



The **LIGHT**
of the
DHAMMA

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DHAMMA

VOL. IV

No. 1

2500 B.E.

January 1957 C.E.



THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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Translated by the Pāli Department, University of Rangoon

THE WORLD-FAMED SHWE DAGON PAGODA

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

The ever-glittering and beautifully shaped Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon has been recognized as one of the World's supreme art treasures of modern times. It has been a dream and a long cherished wish of many a distinguished foreigner from far-off lands and having visited the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, he considered it as the fulfilment of his dream and wish into a reality. To a foreign visitor on approach either by air or by sea, the glittering, towering pagoda, standing on a hill top amidst the green wooded landscape, presents the first beautiful sight of Rangoon; and on his departure too the same harmoniously proportioned shrine, rising into the sky, presents the last impressive sight of the city. No doubt the magnificence and splendour of the Great Shrine has captivated the imaginations of Buddhists and Non-Buddhists as well.

Writings by foreign visitors show that the Shwe Dagon Pagoda evokes emotional feelings even amongst non-Buddhists by its size, grandeur and imposing serenity. Above all, they are genuinely fascinated and charmed by its aesthetic beauty. This historic Pagoda has not only fascinated foreigners but has also attracted many thousands of the people of Burma both young and old throughout the years.

Boyhood days.

In this connection I have a vivid recollection of the years 1907 and onwards, that is, about half a century ago, when we as young boarding-school-boys of Government High School, Rangoon, used to visit the Sacred Pagoda on Saturday mornings in batches of five, ten or fifteen before the appearance of dawn

on the Eastern horizon. . . . how on cold winter mornings we were the first to trail along the dewy grasses across the old maidan; laughing, frolicking and merry-making all the way. On arrival at the steps of the Pagoda, we bought flowers and candles worth about one or two annas specially saved from our pocket monies and with these objects for offering, quick-marched up the steps without a break. We were not content to place our offerings at the Tazaungs on the main platform but climbed up to the upper terrace which took us right on to the base of the Great Pagoda.

Only on closer scrutiny is one struck and awed by the hugeness and impressiveness of the whole structure. Usually not many persons are to be found on the upper terrace. It is only the enterprising worshipper who can betake himself to this secluded terrace. It is absolutely clean and there is no noise to distract him. The whole atmosphere is serene and tranquil. There we lit our candles, offered our flowers and respectfully worshipped at the Shrine.

You may be tempted at this point to ask what else we did! Of course, having done these meritorious deeds with the best of youthful volitions we did pray and very fervently too, to pass our examinations. We did not stop there. At school, we implemented those prayers by earnest efforts over our lessons and when the time came, we took our examinations with courage and confidence with the result that we passed our examinations without much difficulty. On our marches back to school from the Great Pagoda, the same jollity and mirth prevailed and

we arrived there in time to resume and enjoy the day's work. I still recollect our contemporaries whom I can count on the fingers of my hands (most of them in Rangoon) who, I am sure, will join with me and heartily say.... "Oh, those days were really happy Ones."

Years of maturity.

Since our boyhood we have come to learn that our legitimate prayers are fulfilled provided they are strengthened by right actions and volitions. Now with years piling up and knowledge growing, the Great Shwe Dagon Pagoda conveys a far deeper significance. It not only represents the exquisite workmanship of olden and modern Burma, but represents also the loftier ideals of Ultra-Mundane Goal. History tells us that herein are enshrined the Sacred Relics of Gotama Buddha. To a devout Buddhist the sight of the Sacred Pagoda evokes a train of emotional thoughts of the past, the present and the future. It at once reminds him of the Nine Sterling Attributes of Gotama Buddha which He became possessed of on attaining Buddhahood.... how Gotama Buddha voluntarily went through the vicissitudes of life for millions of World-cycles or Kappas in the past with no other object than to show the Way of Deliverance to all beings from the labyrinth of rebirths and suffering, although he had achieved the necessary attainments for entering into Nibbāna at that time.... and how after attaining Perfect Buddhahood He strenuously preached for forty-five years, thus holding aloft the light of the Three *Ratanas*, The Buddha, The Dhamma and The Saṅgha for the future good and welfare of mankind. Bearing all these in mind, a devout Buddhist cannot but be ever grateful to Gotama Buddha and thus

keeps His memory in great reverence. Here, the shining beauty of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, towering majestically above the city, represents the embodiment of these incomparable qualities of Buddhahood. Is there any wonder, then, that devotees from far and near fervently worship and make offerings at the Sacred Shrine in memory of their Great Teacher, Gotama Buddha, the Enlightened One. History also records that this spirit of worship and devotion was shown by the former two rulers of Burma, that is, Shin Sawbu (1461-80 C.E.) and Sinbyushin (1774 C.E.) who had raised the pagoda to the present height and had gilded it with their weights in gold.

The Tabaung Festival.

The festival of this Pagoda is celebrated on the full moon of Tabaung. On such occasions in the past, thousands of pilgrims from far and near will visit the Great Pagoda dressed gaily in multi-coloured silk clothes. There, forests of flowers will be laid, tons of 'soon' (*i.e.*) that is, boiled rice, fruits and sweet cakes will be offered and thousands of candles and oil-lights will be lit before the stainless images of the Buddha. They will then worship fervently at the Shrine in memory of and honour to the Great Qualities of the Enlightened One. This is being done and all will be done in the future in accordance with His Dhamma as memorised and repeated by the Saṅgha after His Parinibbāna. After paying homage at the various shrines, the pilgrim walks round the open platform, makes a gift of charity to the needy whenever he finds one, reads the names of donors shown on plaques and joyfully and whole-heartedly responds to the sharing of merit by the donor with the words, "Sadhu, sadhu". Whenever a

visitor from the countryside reads the name of his co-villager among the donors, he beams with delight and resolves that he may have an early chance to do a similar act of merit. There are pandals on the platform where food and drinks are offered to all and sundry; the pilgrim goes in and has his fill and comes out with the rejoicings of “Sadhu, Sadhu”.

The Western Observer.

To an observer from the West all these form an amazing sight. However, it is difficult for him to understand what animates the huge crowds that visit the Sacred Shrine. He finds no organised worship led by a priest as in the West. Here worship is an individual affair. This is strictly in compliance with teaching of the Buddha who enjoins that each person must work out his deliverance in conformity with the Dhamma. It may be pointed out to non-Buddhists that the sharing of merit by the donor and the whole-hearted response of rejoicing by others are laid down by the Buddha to be performed by the spiritually minded persons known in Pāli as “Dasapuññakusalāni”. Again in Dhammasaganī ,(the first of the seven books of Abhidhamma) it is shown how a well disciplined mind may move from one noble state of thought to another without relapse into an ignoble one.

It may be pointed out to Western writers that it is not in disobedience to his mandate that fervent worship and offerings are made to Gotama Buddha, but it is in accord with the teaching in Parinibbāna Sutta where He says that after His demise the 84,000 Dhammakhandhas that have been preached will remain as 84,000 Buddhas and that worship and offering made in memory of and honour

to Him will produce equal beneficial results as made to Him in His lifetime,

The Flaws and Frailties.

There are certain things which the Easterner takes for granted as inseparable from the suffering of life. His tolerance at times takes him to such lengths that in the eyes of one who is of a different pattern of mind from his, the little flaws and frailties simply look ridiculous. However he should be thankful and take the criticisms as eye-openers. An infant as Burma is in the life of free nationhood, being released only a few years ago from the yoke of 100 year subjugation, she has been trying her best to keep her house in order amidst the troubles that beset an infant nation in similar circumstances. Any way it will do her a lot of good if she only summons courage and owns that the sooner the flaws and frailties are corrected and removed the better. Then she should plan and work strenuously to make the precincts of the World-famed Sacred Shrine a real dreamland not only to the peoples of the Union of Burma but also to the peoples of the World.

The Distracted World.

The peoples of the World have not yet settled down to live in peace and amity in spite of the two catastrophic wars that have taken place during the lifetime of many of us. Greed, hate, suspicion and racial pride are still rampant today as before. What are the forces to combat this mounting menace? To us Buddhists, the beaming, towering Shwe Dagon Pagoda, in its majestic repose, represents a perfect symbol of peace and a beacon of Light and Truth. May this Sacred Shrine—the mighty Shwe Dagon continue to stand until the fullness of time, as the embodiment of the higher spiritual peace and bliss of Nibbāna.

SUTTA-NIPĀTA, CULAVAGGA ĀMAGANDHA* SUTTA

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

Ascetic Tissa:

'Millet, beans and peas, edible leaves and roots, the fruit of any creeper; the holy men who eat these, obtained lawfully, do not seek pleasures nor speak vainly.

'O Kassapa! Thou who eatest whatsoever food is given by others, which is well-prepared, daintily garnished, pure and excellent; he who enjoys such food served with rice, he eats uncleanness.

'O Brahmin**! You say that the charge of uncleanness does not apply to you who eat rice tastily cooked with birds' flesh. O Kassapa! I enquire the meaning from you, please define 'Uncleanness'.

Buddha Kassapa:

'Taking life, beating, cutting, binding, stealing, lying, fraud, deceiving, pretended knowledge, adultery; this is uncleanness and not the eating of flesh. 'When men are unrestrained in sensual pleasures, are greedy in tastes, are associated with impure actions, are of nihilistic views, crooked, obscurantist; this is uncleanness and not the eating of flesh.

'When men are rough and harsh, backbiting, treacherous, without compassion, haughty, ungenerous and do not give anything to anybody; this is uncleanness and not the eating of flesh.

'Anger, pride, obstinacy, antagonism, hypocrisy, envy, ostentation, pride of opinion, intercourse with the unrighteous; this is uncleanness and not the eating of flesh.

'When men are of bad morals, refuse to pay their debts, slanderers, deceitful in their

dealings, pretenders, when the vilest of men commit foul deeds this is uncleanness and not the eating of flesh.

'When men attack living beings either because of greed or hostility, and are always bent upon evil, they go to darkness after death and fall headlong into hell; this is uncleanness and not the eating of flesh.

'Abstaining from fish or flesh, nakedness, shaving of the head, wearing the hair matted, smearing with ashes, wearing rough deer skins, attending the sacrificial fire, all the various penances performed for immortality, neither incantations, oblations, sacrifices nor observing seasonal feasts, will cleanse a man who has not overcome his doubt.

'He who lives with his senses guarded and conquered, and is poised in the Law, delights in uprightness and gentleness, who has gone beyond attachments and has overcome all sorrows that wise man does not cling to what is seen and heard.'

Thus the Blessed One preached this again and again, and that Brahmin who was well-versed in the ancient lore, understood it; for the Sage free from defilement, detached and hard to track, uttered this in beautiful verses. Having listened to the well-preached word of the Buddha, which is free from defilement and which ends all misery, he paid homage to the Tathāgata with humble spirit and begged to be admitted into the Order at that very place.'

* Āmagandha—lit. 'Odours of flesh' which had the connotation of 'putridity' and the repugnant sense of uncleanness'.

** The Buddha Kassapa was a Brahmin by birth.

BUDDHISM IN A NUTSHELL

Nārada Thera

*Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammā-Sambuddhassa*

Chapter I

The Buddha

On the full moon 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 Buddha¹, 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.

[The original issue had only the conclusion to this article. We have included this important booklet entirely in this Pariyatti Treasures Edition.]

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 Tathāgatas² 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 irresponsible 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. Despotic 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 Arahats³ versed in the Dhamma⁴ and Vinaya,⁵ 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. Paṭisaṃbhidā 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, forespoken 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-diṭṭhi*.

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 inlook, a teaching which enables those who give it heed to face life with fortitude and death with serenity,”⁶ 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*)⁷ and for annihilation (*Vibhavatanḥā*).”⁸

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 Āḷavaka 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 tiniest 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 occasion⁹ 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 H₂O, 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 *Samṣāra* — recurrent wandering.

What is the ultimate origin of life?

The Buddha declares:

“Without cognizable end is this *Samṣāra*. 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.¹⁰

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 presupposes 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.

Chapter IX

Anattā or Soul-lessness

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.”¹¹

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 ‘ourself,’ 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 (*ṭhiti*), 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.”¹² 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.”¹³ 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 re-born. 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* (*Dhuvā*), *desirable* (*Subhā*), and *happy* (*Sukhā*).

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 death¹⁴; 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 key-note 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. *Avihiṃsā* — 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 enwrapped 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 (Sīlabbatapārāmāsa).

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 — Anāgāma (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 gacchāmi — (I go
to the Buddha for refuge)

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

Saṅghaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi — (I go to
the Sangha for refuge)¹⁵

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 I¹⁶ 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.

PEOPLE ESTEEM AUSTERITY

Ohn Ghine

More than two thousand, five hundred years ago the first attempt to turn the Saṅgha, the Noble Order of monks, into a vegetarian society was made by the evil Devadatta.

He and a fellow-conspirator, Kokalika, decided that ‘people esteem austerity’¹ and that it would be an easy matter to create a schism in the Noble Order by insisting to the Buddha that, among other things, vegetarianism should be introduced as part of the Buddhist discipline. They well knew that the Buddha ate meat and allowed meat-eating to those in the Saṅgha on three conditions, ‘that it has not been seen, heard or suspected’ to be killed especially for one.²

They also knew that the Omniscient Buddha would refuse to make a change that would involve that self-tormenting He had preached against and which He had shown as a hindrance which could lead on to a hell state.³

And in the famed Brahmajāla Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, the passage occurs: ‘...he refuses to accept uncooked flesh’....implying clearly enough that cooked flesh is allowable, while in the Vinaya again (1. 218-220) there are the prohibitions against eating the flesh of certain specified animals but not that of all animals.

Elsewhere in this issue is to be found the Āmagandha Sutta which gives the important things to be refrained from. Only one who has cleansed himself of doubt and is free from every one of the long list of ‘unclean-nesses given in that Sutta should begin to think of refraining from fish and flesh. There are many other

instances of meat-eating in the Scriptures and it is interesting to consider the circumstances under which the Buddha explained the rule regarding meat-eating.⁴

The great general, Sīha, came to listen to the Buddha and was converted. He had been the chief disciple of the Nigaṇṭhas (the Jain Sect) and the chief supporter of their great founder, Nātaputta (also known as Mahāvira) and was, naturally, as one of that sect, a very strict vegetarian.

On conversion he begged the Buddha to accept a meal at his house and to bring the Saṅgha; and the Buddha by His silence, accepted.

