the class of taricchana katha but that such conversation may be given a beneficial and vipassanā tone by our dwelling on the virtues and good deeds of the departed and of the Anicca nature of both the Deeds and the Doers. Yogis should always terminate their conversation with Vipassanā work as outlined in this brief method of gaining insight through the organ of the ear.

Section Eight

Practice Based on Nose, Tongue and Body.

Next, in regard to "smelling through the nose" there is constant changing in the physical part of the phenomena concerned. As an under-current, the Paramattha constituents of nāma-rūpa khanda also operate in a flow of Arising and Passing away.

What applies to the nose, applies as well to what happens in the cases of tasting and tactile processes.

Thus it behoves the yogi to pay due attention to each of the functioning of the three organs concerned and to concentrate on how in each case the nāma-rūpa constituents are forming anew as they dissolve and vanish. Repeated practice is necessary to grasp the fact of Arising and Passing away. May all yogis be able to carry out a balanced training out of the threefold experiences.

(To be continued).

THE ANALYTICAL MIND IN BUDDHISM (Contd) PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE (Contd)

By

U Thein Nyun

(Continued from April Issue).

WE are not geniuses to gain practical knowledge of facts that we come across for the first time. Therefore, for most of us who are persons of average intelligence, we have to go about it the hard way. And in doing so we must know the pitfalls to be avoided and the systematic procedures to be followed for acquiring practical knowledge of facts. Of course, when we read a book or listen to a lecture we understand what is set forth because we know the language. But unless we have very good memories most of the facts are soon forgotten. So that simply reading a book or listening to a lecture is not enough. We have to go through the book or lecture notes over and over again to remember them. This becomes our own memorized or remembered knowledge. And then we have to make a study of what is remembered. Of course, we can dispense with the memorization if we sit at a desk and study with the help of the book or lecture notes. This study - which many shirk - takes time and mental effort for we have to get the right interpretations so as to reflect or meditate on the right ideas systematically, to find out the relations between them and those that are already known and then reason things out intellectually. This reflection or meditation has to be done repeatedly so that we come to remember the facts, know their deeper meanings and become convinced about them. In this way we get original ideas and arrive at our own theoretical conclusions. This becomes our reflected or meditated knowledge. It is just like students who have to study an hour's lecture notes for hours in spite of the fact that they have attained the required proficiency in that subject by having learnt it gradually from teachers at the different standards in school. Otherwise they would never be able to understand the notes let alone study by themselves. We have not gone through the same procedure of learning Buddhism as a subject from teachers and yet we expect to be able to study the advanced portions on our own right from the start. It must be admitted, however, that there are very few who chew and digest what they learn from books and lectures. They are the intellectuals or theorists who can give intelligent discourses on the subjects they have studied and thus they are looked up to and envied by the majority who only read and listen.

But if this theoretical or intellectual or objective knowledge is believed to be the be-all and end-all of the study of a practical subject, it is fraught with danger. For one thing it gives rise to conceit because one often gets the better of the argument in discussion. Also, there is a certain fascination in allowing one's imagination to run wild so that facts are misrepresented

and fanciful views are fabricated which have no practical basis at all but arguments and quotations taken out of context to support them. Again, reflection will be made on ideas which are inessential for practice or beyond one's intelligence and, as a consequence, proclaim that they are absurd just to show off that one is not as credulous as the others instead of keeping such opinions to oneself. Moreover, one becomes very talkative but one's actions are not in consonance with what one preaches. The Buddha warned us about this in The Discourse on the Parable of the Water-snake (The Middle Length Sayings I) "Herein, Bhikkhus, some foolish men master Dhamma; the Discourses in prose, in prose and verse, the Expositions, the Verses, the Uplifting Verses, the 'As it Says', the Birth Stories, the Wonders, the Miscellanies. These, having mastered that Dhamma, do not test the meaning of these things by intuitive wisdom; and these things whose meaning is untested by intuitive wisdom do not become clear; they master this Dhamma simply for the advantage of reproaching others and for the advantage of gossiping, and they do not arrive at that goal for the sake of which they mastered Dhamma. These things, badly grasped by them, conduce for a long time to their woe and sorrow. What is the reason for this? Bhikkhus, it is because of a wrong grasp of things. Bhikkhus, it is like a man walking about aiming after a water-snake, searching for a water-snake, looking about for a water-snake. He might see a large water-snake, and he might take hold of it by a coil or by its tail; the water-snake, having rounded on him, might bite him on his hand or arms or on another part of his body; from this cause he might come to dying or to pain like unto dying. What is the reason for this? Bhikkhus, it is because of his wrong grasp of the water-snake". No doubt the scientist also theorises and arrives at theoretical conclusions but he would never dare to publicise them unless he could provide experimental facts to prove them. Thus theoretical or intellectual or objective study of a practical subject is by no means sufficient for achieving practical results.

The next step is to make a practical study so that action will be in accordance with the theoretical conclusion arrived at from the theoretical study, i.e., to put theory into practice. Here reflection has still to be done but only with a practical end in view. The method of practice is thought out and the systematic procedure is repeatedly called to mind so that it becomes very familiar. The practice to be carried out must be clearly seen in the mind. In other words, the practice is well-planned. After this the actual practice - which is mental practice in Buddhism - is carried out. Then when the practice is correct, the theoretical conclusion becomes a practical conclusion. But this is not the end because the training in the practice has to be continued till such proficiency is attained that the practice comes spontaneously or automatically, i.e., one has to train in order to transcend training. This is just like practising to walk in childhood and then training so that it can be done spontaneously when no more training is needed. Only at this stage is practical knowledge attained.

It is only when a theorist undertakes the above practical procedure that he becomes a practicalist. But amongst the very few theorists, there

are, again, very few who make such practical studies. For even though the practices are given in books it is seldom that they are carried out by the readers. It will be seen, therefore, that the practicalist also gathers facts from books, lectures and discussions and reflects on them just as the theorist does. But he takes further steps for putting the facts to the test by applying them in practice and then continuing with the training till they are spontaneously known practically. By this means the practicalist gets subjective results which are of practical benefit to him. For him, therefore, facts are of great value because he knows how to apply them for his benefit. In this connection the difference between a theorist and a practicalist can be clearly shown by a simple illustration. The fact that a hammer is used for driving nails, which is known both by the theorist and practicalist, is objective knowledge. But the theorist does not make use of the hammer when the need for driving nails arises whereas the practicalist does so at every opportunity and gets results. When objective knowledge is so applied to give practical results it becomes subjective knowledge. As a matter of fact any trifling thing which is put to use to give one a practical result becomes valuable. So when a theorist, who does not know how to apply facts, wants to become a practicalist he discards facts altogether. He gives up reading books, attending lectures and discussions because facts obtained from them are of no practical benefit to him and he despises those who do. Instead he becomes enamoured of routine practices and heartily takes them up believing that he is a practicalist. It must be borne in mind, however, that a person mechanically hammering bricks into pieces all day long is not a practicalist. Only one who consciously puts the theory he knows into practice and then trains so that the practical result is spontaneously known in practice is the true practicalist.

