

*The* **LIGHT**  
*of the*  
**DHAMMA**

Published by the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council

Vol. III No. 4

K 1.50

Electronic Publishers Notice: This work has been republished by Pariyatti as an electronic publication. All of the addresses and contact information provided in this online edition of The Light of the Dhamma are no longer valid. They have been included here for historical purposes.

Questions or comments regarding this electronic publication can be addressed to  
[treasures@pariyatti.org](mailto:treasures@pariyatti.org)

For other issues in this series please visit  
[www.pariyatti.org/treasures](http://www.pariyatti.org/treasures)



## PARIYATTI

867 Larmon Road  
 Onalaska, Washington 98570 USA  
 360.978.4998  
[www.pariyatti.org](http://www.pariyatti.org)

Pariyatti is a nonprofit organization dedicated to enriching the world by

- disseminating the words of the Buddha,
- providing sustenance for the seeker's journey, and
- illuminating the meditator's path.

*The* LIGHT  
*of the*  
DHAMMA

VOL. III

No. 4

2500 B.E.

August 1956 C.E.



## THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

1. Please regard this not just as a quarterly magazine but as a continuing service for Buddhism.

Your frank criticism will be welcomed in a Buddhist spirit and if there are any questions pertaining to Buddhism that we can answer or help to answer, we are yours to command.

2. Any articles herein may be quoted, copied, reprinted and translated free of charge without further reference to us. Should you care to acknowledge the source we would be highly appreciative.

3 Foreign subscription. (including postage to any part of the world) is but the equivalent of sh 9/- (Nine Shillings) sterling per annum.

### HOW TO REMIT

In any country subscribing to the International Postal Union, International Postal Certificates are obtainable from the post office.

TRADING BANKS can usually advise, in other cases, how small remittances may be made.

THE EDITOR,  
 "THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA"  
 Union Buddha Sasana Council  
 16, Hermitage Road, Kokine  
 Rangoon, Union Of Burma



Vol. III

2500 B.E.

August 1956 C.E.

No. 4

## CONTENTS

| Article  | PAGE |
|--|------|
| Buddhism in a Nutshell ..... Venerable Nārada Mahāthera...                           | 7    |
| Way to Perfect Peace ..... Venerable U Wisāra  | 38   |
| Mahāsatiṭṭhāna-Sutta..... Venerable Sobhana Mahāthera                                | 41   |
| Victory of the Sāsana ..... U Ohn Ghine  | 57   |
| The Conventional versus the Real ..... U Ba Htu                                      | 61   |
| Natural Phenomena, Mental and Physical, as analyzed by the Buddha.....U Saw Tun Teik | 64   |
| Biographical sketches of our Contributors  | 70   |
| Glossary   | 72   |

*Also in the original issue:*

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Sammādiṭṭhi Dīpanī .....                            | Venerable Ledi Sayadaw                                 |
| Titthāyatana-Sutta.....                             | Translated by the Editors of the “Light of the Dhamma” |
| Power of Mindfulness .....                          | Bhadanta Nyanaponika Thera                             |
| The Dhammapada Commentary (Aggasāvaka Vatthu) ..... |  |

Translated by the Pāli Department of the University of Rangoon



Ven. Nārada Mahā Thera, Vajirarama, Bambalapitiya, Colombo, Ceylon, is one of the best known Buddhist authors and writers. He is widely travelled in all Buddhist countries where he has done excellent work in binding together the Buddhists of Asia. He is at present in England in connection with the founding of a Buddhist Vihāra in London.

# Buddhism in a Nutshell

*Nārada Thera*

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-Sambuddhassa*

## Chapter I

### The Buddha

On the fullmoon day of May, in the year 623 B.C., there was born in the district of Nepal an Indian Sakya Prince named Siddhattha Gotama, who was destined to be the greatest religious teacher in the world. Brought up in the lap of luxury, receiving an education befitting a prince, he married and had a son.

His contemplative nature and boundless compassion did not permit him to enjoy the fleeting material pleasures of a Royal household. He knew no woe, but he felt a deep pity for sorrowing humanity. Amidst comfort and prosperity, he realized the universality of sorrow. The palace, with all its worldly amusements, was no longer a congenial place for the compassionate prince. The time was ripe for him to depart. Realizing the vanity of sensual enjoyments, in his twenty-ninth year, he renounced all worldly pleasures and donning the simple yellow garb of an ascetic, alone, penniless, wandered forth in search of Truth and Peace.

It was an unprecedented historic renunciation; for he renounced not in his old age but in the prime of manhood, not in poverty but in plenty. As it was the belief in the ancient days that no deliverance could be gained unless one leads a life of strict asceticism, he strenuously practiced all forms of severe austerities. "Adding vigil after vigil, and penance after penance," he made a superhuman effort for six long years.

His body was reduced to almost a skeleton. The more he tormented his body, the farther his goal receded from him. The painful, unsuccessful austerities which he strenuously practiced proved absolutely futile. He was now fully convinced, through personal experience,

of the utter futility of self-mortification which weakened his body and resulted in lassitude of spirit.

Benefiting by this invaluable experience of his, he finally decided to follow an independent course, avoiding the two extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. The former retards one's spiritual progress, and the latter weakens one's intellect. The new way which he himself discovered was the Middle Path, Majjhima Paṭipadā, which subsequently became one of the salient characteristics of his teaching.

One happy morning, while He was deeply absorbed in meditation, unaided and unguided by any supernatural power and solely relying on His efforts and wisdom, He eradicated all defilements, purified Himself, and, realizing things as they truly are, attained Enlightenment (Buddhahood) at the age of 35. He was not born a Buddha<sup>1</sup>, but He became a Buddha by His own striving. As the perfect embodiment of all the virtues He preached, endowed with deep wisdom commensurate with His boundless compassion. He devoted the remainder of His precious life to serve humanity both by example and precept, dominated by no personal motive whatever.

After a very successful ministry of 45 long years the Buddha, as every other human being, succumbed to the inexorable law of change, and finally passed away in His 80th year, exhorting His disciples to regard His doctrine as their teacher.

The Buddha was a human being. As a man He was born, as a man He lived, and as a man His life came to an end. Though a human being, He became an extraordinary man (Acchariya Manussa), but He never arrogated to Himself divinity. The Buddha laid stress on this important point and left no room whatever for anyone to fall into the error of thinking that

He was an immortal divine being. Fortunately there is no deification in the case of the Buddha. It should, however, be remarked that there was no Teacher, “ever so godless as the Buddha, yet none so god-like.”

The Buddha is neither an incarnation of the Hindu God Vishnu, as is believed by some, nor is He a savior who freely saves others by His personal salvation. The Buddha exhorts His disciples to depend on themselves for their deliverance, for both purity and defilement depend on oneself. Clarifying His relationship with His followers and emphasizing the importance of self-reliance and individual striving, the Buddha plainly states: “You should exert yourselves, the Tathāgatas<sup>2</sup> are only teachers.”

The Buddhas point out the path, and it is left for us to follow that path to obtain our purification.

“To depend on others for salvation is negative, but to depend on oneself is positive.” Dependence on others means a surrender of one’s effort.

In exhorting His disciples to be self-dependent the Buddha says in the Parinibbāna Sutta: “Be ye islands unto yourselves, be ye a refuge unto yourselves, seek not for refuge in others.” These significant words are self-elevating. They reveal how vital is self-exertion to accomplish one’s object and, how superficial and futile it is to seek redemption through benignant saviors and to crave for illusory happiness in an after life through the propitiation of imaginary Gods or by irresponsive prayers and meaningless sacrifices.

Furthermore, the Buddha does not claim the monopoly of Buddhahood which, as a matter of fact, is not the prerogative of any specially graced person. He reached the highest possible state of perfection any person could aspire to, and without the close-fist of a teacher he revealed the only straight path that leads thereto. According to the Teaching of the Buddha anybody may aspire to that supreme

state of perfection if he makes the necessary exertion. The Buddha does not condemn men by calling them wretched sinners, but, on the contrary, He gladdens them by saying that they are pure in heart at conception. In His opinion the world is not wicked but is deluded by ignorance. Instead of disheartening His followers and reserving that exalted state only to Himself, He encourages and induces them to emulate Him, for Buddhahood is latent in all. In one sense all are potential Buddhas.

One who aspires to become a Buddha is called a Bodhisatta, which, literally, means a wisdom-being. This Bodhisatta ideal is the most beautiful and the most refined course of life that has ever been presented to this ego-centric world, for what is nobler than a life of service and purity?

As a Man He attained Buddhahood and proclaimed to the world the latent inconceivable possibilities and the creative power of man. Instead of placing an unseen Almighty God over man who arbitrarily controls the destinies of mankind, and making him subservient to a supreme power, He raised the worth of mankind. It was He who taught that man can gain his deliverance and purification by his own exertion without depending on an external God or mediating priests. It was he who taught the ego-centric world the noble ideal of selfless service. It was He who revolted against the degrading caste system and taught equality of mankind and gave equal opportunities for all to distinguish themselves in every walk of life.

He declared that the gates of success and prosperity were open to all in every condition of life, high or low, saint or criminal, who would care to turn a new leaf and aspire to perfection.

Irrespective of caste, color or rank He established for both deserving men and women a democratically constituted celibate Order. He did not force His followers to be slaves either to His Teachings or to Himself but granted complete freedom of thought.

He comforted the bereaved by His consoling words. He ministered to the sick that were deserted. He helped the poor that were neglected. He ennobled the lives of the deluded, purified the corrupted lives of criminals. He encouraged the feeble, united the divided, enlightened the ignorant, clarified the mystic, guided the benighted, elevated the base, dignified the noble. Both rich and poor, saints and criminals loved Him alike. Despotism and righteous kings, famous and obscure princes and nobles, generous and stingy millionaires, haughty and humble scholars, destitute paupers, down-trodden scavengers, wicked murderers, despised courtesans — all benefited by His words of wisdom and compassion.

His noble example was a source of inspiration to all. His serene and peaceful countenance was a soothing sight to the pious eyes. His message of Peace and Tolerance was welcomed by all with indescribable joy and was of eternal benefit to every one who had the fortune to hear and practice it.

Wherever His teachings penetrated it left an indelible impression upon the character of the respective peoples. The cultural advancement of all the Buddhist nations was mainly due to His sublime Teachings. In fact all Buddhist countries like Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Nepal, Tibet, China, Mongolia, Korea, Japan, etc., grew up in the cradle of Buddhism. Though more than 2500 years have elapsed since the passing away of this greatest Teacher, yet his unique personality exerts a great influence on all who come to know Him.

His iron will, profound wisdom, universal love, boundless compassion, selfless service, historic renunciation, perfect purity, magnetic personality, exemplary methods employed to propagate the Teachings, and his final success — all these factors have compelled about one-fifth of the population of the world today to hail the Buddha as their supreme Teacher.

Paying a glowing tribute to the Buddha Sri Radhakrishnan states: "In Gautama the Buddha

we have a master-mind from the East second to none so far as the influence on the thought and life of the human race is concerned, and, sacred to all as the founder of a religious tradition whose hold is hardly less wide and deep than any other. He belongs to the history of the world's thought, to the general inheritance of all cultivated men, for, judged by intellectual integrity, moral earnestness, and spiritual insight, He is undoubtedly one of the greatest figures in history.

In *The Three Greatest Men in History* H.G. Wells writes: "In the Buddha you see clearly a man, simple, devout, lonely, battling for light — a vivid human personality, not a myth. He too gave a message to mankind universal in character. Many of our best modern ideas are in closest harmony with it. All the miseries and discontents are due, he taught, to selfishness. Before a man can become serene he must cease to live for his senses or himself. Then he merges into a great being. Buddha in different language called men to self-forgetfulness 500 years before Christ. In some ways he is nearer to us and our needs. He was more lucid upon our individual importance and service than Christ and less ambiguous upon the question of personal immortality."

St. Hilaire remarks "The perfect model of all the virtues He preaches. His life has not a stain upon it."

Fausboll says — "The more I know of Him, the more I love Him."

A humble follower of his would say — "The more I know Him, the more I love Him; the more I love Him, the more I know Him."

---

## Chapter II

### The Dhamma: Is it a Philosophy?

The non-aggressive, moral and philosophical system expounded by the Buddha, which demands no blind faith from its adherents, expounds no dogmatic creeds, encourages no superstitious rites and ceremonies, but advocates a golden mean that

guides a disciple through pure living and pure thinking to the gain of supreme wisdom and deliverance from all evil, is called the Dhamma and is popularly known as Buddhism.

The all-merciful Buddha has passed away, but the sublime Dhamma which He unreservedly bequeathed to humanity, still exists in its pristine purity.

Although the Master has left no written records of His Teachings, His distinguished disciples preserved them by committing to memory and transmitting them orally from generation to generation.

Immediately after His demise 500 chief Arahats<sup>3</sup> versed in the Dhamma<sup>4</sup> and Vinaya,<sup>5</sup> held a convocation to rehearse the Doctrine as was originally taught by the Buddha. Venerable Ānanda Thera, who enjoyed the special privilege of hearing all the discourses, recited the Dhamma, while the Venerable Upāli recited the Vinaya.

The Tipiṭaka was compiled and arranged in its present form by those Arahats of old.

During the reign of the pious Sinhala King Vattagamani Abhaya, about 83 B.C., the Tipiṭaka was, for the first time in the history of Buddhism, committed to writing on palm leaves (ola) in Ceylon.

This voluminous Tipiṭaka, which contains the essence of the Buddha's Teaching, is estimated to be about eleven times the size of the Bible. A striking contrast between the Tipiṭaka and the Bible is that the former is not a gradual development like the latter.

As the word itself implies, the Tipiṭaka consists of three baskets. They are the Basket of Discipline (Vinaya Piṭaka), the Basket of Discourses (Sutta Piṭaka), and the Basket of Ultimate Doctrine (Abhidhamma Piṭaka).

The Vinaya Piṭaka which is regarded as the sheet anchor to the oldest historic celibate order — the Saṅgha — mainly deals with rules and regulations which the Buddha promulgated, as occasion arose, for the future

discipline of the Order of monks (Bhikkhus) and nuns (Bhikkunis). It described in detail the gradual development of the Sāsana (Dispensation). An account of the life and ministry of the Buddha is also given. Indirectly it reveals some important and interesting information about ancient history, Indian customs, arts, science, etc.

The Vinaya Piṭaka consists of the five following books:

(Vibhaṅga):

1. Pārājika Pāli — Major Offenses
2. Pācittiya Pāli — Minor Offenses

(Khandaka):

3. Mahāvagga Pāli — Greater Section
4. Cuḷavagga Pāli — Shorter Section
5. Parivāra Pāli — Epitome of the Vinaya

The Sutta Piṭaka consists chiefly of discourses, delivered by the Buddha himself on various occasions. There are also a few discourses delivered by some of His distinguished disciples such as the Venerable Sāriputta, Ānanda, Moggallāna, etc., included in it. It is like a book of prescriptions, as the sermons embodied therein were expounded to suit the different occasions and the temperaments of various persons. There may be seemingly contradictory statements, but they should not be misconstrued as they were opportunely uttered by the Buddha to suit a particular purpose: for instance, to the self-same question He would maintain silence (when the inquirer is merely foolishly inquisitive), or give a detailed reply when He knew the inquirer to be an earnest seeker. Most of the sermons were intended mainly for the benefit of Bhikkhus and they deal with the Holy life and with the expositions of the doctrine. There are also several other discourses which deal with both the material and moral progress of His lay followers.

This Pitaka is divided into five Nikāyas or collections, viz:

1. Dīgha Nikāya (Collection of Long Discourses).
2. Majjhima Nikāya (Collection of Middle-Length Discourses).
3. Saṃyutta Nikāya (Collection of Kindred Sayings).
4. Aṅguttara Nikāya (Collection of Discourses arranged in accordance with numbers).
5. Khuddaka Nikāya (Smaller Collection).

The fifth is subdivided into fifteen books:

1. Khuddaka Pāṭha (Shorter texts)
2. Dhammapada (Way of Truth)
3. Udāna (Paeans of Joy)
4. Iti Vuttaka ("Thus said" Discourses)
5. Sutta Nipāta (Collected Discourses)
6. Vimāna Vatthu (Stories of Celestial Mansions)
7. Peta Vatthu (Stories of Petas)
8. Theragāthā (Psalms of the Brethren)
9. Therīgāthā (Psalms of the Sisters)
10. Jātaka (Birth Stories)
11. Niddesa (Expositions)
12. Paṭisambhidā Magga (Analytical Knowledge)
13. Apadāna (Lives of Arahats)
14. Buddhavaṃsa (The History of the Buddha)
15. Cariyā Piṭaka (Modes of Conduct)

The Abhidhamma Piṭaka is the most important and the most interesting of the three, containing as it does the profound philosophy of the Buddha's Teaching in contrast to the illuminating and simpler discourses in the Sutta Piṭaka.

In the Sutta Piṭaka is found the conventional teaching (vohāra desanā) while in

the Abhidhamma Piṭaka is found the ultimate teaching (paramattha-desanā).

To the wise, Abhidhamma is an indispensable guide; to the spiritually evolved, an intellectual treat; and to research scholars, food for thought. Consciousness is defined. Thoughts are analyzed and classified chiefly from an ethical standpoint. Mental states are enumerated. The composition of each type of consciousness is set forth in detail. How thoughts arise, is minutely described. Irrelevant problems that interest mankind but having no relation to one's purification, are deliberately set aside.

Matter is summarily discussed; fundamental units of matter, properties of matter, sources of matter, relationship between mind and matter, are explained.

The Abhidhamma investigates mind and matter, the two composite factors of the so-called being, to help the understanding of things as they truly are, and a philosophy has been developed on those lines. Based on that philosophy, an ethical system has been evolved, to realize the ultimate goal, Nibbāna.

The Abhidhamma Piṭaka consists of seven books:

1. Dhammasaṅgaṇī (Classification of Dhammas)
2. Vibhaṅga (The book of Divisions)
3. Dhātu-Kathā (Discussion with reference to elements)
4. Puggala-Paññatti (Descriptions of Individuals)
5. Kathā-Vatthu (Points of Controversy)
6. Yamaka (The Book of Pairs),
7. Paṭṭhāna (The Book of Relations)

In the Tipiṭaka one finds milk for the babe and meat for the strong, for the Buddha taught His doctrine both to the masses and to the intelligentsia. The sublime Dhamma enshrined in these sacred texts, deals with truths and facts, and is not concerned with theories and

philosophies which may be accepted as profound truths today only to be thrown overboard tomorrow. The Buddha has presented us with no new astounding philosophical theories, nor did He venture to create any new material science. He explained to us what is within and without so far as it concerns our emancipation, and ultimately expounded a path of deliverance, which is unique. Incidentally, He has, however, foreshadowed many a modern scientist and philosopher.

Schopenhauer in his “World as Will and Idea” has presented the truth of suffering and its cause in a Western garb. Spinoza, though he denies not the existence of a permanent reality, asserts that all phenomenal existence is transitory. In his opinion sorrow is conquered “by finding an object of knowledge which is not transient, not ephemeral, but is immutable, permanent, everlasting.” Berkeley proved that the so-called indivisible atom is a metaphysical fiction. Hume, after a relentless analysis of the mind, concluded that consciousness consists of fleeting mental states. Bergson advocates the doctrine of change. Prof. James refers to a stream of consciousness.

The Buddha expounded these doctrines of Transiency, (Anicca), Sorrow (Dukkha), and No-Soul (Anattā) some 2500 years ago while He was sojourning in the valley of the Ganges.

It should be understood that the Buddha did not preach all that He knew. On one occasion while the Buddha was passing through a forest He took a handful of leaves and said: “O Bhikkhus, what I have taught is comparable to the leaves in my hand. What I have not taught is comparable to the amount of leaves in the forest.”

He taught what He deemed was absolutely essential for one’s purification making no distinction between an esoteric and exoteric doctrine. He was characteristically silent on questions irrelevant to His noble mission.

Buddhism no doubt accords with science, but both should be treated as parallel

teachings, since one deals mainly with material truths while the other confines itself to moral and spiritual truths. The subject matter of each is different.

The Dhamma He taught is not merely to be preserved in books, nor is it a subject to be studied from a historical or literary standpoint. On the contrary it is to be learned and put into practice in the course of one’s daily life, for without practice one cannot appreciate the truth. The Dhamma is to be studied, and more to be practiced, and above all to be realized; immediate realization is its ultimate goal. As such the Dhamma is compared to a raft which is meant for the sole purpose of escaping from the ocean of birth and death (Saṃsāra).

Buddhism, therefore, cannot strictly be called a mere philosophy because it is not merely the “love of, inducing the search after, wisdom.” Buddhism may approximate a philosophy, but it is very much more comprehensive.

Philosophy deals mainly with knowledge and is not concerned with practice; whereas Buddhism lays special emphasis on practice and realization.

---

### Chapter III

#### Is it a Religion?

It is neither a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood, for it is not “a system of faith and worship owing any allegiance to a supernatural being.”

Buddhism does not demand blind faith from its adherents. Here mere belief is dethroned and is substituted by confidence based on knowledge, which, in Pāli, is known as Saddhā. The confidence placed by a follower on the Buddha is like that of a sick person in a noted physician, or a student in his teacher. A Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha because it was He who discovered the Path of Deliverance.

A Buddhist does not seek refuge in the Buddha with the hope that he will be saved by His personal purification. The Buddha gives no such guarantee. It is not within the power of a Buddha to wash away the impurities of others. One could neither purify nor defile another.

The Buddha, as Teacher, instructs us, but we ourselves are directly responsible for our purification.

Although a Buddhist seeks refuge in the Buddha, he does not make any self-surrender. Nor does a Buddhist sacrifice his freedom of thought by becoming a follower of the Buddha. He can exercise his own free will and develop his knowledge even to the extent of becoming a Buddha himself.

The starting point of Buddhism is reasoning or understanding, or, in other words, *Sammā-ditṭhi*.

To the seekers of truth the Buddha says:

“Do not accept anything on (mere) hearsay — (i.e., thinking that thus have we heard it from a long time). Do not accept anything by mere tradition — (i.e., thinking that it has thus been handed down through many generations). Do not accept anything on account of mere rumors — (i.e., by believing what others say without any investigation). Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures. Do not accept anything by mere suppositions. Do not accept anything by mere inference. Do not accept anything by merely considering the reasons. Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your pre-conceived notions. Do not accept anything merely because it seems acceptable — (i.e., thinking that as the speaker seems to be a good person his words should be accepted). Do not accept anything thinking that the ascetic is respected by us (therefore it is right to accept his word).

“But when you know for yourselves — these things are immoral, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the wise, these things, when performed and

undertaken conduce to ruin and sorrow — then indeed do you reject them.

“When you know for yourselves — these things are moral, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken, conduce to well-being and happiness — then do you live acting accordingly.”

These inspiring words of the Buddha still retain their original force and freshness.

Though there is no blind faith, one might argue whether there is no worshiping of images etc., in Buddhism.

Buddhists do not worship an image expecting worldly or spiritual favors, but pay their reverence to what it represents.

An understanding Buddhist, in offering flowers and incense to an image, designedly makes himself feel that he is in the presence of the living Buddha and thereby gains inspiration from His noble personality and breathes deep His boundless compassion. He tries to follow His noble example.

The Bo-tree is also a symbol of Enlightenment. These external objects of reverence are not absolutely necessary, but they are useful as they tend to concentrate one's attention. An intellectual person could dispense with them as he could easily focus his attention and visualize the Buddha.

For our own good, and out of gratitude, we pay such external respect but what the Buddha expects from His disciple is not so much obeisance as the actual observance of His Teachings. The Buddha says — “He honors me best who practices my teaching best.” “He who sees the Dhamma sees me.”

With regard to images, however, Count Kevserling remarks — “I see nothing more grand in this world than the image of the Buddha. It is an absolutely perfect embodiment of spirituality in the visible domain.”

Furthermore, it must be mentioned that there are not petitional or intercessory prayers

in Buddhism. However much we may pray to the Buddha we cannot be saved. The Buddha does not grant favors to those who pray to Him. Instead of petitional prayers there is meditation that leads to self-control, purification and enlightenment. Meditation is neither a silent reverie nor keeping the mind blank. It is an active striving. It serves as a tonic both to the heart and the mind. The Buddha not only speaks of the futility of offering prayers but also disparages a slave mentality. A Buddhist should not pray to be saved, but should rely on himself and win his freedom.

“Prayers take the character of private communications, selfish bargaining with God. It seeks for objects of earthly ambitions and inflames the sense of self. Meditation on the other hand is self-change.”

— *Sri Radhakrishnan*

In Buddhism there is not, as in most other religions, an Almighty God to be obeyed and feared. The Buddhist does not believe in a cosmic potentate, omniscient and omnipresent. In Buddhism there are no divine revelations or divine messengers. A Buddhist is, therefore, not subservient to any higher supernatural power which controls his destinies and which arbitrarily rewards and punishes. Since Buddhists do not believe in revelations of a divine being Buddhism does not claim the monopoly of truth and does not condemn any other religion. But Buddhism recognizes the infinite latent possibilities of man and teaches that man can gain deliverance from suffering by his own efforts independent of divine help or mediating priests.

Buddhism cannot, therefore, strictly be called a religion because it is neither a system of faith and worship, nor “the outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a God or gods having power over their own destiny to whom obedience, service, and honor are due.”