Sīha then sent his servant to the bazaars to buy what meat was available. Nothing had been said on the subject as between the Buddha and Sīha, but Sīha knew, of course, that the Buddha would accept meat dishes as this was one of the charges made against the Exalted One by the very jealous Jains. The Jain priests, hearing of this, ‘went about through the highways and the byways of the city of Vesālī, from cross-road to cross-road, waving their arms and crying “Today a huge beast has been slain by Sīha the general, and a meal has been prepared for the recluse Gotama ; and the recluse Gotama is going to eat the meat, knowing that it was meant for him, that the deed was done on his account.”’

Incidentally this was the first recorded instance of picketing. It was then that the Buddha enunciated the rule binding on the Order as to the eating of meat.

1 Vinaya Piṭaka: Cullavagga VII.

2 Vinaya Piṭaka 111—172.

3 Aṅguttara Nikāya IV. XX. 198.

4 Vinaya Piṭaka, 1. 233-8: Aṅguttara Nikāya IV. 188.

Since much ink and paper has been wasted by the modern Devadattas and by those direct descendants of the hostile people who attacked the Buddha on this score more than 25 centuries ago, in an attempt to prove by procrustean methods that the Buddha's last meal of Sūkara-maddava was not really the 'succulent flesh of the boar' which it translates as, but, instead, 'a dish of truffles', it is perhaps timely to show that that was not the only instance of the acceptance of pork by the Buddha. It is told in the Aṅguttara Nikāya how Ugga, of Vesālī, made offerings of various kinds to the Buddha saying 'From the mouth of the Exalted One have I heard this, "The giver of good things gains the good." Lord, good is the flesh of pigs with plenty of jujube fruit; let the Exalted One accept some from me out of compassion'; and the Exalted One accepted. Here the phrase used is Sukara maṁsa, which can not be twisted to mean anything else but what it does mean 'pig's-flesh'.

It is clear that Buddhism cannot be equated with vegetarianism, Buddhism can be equated only with Buddhism. The Teaching of the Buddha is one of self-discipline to gain freedom from the whirlpool of existence. It begins in morality and in loving-kindness to all animals as well as other sentient beings but it is not maudlin sentimentality nor irrationality but the reverse.

The people who are solicitous about animals are admirable, as long as they refrain from hurting any form of life, refraining from using leather, since as many animals are killed for their skins as are killed to provide food. They should also refrain from eating manufactured cheese, since this is made from rennet

procured by killing, young calves. They should also refrain from taking medicine to kill germs. But first and foremost they must refrain from all the uncleannesses listed in the Āmagandha Sutta.

There are those who will say that vegetarianism can change the mind and is the first thing to commence, since it gives a calm and loving mind. When one considers that apart from Devadatta, who attempted to murder the Buddha, and his friends who did likewise, all of them vegetarians, the late Adolf Hitler was also a strict vegetarian, yet committed the most cruel and brutal murders of this age, and when one considers that the fierce gorilla, savage and bad-tempered and the ugliest brute in the jungle, is a vegetarian, the plea of mildness engendered by a vegetable diet does not bear examination.

The way to attain freedom from lust and anger and delusion is not to commence with diet, that may possibly follow, but to commence with a definite practice. This practice has been given by the Buddha in the Vitakka-Saṅṭhāna Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya. It consists in taking one's mind from the evil thought to an associated thought which is not evil. The modern psychologists call it 'sublimation'. If that is not successful there is a second step, the consideration of the wretchedness of such evil thoughts. Then, if the thoughts are not by this means driven away there is a third step, the turning of the mind away to other thoughts that are not associated at all with the evil thoughts, but are thoughts good in themselves. If they still persist, the evil thoughts may be lessened by degrees, by taking thought that they may be made less violent 'Just as a man running swiftly might say to himself: 'But what am I

going so hurriedly for? How if I were to go more gently...’ And thus as a man might slow down from more vigorous postures until he finally stopped, then sat, then lay down, so evil, unsalutary thoughts that arise may be gradually slowed down if the other methods of banishing such thoughts fail altogether.

‘But if’, said the Omniscient Buddha, ‘O disciples, bringing these considerations to subsidence by degrees, evil unsalutary considerations connected with Desire and Hate and Delusion should still persist in arising, then with teeth clenched and tongue pressed against palate, the monk by main force must constrain his mind and coerce it; and thus with clenched teeth and taut tongue, constraining and coercing his mind, those evil, unsalutary considerations will disappear and go to

decay; and with their disappearing, the mind of the disciple within him will become settled, subdued, unified, concentrated.’

This is the discipline to be followed by a Buddhist. If he can do this and be a vegetarian as well (as is, by preference, the author of this article) so much the better. But it should be apparent from the just-quoted *Vitakka-Saññhāna Sutta* that, as Shakespeare put it, ‘the mind grows by what it feeds on’ and that it is the food of the mind and not of the body that is essential for Salvation.

A Buddhist should eat cheerfully what he gets, neither overeating nor undereating and should not take too much account of what he eats, even though ‘people esteem austerity.’

POSTSCRIPT

A very valuable addition to the foregoing article has been suggested by Hon’ble Justice Agga Maha Thray Sithu-Thado Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Maung, Chief Justice of the Union of Burma, Vice-President of the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council, and Chairman of the English Editorial Board, who points out that a proper understanding of the Buddha-Dhamma necessitates a proper orientation of mind.

The Hon’ble U Thein Maung has suggested that we translate the *Jīvaka Sutta* in which the Buddha states the position more fully, and we hope to be able to present a translation of this *Sutta* to our readers in a forthcoming issue; and also that we might mention the following points:—

1. The Ariya-vaṃsa or four ‘Noble Usages’ which are: contentedness of the

monk with any robe that he may obtain, contentedness with any alms-food he may obtain, contentedness with any dwelling and rejoicing in meditation and detachment. In the *Dīgha Nikāya*, 33, we hear:

“Now, the monk is contented with any robe, with any alms-food, with any dwelling, finds pleasure and enjoyment in mental training and detachment ... But not is he haughty on that account, nor does he look down upon others. Now, of a monk who herein is fit and indefatigable, who remains clearly conscious and attentive, of such a monk, it is said that he is firmly established in the ancient, noble usages known as the most lofty ones”.

2. Even a novice has to vow to take his meal with proper care and mindfulness—*Paṭisaṅkhā yoniso piṇḍa-pātaṃdi paṭisevāmi*.

3. That the Visuddhi Magga describes Āhare patikula-saññā—reflection on the loathsomeness of food, which is an object of meditation. How that food, itself subject to decay, goes into the body that is also subject to decay and there is transformed into the decaying organic matter of the body and into loathsome excreta.

4. That one of the Saṃvega-vatthu—“The sources of emotion”—is the suffering of the present state rooted in the continual searching after food; and which is the cause of so much suffering and evil-doing in this round of rebirth.

5. That the crowning piece of course is Vipassanā (Insight). One has to eat because one’s rūpa-khandha (corporeality group) is anicca (impermanent) and therefore dukkha (suffering) and anattā (without any permanent ego entity or soul).

All this adds up, as pointed out, to an orientation of mind. The Buddha taught compassion to all beings but His Teaching was of a non-attachment to anything whatsoever and He pointed out that while it is quite impossible for a man himself still sunk in the mire to free others, it is possible for a man freed from the mire himself, to free others. This has been rather aptly paraphrased in an old saying “The wise men of the world spend most of their time undoing the harm done by the ‘good’ men. There is no substitute for Vipassanā (insight) and there is only one way, the

Buddha called it “ekāyano”—the Only Way—to insight, and that is the way which He gave and which we have still preserved in the Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta.

It is interesting to note the comment of the American translator of the Dhammapada Commentary, Eugene Watson Burlingame. He says:—

“For example, the Jains taught the Doctrine of Non-Injury; the doctrine, namely, that it is a wicked thing to injure man, animal or plant. But this doctrine, noble as it is, they carried to what was perhaps a logical, but for all that, quite absurd extreme. The Buddha also taught the Doctrine of Non-Injury, but took pains to confine it within reasonable limits. He condemned the killing of animals even for food, but did not altogether forbid the eating of flesh and fish. But he was not satisfied merely to condemn the injuring and killing of living creatures; he taught no such merely negative doctrine. Instead he taught the most sublime doctrine that ever fell from the lips of a human being; the doctrine, namely, of love for all living creatures without respect of kind or person and for the whole visible creation. A man must love his fellow-man as himself, returning good for evil and love for hatred. But this is not all. He must extend his love to the fishes of the sea and the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, to the plants and the trees, to the rivers and the mountains. A man must not kill his fellow-man even in self-defense. *All war is unholy.*”

IMPRESSIONS OF BUDDHA JAYANTI

By Francis Story

(A Radio talk from B.B.S. on 27-6-56)

On Wednesday last I witnessed a unique event, the Novitiation of 2,668 Sāmaṇeras into the Holy Order of the Yellow Robe. It took place in the Great Rock Cave of the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā, in the presence of many thousands of pilgrims and prominent people invited by the Government of the Union of Burma.

I have seen many impressive sights in the course of my life, but nothing so inspiring as this. From the historical point of view alone, it is something that cannot be paralleled anywhere in the world outside Buddhist Asia. The continuity through 2,500 years of a religious institution that has preserved the same language, the same formula of initiation, the same rule of life and precisely the same dress, is an achievement that only Buddhism can show.

But far more important than this historical interest is the triumphant affirmation across the centuries of the way of life for which the Buddhist Saṅgha stands. My thoughts went back to Isipatana, where I have so often sat close to the very spot where the first Ordination was given, so many centuries ago. That was a very simple summons to the holy life: “Ehi, Bhikkhu!” — “Come, O Bhikkhu !”—but it was both Novitiation and Higher Ordination. For the Ascetic Kodaṇṇa, on hearing the first Sermon of the Buddha, had realised the Path and the Fruits, and became the first Mahā Thera.

For some time that simple phrase, uttered by the Buddha Himself, had constituted the whole of the induction into the path of

holiness, for it was addressed to those who already knew the Law. “Come, O Bhikkhu!” —come, and see for yourself the truth of the Dhamma; come, and learn to distinguish between the false and the true, between those things that only temporarily are, and that which eternally is.

Then later, as we read in the Mahāvagga, the Great Section of the Vinaya Piṭaka, the Buddha gave authority to the Bhikkhus to bestow Ordination themselves. “I permit you, O Bhikkhus, to go forth and ordain in any quarter, in any district. And in this way, O Bhikkhus, should one ordain. First having instructed him (the postulant) to have his hair and beard shaved off, to assume yellow robes, to arrange the upper robe over one shoulder, to honour the feet of the Bhikkhus; and having instructed him to sit down on his haunches and salute with joined palms, in this manner should he be told ‘Speak thus: I go to the Buddha for refuge, I go to the Dhamma for refuge, I go to the Sangha for refuge’. And a second and a third time should he say this. I permit, O Bhikkhus, the going forth and the ordaining by these Three Refuges”.

At that time the Threefold Refuge of all Buddhists, lay and monastic, was the Ordination of the Bhikkhu. It was only later, as the need arose for a more exacting formula, that the Ordination as we know it today was laid down by the Enlightened One, to be performed by a Chapter of Theras, with the applicant for Upasampadā sponsored by his preceptors and closely questioned as to his suitability

for the monastic life. In the case of the first initiation of Sāmaṇeras the form remained essentially simple. The postulant approaches, in lay dress and carrying the robes of a Bhikkhu, and asks the presiding Thera to take the robes and grant him Novitiation “In compassion for me, lord, give me the yellow robe and let me be ordained, for the destruction of all sorrow and for the attainment of Nibbāna”. He then repeats after the Mahā Thera the formula of the Refuges, followed by the Precepts of Sāmaṇeras. At the conclusion he says: “I have received these Precepts. Permit me, O lord I make obeisance. Forgive me my faults. May the merit I have gained be shared by you, my lord. Give me also to share in your merit, my lord. It is good. I share in it”.

“I share in it” means that he shares the merit freely bestowed in loving-kindness by his spiritual benefactor, even as he shares his own with him. It also means in a wider sense that he shares in the life of holiness that is the supreme purpose of the going forth from the household life into the life of the monk who lives by alms: “The destruction of all sorrow and the attainment of Nibbāna”. Not for one moment should he lose sight of that essential purpose, from the time he exchanges the clothes of a layman for the Yellow Robes of the Saṅgha. He may be only a temporary Sāmaṇera, yet while he is wearing those robes he should devote himself steadfastly to the purpose for which he is wearing them. Only thus can he “share in it”—in both the merit and the aim of that life—in a real and positive sense.

The Higher Ordination, Upasampadā, is more elaborate. The Postulant, already a Sāmaṇera, goes through the same

introductory forms and then, after being exhorted by his sponsors to speak the truth, he is asked certain questions, such as whether he is free from disease, is exempt from military service; whether he is a free man and free from debt whether he has the permission of his parents, whether he is of full age, twenty years; and whether he is a human being, and a male. It will be seen that the Buddha covered every possible eventuality, even to an error in sex. The question regarding the service of the king, that is, military service, reveals two significant facts. Firstly, that the Buddha did not confuse a citizen’s worldly duties to his nation, represented by the ruler, with his spiritual life; secondly, that He did not want the Saṅgha made a refuge for those who desired merely to shirk such responsibilities. Had it been otherwise, there would have been a very real danger that the Saṅgha itself would be perverted into a disruptive element in the community. All these possibilities the Buddha, with His supramundane knowledge, foresaw and guarded against. For He saw clearly that if the worldly life was disrupted there could be no hope for the survival of the higher life of man.

The applicant for Higher Ordination, then, must be a free man in every respect; one who has discharged his obligations to others in the fullest measure. So, the enquiring mind may ask what of those who for some reason are so entangled in commitments that they cannot follow the holy life? Is it therefore denied them?

The answer is emphatically, no. If by reason of their past Kamma—and all obligations are in the last analysis voluntarily undertaken, not imposed by a god or by fate—certain persons are

unable to become Bhikkhus, they must wait until the obstructive Kamma-result has exhausted itself. Until, in other words, they have settled the debt and are at liberty again to choose their own path. If it cannot be in this life, it must be in some subsequent one, to which end they should regulate their conduct now, in order that conditions may be favourable for them in time to come. That is the beat motive for accumulating good Kamma not for specific worldly or heavenly results, but to pave the way to that ultimate and highest objective, the attainment of Nibbāna.

