



The **LIGHT**
of the
DHAMMA

Published by the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council

Vol. VI No. 2

K 1.50

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2502 B.E.

April 1959 C.E.



THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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

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



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Department, University of Rangoon

FOUR PRAYED FOR GUIDANCE

U Ohn Ghine

Lobha, *Dosa*, and *Moha* are terms usually translated as Greed, Anger and Ignorance, and they, with their opposites, *Alobha*, Altruism *Adosa*, Loving-kindness and *Amoha*, Wisdom, are the six springs of action, of all action, of any action.

The simple translations without explanation make an oversimplification, while to give all the terms by which they might be translated with analogous *Pāli* words might result in some confusion. It may be pointed out, however, that these words cover the whole gamut of feeling; in the case of *Dosa*, for instance, everything from mild aversion to mad rage.

So when we take the cases, admittedly extreme cases, of men who “knew they were right because God had told them so” we are not wrong when we point out that they were motivated by *Lobha*, *Dosa* and *Moha*,

First we must take another *Pāli*, word, *Sīla*, which we can translate as Morality.

What do we mean when we say ‘Right’ and ‘Wrong’? What standard shall a man, a free man, use when searching with steady eyes the earth and the heavens and what lies between and below, he dares to judge of men and gods whether they be ‘right’ or ‘wrong’?

He can see a man fall into the water and an alligator, motivated by the instinct of mother-love as well as by greed perhaps, drag the man down as food for her young. He can see babies burned horribly in painful death from bombs rained down by airmen motivated, on the surface, more by love of country than the desire to kill babies. He can see a God who, he is told (and indeed that God Himself believes it) ‘created’ the world, the man and the alligator and the airman, and the babies-to-be-burnt: who, he is told, listens to the prayers of the airmen, some of them, and saves them from the opposing planes and anti-aircraft guns, so that they can perform their mission

and succeed in burning babies as yet too young to pray.

What standard may be used by this free man with steady eyes?

We Buddhists have *Sīla* as our standard, the standard which says that greed, anger and ignorance are wrong and that altruism, loving-kindness and wisdom are right. It is a standard set up by the Buddha, a standard to be used firstly on oneself in a deep and continuing analysis of one’s own motives, a standard that is only then to be used for all.

The mind of man works in most curious ways ‘its wonders to perform’, and not every man is brave enough to look into the depths of that mind, for sometimes the merest glance causes a man to shrink back in horror and to clamp down the lid on the hell he sees within.

And there are some people who, on the surface at least, see what one part of the flux of mind (their so-called ‘soul’ or ‘self’) wishes to see. As the psychologists would say, they ‘rationalise’.

Let us take the cases of four murderers who have puzzled psychologists, to explain something of this.

The Case of John Lynch.

The first on our list is a young man, John Lynch, who was executed in Australia more than a hundred years ago. He was described as a ‘hazel-eyed, brown-haired and mild-mannered young man, of a religious disposition and decent and god-fearing, a sincere believer in Almighty God!’. From all accounts he really was this, before, during and after his crimes. Yet this blood-thirsty criminal slaughtered nine people with an axe, not in the mad heat of anger but for greed of gain after, in his own words: ‘sincerely praying to Almighty God for guidance’.

Lynch was in his twenties when he murdered a family of four. He had been a prisoner for theft and again stole after his release and tried to sell some of the goods to this family. He had already killed some people before this and was to kill yet another before being found out. Before killing this family of four he 'prayed to Almighty God to assist and enlighten me. I was strengthened and decided to kill the lot'. 'The lot' included a girl of fourteen and he allowed her to pray before killing her with an axe 'because she was a good little girl'.

Now one can just dismiss this and say 'He was mad'. Just what does this mean? Here is a man who killed and robbed through greed and then 'through fear', and, in the case of the 'good little girl' because he 'was guided by Almighty God'. He had a degree of cunning that is often associated with lunacy, yet a degree of cold, calculated ability for planning and knowledge of, and memory of, what he did that made him a sane man in the eyes of the Law.

The Case of John Balaban.

Another young man who 'Saw God' and was guided to murder after sincere prayer was John Balaban. In addition to his Christian name he had much in common with John Lynch. Not a thief, he had black hair and brown eyes, but he also was mild-mannered, deeply and sincerely religious and prayed to God. He had gone from Poland to Germany and there met a young German girl with whom he had become more than friendly. Conditions arose that made him want to part company, yet he did not want to leave her. The idea came, such ideas come at times to all men, that killing was one way out. He thought it over and then decided to 'take it to the Lord in prayer'. He sincerely 'prayed to Almighty God', for 'guidance'. Then a wonderful thing happened. This he told some years later in all sincerity. The roof opened and 'God came through the roof'. God told him:

'I will protect you, John, just trust in God. You do what you think you should do.'

Accordingly John killed the girl. Nobody suspected the quiet young deeply-religious man and all sympathised with him in his terrible loss.

John soon after left and went to Australia. There he met and married a beautiful young widow who had a small son by her previous marriage. They lived happily together for a year or two and everybody admired John. Then one night he came home and killed his wife. He also killed her five year-old son. Nobody suspected John. He was quiet, mild, religious. With the sympathy of all, he went away heart-broken. He went north and in another city met a prostitute. He went home with her and killed her. It was quite a small city and John was a stranger and was called for questioning as he resembled the vague description of a man seen with the girl. He had not been there long enough to acquire a reputation for religious sincerity but the police were impressed with his quiet religious manner and, in the absence of evidence, inclined to release him. However when a check showed that his wife and stepson had been murdered in a similar manner some time before, the end came in sight. John finally confessed everything. He was not wrong, he said, because he had 'prayed to Almighty God and God guided me.'