If, by religion, is meant “a teaching which takes a view of life that is more than

superficial, a teaching which looks into life and not merely at it, a teaching which furnishes men with a guide to conduct that is in accord with this its in-look, a teaching which enables those who give it heed to face life with fortitude and death with serenity,”<sup>6</sup> or a system to get rid of the ills of life, then it is certainly a religion of religions.

---

## Chapter IV

### Is Buddhism an Ethical System?

It no doubt contains an excellent ethical code which is unparalleled in its perfection and altruistic attitude. It deals with one way of life for the monks and another for the laity. But Buddhism is much more than an ordinary moral teaching. Morality is only the preliminary stage on the Path of Purity, and is a means to an end, but not an end in itself. Conduct, though essential, is itself insufficient to gain one's emancipation. It should be coupled with wisdom or knowledge (*paññā*). The base of Buddhism is morality, and wisdom is its apex.

In observing the principles of morality a Buddhist should not only regard his own self but also should have a consideration for others we well — animals not excluded. Morality in Buddhism is not founded on any doubtful revelation nor is it the ingenious invention of an exceptional mind, but it is a rational and practical code based on verifiable facts and individual experience.

It should be mentioned that an external supernatural agency plays no part whatever in the moulding of the character of a Buddhist. In Buddhism there is no one to reward or punish. Pain or happiness are the inevitable results of one's actions. The question of incurring the pleasure or displeasure of a God does not enter the mind of a Buddhist. Neither hope of reward nor fear of punishment acts as an incentive to him to do good or to refrain from evil. A Buddhist is aware of future consequences, but he refrains from evil because it retards, does good because it aids progress to Enlightenment

(Bodhi). There are also some who do good because it is good, refrain from evil because it is bad.

To understand the exceptionally high standard of morality the Buddha expects from His ideal followers, one must carefully read the Dhammapada, Sigālovāda Sutta, Vyaggapajja Sutta, Maṅgala Sutta, Karaṇīya Sutta, Parābhava Sutta, Vasala Sutta, Dhammika Sutta, etc.

As a moral teaching it excels all other ethical systems, but morality is only the beginning and not the end of Buddhism.

In one sense Buddhism is not a philosophy, in another sense it is the philosophy of philosophies.

In one sense Buddhism is not a religion, in another sense it is the religion of religions.

Buddhism is neither a metaphysical path nor a ritualistic path.

It is neither sceptical nor dogmatic.

It is neither self-mortification nor self-indulgence.

It is neither pessimism nor optimism.

It is neither eternalism nor nihilism.

It is neither absolutely this-worldly nor other-worldly.

It is a unique Path of Enlightenment.

The original Pāli term for Buddhism is Dhamma, which, literally, means that which upholds. There is no English equivalent that exactly conveys the meaning of the Pāli term.

The Dhamma is that which really is. It is the Doctrine of Reality. It is a means of Deliverance from suffering, and Deliverance itself. Whether the Buddhas arise or not the Dhamma exists. It lies hidden from the ignorant eyes of men, till a Buddha, an Enlightened One, realizes and compassionately reveals it to the world.

This Dhamma is not something apart from oneself, but is closely associated with oneself. As such the Buddha exhorts:

“Abide with oneself as an island, with oneself as a Refuge. Abide with the Dhamma as an island, with the Dhamma as a Refuge. Seek no external refuge.”

— *Parinibbāna Sutta*

---

## Chapter V

### Some Salient Features of Buddhism

The foundations of Buddhism are the four Noble Truths — namely, Suffering (the *raison d'être* of Buddhism), its cause (i.e., Craving), its end (i.e., Nibbāna, the Summum Bonum of Buddhism), and the Middle Way.

What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?

“Birth is suffering, old age is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, to be united with the unpleasant is suffering, to be separated from the pleasant is suffering, not to receive what one craves for is suffering, in brief the five Aggregates of Attachment are suffering.”

What is the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering?

“It is the craving which leads from rebirth to rebirth accompanied by lust of passion, which delights now here now there; it is the craving for sensual pleasures (*Kāmatanḥā*), for existence (*Bhavatanḥā*)<sup>7</sup> and for annihilation (*Vibhavatanḥā*).”<sup>8</sup>

What is the Noble Truth of the Annihilation of Suffering?

“It is the remainderless, total annihilation of this very craving, the forsaking of it, the breaking loose, fleeing, deliverance from it.”

What is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Annihilation of Suffering?

“It is the Noble Eightfold Path which consists of right understanding, right thoughts, right speech, right action, right livelihood,

right endeavor, right mindfulness, and right concentration.”

Whether the Buddhas arise or not these four Truths exist in the universe. The Buddhas only reveal these Truths which lay hidden in the dark abyss of time.

Scientifically interpreted, the Dhamma may be called the law of cause and effect. These two embrace the entire body of the Buddha’s Teachings.

The first three represent the philosophy of Buddhism; the fourth represents the ethics of Buddhism, based on that philosophy. All these four truths are dependent on this body itself. The Buddha states: “In this very one-fathom long body along with perceptions and thoughts, do I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the end of the world and the path leading to the end of the world.” Here the term world is applied to suffering.

Buddhism rests on the pivot of sorrow. But it does not thereby follow that Buddhism is pessimistic. It is neither totally pessimistic nor totally optimistic, but, on the contrary, it teaches a truth that lies midway between them. One would be justified in calling the Buddha a pessimist if He had only enunciated the Truth of suffering without suggesting a means to put an end to it. The Buddha perceived the universality of sorrow and did prescribe a panacea for this universal sickness of humanity. The highest conceivable happiness, according to the Buddha, is Nibbāna, which is the total extinction of suffering.

The author of the article on Pessimism in the Encyclopedia Britannica writes: “Pessimism denotes an attitude of hopelessness towards life, a vague general opinion that pain and evil predominate in human affairs. The original doctrine of the Buddha is in fact as optimistic as any optimism of the West. To call it pessimism is merely to apply to it a characteristically Western principle to which happiness is impossible without personality. The true Buddhist looks forward with enthusiasm to absorption into eternal bliss.”

Ordinarily the enjoyment of sensual pleasures is the highest and only happiness of the average man. There is no doubt a kind of momentary happiness in the anticipation, gratification and retrospection of such fleeting material pleasures, but they are illusive and temporary. According to the Buddha non-attachment is a greater bliss.

The Buddha does not expect His followers to be constantly pondering on suffering and lead a miserable unhappy life. He exhorts them to be always happy and cheerful, for zest (Pīti) is one of the factors of Enlightenment.

Real happiness is found within, and is not to be defined in terms of wealth, children, honors or fame. If such possessions are misdirected, forcibly or unjustly obtained, misappropriated or even viewed with attachment, they will be a source of pain and sorrow to the possessors.

Instead of trying to rationalize suffering, Buddhism takes suffering for granted and seeks the cause to eradicate it. Suffering exists as long as there is craving. It can only be annihilated by treading the Noble Eightfold Path and attaining the supreme bliss of Nibbāna.

These four Truths can be verified by experience. Hence the Buddha Dhamma is not based on the fear of the unknown, but is founded on the bedrock of facts which can be tested by ourselves and verified by experience. Buddhism is, therefore rational and intensely practical.

Such a rational and practical system cannot contain mysteries or esoteric doctrines. Blind faith, therefore, is foreign to Buddhism. Where there is no blind faith there cannot be any coercion or persecution or fanaticism. To the unique credit of Buddhism it must be said that throughout its peaceful march of 2500 years no drop of blood was shed in the name of the Buddha, no mighty monarch wielded his powerful sword to propagate the Dhamma, and no conversion was made either by force or by repulsive methods. Yet, the Buddha was the

first and the greatest missionary that lived on earth.

Aldous Huxley writes: "Alone of all the great world religions Buddhism made its way without persecution censorship or inquisition."

Lord Russell remarks: "Of the great religions of history, I prefer Buddhism, especially in its earliest forms; because it has had the smallest element of persecution."

In the name of Buddhism no altar was reddened with the blood of a Hypatia, no Bruno was burnt alive.

Buddhism appeals more to the intellect than to the emotion. It is concerned more with the character of the devotees than with their numerical strength.

On one occasion Upāli, a follower of Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, approached the Buddha and was so pleased with the Buddha's exposition of the Dhamma that he instantly expressed his desire to become a follower of the Buddha. But the Buddha cautioned him, saying:

"Of a verity, O householder, make a thorough investigation. It is well for a distinguished man like you to make (first) a thorough investigation."

Upāli, who was overjoyed at this unexpected remark of the Buddha, said:

"Lord, had I been a follower of another religion, its adherents would have taken me round the streets in a procession proclaiming that such and such a millionaire had renounced his former faith and embraced theirs. But, Lord, Your Reverence advises me to investigate further. The more pleased am I with this remark of yours. For the second time, Lord, I seek refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma and the Saṅgha."

Buddhism is saturated with this spirit of free enquiry and complete tolerance. It is the teaching of the open mind and the sympathetic heart, which, lighting and warming the whole universe with its twin rays of wisdom and

compassion, sheds its genial glow on every being struggling in the ocean of birth and death.

The Buddha was so tolerant that He did not even exercise His power to give commandments to His lay followers. Instead of using the imperative, He said: "It behooves you to do this — It behooves you not to do this." He commands not but does exhort.

This tolerance the Buddha extended to men, women and all living beings.

It was the Buddha who first attempted to abolish slavery and vehemently protested against the degrading caste system which was firmly rooted in the soil of India. In the Word of the Buddha it is not by mere birth one becomes an outcast or a noble, but by one's actions. Caste or color does not preclude one from becoming a Buddhist or from entering the Order. Fishermen, scavengers, courtesans, together with warriors and Brahmans, were freely admitted to the Order and enjoyed equal privileges and were also given positions of rank. Upāli, the barber, for instance, was made in preference to all other the chief in matters pertaining to Vinaya discipline. The timid Sunita, the scavenger, who attained Arhatship was admitted by the Buddha Himself into the Order. Aṅgulimāla, the robber and criminal, was converted to a compassionate saint. The fierce Ālavaka sought refuge in the Buddha and became a saint. The courtesan Ambapāli entered the Order and attained Arhatship. Such instances could easily be multiplied from the Tipiṭaka to show that the portals of Buddhism were wide open to all, irrespective of caste, color or rank.

It was also the Buddha who raised the status of downtrodden women and not only brought them to a realization of their importance to society but also founded the first celibate religious order for women with rules and regulations.

The Buddha did not humiliate women, but only regarded them as feeble by nature. He saw the innate good of both men and women

and assigned to them their due places in His teaching. Gender is no barrier to attaining Sainthood.

Sometimes the Pāli term used to denote women is Mātugāma, which means “mother-folk” or “society of mothers.” As a mother, woman holds an honorable place in Buddhism. Even the wife is regarded as “best friend” (parama sakhā) of the husband.

Hasty critics are only making *ex parte* statements when they reproach Buddhism with being inimical to women. Although at first the Buddha refused to admit women into the Order on reasonable grounds, yet later He yielded to the entreaties of His foster-mother, Pajāpati Gotami, and founded the Bhikkhuni Order. Just as the Arahats Sārīputta and Moggallāna were made the two chief disciples in the Order of monks, even so he appointed Arahats Khema and Uppalavaṇṇā as the two chief female disciples. Many other female disciples too were named by the Buddha Himself as His distinguished and pious followers.

On one occasion the Buddha said to King Kosala who was displeased on hearing that a daughter was born to him:

A woman child, O Lord of men; may prove  
Even a better offspring than a male.

Many women, who otherwise would have fallen into oblivion, distinguished themselves in various ways, and gained their emancipation by following the Dhamma and entering the Order. In this new Order, which later proved to be a great blessing to many women, queens, princesses, daughters of noble families, widows, bereaved mothers, destitute women, pitiable courtesans — all, despite their caste or rank, met on a common platform, enjoyed perfect consolation and peace, and breathed that free atmosphere which is denied to those cloistered in cottages and palatial mansions.

It was also the Buddha who banned the sacrifice of poor beasts and admonished His followers to extend their loving kindness (Mettā) to all living beings — even to the

tinest creature that crawls at one's feet. No man has the power or the right to destroy the life of another as life is precious to all.

A genuine Buddhist would exercise this loving-kindness towards every living being and identify himself with all, making no distinction whatsoever with regard to caste, color or sex.

It is this Buddhist Mettā that attempts to break all the barriers which separate one from another. There is no reason to keep aloof from others merely because they belong to another persuasion or another nationality. In that noble Toleration Edict which is based on Culla-Vyuha and Mahā-Vyuha Suttas, Asoka says: “Concourse alone is best, that is, all should harken willingly to the doctrine professed by others.”

Buddhism is not confined to any country or any particular nation. It is universal. It is not nationalism which, in other words, is another form of caste system founded on a wider basis. Buddhism, if it be permitted to say so, is supernationalism.

To a Buddhist there is no far or near, no enemy or foreigner, no renegade or untouchable, since universal love realized through understanding has established the brotherhood of all living beings. A real Buddhist is a citizen of the world. He regards the whole world as his motherland and all as his brothers and sisters.

Buddhism is, therefore, unique, mainly owing to its tolerance, non-aggressiveness, rationality, practicability, efficacy and universality. It is the noblest of all unifying influences and the only lever that can uplift the world.

These are some of the salient features of Buddhism, and amongst some of the fundamental doctrines may be said — Kamma or the Law of Moral Causation, the Doctrine of Rebirth, Anattā and Nibbāna.

---

## Chapter VI

## Kamma or the Law of Moral Causation

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

Why, it may be questioned, should one be an inferior and another a superior? Why should one be wrested from the hands of a fond mother when he has scarcely seen a few summers, and another should perish in the flower of manhood, or at the ripe age of eighty or hundred? Why should one be sick and infirm, and another strong and healthy? Why should one be handsome, and another ugly and hideous, repulsive to all? Why should one be brought up in the lap of luxury, and another in absolute poverty, steeped in misery? Why should one be born a millionaire and another a pauper? Why should one be born with saintly characteristics, and another with criminal tendencies? Why should some be linguists, artists, mathematicians or musicians from the very cradle? Why should some be congenitally blind, deaf and deformed? Why should some be blessed and others cursed from their birth?

These are some problems that perplex the minds of all thinking men. How are we to account for all this unevenness of the world, this inequality of mankind?

Is it due to the work of blind chance or accident?

There is nothing in this world that happens by blind chance or accident. To say that anything happens by chance, is no more true than that this book has come here of itself. Strictly speaking, nothing happens to man that he does not deserve for some reason or another.

Could this be the fiat of an irresponsible Creator?

Huxley writes:

"If we are to assume that anybody has designedly set this wonderful universe going, it is perfectly clear to me that he is no more entirely benevolent and just in any intelligible sense of the words, than that he is malevolent and unjust."

According to Einstein:

"If this being (God) is omnipotent, then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also his work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an Almighty Being.

"In giving out punishments and rewards, he would to a certain extent be passing judgment on himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to him."

"According to the theological principles man is created arbitrarily and without his desire and at the moment of his creation is either blessed or damned eternally. Hence man is either good or evil, fortunate or unfortunate, noble or depraved, from the first step in the process of his physical creation to the moment of his last breath, regardless of his individual desires, hopes, ambitions, struggles or devoted prayers. Such is theological fatalism."

— Spencer Lewis

As Charles Bradlaugh says:

"The existence of evil is a terrible stumbling block to the Theist. Pain, misery, crime, poverty confront the advocate of eternal goodness and challenge with unanswerable

potency his declaration of Deity as all-good, all-wise, and all-powerful.”

In the words of Schopenhauer:

“Whoever regards himself as having become out of nothing must also think that he will again become nothing; for an eternity has passed before he was, and then a second eternity had begun, through which he will never cease to be, is a monstrous thought.

“If birth is the absolute beginning, then death must be his absolute end; and the assumption that man is made out of nothing leads necessarily to the assumption that death is his absolute end.”

Commenting on human sufferings and God, Prof. J.B.S. Haldane writes:

“Either suffering is needed to perfect human character, or God is not Almighty. The former theory is disproved by the fact that some people who have suffered very little but have been fortunate in their ancestry and education have very fine characters. The objection to the second is that it is only in connection with the universe as a whole that there is any intellectual gap to be filled by the postulation of a deity. And a creator could presumably create whatever he or it wanted.”

Lord Russell states:

“The world, we are told, was created by a God who is both good and omnipotent. Before He created the world he foresaw all the pain and misery that it would contain. He is therefore responsible for all of it. It is useless to argue that the pain in the world is due to sin. If God knew in advance the sins of which man would be guilty, He was clearly responsible for all the consequences of those sins when He decided to create man.”

In “Despair,” a poem of his old age, Lord Tennyson thus boldly attacks God, who, as recorded in Isaiah, says, “I make peace and create evil.” (Isaiah, xiv. 7.)

“What! I should call on that infinite love that has served us so well? Infinite cruelty,

rather that made everlasting hell, Made us, foreknew us, foredoomed us, and does what he will with his own. Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us groan.”

Surely “the doctrine that all men are sinners and have the essential sin of Adam is a challenge to justice, mercy, love and omnipotent fairness.”

Some writers of old authoritatively declared that God created man in his own image. Some modern thinkers state, on the contrary, that man created God in his own image. With the growth of civilization man’s concept of God also became more and more refined.

It is however, impossible to conceive of such a being either in or outside the universe.

Could this variation be due to heredity and environment? One must admit that all such chemico-physical phenomena revealed by scientists, are partly instrumental, but they cannot be solely responsible for the subtle distinctions and vast differences that exist amongst individuals. Yet why should identical twins who are physically alike, inheriting like genes, enjoying the same privilege of upbringing, be very often temperamentally, morally and intellectually totally different?

Heredity alone cannot account for these vast differences. Strictly speaking, it accounts more plausibly for their similarities than for most of the differences. The infinitesimally minute chemico-physical germ, which is about 30 millionth part of an inch across, inherited from parents, explains only a portion of man, his physical foundation. With regard to the more complex and subtle mental, intellectual and moral differences we need more enlightenment. The theory of heredity cannot give a satisfactory explanation for the birth of a criminal in a long line of honorable ancestors, the birth of a saint or a noble man in a family of evil repute, for the arising of infant prodigies, men of genius and great religious teachers.

According to Buddhism this variation is due not only to heredity, environment, “nature

and nurture,” but also to our own kamma, or in other words, to the result of our own inherited past actions and our present deeds. We ourselves are responsible for our own deeds, happiness and misery. We build our own hells. We create our own heavens. We are the architects of our own fate. In short we ourselves are our own kamma.

On one occasion<sup>9</sup> a certain young man named Subha approached the Buddha, and questioned why and wherefore it was that among human beings there are the low and high states.

“For,” said he, “we find amongst mankind those of brief life and those of long life, the hale and the ailing, the good looking and the ill-looking, the powerful and the powerless, the poor and the rich, the low-born and the high-born, the ignorant and the intelligent.”

The Buddha briefly replied: “Every living being has kamma as its own, its inheritance, its cause, its kinsman, its refuge. Kamma is that which differentiates all living beings into low and high states.”

He then explained the cause of such differences in accordance with the law of moral causation.

Thus from a Buddhist standpoint, our present mental, intellectual, moral and temperamental differences are mainly due to our own actions and tendencies, both past the present.

Kamma, literally, means action; but, in its ultimate sense, it means the meritorious and demeritorious volition (*Kusala Akusala Cetanā*). Kamma constitutes both good and evil. Good gets good. Evil gets evil. Like attracts like. This is the law of Kamma.

As some Westerners prefer to say Kamma is “action-influence.”

We reap what we have sown. What we sow we reap somewhere or some when. In one sense we are the result of what we were; we will be the result of what we are. In another sense, we are not totally the result of what we

were and we will not absolutely be the result of what we are. For instance, a criminal today may be a saint tomorrow.

Buddhism attributes this variation to Kamma, but it does not assert that everything is due to Kamma.

If everything were due to Kamma, a man must ever be bad, for it is his Kamma to be bad. One need not consult a physician to be cured of a disease, for if one’s Kamma is such one will be cured.

According to Buddhism, there are five orders or processes (*Niyāmas*) which operate in the physical and mental realms:

- i. Kamma Niyāma, order of act and result, e.g., desirable and undesirable acts produce corresponding good and bad results.
- ii. Utu Niyāma, physical (inorganic) order, e.g., seasonal phenomena of winds and rains.
- iii. Bīja Niyāma, order of germs or seeds (physical organic order); e.g., rice produced from rice-seed, sugary taste from sugar cane or honey etc. The scientific theory of cells and genes and the physical similarity of twins may be ascribed to this order.
- iv. Citta Niyāma, order of mind or psychic law, e.g., processes of consciousness (*Citta vithi*), power of mind etc.
- v. Dhamma Niyāma, order of the norm, e.g., the natural phenomena occurring at the advent of a Bodhisatta in his last birth, gravitation, etc.

Every mental or physical phenomenon could be explained by these all-embracing five orders or processes which are laws in themselves.

Kamma is, therefore, only one of the five orders that prevail in the universe. It is a law in itself, but it does not thereby follow that there should be a law-giver. Ordinary laws of nature, like gravitation, need no law-giver. It operates in its own field without the intervention of an external independent ruling agency.

Nobody, for instance, has decreed that fire should burn. Nobody has commanded that water should seek its own level. No scientist has ordered that water should consist of H<sub>2</sub>O, and that coldness should be one of its properties. These are their intrinsic characteristics. Kamma is neither fate nor predestination imposed upon us by some mysterious unknown power to which we must helplessly submit ourselves. It is one's own doing reacting on oneself, and so one has the possibility to divert the course of Kamma to some extent. How far one diverts it depends on oneself.

It must also be said that such phraseology as rewards and punishments should not be allowed to enter into discussions concerning the problem of Kamma. For Buddhism does not recognize an Almighty Being who rules His subjects and rewards and punishes them accordingly. Buddhists, on the contrary, believe that sorrow and happiness one experiences are the natural outcome of one's own good and bad actions. It should be stated that Kamma has both the continuative and the retributive principle.

Inherent in Kamma is the potentiality of producing its due effect. The cause produces the effect; the effect explains the cause. Seed produces the fruit; the fruit explains the seed as both are inter-related. Even so Kamma and its effect are inter-related; "the effect already blooms in the cause."

A Buddhist who is fully convinced of the doctrine of Kamma does not pray to another to be saved but confidently relies on himself for his purification because it teaches individual responsibility.

It is this doctrine of Kamma that gives him consolation, hope, self reliance and moral courage. It is this belief in Kamma "that validates his effort, kindles his enthusiasm," makes him ever kind, tolerant and considerate. It is also this firm belief in Kamma that prompts him to refrain from evil, do good and be good without being frightened of any punishment or tempted by any reward.

It is this doctrine of Kamma that can explain the problem of suffering, the mystery of so-called fate or predestination of other religions, and above all the inequality of mankind.

Kamma and rebirth are accepted as axiomatic.

---

## Chapter VII

### Re-birth

As long as this Kammic force exists there is re-birth, for beings are merely the visible manifestation of this invisible Kammic force. Death is nothing but the temporary end of this temporary phenomenon. It is not the complete annihilation of this so-called being. The organic life has ceased, but the Kammic force which hitherto actuated it has not been destroyed. As the Kammic force remains entirely undisturbed by the disintegration of the fleeting body, the passing away of the present dying thought-moment only conditions a fresh consciousness in another birth.

It is Kamma, rooted in ignorance and craving, that conditions rebirth. Past Kamma conditions the present birth; and present Kamma, in combination with past Kamma, conditions the future. The present is the offspring of the past, and becomes, in turn, the parent of the future.

If we postulate a past, present, and a future life, then we are at once faced with the alleged mysterious problem — "What is the ultimate origin of life?"

Either there must be a beginning or there cannot be a beginning for life.

One school, in attempting to solve the problem, postulates a first cause, God, viewed as a force or as an Almighty Being.

Another school denies a first cause for, in common experience, the cause ever becomes the effect and the effect becomes the cause. In a circle of cause and effect a first cause is inconceivable. According to the former, life

has had a beginning, according to the latter, it is beginningless.

From the scientific standpoint, we are the direct products of the sperm and ovum cells provided by our parents. As such life precedes life. With regard to the origin of the first protoplasm of life, or colloid, scientists plead ignorance.

According to Buddhism we are born from the matrix of action (Kammayoni). Parents merely provide an infinitesimally small cell. As such, being precedes being. At the moment of conception it is past Kamma that conditions the initial consciousness that vitalizes the fetus. It is this invisible Kammic energy, generated from the past birth that produces mental phenomena and the phenomenon of life in an already extant physical phenomenon, to complete the trio that constitutes man.

For a being to be born here a being must die somewhere. The birth of a being, which strictly means the arising of the five aggregates or psycho-physical phenomena in this present life, corresponds to the death of a being in a past life; just as, in conventional terms, the rising of the sun in one place means the setting of the sun in another place. This enigmatic statement may be better understood by imagining life as a wave and not as a straight line. Birth and death are only two phases of the same process. Birth precedes death, and death, on the other hand, precedes birth. The constant succession of birth and death in connection with each individual life flux constitutes what is technically known as *Saṃsāra* — recurrent wandering.

What is the ultimate origin of life?

The Buddha declares:

“Without cognizable end is this *Saṃsāra*. A first beginning of beings, who, obstructed by ignorance and fettered by craving, wander and fare on, is not to be perceived.”