REFLECTION

Let us, to be practicalists, apply what we have learnt above for making a practical study of the true nature of the table. Now that we have read about the analysis and investigation of the table we will systematically reflect or meditate on the facts to find out if they are true and whether there are any flaws in the arguments. In case some of the facts are not understood we will have to ask others in the know in order to get the right ideas. For in the Discourse on the Parable of the Water-snake (The Middle Length Sayings I) The Buddha said "These, having mastered that Dhamma, test the meaning of these things by intuitive wisdom, and these things whose meaning is tested by intuitive wisdom become clear to them. They master Dhamma neither for the advantage of reproaching others nor for the advantage of gossiping, and they arrive at the goal for the sake of which they mastered Dhamma. These things, being well grasped by them, conduce for a long time to their welfare and happiness. What is the reason for this? It is, Bhikkhus, because of a right grasp of things....Wherefore, Bhikkhus understand the meaning of what I have said, then learn it. But in case you do not understand the meaning of what I have said, I should be questioned about it by you, or else those who are experienced

Bhikkhus." Thus we must be very careful to see that reflection is done on facts that are rightly interpreted and in proper sequence as otherwise we will go wrong in our practice. Then we will have to reflect repeatedly on the right ideas so that they become very familiar and penetrate into our very beings, i.e., the ideas become part of us, remain soaked within us and are, therefore, retained. This may be compared to water repeatedly falling on the same spot. In time the drops of water will penetrate through that spot and the hollow space will always be soaked with water. Only now we will become convinced of the facts and arrive at the theoretical conclusion that only the parts of the composite thing exists and that the table is a mentally associated word-concept existing only in the mind. This reflected or meditated or theoretical knowledge, which is our very own, is in itself not very satisfying. For when we see the composite thing we still believe that the table really exists in the external world. We have had so much training and experience in merely looking at the form of the composite thing that the form recalls past associations of a real table and we go on talking and thinking about the table as if it really existed. This is why we often forget to analyse the form into its component parts when it is seen.

We have to carry out further reflection, the kind that is done only by practicalists who know that their actions must eventually correspond with their theoretical knowledge, i.e., reflection with a practical end in view. So we will recall the composite thing in our minds and analyse it. We will have to see that the wooden parts are the only things existing externally and that the table is separate and apart from the composite thing and is a mere name existing in the mind. We will also have to see the mind projecting the name "table" on the composite thing and how we have been deceived into believing in the real existence of a table. For this is the mistake we will often make in our practice. In other words, the practice is carried out mentally in order to see it correctly and to know the mistake we will make so that it can be corrected. We will then frequently reflect on this practice till it becomes very familiar. For the oftener this is done, the easier it becomes for us to carry out the actual practice. This is the procedure that has to be followed if we want to do things smoothly and efficiently. The successive stages that have to be gone through and the things that have to be done at each stage are well-thought-out and made very familiar before any course of action is carried out. Even for such a trifling thing as shopping we can go about it efficiently, without unnecessary waste of time and effort, if things are well-planned ahead. This applies especially to games, experiments, manufacturing processes and the like when we want to become proficient in them and stand up to competition. But if we are impatient and always do things on the spur of the moment or without proper preparation, we will just be mediocre.

BUDDHISM AND CASTE SYSTEM

By

Rastrapal Bhikshu, Nalanda (India)

NOT by birth a man is a Brahmin, high caste or a Sudra, low caste. By deed alone a man is a Brahmin or a Sudra. By deed alone man is divine or a devil." (Suttanipāta-Vasallasutta).

For forty five years the compassionate Buddha walked up and down the country Propagating His Sublime message. The main theme of His Sermon is the Noble Path (Ariya magga) which leads to deliverance. There are also Sermons which deal with other topics. Though Lord Buddha is generally known as a spiritual teacher he also dealt with Certain Social Problems of the day. Caste System was one of them. There are many sermons which refer to the method that He followed for its solution.

The caste system is foreign to Buddhism. The Buddha was the first man, at least in the history of India, who took up the cause of the poor outcastes and the down-trodden. It was He who vehemently protested against the caste system that blocked the progress of mankind, and granted equal privileges to all, irrespective of caste, colour, or rank.

Lord Buddha made no distinction between man and man. All were equal in His sight. No life was too insignificant for His attention. He looked upon all as His children. He led them all on the Path of righteousness. From child to aged man, from beggar to King, from man of piety to man of wicked ways, all received His love and compassion.

In the first place He admitted members of all castes and classes to the order of monks established by Him without any distinction whatsoever. To the people in general He explained that a man becomes superior or inferior according to his good and bad actions and not according to his birth in a particular family.

During the time of the Buddha, women were not given much recognition. It was the Buddha who raised the status of women. He established the order of Nuns (the Bhikkhuni Sangha), for the first time in history, for never before this was there an order where women had the opportunity of leading a celibate life of renunciation.

Buddhism is a universal religion. One of the Buddha's messages says:-
"Come to me, all of you, I do not care what family you come from, if you are rich or poor, if your class is high or low, if you are man or woman, for me you all belong to the same family, my own, whatever your race or country or social standing. The only thing I want from you is purity of thought which leads to purity of life, to compassion and universal love."

He consoled Kisagotami, the bereaved young mother, who was mad with grief. He converted Angulimāla, the murderer into a saint. As a most consequent democrat He admitted into the order Sunita the out-caste. Sati was the son of a fisherman, Nanda was a cowherd, Ambapāli was a courtesan, the two Panthas were born out of wedlock to the daughter of a noble and a slave, Kumāra Kassapa was an orphan, Capa was the daughter of a deerstacker, Punna and Punnika were slave girls, Sumaṅgalamata was the daughter of a worker in rushes - and Subha was the daughter of a Smith and so on. As the members of the holy order they attained sainthood and became the teachers of the People at large. They became worthy of the veneration of Kings. Theragāthā (hymns of the monks) and Therīgāthā (hymns of the nuns) record the life stories of some of these saints.