Forty-five years intervened between the first Ordination given by the Buddha, and His last. And then a very striking thing happened. Subhadda, a wandering ascetic, came to the Buddha while He lay dying, and begged for instruction. The Buddha gave it, and the wandering ascetic, like Kondañña so long ago, accepted the Doctrine at first hearing, Taking refuge in Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha, he asked for the low and higher Ordination, whereupon the Buddha told the Venerable Ānanda to admit Subhadda into the Order without the customary probationary period. Here is the passage, a very beautiful one, from the Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta:

“Atha kho Bhagavā āyasmantanam Ānandaṃ āmantesi: ‘Tena h’Ānanda Subhaddaṃ pabbājethāti.

‘Evam Bhante’ ti kho āyasmā Ānando Bhagavato paccassosi. Atha kho Subhaddo paribbājako āyasmantaṃ Ānandaṃ etad avoca: ‘Lābhā vo āvuso Ānanda, saluddhaṃ vo āvuso Ānanda, ye ettha Satthārā sammukhā antevā-sābhisekena abhisittā’ ti.

Alattha kho Subhaddo panibbājako Bhagavato santike pabbajjam, alattha

upasampadam. Acirūpasampanno kho pan’ āyasmā Subhaddo eko vupakaṭṭho appamatto ātāpī pahitatto viharanto. Na cirass’ eva yass ‘atthāya kulaputtā sammad eva āgarasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti, tad anuttaram brahmacariya-paniyosānaṃ diṭṭhe’ va dhamme sayāṃ abhiññā sacchikatva upasampajja vihāsi: ‘Khīṇā jāti, viṣitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇiyaṃ, naparaṃ itthattāyāti’ abbhāññāsi.

Aññataro kho pan’ āyas-mā Subhaddo arahataṃ ahoṣi.

So ‘Bhagavato pacchimo sakkhi-sāvakaṃ ahoṣi’.

It means, briefly, that on being granted Ordination, Subhadda said to Ānanda that it was greatly to their gain and advantage that Ānanda and the other disciples had received Ordination from the Buddha Himself. And so Subhadda was ordained by the Buddha, and in a very short time he became one of the Arahats.

Buddhaghosa in his commentary takes up the story in more detail. He relates that Ānanda took Subhadda aside, poured water on his head, shaved off his hair and beard, and taught him the formula of meditation on the impermanency of the body. Then he caused him to repeat the Three Refuges, and after that the Buddha gave Subhadda full Ordination.

The Wheel of the Law, set in motion at Isipatana forty-five years before, had made one complete revolution, and the Buddha’s last Ordination was an act of supreme compassion. I like to think that he summoned Subhadda to the holy life with the same simple words with which He started His ministry “Ehi Bhikkhu !”.

These were some of the thoughts that passed through my mind as I watched the ordination of the 2,668 Sāmaṇeras in the

Great Stone Cave of the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā. And I thought that no more fitting ceremony could have been chosen to grace the concluding days of the Great Council. As the young, ardent voices rang through the vaulted hall, echoing the Mahā Thera's words, I thought that this must truly be a memorable experience for them, and one that will remain to influence their whole lives. Let us hope that they too, like Subhadda, will strive earnestly and attain Arahatship in a very short time, and that their merit will be shared by all beings. That would indeed be a crowning glory to the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā and the Buddha Jayanti celebrations.

(The Novitiation Ceremony referred to in the broadcast was held on Wednesday May 23rd 1956. It was originally intended that 2,500 Sāmaṇeras should be given novitiation, one for every year of the Buddha Sāsana. So many families, however, desired their sons to take the Robe on this great occasion that the number was increased to 2,668. In addition to these, many thousands of youths became Sāmaṇeras in the districts during the Buddha Jayanti celebrations.

No greater proof could be needed of the flourishing state of the Sāsana in Burma, and of the tremendous influence Buddhism has on the lives of the people. While religion is disintegrating in the Western hemisphere, the Theravāda lands of Asia continue to preserve the noble truth of the Dhamma, which is unaffected by time and changing circumstances. The reason for this is not far to seek. So long as Suffering exists, men will search for a means to bring it to an end, and the Teaching of the Supreme Buddha is the only system that completely eradicates Suffering at its root—the instinct of Craving conjoined with the illusion of Self. When dreams and myths have faded away there comes the opportunity for Truth to assert itself. The 2,500th year of the Buddha's Dispensation sees us at such a point, and places before the world a reminder that there is a Way of self-salvation for all, founded on a reasonable world-view, an unimpeachable philosophy, a sublime ethic and a practical rule of life that is good for this world and all conceivable states of existence until the final goal of Nibbāna is reached. F.S.)

“Though a person recites much of the Sacred Texts, yet, if he, being negligent does not live up to them, he will not share the holy life and is merely a cowherd who counts the kine of others.

Though a person recites but a little of the Sacred Texts, yet, if he lives up to the Teaching, having dispelled his lust, hatred, and delusion, possessing right knowledge, with a mind well-freed and not clinging to this world or the next, he does indeed share the holy life.”

Dhammapada verses 19 & 20.

BUDDHA-DHAMMA AND MODERN SCIENCE

U Khin Moun,

(A Radio Talk from B.B.S.)

The Buddha Dhamma may be defined in brief as the teaching of Gotama Buddha on the basis of the discoveries He made when He attained Supramundane knowledge by introspective meditation. To be a Buddhist scholar it is essential to study all His discoveries, discourses and commentaries, which are comprehensive, but the learned teachers advise us that the first step for the layman is to thoroughly comprehend the physical and psychical processes and their causal relations. Bearing this in mind let us first of all study the phenomena of physical process.

The Buddha discovered with scientific exactitude the composite nature of wave and matter as the basic phenomenon of physical particles. He taught us that the smallest particles are in a dynamic process of arising and vanishing with a frequency of about fifty thousand million cycles during the period of a finger-snap. He mentioned that about 46,656 atoms are required to form the minutest particle of fine dust raised by the wheel of a chariot in summer. Devout Buddhist scholars have actually seen this process in the course of Vipassanā meditation, but I am not quite sure whether they are able to count and compute the frequency accurately as shown by the Buddha. At any rate we can realise that the static structure, which we find through our sense organs is a delusion and we shall find that this delusion is the main cause of our life-long troubles and miseries. It is a misconception inherent in us since childhood, and it will remain till death, unless we dispel it by developing the

faculty of understanding. The Buddha scientifically expounded these phenomena as Four Noble Truths and formulated the Eightfold Noble Path for the solution of all the problems of life.

Let us now find out how far modern science can help us to understand the phenomena of physical process. It can help us to a great extent to understand at least theoretically. Its findings are almost identical with the discovery of the Buddha. The scientists have re-discovered the composite nature of wave and matter by the use of their precision instruments, mathematical equations, and logical thinking in the light of experiments and observations. They describe it briefly stating that there are two kinds of waves—bottled-up waves, which we call matter and unbottled waves which we call light, heat, electro-magnetic radiations, X-rays, etc. They can resolve the whole material universe into waves—nothing but waves. Their discoveries of natural radio activity, cosmic radiations and the natural formation of discrete quantities or packets of radiated energy as propounded by quantum theory are in total agreement with the discovery of the Buddha. They can tell us precisely that one gram of radium emits 3.70×10^{10} alpha particles with a velocity of 1.699×10^9 centimeters per second. They are also able to generate artificial electronic radiations with super-high frequencies ranging beyond ten thousand million cycles per second. When they produce them with the help of electronic devices, they distinctly find the process of arising and vanishing. The

process of arising and vanishing means motion. Motion means time. Using time as factor for the theory of relativity, Einstein propounded that the physical phenomenon is a four-dimensional continuum formed by the union of space and time. All these go to show that the scientists have also fully realised the dynamic nature of physical particles. The atom is no more a static structure to them. So far so good. Modern science is the chief witness, that can give reliable evidence in support of the Buddha-Dhamma. I cannot find such strong evidence in the speculative philosophies, some of which, in fact, try to justify the existence of immortal soul and Almighty God, which are conspicuous by their absence in the discoveries of the Buddha.

Let us go ahead and study His other discoveries relating to physical phenomena. He taught us that there are four generating forces, that give rise to the appearance of material existence. They are

- (1) Resultant mental forces,
- (2) Mental activities,
- (3) Temperature or weather and
- (4) Nutriment.

The mental phenomena and the causal relations between physical and psychical processes as discovered by the Buddha can never be re-discovered and realised with the help of scientific instruments, mathematical formulae, experiments, observations, analysis and logical thinking. The mental phenomena can be discovered completely only in the light of Supramundane knowledge far transcending the mundane intellect and faculties. It is beyond the realms of physical science and it will be interesting

to study the limitations of modern science in contrast to the wide vista presented by the Supramundane knowledge.

If we study the methods used for the development of scientific knowledge, we shall find that all sciences have been built upon two main foundations only. They are

- (1) the sensations received by the scientists as the subjective and
- (2) the external physical phenomena or stimulus as the objective.

The subjective sensations are formed through five sense organs i.e. eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. The objective physical phenomena are the manifestations of material properties in a perpetual state of flux. The scientists receive a series of sensations by observing the results of experiments when they try to understand the phenomena of a particular subject. After the formation of sensations as a result of experiments and analysis, the mind organ begins to function by reasoning and deducing logical inferences from the observed facts. They then formulate scientific laws with the support of mathematical equations. This is the process upon which modern science is founded. But the scientists cannot go beyond approximations since the external world of objects which they find through their sense organs are not absolute or direct or real. The sensations are mere images of the objects. The late Albert Einstein himself admitted that sense perception only gives information of the external world indirectly and we can only grasp the latter by speculative means. This is the dead end of modern science.

Let us now study the immense field of the Supramundane knowledge of the

Buddhas and Arahats. We shall find with amazement that Gotama Buddha discovered with mathematical precision the mental phenomena and causal relations, the foundations of the Buddha-Dhamma. But in this short talk I can mention only a few essential facts in brief just to give an idea. The Buddha taught us that the mental process with quanta of thought moments is 17 times faster than the physical frequency. These rapidly fleeting thought moments have 52 types of mental properties, which in combination with passive mind generate 121 classes of consciousness ramifying as 31 planes of existence. The most important discovery is the causal relations between mental and physical phenomena in 24 systems of correlation. Another important system of causation is Dependent Origination of 12 mental and physical factors, that give rise to the appearance of life continuum in cyclic order. He taught us that inherent delusion or ignorance is the main cause that creates the living beings. The predominance of mental process in the phenomenal existence will be realised if we study the nature of those living beings in the higher celestial world. They have no material qualities at all. Their existence is only mental. Their life term is very long but they cannot escape the life process. After death they are liable to be reborn as human or celestial beings with both mental and physical properties.

As a last word, I would like to mention that if we study the scientific expositions of the Buddha-Dhamma rationally, we shall be able to develop our faculty of understanding, leading to our realisation that the so-called life is nothing more than

an endless psycho-physical process like a pendulum between likes and dislikes or joy and sorrow with resultant miseries in series. But when we fully realise the miserable nature of life, we can stop the psycho-physical process by a systematic course of Vipassanā meditation. We can then dispel all the delusions and resist the temptations of worldly sensual desires or cravings. Our feelings of like and dislike are strong when the faculty of understanding is low. Their strength diminishes in the same ratio as the increase in the faculty of understanding. They will go down to zero point as the knowledge reaches the highest stage. It may be formulated that the feelings, of likes and dislikes or joy and sorrow vary inversely as the faculty of understanding. It is the law of diminishing craving. The Buddha dispelled craving completely as soon as He attained the Supramundane knowledge. He therefore taught us that the development of the faculty of understanding is the first step in the Eightfold Noble Path, that leads to perfect peace of mind by attaining complete emancipation from the conditioned life-continuum.

In conclusion, I am not trying to belittle the scientists by showing the limitations of modern science. On the contrary, their highly developed scientific knowledge will help them to understand the Buddha-Dhamma thoroughly and to take up a course of Vipassanā meditation successfully. For these reasons the scientists are requested to study the Buddha-Dhamma and interpret it in their scientific language as and when they are satisfied and convinced that it will be really conducive to the welfare of mankind.

THE ESSENTIALS OF BUDDHISM

“The Optimism of the Four Noble Truths: The Buddha’s Cure for the Canker of Life”

U Hla Maung. B. A., B.E.S. (Retd.)

There are four great truths or affirmations which contain in a nutshell the central teaching of the Enlightened Buddha. They form the crux of Buddhism. The four truths, discovered by our Tathāgata by virtue of His deep insight and wisdom are unlike and distinct from other views and theories. They are:—

1. Life or existence as part of the Becoming process of the world is “DUKKHA”—“SORROW”—“ILL”
2. The perpetuation of life or sorrow has Originating Causes.
3. Originated life and sorrow can be ended by dissolving the causes of such origin.
4. The Buddha’s path of morality and mental discipline can dissolve these causes.

It is apparent that these four great affirmations run counter

- (a) to the theistic theory that God is the giver and arbiter of life,
- (b) to the pantheistic creed that life is a manifestation of an unknowable mind or spirit,
- (c) to the mechanistic—materialistic dictum that life is a product of chance,
- (d) to the claims of determinism or predestination, and
- (e) to the optimistic idea of the thoughtless that life with all its vanities, vulgarities, vicissitudes, and make-beliefs is worth clinging to.

In His investigation of the truth in regard to life the Buddha discovered the convincing fact that life is sorrow, and in

consequence He earnestly and untiringly propagated it. Truth may be unpalatable, but that it has to be grimly and courageously faced is the exhortation of the Buddha.

Are these unique truths worthy of unprejudiced study and sincere thought? The main point is that life is painted in its true colours as sorrow, and that again this ever-pursuing sorrow is shown to be an ill that can be ended. Further it is shown that in and through life, man can, by his own efforts, make the greatest achievement conceivable to the human mind. The Buddha, in effect has said “Face the truth of rebirth and sorrow. Realise that this sorrow has its causes in the chain of dependent causation. Similarly realise that through right knowledge there is a parallel chain of causation which can dissolve this repeating sorrow. There is a path of self-conviction and faith which will lead you by proper discipline and training to the great goal of purification and emancipation. Here I lay before you the problem in its stark nakedness with all its factors. Also I lay before you the means of solving the problem. Be a hero and wage war against ignorance in yourself and crown yourself with wisdom and its incomparable fruit .”