He also was executed in Australia, a hundred years after the other John. He also was adjudged sane.

The case of Willie Moretti.

Here is the case of another gruesome murderer who had something in common with the others, the American gangster, Willie Moretti. One of the leading murderers in that part of his great country he was himself murdered, seven years ago, by real gangsters. For one reason or another reason he had never been apprehended by the authorities for his many murders.

Illustrated papers were full of pictures and accounts of his funeral. An ornate coffin that, according to report, cost six thousand American dollars was piled high with flowers

while six well-known gangsters and murderers solemnly carried the coffin while policemen looked on sympathetically and kept back the common herd of ordinary people. The gangster pall-bearers looked sad, some of them obviously crying emotionally and all with the appearance of constant church-goers, which, no doubt, they were. Newspaper reports said that Willie Moretti, known gangster, seller of cocaine and heroin to school-children, murderer of hundreds who obstructed his way to riches and power, was buried in a dress suit that cost hundreds of dollars, and specially made shoes. So ended in magnificence the man who lived in magnificent splendour, a man, and this is one thing he had in common with the others, who, it is reported, 'constantly prayed to God for guidance'.

One thing stands out, and this is the main point I wish to make: these people were 'right according to their lights', which means that, in their ignorance they did not think that they were wrong. Conscience is therefore not so reliable a guide as some would have us think. If it is formed by an emotional standard alone it is as likely to guide to evil as to good. The gangster or dictator who gets any qualms of conscience is slowed up thereby; that is a matter of the synapses and reflex action, and the dictator or gangster who is 'slowed up' is soon 'wiped out' leaving the field in possession of those who 'know' they are 'right'.

The Fourth case:—Murder for 'high' motives.

Along the street of a New Zealand city hobbled an old Chinese. Poor, crippled, racked with pain, he had no friends, and no enemies. Suddenly from the crowd stepped a well-dressed, tall, distinguished-looking stranger, a European. He walked purposefully up behind the old Chinese, pulled out a revolver and shot him dead, then walked calmly away and mingled with the crowd in which, so startled was everybody, he was soon lost.

The police searched for a motive the whole of that day and night and well into the next.

They searched in vain. After a murder that causes a sensation there are sometimes grim jokers and seekers of notoriety who claim to have done the deed, and when the police received by post a revolver with a letter stating that the sender, who gave his name and address, was the murderer and was waiting to be arrested at his lodging in a good locality in the city, the police made a merely routine investigation to warn the 'crank' not to impede them in their search for the murderer. They did not believe that a real murderer would act in such a way. The sender of the gun turned out to be a well-known citizen who, a few years previously, had come from England. He had been educated at one of England's famous Universities. was highly cultured and much travelled, a very religious man. He insisted that he had fired the shot and asked the police to examine the gun and the bullet. Full investigation proved his claim to be the murderer.

He was a well-known man and a well-known writer but he had two 'bees in his bonnet'. One was that he believed that 'man's instinct alone should be his guide after praying to God for guidance' in conjunction with his religion and that by following this he could do no wrong: another was that he had that peculiar racial arrogance that is a disease in some people. He had seen an increasing Chinese immigration to New Zealand and thought that it should be stopped. He wrote articles about it but attracted very few others to his way of thinking. To draw attention to what he saw as a 'danger' he determined to kill a Chinese. He selected his victim with care, as one likely, in his view, to benefit by death as much as he would suffer by it. He acted with the highest possible motives 'according to intuition and God-given guidance.

Now these are the facts. What is the moral we can draw from them?

Well, the first and obvious one is that pious aspirations, wishful thinking, listening to the voice within, praying to some vague God supposed to be sending out guidance, may as

easily give ‘guidance’ and ‘strength’ to commit atrocious crimes as any sort of moral improvement.

Even pious wishes for ‘a change of heart’ are barely likely to take effect unless an effort is made and unless that effort is based on *Sīla*, reason and the pursuit of knowledge of the mind instead of on blind faith.

Those who claim to be religious, even those who are sincere in their attempts to be so, are, if they are mere sentimentalists, just as likely as not to get ‘guidance’ to do what their own *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha* tell them to do.

In the *Abhidhammapiṭaka*, the psycho-ethical-analytical method given by the Buddha over twenty-five centuries ago, mind and its concomitants are *inter alia* acutely analysed and nothing of modern psychoanalysis has yet come anywhere near the penetrating analysis therein.

A study of the *Abhidhamma* shows that even the ‘altruistic’ murderer was motivated by greed, looking on his ‘Empire’ as an extension of himself and seeing it threatened, anger, in its form of repulsion, and ignorance. Ignorance of what? Ignorance of the cosmic Law, a Law that transcends even the God who thinks himself ‘Almighty’.

Though an intricate analysis is impossible in an article such as this, it can be shown that he was just as much a cruel murderer as any of the others. He deserves sympathy; so does every murderer. For every murderer murders, in effect, himself.

There is, then, another moral to be drawn from all this. That is that all projection of man’s powers outside himself, whether it be a projection in the shape of an ‘Almighty God’ or of any other sort, are mere projections, thrown out by the mind’s fear of itself and its necessity through fear to rationalise, and are very harmful, even where the God projected forth is a highly moral and loving God.

This is *micchaditṭhi*, wrong views as to facts and wrong inferences drawn from the

facts as perceived, and all wrong views are harmful and dangerous views.