The story of the ordination of Upāli the barber is an outstanding example of how the Buddha tried to abolish caste differences. Once six Sakyan Princes, closely related to the Buddha, came to seek admission into the order. The Sakyans were well known for their pride of clan.

Upāli the barber also followed his Kshatriya masters who had come to the Buddha and asked for ordination. The Buddha first initiated Upāli and the Sakyan Princes were admitted next. This was arranged so as to give Upāli the place of seniority. His own Kshatriya masters had to worship and pay their homage to Upāli who later on became the highest authority on the monastic discipline. The Pāli canon is full of stories which showed that the Buddha and His great disciples like Sāriputta, Moggallāna, Kassapa and others tried their best to bring home the uselessness of caste distinction.

Lord Buddha practised what he preached. As an instance we may take into consideration the Buddha's daily round of alms. Among the most important points, caste superiority was maintained in the matter of food and drink. The people of high castes did not take anything touched by those of low castes, not to speak of out-castes. The Buddha and His disciples lived on alms collected from door to door. They did not make any distinction in this matter. In this connection the Buddha recommended what is known as the rule of Sapadānacariya - that is going from door to door for alms without leaving any house in between on grounds of caste, rank of position.

All people were equal in the eye of the compassionate Buddha. On several occasions the Buddha refused royal invitations in preference for those of the poor and the down-trodden. Thus out of compassion He accepted the invitation of Ambapāli and declined that of the Licchavi Princes. The compassionate Buddha accepted His last meal from Cunda - the Smith, a man of low caste.

Lord Buddha says "Even as the five great rivers - Ganga, Yamuna, Aciravati, Sarathu and Mahi, when they enter the great ocean, leaving their old names behind, become one with it, even so, in this dispensation Kshatriyas, Brahmanas, Vaisyas and Sudras lose their old names and old descent, and become known as sons of the Buddha". (Anguttara Nikāya. P. 101).

During the time of the Buddha caste system was one of the burning questions of the day. Vāsettha Sutta (Suttanipāṭa, Sutta No. 35) bears ample testimony to this fact. According to it two young Brahmin students Bharadvaja and Vāsettha fell into a discussion as to what makes a Brahmin. Bharadvaja contended that one who is of pure birth, on the side of both father and mother, up to the seventh generation, is a Brahmin. But Vāsettha held that it is the noble character of a Brahmin that determines him as such. One maintained heredity as the determining factor of a Brahmin whereas the other maintained character to be so. As the dispute could not be solved one way or the other they agreed to go to the Blessed one for a decision on the matter. In course of a long discourse the Buddha explained to them that it is the conduct that makes a man noble or mean and birth and other accidents do not count at all. The Buddha pointed out to them that those who till the soil are farmers and not Brahmins, those who deal in merchandise are traders and not Brahmins, those who officiate at religious ceremonies are priests and not Brahmins and so on.

Lord Buddha used the word Brahmin as a special term for Arahant - the man of highest perfection and Vasala for the man of meanest character. The Buddha calls Sunita, an outcaste, who became a member of his order and attained full sainthood, a Brahmin. He calls Agnika-bharadvaja, a Brahmin by caste and a man of mean character Vasala. In the Brahmana-vagga of Dhammapada and the Vasala Sutta of Sutta Nipāṭa there are full descriptions of the Buddha's conception of a Brahmin of a Vasala.

In the Brahmana Dhammika Sutta of the Suttanipāṭa Lord Buddha said, "Between ashes and gold there is marked differences, but between a Brahmin and a Chandala there is nothing of the kind. A Brahmin is not produced like fire by the friction of dry wood, he does not descend from the sky nor from the air, nor does he come out piercing the earth. The Brahmana is brought forth from the womb of a woman in exactly the same was a Chandala. All human beings have organs exactly alike, there is not the slightest difference in kind. In plants, insects, fishes, snakes, birds, quadrupeds the marks that constitute the species are abundant, whereas amongst men this is not the case. Neither the hair, nor the formation of the skull, nor the colour of the skin, nor the vocal organ, nor any other part of the body exhibits any specific differences."

All beings were equal in the eye of the compassionate Buddha. He used to instruct His audiences, thus:- "just as a mother would protect her only child even at the risk of her own life, so one practise loving-kindness towards all beings (Kuddakapāṭha, - Metta Sutta).

According to the theory of creation first referred to in the Purusa Sukta of the Rig Veda, Brahmins came from the mouth, Kshatriyas from the arms, Vaisyas from the thighs and Sudras from the foot of Brahma, the creator. This myth had been circulated by the Brahmins so as to explain the social gradation devised by them and justify their place of superiority in the same. In their discussions with the Buddha Brahmins often cited this

instance to prove their superiority (Majjhima Nikāya. I, p. 43 id. pp. 84-85) But when the Buddha pointed out to them that it was only a myth without any relevance to facts. He told them that human beings are born from parents and not from any imaginary being. As regards Brahmins, He showed them that they are born of mothers who have to undergo the same natural processes, as others, in the matter of conception, delivery and so on. Young Assalayana puts forth the claim of the Brahmins in the following manner, "Brahmins, Gotama, maintain that they are the superior class, all other classes being inferior, that Brahmins alone are of fair complexion and all the rest are of dark complexion; that purity resides in Brahmins alone and not in Non-Brahmins, and that only Brahmins are Brahma's legitimate sons, born from his mouth, offspring of his, creation of his and his heirs.

Thereupon the Buddha said, "Assalayana, the wives of Brahmins are known to have their periods, conceive, lie in and give suck. So how do they maintain all this when they are themselves born of woman like everybody else?" (Majjhima Nikāya II, p. 85. Dīgha Nikāya III, p. 78).

On the same point the Buddha says to another Brahmin. "The Brahmins have quite forgotten the past when they say so. On the contrary the wives of Brahmins have their periods, are seen to be with child, bring forth and nurse children. And yet it is these very woman-born Brahmins who say that.....Brahmins are genuine children of Brahma, born from his mouth, his offspring, his creation and his heirs; "this is false through and through." (Dīgha Nikāya, III. pp. 78-79).

Thus the Buddha showed up the mythical character of the Brahmanical theory and propounded the equality of birth in the case of all human beings.

The authority of the sacred scriptures went a long way in maintaining the caste system. The Buddha saw in this the strongest point that supported the age-old traditions. The Buddha's advice in this regard, which occurs in Kālāma Sutta (Anguttara Nikāya. Tika Nipata 56. Mahāvagga) and several other places that not to accept anything unreasonable simply because it is recorded in the scriptures or upheld by other authorities; not even what He Himself had said", but to accept them on the merits of their own after testing their truth.