This life-stream flows *ad infinitum*, as long as it is fed by the muddy waters of ignorance and craving. When these two are completely

cut off, then only, if one so wishes, does the stream cease to flow, rebirth ends as in the case of the Buddhas and Arahats. An ultimate beginning of this life-stream cannot be determined, as a stage cannot be perceived when this life-force was not fraught with ignorance and craving.

The Buddha has here referred merely to the beginning of the life-stream of living beings. It is left to scientists to speculate on the origin and the evolution of the universe. The Buddha does not attempt to solve all the ethical and philosophical problems that perplex mankind. Nor does He deal with theories and speculations that tend neither to edification nor to enlightenment. Nor does He demand blind faith from His adherents. He is chiefly concerned with the problem of suffering and its destruction. With but this one practical and specific purpose in view, all irrelevant side issues are completely ignored.

But how are we to believe that there is a past existence?

The most valuable evidence Buddhists cite in favor of rebirth is the Buddha, for He developed a knowledge which enabled Him to read past and future lives.

Following His instructions, His disciples also developed this knowledge and were able to read their past lives to a great extent.

Even some Indian Rishis, before the advent of the Buddha, were distinguished for such psychic powers as clairaudience, clairvoyance, thought-reading, remembering past births, etc.

There are also some persons, who probably in accordance with the laws of association, spontaneously develop the memory of their past birth, and remember fragments of their previous lives. Such cases are very rare, but those few well-attested, respectable cases tend to throw some light on the idea of a past birth. So are the experiences of some modern dependable psychics and strange cases of alternating and multiple personalities.

In hypnotic states some relate experiences of their past lives; while a few others, read the past lives of others and even heal diseases.<sup>10</sup>

Sometimes we get strange experiences which cannot be explained but by rebirth.

How often do we meet persons whom we have never met, and yet instinctively feel that they are quite familiar to us? How often do we visit places, and yet feel impressed that we are perfectly acquainted with those surroundings?

The Buddha tells us:

“Through previous associations or present advantage, that old love springs up again like the lotus in the water.”

Experiences of some reliable modern psychics, ghostly phenomena, spirit communications, strange alternating and multiple personalities and so on shed some light upon this problem of rebirth.

Into this world come Perfect Ones like the Buddhas and highly developed personalities. Do they evolve suddenly? Can they be the products of a single existence?

How are we to account for great characters like Buddhaghosa, Panini, Kalidasa, Homer and Plato; men of genius like Shakespeare, infant prodigies like Pascal, Mozart, Beethoven, Raphael, Ramanujan, etc.?

Heredity alone cannot account for them. “Else their ancestry would disclose it, their posterity, even greater than themselves, demonstrate it.”

Could they rise to such lofty heights if they had not lived noble lives and gained similar experiences in the past? Is it by mere chance that they are born to those particular parents and placed under those favorable circumstances?

The few years that we are privileged to spend here or for the most five score years must certainly be an inadequate preparation for eternity.

If one believes in the present and in the future, it is quite logical to believe in the past. The present is the offspring of the past, and acts in turn as the parent of the future.

If there are reasons to believe that we have existed in the past, then surely there are no reasons to disbelieve that we shall continue to exist after our present life has apparently ceased.

It is indeed a strong argument in favor of past and future lives that “in this world virtuous persons are very often unfortunate and vicious persons prosperous.”

A Western writer says:

“Whether we believe in a past existence or not, it forms the only reasonable hypothesis which bridges certain gaps in human knowledge concerning certain facts of every day life. Our reason tells us that this idea of past birth and Kamma alone can explain the degrees of difference that exist between twins, how men like Shakespeare with a very limited experience are able to portray with marvelous exactitude the most diverse types of human character, scenes and so forth of which they could have no actual knowledge, why the work of the genius invariably transcends his experience, the existence of infant precocity, the vast diversity in mind and morals, in brain and physique, in conditions, circumstances and environment observable throughout the world, and so forth.”

It should be stated that this doctrine of rebirth can neither be proved nor disproved experimentally, but it is accepted as an evidentially verifiable fact.

The cause of this Kamma, continues the Buddha, is *avijjā* or ignorance of the Four Noble Truths. Ignorance is, therefore, the cause of birth and death; and its transmutation into knowingness or *vijjā* is consequently their cessation.

The result of this analytical method is summed up in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

## Chapter VIII

## Paṭicca Samuppāda

Paṭicca means because of, or dependent upon: Samuppāda “arising or origination.” Paṭicca Samuppāda, therefore, literally means — “Dependent Arising” or “Dependent Origination.”

It must be borne in mind that Paṭicca Samuppāda is only a discourse on the process of birth and death and not a theory of the ultimate origin of life. It deals with the cause of rebirth and suffering, but it does not in the least attempt to show the evolution of the world from primordial matter.

Ignorance (Avijjā) is the first link or cause of the wheel of life. It clouds all right understanding.

Dependent on ignorance of the Four Noble Truths arise activities (Saṅkhārā) — both moral and immoral. The activities whether good or bad rooted in ignorance which must necessarily have their due effects, only tend to prolong life’s wandering. Nevertheless, good actions are essential to get rid of the ills of life.

Dependent on activities arise rebirth-consciousness (Viññāṇa). This links the past with the present.

Simultaneous with the arising of rebirth-consciousness there come into being mind and body (Nāma-rūpa).

The six senses (Saḷāyatana) are the inevitable consequences of mind and body.

Because of the six senses contact (Phassa) sets in. Contact leads to feeling (Vedanā).

These five — viz., consciousness, mind and matter, six senses, contact and feeling — are the effects of past actions and are called the passive side of life.

Dependent on feeling arises craving (Taṇhā). Craving results in grasping (Upādāna). Grasping is the cause of Kamma (Bhava) which in its turn, conditions future

birth (Jāti). Birth is the inevitable cause of old age and death (Jarā-maraṇa).

If on account of cause effect comes to be, then if the cause ceases, the effect also must cease.

The reverse order of the Paṭicca Samuppāda will make the matter clear.

Old age and death are possible in and with a psychophysical organism. Such an organism must be born; therefore it pre-supposes birth. But birth is the inevitable result of past deeds or Kamma. Kamma is conditioned by grasping which is due to craving. Such craving can appear only where feeling exists. Feeling is the outcome of contact between the senses and objects. Therefore it presupposes organs of senses which cannot exist without mind and body. Where there is a mind there is consciousness. It is the result of past good and evil. The acquisition of good and evil is due to ignorance of things as they truly are.

The whole formula may be summed up thus:

Dependent on Ignorance arise Activities (Moral and Immoral)

Dependent on Activities arises Consciousness (Re-birth Consciousness)

Dependent on Consciousness arise Mind and Matter

Dependent on Mind and Matter arise the six Spheres of Sense

Dependent on the Six Spheres of Sense arises Contact

Dependent on Contact arises Feeling

Dependent on Feeling arises Craving

Dependent on Craving arises Grasping

Dependent on Grasping arise Actions (Kamma)

Dependent on Actions arises Rebirth

Dependent on Birth arise Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief, and Despair.

Thus does the entire aggregate of suffering arise. The first two of these twelve pertain to the past, the middle eight to the present, and the last two to the future.

The complete cessation of Ignorance leads to the cessation of Activities.

The cessation of Activities leads to the cessation of Consciousness.

The cessation of Consciousness leads to the cessation of mind and matter.

The cessation of Mind and Matter leads to the cessation of the six Spheres of Sense.

The cessation of the six Spheres of Sense leads to the cessation of Contact,

The cessation of Contact leads to the cessation of Feeling.

The cessation of Feeling leads to the cessation of Craving.

The cessation of Craving leads to the cessation of Grasping.

The cessation of Grasping leads to the cessation of Actions.

The cessation of Actions leads to the cessation of Re-birth.

The cessation of Re-birth leads to the cessation of Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief, and Despair.

Thus does the cessation of this entire aggregate of suffering result.

This process of cause and effect continues ad infinitum. The beginning of this process cannot be determined as it is impossible to say whence this life-flux was encompassed by nescience. But when this nescience is turned into knowledge, and the life-flux is diverted into Nibbānadhātu, then the end of the life process of Saṃsāra comes about.

This Buddhist doctrine of re-birth should be distinguished from the theory of re-incarnation which implies the transmigration of a soul and its invariable material rebirth. Buddhism denies the existence of an unchanging or eternal soul created by a God or emanating from a Divine Essence (Paramatma).

If the immortal soul, which is supposed to be the essence of man, is eternal, there cannot be either a rise or a fall. Besides one cannot understand why “different souls are so variously constituted at the outset.”

To prove the existence of endless felicity in an eternal heaven and unending torments in an eternal hell, an immortal soul is absolutely necessary. Otherwise, what is it that is punished in hell or rewarded in heaven?

“It should be said,” writes Bertrand Russell, “that the old distinction between soul and body has evaporated quite as much because ‘matter’ has lost its solidity as mind has lost its spirituality. Psychology is just beginning to be scientific. In the present state of psychology belief in immortality can at any rate claim no support from science.”

Buddhists do agree with Russell when he says “there is obviously some reason in which I am the same person as I was yesterday, and, to take an even more obvious example if I simultaneously see a man and hear him speaking, there is some sense in which the ‘I’ that sees is the same as the ‘I’ that hears.”

Till recently scientists believed in an indivisible and indestructible atom. “For sufficient reasons physicists have reduced this atom to a series of events. For equally good reasons psychologists find that mind has not the identity of a single continuing thing but is a series of occurrences bound together by certain intimate relations. The question of immortality, therefore, has become the question whether these intimate relations exist between occurrences connected with a living body and

other occurrence which take place after that body is dead.”

As C.E.M. Joad says in “The Meaning of Life,” matter has since disintegrated under our very eyes. It is no longer solid; it is no longer enduring; it is no longer determined by compulsive causal laws; and more important than all, it is no longer known.

The so-called atoms, it seems, are both “divisible and destructible.” The electrons and protons that compose atoms “can meet and annihilate one another while their persistence, such as it is, is rather that of a wave lacking fixed boundaries, and in process of continual change both as regards shape and position than that of a thing.”<sup>11</sup>

Bishop Berkeley who showed that this so-called atom is a metaphysical fiction held that there exists a spiritual substance called the soul.

Hume, for instance, looked into consciousness and perceived that there was nothing except fleeting mental states and concluded that the supposed “permanent ego” is non-existent.

“There are some philosophers,” he says, “who imagine we are every moment conscious of what we call ‘ourselves,’ that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence and so we are certain, both of its perfect identity and simplicity. For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call ‘myself’ I always stumble on some particular perception or other — of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch myself... and never can observe anything but the perception... nor do I conceive what is further requisite to make me a perfect non-entity.”

Bergson says, “All consciousness is time existence; and a conscious state is not a state that endures without changing. It is a change without ceasing, when change ceases it ceases; it is itself nothing but change.”

Dealing with this question of soul Prof. James says — “The soul-theory is a complete superfluity, so far as accounting for the actually verified facts of conscious experience goes. So far no one can be compelled to subscribe to it for definite scientific reasons.” In concluding his interesting chapter on the soul he says: “And in this book the provisional solution which we have reached must be the final word: the thoughts themselves are the thinkers.”

Watson, a distinguished psychologist, states: “No one has ever touched a soul or has seen one in a test tube or has in any way come into relationship with it as he has with the other objects of his daily experience. Nevertheless to doubt its existence is to become a heretic and once might possibly even had led to the loss of one’s head. Even today a man holding a public position dare not question it.”

The Buddha anticipated these facts some 2500 years ago.

According to Buddhism mind is nothing but a complex compound of fleeting mental states. One unit of consciousness consists of three phases — arising or genesis (uppāda) static or development (thiti), and cessation or dissolution (bhaṅga). Immediately after the cessation stage of a thought moment there occurs the genesis stage of the subsequent thought-moment. Each momentary consciousness of this ever-changing life-process, on passing away, transmits its whole energy, all the indelibly recorded impressions to its successor. Every fresh consciousness consists of the potentialities of its predecessors together with something more. There is therefore, a continuous flow of consciousness like a stream without any interruption. The subsequent thought moment is neither absolutely the same as its predecessor — since that which goes to make it up is not identical — nor entirely another — being the same continuity of Kamma energy. Here there is no identical being but there is an identity in process.

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

It must not be understood that a consciousness is chopped up in bits and joined together like a train or a chain. But, on the contrary, "it persistently flows on like a river receiving from the tributary streams of sense constant accretions to its flood, and ever dispensing to the world without the thought-stuff it has gathered by the way."<sup>12</sup> It has birth for its source and death for its mouth. The rapidity of the flow is such that hardly is there any standard whereby it can be measured even approximately. However, it pleases the commentators to say that the time duration of one thought-moment is even less than one-billionth part of the time occupied by a flash of lightning.

Here we find a juxtaposition of such fleeting mental states of consciousness opposed to a superposition of such states as some appear to believe. No state once gone ever recurs nor is identical with what goes before. But we worldlings, veiled by the web of illusion, mistake this apparent continuity to be something eternal and go to the extent of introducing an unchanging soul, an Attā, the supposed doer and receptacle of all actions to this ever-changing consciousness.

"The so-called being is like a flash of lightning that is resolved into a succession of sparks that follow upon one another with such rapidity that the human retina cannot perceive them separately, nor can the uninstructed conceive of such succession of separate sparks."<sup>13</sup> As the wheel of a cart rests on the ground at one point, so does the being live only for one thought-moment. It is always in the present, and is ever slipping into the irrevocable past. What we shall become is determined by this present thought-moment.

If there is no soul, what is it that is reborn, one might ask. Well, there is nothing to be reborn. When life ceases the Kammic energy re-materializes itself in another form. As Bhikkhu Sīlacāra says: "Unseen it passes whithersoever the conditions appropriate to its visible manifestation are present. Here showing itself as a tiny gnat or worm, there making its presence known in the dazzling magnificence of a Deva or an Archangel's existence. When one mode of its manifestation ceases it merely passes on, and where suitable circumstances offer, reveals itself afresh in another name or form."

Birth is the arising of the psycho-physical phenomena. Death is merely the temporary end of a temporary phenomenon.

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

Buddhism does not totally deny the existence of a personality in an empirical sense. It only attempts to show that it does not exist in an ultimate sense. The Buddhist philosophical term for an individual is Santana, i.e., a flux or a continuity. It includes the mental and physical elements as well. The Kammic force of each individual binds the elements together. This uninterrupted flux or continuity of psycho-physical phenomenon, which is conditioned by Kamma, and not limited only to the present life, but having its source in the beginningless past and its continuation in the future — is the Buddhist substitute for the permanent ego or the immortal soul of other religions.

---

## Chapter X

## Nibbāna

This process of birth and death continues ad infinitum until this flux is transmuted, so to say, to Nibbānadhātu, the ultimate goal of Buddhists.

The Pāli word Nibbāna is formed of Ni and Vāna. Ni is a negative particle and Vāna means lusting or craving. "It is called Nibbāna, in that it is a departure from the craving which is called Vāna, lusting." Literally, Nibbāna means non-attachment.

It may also be defined as the extinction of lust, hatred and ignorance, "The whole world is in flames," says the Buddha. "By what fire is it kindled? By the fire of lust, hatred and ignorance, by the fire of birth, old age, death, pain, lamentation, sorrow, grief and despair it is kindled."

It should not be understood that Nibbāna is a state of nothingness or annihilation owing to the fact that we cannot perceive it with our worldly knowledge. One cannot say that there exists no light just because the blind man does not see it. In that well known story, too, the fish arguing with his friend, the turtle, triumphantly concluded that there exists no land.

Nibbāna of the Buddhists is neither a mere nothingness nor a state of annihilation, but what it is no words can adequately express. Nibbāna is a Dhamma which is "unborn, unoriginated, uncreated and unformed." Hence, it is eternal (Dhuva), desirable (Subha), and happy (Sukha).

In Nibbāna nothing is "eternalized," nor is anything "annihilated," besides suffering.

According to the Books references are made to Nibbāna as Sopādisesa and Anupādisesa. These, in fact, are not two kinds of Nibbāna, but the one single Nibbāna, receiving its name according to the way it is experienced before and after death.

Nibbāna is not situated in any place nor is it a sort of heaven where a transcendental ego resides. It is a state which is dependent upon this body itself. (What?) It is an attainment (Dhamma) which is within the reach of all. Nibbāna is a supramundane state attainable even in this present life. Buddhism does not state that this ultimate goal could be reached only in a life beyond. Here lies the chief difference between the Buddhist conception of Nibbāna and the non-Buddhist conception of an eternal heaven attainable only after death or a union with a God or Divine Essence in an after-life. When Nibbāna is realized in this life with the body remaining, it is called Sopādisesa Nibbāna-dhātu. When an arahant attains Parinibbāna, after the dissolution of his body, without any remainder of physical existence it is called Anupādisesa Nibbāna-dhātu.

In the words of Sir Edwin Arnold:

"If any teach Nirvāna is to cease

Say unto such they lie.

If any teach Nirvāna is to love

Say unto such they err."

From a metaphysical standpoint Nibbāna is deliverance from suffering. From a psychological standpoint Nibbāna is the eradication of egoism. From an ethical standpoint Nibbāna is the destruction of lust, hatred and ignorance.

Does the arahant exist or not after death?

The Buddha replies:

"The arahant who has been released from the five aggregates is deep, immeasurable like the mighty ocean. To say that he is reborn would not fit the case. To say that he is neither reborn nor not reborn would not fit the case."

One cannot say that an arahant is reborn as all passions that condition rebirth are eradicated; nor can one say that the arahant is annihilated for there is nothing to annihilate.

Robert Oppenheimer, a scientist, writes:

“If we ask, for instance, whether the position of the electron remains the same, we must say ‘no’; if we ask whether the electron’s position changes with time, we must say ‘no’; if we ask whether the electron is at rest, we must say ‘no’; if we ask whether it is in motion, we must say ‘no.’

“The Buddha has given such answers when interrogated as to the conditions of man’s self after death<sup>14</sup>; but they are not familiar answers from the tradition of the 17th and 18th century science.”

---

## Chapter XI

### The Path to Nibbāna

How is Nibbāna to be attained?

It is by following the Noble Eight-fold Path which consists of Right Understanding (Sammā-diṭṭhi), Right Thoughts (sammā-saṅkappa), Right Speech (sammā-vācā), Right Actions (sammā-kammanta), Right Livelihood (sammā-ājīva), Right Effort (sammā-vāyāma), Right Mindfulness (sammā-sati), and Right Concentration (sammā-samādhi).

1. Right Understanding, which is the keynote of Buddhism, is explained as the knowledge of the four Noble Truths. To understand rightly means to understand things as they really are and not as they appear to be. This refers primarily to a correct understanding of oneself, because, as the Rohitassa Sutta states, “Dependent on this one-fathom long body with its consciousness” are all the four Truths. In the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Understanding stands at the beginning as well as at its end. A minimum degree of Right Understanding is necessary at the very beginning because it gives the right motivations to the other seven factors of the Path and gives to them correct direction. At the culmination of the practice, Right Understanding has matured into perfect Insight Wisdom (vipassanā-paññā), leading directly to the Stages of Sainthood.

2. Clear vision of right understanding leads to clear thinking. The second factor of the Noble Eight-fold Path is therefore, Right Thoughts (sammā-saṅkappa), which serves the double purpose of eliminating evil thoughts and developing pure thoughts. Right Thoughts, in this particular connection, are three fold. They consist of:

i. Nekkhamma — Renunciation of worldly pleasures or the virtue of selflessness, which is opposed to attachment, selfishness, and possessiveness;

ii. Avyāpāda — Loving-kindness, goodwill, or benevolence, which is opposed to hatred, ill-will, or aversion; and

iii. Ahiṃsā — Harmlessness or compassion, which is opposed to cruelty and callousness.

3. Right Thoughts lead to Right Speech, the third factor. This includes abstinence from falsehood, slandering, harsh words, and frivolous talk.

4. Right Speech must be followed by Right Action which comprises abstinence from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct.

5. Purifying his thoughts, words and deeds at the outset, the spiritual pilgrim tries to purify his livelihood by refraining from the five kinds of trade which are forbidden to a lay-disciple. They are trading in arms, human beings, animals for slaughter, intoxicating drinks and drugs, and poisons.

For monks, wrong livelihood consists of hypocritical conduct and wrong means of obtaining the requisites of monk-life.

6. Right Effort is fourfold, namely:

i. the endeavor to discard evil that has already arisen;

ii. the endeavor to prevent the arising of unarisen evil;

iii. the endeavor to develop unarisen good;

iv. the endeavor to promote the good which has already arisen.

7. Right Mindfulness is constant mindfulness with regard to body, feelings, thoughts, and mind-objects.

8. Right Effort and Right Mindfulness lead to Right Concentration. It is the one-pointedness of mind, culminating in the Jhānas or meditative absorptions.

Of these eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path the first two are grouped under the heading of Wisdom (paññā), the following three under Morality (sīla), and the last three under Concentration (samādhi). But according to the order of development the sequence is as follows:

#### I. Morality (sīla)

Right Speech

Right Action

Right Livelihood

#### II. Concentration (samādhi)

Right Effort

Right Mindfulness

Right Concentration

#### III. Wisdom (paññā)

Right Understanding

Right Thoughts

Morality (sīla) is the first stage on this path to Nibbāna.

Without killing or causing injury to any living creature, man should be kind and compassionate towards all, even to the tiniest creature that crawls at his feet. Refraining from stealing, he should be upright and honest in all his dealings. Abstaining from sexual misconduct which debases the exalted nature of man, he should be pure. Shunning false speech, he should be truthful. Avoiding pernicious drinks that promote heedlessness, he should be sober and diligent.

These elementary principles of regulated behavior are essential to one who treads the path to Nibbāna. Violation of them means the introduction of obstacles on the path which will obstruct his moral progress. Observance of them means steady and smooth progress along the path.

The spiritual pilgrim, disciplining thus his words and deeds, may advance a step further and try to control his senses.

While he progresses slowly and steadily with regulated word and deed and restrained senses, the Kammic force of this striving aspirant may compel him to renounce worldly pleasures and adopt the ascetic life. To him then comes the idea that,

“A den of strife is household life,  
And filled with toil and need;  
But free and high as the open sky  
Is the life the homeless lead.”

It should not be understood that everyone is expected to lead the life of a Bhikkhu or a celibate life to achieve one's goal. One's spiritual progress is expedited by being a Bhikkhu although as a lay follower one can become an arahant. After attaining the third state of Sainthood, one leads a life of celibacy.

Securing a firm footing on the ground of morality, the progressing pilgrim then embarks upon the higher practice of Samādhi, the control and culture of the mind — the second stage on this Path.

Samādhi — is the “one-pointedness of the mind.” It is the concentration of the mind on one object to the entire exclusion of all irrelevant matter.

There are different subjects for meditation according to the temperaments of the individuals. Concentration on respiration is the easiest to gain the one-pointedness of the mind. Meditation on loving-kindness is very beneficial as it is conducive to mental peace and happiness.

Cultivation of the four sublime states — loving-kindness (*Mettā*), compassion (*Karuṇā*), sympathetic joy (*Muditā*), and equanimity (*Upekkhā*) — is highly commendable.

After giving careful consideration to the subject for contemplation, he should choose the one most suited to his temperament. This being satisfactorily settled, he makes a persistent effort to focus his mind until he becomes so wholly absorbed and interested in it, that all other thoughts get *ipso facto* excluded from the mind. The five hindrances to progress — namely, sense-desire, hatred, sloth and torpor, restlessness and brooding and doubts are then temporarily inhibited. Eventually he gains ecstatic concentration and, to his indescribable joy, becomes enwrapt in *Jhāna*, enjoying the calmness and serenity of a one-pointed mind.

When one gains this perfect one-pointedness of the mind it is possible for one to develop the five Supernormal Powers (*Abhiññā*): Divine Eye (*Dibbacakkhu*), Divine Ear (*Dibhasota*), Reminiscence of past births (*Pubbenivāsānussati-ñāṇa*), Thought Reading (*Paracitta vijañña*) and different Psychic Powers (*Iddhividhā*). It must not be understood that those supernormal powers are essential for Sainthood.

Though the mind is now purified there still lies dormant in him the tendency to give vent to his passions, for by concentration, passions are lulled to sleep temporarily. They may rise to the surface at unexpected moments.

Both Discipline and Concentration are helpful to clear the Path of its obstacles but it is Insight (*Vipassanā Paññā*) alone which enables one to see things as they truly are, and consequently reach the ultimate goal by completely annihilating the passions inhibited by *Samādhi*. This is the third and the final stage on the Path of *Nibbāna*.

With his one-pointed mind which now resembles a polished mirror he looks at the world to get a correct view of life. Wherever he turns his eyes he sees nought but the Three

Characteristics — *Anicca* (transiency), *Dukkha* (sorrow) and *anattā* (soul-lessness) standing out in bold relief. He comprehends that life is constantly changing and all conditioned things are transient. Neither in heaven nor on earth does he find any genuine happiness, for every form of pleasure is a prelude to pain. What is transient is therefore painful, and where change and sorrow prevail there cannot be a permanent immortal soul.

Whereupon, of these three characteristics, he chooses one that appeals to him most and intently keeps on developing Insight in that particular direction until that glorious day comes to him when he would realize *Nibbāna* for the first time in his life, having destroyed the three Fetters — self-illusion (*Sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), doubts (*Vicikicchā*), indulgence in (wrongful) rites and ceremonies (*Sīlabbataparāmāsa*).