We have already seen that the Paṭiccasamuppāda chain of twelve nidānas (links), beginning with Avijjā (ignorance), deals with the origin and perpetuation of the sorrow of life. The parallel chain of faith, hope and joy, founded upon self-investigation and

confidence, lays down the path of triumph to wisdom. From ignorance and sorrow to wisdom and happiness—such is the bitter and sweet of truth in its opposites. We give below the two formulae:—

A. *Chain of Dukkha—Sorrow*
 Avijjā Paccayā Saṅkhārā
 Saṅkhāra Paccayā Viññāṇaṃ
 Viññāṇa Paccayā Nāma-rūpaṃ
 Nāma-rūpa Paccayā Saḷāyatanaṃ
 Saḷāyatana Paccayā Phassa
 Phassa Paccayā Vedanā
 Vedanā Paccayā Taṇhā
 Taṇhā Paccayā Upādānaṃ
 Upādāna Paccayā Bhava
 Bhava Paccayā Jāti
 Jāti Paccayā Jarā maraṇaṃ etc.
 Through Ignorance Kamma
 formations are conditioned;
 through Kamma formations
 Consciousness is conditioned;
 through Consciousness Mental and
 Physical Phenomena are
 conditioned;
 through Mental and Physical
 Phenomena the 6 Bases are
 conditioned;
 through the 6 Bases Contact is
 conditioned;
 through Contact Sensation is
 conditioned;
 through Sensation Craving is
 conditioned
 through Craving Clinging is
 conditioned;
 through Clinging the Process of
 Becoming is conditioned;
 through the Process of Becoming
 Rebirth is conditioned;
 through Rebirth are conditioned Old
 Age and Death,
 Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and
 Despair.

B. *Chain of Self-found Salvation*
 Dukkha Upanisā Saddhā (faith in the
 way out)
 Saddhā Upanisā Pāmojjaṃ (pleasant
 state of mind)
 Pāmojja Upanisā Pīti (Joy)
 Pīti Upanisā Passadhi (serenity and
 calm)
 Passadhi Upanisā Sukhaṃ (blest and
 happy)
 Sukha Upanisā Samādhi (calmness
 and tranquility of mind
 concentrated on truth)
 Samādhi Upanisā Yathābhūta
 Ñāṇadassanaṃ (seeing things in
 their true nature)
 Yathābhūta Ñāṇadassanaṃ Upanisā
 Nibbidā (weariness of human
 frailties and vanities)
 Nibbidā Upanisā Virāgo (void of
 desire and passion)
 Virāga Upanisā Vimutti (release—
 emancipation)
 Vimutti Upanisā Khaya Ñāṇaṃ
 (knowledge of the end of
 passion)
 Khaya Ñāṇaṃ Upanisā
 Āsavakkhayaṃ (complete
 eradication of corruptions and
 defilements)

By way of a side-light for the need of investigation and thought into the dire malady of the world we quote Dr. Ralston in the quest for an effective cure for Cancer London Times, June 1, 1952. Dr. Gerald Ralston, MRCS, LRCP is the head of a large practice in the London borough of Holborn.

“In the pursuit of discovering the cause of cancer it cannot be said that organised research has failed”, he writes. “In every civilized country in the world innumerable scientists of all grades,

working indefatigably in all manner of institutions and laboratories, are using up uncountable man-hours, irreplaceable materials and millions of pounds—all to agonisingly small human profit.

New Original Approach Needed.

“It seems that a new and original approach is needed to the problem. Modern research, in this field certainly, has become too stereotyped.

“Many of our greatest discoveries have resulted not from endless experimentation but from the processes of native thought. What experiment did was to confirm, usually by trial and error—always a costly, wasteful business.

“All of us who practise medicine with sincerity have given thought to the problem, and many of us have evolved ideas of Cancer. It is not impossible that in such a welter of theories the truth may be found.

“No doubt among the speculations some may prove too bizarre for serious cogitation and some, so at variance with accepted fact and knowledge, as to deserve scant consideration. On the other hand, somebody by thought or observation may have arrived at a theory worth further investigation.”

Dr. Ralston’s words are to say the least, very suggestive and revealing. He speaks of the tremendous efforts being made through thought and experiment to discover the cause of cancer and its cure. The doctor also champions the potency of “native thought”. He thinks that someone with the power of profound thinking and intuition would be able to arrive at a true diagnosis and the right cure where continuous and tireless experimentation by scientists has up to

now failed to achieve the desired result.

The potency of thought is supported by the late Professor Einstein. In “Autobiographical Notes” Einstein remarked in one place “I saw that mathematics was split up into numerous specialities, each of which could easily absorb the short life granted to us. Consequently, I saw myself in the position of Buridan’s ass which was unable to decide upon any specific bundle of hay. This was due to the fact that my intuition was not strong enough in the field of mathematics to differentiate clearly the fundamentally important, that which is really basic, from the rest of the more or less dispensable erudition.” In trying to satisfy his hunger for deeper knowledge and in becoming the founder of the Special Theory of Relativity and ten years later of the General Theory of Relativity, Einstein came across paradoxes and climaxes of thought which, he asserted, he surmounted by turning away from the multitude of things which clutter up the mind and divert it from the essential, and by the help of insight and intuition—two terms which occur more than four times in the short autobiographical notes.

While Dr. Ralston speaks of cancer, the Buddha speaks of the “Canker of Life”. And it was in the deepness of His insight and the clear intuition available to one who became enlightened that the Buddha found the day-light of truth, namely that life is a dire disease. The problem being segregated from others which clouded the issue, the Buddha, through the powerful lens of Samādhi, arrived at the proper solution of the selected basic problem.

The Buddha did not claim to be a “Chosen Person” or to belong to a

“Chosen People”. He was neither an incarnation nor a manifestation of God. He was no selected mouthpiece for Divine revelation. He wandered on the various planes of life, and the trail of right understanding, right living and right meditation led to His self-won Enlightenment. There is the fullest force and potency in the Paṭiccasamuppāda and its accompanying formula— “From Dukkha to Full Emancipation”. The same applies to the Four Truths, which are verily “Noble and Holy”.

Is not Life a Canker—a dire malady as the Buddha says? Is not Cancer only one of the innumerable ills that afflict

mankind? How are we to cure these physical ills as well as the fires of passion, anger and greed that burn us internally? Not by reliance on religions which feed on emotional appeals, faith and revelation nor by reliance on scientific wizardry, which has brought about the Hydrogen Bomb. The Buddha has laid out a way for the cure of the Canker of Life. The way lies through the realisation of the Noble Truths and of the Law of Dependent Origination. These are grim facts. They sound pessimistic, but read again the optimistic formula of glory and release given as a counterpart of the Law of Origination.

‘Thereupon the Brahman who was chaplain said to the king: “The king’s country, Sire, is harassed and harried. There are dacoits abroad who pillage the villages and townships, and who make the roads unsafe. Were the king, so long as that is so, to levy a fresh tax, verily his majesty would be acting wrongly. But perchance his majesty might think ‘I’ll soon put a stop to these scoundrels’ game by degradation and banishment, and fines and bonds and death! But their licence cannot satisfactorily be so put to a stop. The remnant left unpunished would still go on harassing the realm. Now there is one method to adopt to put a thorough end to this disorder. Whosoever there be in the king’s realm who devote themselves to keeping cattle and the farm, to them let his majesty the king give food and seed-corn. Whosoever there be in the king’s realm who devote themselves to trade, to them let his majesty the king give capital. Whosoever there be in the king’s realm who devote themselves to government service, to them let his majesty the king give wages and food. Then those men, following each his own business, will no longer harass the realm; the king’s revenue will go up; the country will be quiet and at peace; and the populace, pleased one with another and happy, dancing their children in their arms, will dwell with open doors.”

Kutadanta Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya.

BUDDHA GAYA IN THE BUDDHA JAYANTI YEAR

Freda Bedi, M.A. (Oxon)

Buddha Gaya at Jayanti time was a dream come true. We arrived the day before the celebration, very early in the morning, and, in the first hush of dawn, the feet of our rickshaw puller beat lightly and methodically on the road. A simple little road, and a simple countryside, and all the time we were thinking: "It was on this soil that the Buddha walked, to this place he had to come to gain enlightenment. According to tradition, it is this soil too that will be the scene of enlightenment of future Buddhas." It was cool at that early hour, but the fields were parched, but for the well-watered patches of artichoke leaves, heart-shaped and dazzlingly green against the monotone of the landscape. Here and there a few palms were gathered in clusters: the few shops by the wayside had round palm leaf fans, so functional and beautiful in design that the idea occurred to me that this very same must have been in use in the Buddha's day.

The dried-up river bed of the Nerañjarā river was left behind and we were in the narrow village street, lined with provision shops and tea stalls, and bright with the orange and yellow robes of the Bhikkhus. My schoolboy son amused himself with guessing... "This is a bhikkhu from Ceylon, and this is a bhikkhu from Burmaand where do you think this one comes from?" And then we saw the Mahabodhi temple. Exquisite, in the early pale sun, every detail of the magnificent tower was visible. But it was not the carving that was remarkable, rather the sheer balance of the massive building. Square based, it rose a hundred and seventy feet to a cylindrical neck and

"hti", and it was surrounded by a garden interspersed with stupas of all sizes, and bushes of flowering chandni.

We had to hurry past, to the room in the Community Project Guest House that had been reserved for us. From there we went on to the Mahabodhi Society Rest House, where many pilgrims from Ceylon were staying and where a real welcome was awaiting us from Sri Barua, who was patiently serving many monks and pilgrims on behalf of the Society.

But we were impatient to get away and to see the centre of this drama of the pilgrimage. The tree. There it was, thick with green shade. It seemed as if it was itself in meditation, conscious and yet oblivious of the pilgrims who had come in their millions through the centuries. It had defied time. Now a hundred feet high, and rich in foliage, it has arisen time and again from the original roots, as if to prove that the Dhamma would continue to grow and spread in this world of suffering.

We stood beside it, hushed. To one side, in the exact spot where the Tathagata sat, was a stone slab with a caned base, traditionally known as the Vajārāsana. It had a few lights on it, and some simple food offerings. So this was the spot, dappled with the shade of the shining leaves, where the Enlightened One found the answer to the sorrows of the world, and the Path to Nibbāna. The very air breathed peace.

During the day and most of the night we watched it. In the evening the pilgrims began arriving in groups. Some Ceylon pilgrims in the white "Sil" dress came in a procession with music and many cries,

bearing long strings of flags and bunting. Some were embroidered on silk with pictures of the Buddha, with texts in Pāli. Many were very beautiful. They were attached to the tree branches, the long silken banners hanging from the high branches. And so it continued.

Many kept vigil that night and with the first streaks of the dawn of the anniversary a Burmese procession reached the foot of the tree. Led by Upāsakās carrying rich gifts, and about thirty learned Sayadaws and Bhikkhus, it was mainly composed of women, from village, township, or town. Dressed in bright longyi skirts and white blouses, they carried earthen water pitchers on their heads, for a long distance, to pour them at the foot of the precious Tree. Small girls danced in traditional style, and young men beat the drums and sang. It was happy, carefree Burmese in spirit and form. The small group made the sacred circle round the shrine, past the stupas and the Cankamana with its embossed lotuses. They came back to join the larger procession that formed at about six in front of the Mahabodhi Society offices.

Here was what, in India, is called “ronuk”. Cheerful noise and good spirits. Leading the procession came the Lamas from Tibet, Sikkim, Leh and Darjeeling in their maroon robes and helmet-like headdresses. Banners, gongs and carved horns were an integral part of the display. Following them Ceylon monks and lay groups and the Burmese processionists, student monks, from Nalanda, representing Thailand, Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos. Indian Buddhists, mainly from the old established groups in Chittagong, East Bengal, were also there, some of them Pakistan citizens.

If I were asked what struck me when looking at the pilgrims, I should say it was their great devotion. Strikingly, most of them from all countries, looked as if they came from unsophisticated families. Some were even poor, in creased and cheap clothes, but radiant with the joy of being able to visit the shrine on this day of days. Later, I thought, the great dignitaries of the Saṅgha and the Governments may come; there are the rich who will wait for the cool pleasant weather of the Indian winter. But nothing could move me more than these simple people, who have spent all they had in sacrifice and devotion. I looked at the plates they carried, full of pieces of cucumber and watermelon. Plain offerings plain people. But what an aura of Mettā irradiated them, and the villagers of Gaya, already gathering in their hundreds to be the spectators of this historic scene.

The procession made its way to the foot of the Bodhi Tree and formed itself into groups where the Five Precepts and the Eight Precepts were taken. Robes and parasols and even the sandals of the monks were hung on the tree, until it gave the impression of being a mass of offerings. Learned monks showed their skill of climbing, and placed the gifts higher and higher in the branches.

Many had planned to become novice monks (Sāmaṇeras) under the tree but plans are difficult to mature, and the only man whose good Kamma was enough to ensure the fruition of that wish was a Bengali Buddhist brahmachari who took the robes with the classic request to the Mahā Theras to be taken as pupil. A week later he was followed by the ten-year-old son of the Ambassador of the Union of Burma in India, Sithu U Aung Soe, and the junior member of the Embassy Staff.

All the parties came, with flags and drums, and offerings. By the night when the Vihāra was flooded with golden light, ten thousand people thronged the streets, big meetings were addressed by the Governor of Bihar, and the Ministers of the Government, Sri Abraham, and members of the Temple Committee. At the foot of the shrine, Mrs. Nalini Moonesinghe of Ceylon and many willing volunteers filled and lighted the first of the 84,000 oil lamps that she is offering; side by side the junior lamas filled and lighted ghee lamps in brass receptacles.

The newspaper men made their last notes; the All India Radio folded up the tape-recording equipment. Comments were made; opinions exchanged. There were many good words for the new Committee of the Temple, and those local officers who had cleared the surrounding land of huts, and housed their occupants in the neat little homes on the Community Project. By the end of the rains, a new part will have been laid out.

The golden tower rose like a dream in the cool air of the late night. All were resting, on the grass, in the open, under the trees. A great peace descended, as the last pilgrims slept and the last visitors made their way homeward.

The holy year had begun. From then on the stream of visitors has been mounting. It will reach flood tide in October and November, and the Bihar Government is already planning how to meet that challenge to its hospitality, with housing, tents, food, understanding advice.

Buddha Gaya .. Rajgir .. Nalanda .. Sarnath .. Lumbini .. Kasia. It is a refrain that is echoing in a million hearts wherever the Dhamma of the Buddha is preached. Its music will draw them inevitably to his Indian homeland before the Full Moon of Vaisakh, 1957, swings slowly over temple and rooftop and gilds what to Buddhist hearts are the most precious leaves in the world.