We, as followers of the Buddha, should not be weak and sentimental and ignorant and say ‘they do a lot of good’ when they (the wrong views) do as much good as sticking-plaster placed over leprosy. We should, and, it is our *Dhammadūta* duty, point out the error of such wrong views and, as gently and kindly as possible, help to educate our less fortunate friends who have not had the advantage of a knowledge of the Buddha’s Teachings.

It may be relevant here to quote from the *Abhayarājakumārasutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*:

‘Prince Abhaya, sitting down at a respectful distance, asked the Buddha:

“Now revered Sir, could a Tathāgata utter a speech disliked by others, disagreeable to them?”

At that time an innocent little baby boy was lying on its back on Prince Abhaya’s knees. Then the Buddha asked Prince Abhaya; “What do you think, Prince? If this boy, owing to your carelessness or that of his nurse were to put a stick or stone into his mouth what would you do for him?”

“I would get it out, revered sir, and if I, revered sir, were not able to get it out at once, then taking hold of his head with my left hand, crooking a finger, I would get it out with my right hand, even though it were with blood. What is the reason for this? Revered sir, I have compassion for the boy.”

The Buddha then explained that out of compassion a Tathāgata spoke when the need existed and when the matter was one of truth and of benefit, even if disagreeable to others. (See Appendix).

It is then with compassion and because of compassion that we must explain what is right, being in this matter free from *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*.

There are those even among the materialists and the animists, the soul-believers, 'whose eyes are but lightly covered with dust' who will be able to perceive the Truth.

The case of the alcoholics.

Here is a case that is relevant in that it shows a method now originating in the West to cure drunkards by teaching them self-reliance. An alcoholic, or to use the more direct older expression, drunkard, (and any man who drinks alcohol at all is to some extent a drunkard) is murdering his own mind, and if he will sober up completely and analyse his thoughts he will find that he is motivated as are all murderers by *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha*.

It is also relevant in showing that 'surrendering one's will to God' is, like 'guidance', something that is a handicap and works but temporary cures.

In America a group of ex-drunkards styling themselves 'Alcoholics Anonymous', have been doing very good work helping to cure others who are still victims of this special craving but they say they can only do this if 'you turn your will and your life over to the care of God'. They have had some considerable success, and yet many failures, and quite a few of the successes have relapsed to failure.

Now has come another technique, and this is based on Reason, just as is Buddhism. It was started as one man's effort and is having, it seems, successes where the former method of 'hand over your will' has failed.

Instead of substituting for the reliance on alcohol of those who cannot 'spark' without spirits, a reliance on some Power supposed to be without, giving a faith that may or may not fail, this method builds character by reason and produces a strong integrated mind that is its own master. Although this is, in Buddhism, but the first step, it is so much in line with the idea of self-reliance expressed in the Buddhist Teaching that I make no excuse for quoting here (from the Readers Digest) a description of the method.

"A technique that is proving helpful for alcoholics who cannot rely on faith has been developed by a lawyer, Edward J. McGoldrick, Director of the Bureau of Alcoholic Therapy of the City of New York. He flatly contradicts the two most widely held concepts of alcoholism: alcoholism, he asserts, is not a disease, and the alcoholic needs not reformation but information. The 'Alcoholics Anonymous' tells the alcoholic:

"You must turn your life over to the care of God".

McGoldrick tells the alcoholic: "God cannot do for you what can only be done through you". His system aims to replace the patient's reliance on alcohol with reliance on the power of his own mind. Alcoholism, says McGoldrick, derives from twisted mental processes; its roots are immaturity, frustration and ignorance. The alcoholic must be taught to think correctly and to express himself in socially useful ways. McGoldrick teaches him that alcohol prevents proper functioning of the mind and hence the satisfactory solution of problems; that by keeping the mind clear and using it, any problem can be solved, thus making escape in alcoholism unnecessary. His therapy is like a course of instruction with a series of private conferences. He helps the patient to reason his way to a great faith in himself and to an acceptance of the challenges he must face. There is a wonderful exultation that comes to a man when he meets head-on the problem he has been fleeing and finds that through his own ability he can conquer it.'

The Buddha taught that we should not rely on some outside agency and said: 'Work out your own salvation, with diligence' and 'Even Buddhas only point out the way.' He gave the Teaching of the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path and a method, the practice of Vipassanā, for those who are prepared to gain complete emancipation.

This is the Teaching that we must give, and there are many of the elaborations in our Scriptures to make it understandable and effective. This is the only Teaching that will

explain crime and what it is, a motivation, as is all 'wrong', by *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*. This is the Teaching that will eradicate crime and criminal tendencies and make a happier world, and lead to something more than a happier world.

Appendix *

'Whatever speech the Tathāgata knows to be not fact, not true, and by which nobody can benefit and which is disagreeable to others that speech the Tathāgata does not utter.

Whatever speech the Tathāgata knows to be fact, true, but by which nobody can benefit and which is disagreeable to others, neither does the Tathāgata utter that speech.

Whatever speech the Thatāgata knows to be fact, true, by which one can benefit though it is

disagreeable to others, the Tathāgata is aware of the right and proper time for that speech.

Whatever speech the Tathdgate knows to be not fact, not true, by which nobody can benefit though agreeable to others, that speech the Tathāgata does not utter.

Whatever speech the Tathāgata knows to be fact, true, but by which nobody can benefit, though agreeable to others, neither does the Tathāgata utter that speech.

Whatever speech the Tathāgata knows to be fact, true, by which one can benefit, and which is agreeable to others, the Tathāgata is aware of the right and proper time for that speech.'