At this stage he is called a *Sotāpanna* (stream-winner) — one who has entered the stream that leads to *Nibbāna*. As he has not eradicated all Fetters he is reborn seven times at the most.

Summoning up fresh courage, as a result of this glimpse of *Nibbāna*, the Pilgrim makes rapid progress and cultivating deeper Insight becomes a *Sakadāgāmi* (once-returner) by weakening two more Fetters — namely Sense-desire (*Kāmarāga*) and ill-will (*Paṭigha*). He is called a *Sakadāgāmi* because he is reborn on earth only once in case he does not attain *Arhatship*.

It is in the third state of Sainthood — *Anāgāmi* (never-returner) that he completely discards the aforesaid two Fetters. Thereafter, he neither returns to this world nor does he seek birth in the celestial realms, since he has no more desire for sensual pleasures. After death he is reborn in the “Pure Abodes” (*Suddhāvāsa*) a congenial *Brahma* plane, till he attains *Arhatship*.

Now the saintly pilgrim, encouraged by the unprecedented success of his endeavors, makes his final advance and, destroying the remaining

Fetters — namely, lust after life in Realms of Forms (Rūparāga) and Formless Realms (Arūparāga), conceit (Māna), restlessness (Uddhaccā), and ignorance (Avijjā) — becomes a perfect Saint: an arahant, a Worthy One.

Instantly he realizes that what was to be accomplished has been done, that a heavy burden of sorrow has been relinquished, that all forms of attachment have been totally annihilated, and that the Path to Nibbāna has been trodden. The Worthy One now stands on heights more than celestial, far removed from the rebellious passions and defilements of the world, realizing the unutterable bliss of Nibbāna and like many an arahant of old, uttering that paean of joy:

“Goodwill and wisdom, mind by method trained,

The highest conduct on good morals based,

This maketh mortals pure, not rank or wealth.”

As T.H. Huxley states — “Buddhism is a system which knows no God in the Western sense, which denies a soul to man, which counts the belief in immortality a blunder, which refuses any efficacy to prayer and sacrifice, which bids men to look to nothing but their own efforts for salvation, which in its original purity knew nothing of vows of obedience and never sought the aid of the secular arm: yet spread over a considerable moiety of the world with marvelous rapidity — and is still the dominant creed of a large fraction of mankind.”

---

## Appendix

### Ānāpāna Sati, Concentration on Respiration

Ānāpāna Sati is mindfulness on respiration. Āna means inhalation and Apāna exhalation.

Concentration on the breathing process leads to one-pointedness of the mind and ultimately to Insight which enables one to attain Sainthood or Arhatship.

The Buddha also practiced concentration on respiration before He attained Enlightenment.

This harmless concentration may be practiced by any person irrespective of religious beliefs.

Adopting a convenient posture, keep the body erect. Place the right hand over the left hand. Eyes may be closed or half-closed.

Easterners generally sit cross-legged with the body erect. They sit placing the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. This is the full position. Sometimes they adopt the half position, that is by simply placing the right foot on the left thigh or the left foot on the right thigh.

When the triangular position is assumed the whole body is well-balanced.

Those who find the cross-legged posture too difficult may sit comfortably in a chair or any other support sufficiently high to rest the legs on the ground.

It is of no importance which posture one may adopt provided the position is easy and relaxed.

Head should not be drooping. Neck should be straightened so that the nose may be in a perpendicular line with the navel.

Buddhas usually adopt the full lotus position. They sit with half closed eyes looking not more than a distance of three and half feet.

Before the practice, bad air from the lungs should be breathed out slowly through the mouth and then the mouth should be closed.

Now inhale through the nostrils normally, without strain, without force. Mentally count one. Exhale and count two. Inhale and count three. Count up to ten constantly concentrating on the breathing process without thinking of anything else. While doing so one's mind may wander. But one need not be discouraged. Gradually one may increase the number of series — say five series of ten.

Later, one may inhale and pause for a moment, concentrating merely on inhalation without counting. Exhale and pause for a moment. Thus inhale and exhale concentrating on respiration. Some prefer counting as it aids concentration while others prefer not to count. What is essential is concentration and not counting, which is secondary.

When one practices this concentration one feels very peaceful, light in mind and body. After practicing for a certain period a day might come when one may realize that this so-called body is supported by mere breath and that body perishes when breathing ceases. One fully realizes impermanence. Where there is change there cannot be a permanent entity or an immortal soul. Insight can then be developed to attain Arhatship.

It is clear that the object of this concentration on respiration is not merely to gain one-pointedness but also to cultivate Insight to obtain deliverance from suffering.

In some discourses this simple and harmless method of respiration is described as follows:

“Mindfully he inhales; mindfully he exhales.

1. When making a long inhalation he knows: ‘I make a long inhalation’; when making a long exhalation he knows: ‘I make a long exhalation.’

2. When making a short inhalation he knows: ‘I make a short inhalation’; when making a short exhalation he knows: ‘I make a short exhalation.’

3. Clearly perceiving the entire breathing process (i.e., the beginning, middle and end), ‘I will inhale’; thus he trains himself; clearly perceiving the entire breathing process, ‘I will exhale’; thus he trains himself.

[(sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī), actually:—feeling the whole body, I shall breath in..... I shall breath out]

4. Calming the respiration, ‘I will inhale’; thus he trains himself; calming the respirations, ‘I will exhale’; thus he trains himself.”

[(passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ), actually:—with the bodily activities calmed, I shall breath in..... I shall breath out.]

[Editor’s note on points 3 & 4: those yogis with experience of observing bodily sensations as the primary meditation object (vedanānupassanā), know that the entire body, head to feet, is full of feeling. As one practices Ānāpāna, these sensations show themselves to the conscious mind and one may observe their changing nature, allowing them to subside naturally. By feeling the breath (and only the breath—no verbalising or visualising) as a concentration exercise, one does two things. One learns to focus the attention in a trying situation; *and* one tunes one’s attention to the reality of sensation on the physical body, i.e., the tactile sense sphere where suffering is really experienced and where it must be met head-on.]

Mettā, Meditation on Loving-kindness

Be still and peaceful.

Recite three times — Nammo Buddhaya — (Honor to the Buddha)

Recite three times — Araham — (The Pure One)

Recite:

Buddhaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmī — (I go to the Buddha for refuge)

Dhammaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmī — (I go to the Dhamma for refuge)

Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmī — (I go to the Sangha for refuge)<sup>15</sup>

Think thus:

My mind is temporarily pure, free from all impurities; free from lust, hatred and ignorance; free from all evil thoughts.

My mind is pure and clean. Like a polished mirror is my stainless mind.

As a clean and empty vessel is filled with pure water I now fill my clean heart and pure mind with peaceful and sublime thoughts of boundless loving-kindness over-flowing compassion, sympathetic joy and perfect equanimity.

I have now washed my mind and heart of anger, ill will, cruelty, violence, jealousy, envy, passion and aversion.

Think ten times:

May I<sup>16</sup> be well and happy!

May I be free from suffering, disease, grief, worry and anger!

May I be strong, self-confident, healthy and peaceful!

Think thus:

Now I charge every particle of my system, from head to foot, with thoughts of boundless loving-kindness and compassion. I am the embodiment of loving-kindness and compassion. My whole body is saturated with loving-kindness and compassion. I am a stronghold, a fortress of loving-kindness and compassion. I am nothing but loving-kindness and compassion. I have sublimated myself, elevated myself, ennobled myself.

Think ten times:

May I be well and happy!

May I be free from suffering, disease, grief, worry and anger!

May I be strong, self-confident, healthy and peaceful!

Think:

Mentally I create an aura of loving-kindness around me. By means of this aura, I cut off all negative thoughts, hostile vibrations. I am not affected by the evil vibrations of others. I return good for evil, loving-kindness for anger, compassion for cruelty, sympathetic joy for jealousy. I am peaceful and well-balanced in mind. Now I am a fortress of loving-kindness, a stronghold of morality.

What I have gained I now give unto others.

Think of all your near and dear ones at home, individually or collectively, and fill them with thoughts of loving-kindness and wish them peace and happiness, repeating May all beings be well and happy!... Then think of all seen and unseen beings, living near and far, men, women, animals and all living beings, in the East, West, North, South, above and below, and radiate boundless loving-kindness, without any enmity or obstruction, towards all, irrespective of class, creed, color or sex.

Think that all are your brothers and sisters, fellow-beings in the ocean of life. You identify with all. You are one with all.

Repeat ten times, “May all beings be well and happy,” and wish them all peace and happiness.

In the course of your daily life try to translate your thoughts into action as occasion demands.

### **Pāramī, Perfections**

1. May I be generous and helpful! (Dāna — Generosity)

2. May I be well-disciplined and refined in manners! May I be pure and clean in all my dealings! May my thoughts, words and deeds be pure! (Sīla — Morality)

3. May I not be selfish and self-possessive but selfless and disinterested! May I be able to sacrifice my pleasure for the sake of others! (Nekkhamma — Renunciation)

4. May I be wise and be able to see things as they truly are! May I see the light of Truth and lead others from darkness to light! May I be enlightened and be able to enlighten others! May I be able to give the benefit of my knowledge to others! (Paññā — Wisdom)

5. May I be energetic, vigorous and persevering! May I strive diligently until I achieve my goal! May I be fearless in facing dangers and courageously surmount all obstacles! May I be able to serve others to the best of my ability! (Viriya — Energy)

6. May I be ever patient! May I be able to bear and forbear the wrongs of others! May I ever be tolerant and see the good and beautiful in all! (Khanti — Patience)

7. May I ever be truthful and honest! May I not hide the truth to be polite! May I never swerve from the path of Truth! (Sacca — Truthfulness)

8. May I be firm and resolute and have an iron will! May I be soft as a flower and firm as a rock! May I ever be high-principled! (Adhiṭṭhāna — Determination)

9. May I ever be kind, friendly and compassionate! May I be able to regard all as my brothers and sisters and be one with all! (Mettā — Loving-kindness)

10. May I ever be calm, serene, unruffled and peaceful! May I gain a balanced mind! May I have perfect equanimity! (Upekkhā — Equanimity)

May I serve to be perfect!

May I be perfect to serve!

---

Notes:

1. An Awakened or Enlightened One.
2. Lit., Thus who hath come.
3. Literally, the Worthy Ones. They are the enlightened disciples who have destroyed all passions.

4. The Teaching.

5. The Discipline.

6. Bhikkhu Sīlacāra

7. Craving associated with “Eternalism” (Sassatadiṭṭhi) (Comy)

8. Craving associated with “Nihilism” (Ucchedadiṭṭhi) (Comy)

9. Culakamma Vibhaṅga Sutta — Majjhima Nikāya, No. 135.

10. See Many Mansions and The World Within by Gina Cerminara.

11. C.E.M. Joad, The Meaning of Life

12. See Compendium of Philosophy, Trans. by Shwe Zan Aung (Pali Text Society, London) — Introduction p. 12.

13. Compare the cinematograph film where the individual photographs give rise to a notion of movement.

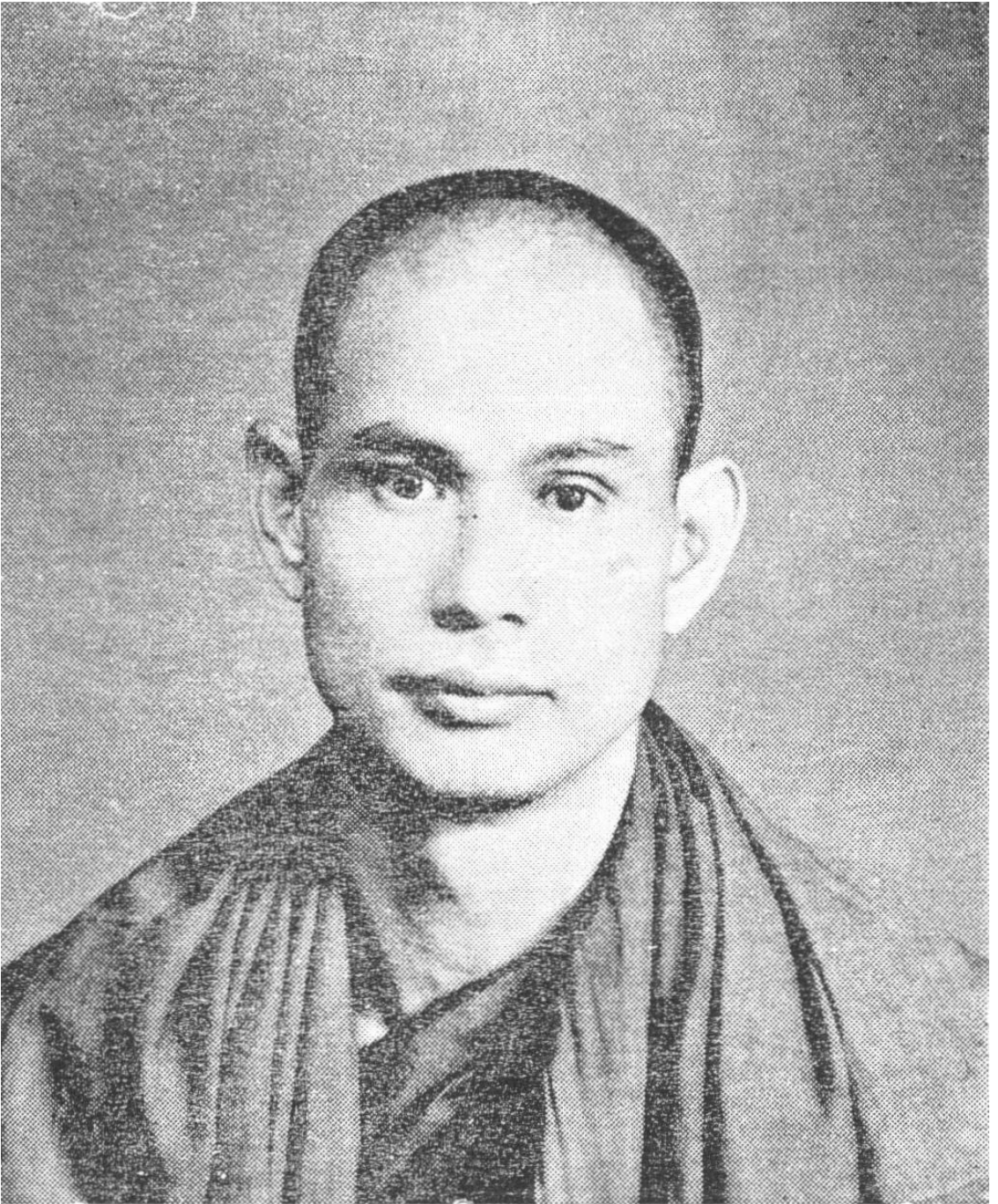
14. Evidently the writer is referring to the state of an arahant after death.

15. This introductory part may be omitted by non-Buddhists.

16. Here the term “I” is used in a conventional sense.

Now, monks, all those who in future time shall be Arahats ... may, I myself who am now Arahāt, a Fully Enlightened One, I am a teacher of the deed, of the efficacy of the deed, of energy to do. Me also does Makkhali, infatuated man, excludes by his doctrine of: There is no doing of a deed; there is nothing done thereby; there is no energy to do.

*Anguttara-Tikāya*, THE BOOK OF THE THREES, Chapter 135.



Ven. U Wisāra of Calcutta

## WAY TO PERFECT PEACE

*By Ven. U Wisāra,*

**BURMA BUDDHIST DHAMMASALA, 10-A, EDEN HOSPITAL ROAD, CALCUTTA-12**

In this world we have not yet fully learnt the art of living nor do we know what is the higher or supreme state beyond the supreme one. We live a worldly life and we think of the world as a paradise. Our sole aim is to seek pleasure by whatever means available to us.

The consideration of the conditions bounding our life has not yet come to our thought rightly and therefore it is essential to ponder on our life and to ask ourselves many questions. Should we be content with our way of living? Since we are born we have so far done what we think best for our happiness; is there then any single work which has been completed to our full satisfaction? Is there anyone who is really completely happy anywhere in this world? The honest answers to these questions must be no". However hard we have worked and enjoyed the worldly pleasures, we are still in thirst and need for more lasting happiness. We have to leave all properties and indeed our life itself sooner or later.

It is this thirst and need, in Buddhism, "Lobha" — "greed", which causes us to suffer. Whatever we have we are not content with and still want some more; then the more we want the more we suffer. That is why the Buddha said "Yam piccham na labhati tam pi dukkham" — not to get what one wants, that also is Suffering. That is true, indeed, in the highest sense of the word. There is nothing but Suffering (dukkha) in this world, and one cannot escape it. "Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā; sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā (All component things are impermanent; all component things are Suffering.) So, we are born in Suffering, live in Suffering and at last decay and die in Suffering.

But we think of the necessities of life in terms of sensual pleasures and we think we are really happy. In point of fact, this pleasurable

sensation cannot be called genuine happiness, because it is merely the happiness of the insect which is flying to the flame which will burn it. The necessities of life are, therefore, hindrances to our goal. We have only unreal and distorted happiness of the senses which is due to ignorance and craving "Avijjā and Taṇhā". Hence, it is said, "*Avijjā taṇhā vasena dve mūlāni*" (ignorance and craving are the two roots). They are the main causes leading to the production of Mind and Form nāma and Rūpa" and to rebirth.

Ignorance is not knowing, not knowing the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering and the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering.

Craving is the very keen desire for sensual pleasure and for rebirth.

If we do not attempt to get rid of these two main roots, ignorance and craving, we shall continue to float on the ocean of suffering. These two roots are not far from us; they are in our hearts and minds always prompting to evil.

It is, therefore, necessary for us to seek the perfect way to the ultimate goal — the permanent release from suffering. It is not easy, but an extremely arduous task. The actual practice of right concentration must be in our daily life. It is based on the faculty of our consciousness.

*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇam,  
kusalassa upasampadā.  
sacittaparivodapanam,  
etaṃ Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*

To abstain from bad action, to produce what is good, to purify one's thought — that is the teaching of the Buddha.

— *Dhammapada. 183.*

### To abstain from bad action.

Bad actions are ten in number, “Akusala kammās” which are caused by Deed, Word and Thought. All bad actions are included in these three.

1. Pānātipāta — killing living creatures;
2. Adinnādāna — stealing others’ properties;
3. Kāmesu micchācāra — sexual misconduct.

These three are evils of Deed.

4. Musāvāda — lying;
5. Pisunavācā — harsh speech;
6. Samphapalāpa — harsh talk.

These four are evils of Word.

8. Abhiṇṇhā — covetousness;
  9. Vyāpāda — ill-will;
  10. Micchādittṭhi — false view.
- These three are evils of Thought.

### To produce what is good.

There are three kinds of good “Kusala kammās” which should be produced.

1. Dāna — offering what is good to others;
2. Sīla — observing the precepts;
3. Bhāvanā — mental development; meditation;
4. Apacayana — respecting the elders;
5. Veyyāvacca — serving or helping others;
6. Pattidāna — transferring one’s merit to others;
7. Pattānumodanā — rejoicing in others’ merits;
8. Dhammasavana — listening to the doctrine;
9. Dhammadesana — delivering the doctrine;
10. Dittṭhijukamma — holding right view.

### To purify one’s mind.

To purify one’s mind is to control the mind to make it cultured and powerful. For this it is necessary to practise the three terms with care:

Sammā Vāyama, Sammā Sati and Sammā Samādhi — Exertion, Mindfulness and Concentration.

1. Sammā Vāyama — exertion to remove the existing evil thoughts that have been remaining in our mind, to keep the mind from being polluted, by fresh evil thoughts and to preserve and to increase the good thoughts.

2. Sammā Sati — mindfulness of all that is happening within our body and mind.

3. Sammā Samādhi — concentration, that is one-pointedness of mind, a fixation of mind on a single object by means of exertion and mindfulness leading to complete awareness.

We have now a powerful microscope, that of concentration. If we look at the world through this microscope, we will obtain a clear and correct view of life, and then if we contemplate what we see, understanding the three characteristics “Tilakkhaṇa” — Anicca, Dukkha and Anattā — Impermanence, Suffering and Soullessness”, we will realize that all things are impermanent, all things are suffering and all things are without a “soul”.

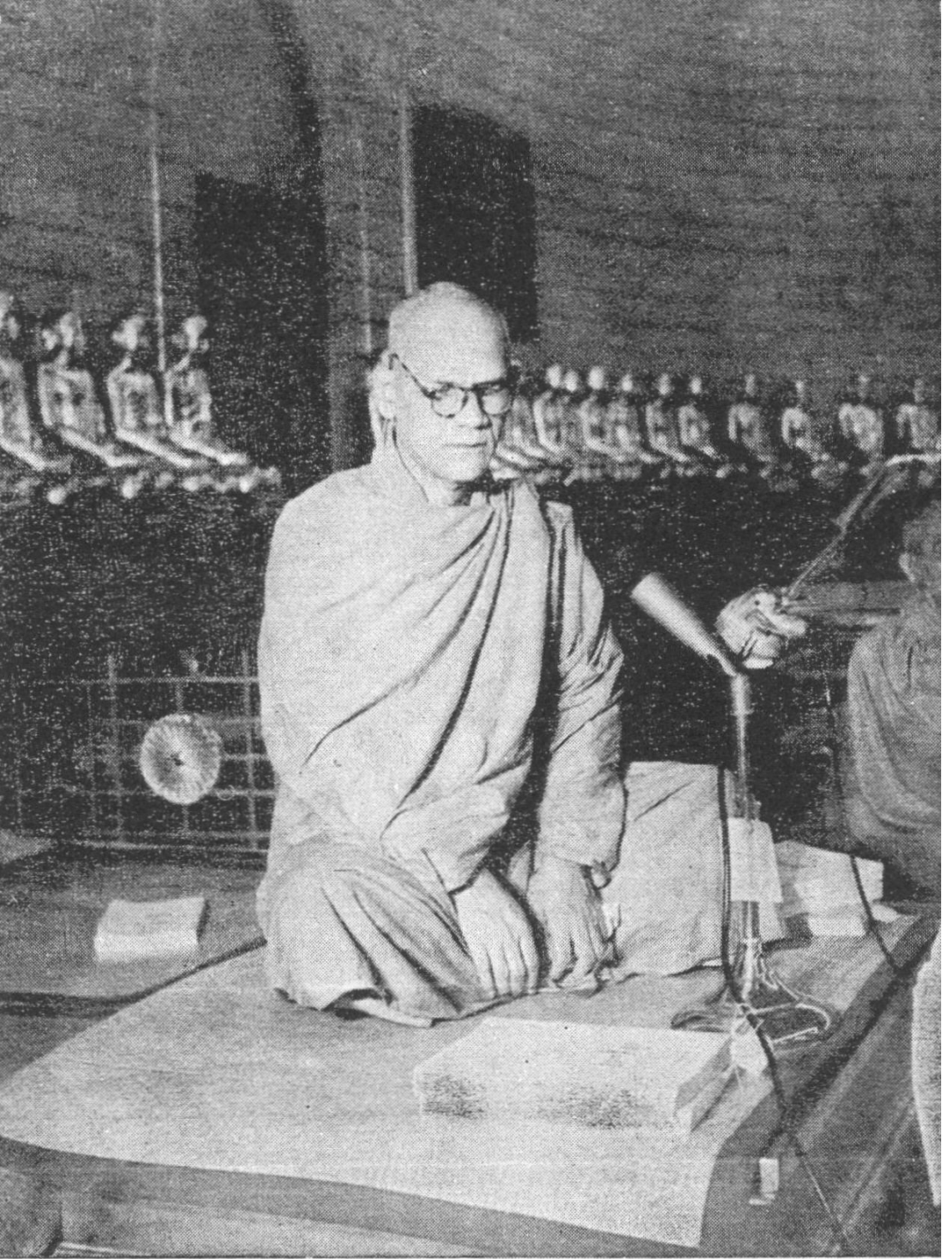
*Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā*

*Sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā*

*Sabbe dhammā anattā.*

Now, we have learnt the fundamental way to perfect peace, let us endeavour to achieve it by practising it and in order to achieve it, let us strive hard in the true path with determination.

PEACE TO ALL LIVING BEINGS.



Ven. Mahāthera Sobhana (Mahāsī Sayadaw), Aggamahāpaṇḍita

# MAHĀSATIPATTHĀNA SUTTA

(Discourse on the Four Applications of Mindfulness)

A SERIES OF BROADCASTS BY VENERABLE MAHATHERA SOBHANA,

MAHASI SAYADAW, *Agga Mahā Paṇḍita*.

Translated by the Editors of the "Light of the Dhamma."

## ONE

The Discourse for exposition is the Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta (the Discourse on the Four applications of Mindfulness). This Sutta is perhaps the most important of the Buddhist Suttas. Why? Because many Vipassanā methods known as *pubba-bhāga magga* (preliminaries to the Path) are fully described therein. It also tells how the various types of special Vipassanā-knowledge come into existence. The Four Noble Truths clarified by *pariññeyya* (Full Comprehension in right knowledge), *pahātabba* (Abandonment; rejection), *sacchikātabba* (Seen with the eyes or wisdom; realization), and *bhāvetabba* (developed by means of meditation), have also been completely and vividly described in this Sutta. In the epilogue there is a firm and bold assurance of Attainment which serves as an encouragement.

‘Whosoever practises these Four Applications of Mindfulness for seven year ... let alone seven years ... for seven days then by him one of the two fruitions may be expected in this life: the Fruition of Holiness or the Fruition of Never Return.’