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MORAL CAUSATION

Bhadanta Piyadassi Mahā Thera

Religion is something to be approached by reasoning and reflection. If, after a thorough study, a teaching appeals to one's heart and mind, let one adopt its principles in the conduct of life. It is foolish to try to follow a creed when one is dissatisfied with it on reasonable grounds. One must be upright. One must be true to oneself and others. Self-deception leads to mental conflict and unhappiness. None has the right to tamper with the freedom of another in the choice of a religion. Freedom of thought is the birthright of every individual. It is wrong to force one out of the way of life which accords with one's outlook and character, spiritual inclinations and tendencies. Compulsion in every form is bad. It is unpardonable when it affects a man's inner life. It is coercion of the blackest kind to make a man gulp down beliefs for which he has no relish. Such forced feeding cannot be good for anybody, anywhere.

A man must be allowed to grow in that way which will bring out his best. Any regimentation of thought is direct interference with that unfolding of the spirit. A Buddhist considers such interference as intolerance of the worst kind.

Purification comes not from an external agency and self-purification can only come to one who is free to think out his own problems without let or hindrance. Others may help if one is ready to receive such help or seeks it. The highest happiness is attained only through self-knowledge, self-realization, self-awakening to the truth. One must put

forth the appropriate effort and break the shackles that have kept one long in bondage and get at freedom from sorrow by unremitting self-exertion, and not through the mediation of another. Buddhist monks are not priests who perform rites of sacrifice. They do not administer sacraments and pronounce absolution. A Bhikkhu cannot and does not stand as an intermediary between men and supernatural powers; for Buddhism teaches that each individual, whether layman or monk, is solely responsible for his own liberation. Hence, there is no need to win the favour of a mediating priest.

“By ourselves we cease to do evil
By ourselves we become pure,
No one saves us, but ourselves,
No one can, and no one may
We ourselves must walk the Path,
Buddhas only teach the way.”

It was the Buddha, who for the first time in the world's history, taught that salvation could be attained without a saviour. “By precept and example, he was an exponent of the strenuous life.” ‘Strive on with diligence’ (Appamādena sampādetha!) are the last words of the Master.

Each living being is his own creator; no other creator do we see in the world beyond our own action. By our action we make our character, personality, individuality. We are all self-made. Therefore does the Buddha say that we are heirs of our own deeds, bearers of our own deeds and that our deeds are the womb out of which we spring and that through our deeds alone we must change for the better, remake ourselves and win

liberation from ill. How can it be otherwise? If we through our ignorance and our passions, in the long night of samsāric wandering, had not shaped ourselves, how could there be such difference and dissimilarity between living beings as we see in the world to-day?

Can we conceive of a mind, a single mind, vast enough to plan out such a varied sentient world as we see around us? And, if someone else by a creative act made us out of nothing, who created that mighty brain? For nothing can escape the law of condition and cause which is patent in the world to all but those who will not see. Only a terrible blindness to the actuality of life can postulate any cause other than actions born of craving and ignorance for the existence of sentient beings. Nevertheless, we do not go out of our way to condemn or belittle the conceptual doctrinal systems of the non-Buddhists.

The teaching of moral causation (*Kamma*), which is the one and only reasonable explanation for the mass of suffering called the world, cannot be overthrown. All explanations of sentient existence, except moral causation, are fully unsatisfactory; for they do not take into account the real function of the intangible, but nevertheless, deciding factor of consciousness (*Nāma*) in the process of becoming (*Bhava*). But when one sees sentient life as the working, principally, of causality in its aspect of conscious process, then one comes to know and grasp the fount of life as *ignorance*; and the countless forms of sentience as expressions of the drive of many coloured passion which urges all from life to life, arising and bursting asunder as bubbles in the vast sea of *Samsāra*. Then one comes to cognac the

meaning of moral causation through the phenomenon of rebirth

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

(*Light of Asia*)

We are reaping what we have sown in the past; some of our reapings, we know, we have even sown in this life. In the self-same way, our actions here mould our hereafter and thus we begin to understand our position in this mysterious universe.

We, therefore, do not hasten to blame or praise a Deva or a specially graced person for the ills we suffer and the good we experience. No, not even the Buddha could redeem us from *samsāra*'s bond. Each individual should make the exertion necessary for his emancipation. In our own human hands lies the power to mould our lives. Others may lend us a helping hand indirectly, but deliverance from suffering must be wrought out and fashioned by each one for himself upon the anvil of his own actions.

We believe that

“Whatever a man does, the same he
in himself will find;
The good man good; and evil he that
evil has designed;
And so our deeds are all like seeds,
and bring forth fruit in kind.”

We see a reign of natural law, unending cause and effect and naught else ruling the universe. The whole world is subject to the Law of Cause and Effect. The entire world is governed and controlled by this unending cause and effect, in other words, action and reaction.

We cannot think of anything in this world of sentient things that is causeless and unconditioned. Although the Buddhists believe in the Law of Cause and Effect, they emphatically deny a “*First Cause*” and, that is the reason, that is the cause, why Buddhists do not attribute anything to a “*First Cause*” with a capital “*F*” and a capital “*C*”. If any posit a “*First*

Cause”, one is justified in asking for the source of that “*First Cause*”.

As Bertrand Russell says in “*Why I am not a Christian*,” “There is no reason to suppose that the world had a beginning at all. The idea that things must have a beginning is really due to the poverty of our imagination.”

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

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

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

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

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

Samyutta Nikāya, XXII–102.

“NAMO TASSA BHAGAVATO ARAHATO SAMMA SAMBUDDHASSA.”

CULTURE OF MIND

Bhikkhu Ānanda Metteyya (Allan Bennett)

THE Religion of the Buddha is in the most eminent sense of the word, a Practical Philosophy. It is not a collection of dogmas which are to be accepted and believed with an unquestioning and unintelligent faith, but a series of statements and propositions which, in the first place, are to be intellectually grasped and comprehended; in the second, to be applied to every action of our daily lives, to be practised and lived, up to the fullest extent of our powers. This fact of the essentially practical nature of our Religion is again and again insisted upon in the Holy Books.

Sahassamapi ce giāthā anatta-pada-
sāṃhitā

Ekam gāthā-padam seyyo yaṃ sutvā
upāsammati.

Dhammapada viii. 2.

Though one man should know by heart a Thousand stanzas of the Law, and not practise it, he has not understood the Dhamma. That man who knows and practises one stanza of the Law, he has understood the Dhamma, he is the true follower of the Buddha. It is the practice of the Dhamma that constitutes the true Buddhist, not the mere knowledge of its tenets: it is the carrying out of the Five Precepts, and not their repetition in the Pāli tongue; it is the bringing home into our daily lives of the Great Laws of Love and Righteousness that marks a man as *sammādiṭṭhi*, and not the mere appreciation of the truth of that Dhamma as a beautiful and poetic statement of Laws which are too hard to follow. The Dhamma has to be lived, to be acted up to, to be

felt as the supreme ideal in our hearts, as the supreme motive of our lives; and he who does this to the best of his ability is the right follower of the Master;—not he who calls himself “Buddhist” but whose life is empty of the love the Buddha taught.

And because betimes our lives are very painful, because to do right, to follow the Good Law in all our ways is very difficult, therefore we should not despair of ever being able to walk in the way we have learned, and resign ourselves to living a life full only of worldly desire and ways. For has not the Master said

Māvamaññetha puññassa na maṇḍam
āgamissati

Udabindu-nipātena udakumbhopi
pūrati

Dhīro pūrati puññassa thokaṃ
thokampi ācinaṃ.

Dhammapada ix. 6

“Let no man think lightly of good, saying, ‘it will not come nigh me’— for even by the falling of drops, the water-jar is filled. The wise man becomes full of Good, even if he gather it little by little.” He who does his best, he who strives, albeit failingly, to follow what is good, to eschew what is evil, that man will grow daily the more powerful for his striving; and every wrong desire overcome, each loving and good impulse acted up to, will mightily increase our power to resist evil, will ever magnify our power of living the life that is right.

Now, the whole of this practice of Buddhism, the whole of the Good Law which we who call ourselves “Buddhists”

should strive to follow, has been summed up by the Tathāgata in one single stanza

Sabba-pāpassa akaraṇaṃ kusalassa
 upasampadā
 Sa-citta-pariyodapanaṃ etaṃ
 Buddhāna sāsanaṃ.

Dhammapada xiv. 4

“To avoid the performance of evil actions, to gain merit by the performance of good acts and the purification of all our thoughts; —this is the Teaching of all the Buddhas.”

And so we that call ourselves Buddhists have so to live that we may carry out the three rules here laid down. We all know what it is to avoid doing evil:— we detail the acts that are ill each time we take Pañca Sīla. The taking of life, the taking of what does not rightly belong to us, unlawful sexual intercourse, speaking what is not true, or is cruel and unkind, and indulging in drugs and drinks that undermine the mental and moral faculties—these are the evil actions that we must avoid. Living in peace and love, returning good for evil, having reverence and patience and humility— these are some part of what we know for good. And so we can all understand, can all try to live up to the first two clauses of this stanza, can all endeavour to put them into practice in our daily lives. But the way to purify the mind, the way to cultivate the thoughts that are good, to suppress and overcome the thoughts that are evil the practices by which the mind is to be trained and cultivated; of these things less is known, they are less practised, and less understood.

The object of this essay is to set forth what is written in the books of these methods of cultivating and purifying the mind; — to set forth how this third rule

can be followed and lived up to; for in one way it is the most important of all, it really includes the other two rules, and is their crown and fruition. The avoidance of evil, the performance of good these things will but increase the merit of our destinies, will lead but to new lives, happier, and so more full of temptation, than that we now enjoy. And after that merit, thus gained, is spent and gone, the whirling of the great Wheel of Life will bring us again to evil and unhappy lives;— for not by the mere storing of merit can freedom be attained, it is not by mere merit that we can come to the Great Peace. This merit-gaining is secondary in importance to the purification and culture of our thought; but it is essential, because only by the practice of *Sīla* comes the power of Mental Concentration that makes us free.

In order that we may understand how this final and principal aim of our Buddhist Faith is to be attained, before we can see why particular practices should thus purify the mind, it is necessary that we should first comprehend the nature of this mind itself—this thought that we seek to purify and to liberate.

In the marvellous system of psychology which has been declared to us by our Teacher, the *Citta* or thought-stuff is shewn to consist of innumerable elements which are called *Dhamma* or *Saṅkhāra*. If we translate *Dhamma* or *Saṅkhāra* as used in this context as “Tendencies”, we will probably come nearest to the English meaning of the word. When a given act has been performed a number of times;—when a given thought has arisen in our minds a number of times, there is a definite tendency to the repetition of that act, a

definite tendency to the recurrence of that thought. Thus each mental Dhamma, each Saṅkhāra, tends to constantly produce its like, and be in turn reproduced; and so, at first sight it would seem as though there were no possibility of altering the total composition of one's Saṅkhāras, no possibility of suppressing the evil Dhammas, no possibility of augmenting the states that are good. But, whilst our Master has taught us of this tendency to reproduce that is so characteristic of all mental states, he has also shewn us how this reproductive energy of the Saṅkhāras may itself be employed to the suppression of evil states, and to the culture of the states that are good. For if a man has many and powerful Saṅkhāras in his nature, which tend to make him angry or cruel, we are taught that he can definitely overcome those evil Saṅkhāras by the practice of mental concentration on Saṅkhāras of an opposite nature;—in practice by devoting a definite time each day to meditating on thoughts of pity and of love. Thus he increases the Saṅkhāras in his mind that tend to make men loving and pitiful.

Na hi verena verāni sammantīdha
kudācanaṃ
Averena ca sammanti esa dhamno
sanantano.

Dhammapada i. 5.

“Hatred ceaseth not by hatred at any time, hatred ceaseth by Love alone.”

Then do those evil Saṅkhāras of his nature, those tendencies to anger and to cruelty, disappear before the rise of new good tendencies of love and of pity, even as the darkness of the night fades in the glory of the dawn. Thus we see that one way—and the best way—of overcoming bad Saṅkhāras, is the systematic

cultivation, by dint of meditation, of such qualities as are opposed to the evil tendencies we desire to eliminate; and in the central and practical feature of the instance adduced, the practice of definite meditation or mental concentration upon the good Saṅkhāras, we have the key to the entire system of the Purification and Culture of the mind, which constitutes the practical working basis of the Buddhist Religion.

If we consider the action of a great and complex engine—such a machine as drives a steamship through the water—we will see that there is, first and foremost, one central and all operating source of energy in this case the steam which is generated in the boilers. This energy in itself is neither good nor bad—it is simply Power and whether that power does the useful work of moving the ship, or the bad work of breaking loose and destroying and spoiling the ship, and scalding men to death, and so on, all depends upon the correct and co-ordinated operation of all the various parts of that complex machinery. If the slide-valves of the great cylinders open a little too soon and so admit the steam before the proper time, much power will be lost in overcoming the resistance of the steam itself. If they remain open too long, the expansive force of the steam will be wasted, and so again power will be lost; and if they open too late, much of the momentum of the engine will be used up in moving uselessly the great mass of machinery. And so it is with every part of the engine. In every part the prime mover is that concentrated expansive energy of the steam; but that energy must be applied in each diverse piece of mechanism in exactly the right way, at exactly the right

time or either the machine will not work at all, or much of the energy of the steam will be wasted in overcoming its own opposing force.

So it is with this subtle machinery of the mind;—a mechanism infinitely more complex, capable of far more power for good or for evil, than the most marvellous of man's mechanical achievements, than the most powerful engine ever made by human hands. One great engine, at its worst, exploding, may destroy a few hundred lives, at its best may carry a few thousand men, may promote trade, and the comfort of some few hundred lives; but who can estimate the power of one human mind, whether for good or for evil? One such mind, the mind of a man like Napoleon, may bring about the tortured death of three million men, may wreck States and religions and dynasties, and cause untold misery and suffering; another mind, employing the same manner of energy, but rightly using that energy for the benefit of others, may, like the Buddha, bring hope into the hopeless lives of millions upon millions of human beings, may increase by a thousandfold the pity and love of a third of humanity, may aid innumerable lakhs of beings to come to that peace for which we all crave—that Peace the way to which is so difficult to find.

But the energy which these two minds employed is one and the same. That energy lies hidden in every human brain, it is generated with every pulsation of every human heart, it is the prerogative of every being, and the sole mover in the world of men. There is no idea or thought, there is no deed, whether good or bad in this world accomplished, but that supreme energy, that steam- power of our mental

mechanism is the mover and the cause. It is by use of this energy that the child learns how to speak; it is by its power that Napoleon could bring sorrow into thousands of lives; it is by this power that the Buddha conquered one third of the heads of men; it is by that force that so many have followed Him on the way which He declared;—the Nibbāna Magga, the way to the Unutterable Peace. The name of that power is Mental Concentration, and there is nothing in this world, whether for good or for evil, but is wrought by its application. It weaves upon the Loom of Time the fabric of men's characters and destinies. Name and form twin-threads, with which it blends the quick-flying shuttles of that Loom, men's good and evil thoughts and deeds; and the pattern of that fabric is the outcome of innumerable lives.