* 6th Synodd Edition: pg. 57.
Majjhimanikāya, Majjhimapannāsa, (I)
Gahapati vagga, (8) Abhayarājakumāra.

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BUDDHISM AND THE STATE

Myanaung U Tin.

The Constitution of the Union of Burma provides: 'The State recognises the special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens of the Union' (Section 21(1)). The provision is to meet half way the fervent wish of the devout Buddhists who are in favour of declaring Buddhism as the State Religion. It came into force in 1948 C.E. when Burma became a Sovereign Independent Republic. Ever since then there has been a persistent and insistent demand by the pious Buddhists—Saṅgha and laity alike—for the declaration of Buddhism as the State Religion. On the other hand, there is a strong feeling among the so-called modern-minded people that religion and the State should not be mixed up. Although I do not want to take sides in this controversy, a controversy that rages in several countries, whether the religion professed by the great majority be Buddhism, Christianity or Islam, I must state that Buddhism is a way of life and, as such, it is translatable into a polity, if so desired.

Asoka was the first ruler of men to translate the Buddhist Way of Life into a polity or organised society. It was he who urged his people to live practically the way of life preached by the Buddha. However, he was not a religious fanatic. G. Nye Steiger writes in 'A History of the Far East'. 'Ardent though he was in his advocacy of the Buddhist "Way" Asoka differs in one notable respect from most of history's royal propagandists: his advocacy appears to have been free from any taint of bigotry or intolerance. The teachings of Gautama were to him not a body of dogma but a way of life; therefore, while urging all men to choose and to follow this way, he was careful to avoid making any attack upon the existing beliefs and religious practices of his subjects.'

The word of the Buddha is summarized in Stanza No. 183 of the Dhammapada; 'Not to do any evil; to cultivate good: to purify one's

mind—this is the teaching of the Buddhas'. Whether Buddhism is placed in the special position as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens, or declared to be the State Religion, systematic steps and sustained efforts to urge the people to practise actually the way of life taught by the Buddha are bound to bring about in a reasonable time, conditions similar to those that prevailed in the Asokan period. By the people is meant, of course, only those who profess Buddhism. The non-Buddhists need have no fear of bigotry and intolerance on the part of the Buddhist rulers, because section 20 of the Constitution provides:

'All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to profess and practise religion subject to public order, morality or health and to the other provisions of this Chapter (i.e. Fundamental Rights).

Recently (23rd February 1959) Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the new order should be based on co-operation, not competition, and for the eventual achievement of a world state, humanity needed a new mental approach: 'This approach can only be real if there is a change of mind and spirit, not merely by bandying words which have lost their meaning'. I imagine that often his mind goes back towards what India stood for in the ancient days, the days of the Buddha, and of Asoka. H.G.Wells writes in 'The Outline of History': 'For eight and twenty years Asoka worked sanely for the real needs of men. Amidst the tens of thousands of names of monarchs that crowd the columns of history.....the name of Asoka shines, and shines almost alone, a star.....Mere living men cherish his memory today than have ever heard the names of Constantine or Charlemagne.

The code of life which Asoka gave to his people, as also to the world within his reach, by launching a movement for righteousness,

was mainly the norm of social conduct preached by the Buddha which is one of the conditions of the stability of civilised society. He had the moral exhortations or Edicts carved upon stone pillars, which he set up in all parts of his empire. And these celebrated Edicts are but the teachings of the Buddha. Asoka showed both in his personal life and in his administration that the Buddha-dhamma was not merely a philosophical doctrine but a way of life to be cultivated. 'How compatible that way of living was with the most useful and beneficent activities, his life shows. Right Aspiration, Right Effort, and Right Livelihood distinguished his career,' says H.G.Wells, in his appraisal of Asoka.

'Asoka', writes Joseph McCabe in 'The Golden Ages of History', 'did not confine his improvement of the State to a correction of individual conduct. He built a number of hospitals and had large gardens of medicinal herbs which he distributed to the poor. He reformed the prisons, and anticipating our advanced ideas on the subject, urged officials to help prisoners to see the blunder of crime rather than punish them. He recommended the kindly treatment of slaves and servants. He built hostels, dug wells and planted trees along the roads for travellers. He opened "Spinning houses" (workshops) for widows and poor women and made provision for the aged. He had thousands of vessels of water placed on the streets of his capital to meet the contingency of fire, and he imposed a fine upon any man who would not help to extinguish a fire in his neighbour's house. He made it a penal offence to throw dead animals or filth upon the streets. He instituted a department of state to attend to the welfare of the backward races in his empire. And above all, he denounced war and most ardently desired the friendly intercourse of all nations, sending his missionaries as far as Syria in the West to preach his gospel. His own people were his children, but all men were his brothers.'

The "new mental approach" mentioned by Pandit Nehru in his appeal for a new

supranational world order is the approach of ancient days, the approach adopted by Asoka and his people who were imbued with the spirit of the teaching of the Buddha: 'new' only in the sense that it has been long lost in the welter of creeds and conflicts. Even the followers of the Buddha, generally speaking, do not seem to be paying sincere heed to the Buddha's message of universal loving-kindness and universal brotherhood,

"Just as a mother her own child,
Her only son, protects with all her might,
Just so one should t'wards all that lives
Develop one's own mind in boundless
love,
"Thus t'ward the whole wide world one
should
Unfold one's mind in all-embracing
kindness,
Above, below, on ev'rv side.
Unhindered, free from hate and angry
feeling."

(Metta Sutta)

Nowhere has this universal kindness, or selfless love, been so clearly defined as in Buddhism. It is heartening to note that eminent thinkers and statesmen of the modern world are now advocating the ancient ideal, the ideal inspiring the Buddhist Way of Life.