Should any moderately-witted person make become the Four Applications of Mindfulness in this manner for seven years, then by him one of the two fruitions may be expected: the fruition of Holiness or the Fruition of Never-Return. ... Should any quick-witted person make become these Four Applications of Mindfulness in this manner for seven days, then by him one of the two fruitions may be expected: the Fruition of Holiness or the

Fruition of Never Return. Now, according to this Declaration of assurance, it is evident that one is able to become a Sotapanna or a *Sakadāgāmin* in no long time. Also in the preamble of the Discourse, the Buddha declared concerning this Sutta:

*“Ekāvano ayam maggo, sattānam  
visuddhiyā,*

*sokaparidevānam (samatikkamāya, dukkha  
domanassānam*

*atthan-gamāya, ñāyassa adhi-gamāya,  
nibbānassa*

*sacchikiriya yadidam cattāro  
satipaṭṭhānam.”*

This is the only way, O bhikkhus, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the destruction of suffering and grief, for reaching the right path, for the attainment of Nibbāna, namely, the Four Applications of Mindfulness.

Here, ‘purification’ means ‘to win free from defilements and to become an Arahāt’. This is the only way for the attainment of Nibbāna. The practice of the Four Applications of Mindfulness is the only sure way that leads one to the stage of Sainthood. Well, then, if you wish to become Arahats, free from Defilements, you should practise the Four Applications of Mindfulness. Here, one may say to another: ‘I do not desire to become an Arahāt at once. I only desire to become a Sotapanna so that I may escape the danger of being reborn in the Lower Worlds in my next existence. Will it not be feasible?’ This need not worry you. To become an *Arahāt*, you will have first to become a *Sotapanna*, then a

*Sakadāgāmin* and an *Anāgāmin*. This state can be achieved only after fulfilling the requirements with diligence. One who desires to become a Sotapanna will attain this state only after his Strenuous endeavour. So one who desires only to become a Sotapanna should practise this Satipaṭṭhāna.

‘Ekāyano ayam bhikkhave maggo sokapariddavānam samatikkamāya.’

For the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, this is the only way, O bhikkhus.

In the world, people are oppressed by sorrow and lamentation in the losing of their parents, husbands, wives, children, by being separated from loved ones and by their adverse positions. These troubles can be overcome by this Way of Mindfulness. So, if you wish to attain a state where there is no sorrow and lamentation, and where you can find absolute happiness, you should practise *satipaṭṭhāna* in full.

‘Ekāyano ayam bhikkhave maggo, dukkha domanassānam atthangamāya.’

For the destruction of suffering and grief, this is the only way, O bhikkhus.

*Dukkhā* = *kāyika dukkhā-vedanā* (Bodily disagreeable sensations) and *domanassa* = *cetasikā dukkhā-vedanā* (Mentally disagreeable sensations) are the most dreaded sufferings. They can be totally overcome by this Way of Mindfulness. If you desire to enjoy an absolute happiness free from all kinds of suffering, you should practise this satipaṭṭhāna in full.

‘Ekāyano ayam bhikkhave maggo, ñāyassa adhigamāya, nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya’

‘This is the only way, O bhikkhus, the Noble Eightfold Path, for the attainment of Nibbāna and realising it face to face by means of Insight-Wisdom.’

The Paths of Sainthood, the Fruitions thereof and Nibbāna are the highest good among the Teachings of the Buddha. The way

to attain these is also this Way of Mindfulness. Moreover, this Way of the Application of Mindfulness is conducive to the realisation of the Supramundane Way. If you really have a determination to attain the paths of Sainthood, the Fruitions thereof and Nibbāna in this present life, you have simply to follow the correct method — this Way of Mindfulness. So, I am now expounding this Discourse of the Four Applications of Mindfulness as the path to be followed by those yogīs who have such determination.

In the epilogue of the Sutta, the Omniscient Buddha declared that the following seven advantages can be achieved by practising the Four Applications of Mindfulness:

- (1) the purification of beings;
- (2) the overcoming of sorrow;
- (3) the overcoming of lamentation;
- (4) the destruction of suffering;
- (5) the destruction of grief;
- (6) reaching the right path; and
- (7) the attainment of Nibbāna.

It is evident that these seven advantages are the most desirable to and essential for every being. Every person who desires to possess for himself the knowledge of the Holy paths and the Fruitions thereof, should practise the Four Applications of Mindfulness.

Some people set forth questions of the following nature: ‘By practicing these Four Applications of Mindfulness, can a person fly in the air? Or

What miracles can he perform?’

Those who set forth such questions are not aware of the Assurance of the Buddha Himself, because in that Assurance, Buddha did not mention even the slightest hint of such statements as ‘One would be able to fly in the air, or perform miracles after practising the Four Applications of Mindfulness.’ Those who are aware of this Assurance will not ask such irrelevant questions. However, if such

questions are asked, no Kammaṭṭhāna Teacher will be able to say more than what was assured the Buddha Himself in the epilogue of the Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.

What is meant by ‘*satipaṭṭhāna*’? It means ‘to be ever mindful’ or ‘awareness and attentiveness’. To be mindful about what then? ‘Here, one lives contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending it and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating sensations in the sensations, ardent, clearly comprehending them and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief; he lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief.’

What is meant here is this: One should contemplate<sup>1</sup> the body in the body, sensation in the sensations, taking at the same time a mental note of the physical and mental phenomena as they arise, and without allowing any phenomenon to escape one’s cognition. The Omniscient Buddha declared such contemplations as *Kavanupassī* (Contemplating the body in the body) and *Vedanānupassī* (Contemplating sensations in the sensations). Take for instance the case of ‘going’. Physical action born of mental activity produces bodily expressions in the form of ‘lifting’, ‘pushing’, ‘putting’ or ‘up’, ‘forward’, ‘down’, and a disciple should objectify all causally-conditioned arising-and-vanishing physical phenomena and contemplate the body in the body without leaving any detail in the processes of movement pertaining there to. Such contemplation should be preformed at every step and none of the steps should get left out without being contemplated in such a manner.

Do not take anything else into consideration. If, however, any idea may chance to creep into your mind, you should make a mental note of it. In stretching and bending your hands and legs also you should contemplate the arising and vanishing physical phenomena during the processes of movement. Likewise this holds good for all bodily movements. Do not allow any physical or mental phenomenon to pass by without being contemplated in the above manner. You should contemplate in such a manner that you are always pertaining to the four modes of deportment – walking, standing, sitting, lying and physical and mental phenomena that arise in connection therewith.

In any *dukkha-vedanā* (bodily disagreeable sensations), such as strain, pressing and pain, you should objectify such sensations in the sensations. If a thought or idea arises in your life-continuum, you should objectify thought or idea and contemplate sensations. Again, if such things as agreeableness and disagreeableness in seeing and hearing arise, you should objectify each of them as it arises and contemplate sensations in the sensations.

Although it is stated that a disciple should make a mental note of all physical and mental phenomena as they arise, it will be difficult for a beginner to perceive all of them, and he will find that he was not able to make a mental note of many of them. However, by dint of earnestness, constant application and zeal, if you concentrate in this manner for five or six days, you will strikingly establish yourself in *sati-samādhi* (Attentive Concentration). After that stage you will find that there will be very few phenomena that escape perception and knowledge. At such a stage, every time you perceive any object, your consciousness will be found to have oneness on the object you perceive. This one-pointedness is called *Vipassanā-khaṇika-samādhi* (the Concentration acquired while carrying out the Insight-exercises). When this *samādhi* becomes well established, you will be able to understand clearly all the objects you perceive. In what manner? It is as follows: If you perceive a physical phenomenon, you

<sup>1</sup> Contemplation in the sense of being full aware of and not in pondering over or discursive thinking.

definitely know that it is so, and that the physical phenomenon has in itself no power of knowing sensation. When you perceive a sensation, you understand that this sensation group experiences agreeable or disagreeable sensations. If you cognize any consciousness, you understand that this consciousness group is directed towards the object it objectifies. Moreover, you understand that these objects, perceptions and consciousness arise and vanish then and there. So you understand that all these are nothing but Impermanence, Suffering and mere Law of Cosmic Order, and thus do not take these objects as either pleasant or hateful. Thus you are free from *abhijjhā* (covetousness) and *domanassa* (mentally disagreeable sensation).

You should make a mental note of the physical phenomena and their properties as they arise so as to dispel the Defilements, such as pleasantness and hatefulness, and understand them as Impermanence and Suffering as a 'Law of Cosmic Order'. This is *Kāyā-nupassanā-satipaṭṭhāna* (Contemplation of the body in the body in the Four Applications of Mindfulness.)

Also you should contemplate sensations, consciousness and mental objects as they arise and understand them as Impermanence and Suffering as a 'Law of Cosmic Order'.

The Buddha declared:

*“Kāye kāyā-nupassī viharati, vedanāsu vedānanupassī viharati, citte cittānupassī viharati, dhammesu dhammā-nupassanā viharati, ātāpī sampajāno satimā vinneyya loke abijjhādomanassam.”*

He lives contemplating the body in the body, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief;

He lives contemplating sensations in the sensations, ardent, fully comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief;

He lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness, ardent, fully comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief;

He lives contemplating mental objects in mental objects, ardent, clearly comprehending and mindful, having overcome, in this world, covetousness and grief.

You should contemplate sensations in the sensations, consciousness in consciousness and mental objects in mental objects as they arise, in accordance with the truth. You must also have constant application of mindfulness and understand them in the Ultimate sense. As you know them in this manner, so you are Free from Defilements.

I should like to stress on one very important thing. This Discourse was delivered by the Omniscient Buddha with an Assurance of Attainment. It is a *sanditṭhika-dhamma* (the Teaching that can be tried and proved). It is not like any teachings that one has to be satisfied with by hearsay. If you actually practise the Dhamma, you will be able to realize the Truth here and now. If you desire to test its truth, then get instructions on the satipaṭṭhāna method from an instructor of meditation, and practise ardently for yourself. You will then find the various kinds of knowledge and concentration, as already explained.

## TWO

In the First Part I have mentioned the synopsis of the Sutta and in the present talk I shall describe the analytically expository portion of the Sutta. But, as there are 21 sections in the expository portion, I shall be able to deal herein only with the section on the Four Modes of Deportment. First of all, I should like you to bear in mind that the Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta does not contain any hidden meaning or metaphorical expression, and also I should like you to understand that this Sutta directly explains in a simple manner

all Satipaṭṭāna methods that are conducive to the attainment of the Paths of Sainthood, the Fruitions thereof and Nibbāna. I should therefore like you to listen to the present talk with determination and attentively, keeping in mind at the same time that you will have an opportunity to know the Satipaṭṭāna methods which lead to the attainment of Nibbāna and which were expounded by the Omniscient Buddha.

The Vipassanā practice that leads one to the attainment of Nibbāna is most essential. Only when one understands this *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* precisely, will he be able to attain Nibbāna; otherwise, he is liable to miss the Paths of Sainthood, the Fruitions thereof and Nibbāna. Here, I should like to point out that there are two things that can cause one to miss the Paths, the Fruitions and Nibbāna. They are:

- (1) Pāpamittatā (association with wicked people)
- (2) Kiriya-parihāni (negligence in performance of duty).

‘Pāpamittatā’ means ‘to associate with wicked persons’ or ‘to be under the domination of a wicked master’. The reason why King Ajātasattu could not attain to Deliverance, and missed Nibbāna should be attributed to this ‘Pāpamittatā’, because he listened to the words of Devadatta. It should also be borne in mind that if any one acts according to the instigation of any other person to perform an act that may impede the attainment by him of the Supramundane Paths, the Fruitions thereof and Nibbāna or to the dictates of one who objects to the contemplation of the *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* that leads to Supramundane Paths, the Fruitions thereof and Nibbāna, he is liable to miss the Paths, Fruitions and Nibbāna.

‘Kiriya-parihāni’ means negligence in ‘Preaching’, ‘Hearing’ and ‘Practising’. Of these the first is the duty of a preacher and the others are the duties of a meditating disciple. The teacher should explain the Vipassanā methods thoroughly and completely; otherwise, he will fail in his duty, and on this

account a meditating disciple is liable to miss the Holy Paths, and the fruitions thereof. The disciple, on his part also, should carefully note the instructions given to him by his teacher and practise accordingly. If he does not listen to the instructions and fails in his duty by not practising the Dhamma according to the teacher’s instructions, he is liable to miss the Holy Paths and the fruitions thereof, just as Pessa, who did not listen to the Buddha’s sermon attentively and left his place before the conclusion of the Discourse thus losing an opportunity of attaining Deliverance. Had this Pessa listened to the Discourse up to its end, he could have become a *Sotapanna* (Stream-winner). The Majjhima-Nikāya says: “As Pessa returned home without listening to the Discourse till its end, he lost the opportunity of becoming a *Sotapanna*.” Nowadays too, there may be many who have lost the opportunity of attaining the Path-knowledge for the following reasons:

- (1) Through not listening to the Discourses which expound methods leading to the Paths and Fruitions thereof;
- (2) Through not practising the Dhamma, though they have listened to the Discourses; and
- (3) Through not practising Vipassanā to the end with zeal and fervour.

You should therefore remember that I am now expounding the Discourse on the Four Applications of Mindfulness to fulfill my duty as a teacher, and that you, on your part, will accomplish your duty by carefully listening and then practising *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* with zeal and fervour.

You will now hear the disquisition on the Four Modes of Deportment as declared by the Supremely Enlightened Buddha. Please pay attention to it.

When a disciple is going, he understands: “I am going”; when he is standing, he understands: “I am standing”; when he is sitting, he understands: “I am sitting”; when he is lying down, he understands: “I am lying

down”, or just as his body is disposed so he understands it.

The Satipaṭṭhāna method just mentioned is not a new *Kammaṭṭhāna* method invented by any *Kammaṭṭhāna* teacher. It is the ancient *Kammaṭṭhāna* method which was declared by the Omniscient Buddha 2,500 years ago.

Is it not easy to note that one is going and to understand as such when he is going? Again, is it not easy to note that one is standing, when one is standing; to note that one is sitting, when one is sitting; and to note that one is lying down, when one is lying down?

In summing up the foregoing statements, the phrase “Or just as his body is disposed so he understands” means that a yogī should make a mental note of all states of going, standing, etc. by way of causes and conditions whether they are great or small. Here, if the body is disposed in the “states of the rising and falling of the abdomen of a being”, the noting of these states and the understanding of these as such come under this category. So, when a yogī has a tranquil mind and is not occupied in contemplating any other subject of meditation, he should make a mental note of the rising and falling of the abdomen, in the states in which the body is disposed, and understand as such. Is it not easy to do so? Is it not easy for an intending yogī if he desires to practise Vipassanā according to the method I have just expounded? Yes, it will be easy, because the Buddha declared this method in the simplest way. He declared this method in such a simple way that it is accessible to all — adults, children, males, females, educated people, uneducated people alike. We find that during the lifetime of the Buddha, boys and girls of 7 years of age became *Sotapannas* and Arahats. Again the reason why 5/7th of the population of Sāvattthi became Holy Ones was due to the simplicity of the practising methods. If these methods had to be studied for a long time before entering into practice, such a state of affairs would never arise. If a person were to practise meditation after possessing a good

knowledge of the Abbidhamma, such as Types of Consciousness, Psychic-factors, Courses of Cognition, Material Qualities and the Philosophy of Relations, there would be practically none to practise such *Vipassanā-bhāvana* in those days when people were mostly uneducated. A dull-witted person, as was in the beginning, Venerable Cūlapanna would encounter greater hardship. Working on these premises, it will be clearly seen that all subjects of mental training declared by the Buddha are as simple as the Satipaṭṭhāna method.

Here, when I say that it is simple, I mean that the method is easy to pick up nut, to practise the Dhamma so as to attain Concentration and Wisdom is not easy. It appears to be a hard task after all. It can only be done by right exertion, constant application, zeal and earnestness. With slackness all round, nothing good can be expected.

Returning to the subject of actual practice. In the sentence “he understands that he is going, when he is going”, those who have not realised the word of the Buddha may raise questions in regard to this. The Commentator, Venerable Buddhaghosa, had studied arid also given his explanation. An ignorant person may say to another: ‘In this matter of “going”, readily do dogs know, when they move on, that they are moving. When a yogī knows in the same manner, will not the awareness be similar in both cases?’ Let us hear what the Commentator says. “Yes, it is true that men as well as dogs know when they move that they are moving. But human reason is quite different from animal instinct. The two cases are really diametrically opposite. How? The answer is this: both dogs and ordinary people recognise the physical and mental phenomena and their functionings as *nicca* (Permanence), *sukha* (Pleasure) and *attā* (Soul-essence). Although they may say that they are aware of their ‘going’, they are not aware of this movement, item by item, in a detailed manner, at every time they go, walk or move. They know only very superficially and most of their attention is diverted to other objects. Even

when they pay some attention and thus ‘know’, they do not know that the moving on of the whole body is merely a phase of physical motion born of mental activity called ‘going’. Such a person thinks: ‘The one who desires to go am I. The going is mine too.’ He is swayed by the idea of ‘I am’. These types of people are entirely ignorant of the incessant syntheses and dissolutions of phenomena. They think that the Soul is permanent and unchangeable throughout the whole life. Thus, such kind of awareness, instead of knocking out the concept of a soul, strengthens it more. Awareness of this sort, unaccompanied by any kind of contemplation, neither becomes a subject of meditation nor develops the Applications of mindfulness. The Buddha did not declare such sort of ‘awareness’ ”.

The kind of awareness taught by the Buddha is the awareness of the fact of moving on and the knowledge of the characteristic qualities of moving on. A yogī trained in this way knows: “If there arises the thought, ‘I shall go’, that thought produces a phase of physical motion born of mental activity, which in turn produces bodily expression”. Who goes? Whose going is it? These are the two questions that may be asked. The answer to these two questions is: Who goes? No living being or person whatsoever. Whose going is it? Not the going of any living being or person. Thus the yogī clearly understands that there are only the following two things:

- (1) The thought ‘I shall go’ born of mental activity, and
- (2) The bodily expressions produced by the process of physical motion born of mental activity.

One of the particular modes of bare phenomenal movement due to appropriate cause-and-effect is called ‘going’. Apart from these two bare phenomena, there is no such thing as ‘I go’ or ‘he goes’.

On what account is this going? On account of a phase of physical motion born of mental activity. Because of that the yogī knows: If

there arises a thought ‘I shall go’, that thought produces a phase of physical motion born of mental activity; this phase produces expression — that change when it takes place together with the intention. The consequent moving of the whole body is called ‘going’.

As has been explained before, the clear comprehension of the answer to the above three questions — Who goes? Whose going is it? And, on what account is this going? is called *sampajāna-ñāṇa* (comprehending clearly item by item in a detailed manner). These are the words of the Commentator. Such complete comprehension is in accordance with the word “*pajānāti*” (knows in every respect).

To repeat the words of the Commentator: a yogī understands in this way: “Owing to a phase of physical motion born of mental activity, bodily expression comes into existence”. Here, ‘rigidity’ in the sense of supporting or holding up with energy is the supporting characteristic of *vāyo-dhātu* (the element of motion), and ‘moving’ is the functioning of the same element. Thus the Commentator gives us to understand that the moving of the whole body through the mind-produced physical motion is called ‘going’. These are the amplifications of the word ‘*pajānāti*’.

A yogī must understand the arising of the thought ‘I shall go’ born of mental activity, and also he must understand the process of movement produced thereby; and finally the bodily expression produced by that process. He should also understand that the whole body moves forward, and that this movement has to be termed ‘I am going’ or ‘he is going’. In fact there is no goer but only the going takes place. A yogī must understand in this manner, and this understanding is called *asammoha-sampajāññā* (clear comprehension of non-delusion), which itself is a subject of meditation. Also this clear comprehension arises after perceiving subjects of meditation, it becomes *Satipaṭṭhāna-bhāvanā* (contemplation of the Four Applications of Mindfulness). The Buddha, therefore, thus declared: ‘A yogī

understands that he is going, when he is going’.

If we read the Text in conjunction with the relevant Commentary, it will be apparent that the Text directly shows the method of meditating in accordance with the *gocara-sampajāññā* (clear comprehension of resort). The Commentator explains that when a meditating disciple who practises in this manner attains a considerable degree of Concentration and Wisdom, his understanding becomes clear comprehension of non-delusion. With these words the Commentator supported the Text. We also rely on the words of the Commentator and give instructions to the disciples on the Satipaṭṭhāna method as declared in the Text. Many persons have tried this method, and, so far, many hundreds of my disciples have attained the stage of this *asammoha-sampajāññā* (clear comprehension of non-delusion). They include those who are well conversant with Buddhist literature, those who are not so, bhikkhus and lay devotees. This being the case, do not entertain doubt by asking yourself: ‘By simply contemplating the matter of “going”, can such a clear comprehension be attained? If you do so, you will resemble a person who is born blind, and who does not believe that other people can see visible objects because he, being born blind, cannot see things himself. Moreover, you have the opportunity to obtain the *dullabhas* (rare opportunities) and are fortunate enough to have become a man. If you entertain such kind of doubt, you will forego all benefits derived from your having become a man. So if you really love yourself (the term used conventionally), and desire to work out your own salvation, try to practise *Vipassanā-bhāvana* by the Satipaṭṭhāna method. If you practise so for four or five days according to my instructions, I can guarantee that you will attain such clear comprehension.

As has been explained before, and as in the case of ‘going’, a yogī understands that owing to the phase of physical motion born of mental activity, ‘standing’, ‘sitting’ and ‘lying down’ take place. Such kind of contemplation is

called *samudaya dhammā-nupassī* (Contemplating origination-things), because a yogī lives contemplating origination things in the body, or he lives contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in the body. This *asammoha-sampajāññā* (clear comprehension of non-delusion) is the outcome of this sort of contemplation.

If a yogī continues to contemplate in this manner, his knowledge consisting in such contemplation will be gradually increased till he attains the Holy Paths, the Fruitions thereof and Nibbāna. For this reason the Omniscient Buddha declared: “*ñāyassa adhiḡamāya nibbānassa sacchikiriya*” (For reaching the right path — the Real Eightfold Path and for the attainment of Nibbāna.)

### THREE

The Declaration is “*Abhikkante paṭikkante sampajānakārī hoti*.” (The yogī practises only clear comprehension and is nowhere without comprehension in going forwards and going backwards.) Thus in going forwards and in going backwards the yogī must understand that he goes forwards or that he goes backwards. He should not go forwards or go backwards without clearly comprehending that he does so. Therefore the yogī should practise clear comprehension with regard to standing, sitting, swaying backwards and forwards, etc. Again he should practise in the same manner when his body sways from left to right. Here, one may say to another: ‘The swaying of the body from side to side is not contained in the *āhacca-bhāsita-desanā* (a Discourse of the Scriptures)’.

Do not entertain doubt by saying to yourself: ‘Will it amount to the contemplation of body in the body, by practising clear comprehension of those things that are not directly mentioned by the Buddha?’ *āhacca-bhāsita-desanā* means the Discourse which briefly explains the fundamental principles pertaining to the Practices as mentioned in the Text. It is not a full explanation, if it were, the treatise would be voluminous. The most important point to note in this regard is that, whether it is the

swaying of the body forwards, backwards, left or right, the swaying itself in any form is a physical phenomenon. These physical phenomena can be delusively taken as *nicca*, *sukha*, and *attā*. Thus all mental and physical phenomena that can be delusively taken as such, are to be treated as the subjects of meditation for the purpose of dispelling such delusion. This is the fixed procedure of the Vipassanā-practice. That being the case, it should be clearly borne in mind that all mental and physical phenomena that can be delusively taken as *nicca*, *sukha* and *attā*, are fit to be meditated on as briefly shown in the Discourse.

There are four kinds of clear comprehension: (i) *sāthaka-sampajañña* (clear comprehension of purpose), *sappāya-sampajañña* (clear comprehension of suitability), *gocara-sampajañña* (clear comprehension of resort), and *asammoha-sampajañña* (clear comprehension of non-delusion).

Among, these four kinds of clear comprehension, the comprehension of purpose is the comprehension of a worthy purpose after considering what is worthy and what is not, with the thought, 'Is there any use to any one by doing thus, or not?'

Clear comprehension of suitability is the comprehension of the suitable after considering what is suitable and what is not, in comparison with one's own status and dignity.

Clear comprehension of purpose and clear comprehension of suitability are useful both for mundane and supramundane affairs. If one is endowed with these two kinds of clear comprehension, he is able to prosper in this world, and at the same time these are able to serve as the foundation of his practice in *Vipassanā-bhāvanā*. These two clear comprehensions which are the auxiliaries to the mental development of Calm and Insight are also called *Pāhihārika-paññā* (Knowledge connected with the preservation or sustaining).

But it is not yet *bhāvanā-paññā* (Knowledge based on Mental Development).