It is by the power of this Samādhi that the baby learns to walk, it is by its power that Newton weighed these suns and worlds. It is the steam-power of this human organism, and what it does to make us great or little, good or bad, is the result of the way the mechanism of the mind, all these complex Saṅkhāras, apply and use that energy. If the Saṅkhāras act well together, if their varying functions are well co-ordinated, then that man has great power, either for good or for evil; and when you see one of weak mind and will, you may be sure that the action of his Saṅkhāras are working one against another; and so the central power, this power of Samādhi, is wasted in one part of the mind in overcoming its own energy in another.

If a skilful engineer, knowing well the functions of each separate part of an engine, were to have to deal with a

machine whose parts did not work in unison, and which thus frittered away the energy supplied to it, he would take his engine part by part, adjusting here a valve and there an eccentric; he would observe the effect of his alterations with every subsequent movement of the whole engine, and so, little by little, would set all that machinery to work together, till the engine was using to the full the energy supplied to it. And this is what we have to do with this mechanism of our minds—each one for himself. First, to earnestly investigate our component Saṅkhāras, to see wherein we are lacking, to see wherein our mental energy is well used and where it runs to waste; and then to keep adjusting, little by little all these working parts of our mind-engine, till each is brought to work in the way that is desired till the whole vast complex machinery of our being is all working to one end—the end for which we are working, the goal which now lies so far away; yet not so far, but that we may yet work for and attain it.

But how are we thus to adjust and to alter the Saṅkhāras of our natures? If a part of our mental machinery *will* use up our energy wrongly, *will* let our energy leak into wrong channels, how are we to cure it? Let us take another example from the world of mechanics. There is a certain part of a locomotive which is called the slide-valve. It is a most important part, because its duty is to admit the steam to the working parts of the engine and upon its accurate performance of this work the whole efficiency of the locomotive depends. The great difficulty with this slide-valve consists in the fact that its face must be perfectly, almost mathematically, smooth; and no machine has yet been

devised that can cut this valve-face smooth enough. So, what they do is this they make use of the very force of the steam itself, the very violent action of steam, to plane down that valve-face to the necessary smoothness. The valve, made as smooth as machinery can make it, is put in its place, and steam is admitted; so that the valve is made to work under very great pressure and very quickly for a time. As it races backwards and forwards, under this unusually heavy pressure of steam, the mere friction against the port-face of the cylinder upon which it moves suffices to wear down the little unevennesses that would otherwise have proved so fertile a source of leakage. So we must do with our minds. We must take our good and useful Saṅkhāras one by one; must put them under extra and unusual pressure by special mental concentration. And by this means those good Saṅkhāras will be made ten times as efficient; there will be no more leakage of energy; and our mental mechanism will daily work more and more harmoniously and powerfully. From the moment that Mental Reflex ¹ is attained, the hindrances (i.e., the action of opposing Saṅkhāras) are checked, the leakages (Āsavas, a word commonly translated “corruptions”, means, literally, “leakages” i.e., leakages through wrong channels of the energy of the being) are assuaged, and the mind concentrates itself by the concentration of the neighbourhood degree. ²

Now let us see how these Saṅkhāras, these working parts of our mental

1 The Mental Reflex, or Nimitta, is the result of the practice of certain forms of Samādhi. For a detailed account see Visuddhi Magga,

2 Visuddhi Magga iv. There are two degrees of mental concentration,—“Neighbourhood-concentration” and “Attainment-concentration” respectively.

mechanism, first come into being. Look at a child learning how to talk. The child hears a sound, and this sound the child learns to connect by association with a definite idea. By the power of its mental concentration the child seizes on that sound by its imitative group of Saṅkhāras, it repeats that sound, and by another effort of concentration it impresses the idea of that sound on some cortical cell of its brain, where it remains as a faint Saṅkhāra, ready to be called up when required. Then, an occasion arises which recalls the idea that sound represents—it has need to make that sound in order to get some desired object. The child concentrates its mind with all its power on the memorising cortex of its brain, until that faint Saṅkhāra, that manner of mind-echo of the sound that lurks in the little brain-cell is discovered, and, like a stretched string played upon by the wind, the cell yields up to the mind a faint repetition of the sound idea which caused it. By another effort of concentration, now removed from the memorising area and shifted to the speaking centre in the brain, the child's vocal chords tighten in the particular way requisite to the production of that sound; the muscles of lips and throat and tongue perform the necessary movements; the breathing apparatus is controlled, so that just the right quantity of air passes over the vocal chords and the child speaks: it repeats the word it had formerly learnt to associate with the object of its present desire. Such is the process of the formation of a Saṅkhāra. The more frequently that idea recurs to the child, the more often does it have to go through the processes involved—the more often, in a word, has the mind of the child to perform mental concentration, or Samādhi, upon that particular series of

mental and muscular movements, the more powerful does the set of Saṅkhāras involved become, till the child will recall the necessary sound-idea, will go through all those complex movements of the organs of speech, without any appreciable new effort of mental concentration;—in effect, that chain of associations, that particular co-ordinated functioning of memory and speech, will have established itself by virtue of the past mental concentrations, as a powerful Saṅkhāra in the being of the child and that Saṅkhāra will tend to recur whenever the needs which led to the original Samādhi are present, so that the words will be reproduced automatically, and without fresh special effort.

Thus we see that Saṅkhāras arise from any act of mental concentration. The more powerful, or the more often repeated, is the act of Samādhi, the more powerful the Saṅkhāras produced; thus a word in a new language, for instance, may become a Saṅkhāra, may be perfectly remembered without further effort, either by one very considerable effort of mental concentration, or by many repetitions of the word, with slight mental concentration.

The practical methods, then for the culture and purification of the mind, according to the method indicated for us by our Master, are two first, *Sammāsati*, which is the accurate reflection upon things in order to ascertain their nature—an investigation or analysis of the Dhammas of our own nature in this case; and, secondly, *Sammāsamādhi*, or the bringing to bear upon the mind of the powers of concentration, to the end that the good states, the good Dhammas may become powerful Saṅkhāras in our being. As to the bad states, they are to be

regarded as mere leakages of the central power; and the remedy for them, as for the leaky locomotive slide-valve, is the powerful practice upon the good states which are of an opposite nature. So we have first to very accurately analyse and observe the states that are present in us by the power of *Sammāsati*, and then practise concentration upon the good states, especially those that tend to overcome our particular failings. By mental concentration is meant an intentness of the thoughts, the thinking for a definite time of only one thought at a time. This will be found at first to be very difficult. You sit down to meditate on love, for instance; and in half a minute or so you find you are thinking about what some one said the day before yesterday. So it always is at first. The Buddha likened the mind of the man who was beginning this practice of *Samādhi* to a calf, which had been used to running hither and thither in the fields, without any let or hindrance, which has now been tied with a rope to a post. The rope is the practice of meditation; the post is the particular subject selected for meditation. At first the calf tries to break loose, he runs hither and thither in every direction; but is always brought up sharp at a certain distance from the post, by the rope to which he is tied.

For a long time, if he is a restless calf, this process goes on; but at last the calf becomes more calm, he sees the futility of struggling, and lies down by the side of the post. So it is with the mind. At first, subjected to this discipline of concentration, the mind tries to break away, it runs in this or that direction; and if it is a usually restless mind, it takes a long time to realise the uselessness of

trying to break away. But always, having gone a certain distance from the post, having got a certain distance from the object selected for meditation, the fact that you have sat down with the definite object of meditating acts as the rope, and the mind realises that the post was its object, and so comes back to it. When the mind, becoming concentrated and steady, at last lies down by the post, and no longer tries to break away from the object of meditation, then concentration is obtained. But this takes a long time to attain, and very hard practice; and in order that we may make this, the most trying part of the practice, easier, various methods are suggested. One is, that we can avail ourselves of the action of certain Saṅkhāras themselves. You know how we get into *habits* of doing things, particularly habits of doing things at a definite time of day. Thus we get into the habit of waking up at a definite time of the morning, and we always tend to wake up at the same hour of the day. We get into a habit of eating our dinner at seven o' clock, and we do not feel hungry till about that time; and if we change the times of our meals, at first we always feel hungry at seven; then, when we get no dinner, a little after seven that hunger vanishes, and we presently get used to the new state of things. In effect the practice of any act, the persistence of any given set of ideas, regularly occurring at a set time of the day, forms within us a very powerful tendency to the recurrence of those ideas, or to the practice of that act, at the same time every day.

Now we can make use of this time-habit of the mind to assist us in our practice of meditation. Choose a given time of day; always practise in that same

time, even if it is only for ten minutes, but always at exactly the same time of day. In a little while the mind will have established a habit in this respect, and you will find it much easier to concentrate the mind at your usual time than at any other. We should also consider the effect of our bodily actions on the mind. When we have just eaten a meal the major part of the spare energy in us goes to assist in the work of digestion; so at those times the mind is sleepy and sluggish, and under these circumstances we cannot use all our energies to concentrate with. So choose a time when the stomach is empty—of course the best time from this point of view is when we wake up in the morning. Another thing that you will find very upsetting to your concentration at first is sound—any sudden, unexpected sound particularly. So it is best to choose your time when people are not moving about—when there is as little noise as possible. Here again the early morning is indicated, or else late at night, and, generally speaking, you will find it easiest to concentrate either just after rising, or else at night, just before going to sleep.

Another thing very much affects these Saṅkhāras, and that is *place*. If you think a little you will see how tremendously place affects the mind. The merchant's mind may be full of trouble; but no sooner does he get to his office or place of business, than his trouble goes, and he is all alert—a keen, capable business man. The doctor may be utterly tired out and half asleep when he is called up at night to attend an urgent case; but no sooner is he come to his place, the place where he is wont to exercise his profession, the bedside of his patient, than the powerful associations of the place overcome his

weariness and mental torpor, and he is very wide awake—all his faculties on the alert, his mind working to the full limits demanded by his very difficult profession. So it is in all things: the merchant at his desk, the captain on the bridge of his ship, the engineer in his engine-room, the chemist in his laboratory—the effect of *place* upon the mind is always to awaken a particular set of Saṅkhāras, the Saṅkhāras associated in the mind with place. Also there is perhaps a certain intangible yet operative atmosphere of thought which clings to places in which definite acts have been done, definite thoughts constantly repeated. It is for this reason that we have a great sense of quiet and peace when we go to a monastery. The monastery is a place where life is protected. where men think deeply of the great mysteries of Life and Death; it is the home of those who are devoted to the practice of this meditation, it is the centre of the religious life of the people. When the people want to make merry, they have pwes and things, in their own houses, in the village; but when they feel religiously inclined, then they go to their monastery. So the great bulk of the thoughts which arise in a monastery are peaceful, and calm, and holy; and this atmosphere of peace and calm and holiness seems to penetrate and suffuse the whole place, till the walls and roof and flooring—more the very ground of the sacred enclosure—seem soaked with this atmosphere of holiness, like some faint distant perfume that can hardly be scented, and yet that one can feel. It may be that some impalpable yet grosser portion of the thought-stuff thus clings to the very walls of a place we cannot tell, but certain it is that if you blindfold a sensitive man and

take him to a temple, he will tell you it is a peaceful and holy place whilst if you take him to the shambles, he will feel uncomfortable or fearful.

And so we should choose for our practice of meditation a place which is suited to the work we have to do. It is a great aid, of course, owing to the very specialised set of place Saṅkhāras so obtained, if we can have a special place in which nothing but these practices are done, and where no one but oneself goes; but, for a layman especially, this is very difficult to secure. Instructions are given on this point in *Visuddhi Magga* how the bhikkhu who is practising *Kammaṭṭhāna* is to select some place a little away from the monastery, where people do not come and walk about—either a cave, or else he is to make or get made a little hut, which he alone uses. But as this perfect retirement is not easy to a layman, he must choose whatever place is most suitable—some place where, at the time of his practice, he will be as little disturbed as possible; and, if he is able, this place should not be the place where he sleeps, as the Saṅkhāras of such a place would tend, so soon as he tried to reduce the number of his thoughts down to one, to make him go to sleep, which is one of the chief things to be guarded against.

Time and place being once chosen, it is important, until the faculty of concentration is strongly established, not to alter them. Then bodily posture is to be considered. If we stand up to meditate, then a good deal of energy goes to maintain the standing posture. Lying down is also not good, because it is associated in our minds with going to sleep. Therefore the sitting posture is best. If you can sit cross-legged, as Buddha-

rūpas sit, that is best; because this position has many good Saṅkhāras associated with it in the minds of Buddhist people.

Now comes the all-important question of what we are to meditate upon. The subjects of meditation are classified in the books under forty heads; and in the old days a man wishing to practise *Kammaṭṭhāna* would go to some great man who had practised long, and had so attained to great spiritual knowledge, and by virtue of his spiritual knowledge that Arahāt could tell which of the forty categories would best suit the aspirant. Now-a-days this is hardly possible, as so few practise this *Kammaṭṭhāna*; and so it is next to impossible to find anyone with this spiritual insight. So the best thing to do will be to practise those forms of meditation which will most certainly increase the highest qualities in us, the qualities of Love, and Pity, and Sympathy, and Indifference to worldly life and cares; those forms of Sammāsaṭi which will give us an accurate perception of our own nature, and the Sorrow, Transitoriness, and Soul-lessness of all things in the Saṃsāra Cakka; and those forms which will best calm our minds by making us think of holy and beautiful things, such as the Life of the Buddha, the liberating nature of the Dharmna He taught, and the pure life which is followed by His Bhikkhus.³

We have seen how a powerful Saṅkhāra is to be formed in one of two ways: either by one tremendous effort of concentration, or by many slight ones. As it is difficult for a beginner to make a tremendous effort, it will be found simplest to take one idea which can be expressed in a few words, and repeat those words silently over and over again.