It is true that authority, tradition or otherwise, has got two sides - a good side and a bad side. When it supports a right cause it might do lot of good. In the same way, when it supports a wrong cause it certainly does lot of harm. Reason alone can make a choice between the two. So the Buddha advised the people to accept or reject a thing after taking into consideration merits and demerits of the case.

During summer season once Venerable Ānanda went out for his daily round of alms and felt thirsty on the way, he went near a well where a girl was drawing water and asked her for water. The girl, named Chanda-

lika, refused as she was an outcaste girl. In reply Ānanda said that he wanted water and he had nothing to do with her caste. Thereupon the girl rejoiced and gave him water. After some time she entered the Bhikkhuni Sangha or the order of nuns and in due course attained full sainthood of an Arahanta. This episode has been immortalised by the poet Rabindranath Tagore in his drama called Chandālikā.

Vardhamana Mahāvira, Guru Nanak, Kabir, Mahatma Gandhi, Keshava Chandra Sen, Ram Moham Roy, Dayananda etc. some other imminent reformers of India, directed their best efforts to the abolition of this evil of caste distinction.

Caste system is the greatest disdain of social life. Each caste thinks itself superior to others and takes pride in this fancied superiority. Such a state of affairs has made it impossible to build up a united nation. We are now in the scientific age of the twentieth century. Caste system is still having its away. It is a redeeming feature that the leaders of the nation and the educated people have begun to realise the utmost futility of the system. The penal code of the country made no distinction with regard to different castes. The new constitution of the country does not give recognition to it. But due to some dogmatic and selfish persons who are clinging to tradition it is very difficult to eradicate the evils of Caste system. Herein comes the necessity of the message of compassionate Buddha.

We should remember that we are all true citizens of India and we are the members of the United Nations Organisation. The four names Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras should not be found in the vocabulary of democratic and secular India.

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BUDDHISM IN ANSWERS

By

Miss Sujata Soni

(Continued from April Issue)

XIX

MENTAL CULTURE

THE best way for *Samma-samādhi* or Mental Culture is first to prepare an optimum foundation of *Sīla* or Moral Culture. Without this foundation, *Samma-samādhi* or right mental culture will generally be not possible. After this, start can be made with *Samatha* or Concentration, using any of the 40 methods suiting individual inclination and capacity. With most, some sublime contemplation or *āna-pāna-sati* works well, with others *Satipaṭṭhāna*, but with those given to sense delights some *asubha* will be excellent. While on this path, the person may go ahead to all the *Jhānas* or Absorptions or Ecstatic States, or the devotee may profitably switch on to *Vipassanā* or Insight practices, preferably from the stage one-pointedness of mind is attained. *Vipassanā* is essentially concerned with concentrated contemplation on *anicca*, *dukkha*, and/or *anatta* i.e. impermanency, sufferings, and impersonality. The Final Result is Supreme Liberation or *Nibbāna*.

In Burma, we have many excellent Meditation Masters, the top ranking of them being the *Webu Sayadaw*, *Mahasi Sayadaw*, the late *Sun-lun Sayadaw*, *U Ba Khin* and others. There are excellent guides trained by these. Among the available books in English are '*Heart of Buddhist Meditation*', '*Satipaṭṭhāna*', '*Ānāpānasati*', '*Path to Purification*' and '*An Experiment in Mindfulness*'.

XX

MENTAL DERANGEMENT & MEDITATION

We do come across at times persons who while practising Buddhist Meditations, instead of improving spiritually, show signs of mental derangement. This is not because of any fault in the technique of the Meditation but because of some faults in attending to it.

There are certain prerequisites which need be carefully considered before one ventures headstrong into Buddhist Meditations. Firstly, the person needs be not only in fairly good physical health but also must take care of the rules of health during the Meditation course: secondly, he or she must be with sound mental health: thirdly, the aspirant must be free from serious worldly worries: fourthly, there must be a fairly commendable record of '*sīla*' or moral culture: fifthly, the teacher selected must be a

competent one, capable of understanding and suitably guiding the practitioner: and, sixthly, all the instructions issued by the teacher must be duly and devotedly attended to. Failing this, unwholesome results affecting bodily health or mental integrity are to be expected, particularly when some pre-existing weakness in bodily health asserts itself or some '*vipākas*' or ideas lying buried deep in the subconscious suddenly burst out like a volcano into the conscious sphere. It might be that at times, though very rarely so, such an unfortunate event may happen unexpectedly in spite of all the care and precautions taken, either because of some sudden serious lapse on the part of the practitioner or because of over-too-much enthusiasm and exertion to the breaking point for quick results. However, given a suitable teacher and the requisite data, the progress is duly graded and properly guided. It must be remembered that haste is a call for waste in matters relating to Buddhist Meditations. If at all unavoidable, because of the stress of certain circumstances, it needs be made slowly and then even it must fall far short of the danger line.

XXI

WHO ARE WE?

The Buddhist belief is that none of the Five Aggregates of personality are transmitted from one existence to the other. As a matter of fact, personality is not a matter of '*identity*' in any form from time to time or existence to existence, but an affair of *continuity* because of the process of 'cause' and 'effect'. Thus, we are an ever-changing procession of 'causes' and 'effects' bottle-necked periodically by death-rebirth events. As such, we have no material or any direct psychical connection with the past: the only connection is of the 'causes' in the past because of which we emerged into the present.

XXII

KNOWING A SAINT

In Buddhism a Saint is the one who has realized one of the 8 stages of holiness, which include the Four Paths (*magga*) and the Four Fruitions (*phala*). Thus there are the Four Paths of holiness leading to the corresponding Four Fruitions. In other words, there are Four grades of '*Ariyās*' or '*Noble-Ones*', namely '*sotāpanna*', '*sakadāgāmi*', '*anāgāmi*' and '*arhat*', each one being known by the partial or complete conquest of some '*fetters*' or '*samyojana*' which are ten in numbers. Thus, the '*sotāpanna*' is the one who is free from '*personality belief*', '*doubts*' and '*attachment to rituals and superstitions*'; the '*sakadāgāmi*' is nearly free from '*sensuality*' and '*ill-will*', the '*anāgāmi*' fully free from these first five; and the '*arhat*' is in addition utterly free from the remaining five, namely '*cravings for fine material*' and '*non-material*' existences, '*conceit*', '*restlessness*', and '*ignorance*'.