'The fundamental cause of the grievous disorders with which mankind is afflicted' said the Marquess of Zetland, an admirer of Buddhism, 'is to be found in the fact that man's progress on the material plane has outstripped his advancement on moral and spiritual planes.' As a matter of fact, human beings, by and large, are obsessed with ideas for material progress which they seek to achieve having no regard to moral and spiritual values of life. The present world order is based on competition, and not on co-operation, with the result that moral scruples are discarded in the struggle for material gains. Thus the world order is palpably turning into a world disorder. It is true that worldlings (*puthujjana*) are not free from greed, hatred, and delusion. But it behoves them to observe the moral precepts,

which constitutes the foundation of human society.

At this juncture, let us hear what the Buddha preaches to us in the Cakkhavatti Sihanāda Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya. The gist of the long discourse is: In the beginning, human society was conspicuous by the total absence of social evils. It was a simple society, owning no private property, each man receiving daily according to his wants. It was a universal brotherhood. But in course of time lazy men resorted to hoarding for a number of days, and greedy men began to take what was not given to them. Thieves, when caught, were allowed to go away with provisions given by the rulers, thinking that they stole through utter necessity. Consequently, the incidence of theft was on the increase, and it came to be punishable with a death sentence. Because it was a capital punishment, thieves and robbers, armed with weapons, resorted to violence, resulting in taking life. Disorder that had set in led to telling lies and slander, then to adultery, further to harsh language and frivolous talk, still further to covetousness and malevolence and finally to false views. These are known as ten kinds of *Duccarita*, Evil Conduct. Since the advent of social evils, human society gradually ceased to be a universal brotherhood or a paradise on earth, which it was in the beginning.

It is clearly stated in this sutta that ever since the human life-span was five hundred years the sensual desires began to be crude and inordinate, and when that life-span was halved, there set in initial stages of disregard and disrespect to parents and elders, to the wise and virtuous. Nowadays, the life-span is reckoned to be one hundred years, and ten kinds of social evils or evil conduct are very much in evidence all over the world. The life-span is decreasing, and after a long, long period, it will be but ten years. When that time comes, the law of the jungle alone will prevail, and human beings will be no better than animals, animals of absolutely vile and fierce type at that. The signs of the present times are pointing towards that final catastrophe.

In the Brahma Vagga, Tika Aṅguttara, the Buddha explains to us how the widespread social evils bring about the three traditional calamities, War, Famine and Pestilence, and, accordingly, the decrease in the span of human life.

Then, the obvious thing is for mankind to abstain from committing social evils. Ten kinds of Good Conduct or ten items of Good Conduct (*Sucarita*) are:

- (1) Abstinance from taking life.
- (2) Abstinance from taking what is not given to one.
- (3) Abstinance from adultery.
- (4) Abstinance from telling lies.
- (5) Abstinance from slander.
- (6) Abstinance from harsh or impolite speech.
- (7) Abstinance from frivolous and senseless talk.
- (8) Non-entertainment of covetousness.
- (9) Non-entertainment of malevolence.
- (10) Non-entertainment of false views.

Abstinance from social evils, far from being negative in character, is a positive endeavour for the stability of the civilized life. To be exact, *sīla* or morality means only the abstinance of the first seven items, which concern bodily and verbal actions; and to check or, better still, to get rid of the remaining three items, it is necessary to go higher by developing *Samādhi* (concentration) and *paññā* (wisdom). It may incidentally be pointed out that abstinance from any state of indolence arising from the use of intoxicants is one of the five moral precepts (*pañca-sīla*), which are a preliminary condition for any higher development, and this particular precept is conjoined to the third item mentioned above (*Kāmesu micchā-cāra Veramani*), which in its literal sense means, evil conduct pertaining to sensual things. The Buddha warns against intoxicants under the influence of which men do not hesitate to commit any or all of the social evils for the gratification of sensual desires.

In addition there are ten kinds of good or meritorious actions. (*puññā-kiriya vatthuni*) which promote higher development. They are (1) liberality, (2) good conduct, (3) contemplation, (4) respect for the Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, parents, teachers and elders, (5) rendering of service or performance of duty, (6) transference of merit, (7) showing appreciation and joy at the 'good works' done by others, (8) giving discourses on Dhamma, (9) hearing the teaching of Dhamma, and (10) upright views.

In any country, people must be educated, trained, and, if needs be, guided to abstain from social evils. In a Buddhist country it is up to the rulers no less than the Sangha, to urge the people to practise the teaching of the Buddha, or, in other words, to live practically the Buddhist Way of Life. It will be well if the rulers emulate the example of Asoka. The Jātakas (Buddha's Birth-stories) mention that the monarchs 'ruled in righteousness, not shaking the ten-fold code of the king or ten rules of governing.' They are (1) almsgiving, (2) morality, (3) liberality, (4) straightness (5) gentleness, (6) self-restraint, (7) non-anger, (8) non-hurtfulness. (9) forbearance and (10) non-opposition (to the will of the people). Rulers of any age will be well advised to rule their people in righteousness, observing this code, at least in spirit, if not to the letter.

After all, a government or a ruler becomes a necessity only when human beings commit social evils. In the final analysis, laws are framed to stamp out social evils and make life worth living. Indeed, laws are required to regulate the life of an organised society, but mere enforcement of man-made laws is not enough: it must go along with observance of moral precepts. Again, it is manifest that reasonable compulsion as well as education are necessary to enforce both man-made laws and moral precepts. Society being made up of individuals, what is done for the benefit of individuals is certainly good for the society as well. Corrections of individual moral conduct serves the interests of the society as a whole.