Clear comprehension of resort means the subject of meditation in the sense of the locus of contemplative action. That is to say that the yogī has one-pointedness on the spheres of action which are being objectified by him. In the province of Insight-practice, the clear comprehension of bodily, verbal and mental actions signified by *kāya* (body), *vedanā* (sensation), *citta* (consciousness), *dhamma* (mental object). This *gocara-sampajañña* is the working field of Insight-practice. Only when one has acquired the clear comprehension of resort, will he also acquire *asammoha-sampajañña* (clear comprehension of non-delusion). In the Commentary the following set of four has been explained in connection with this clear comprehension of resort:

- (1) A certain bhikkhu on the journey out for alms takes with him in mind the subject of meditation, but on the journey back from the work of alms-gathering he does not bring it along with him, having become unmindful of it.
- (2) There is another bhikkhu who does not take it along with him on the outward journey, but returns from the alms-tour with the subject of meditation in his mind. Many Bhikkhus such as this, after taking food and then exerting themselves in the development of insight, have reached the Holy Paths and the Fruitions thereof. In olden days, in *Lankā-dīpa* (Ceylon) alone, there was not a sitting place in any of the various villages which was not a place where bhikkhus, having sat and drunk gruel, attained Sainthood. So it should be believed that there are people who attained to Deliverance by exerting themselves in practising *Vipassanā-bhāvana*.
- (3) The third type of bhikkhu, one who neither takes it along with him on the outward journey nor returns with it on the way back home. Such is called *Nikkitta-dhūra-puggala* (one not yoked with

meditation). He is also called Pamā-vihārī (one who lives with carelessness or negligence). That is to say that he has thrown away the yoke – or the burden of right exertion and so is an irresponsible person. He will give up all hopes of attaining to Deliverance during the present birth and abandon all kinds of Vipassanā-practices. Such a person will not even notice that there is such a thing as kamma-tṭhāna (spheres of action). But there are people worse than that. They are the people who object to others practising Vipassanā on the ground that none is able to attain Freedom during the present lifetime.

One will have to take this matter into very deep consideration. Just as a patient can procure medicine, if he is in possession of the correct prescription, and cure his disease, people with ripe *Pāramitās* (Perfections) are able to practise according to the Teaching of the Buddha so long as it remains extant, and attain the Holy Paths and the Fruitions thereof. This point should not be ignored. No canonical book says that a yogī cannot attain to Deliverance during the present existence. On the other hand, the Commentaries say that by practising Vipassanā according to the Teaching of the Buddha, one is able to become an Arahāt endowed with (i) remembrance of former births; (ī) insight into the future destiny of beings; (īī) recognition of the origin of *Dukkha* and the way to its removal. The Commentary to the Vinaya says that one is at least able to become an *Anāgāmi* by practising so.

The most reliable authority is the Declaration made in the *Mahā-pari-nibbāna-sutta* which runs as follows:

*‘Ime ca subhadda bhikkhu sammā-vihareyyum asuñño loko arahantehi assāti*

(But let these my disciples, O Sabhadda, live rightly, world will not destitute of saints).’

In this Declaration it is highly necessary for us to clearly understand the true interpretation

of the phrase ‘*sammā-vihareyyum*’. If the Noble Ones and yogīs practise Vipassanā silently and in solitariness, without propagating the Teaching of the Buddha, can the Buddha’s Sāsana endure for long? No. Only by preaching of the Dhamma by teachers to the disciples and encouraging them to practise the Dhamma, then only will the Sāsana be able to endure for long. So the phrase ‘*sammā-vihareyyum*’ should be understood in this manner:

According to the Commentary ‘to live righteously’ means ‘to preach to the people whatever little of the Dhamma he knows, to show them the method of practising it and to encourage them so that they may understand the Dhamma as much as the preacher does.’

I shall further explain the words of the Commentator who says: “*Sammā vihareyyunti ettha sotāpanno atano adhigataṭṭhānam aññassa kathetvā tam sotapannam karonto sammā viharati nāma esanayo sakadāgāmi ādīsu*”. (‘To live righteously’ means this: if a *Sotapanna* explains to another particulars about the Path-knowledge he has already attained, and causes that the latter to become a *Sotapanna*. The same holds good for a *Sakadāgāmi* and an *Anāgāmi*.)

Again, ‘*Sotāpatti maggatthāya āraddha vipassako attano paṇaṃ kamma-tṭhānam kathetvā aññampi sotāpatti-magga-tṭhāya araddha vipassakam karonto sammā-viharati nāma; esa nayo sesa-magga-tṭhāya āraddha-vipassakesu idam sandhāyāha sammā-vihāreyyum*.’ (‘If a yogī who aspires to become a *Sotapanna* explains to another all about the Spheres of Action he has traversed so that the latter may be able to acquire the same amount of knowledge as the explainer, he is said to live righteously’. The same holds good for those who are practising Vipassanā to attain the Path of ‘Once-Returning’ and the Path of ‘Never-Returner’. Such kind of living means ‘to live righteously’.)

These are the explanations given by the Commentator. That being the case, there can appear any number of persons who have

penetrated to the Truth, and the Buddha-Sāsana will prosper for long. The phrase ‘to live righteously’ implies the imparting of Vipassanā practice with an introduction of the Teaching of the Buddha in this respect, and it is the *Pariyatti* (Learning the Wording of the Doctrine) or (Theory). Well now, do we not find nowadays the ‘Learning of the Wording of the Doctrine’, in conformity with the phrase ‘*Sammā-vihareyyum*’? Since this *Pariyatti* exists, it undoubtedly follows that the world is not destitute of Holy Ones and Arahats, in accordance with the Declaration, “*Asuñño loko arahantehi assā*” (the world will not be destitute of saints). If you only consider the sure and certain benefits to be derived there from, you will come to this: ‘When a meditating disciple practises Vipassanā in consonance with the methods provided by the Teaching of the Buddha, even if he is unable to attain to Deliverance in the present existence, he will establish himself in *Sīla* (Morality) *Samādhi* (Concentration) and *Paññā* (Wisdom), and thus strengthen his Pāramitās. A Buddhist should not therefore prevent another from practising *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* if he is doing so according to the Word of the Buddha. People should carefully note that if they prevent others from practising they will be performing an action the resultant effect of which will hinder them themselves in attaining the Knowledge of the Holy Paths, and that they will also be causing damage to the Buddha-Sāsana.

- (4) The Fourth and the last type of bhikkhu is the one who both takes the subject of meditation along with him on the journey out for alms and brings it back with him on the journey home. This type is the best of all. The Commentator says: Such a person may be able to attain Arahantship in the present birth. If he fails to reach Sainthood at an early stage, then he reaches it at the time of death; if he fails at the time of death, then, after becoming a Deva; or if not then, immediately on meeting a Fully Enlightened Buddha will he become one endowed with quick

intuition and psychic powers. So, the intending yogīs should never give up; there is plenty of hope for them. We are also teaching our disciples ‘clear comprehension of resort’ in the same manner as set forth in regard to the fourth type mentioned above.

*Asammoha-sampajañña* means ‘clear comprehension of non-delusion’; that is clear comprehension with no dullness or stupidity. That is to say that the meditating disciple contemplates the arising and dissolution of mental and physical phenomena, and is constantly aware of and comprehends *anicca* (Impermanence), *dukkha* (Unsatisfactoriness) and *anattā* (Impersonality). Further, non-confusion in going forwards and so forth is the clear comprehension of non-delusion. When the clear comprehension of resort is fully established this clear comprehension of non-delusion appears automatically. It is not necessary for one to work for it separately. The yogī thus understands: ‘When there is the arising in one of the thought “I am swaying” just with that thought, appears the process of movement originating from mind which brings to birth bodily expression. The act of swaying is not produced by the soul; nor is the act of swaying produced by me. Only by way of the movement due to mental activity, this skeleton called “the body” is swaying.

The yogī will have to work for *gocara-sampajañña* (clear comprehension of resort), and *asammoha-sampajañña* (clear comprehension of non-delusion) will appear of itself.

*Clear comprehension in looking straight on and in looking away.*

The Declaration is: “*ālokitē vilokite sampajānakārī*” (Practising clear comprehension in looking straight on and in looking out in all other directions).

*Clear comprehension in the bending and the stretching of limbs.*

“*Sammiñjite pasārite sampajānakārī*”. The meaning of this sentence is ‘Practising clear

comprehension in the bending and the stretching'. It means that one should contemplate the clear comprehension in the bending and the stretching of the joints as they arise, and not to bend or stretch the joints for the purpose of this exercise.

*Clear comprehension in wearing robes and so forth.*

“Sanghāti patta cīvara dhāraṇe sampajānakārī” (Practising clear comprehension in wearing the robes and in handling the bowl, personal requisites, etc.)

*Clear comprehension in taking food and drink..*

“Asite pite sampajānakārī” (Practising clear comprehension in the partaking of food and drink).

*Clear comprehension in cleansing the body.*

“Uccārapassāvakamme sampajānakārī” (Practising clear comprehension in defecating and in urinating).

In short, it means that the yogī should develop the Applications of Mindfulness on such bodily movements as the movement of the lips, the movement of the tongue, the movement of eye-lids, the opening of the eyes, the shutting of the eyes, blinking, in fact, all bodily expression or movement, and thus live contemplating origination-and-dissolution-things in the body.

Thus the yogī understands: ‘There is no doer of things. Only there are the thought, the process of movement born of mental activity, and the bodily movements produced by the process of movement. So there is no confusion in going forwards and so forth. This is called the clear comprehension of non-delusion.

By contemplating clear comprehension of resort and also of non-delusion, the yogī will gradually acquire various kinds of Vipassanā-knowledge, stage by stage, and finally attain Nibbāna, ‘Extinction of greed, extinction of hatred and extinction of delusion’.

In order to help the yogī to attain such a state, I am now giving you some instructions in regard to the Applications of Mindfulness.

#### FOUR

I have dwelt at length upon “*Kāyā-nupassanā*” (the Contemplation of the Body in the Body). Now I shall deal at some length with “*Vedanā-nupassanā*” (the Contemplation of Sensations in Sensations), “*Cittā-nupassanā*” (the Contemplation of consciousness in consciousness) and “*Dhāmma-nupassanā*” (the contemplation of mental objects in mental objects), together with the various grades of Vipassanā-knowledge. But those who have never heard of these and those who have no practical knowledge of them may find some difficulty in understanding them.

There are two fundamental methods of practising Vipassanā. They are ‘*Samatha-yānika*’ method and ‘*Vipassanā-yānika*’ method. In the ‘*Samatha-yānika*’ method the yogī establishes himself in *Upacāra-samādhi* (Neighbourhood or Access concentration) or *Appanā-samādhi* (Ecstatic concentration), and then practises *Vipassanā-bhāvanā* in the case of ‘*Vipassanā-yānika*’ method, it is not necessary for the yogī to establish himself in these Concentrations, but to practise mere Insight which does not involve these two Samādhis. It is also known as ‘*Suddha-Vipassanā-yānika*’ method, meaning that it is just Insight and nothing else. The Commentary says: ‘*Vuttappakāram samatham anuppādetva*’ (Contemplating the subject of meditation without allowing the two kinds of Concentration to arise). But when a yogī is concentrating completely on the arisings and dissolutions of the mental and physical phenomena as they arise, the Concentration thus temporarily achieved by him during the period of meditation becomes as strong as *Upacāra-samādhi* and is able to dispel ‘Hindrances’ or ‘Obstacles to the mind’. So most of the Commentators have placed this kind of Samādhi under the category of *Upacāra-samādhi*. I am explaining all this to

show that although a yogī does not establish himself in Concentration separately, he is able to acquire *Citta-visuddhi* (Purity of mind).

*Vipassanā* means ‘to contemplate Mind and Body that can be delusively taken as Permanence, Pleasure and Soul-essence, in such a manner that all these delusions may be dispelled.’ It is also apparent that these psycho-physical elements arise at the six Bases of every person’s *Santāna* (continuity). In what manner do they arise? Conditioned through the eye, the visible object, light and attention, eye-consciousness arises. Conditioned through the ear, the audible object, the eardrum — the conducting medium, and attention, ear-consciousness arises. Conditioned through the nose, the odoriferous object, air and attention, nose-consciousness arises. Conditioned through the tongue, the sapid object, humidity and attention, tongue-consciousness arises. Conditioned through the body, bodily impression, the element of solidity and attention, body consciousness arises. Conditioned through the *mano-dhātu* (mind-element), the mind-object and attention, mind-consciousness arises. But an ordinary irresponsible person who never contemplates the Way of Mindfulness will never be aware of the arisings and dissolutions of physical and mental phenomena. Thus he takes these arising and vanishing phenomena as one continuous series and under the idea of compactness he takes them as permanent Personality or Being or pleasurable ‘I’ or ‘Being’.

If the yogī directs his attention to these psycho-physical elements as they arise and vanish, he will be able to understand them item-by-item thus: ‘This is *anicca* (impermanence), this is *dukkha* (Unsatisfactoriness) and this is *anattā* (Impersonality). For this reason a meditating disciple has to live contemplating these psycho-physical elements as they arise. However, one will be able to make a mental note of all these only when he has firmly established himself in Concentration.

A beginner will not be able to make a mental note of all these phenomena. If he attempts to do so, he will not be able to attain Concentration of mind. So, the Commentator says: ‘*Yathāpākaṭam vipassanā-bhiniveso....*’ (One should contemplate the arising of perceptible physical phenomena). Among the twenty-eight kinds of physical phenomena also, the Four Great Primaries or the Four Great Essentials should be contemplated first. Of these Four Great Primaries too, *pathavī* (the element of extension or solidity), *tejo* (the element of kinetic energy) and *vāyo* (the element of motion) are all tangible objects. Thus, if you objectify the tangible objects and contemplate the body in the body saying, ‘touching’, ‘touching’, you are sure to realise one of these three elements. As regards *āpo* (the element of cohesion or the holding, the fluid), it is not to be perceived by touch or contact. But, if you are making a mental I note of the arisings and vanishings of these tangible objects, you will notice the appearance of such qualities as ‘liquidity’, ‘cohesion which are *lakkhaṇa* (characteristic), *rasa* (function) and *paccupaṭṭhāna* (manifestation) of this element of *āpo*. So you must understand that whenever you contemplate the body in the body by way of ‘Impression’, you will clearly notice the characteristic, functions and manifestations of these Four Great Primaries.

I shall now expound the properties of *vāyo-dhātu* (the element of motion). Its characteristic is ‘to support’; its function is ‘to set in motion’, and its manifestation is ‘to move’. The other three elements — *pathavī*, *āpo* and *tejo* have their own characteristics, functions and manifestations. In short, whatever dhamma it may be, if a meditating disciple applies mindfulness on one of the Four Great Primaries, he will soon be able to realise its characteristic, function and manifestation. This is in accordance with the *Visuddhi-magga* (the Way of Purity) that is based on the Teaching of the Buddha.

Therefore, bearing in mind that the *mahā-satipaṭṭhana-sutta* provides various methods of

practising Vipassanā, one should apply mindfulness on physical and mental phenomena as they arise, and contemplate the body in the body. While contemplating so, if one experiences such disagreeable sensations as ‘straining’, ‘pressing’ or ‘pain’, one should direct one’s attentions towards the spot where this sensation arises and contemplate the sensations in the sensations. This is called *Vedanā-nupassanā* (contemplating the sensations in the sensations). In this connection the Commentator has explained the different grades of knowledge acquired as a child, and ordinary person, and a meditating disciple respectively, but I shall have to deal with this very briefly. If one desires to estimate how much vipassanā-knowledge a yogī has acquired under such circumstances, he should practise for 4, 5 or 6 days, when he will be able to acquire such a clear understanding as he has never before experienced in his life.

There is another point to note. While a yogī is contemplating the body in the body, he will find that his mind flits from one object to another, or that he is wool-gathering. When such fanciful thought arises, the yogī should make a mental note of this also, saying to himself, ‘going’, ‘thinking’, ‘knowing’ etc., and contemplating the arising vanishing of the same. This is called *cittā-nupassanā* (contemplating consciousness in consciousness). The Buddha declared: “*Sarāgam vā cittam sarāgam cittanti pajānāti*” (understands the consciousness activity that is accompanied by lust, as consciousness with lust.) The Commentator further points out that every consciousness must contemplated as it arises.

Again, whenever such Hindrances as *kāmacchanda* (Sensuous Lust), *vyāpāda* (Ill-will), *thina-middha* (Torpor and Languor), *uddhacca* (Restlessness), *kukkucca* (Worry), *vicikicchā* (Sceptical Doubt) arise, the yogī should apply mindfulness on such hindrances and contemplate the arisings and vanishings of these, until they totally disappear. A beginner will had some difficulty in making a mental note of these, but as his Concentration

becomes more and more established, he will be able to overcome these hindrances just as a child listens to his parents’ words. This kind of contemplation is called *Dhammā-nupassanā* (contemplating the mental objects in the mental object).

I have hardly enough time to expound *khandha* (Groups of existence), *āyatana* (Bases), *dhātu* (Elements), *bojjhanga*<sup>2</sup> and *saccā* (Noble Truths), even in regard to the expounding of the various stages of Vipassanā knowledge. I shall have to dwell upon them in brief. As has been stated before, when the yogī applies his mindfulness on the arisings and vanishings of the mental and physical phenomena as they appear, the amount of concentration which he acquires during the period of his Insight-practice will become stronger and stronger, and he will have one-pointedness on the very subject of meditation he objectifies. As there is no discursive thinking or wavering of the mind, it becomes pure. This is *citta-visuddhi* (Purity of Mind).

At such a stage, perception to the yogī becomes conspicuous by itself, and so on, whenever he makes a mental note of any object, he understands that only physical and mental phenomena arise and vanish side by side forming dyads and nothing else. Thus he clearly understands that, apart from these two kinds of phenomena — *nāma* and *rūpa* (Mind and Matter) there is no ‘I’, no ‘Being’. This is called *diṭṭhi-visuddhi* (Purity of Understanding) and *nāma-rūpa-pariccheda-ñāṇa* (Knowledge determining Mind and Body).

In the case of bending the body and so forth, the yogī understands that conditioned by the physical motion born of mental activity,

---

<sup>2</sup> *Bojjhanga*: ‘The 7 Links of Enlightenment’, are: Attentiveness (*sati-sambojjhanga*), Investigation of the Law (*dhamma-vicaya bojjhanga*), Energy (*virīya bojjhanga*), Rapture (*pīti bojjhanga*), Tranquility (*passaddhi bojjhanga*), Concentration (*samādhi bojjhanga*), Equanimity (*upekkhā bojjhanga*). “Because they are leading to Enlightenment, they are called Links of Enlightenment”.

bodily expression or intimation (in the form of effect) arises. Also, while contemplating in the manner, the yogī understands: ‘Conditioned through the eye, the visible object, light and attention, eye-consciousness arises.’ Thus he knows that there are only conditions or causes and their resultant-effects, and there is no seer, doer, etc. This is called *paccaya-pariggaha-ñāṇa* (Knowledge determining the relations of one phenomenon to another). It is also called *kankhāvitarāṇa-visuddhī* (the Purity of Escape from doubt). If the yogī really and strenuously practises Vipassanā for 2 or 3 days, he will be able to acquire such kind of purity. Again, the yogī, while contemplating in this manner finds that mental and physical phenomena having arisen vanish immediately, at times he also experiences sensations that are intolerable. He then considers in this manner: ‘As the phenomena having arisen pass away immediately, they are *anicca*.’ As the life-continuum of the yogī is constantly oppressed by such arisings and vanishings, he experiences misery. Again, these phenomena come and go and none can prevent them from doing so: none can hold sway over them; they are functioning of themselves according to the Law of Cosmic Order. This is called *Samma-sana-ñāṇa* (Knowledge to observe, explore and determine all phenomena of existence as Impermanent, Unsatisfactory and Impersonal.)

Also, the yogī will find that the phenomena which he is contemplating, arise and vanish immediately. They do not go to any other place. They arise and disappear immediately then and there. This is called *Udaya-bbaya-ñāṇa* (Knowledge consisting in Contemplation of Arising and Vanishing). To reach such a stage, the yogī will have to practise hard for about 4 or 5 days.

During such insight, however, there arise the so-called *Vipassanū-pakkilesa* (Defilements of Insight), such as effulgence of light, rapture, tranquility, happiness, etc. When the yogī experiences such extraordinary things, he becomes very delighted and attached to them. He should not do so. He should make a mental note of these and contemplate them as

Impermanent, Unsatisfactory and Impersonal. If I were to explain this *upa-kkilesa* fully, I should have to speak at great length. The detailed explanation may be found in my Manual of Vipassanā~practice, Part I.

Then again, while the yogī is thus contemplating, he will notice that phenomena arise and vanish immediately, without an admixture of concepts and ideas. This is called *bhanga-ñāṇa* (Knowledge in Contemplation of Dissolution). Some people are under the impression that it is *bhanga-ñāṇa* only when they see the mental pictures of the subjects of meditation followed by a mental note of seeing them destroyed. You should note that it is not *bhanga-ñāṇa*, because in that insight there is no concept or idea whatsoever. Only in the *samma-sana-ñāṇa*, will you find such things. During your insight-practice, if you notice that you reach a stage where you discern the arisings and immediate vanishings of these phenomena, you must remember that it is *bhanga-ñāṇa*. It is, therefore, highly necessary for the yogī to practise Vipassanā methodically and to achieve such a knowledge as *bhanga-ñāṇa*. After that the yogī will gradually be able to achieve such higher knowledges as *bhaya-ñāṇa* (Knowledge of Awareness of Fear), *ādinava-ñāṇa* (Knowledge in Contemplation of Misery), *nibbida-ñāṇa* (Knowledge in Contemplation of Aversion), *muccitukamyatā-ñāṇa* (Knowledge of the Desire for Deliverance), *patisankhā-ñāṇa* (Knowledge of the Reflection of Contemplation) and *sankhārupekkhā-ñāṇa* (Knowledge in Equanimity in regard to all formations of existence). I merely mention that it is not difficult to acquire such higher knowledge, since I have not time to explain them in full. There are also some difficulties to overcome until the yogī acquires the Path-knowledge. So the service of a *kamma-ṭṭhā-nā-cariya* (Instructor in meditation) is absolutely necessary.

However, if the yogī applies his mindfulness on the arisings and vanishings of the phenomena as they appear, and contemplates them as *anicca*, *dukkha* and

*anattā* with zeal and fervour, he will at last acquire such knowledge as *vuṭṭhānagāmini-vipassanā-ñāṇa* (Insight leading to the Ascent) and *anuloma-ñāṇa* (Adaptation-knowledge). Immediately upon this Adaptation-knowledge there arises the *gotrabhū-ñāṇa* (Maturity-knowledge) taking as object the Unconditioned, the standstill of existence, the absence of becoming, cessation, Nibbāna. Such a state is called ‘realisation of Nibbāna’ or ‘seeing Nibbāna face to face’. It is in accordance with the Declaration: “*Dhammacakkhum uddāpādi yam kinci samudaya-dhammam sabbantam nirodha-dhamanti*” (the Eye of Wisdom arises; all causally-conditioned phenomena that have arisen are liable to cessation). *Milinda-paṇḥā* (the Questions of Milinda) also says: ‘*Appavatta manupatto nibbānam*

*sacchikarotīti vuccati*’ (When the state of non-continuance of the phenomena of existence comes to be, it is called ‘seeing Nibbāna face to face’. In order to allow one to practise *Vipassanā* and realise Nibbāna here and now, the Omniscient Buddha propounded the *Mahā-satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*. I have now given you a hint as to how to attain Nibbāna.

‘May all be able to follow the Discourse on the Four Applications of Mindfulness’

‘May all be able to contemplate the Four Applications of Mindfulness.’

‘May all accomplish the course of training methodically, and finally attain the Holy Paths, the Fruitions thereof and Nibbāna.’

Those monks who bar out both the letter and the spirit, by taking the discourses wrongly and Interpreting according to the letter, — such are responsible for the loss of many folk, for the discomfort of many folk, for the loss, discomfort and sorrow of devas and mankind. Moreover such monks beget demerit and cause the disappearance of this true Dhamma.

But those monks who, by taking the discourses rightly and interpreting according to the letter, conform to both letter and spirit, — such are responsible for the profit, of the welfare of many folk, for the profit, the welfare, the happiness of devas and mankind. Moreover such monks beget merit and establish this true Dhamma!

*Āṅguttara-Nikāya*, THE BOOK OF THE TWOS,

Chapter IV.

## VICTORY OF THE SĀSANA

### Broadcast on 24th May 1956 by U Ohn Ghine

In the early days of civilisation, in the West as in Asia, if somebody shouted 'Victory' the guards of the local ruler would come tumbling out with drawn swords and the populace would panic. 'Victory' meant just 'battle, murder and sudden death'. It was the Omniscient Buddha who changed all that. He gave a new meaning to many words because He changed many of the old concepts. 'If a man win a victory over tens of thousands of men in battle, that is not a true victory, the real victory is to conquer oneself' He taught.

And now a great victory for Peace has been won, in the only way in which victories for peace can be won, by peaceful means. That victory is the preservation of the word of the Buddha for a full 2,500 years, and the victory is now being celebrated throughout Asia and in many Western countries also. More than that, the victory has been consolidated by the laying of a sure foundation for a further victory. Efforts of the Buddhist world have ensured that the Sāsana, the Teaching of the Buddha is preserved in its purity so that it may well last a further twenty-five centuries.