³ See end of article

The reason for the use of a formula of words is that, owing to the complexity of the brain actions involved in the production of words, very powerful Saṅkhāras are formed by this habit of silent repetition; the words serve as a very powerful mechanical aid in constantly evoking the idea they represent. In order to keep count of the number of times the formula has been repeated Buddhist people use a rosary of a hundred and eight beads, and this will be found a very convenient aid. Thus one formulates to oneself the ideal of the Great Teacher; one reflects upon His love and Compassion, on all that great life of His devoted to the spiritual assistance of all beings; one formulates in the mind the image of the Master, trying to imagine Him as He taught the Dhamma which has brought liberation to so many; and every time the mental image fades, one murmurs “Buddhānussati”—“reflection upon the Buddha”—each time of repetition passing over one of the beads of the rosary. And so with the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha;—whichever one prefers to reflect upon.

But perhaps the best of all the various meditations upon the ideal, are what is known as the Four Sublime States—*Cattaro Brahmavihāra*. These meditations calm and concentrate the Citta in a powerful and effective way; and besides this they tend to increase in us those very qualities of the mind which are the best. One sits down facing East, preferably; and after reflecting on the virtues of the *Tiratana*, as set forth in the formulas “Iti pi so Bhagavā,” etc., one concentrates one’s thought upon ideas of Love: one imagines a ray of Love going out from one’s heart, and embracing all beings in the Eastern Quarter of the World, and one

repeats this formula: “And he lets his mind pervade the Eastern Quarter of the World with thoughts of Love—with Heart of Love grown great, and mighty, and beyond all measure—till there is not one being in all the Eastern Quarter of the World whom he has passed over, whom he has not suffused with thoughts of Love, with Heart of Love grown great, and mighty, and far-reaching beyond all measure.” And as you say these words you imagine your Love going forth to the East, like a great spreading ray of light; and first you think of all your friends, those whom you love, and suffuse them with your thoughts of love; and then you reflect upon all those innumerable beings in that Eastern Quarter whom you know not, to whom you are indifferent, but whom you should love, and suffuse them also with the ray of your love; and lastly you reflect upon all those who are opposed to you, who are your enemies, who have done you wrong; and these too, by an effort of will, you suffuse with your Love “till there is not one being in all that Eastern Quarter of the Earth whom you have passed over, whom you have not suffused with thoughts of Love with Heart of Love grown great, and mighty and beyond all measure.” And then you imagine a similar ray of Love issuing from your heart in the direction of your right hand; and you mentally repeat the same formula, substituting the word “Southern” for “Eastern,” and you go through the same series of reflections in that direction. And so to the West, and so to the North, till all around you, in the four directions, you have penetrated all beings with these thoughts of Love. And then you imagine your thought as striking downwards, and embracing and including

all beings beneath you, repeating the same formula, and lastly as going upwards, and suffusing with the warmth of your Love all beings in the worlds above. Thus you will have meditated upon all beings with thoughts of Love, in all the six directions of space; and you have finished the Meditation on Love.

In the same way, using the same formula, do you proceed with the other three Sublime States. Thinking of all beings who are involved in the Saṃsāra Cakka, involved in the endless sorrow of existence—thinking especially of those in whom at this moment sorrow is especially manifested, thinking of the weak, the unhappy, the sick, and those who are fallen; you send out a ray of Pity and Compassion towards them in all six directions of Space. And so suffusing all beings with thoughts of Compassion, you pass on to the meditation on Happiness. You meditate on all beings who are happy, from the lowest happiness of earthly love to the highest, the Happiness of those who are freed from all sin, the unutterable Happiness of those who have attained the Nibbāna Dhamma. You seek to feel with all those happy ones in their happiness, to enter into the bliss of their hearts and lives, and to augment this feeling of sympathy with all that is happy, and fair, and good.

Then finally, reflecting on all that is evil and cruel and bad in the world, reflecting on the things which tempt men away from the holy life, you assume to all evil beings thoughts of indifference—understanding that all the evil in those beings arises from ignorance; from the Āsavas, the leakages of mental power into wrong channels; you understand concerning them that it is not your duty

to condemn, or revile, but only to be indifferent to them and when you have finished this meditation on Indifference, you have completed the meditation on the four Sublime States—on Love, and Pity, and Happiness, and Indifference. The meditation on Love will overcome in you all hatred and wrath; the meditation on Pity will overcome your Saṅkhāras of cruelty and unkindness; the meditation on Happiness will do away with all feelings of envy and malice; and the meditation on Indifference will take from you all sympathy with evil ways and thoughts. And if you diligently practise these four Sublime States, you will find yourself becoming daily more and more loving and compassionate and happy with the highest happiness, and indifferent to personal misfortune and to evil. So very powerful is this method of meditation, that a very short practice will give results—results that you will find working in your life and thoughts, bringing peace and happiness to you, and to all around you.

Then there is the very important work of Sammāsatī, the analysis of the nature of things that leads men to realise how all in the Saṃsāra Cakka is characterised by the three characteristics of Sorrow, and Transitoriness, and Soullessness, how there is nought that is free from these three characteristics; and how only right reflection and right meditation can free you from them, and can open for you the way to peace. And because men are very much involved in the affairs of the world, because so much of our lives is made up of our little hates and loves and fears; because we think so much of our wealth, and of those we love with earthly love, and of our enemies, and of all the little concerns of our daily life, therefore is this

right perception very difficult to come by, very difficult to realise as absolute truth in the depth of our hearts. We think we have but one life and one body; so these we guard with very great attention and care, wasting useful mental energy upon these ephemeral things. We think we have but one state in life; and so we think very much of how to better our positions, how to increase our fortune.

Puttā ma'tthi, dhanam ma'tthi,
Iti bālo vihaññati
Attā hi attano natthi
Kuto puttā, kuto, dhanam?"

Dhammapada v. 3.

“I have these sons, mine is this wealth”— thus the foolish man is thinking: “he himself hath not a self, how sons, how wealth?”

But if we could look back over the vast stairway of our innumerable lives, if we could see how formerly we had held all various positions, had had countless fortunes, countless children, innumerable loves and wives if we could so look back, and see the constant and inevitable misery of all those lives, could understand our everchanging minds and wills, and the whole mighty phantasmagoria of the illusion that we deem so real; if we could do this, then indeed we might realise the utter misery and futility of all this earthly life, might understand and grasp those three characteristics of all existent things; then indeed would our desire to escape from this perpetual round of sorrow be augmented, augmented so that we would work with all our power unto liberation.

To the gaining of this knowledge of past births there is a way, a practice of meditation by which that knowledge may be obtained. This at first may seem

startling; but there is nothing really unnatural or miraculous about it: it is simply a method of most perfectly cultivating the memory. Now, memory is primarily a function of the material brain; we remember things because they are stored up like little mind-pictures, in the minute nerve-cells of the grey cortex of the brain, principally on the left frontal lobe. So it may naturally be asked: “If memory, as is certainly the case, be stored up in the material brain, how is it possible that we should remember, without some miraculous faculty, things that happened before that brain existed?” The answer is this: our brains, it is true, have not existed before this birth, and so all our normal memories are memories of things that have happened in this life. But what is the *cause* of the particular brain-structure that now characterises us? Past Saṅkhāras. The particular and specific nature of a given brain; that, namely, which differentiates one brain from another, which makes one child capable of learning one thing and another child another; the great differences of aptitude; and so on which gives to each one of us a different set of desires, capacities, and thoughts. What force has caused this great difference between brain and brain? We say the action of our past Saṅkhāras, the whole source of Saṅkhāras of our past lives, determined, ere our birth in this life, whilst yet the brain was in process of formation, these specific and characteristic features. And if the higher, thinking levels of our brains have thus been specialised by the acquired tendencies of all our line of lives, then every thought that we have had, every idea and wish that has gone to help to specialise that thinking stuff, must have

left its record stamped ineffaceably, though faintly, on the structure of this present brain, till that marvellous structure is like some ancient palimpsest—a piece of paper on which, as old writing faded out, another and yet another written screen has been superimposed. By our little seeing eyes, only the last record can be read; but there are ways by which all those ancient faded writings can be made to appear; and this is how it is done. To read those faded writings we use an eye whose sensitivity to minute shades of colour and texture is far greater than our own; a photograph is taken of the paper, on plates prepared so as to be specially sensitive to minute shades of colour, and, according to the exposure given, the time the eye of the camera gazed upon that sheet of paper, another and another writing is impressed upon the sensitive plate used, and the sheet of paper, which to the untrained eye of man bears but one script, yields up to successive plates those lost, ancient, faded writings, till all are made clear and legible.

So it must be, if we think, with this memory of man; with all the multiple attributes of that infinitely complex brain-structure.

All that the normal mental vision of man can read there is the last plain writing, the record of this present life. But every record of each thought and act of all our kammic ancestry, the records upon whose model this later life, this specialised brain-structure has been built, must lie there, visible to the trained vision, so that, had we but this more sensitive mental vision, that wondrous palimpsest, the tale of the innumerable ages that have gone to the composing of that marvellous document, the record of a brain, would stand forth clear and separate, like the various

pictures on the colour-sensitive plates. Often, indeed, it happens that one, perchance the last of all those ancient records, is given now so clear and legible that a child can read some part of what was written; and so we have those strange instances of sporadic, uninherited genius that are the puzzle and the despair of Western Psychologists. A little child, before he can hardly walk, before he can clearly talk, will see a piano, and crawl to it, and, untaught his baby fingers will begin to play; and in a few years' time, with a very little teaching and practice, that child will be able to execute the most difficult pieces—pieces of music which baffle any but the most expert players. There have been many such children whose powers have been exhibited over the length and breadth of Europe. There was Smeaton, again, one of our greatest engineers. When a child (he was the son of uneducated peasant people) he would build baby bridges over the streams in his country,—untaught—and his bridges would bear men and cattle. There was a child, some ten years ago, in Japan, who a baby, saw one day the ink and brush with which the Chinese and Japanese write, and, crawling with pleasure, reached out his chubby hand for them, and began to write. By the time he was five years old that baby, scarce able to speak correctly, could write in the Chinese character perfectly—that wonderful and complex script that takes an ordinary man ten to fifteen years to master—and this baby of five wrote it perfectly. This child's power was exhibited all over the country, and before the Emperor of Japan; and the question that arises is, how did all these children get their powers? Surely, because for them the last writing on the book of

their minds was yet clear and legible; because in their last birth that one particular set of Saṅkhāras was so powerful that its record could still be read.

And thus we all have, here in our present brains, the faded records of all our interminable series of lives; a thousand, tens of thousands, millions upon millions of records, one superimposed over another, waiting only for the eye that can see, the eye of the trained and perfected memory to read them, to distinguish one from another as the photographic plate distinguished, and the way so to train that mental vision is as follows: You sit down in your place of meditation and you think of yourself seated there. Then you begin to think backwards. You think the act of coming into the room. You think the act of walking towards the room, and so you go on, thinking backwards on all the acts that you have done that day. You then come to yourself, waking up in the morning, and perhaps you remember a few dreams, and then there is a blank, and you remember your last thoughts as you went to sleep the night before, what you did before retiring, and so on, back to the time of your last meditation.

This is a very difficult practice; and so at first you must not attempt to go beyond one day: else you will not do it well, and will omit remembering a lot of important things. When you have practised for a little, you will find your memory of events becoming rapidly more and more perfect; and this practice will help you in worldly life as well, for it vastly increases the power of memory in general. When doing a day becomes easy, then slowly increase the time meditated upon. Get into the way of doing a week at a sitting—here taking only the more important events—then a

month, then a year, and so on. You will find yourself remembering all sorts of things about your past life that you had quite forgotten; you will find yourself penetrating further and further into the period of deep sleep; you will find that you remember your dreams even far more accurately than you ever did before. And so you go on, going again and again over long periods of your life, and each time you will remember more and more of things you had forgotten. You will remember little incidents of your childhood, remember the tears you shed over the difficult tasks of learning how to walk and speak; and at last, after long and hard practice, you will remember a little, right back to the time of your birth.

It you never get any further than this, you will have done yourself an enormous deal of good by this practice. You will have marvelously increased your memory in every respect; and you will have gained a very clear perception of the changing nature of your desires and mind and will, even in the few years of this life. But to get beyond this point of birth is very difficult, because, you see, you are no longer reading the relatively clear record of this life, but are trying to read one of those fainter, underwritten records the Saṅkhāras have left on your brain. All this practice has been with the purpose of making clear your mental vision; and, as I have said, this will without doubt be clearer far than before; but the question is, whether it is clear enough. Time after time retracing in their order the more important events of this life, at last, one day, you will bridge over that dark space between death and birth, when all the Saṅkhāras are, like the seed in the earth, breaking up to build a new life; and one

day you will suddenly find yourself remembering your Death *in your last life*. This will be very painful, but it is important to get to that stage several times, because at the moment when a man comes very near to death the mind automatically goes through the very process of remembering backwards you have been practising so long, and so you can then gather clues to the events of that last life.

Once this difficult point of passing from birth to death is got over, the rest is said in the books to be easy. You can then, daily with more and more facility, remember the deeds and thoughts of your past lives, one after another will open before your mental vision. You will see yourself living a thousand lives, you will feel yourself dying a thousand deaths, you will suffer with the suffering of a myriad, existences, you will see how fleeting were their little joys, what price you had again and again to pay for a little happiness;—how real and terrible were the sufferings you had to endure. You will watch how for years you toiled to amass a little fortune, and how bitter death was that time, because you could not take your treasure

with you; you will see the innumerable women you have thought of as the only being you could ever love, and lakh upon lakh of beings caught like yourself in the whirling Wheel of Life and Death; some now your father, mother, children, some again your friends, and now your bitter enemies. You will see the good deed, the loving thought and act, bearing rich harvest life after life; and the sad gathering of ill weeds, the harvest of ancient wrongs. You will see the beginningless fabric of your lives, with its ever-changing pattern stretching back, back, back into interminable vistas of past time, and then at last you will know, and will understand. You will understand how this happy life for which we crave is never to be gained; you will realise, as no books or monks could teach you, the sorrow and impermanence and soullessness of all lives; and you will then be very much stirred up to make a mighty effort, now that human birth and this knowledge is yours: —a supreme effort to wake up out of all this ill dream of life as a man awakes himself out of a fearful nightmare. And this intense aspiration will, say the Holy Books, go very far towards effecting your liberation.