While aware of the magnificent Buddhist activities in the Buddhist countries in the last few years, further co-ordinated efforts by the rulers, the Sangha and the Buddhist organisations are called for to foster effectively the Buddhist Way of Life. Country-wide movements for righteousness must be launched. The remarkable achievements of the recent physical cleaning-up campaign in this country should be an object lesson. In launching moral cleaning-up campaigns, the moral and spiritual power of the Dhamma must be, as in the days of yore, supported by the temporal power of the State. The Sangha and the rulers ought to make combined efforts to guide the people towards becoming worthy members of the society to which they belong. In short, the people, because they are Buddhists, should be encouraged to avail themselves of their opportunity in this life to fulfil the ten pāramita (perfections): (1) Almsgiving and liberality, (2) morality, (3) renunciation, (4) wisdom, (5) energy, (6) forbearance, (7) truthfulness, (8) resolution, (9) all-embracing kindness and (10) equanimity.

In as short a compass as this article, one can only give indications as to why and how the Buddha's teaching can be made use of for the benefit of individuals as well as for the larger interests of the organised life. Human society is much more complex now than, say, in the Asokan period, but human nature is basically the same as ever, rooted in greed, hatred and delusion. Buddha-dhamma is not for a certain period but for all times, and, in the words of Venerable Nyanatiloka, 'of all religions in the world the best suited to improve and elevate the characters and manners of a people. It awakens self-respect and a feeling of self-responsibility of a people and stirs up a nation's energy. It fosters spiritual progress by appealing to men's own thinking powers. It promotes in a people the sense of tolerance by keeping it free from religious and national narrowness and fanaticism. It spreads among the people the feeling of all-embracing kindness and brotherhood and keeps them away from hate and cruelty....And in the

country in which such qualities predominate, peace and happiness will reign supreme; and such a country will be a model to the whole world, will be a paradise on earth’.

What the world needs is a kind of socialism which is ethical in quality. Material advancement without moral progress is surely not desirable. History has shown in unmistakable terms that a human society built on material foundations alone is bound to crash sooner or later. It is, therefore, urgently necessary to foster wisely and assiduously the Buddhist Way of Life with a view to saving the people from the pernicious influence of material ideologies which have been impinging upon them. Burma and, for that matter, the Buddhist countries in the neighbourhood have been long secured to the anchor of Buddhism

and once they break away from it they will have nothing to hang on in the rough sea of material ideas. To counteract the ideas foreign to the Buddhist Way of Life, the people must be taught to appreciate the Buddhist ideas, which help them make sound progress on the material plane as well as on the moral and spiritual plane. Ideas alone can fight ideas, and a battle is already half lost if it is fought without the inspiration of ideas. The prospect is none too bright, and there is much leeway to make up. The Buddhist people must realise that their opponents have stolen a march on them in a challenge against their Way of Life, and their rulers should lose no time to explore this question, a question, which, it seems to me, deserves fully to be a matter of State policy and planning.

‘Thus monks, the Tathāgata, being such an one in things seen, heard, sensed, cognised, is “such”. Moreover than “He who is such” there is none other greater or more excellent, I declare.’

Āṅguttara Nikāya. ii, 23, IV, 111, 24.

In times past, brahman Dhammika, when seafaring merchants put to sea in ships, they took with them a bird to sight land. When the ship was out of sight of land, they freed the bird; and it flew eastward and westward, northward and southward, upward and around. And if the bird sighted land near by, it was gone for good (*Tathagātako*); but if the bird saw no land, it returned to the ship.

Āṅguttara Nikāya. Dhammika sutta.

BUDDHISM—THE RELIGION OF THE AGE OF SCIENCE

The Hon'ble Justice Thado Mahā Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon.

When I received the invitation to this Conference I was deeply impressed by the thoughtful approach shown by the sponsors in framing the questions that are to be the subject of our discussion. They are searching questions; questions of tremendous import to all of us at this crucial point in the history of mankind. They are indicative of a growing awareness of the lack of spiritual values in our materialistic civilisation and of an honest and realistic attempt to get to grips with the problems of the human situation in a world that is fast losing faith in the old religious beliefs.

In view of their importance I propose to deal directly with each of the points raised, from the standpoint of a practising Buddhist. But first I must give you, as briefly as possible, an outline of the Buddhist world-view, the background of Buddhist thought and the Buddhist concept of life and of the nature of man. This is necessary because, as you will see, Buddhism differs fundamentally from every other religious system on many points. As the pattern unfolds you will find that Buddhism gives answers to these problems that are quite different from the answers given by Western religion, while in many cases from the Buddhist point of view there is no problem at all.

Gotama Buddha, as you all know, was an Indian Prince who renounced the life of a ruler to become an ascetic, seeking spiritual realisation in a life of self-discipline and contemplation. As Prince Siddhattha he was a man like ourselves; he never claimed any divine nature, inspiration or even guidance. It was not until He achieved ultimate realisation and became the Buddha of this world-cycle, a perfectly Enlightened Being, that He spoke with any authority on spiritual matters. This status He achieved, also, by His own unaided efforts. The proof that He then gave in support of His claim to Enlightenment and spiritual

emancipation is a proof that can be found by us today in the nature of the Doctrine He taught. He said in effect: 'Come: examine, criticise and analyse my Teachings for yourself; practise the method of gaining emancipation that I shall show you. I do not ask you to take anything on blind faith; but when you have fully accomplished the method you will see the Truth face to face, as I see it now',

That Teaching, the Dhamma, and that method, the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, have been preserved and handed down to us by word of mouth and written texts in unbroken continuity since the time of the Buddha Himself. Throughout the centuries a long line of *Arahats*—that is, disciples who have gained the highest fruits of liberation through self-purification—attests the truth of the Doctrine' and the effectiveness of the method. The Dhamma itself includes ethics, psychology, religion and a complete cosmic philosophy that embraces all forms of life in a harmonious moral order. Whether it can also be called scientific, in the sense of being in accordance with the principles that later science has revealed to us, I shall leave for you to judge when you have heard me. You will in any case agree that the Buddha in His Teaching appealed both to the reasoning and emotive sides of man's nature, and that the loftiest spiritual aspirations of mankind are to be found in the ideal He set before us.