Some Westerners who have no direct knowledge of Buddhism, tend to think at first that it is contemplative, a static religion and even a running away, an escape, a retreat, and as such to be deplored. Life, they say, is dynamic and to be lived. They are rather surprised when one points out that most of the things they do are done as an escape from reality, such things as most reading, as plays and cinemas and even 'good music' and stamp-collecting and company and chatter and even many ideologies, especially those one feels called upon to fight for. It is Buddhism that is a facing of the facts of life, the very terrible facts of life, because we are all going more or less swiftly to death, and to an after-life or existence that will be according to our deeds; and unless we have lived very good

lives, and how many of us have done that?, the future is going to be very, very unpleasant. Most men know that in their hearts and that is why they play games, striving to forget. There is no comfort in the thought of mere good deeds, they can take one but to an impermanent heaven whence the descent may be to an equally impermanent hell. Mere faith can do the same and cannot do more. No God or Buddha can save one: 'You yourself must make the effort, even Buddhas merely point out the way' ... And the Way, enshrined in the Pāli Tipiṭaka, is the easy way; it is a strict discipline though there are no elements of self-torture in it the Buddhist, if he is a good Buddhist, is constantly aware of this and constantly striving with more or less intensity to realise it fully. 'Escapist' is a word therefore that can be applied to anything but Buddhism.

Then take the idea that Buddhism is static which is part of the concept of some non-Buddhists. The world as such, in our present civilisation, so-called, is dynamic only in its rushing to more terrible wars with more terrible weapons in its motivation by Craving and Ignorance. It is Buddhism that is alive and dynamic, not with the feverishness of 'modern civilisation' but with the energy that is motivated by love and reason; that alone can save the world.

Peace and tranquility are by no means static, they are more dynamic than war and struggle. It is only that man has been led away by the fighters that has made us for so long tend to think that the reverse is the case. That Buddhism is dynamic is evidenced by the great mass movement towards brotherhood in Asia and in the world at large which was inspired in the first instance, six hundred years before the birth of Christ, by the Teaching of the Omniscient Buddha, the man who became greater than any God. This movement has been kept going in ever-widening circles of

influence through these 25 centuries by the reason and love and law first given to mankind in this world-period by the Buddha.

Part of the dynamics of Buddhism is the Great Councils of which today we have just concluded so successfully the Sixth. During the lifetime of the Buddha many of those who joined the Noble Order of monks took a part of their training the learning of the Teaching by heart and at the First Great Council called a matter of weeks after the Passing Away of the Exalted One, the Teaching was canonised and entrusted part by part to groups of Bhāṇakas or Reciting Monks who daily recited this Teaching, those parts entrusted to them, and the Reciting Monks of today are their descendants who have carried the Teaching through the ages in unbroken succession.

Some thirty years before Christ, there was a great famine in Ceylon, which was at that time the main repository and guardian of the Sāsana. In addition to the famine and accompanying it was a cruel war. Monks were scattered and unable to get proper sustenance. It is recorded that some groups were so weak that they could merely whisper. Nevertheless they repeated their portion of the Tipiṭaka and that they might hear each other lay down on the ground with their heads close together and their bodies radiating out like the spokes of a wheel. There are many other instances where all has been sacrificed so that the Sāsana might live.

The Buddha had been questioned as to the reasons and causes why the Saddhamma the Sāsana, might last or might wane away, and gave to his questioner the necessary conditions. The venerable Kimbila who had asked the question was told:

“Kimbila, when the Tathāgata has passed away, monk, nun and lay-disciple may dwell without reverence, without respect for the Master without reverence, without respect for the Dhamma; without reverence, without respect for the Order; without reverence, without respect for the training; without reverence, without respect for zeal; without

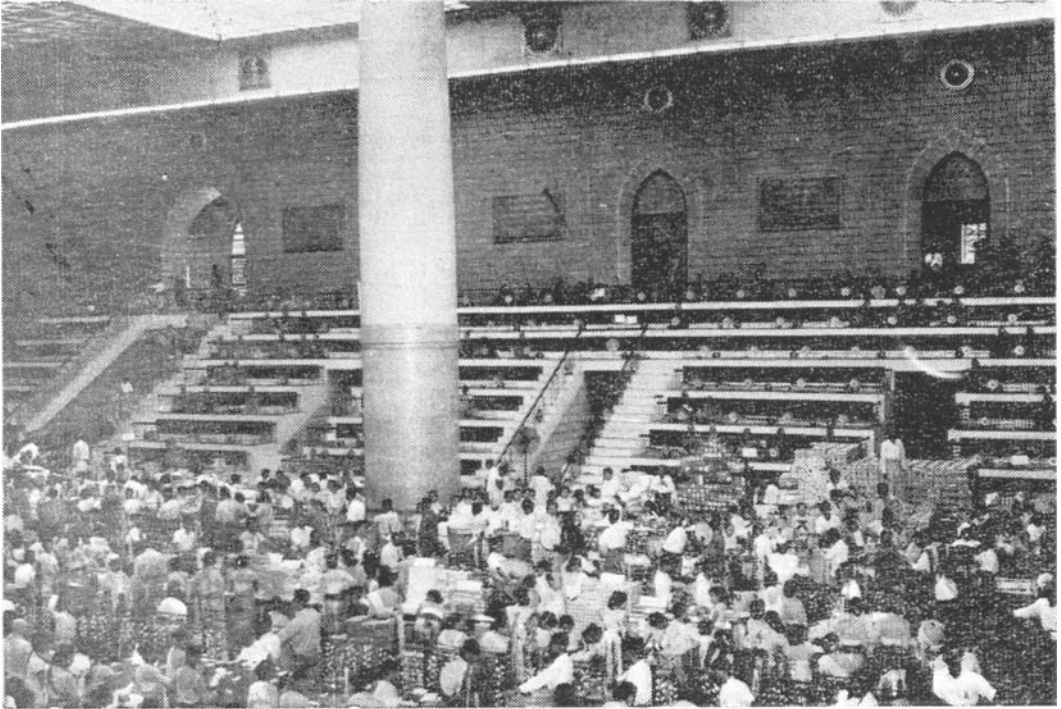
reverence, without respect for goodwill. This, Kimbila, is a reason, this a cause whereby, when the Tathāgata has passed away, Saddhamma shall not endure. But, Kimbila, let monk and nun, lay-disciple, man and woman, live with reverence and respect for the Master. Dhamma, Order, training, zeal and goodwill; and it shall be a reason, a cause, whereby, when the Tathāgata has passed away, Saddhamma shall endure.”

This reverence and respect, accompanied by the positive training and dynamic zeal, we find still in the world today. Indeed we can say, in spite of the many dangers and difficulties and materialisms that beset us, that they are increasing. This is the victory of the Sāsana. Without these things as part of the very hearts of the people there would have been no Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā to preserve the Sāsana.

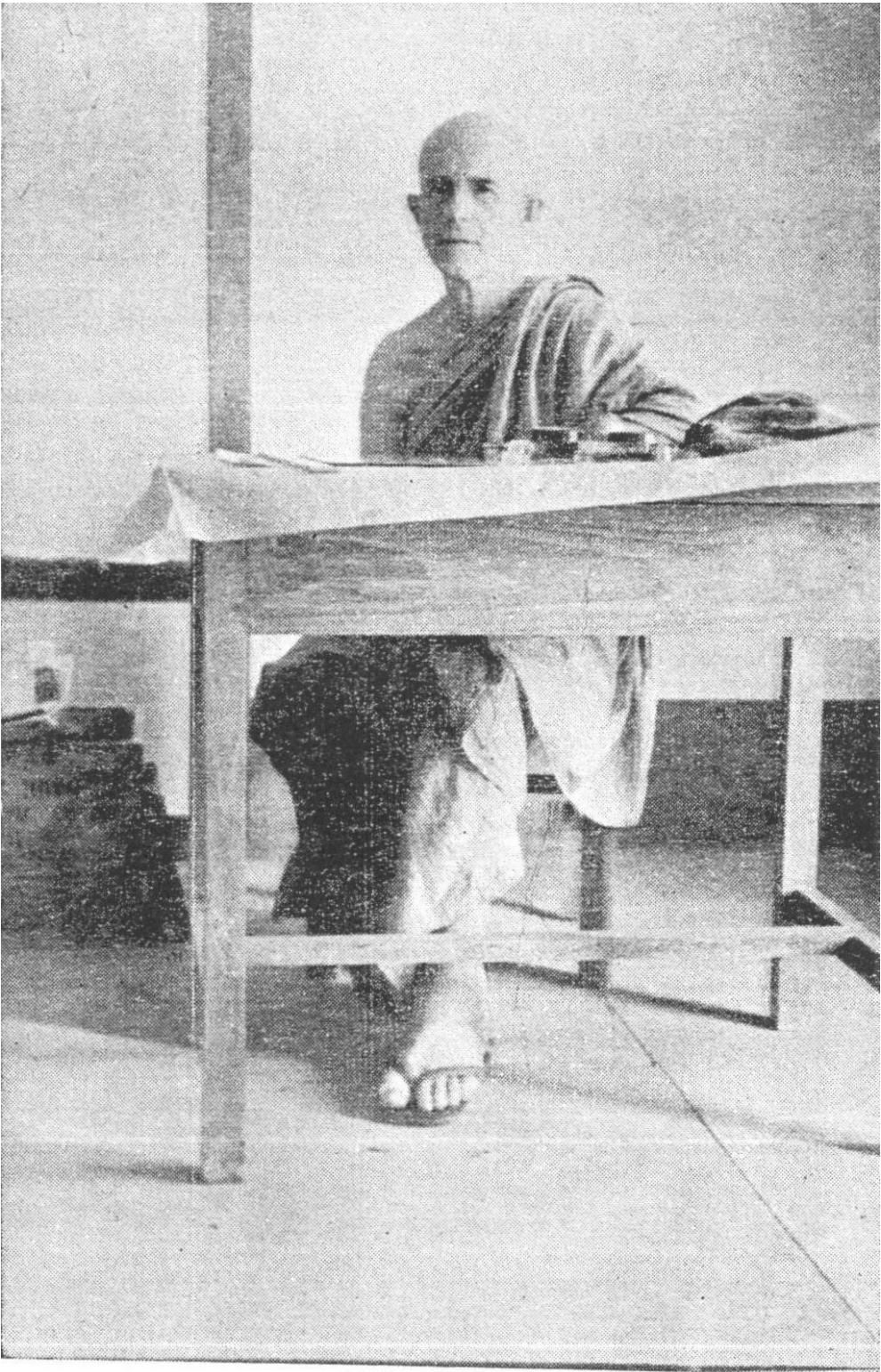
The Six Great Councils have all had one end in view, the preservation of the Teaching that alone can lead men to final victory and as part of that end the propagation of the Teaching. The Great Councils have not been ends in themselves but have been means to an end and this Council is no exception. Here is the Sāsana preserved again, and again men's minds oriented towards that Teaching and again we may expect a wave of influence. Naturally it will be a beneficent, a peaceful influence. In its history of 25 centuries the Teaching has not ever attempted to make converts through force or fear or bribery. Truth and Love and the utmost Tolerance are the weapons since they are part of what we call 'Buddhism'. By Tolerance we mean respect and reverence for everybody's point of view so long as that point of view is based on the minimum moralities. Since these moralities are common to all great religions, to Hinduism, to Christianity, to Islam as well as to Buddhism, they need no definition. They are themselves basic. Maybe they could be summed up in as short a way as possible by using the word 'goodwill' which, you remember, the Buddha gave to Kimbila as one of the necessary conditions for the Teaching to survive.

But Tolerance does not mean allowing immorality or impurity to be propagated as Buddhism. The Texts have been scanned by editing groups working day and night for two years and there has been this great recension and then the chanting of the Texts and their printing. In perfect harmony and with great devotion, the five predominantly Buddhist countries. Thailand, Laos, Ceylon, Cambodia and Burma have worked as one family. All this

has been done to keep the Sāsana pure. We must continue to keep it pure and not allow any extraneous ideas to be put forward as 'Buddhism' be they from the East or from the West. In all Loving-kindness we must point out Dhamma as Dhamma and what is not Dhamma as not Dhamma, as enjoined by the Buddha. Then if we fulfill the other conditions, our victory will be a continuing one and generations as yet unborn will call us blessed.



Presentation of Tipiṭaka Texts and other Offerings inside the Mahāpāsāṇa Guhā (The Great Sacred Cave), Rangoon, during the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā and 2500th Buddha Jayanti Celebrations



Bhadanta Nyanaponika Thera

# THE CONVENTIONAL VERSUS THE REAL

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

Gotama Buddha was born in the year 624 B.C. in Northern India which commanded the central position of the then known world. Being the son of a ruling prince he was born into riches and luxury and was accordingly brought up amidst pomp and splendour. At his birth the court astrologers predicted that if he took up the worldly life he would become the ruler of the *Cakkavāḷa* (Universe), but if he followed the ascetic life he would become the All Enlightened Buddha. Naturally his father wanted him to become the ruler of the *Cakkavāḷa*. For that reason he was purposely kept away from the ugly sights of the world which might incline him to the way of Buddhahood. But the young prince Siddhattha was not satisfied with the environmental pomp and luxury and he wanted to see what life looked like outside the palace gates.

He went out with his charioteer, Channa, and there saw visions of old age, disease, death and, lastly, of a hermit. Shortly after, his young and beautiful wife, Yasodhara, gave birth to a son. He determined that very night to renounce the worldly life and thus leave his wife, new born child, and the luxury of palace life. He discarded all princely garments and took on the scanty robes of a hermit and marched alone into the rough and dreary world in search of that Truth and Enlightenment which he had vowed to attain in many of his previous lives. Undergoing the austerities of the ascetic life for six years, he finally attained the highest attainable goal, the Omniscience of Buddhahood and *Nibbāna*, and thereupon taking the exalted title of *Sammāsambuddha* — the completely Enlightened One.

## Gotama Buddha's Teaching

Gotama Buddha's teaching shows that it is highly intellectual and that it has reached a height of knowledge and wisdom unparalleled in any other philosophical literature known in human history. The vastness and comprehensiveness of the subject involved is

co-extensive with the vastness and innumerable of the Universes in the past, present, and future and the occupants therein.

In the past, attempts have been made by Western writers and scholars to interpret this assemblage of Dhammas in the light of their culture and traditions with the result that in some instances it is not altogether happy. Nevertheless, the Eastern Buddhist World stands greatly indebted to those writers and scholars in general and the Pāli Text Society in particular for the pioneering work of elucidating and translating Pāli Texts into English thus bringing them within easy reach of the reading public of the West and therein stimulating interest in Buddhism

Here is an attempt by an Easterner, a born Buddhist, but with no special claims to scholarship, to interpret some profound aspects of the Buddha Dhamma in the light of the Eastern background and civilization. Gotama Buddha preached the doctrine for 45 years after obtaining the Supreme Enlightenment, thereby building His edifice of Dhamma into stately proportions. It may well be compared to a four-storeyed edifice with deep and broad based foundations on the Universal Laws of Nature (*Niyāma Dhammas*). In the first storey there is *Sīla* (morality), in the second, *Samādhi* — concentration of the mind, in the third, *Paññā* — that essential wisdom for attaining Enlightenment, and lastly at the top storey there is *Nibbāna*. Each storey contains a flight of steps to reach, to the higher floor.

As we ascend step by step, we find that our vision widens and we feel that we are on firmer grounds. It may be some time before we reach the top of each ladder but it is not long before we realize that we are rising to greater heights morally and spiritually than before. As we rise step by step we feel the growing powers of the mind and experience the cooling and stabilizing effect of knowledge thus gained in the process.

## Worldlings' Attitude To Life

A *Putṭhujana* a (worldling) is always attracted by the surface of things perception through the five sense organs, the eye, nose, ear, tongue and body. To satisfy his wants and cravings modern science and industry have combined to provide a variety of sense objects in a most wonderful way; yet his cravings are not diminished.

On the other hand they are multiplied. The more he gets the more he craves. Then science creates more sense objects with the help of industry to meet the growing demands of the worldlings. The unending process thus goes on with the result that the *Putṭhujana* passes his years of life immersed in these sense objects only. In short he lives in the world of senses alone. What does his world of senses consist of? It consists of "I, you, man, woman, son, daughter, motor car, tables, chairs, clubs, dinners, dances, cinemas" and so on. He never cares to think, or he pretends that he never has time to think, what the essence of life is. In Pāli such a person is known as "*Andha Putṭhujana*" that is a person who has eyes but does not use his eye-sight for his benefit. Such a person lives in a world of delusions, in Pāli known as "*Avijjamāna Paññati*".

The above terms "I, you, man, woman," etc. are mere conventionalities or names sanctioned by custom and usage and the Buddha clearly points out that they possess no essential characteristics in the higher *Paramattha* sense.

## Paramattha Dhammas

Now we come to the realm of the highest good. Here the Buddha Dhamma is deep and profound. It requires earnest and patient study to understand its implications. To the Omniscient Buddha no horizon bounds the vision of world life. It extends to innumerable World *Kappas* (Cycles) through immeasurable distances of time. He sees a chain of lives for each individual being, past, present, and future, all transitory, impermanent and unsatisfying. He sees the restless and substanceless

procession of Mind and Body alone moving and surging on the turbulent waters of the Ocean of *Samsāra*. This procession of mind and body begins from the past infinity and will continue into the future infinity. This combination of mind and body which in general parlance is known as '*a being*' is constantly subject to the vicissitudes of birth, decay, disease, sorrow and death. This is the lamentable picture of *Putṭhujanas* traveling to and fro on the Ocean of *Samsāra* as seen by the Omniscient Buddha. As against this Sorrowful picture of life, the Omniscient Buddha also sees and himself enjoys the calmness, coolness, serenity and bliss of *Nibbāna* which is not associated with birth, decay, disease, sorrow and death.

Seeing these two incompatible Dhammas there arose in the Omniscient Buddha a desire to extricate the drowning masses of *Putṭhujanas* from the labyrinth of repeated births and sorrow and to point out the birthless and deathless realm of *Nibbāna* and He then prescribed the Eightfold Noble Path ... the Middle Way that unerringly leads the true follower to the deathless and priceless *Nibbāna*. The All Enlightened Buddha made this famous declaration about *Nibbāna*. "There is an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed. Were there not this unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed, there would be no escape from the world of the born, the originated, the created, the formed."

There are two categories of *Paramattha Dhammas* — (1) *Sankhata Paramattha*, (2) *Asankhata Paramattha*. Mind and Matter take their position under the category of *Sankhata Paramattha*, while *Nibbāna*, the Real of all Realities, can be given the exalted title of *Asankhata Paramattha* — the Highest Good. These *Paramattha Dhammas* unlike *Avijjamāna Paññati* described earlier, do exist with their essential characteristics. In contradistinction to *Avijjamāna Paññati* these *Paramattha Dhammas* are known as *Vijjamāna Paññati*. Although *Sankhata* and *Asankhata Paramatthas* are called by the

general term '*Paramattha*', a distinct demarcation line may be drawn between the two, for they possess diametrically opposite qualities or characteristics. *Sankhata Paramattha*, that is Mind including mental tendencies and Matter, is directly associated with birth, decay, disease and death while in *Asankhata Paramattha*, *Nibbāna*, these undesirable features are totally absent. *Sankhata Paramattha* is compound, conditioned and phenomenal while *Asankhata Paramattha* is uncompounded, unconditioned, and non-phenomenal. *Sankhata Paramattha* is associated with transitoriness and suffering but *Asankhata Paramattha* is associated with deathlessness and bliss.

From the above comparison it is amply clear that *Nibbāna* is a positive Reality for which language has no appropriate expression but for which the well disciplined mind of an *Ariya* has a clear notion.

### Gotama Buddha the Greatest Analyst

The alchemist is interested to find the quintessence of gold. So he uses different chemical methods to get gold in its purest form. Likewise the Omniscient Buddha, 2,500 years ago, analysed the entire content of the Universe to find out the quintessence of the *Paramattha Dhammas*. He therefore analysed the whole Universe firstly into five *Khandhas* (aggregates), secondly into twelve *Ayatanas* (sense organs and sense objects), thirdly in eighteen *Dhātus* (sense organs, sense objects and mental states) and fourthly and lastly into four *Saccas* (Truths). In this exhaustive analysis, He has found that *Nibbāna* is the quintessence of all the *Paramattha Dhammas*, that is, the Highest Good. Nowhere in the whole Universe it there a thing to be called "*Attā*, Self, Ego, or Soul". Everything is *Anattā*. Therefore, the Buddha Dhamma is truly the doctrine of ANATTĀ. It is the fact — the truth when we say that the Omniscient Gotama Buddha of 2,500 years ago is the Greatest Analyst the World has ever seen.

\* \* \*

## PĀLI TEXT SOCIETY

### *New Publications:*

1. PĀLI TIPITAKAM CONCORDANCE,  
being a Concordance in Pāli to the three Baskets of Buddhist Scriptures in the Indian order of letters.  
Listed by F. L. WOODWARD and others, arranged and edited by B. M. HARE.  
Part 1. fasc. 1. pp.vi. 58, paper covers, London, 1952      £1-10-0
2. THERAGATHA COMMENTARY, VOL. II,  
Edited by F. L. WOODWARD, boards, Pt.S. 1952      £2-5-0

### *Reprints:*

1. PĀLI-ENGLISH DICTIONARY,  
Rhys Davids & Stede, 8 parts, sewn, London, 1952      Complete £6-10-0

## PĀLI TEXT SOCIETY

30, Dawson Place, London W. 2

# NATURAL PHENOMENA, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL, AS ANALYSED BY THE BUDDHA

*U Saw Tun Teik, B.A., B.L.*

Buddhism is the mightiest monument of the greatest success ever achieved by a sentient being in overcoming the then incomprehensible and most elusive natural phenomena in both physical and mental aspects.

The greatest and most powerful *rishis* (non-Buddhist recluses), who could see existences of sentient beings extending over a long period of forty kappas (world-cycles), and who were either living or dead at the time of the Buddha, were incapable of scientifically analysing the phenomena that audaciously confronted them.

But these wild obstinate phenomena when subjected to the purifying action of the Buddha brain, tamely melted away and were at once controlled, systematised and scientifically treated by the Buddha.

Attaining *sabbaññuta ñāṇa* (Full Enlightenment), the Buddha came to discover that both this world (*loka*) and the world beyond (*lokuttara*) contain *dhātu* (elements) only. And this discovery inflicts a deadly blow on the belief in *Brahmā* as Creator, God or any other similar idea entertained by human beings.

The *dhātu* is divided into *asankhata dhātu* and *sankhata dhātu*, the Former being designated by the Buddha as *Nibbāna* and the latter, *Samāsāra*, or the Thirty-one Abodes mentioned in the three *Piṭakas*. The beginning and the end of the *dhātu* are not apparent.

The *asankhata dhātu* is unoriginated and unchangeable, and is consequently absolutely peaceful, the final goal of Buddhism. The *sankhata dhātu*, which by nature is changeable and therefore impermanent, is unpeaceful and therefore causes *dukkha* (suffering both mental

and physical) and is for this reason condemned by the Buddha.

The *sankhata dhātu* which pervades the Thirty-one Abodes of *apāya* (lower worlds), human beings, *brahmā* and *devas*, is again subdivided into *nāma* and *rūpa*, mind and body respectively. The *nāma* and *rūpa* never remain permanent for one second, the former changing seventeen times faster than the latter, and the latter, millions of times in an eye-wink. It is therefore evident that each and every sentient being, inhabiting the Thirty-one Abodes, is constantly changing and is therefore permanently within the grip of *dukkha* (suffering both mental and physical).

These discoveries and other more important ones were made by the Buddha under the Bodhi tree at *Buddhagaya*, Bihar District, Northern India, two thousand five hundred and forty-five years ago, when He attained *sabbaññuta ñāṇa* at the age of thirty-five as royal prince.

Our Omniscient Buddha first met *dukkha* consciously as a prince at the age of twenty-nine, when he saw an old man bent double under years outside the royal palace on his way to his garden. He had never seen an old man like that before in his life, and he was very curious to know who or what that was. When informed that it was an old man and one day he himself would become old like that man if he lived long enough, he became extremely frightened. In fact he was then the most distressed man this world had ever seen, since the time the last Buddha *Kassapa*, immediately before our Buddha, passed away into *Nibbāna*. The prince became unbearably distressed at the idea of becoming an old man, weak, bent double, under years, toothless, grey-haired, and weak-eyed and he at once made up his mind to

seek for a method of preventing old age. His further meeting with a sick man, a corpses and finally with a *rishi*, seeking happiness, and his further knowledge that one day he would naturally become old, ill and dead, expedited his determination to be free from old age, disease and death. His consultations in this respect with the pious and learned *rishis* and laymen both in and outside his royal father Suddhodana's palace must have proved to be of no avail. Even Devīla rishi, who was the religious teacher of his royal father and who spent the daytime in the deva loka, could not satisfy Prince Siddhattha in solving the most heartburning question of how successfully to fight old age, disease and death. The inevitable result, as is well-known, was, he left the palace, his family, royal parents and relations, entertaining a firm and unchangeable determination to seek for a solution or a method for overcoming the three most unpleasant and frightful aspects of life. This horrid idea of life never left him afterwards and he endeavoured to undertake this research work under the then most well-known religious teachers. His endeavours though earnest and intensive, were not crowned with success and being highly disappointed, as a last resource, he approached the world-famous Bodhi tree and decisively and finally made up his mind to sit down underneath it and not to get up until he had evolved the correct method for the required solution. At this stage we must not forget that during these six years of intensive application Prince Siddhattha had acquired an enormous amount of experience both practical and theoretical in the course of his research work on old age, disease and death, and had also learned a great deal from those famous and learned recluses.