Note from Page 38:

3 It should be mentioned that the highest practice of meditation is Vipassanā Bhāvanā and that this has always been available in Burma to the earnest seeker. During the days when Burma was not a free country the necessary physical conditions were not available to make it possible to teach the practice to people from abroad. However, after the attainment of Independence 9 years ago the Government of the Union of Burma paid due attention to spiritual things as well as to cultural and the more material matters. As part of this fostering of our great spiritual heritage the Government of the Union of Burma through the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council has subsidised meditation monasteries where the full teaching of Vipassanā Bhāvanā is given. There now exist facilities for peoples from all the world to come to Burma and to practise this great discipline and mental culture. Something of this method, which is that given by the Buddha in the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya and the Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya and mentioned in hundreds of other places in the Tipiṭaka besides, is told about in a very valuable book “Satipaṭṭhāna—The Heart of Buddhist Meditation” by Bhaddanta Nyanaponika Thera. We intend serialising this book and we have copies on order from the publishers—“The Word of the Buddha” Publishing Committee. 10 Layard’s Road, Colombo 5—and shall be able to supply these at a low cost very shortly. We make no apology for quoting here from the Introduction:

—“This book is issued in the deep conviction that the systematic cultivation of Right Mindfulness, as taught by the Buddha in his Discourse on Satipaṭṭhāna, still provides the most simple and direct, the most thorough and effective method for training and developing the mind for its daily tasks and problems as well as for its highest aim: mind’s own unshakeable deliverance from Greed, Hatred and Delusion.

The teachings of the Buddha offer a great variety of methods of mental training and subjects of meditation, suited to the various individual needs, temperaments and capacities. Yet all these methods ultimately converge in the ‘Way of Mindfulness’ (satipaṭṭhāna—magga), called by the Master himself ‘the Only Way’ (ekāyano maggo). The Way of Mindfulness may therefore rightly be called ‘the heart of Buddhist meditation’ or even ‘the heart of the entire doctrine’ (dhamma—hadaya). This great Heart is in fact the centre of all the blood streams pulsating through the entire body of the doctrine (dhammakāya).

This ancient Way of Mindfulness is as practicable to-day as it was 2,500 years ago. It is as applicable in the lands of the West as in the East; in the midst of life’s turmoil as well as in the peace of the monk’s cell.”

Quite a few visitors from the West are taking advantage of this training in Burma.

‘I have naught to do with homage, Nāgita, nor has homage aught to do with me. Whosoever cannot obtain at will, easily and without difficulty this happiness of renunciation, this happiness of seclusion, this happiness of calm and this happiness of enlightenment, which I can obtain at will, easily and without difficulty, let him enjoy that dung-like happiness, that sluggish happiness, that happiness gotten of gains, favours and flattery.’

Āṅguttara Nikāya, v, iii, 30.

‘But, monks, an instructed disciple of the pure ones, taking count of the pure ones, skilled in the dhamma of the pure ones, well trained in the dhamma of the pure ones, taking count of the true men, skilled in the dhamma of the true men, well trained in the dhamma of the true men, regards material shape as: “This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self”; he regards feeling as: “This is not mine” he regards perception as: “This is not mine.....”; he regards the habitual tendencies as: “These are not mine.....”; he regards consciousness as: “This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self.” And also he regards whatever is seen, heard, sensed, cognised, reached, looked for, pondered by the mind as: “This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self.” Also whatever view with causal relation says: “This the world this the self, after dying I will become permanent, lasting, eternal, not liable to change. I will stand fast like unto the eternal”, he regards this as: “This is not mine, this am I not, this is not my self.” He, regarding thus that which does not really exist, will not be anxious.

Majjhima Nikaya 1. 136.

A QUARTER MILLION NEW BUDDHISTS

Dr. Ambedkar leads the “untouchables” to Buddhism

The Buddha accepted as lay-followers and as bhikkhus, members of the Noble Order of Monks, worthy people from every class and from every caste including the so-called “untouchables” or outcastes.

It may seem strange, then, that after 2,500 years, in an educated age and in a country so spiritual as India there should still be those who are down trodden and oppressed not only economically and socially but spiritually as well. Those who do not know India and the conditions that have prevailed there might well ask how this could be possible, how people could accept a religion that relegated them to the fifth rate for now and for eternity. But to the man who knows the history of social and “religious” propaganda in most countries both East and West, there is here no mystery. It is not so many years ago that people in England from the back pews of the churches gazed in awe and reverence at the squires and their families who graced the front pews while they all chanted in unison “The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate, God made them high or lowly; and order’d their estate”. It is only very recently that people the world over have begun to realise the truth of the Buddha’s teaching in the Sutta Nipata:

“Not by birth is one an outcaste,
Not by birth is one a Brahmin.
But by deeds is one an outcaste,
And by deeds is one a Brahmin.”
and:
“This two-footed dirty body
Which carries about a bad odour
And which is full of impurities,

Which pour out from different places
With a body of this sort
If one thinks highly of oneself
And looks down upon others
Due to what can it be, except
ignorance?”

When the “depressed classes” in India began to try to fight their way up they met with seemingly insuperable barriers.

But now (on Oct. 14th) some 200,000 scheduled-caste men and women, led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and his wife, have formally accepted Buddhism at a mass ceremony in India and this has been followed by similar ceremonies at other places.

This is no sudden “mass conversion” for Dr. Ambedkar has for more than a decade been studying comparative religion and Buddhism and in latter years explaining it to the rank and file of the “depressed classes” of which he is the illustrious member.

One of the barriers that they had had to face, was that under the Indian Constitution there were special “privileges” for people regarded as untouchables. Asked whether they would not regret ceasing to be untouchables since they would lose these “privileges” of securing scholarships and government jobs set aside for people of their class, Dr. Ambedkar asked whether brahmins would want to be untouchables to get these “privileges”. Dr. Ambedkar said at the ceremony: “I will discard the caste system and spread equality among human beings. I will strictly follow the Eightfold Path of the Buddha. I will lead my life guided by the three principles of

knowledge, right path and compassion.” This was repeated by the multitude of the people. The main ceremony was conducted in Pāli by Ven’ble Chandramuni Mahāthera of Kusinara, a Burmese monk.

In a speech on the occasion the Ven’ble H. Siddhātissa Thera, Sarnath, Banaras, said:

“As far as I remember it was somewhere in 1936 that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar announced his desire to give up the Hindu faith. When he did so he voiced the feelings of several millions of people who had suffered great injustice in the name of religion. But then he did not take a hasty step to find solace in a faith or ideology foreign to his country. As a great leader of his position would do, he started investigating the rich cultural heritage of India. As a result he came to know that light can be found here at home and he need not turn to foreign sources. He made a thorough study of the noble teachings of the Buddha and came to the wise decision that this is the right path for him and millions of his down-trodden people to follow.

Some people have called this function a conversion ceremony. Conversion is not a very happy term, because force and temptation are associated with it. This is a self-conversion in the true sense of the term. Then again, in modern times conversion has come to mean, giving up one’s own faith and embracing something foreign. But this does not apply to the present case.

The Buddha was born in this country. He lived and worked among the people of this country and it was on this soil that he entered into Mahāparinibbāna. It was the great missionaries of this country who propagated His sublime message of love and peace throughout the world. So when the sons and daughters of this country speak of accepting Buddhism it cannot be interpreted as a kind of conversion in the modern sense of the term. It is something more significant, it is but reclaiming one’s own heritage.”

2500 Tamils of Rangoon Take Refuge in the Buddha-Dhamma

A ceremony for the formal acceptance of Buddhism by 2,500 Tamils of Rangoon and its environs was held in the Great Sacred Cave, near the World Peace Pagoda, Rangoon, on Sunday the 28th October 1956 at 9 a.m.

Present at the ceremony were Ven’ble Mahātheras and Theras of Rangoon, Hon’ble U Kyaw Nyein, Deputy Prime Minister; Hon’ble U Chit Maung, Minister for Information; Thado Thiri Thudhamma Sir U Thwin, President of the Buddha Sāsana Council; Hon’ble Justice Agga Maha Thray Sithu—Thado Thiri Thudhamma U Thein Maung, Chief Justice of the Union and Vice-President of the Buddha Sāsana Council Hon’ble Justice Thado Mahā Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon, Judge of the Supreme Court and Hon. Secretary-General (1) of the Buddha Sāsana Council, and many other dignitaries of Rangoon.

Bhadanta Pandita Mahāthera, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, Principal of the

Dhammadūta College, administered the “Three Refuges” to the new Buddhists and the audience; and the most senior Mahāthera among the bhikkhus (the Ven’ble Weluwun Sayadaw) gave a few words of admonition to the Tamil Buddhists.

Messages from His Holiness the Most Venerable Abhidhaja Mahāraṭṭhaguru Bhadanta Suriyābhivamsa, President of the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā Supreme Saṅgha Council; H.E. Dr. Ba U, President of the Union of Burma; Hon’ble U Ba Swe, Prime Minister of the Union of Burma; and Hon’ble U Nu, President of the A.F.P.F.L. were also read.

In his address of veneration the Hon’ble Justice U Chan Htoon mentioned that at the suggestion of Dr. Ambedkar who attended the 3rd Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists held in Rangoon in 1954, he and some Tamil Buddhist leaders were able to establish a Buddhist school at Dalla and educate about 500 Tamils to Buddhism. When 2,500 youths were given Sāmaṇera

ordination during the Buddha Jayanti Celebrations 50 Tamils were included. Very recently it was possible to establish a “Tamil Young Buddhist League” consisting of about 3,500 from 4,000 Tamil labourers of Rangoon. He also pointed out that Buddhism was introduced into Burma about 1,600 years ago from South India, the original place of Tamils. On the 14th of October about 200,000 Indians under the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar formally accepted Buddhism at Nagpur in North India. These were auspicious signs that Buddhism would again flourish in India, its original land.

It is noteworthy that many of the Tamils, particularly the younger members of the community, have been coming for religious instruction to learned Burmese bhikkhus. The Tamils are bright and intelligent people and much may be looked for from them in the future now that they are bursting the bonds of illiteracy and superstition enforced on them during the centuries.

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BIOGRAPHY OF BHIKKHU ĀNANDA METTEYYA

The late Bhikkhu Ānanda Metteyya (Allan Bennett) was born in London in 1872 (B.E. 2425). Young Bennett, even as a school boy, showed a precocious love of science and the age of seventeen found him with a profounder and wider scientific knowledge than that possessed by any youth in England. He decided on the profession of chemical research which gave full scope to his inventive ability. His mother reared him in a Roman Catholic atmosphere intending to convert him to that faith but Allan Bennett had too agnostic a temperament even in his 'teens to allow his genius to be hampered by the narrow confines of sectarianism.

It was during the years of experimentation that Bennett came across Sir Edwin Arnold's *LIGHT OF ASIA*, which at once turned his attention to the study and practice of Buddhism. His interest grew to such an extent that in his twenty-eighth year he went to Ceylon and, at Kamburugamuwa, made an intensive study of Pāli and Theravāda Buddhism. In such a religious atmosphere he began to feel the utter purposelessness of worldly life

and decided to join the Saṅgha. After two years' stay in Ceylon he left for Burma and, at the famous monastery of Akyab, was ordained a bhikkhu under the name of Ānanda Metteyya.

The Western bhikkhu became very popular not only in Burma and Ceylon but even in England and America. In 1903 (B.E. 2446) he founded the International Buddhist Society and in U.S.A. did a great deal of work in connection with this Society and spent most of his time in the propagation of Buddhism. In 1914 (B.E. 2457) he returned to England on his way to the East again but the Great War made him change his plan and he settled down in his native land. There he spent the remaining years of his life as a layman but it must be mentioned that till his death in 1922 (B.E.2465) he lived a real bhikkhu's life, practising meditation and engaged in all the Buddhist activities in England at that time.

Ānanda Metteyya is best known as the writer of *THE WISDOM OF THE ARYAS* and *THE RELIGION OF BURMA*.

“We, brother, know not where God Almighty is, nor whence. But, brother, when the signs of his coming, appear, when the light ariseth, and the glory shineth, then will He be manifest. For that is the portent of the manifestation of God Almighty when the light ariseth, and the glory shineth.”

‘And it was not long, Kevaddha, before that Great God Almighty became manifest. And that brother drew near to him, and said: “Where, my friend, do the four great elements—earth, water, fire, and air—cease, leaving no trace behind?”’

And When he had thus spoken that Great God Almighty said to him:

“I, brother, am the Great God Almighty, the Supreme, the Mighty, the All-seeing, the Ruler, the Lord of all, the Controller, the Creator, the Chief of all, appointing to each his place, the Ancient of days, the Father of all that are and are to be!”

‘Then that brother answered God Almighty, and said: “I did not ask you, friend, as to whether you were indeed all that you now say. But I ask you where the four great elements—earth, water, fire, and air—cease, leaving no trace behind?”’

‘Then again, Kevaddha, God Almighty gave the same reply. And that brother, yet a third time, put to God Almighty his question as before.

‘Then, Kevaddha, the Great God Almighty took that brother by the arm and led him aside, and said:

“These gods, the retinue of God Almighty, hold me, brother, to be such that there is nothing I cannot see, nothing I have not understood, nothing I have not realised. Therefore I gave no answer in their presence. I do not know, brother, where those four great elements—earth, water, fire, and air—cease, leaving no trace behind.”

The brother then went to the Buddha who explained: “Instead of asking where the great elements cease, leaving no trace behind, you should have asked:—

‘Where do earth, water, fire, and air, and long and short, and fine and coarse, pure and impure, no footing find? Where is it that both name and form die out, leaving no trace behind?’

On that the answer is: ‘The intellect of Arahatsip, the invisible, the endless, accessible from every side—

Kevaddha Sutta; Dīgha Nikāya.

“Monks, there will be in the long road of the future, monks who long for fine robes; and they, with this longing, will leave the ways of wearing rags, will leave the forest wilderness, the outland bed and seat; will move to village, town or ruler’s capital and make their dwelling there; and because of a robe, they will commit many things unseemly, unfit.

Again, monks will long for rich alms-food,.. will leave the ways of the common round, the forest wilderness. ..and will move to village, town or ruler’s capital.. ..seeking out, as it were with the tip of the tongue, tasty morsels; and because of alms-food, they will commit many things unseemly, unfit.

Again, monks will long for a goodly bed and seat will leave the ways of the free-root abode, the forest wilderness....and will move to village, town or ruler’s capital.; and because of a bed and seat, they will commit things unseemly, unfit.

Again, monks will live in company with nuns and novices in training: and when this shall be, it may be expected that the monks will take no delight in leading the godly life; and either they will commit some foul act or give up the training and return to the lower life.

Moreover, monks, there will be in the long road of the future, monks who will live in company with the Park folk and novices; and when this shall be, it may be expected that they will live and feast themselves on the plenty of hoarded stocks and will mark out their lands and crops.

Monks, this is the fifth fear in the way which, though not yet risen, will arise in the future. Be ye fully awake for it; and being awake, strive to get rid of it.”

Āṅguttara-Nikāya, The Book of the Fives, X (80).