To begin with, it must be understood that in the Buddhist system there is no place for a Creator God. There is moral law and moral order, and these principles are supreme. They are the spiritual aspect of the law of cause and effect that prevails in the physical universe. But Buddhist cosmology is based upon relativity; the related and composite nature of all phenomena. World-systems, or universes, arise and pass away in obedience to natural law, but there has never been any first act of creation or any First Cause. Time and relativity

are a closed circle in which no point of beginning can be found. This concept has its parallel in the physical world: in former days people imagined that the horizon must indicate a rim to the earth, but as we move in the direction of the horizon it constantly recedes from us, so that at whatever point on the earth's surface we stand the horizon still spreads all around us. In the same way we mistakenly imagine that time and phenomena must in some way be bounded by a beginning. But with time and eternity it is just as it is with ourselves in relation to the physical horizon. Time, the present, is the spot on which we stand; infinity is the endless recession of such spots. Just as there is no spot at which the earth begins, so there is no point in time at which the world's causal antecedents began. It is very probable, according to the latest scientific notions, that the entire universe, or cosmos, is constructed on the same physical principle, and the fact that its nature is outside our present range of comprehension does not at all affect the mathematical indications. The relativity of space and time, a new concept to science, is and always has been implicit in Buddhist philosophy.

The moral order works through 'the continuum of events on the psycho-physical level which we call life, the life-continuum of conscious beings. That also is beginning-less, an incessant flux of cause and effect. It is true it had a beginning on this earth, but that beginning was only the continuation of a series: its causal antecedents existed before, in former universes. When a universe comes to an end in the course of natural processes, the forces which constituted it are resolved into their atomic elements, but after aeons of disintegration they again re-assemble and another universe gradually forms.

The cause of this cyclic process is *kamma*, the totality of thought-force that is being generated from moment to moment. Man's free will operates within a space-time complex that has been created by his own previous activities, having their origin in mental processes. These previous activities are called

kamma; their results are called *Vipāka* in Buddhism. The *kamma* of the past has created the conditions of the present, while the *kamma* of the present is creating the conditions that will exist in the future. In the Buddhist texts it states definitely that the arising of a fresh world-cycle is brought about by the *kamma* of all the beings that lived in the previous one.

The idea of reincarnation, or, as we prefer to call it, rebirth, is not nowadays so unfamiliar a one to the West as it used to be.

It may perhaps be said that the moral necessity for rebirth is transcendent. It is the only way in which we who believe in moral justice in the universe can account for the seeming injustices we see all about us—the thousands of cases of apparently unmerited suffering, of people stricken by incurable diseases, of children born blind, deaf and dumb, deformed or mentally deficient, or doomed to an early death beyond human or divine aid. All these evils are due to past bad *kamma*. Would the words of Jesus, to the man he had healed—“Go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee”—apply to a child born with an affliction that could not have been brought about by ‘any sin it had committed in this life? But if these words of Jesus did not point to a universal truth they were meaningless.

Such evils as these can be avoided in the future by generating good *kamma* here and now. The individual's present situation may be (but not necessarily is) beyond present remedy, but the nature of his response to it is subject to his will. He can make his future a happy one by the performance of good deeds. No man's destiny is fixed, except by his own intention. It is subject to continual alteration and change of direction. As remedy for present evils, the Buddha laid down the principles of noble conduct; the cultivation of harmlessness towards all beings, accompanied by positive thoughts and deeds of loving-kindness, the practice of charity, sexual restraint, self-discipline and mental cultivation. To avoid evil

in the future we must shun evil in the present; there is no other way.

This is the reason why, we believe, science alone ‘Will never be able completely to eradicate disease and mental and bodily suffering from human life. It is also the reason why a completely equalitarian society can never be achieved; the innate differences in character, intellect and capability between one individual and another, due to past *kamma*, are too great. Nature will always defeat any attempts to put false values into human life.

The doctrine of *kamma* is the direct opposite of fatalism or predestination. While our present condition is the result of past actions, the future is being moulded by our present ones, and every man can raise himself in the scale of spiritual evolution, as well as improve his worldly position, by well-directed effort. Buddhism, in its teaching that nothing is permanent, shows that there is no constant, immutable element in the process of rebirth. The phenomenal personality is a succession of moments of consciousness, each conditioned by the ones that ‘have preceded it, yet subject ‘to the intervention of free-will, which can change the nature of the current of personality. The aphorism “character is destiny”, is shown by Buddhism to be a deep psychological truth, for when we change our character we change our destiny with it. In truth, man has the divine power to shape his own nature and his own mode of being. He can not only improve his condition in this world but can attain higher realms. His highest destiny of all, however, is to gain his release from all forms of conditioned existence, even from the highest heavenly states, because these are all impermanent. There are altogether thirty-one major spheres of being, some of them lower than the human while others are realms of greatly refined spiritual existence; but in none of them is life eternal. After death beings are reborn in whatever sphere, human, sub-human or divine, their mental development has fitted them for, but they remain there only so long as the *kamma* they have generated continues to bear results in that specific order of being.