Knowing the attributes of each category of Saints, it may seem easy to pinpoint them on the spiritual plane: however, for any ordinary person, it is not easy to do so. Only a person who has attained to some stage or is about to attain it, will know who is above or below him or her. However, for a '*puthujjana*' or '*a worldling*' it may not be possible to judge the situation correctly except that the person under question is pre-eminent in '*piety*'. It must be realized that '*piety*' alone or even the presence of supernatural powers and ability to perform miracles, are not the standard by which a Buddhist Saint or *Ariyā* might be judged: this is so, for, miracles are, after all, low grade attainments, and '*piety*' covers only the '*sila*' or moral culture aspect of the discipline and as such is not enough in itself for a person to be hailed an '*Ariyā*', he having yet to go ahead to '*samādhi*' or '*mental culture*' and above all to '*Paññā*' or Supreme Wisdom.

XXIII

IS NIBBĀNA LIMITED TO BUDDHISM?

It was the Buddha who discovered *Nibbāna*, a spiritual awakening which is supreme and final beyond the 'deliverance' offered by other faiths. To his last convert *Subhadda* who contacted him at the time of his Passing Away at *Kusināra*, the Buddha emphatically told: "*In whatever religious discipline the Noble Eightfold Path is not found, therein no Ariyās or the Noble Ones are to be found, also no Nibbāna*". This clearly indicates that only those who follow the Path of the Buddha would have the chance of attaining *Nibbāna*.

XXIV

IS NIBBĀNA NEITHER 'BHAVA' NOR 'VIBHAVA'?

While by '*bhava*' is meant '*a process of becoming*' which involves existence in any one of the 31 planes of Buddhist cosmology, '*vibhava*' spells the undoing of a vital entity consciously or subconsciously accepted as lasting. *Nibbāna* is above either of these concepts, it being the fruit of Supreme Awakening, wherein concepts have no status and instead there is face to face realization of Truth. Moreover, therein all processes end, including '*the process of becoming*' i.e. '*bhava*' and the process of '*vibhava*' or non-becoming, the result being '*the become*' or the Truth. In the light of these observations, *Nibbāna* has neither any truck with any '*lasting entity*' (*sassata-ditthi*) which is a matter of '*bhava-ditthi*' nor with '*annihilation-belief*' or '*uccheda-ditthi*' which is a matter of '*vibhava-ditthi*', both of these '*ditthis*' being '*miccha-ditthis*' or erroneous benefits.

In fine, *Nibbāna* is above all '*bhavas*' or '*processes*', no matter whether positive or negative, it being '*unconditioned*' by "*belief in 'self'*", which underlies '*bhava*' directly and '*vibhava*' indirectly.

XXV NIBBĀNA TRANSCENDS EXPRESSION

Expression is a matter of vocal or bodily gestures, both of which, at their best, are tridimensional equations of the ideas and experiences in the mind. While there will be unmistakable evidence of *Nibbāna* in the speech and behaviour of the person who has attained, it will never be possible to have an exact correspondence between the Supreme Truth which *Nibbāna* is and its expression in words or behaviour.

Obviously, *Nibbāna* is unbounded and marked by infinity, and as such is beyond the meshwork of time and space. It cannot be caught in the net of human language, which evidently is riddled with limitations and imperfections. Therefore, to 'define' *Nibbāna* would be akin to 'defying' it. That is why the Buddha refused to define it. However, *Nibbāna*, though transcends expression, is a practical proposition, it being capable of 'realization'.

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THE SWING OF THE PENDULUM

By

Robert Heap

WITH the advent of the New Year, the traditional idea of making Resolutions is not quite so outmoded as are many other traditions. It would be a great pity if the old-fashioned practice of making New Year Resolutions were to die out altogether. By dropping foolish or harmful habits and cultivating healthier and more positive ones we not only improve ourselves, but we set a good example to others who may be blundering along through life.

However, our Chat this month is not about making good resolutions in general, for they vary so much according to individual tastes. Instead, we are going to be bold enough to suggest one good New Year Resolution which could be universally beneficial—a Return to Religion.

Throughout the world there are many religions, but it is surprising how similar are the basic teachings of most, if not all of these various religions. They possess certain common features which may be regarded as essentials.

Broadly speaking, religion is deeply concerned with human behaviour and our relationship with the Deity. Religion not only helps to give us a sense of greater security in a crazy, materialistic world; it develops Man's spiritual consciousness and helps him to appreciate the things that really matter in life.

During the last fifty years, religious faith has begun to wane, with a gradual and lamentable drifting away from religion. The horrors and misery of two world wars, with people bitterly disillusioned by the threat of a third, may be one of the reasons for the big decline in Church attendance. Another reason may be that as a result of the world today placing such great stress on material values, almost to the exclusion of spiritual ones, numerous men and women are beginning to doubt their basic religious benefits.

We are told that there are at present 370 empty and redundant churches in this country and a further 420 are expected to become redundant during the next fifteen years or so—a total of 790 churches. Not all of these churches are old; some of them are modern buildings, like a certain church near Liverpool for instance, which is only eight years old and is being offered for sale because it is unable to find a congregation. The majority of these redundant churches will be demolished or sold; a few, of architectural or historical interest, may be preserved—if enough money is made available for this purpose. If this trend continues and if Mankind survives for a few more generations, the day may come when the few remaining Church buildings may be more than interesting relics of a bygone age and of a so-called obsolete social custom.

A QUESTION OF MOTIVE

Our suggestion that church-going is a fast-diminishing "social custom" points to one great weakness in religious activity. This isn't a weakness of all that the Christian Church stands for; but it has been for too long a weakness among many of those who attend Church regularly. Why do they go to Church every Sunday? That is the all-important question.

There is every reason to believe that when most of our Churches could boast of large congregations, a considerable proportion of those congregations attended for personal reasons often remote from the worship of God. An astonishing number of people used to go to Church simply because it was then considered to be the respectable and fashionable thing to do every Sunday. After all, how could Mr. and Mr. P—expect their neighbours to respect them unless they were regular church-goers? And without the respect of one's neighbours, life could then be made almost unbearable for the social offender.

Again, there is little doubt, that countless unmarried woman and old ladies used to (and possibly still do) attend Church regularly simply because they were (or are) attracted to the vicar—or his handsome and eligible curate. This form of hero-worship is certain to boost a congregation, but it gives a false picture.

Many a church has been known to lose half its congregation because the new preacher delivers almost interminable and erudite sermons. Or perhaps the vicar is too forthright and picks too many consciences?