The solution of the problem of old age, disease and death by the Omniscient Buddha is clearly direct and boldly scientific. In the person of the All-Enlightened Buddha the world has produced the noblest and greatest scientist, dealing with this world and the world beyond for the purpose of achieving absolute freedom from Dukkha, designated by him as

Nibbāna *i.e.* Absolute Peace. In solving the difficult problem of old age, disease and death, he discovered four basic facts (1) Dukkha — Suffering, (2) Dukkha Samudaya — Cause of Suffering, (3) Dukkha Nirodha — Extinction of Suffering, and (4) Dukkha Nirodhagāmini Paṭipadā — Way to the Extinction of Suffering.

- (1) Dukkha, as defined by the Buddha, means and includes birth, old age, disease, death, association with those one dislikes, separation from those one likes, getting what one does not require, not getting what one requires, and in short, all the five Khandhas (Groups) constituting each sentient being.
- (2) Dukkha Samudaya — Cause of Suffering is taṇhā, desire.
- (3) Dukkha Nirodha — Extinction of Suffering, *i.e.* Nibbāna.
- (4) Dukkha Nirodhagāmini Paṭipadā — Way to the extinction of Dukkha — is the Eightfold Path of Right View, Right Mindedness, Right Speech, Right Bodily Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Attentiveness, and Right Concentration.

The Buddha spent the latter part of those hard six years almost alone, having finally come to the definite conclusion that the methods of the *rishis* for the solution of the problem of old age, disease and death were not the right ones, and that He Himself could successfully strive for the real solution, having come in contact with the actual facts of life in his mature life and with the external phenomena of the world, benefiting also by the experience acquired by him in the course of his intensive and varied discussions with the learned and famous *rishis* of the time. It is therefore clear that, when he sat down under the Bodhi tree not to rise up until he had solved the problem, he must have been right on the verge of success, and it was in order just to give a final finishing touch that he made the well-known resolve.

The Omniscient Buddha proclaims that these Four Noble Truths were first discovered by Him after His immediate predecessor, Kassapa Buddha, attained Nibbāna, and these truths were never taught by any of the then religious teachers and were not found in the religious literature of His time and before.

We have been told that the aim and object of Buddhism is to get rid of the Sankhata dhātu *i.e.* to escape from the sphere of Samsāra or Thirty-one Abodes which are saturated with Dukkha, and to get into that of Asankhata dhātu *i.e.* Nibbāna and the way thereto is the Eightfold Path referred to above, which consists of three main divisions: Sīla (Morality), Samādhi (Concentration) and Paññā (Wisdom).

The most essential point in the Path is to achieve Paññā defined by the Buddha. In striving to acquire Paññā, one must, of necessity, practise Sīla and Samādhi as defined and taught by the Omniscient Buddha.

Paññā is composed of the first two factors of the Path — the Right View and the Right Mindedness, and when a person has achieved Paññā, his mind automatically becomes devoid of all the kilesas (mental impurities and defilements), and with this purification of the mind the five Khandhas, which constitute the Dukkha in the Thirty-one Abodes, become extinct, and Nibbāna is thus attained.

In the Tipiṭaka, Paññā occupies the paramount position, and it is consequently crystal clear that no dull-minded person can gain Nibbāna.

The courageous claim so confidently and publicly made by the Buddha that the Noble Eightfold Path is the only way to the attainment of Nibbāna can be tested, as a scientist would test the correctness of his modern scientific principles. “Ehi passiko” (Come and see the truth of my Teaching) is one of the famous six qualities of His Teaching.

The sight of a beautiful woman or a handsome young man gives rise to a desire in the hearts of man or woman respectively to possess the beautiful or handsome person, and desire is, as already mentioned above, the cause of Dukkha, because the desire may not be fulfilled, or even if so fulfilled, the beautiful or handsome person cannot live long enough and if the desire could be overcome, the Dukkha also naturally would not arise, and the way to overcome the desire should be found. And the Buddha’s method is the application of the Right View, because the Buddha has also discovered that the cause of desire is Avijjā (Ignorance), which is the first step of Paṭiccasamuppāda; and this Avijjā can be overcome only by the Right View mentioned above. And in the present illustration of a beautiful woman or a handsome man, it is not Right View to maintain that it is a woman or a man. The person called a “woman” or a “man” is nothing but a collection of the four Mahābhūtas (Great Essentials), *i.e.* Pathavī (element of hardness or extension), Āpo (element of fluidity or cohesion), Tejo (element of kinetic energy), and Vāyo (element of motion), and either a woman or a man does not really exist. The “woman” and “man” are merely terms applied to certain collections of the four elements, which are changing millions of times in an eye-wink. Again these Mahābhūtas are themselves ever changing and thereby create Dukkha. Now there is nothing that can stop Dukkha — there is nothing that can control Dukkha. Hence the non-existence of any agency to stop the change and Dukkha, *i.e.* the nonexistence of “I” (Attā), which is expressed by the Buddha as Anattā. This is what is termed by the Buddha as Right View, and only this Right View can overcome Avijjā (Ignorance), Taṇhā (Desire) and Dukkha (Suffering). This test can be tried by any person with regard to anything and the result will always be the cessation or prevention of Dukkha — Suffering in any form.

At first Dukkha will stop for a short time, as the Right View cannot be maintained either for a longer time or permanently, but even a temporary extinction of Dukkha will certainly bring about temporary Real Peace. If the Right View can be upheld longer and longer, Real Peace will be enjoyed longer, and longer, and the gradual improvement will enable the devotee to attain the first stage, Sotapanna (the Stream-Winner), the second stage, Sakadāgami (the Once-Returner), the third stage, Anāgami (the Never-Returner); and the fourth stage, Arahatsip (Holy One) who attains full Real Peace permanently even in this world before the Khandhas break up at the time of death in the last life.

We may now take the case of a motor car for a further test. If we see a beautiful car a desire is set in motion in us to have one similar to it, and immediately excites us, that is, it causes Dukkha in us, because we look at it under the influence of a wrong view; and if a Right View is applied, the Dukkha immediately disappears. If any person tried it, he would personally experience the truth of the Buddha's Teaching.

One of the remarkable teachings of the Buddha is that a person should not believe a thing to be true, because elders of the village or town say so, or because one's own relations both living or dead say so. A person should, so says the Buddha, believe a thing to be true when he has personally tested the truth of it, and finally satisfied himself that it is true. This is an exceedingly astounding remark from the lips of the greatest world reformer and Real-Peace-Finder. Hence the world opinion that the Buddha's Teaching, which at this age is designated as Buddhism in the West, confers the greatest liberty and independence of thought on all humanity without the slightest hint of overbearing dogmatism.

Admittedly the most charming aspect of Buddhism is that the more a person critically reads and understands it, the more interested and satisfied he becomes: "*Paccatam vedītabbo viññūhi*" — the Buddha's Teaching

is to be understood by the wise each by himself, which is one of the sterling qualities of the Buddha-Dhamma.

This analysis of phenomena both mental and physical by the Omniscient Buddha illumines the most essential aspect of Buddhism — the Way to the destruction of Dukkha, resulting in certain attainment of Nibbāna, Real Peace. And the Buddha's constant exhortation to His followers is that they should exert themselves to train and develop their mind, until it attains a state in which it becomes absolutely devoid of all Kilesas, mental impurities, and that to be done immediately.

The urgency so imparted evoked an impressive and illuminating discourse, when the Omniscient Buddha on one occasion laid a little quantity of earth on His finger-nail and asked His followers which one was of greater quantity the earth on His finger-nail or the earth of the world. The answer was that the earth on the finger-nail was immeasurably less than the whole earth. The Omniscient Buddha then explained that in the same proportion as many of the human beings as the particles of earth on the finger-nail, are reborn in the upper worlds of human beings, devas and brahmas, the remaining ones being reborn in Apāya, lower worlds of animals and so forth. The same principle applies to those of the deva abode; but it is just the reverse in the case of those who die in Apāya — only a few of them being reborn in the higher abodes of men and devas and the rest, in Apāya again.

It is by way of illustrating the urgency that the Buddha says that it is the duty of every sentient being to try to attain Sotapanna, Stream Winner, the first stage of Ariyaship *i.e.* by developing the Right View. Just as a man whose hair is on fire should at once put the fire out without first asking who has done, who is responsible for it and so forth, so in the same way it is the most urgent duty of every person in this human world to acquire the Right View and thus attain the first stage, Sotapanna, to avoid being reborn in Apāya. It is so difficult

to be released from Apāya, once one is reborn there by any means.

On one occasion when the Omniscient Buddha was in Kosambhi a country in Northern India, He happened to be stopping in an *in-jin* (Sal) grove, and taking a handful of *in-jin* leaves, He asked His followers near Him which was the more numerous of the two — the leaves in His hand or all the leaves of the whole grove. On His followers answering that those of the grove were countless more numerous. He told them what He had actually taught them after His Full Enlightenment was in the same proportion to what He fully came to know on attaining the Full Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Buddhagaya. He went on to explain that what He had taught them was all that was necessary to the attainment of Nibbāna, and the rest was not so and therefore not divulged to the world.

The interesting and instructive incident relating to the *in-jin* leaves also reminds us of what the Buddha told Mahā Moggallāna in the Veḷuvana monastery in Rājagaha, a town in Bihar District, west of Bengal. One day Mahā Moggallāna was coming down the Gijjakuṭa Hill in Rājagaha, accompanied by another Bhikkhu. On the way down, Mahā Moggallāna smiled and the Bhikkhu, noticing it, asked him the reason and was told that the answer would be given in the presence of the Buddha. Having finished the alms-round in the city and partaken of the food, they both went to the monastery, and having approached the Omniscient Buddha, respectively took their seats on one side of Him, and Moggallāna, when so questioned again by the other Bhikkhu, respectfully narrated to the Omniscient Buddha what had happened between him and that Bhikkhu and revealed to the Buddha that he smiled because he saw in the sky a man covered all over his body with long hairs, which from time to time flew out into the sky from his body, only to drop down again on his very body, and it seemed that the falling hairs were as pointed and sharp as iron lances, and the man vociferously kept shouting, feeling the pitiless pain thus caused.

In addition to this Mahā Moggallāna narrated other similar experiences including a Bhikkhu and a Bhikkhuni wearing robes, both their bodies and the robes being on fire in the sky above the hill. On hearing these accounts, the Buddha explained that He Himself had seen similar things under the Bodhi tree in Buddhagaya after His Full Enlightenment, but that He kept silent, because if the people did not believe it, ridiculing it, they would possibly be reborn in Apāya, and that He spoke out to Mahā Moggallāna, because He was thus supported by Moggallāna who had had a similar experience on Gijjakuṭa Hill, and continued to explain why that man and the Bhikkhu and Bhikkhuni had to suffer in this way as the results of their evil actions in their previous existences.

It is noteworthy that the Omniscient Buddha was never in haste in doing anything, but patiently waited for an opportunity to avail Himself of it, and the above incident is the unquestionable proof of the truth of this observation. Again it is crystal clear that there are many things, which, though known to Him, the Buddha has not revealed to the world, either because it is not useful and necessary to the attainment of Nibbāna, or because the people's minds are not sufficiently developed to be able to realise what He teaches.

The following historical incident will prove how deep and true the Buddha's Teachings are even after a lapse of two thousand five hundred years after His Mahaparinibbāna. About fifty years ago, it was held by the medical profession that the human body underwent a complete change in ten years, and later on the period was reduced to seven years. At that time one Major Ross, I.M.S., Burma, became keenly interested in the Buddha's Teachings, and while studying the Abbidhamma, he came in contact with the famous Thitchadaung Sayadaw U Tiloka, and entered into a discussion of its intricacies with him. When the discussion reached the subject of anicca (Impermanence), the learned doctor expounded the theory of seven years; but when the Sayadaw told him that the human body

underwent change millions of times in an eye-wink, and the mind changed seventeen times faster than the body, he became thunderstruck, and asked the Venerable Sayadaw on what authority he said so. The Sayadaw coolly enlightened the doctor on this point by replying that the Buddha discovered and divulged this truth two thousand four hundred and ninety-five years ago in India, and that it was still recorded in the Abhidhamma. This explicit statement of the Buddha made so long ago cannot as yet be proved to be untrue even by the most modern scientists. And I do not think the modern medical doctors have largely, if at all, changed their predecessors' opinion. Major Ross was a sincere Buddhist, Theravādin, studied the Abhidhamma well, wrote pamphlets, books and articles on Buddhism, and died in London, where his remains were cremated in accordance with the Buddhist rites as expressed in his last will.

While earnestly and intensively making uninterrupted, consistent endeavours to exterminate Dukkha in all its forms, the Omniscient Buddha gradually developed the realisation that He must first probe into the phenomena and study their properties, with which, He came to see, Dukkha is vitally connected. His analysis of the phenomena both mental and physical, has resulted in the appearance of Abhidhamma, Buddhist Philosophy, which is exceedingly deep, intricate and difficult to understand, and is founded on a two-fold base of nāma and rūpa. And it is in the Abhidhamma that the ways and

means of exterminating Dukkha and of achieving Peace are set forth.

While the correct, practical and only method of overcoming Dukkha and achieving Peace is found enshrined in the Buddha's Teaching and is available and accessible to the wide world, leaders of powerful nations are at present putting forth their best efforts to attain Peace in this troubled world by inventing most dangerous and deadly war weapons. *Puthujjano ummattako* (the worldlings *i.e.* non-ariyas are mad) — so says the Omniscient Buddha. “*Andhabālo puthujjano*” (foolish are the worldlings *i.e.* - non-ariya people). And to entertain a right view of life is one of the seven things, which is hard to get in this human world.

The Buddha Dhamma is simple in a way, but profound and scientific when properly studied; and its depth, immensity and practical truth can be discerned and appreciated by listening in, when the Chātṭha Sangāyana questions and answers were broadcast in Burma. Those who have already been to such places as Buddhagaya, Rājagaha, Migadāya (Sarnath) Banaras and Sāvātthi, - will feelingly enjoy the various and numerous accounts of the Buddha Himself from His own lips, contained in such questions and answers.

May I attain Nibbāna by virtue of this deed.

Peaceful Happiness be to all beings.

## THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

### Rates of Annual Subscription (Including Postage)

Burma: Kyats 5.00; India and Ceylon: Rupees 6; Malaya: Straits dollar 3.65; Britain and British Commonwealth Countries: sh. 9 (sterling or equivalent); United States of America: \$1.30.

THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA, A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF  
BUDDHISM

**Union Buddha Sāsana Council, Sixth Buddhist Council P.O., Rangoon.**

Telegram: “BUDHSASANA”, Rangoon.

Monies may please be remitted to the Chief Executive Officer.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF OUR CONTRIBUTORS

### Venerable Ledi Sayadaw

**Known to scholars of many countries, the Ven'ble Ledi Sayadaw, Agga-mahā-panḍita, D. Litt., was perhaps the outstanding Buddhist figure of this age. With the increase in interest in Western lands, there is a great demand for his Buddhist discourses and writings which are now being reprinted in the "Light of the Dhamma".**

Bhikkhu Nyāna who was later known as Ledi Sayadaw was born in 1208 Burmese Era (1846 C.E.) at Saing-pyin Village, Dipayin Township, Monywa District. At the age of puberty he was ordained a sāmaṇera and at the age of 20 a bhikkhu. under the patronage of Sayadaw Salin U Pandicca. He received his monastic education under various teachers and later was trained in Buddhist literature by the Venerable San-kyaung Sayadaw, Sudassana Dhaja Atuladhipati Sīri-pavara Mahādhamma Rājādhi-rāja-guru of Mandalay. He was a bright student. It was said of him: — "About 2,000 students attended the lectures daily delivered by the Ven. San-kyaung Sayadaw. One day the Sayadaw set in Pāli 20 questions on Pāramitā (Perfections) and asked all the students to answer them. None of them except Bhikkhu Nyāna could answer those questions satisfactorily." He collected all these answers and when he attained 14 Vassā and while he was still in San-kyaung monastery, he published his first book. "*Pāramitā Dīpanī (Manual of Perfections)*". During the reign of King Theebaw he became a Pāli lecturer at Mahā Jotikārāma Monastery in Mandalay. A year after the capture of King Theebaw, i.e. in 1887 C.E., he removed to a place to the north of Monywa town, where he established a monastery by the name of Ledī-tawya Monastery. He accepted many bhikkhu-students from various parts of Burma and

imparted Buddhist education to them. In 1897 C.E. he wrote *Paramattha Dīpanī (Manual of Ultimate Truths)* refuting the two sub-commentaries — *Abhidhamma-tthavibhāvanī* and *Mani-sāra-mañjūsā-tikā*, both of which contain many errors and misrepresentations. When this book was published in 1906 C.E. it was severely criticised by some learned scholars. However, its teaching prevailed, as Truth does, and his book is largely used by students nowadays.

Later he toured in many parts of Burma for the purpose of propagating the Buddha-Dhamma. In the towns and villages he visited he delivered various Discourses on the Dhamma and established Abhidhamma classes and Meditation Centres. He composed Abhidhamma rhymes and taught them to his Abhidhamma classes. In some of the principal towns he spent a Vassa imparting Abhidhamma and Vinaya education to the lay devotees. Some of the Ledi Meditation Centres are still existing and still famous. During his itinerary he wrote many Manuals in Burmese. He has written more than 50 such Manuals, of which three have been translated into English. *Vipassanā Dīpanī (Manual of Insight)* was translated by his disciple Sayadaw U Nyāna, Pathamagyaw. *Paṭṭhānuddesa-Dīpanī (A Concise Exposition of the Buddhist Philosophy of Relations)* was originally written in Pāli by the late Ledi Sayadaw and translated by U Nyāna. *Niyāma Dīpanī (Manual of Cosmic Order)* was translated by U Nyāna and Dr. Barua and edited by Mrs. Rhys Davids.

He was awarded the title of Agga-mahā-panḍita by the Government of India in 1911 C.E. Later the University of Rangoon conferred on him the degree of D. Litt. (*Honoris Causa*). In his later years he became blind and settled down at Pyinmana where he died at the age of 77.

## BHADANTA SOBHANA MAHĀTHERA

### (Mahasi Sayadaw) Aggamahāpaṇḍita

Born at Seikkhun Village, Shwebo Township on the 3rd Waning of Second Wazo in 1266 Burmese Era (1904 C.E.). Became a Sāmaṇera at 12 at the village monastery under the patronage of the Ven'ble U ādicca, his preceptor. Took the Upasampadā (higher ordination) at the age of 20 in 1285 Burmese Era (1923 C.E.).

Learned the Scriptures under the guidance of such eminent Mahātheras as the Ven'ble U ādicca of Shwebo, and the Ven'ble Khin-makan Sayadaw of Mandalay. Passed the Lower, Middle and Higher Pāli Examinations and Dhammācariya (Lecturership) Examinations conducted by the Government.

In 1949 the Mahāthera came to Rangoon on the invitation of Hon'ble U Nu and Thado Thiri Thudhamma Sir U Thwin to give lessons in Vipassanā Bhāvanā to devotees from Burma and abroad. There are at present more than 100 Meditation Centres in Burma, Thailand and Ceylon which give instructions in Vipassanā Bhāvanā according to this Mahāthera's method. He has played a very important role in the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā by not only acting as the "Questioner" in the proceedings, but also in re-editing the Tipiṭaka Texts and the translations of the same into Burmese. In 1953 the Government of the Union of Burma conferred on him the title of "Aggamahāpaṇḍita" in recognition of his great learning, and for training several devotees in *Vipassanā Bhāvanā*.

## BHADANTA NYANAPONIKA THERA

Born in 1901, at Hanau, near Frankfort, in Western Germany, from Jewish parents. As far as known, he was the first Jew who joined the Sangha, and might still be the only one. When he was 22, he became a Buddhist through the

study of Buddhist literature. Only some years later he met other German lay Buddhists when he moved to Berlin. There, and later in Koenigsberg (East Prussia) he joined the Buddhist societies existing in these cities. In February 1936, he arrived in Ceylon, at the Island Hermitage Dodanduwa, where, in the same year, he received his Novice Ordination (*Pabbajjā*) under the great German monk-scholar, the Venerable Nyanatiloka Mahāthera. In the following year, he took the higher ordination (*Upasampadā*). At the outbreak of the second world-war, he was interned, as a German citizen, and returned to Ceylon, from India, only in 1946. Some years later he became a citizen of Ceylon. He participated in the Opening and Concluding Sessions of the *Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā*.

*English publications: –*

Abhidhamma Studies, Researches in  
Buddhist Psychology

Satipaṭṭhāna, The Heart of Buddhist  
Meditation (two editions)

The Five Mental Hindrances

The Four Sublime States

The Three-fold Refuge

*German publications:*

Satipaṭṭhāna (The German edition includes  
also a translation of the Commentary,  
etc.)

Sutta Nīpāta. Translation with  
Commentary.

Dhammasaṅgani. Translation with  
introduction and notes.

Der Einzige Weg ("The Sole Way", An  
anthology of texts on Satipaṭṭhāna). In  
preparation.

*Unpublished manuscripts in German:*

Translation of Atthasālinī, parts of  
Samyutta-Nikāya. etc.

## THE VENERABLE U WISĀRA

U Wisāra, the eldest son of U Po Shin, bailiff, and Daw Gauk was born in 1916 at Lemyethna, Henzada District. On completion of his studies at the American Baptist Mission Middle School at Lemyethna, he was initiated a Sāmaṇera under the patronage of the Ven'ble Kanthit Sayadaw at Thabyegon in Henzada District. Under the preceptorship of the same Mahāthera he was ordained a Bhikkhu at the age of 20 in 1936. He has studied the Scriptures at East Ledī, Monywa, Mandalay and Amarapura. During the 2nd World War

the Venerable Thera stayed with his preceptor in Henzada District and gave lessons in the Scriptures to Sāmaṇeras and other pupils. At the end of the war he came to Rangoon for further studies in Burmese and Buddhist literature.

He then went to Ceylon and India to prosecute his studies in English and Hindi. He is now residing at the Burmese Dhammasala in Calcutta where he is of great help to Burmese pilgrims to holy places in India. The Ven'ble Thera is now studying Hindi under a private tutor.

## GLOSSARY

FOR VOL. III — No. 4.

### A

|           |                         |
|-----------|-------------------------|
| Acchariya | Wonderful; marvellous.  |
| Akkhātāro | Teachers ; proclaimers. |
| ātappam   | Ardour; zeal; exertion. |
| Attā      | Soul ; soul-essence.    |

### G

|         |               |
|---------|---------------|
| Giragga | Mountain top. |
|---------|---------------|

### K

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Khandhaka | Division; chapter                       |
| Liccam    | Duty; service; that which is to be done |

### M

|         |     |
|---------|-----|
| Manussa | Man |
|---------|-----|

### N

|       |            |
|-------|------------|
| Nicca | Permanence |
|-------|------------|

### P

|              |                           |
|--------------|---------------------------|
| Parābhava    | Defeat; destruction; ruin |
| Pariddavānam | Lamentation               |

### S

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Saddhamma     | The true Dhamma: the sublime Teaching of the Buddha. |
| Samatikkamāya | To cross over; to transcend                          |
| Sukha         | Joy; happiness.                                      |

### T

|           |                           |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| Tirokuḍḍa | Outside the fence or wall |
|-----------|---------------------------|

### V

|        |                           |
|--------|---------------------------|
| Vodāna | Purity (from Defilements) |
|--------|---------------------------|

# BUDDHA DHAMMA LOKA

A Weekly Journal in Burmese published  
by the  
**BUDDHIST WORLD MISSION**

*Annual Subscription:*

Burma—Kyats Ten

Foreign—Kyats Fifteen

*Apply:*

Headquarters Buddhist World Mission,  
No. 26, 28th Street,  
Rangoon.

Where authentic Buddhist literature in English is also available.

\* \* \*

## “BUDDHIST WISDOM for the West”

**Buddha Jayanti Souvenir Magazine**

containing contributions of lasting interest

by authoritative writers of the East and West

Price — ONLY ONE RUPEE — 1/6d. — 2 5 cents American

printed in England & post free, from the

**BUDDHA STUDY ASSOCIATION**

C/o Barclays Bank Ltd.,

43, South End Road, London, N.W.3, U.K.

## HELP TO SPREAD THE BUDDHA DHAMMA

The low subscription rate by no means covers the cost of production of “The Light of the Dhamma” and in publishing this magazine the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council has but one sole and abiding purpose; the propagation of the Buddha’s Teaching. The Council has no desire whatsoever to profit financially from the magazine.

You can help in this Dhammaduta work (Propagation of the Dhamma) by buying copies for your friends here and by sending copies abroad.

You can earn Merit and at the same time earn the gratitude of your friends by subscribing for them for one year or for several years. We shall be happy to send the magazine direct to them with your compliments.

May we also enroll you as a friend of “The Light of the Dhamma”, a friend who will gain us more and more subscribers? We hope to be able eventually to publish a list of such friends.

THE UNION OF BURMA BUDDHA SĀSANA COUNCIL  
KABA AYE P.O., RANGOON.

### SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Please enroll me as a subscriber for \_\_\_\_\_ year/s commencing with your next issue.

Name (in block letters) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I  
enclose the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ in payment

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

### RATES OF ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (INCLUDING POSTAGE)

Burma: Kyats 5/—

India and Ceylon: Rupees 6/—

Malaya: Straits dollars 3.65.

Britain and British Commonwealth Countries: sh. 9/— (or sterling equivalent)

United States of America: \$ 1.30.

THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA, A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF BUDDHISM.