The most apparently devout members of a certain Church were reasonably wealthy local shopkeepers. They vied with each other to make impressive donations to various Church funds; they were elected to serve on Church committees—and the rest of the congregation were inevitably their best customers! This does not mean to say that all those church-going shopkeepers were not also sincere Christians. Far from it. At the same time one can hardly overlook the fact that it was certainly more profitable for them to go to Church than to stay away from it. It is at least possible that the same idea also occurred to them! Moreover, we are entitled to wonder whether some of them who were closely connected with Church activities did so for indirect personal gain.

So we must recognise that there are, and always have been many alternative reasons for church-going other than to worship God in all sincerity and truth.

This unalterable fact places the Church and the Christian Ministry in a most unfortunate position, and in all fairness we must sympathise with Church leaders who face this problem. Naturally they wish to preach to the biggest possible congregation, even if they suspect that a large

number of the congregation are not genuine worshippers. Secretly, some of the clergy may be temporarily satisfied with this state of affairs. Surely there isn't much point in preaching Christianity to the converted? It is the sinners, the hypocrites and cynics, the unbelievers and half-believers who are most in need of the Church's message. Even if they attend Church for the wrong reasons, once they are there, they can be helped to see the Light.

WHERE ARE YOUNG WORSHIPPERS?

In many Churches to-day, we notice that the majority of the congregation consists of middle-aged and elderly women, with a sprinkling of men in the same age groups. Again, we may wonder at the reasons for this. Are these old stalwarts the only remaining "die-hards", the last surviving genuine Christians in a nation of irreligious sceptics and materialists? Or are we to take an even gloomier view and believe that even many of the "remaining few" still go to church chiefly because they may cling to "old-fashioned" ideas, or because they may be lonely and perhaps have no T.V. set? If this is true, what will happen to the Christian Church as death whittles away at its ageing congregations? This indeed would be a frightening prospect, not only for the Church itself and all who serve it faithfully, but for our much-vaunted civilisation.

For many reasons, some obvious, and some which may be obscure to us, many of the younger generation are not particularly attracted towards religion. Few of them are regular Church-goers. Years ago children had to go to Sunday School and to Church and didn't even question the practice. Once they were within the precincts of the School or Church, the children listened to religious teaching and irrespective of whether they understood it or not they believed all they were told. They were considerably influenced by religion, and even if they were often unable to reach the high spiritual and moral standards demanded, they respected it.

How very different is the situation to-day! We may blame the parents or modern distractions and spurious entertainments or outdated methods of religious teaching or whatever else we wish. The harsh fact remains that many young people to-day have little respect for the religion that was treasured by their parents. What these young people actually feel in their own hearts, only they know. Perhaps their whole attitude towards religion may be a pose, a veneer.

Some young people do at least consider religion and discuss what it has to offer them. The trouble seems to be—so far as the orthodox Church is concerned—that these young people ask too many awkward questions! They can be seen and heard on a Sunday Evening T.V. Programme, for instance, discussing religion and morals with Christian Ministers. A genuine sympathy must often be felt for the Ministers of Religion who are the victims of Youth's cross-examination. Intelligent and searching questions have threatened to "tie them up in knots" on frequent occasions, and some of the answers have been far from convincing.

FOUR ALL-EMBRACING VIRTUES OF A TRUE BUDDHIST

By

*Miss Pitt Chin Hui,
President of Singapore Regional Centre, W.F.B.
over the radio.*

MANKIND can never keep themselves away from others and live a lonely life. When one is small, he stays in the family. When one is grown up, he has to go into the society and has to come in contact with people from time to time. Consequently there is an inter-relationship between one and all.

Fish live in water. Human beings live among the company of others. There should be harmony and unity among Mankind, especially when we are working together in an organization with others. There should be peace, harmony and mutual understanding so that real friendship is established. Harmony and unity is the most important factor among public life.

Sakyamuni Buddha has taught us the four all-embracing virtues which are the excellent ways of cultivating real unity:-

A. *Alms-giving*

The spirit of giving what others need in order to lead them to love and receive the Truth voluntarily. There are three kinds of charity to assist people to solve their living problems by giving them money. Mankind is born and brought up in Societies. We get our money from the society and it should be spent therein. When we come across people who are suffering from poverty, sickness, calamity and other kinds of handicap, we should try our very best to help them to get out of their sufferings by offering them money.

B. *Offering of Knowledge.*

To render assistance to people in order to offer them our knowledge such as teachers of schools and the monks in temples.

C. *Offering of Assistance Fearlessly.*

To run the risk of sacrificing everything in one's morality, strength and wisdom to relieve the sufferings and difficulties of others and lead them out of their sorrow and fear so as to leap them in perfect peace.

AFFECTIONATE SPEECH - To show an attitude of courteousness and fraternity.

Humanity is subjected to friendship. When we are among the company of others, we should try to show the attitude of joyfulness and fraternity.

When we speak to others, we should show a consoling, encouraging, good-natured, faithful and trust-worthy appearance. Only then, we can attain the spirit of real friendship and understanding among others.

There are three kinds of affectionate speeches:-

A. Consoling Speech.

When we come across people who are suffering from sickness, calamity and fear, we should try our very best to speak to them with boundless compassion and deepest sympathy so that they may feel mentally relieved.

B. Pleasing Speech.

Different people have different behaviour. We should certainly try our utmost to praise, to appreciate and to encourage all virtuous people so that they may endeavour vigorously to improve their deeds, and thus acquire perfect merit and perfect wisdom. As regards the wicked ones, we ought to please them and encourage them to correct their wrong behaviour as well as to guide them to live a better life.

C. Superlative Beneficial Speech.

We should show good example to others in practising the Noble Teachings of the Buddha ourselves actually. Then forge ahead to encourage others to do good and to abstain from evil. Guide them to improve their good deeds, so that their virtue would gradually become perfect. Try to promote the standard of education and culture, thus leading people to the royal road of right understanding and right views.

CONDUCT PROFITABLE TO OTHERS - To think and to behave towards the benefit of others.

Whatever one does, one's actions should be beneficial to others. For instance, parents should always be careful about the benefit of their children and eventually they would be loved and obeyed by them in return. When teachers teach and give advices which are beneficial to students, they themselves would be respected. When heads of any organization always consider the benefit of their followers, they would be loved and supported by them all. When one is in distress, disappointed and down-hearted but to be suddenly supported and guided to the brightened road of success by someone, just think how happy and delighted one would be!

Therefore, we should train ourselves to possess a virtue for the good of our fellowmen. Endeavour to offer your energy and wisdom to support the less-fortunate. One should strive to possess the spirit of sharing adversity together with others in full sincerity and energy.

When we wish to preach the Noble Teachings of the Buddha to others, we should first try to get their respect, confidence and gratitude, so that

we may achieve great success in spreading the Dhamma to humanity in different parts of the world. That is why our Honoured One advises us to influence others by practising the All-embracing virtuous conduct profitable to others.

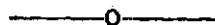
CO-OPERATION with the adaption of oneself to others to lead them to righteousness and Truth.

When one is in the company of others, especially working together in one organization, one should never look upon himself as the superior to all and has the privilege to do things at one's liberty. In fact, one should work together diligently, selflessly and wholeheartedly to share the happiness and welfare of others. To live together with others as if belonging to one family is the best way to achieve real harmony and fraternity.

Everybody should have friends. Without friends, one would be lonely and isolated. Such persons would be tremendously difficult to be successful in whatever he attempts to do and would be difficult to live together with others in society. Friends are precious. When we have friends, we should respect their friendship and try our best to show them real love. We should be honest and affectionate to our friends and should have the spirit to share happiness as well as any suffering with them in full sincerity and truthfulness. Never think of your own benefit alone. Never think of self and work for the benefit of self alone.

When we are together with our friends, we should try to encourage and to advise them in time of sorrow, and endeavour to help them to solve their difficulties, thus bringing them benefit and happiness. We would certainly be honoured and respected through gratitude if we practise infinite loving kindness. We must preach the Noble Teachings of the Buddha and lead people to the Road of Enlightenment.

We must make a strong vow to do something great in the world for humanity and guide Mankind to the Royal Path of Buddhahood. Try our utmost to practise the four all-embracing virtues vigorously.



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THE BUDDHIST SCIENCE OF SALVATION

Part II

By

Thamada U Sū

Q. 1. You have said; "I am a man of destiny: I belong to a nation of destiny". Don't you realize that you have had an upside-down view?

A. 1. You must realize that by having a firm view regarding your own and your nation's destiny, you have been committing an upside-down view called in Pāli as *ahetuka-diṭṭhi* (die Ansicht von der Ursachlosigkeit des Daseins), the view of destiny (Schicksal) without causality. That is one of the Dhammas of the Niyata-micchādiṭṭhi (verkehrten Ansichten).

Q. 2. How many kinds of upside-down views (niyata-micchādiṭṭhi) are there?

A. 2. There are three kinds of upside-down views.

Q. 3. Enumerate three kinds of upside-down views!

A. 3. (1) The fatalistic view of destiny without causality, called in Pāli as *ahetuka-diṭṭhi* was taught by Makkhali-Gosāla, one of the contemporaries of the Buddha, who disowned every cause for the corruption or purity of character and asserted that everything is determined beforehand by destiny (Schicksal).

(2) The view, that any deed you commit has no consequence, is called in Pāli as *akiriya-diṭṭhi*. That upside-down view was taught by Pūrana-kassapa. He denied all operations of reaction-forces (Karma) for noble as well as ignoble deeds. He taught: "To any person, who kills, steals, robs and so on, nothing evil will occur. No reward be expected for generosity, self-control and varacity."

(3) The view of nihilism, called in Pāli as *natthika-diṭṭhi*, was taught by Ajita-kesa-kambali who asserted that every belief in any good action and its effect is a delusion. According to him there is no rebirth after death but the human being breaks up into elements after death.

Q. 4. Is there any other upside-down view?

A. 4. Yes, there is another upside-down view.

Q. 5. Mention another upside-down view!

A. 5. There are ten kinds of antinomy (innere widerspruch) called in Pāli as *antagāhikā-micchā-diṭṭhi*: such as: 'Eternal is the world'

or 'Infinite is the world' or 'The world is not spiritual' or 'Body and soul are in unity' or 'Body and soul are something different' and so on.

Further views of misleading teachers during the time of the Buddha are mentioned in Dīgha-Nikāya and Mijjhima-Nikāya.

Q. 6. What Dhamma is overthrower of inward calm?

A. 6. Vipallāsa Dhamma is overthrower of inward calm.

Q. 7. Define Vipallāsa Dhamma!

A. 7. The Scriptures identify Vipallāsa with 'unwise attention' the root of all unwholesome Dhammas and with ignorance, delusion and false appearance.

Others have preferred to translate Vipallāsa as 'inversion', 'perverseness', 'wrong notion', 'error', 'what can upset', 'upside-down views'.

Sanskrit word for Vipallāsa is Viparyāsa. As, asyati means 'to throw' - overthrowing of a wagon; overthrowers of inward calm.

Q. 8. How many kinds of Vipallāsa Dhamma are there?

A. 8. There are four kinds of Vipallāsa Dhamma.

Q. 9. Enumerate four kinds of Vipallāsa Dhamma!

A. 9. The Buddha said: "Oh monks; there are four distortedness in the perception (Saññā-vipallāsa), in consciousness (Citta-vipallāsa) and in view (diṭṭhi-vipallāsa).

"What are those four?"

- "(1) Permanence in what is impermanent,
(2) Ease in what is inseparable from suffering,
(3) selfhood in what is not linked to any self,
and (4) delight in what is essentially repulsive and disgusting."

Q. 10. Explain the way how vipallāsa Dhamma is helpful in the meditation of ignorance, Avijjā?

A. 10. The ostensible meaning of this doctrine is well known that ignorance (Avijjā) is for Buddhist the root of evil. In the technique of meditation the concept of 'ignorance' is made amenable to analytical contemplation by being divided up into four 'perverted views'.

These are regularly defined by a short formula which states that under the influence one looks

- (1) for the permanent in the impermanent,
(2) for Ease in Suffering,
(3) for the self in what is not self,
(4) for the lovely (Die 'Vorstellung des Lieblichen, subha-nimitta) in the repulsive.

- Q. 11. What did the Buddha say about the lovely (subha-nimitta)?
- A. 11. The perception, consciousness and view of lovely (Die 'Vorstellung des Lieblichen') forms an occasion for the rising up of sensual delight: "Nothing do I know, oh monks," said the Buddha, "to what extent sensual desire produces and enables always the arising desire to grow further, than the concept of lovely. Oh monks, he, who does not meditate wisely over the concept of lovely, the desire arises in him, and the arising desire always grows farther."
- Q. 12. Explain the way by example to the possible extent how the desire arises!
- A. 12. Let us suppose that the mind substance is like a sea, that the surface is the conscious plane, and that the dormant impressions lie deep below the surface. Here we should remember that anything that remains in a dormant state is bound to manifest when the conditions become favourable. Forced by their inward nature, when the dormant impressions begin to manifest, they may be said to slowly rise up from the bottom of the sea of mind in the form of minute bubbles. We may call this bubble the subtle state of desire, or the awakened impression. Then it gradually rises to the surface and appears larger and larger in size. Let us call this bubble state of the awakened impression, desire; then the bubble of desire, after playing on the surface of the mental sea for some time, burst there and take the form of a wave, and agitates the whole sea of mind, transforming it into one mass of impulse. The mind becomes restless, peace is disturbed, power of discrimination becomes dull, we do not know whether good or bad results will follow should be yielded to the impelling impulse; we are forcibly driven headlong towards the object of desire, whatever it may be, mental (like ambition, pride, etc.) or merely sensuous. In fact, our controlling power having been overcome by that wave of desire, we can no longer call it desire. It temporarily takes the form of a ruling passion, or strong impulse. That tremendous impulse controls our nerves, muscles, and the whole body; we struggle to gratify this longing, only to find, when we have attained the thing and gratified the longing, that the satisfaction is but brief. The tempest that wrecked our self-control gradually subsides, and the particular desire that provoked it returns again to its dormant state; then a temporary peace of mind is regained and we remain happy for a time.

Let us see what Schopenhauer has to say about desire. He wrote: "I only wish to add a little to the general indication of the nature of this state. We say above that the wicked man, by the vehemence of his volition, suffers constant, consuming, inward pain, and finally, if all objects of volition are exhausted, quenches the fiery thirst of his self-will by sight of the suffering

of others. He, on the contrary, who has attained the denial of the will to live, however poor, joyless, and full of privation his condition may appear when looked at externally, is yet filled with inward joy and the true peace of Nirvāna.

Let us come again to the bubble of desire. After having gratified the longing that satisfaction is but brief. In the meanwhile another dormant impression gets ready to appear in the form of a bubble. Slowly it rises up from the subconscious to the conscious plane, and the same process is repeated. This ever-recurring series of desires and their temporary gratification forms the daily life of all such persons as have not learned to control their minds.

Q. 13. Explain by similitude the relative unreality of conditioned things!

A. 13. The Khandās ('heaps' or 'groups') are five aggregates of existence as it appears. On analysis, all the facts of experience, of ourselves and of objects in relation to us, can be stated in terms of Khandās. The purpose of the analysis is to do away with the nebulous word "I". The Khandās define the limits of the basis of grasping after a self, and what belongs to a self".

- (1) Form, *rūpa*, is the material or physical side of things; it is that which remains of persons and things after the substraction of their moral and mental quantities.

The following is the similitude to show the relative unreality of form.

Form, or the body, is like a *mass of foam*, because easily crushed, 'Like the dew on the mountain, Like a foam on the river, Like a bubble on the fountain, Thou art gone and forever.'

- (2) Feeling, *vedanā*, are pleasant (when one wants to continue), unpleasant (what one wants to cease) and neutral.

The following is the similitude to show the relative unreality of feeling.

Feeling is compared to a bubble, because it burst soon.

- (3) Perception, *Saññā*, are six, corresponding to the six sense-organs.

The following is the similitude to show relative unreality of perception.

Perception is like a mirage, because it deludes and imposes upon us. A mirage holds out, suggests and promises to be a source of satisfaction for our thirst and longings. But there are no real fountains in it. Likewise that which we perceive springs from thirst and desire and is bound to disappoint.

- (4) Impulses, *Sankhāra* (or 'coefficients') are all active dispositions, tendencies, impulses, volitions, strivings, emotions, etc., whether 'conscious' or repressed, though always linked with consciousness in Buddhist.

The following is the similitude to show the relative unreality of impulses.

Impulses are like the trunk of a plantain tree, because without essence, substance, pith or marrow. The banana tree (*musa sapientium*) is often used as a symbol of frailty. Its sheath-like leaves form a false stemlike structure, and when each leaf is peeled off, nothing remains.

- (5) Consciousness.

The following is the similitude to show the relative unreality of consciousness.

Consciousness is like a magic show - because it deceives and cheats us.

Q. 14. How should one meditate on the five aggregates of existence?

A. 14. One should meditate on (a) the four marks (*Lakkhanās*) of the five aggregates of existence, (b) the arising of the aggregates of existence and (c) the ceaseless decay of the five aggregates of existence.

(a) The four marks (*Lakkhanās*)

The five aggregates (*Khandas*) of existence are being ceaselessly harassed by the four marks (1) impermanence (*anicca*), (2) Suffering (*dukkha*), (3) not-self (*anattā*) and (4) repulsiveness (*asubha*) from which it is most difficult to escape.

(b) The arising of the five aggregates of existence.

The five aggregates of existence are being constantly made to reappear by one of the four influences. (1) reaction - forces (*Kamma*), (2) mind (*Citta*), (3) weather (*Udu*) and (4) nutriment (*Ahāra*) to allow the four marks (*Lakkhanās*) to harass.

(c) The ceaseless decay of the five aggregates of existence happens under the pressure of four marks.

As regards (b), the arising of the five aggregates of existence may be compared to the work of breeding of pigs and fowls while (a), the four marks (*Lakkhanās*) may be compared to the work of the butcher who slaughters those pigs and fowls.

The process of the five aggregates of existence may be compared to the feelings of a man captured by the wild tribes who made a blazing fire before his eyes for roasting him alive for their sumptuous meal.

The idea of a constant burning sensation may be compared to the actual feelings of the captured victim who is watching their proceedings for putting him to a tortured death.

The idea of ceaseless decay of the five aggregates of existence under the pressure of four marks (Lakkhanās) may be compared to the constant changing conditions of the victim while being roasted alive in the blazing fire. That decay of the five aggregates of existence may be compared to variegated condition of the victim, while being roasted.

For the above reasons the noble disciple has no longer the desire to build up this world but to get rid of it. He knows that nothing in it is worth is to be attached to. All bodily forms, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness he regards as transient, subject to pain and suffering and void of an ego.

Having thus attained insight into these five aggregates of existence the noble disciple will attain deliverance of mind in due course and will reach happiness supreme.

Hence how can one say that the following of the Holy Eightfold Path be equal to self-torment and pessimism, while it is the unfolding of inner serenity accompanied by unhampered moral courage - the only worthy endeavour in life.

News Item

THE BUDDHIST DISCUSSION GROUP, MANDALAY.

The announcement for the dissolution of the above Group, as made in the April issue of the Light of Buddha, page 120, should be considered as cancelled.

The Group shall continue to function as a Regional Centre of the World Fellowship of Buddhists. However, it will be in recess till further Notice.

The Office-bearers of the Group are:-

Director: Dr. R.L. Soni,

Secretary: Daw Tin Hla, M.A., M.S.,

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