‘When that particular *kamma* is exhausted they pass away from that state and are again reborn, in whatever sphere their residual *kamma* conducts them to. If you will conceive these states of being as different mental planes on which our consciousness can operate while we are still here on earth, you will have formed a more or less correct picture of the spiritual cosmos. In his moods of greed, lust, hatred or violence man places himself on a low mental plane, and if it is that particular mood which manifests in his last conscious moment before death he will be reborn on the sub-human life-plane that corresponds to it. If, on the other hand, he has cultivated the higher attributes of universal love, compassion, unselfishness and detachment from material concerns, it is these qualities that will preside over his last moments, and will conduct him to the higher states of being to which they correspond. Moral law operates with mechanical precision; man cannot cheat it, but he can make use of it to advance his spiritual growth. In all this incessant round of rebirth there is no permanent “soul” or ego-entity that is reborn; there is merely the life-continuum of cause and effect producing a succession of beings all in the same line of individual causality.

In the Four Noble Truths the Buddha summarised His Doctrine thus:

The life-process involving rebirth and consequent old-age and death in all spheres of conditioned ‘existence is associated with suffering. This is so because all sentient existence bears the three characteristics of impermanence, unsatisfactoriness and the absence of any real, enduring ego-entity.

The cause of this painful round of rebirths is Craving. That is, thirst for the enjoyment of pleasures of the senses, from the lowest animal indulgences up to the most refined mental pleasure, all desires are cravings for experience and renewed experience which promote the psychic will-to-live. It is a mental force, the strongest force in the cosmos. This Craving-force is associated with Ignorance of the nature of reality.

There is a point at which Craving, and the rebirth-process arising from it, can be brought to an end. At this point, Craving and Ignorance are eliminated altogether and with them the psychic elements of grasping and attaching. This cessation of the unreal life-process is called *Nibbāna*, the extinction of the fires of passion. It is the end of suffering and the sole unchanging reality.

The Way to that final perfection is the Noble Eightfold Path of mental or spiritual development, that is, Right View, Right Aspiration, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. Each of these terms has a very exact ethical and psychological significance; they are not simply vague, unformulated ideals but are minutely and systematically delineated modes of thought and behaviour. Taken all together they constitute the three essentials of spiritual development—*Sīla* (Morality), *Samādhi* (Mental Concentration) and *Paññā* (Insight-wisdom). This is the Way to the cessation of suffering.

To the question, “What is human personality?” Buddhism gives the answer that it is a combined psycho-physical process in which nothing is stable or unchanging. It is a flux of dependent relationships brought into being and sustained by past *kamma* and natural laws. A human being consists of five aggregates or *khandhas*, one of which is physical and the other four psychic. They are: *Rūpa*, or physical body; *Vedanā*, or sensation; *Saññā*, or perception; *Saṅkhāra* or tendencies; and *Viññāna* or consciousness. Of these five *Saṅkhāra* is the most difficult to define because there is nothing even remotely corresponding to it in Western thought, and there is no single English word that covers all its meaning. Broadly, it signifies the tendencies or characteristics that have been set in motion by past *kamma*; but it also includes the faculty of willing. I cannot dwell upon the subtleties of Buddhist psychological analysis now; it is a vast subject and one that, if it were to be studied systematically by competent

Western specialists in psychology would completely transform modern ideas concerning the nature of the mind. It is sufficient to say that Buddhism views living beings not as entities but as processes—or, if you like, a series of events—taking place within a causal nexus that gives us our concepts of time, space and phenomena. The intangible force of *kamma* generated in the past works through the processes of the physical universe to produce living beings, but each of these is a composite product. Just as an automobile is composed of the engine, with its various parts, the chassis, the wheels, the upholstery and so on, no single item of which by itself constitutes the automobile, but which when all put together on the assembly-line make the finished product, so a living being is formed of the various elements of mind and physical substance, not one of which alone constitutes the being. The “self”, therefore, is a phenomenal product of various causes; it is not an enduring or self-existing entity. This is the meaning of the Buddhist doctrine of *Anattā*—“non-soul”. The personal ego is an illusion of ignorance, and so to attain liberation it is necessary to free the mind of self-delusion. The whole of Buddhist morality and discipline is directed towards this ultimate end.

To the question, “How did it all begin?” I can only say that there is no answer, because the question itself is merely a product of man’s limited comprehension. If we understand the nature of time and relativity we must see that there could not have been any beginning. It can only be pointed out that all the usual answers to the question are fundamentally defective. If it is assumed that in order to exist, a thing must have had a creator who existed before it, it follows logically that the creator himself must have had a creator, and so on back to infinity. On the other hand, if the creator could exist without a prior cause in the form of another creator, the whole argument falls to the ground. The theory of a Creator-God does not solve any problems; it only complicates the existing ones.

Buddhism then, views life and the cosmos as a process—a complex of interrelated causes and dependent relationships. To find his way out of this maze, man has to develop Insight-Wisdom. This is done by cultivating the virtues, all of which are aimed at diminishing the sense of “self” and the grasping instincts associated with it. Side by side with this cultivation of moral purity there are the exercises in concentration which go by the general name of meditation. Meditation in Buddhism is not the giving up of one’s mind to fantasies born of the myth-content of the unconscious; it stands for scientifically arranged and systematic mental exercises. In the course of this training, psychic powers are developed, such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy and the recollection of previous lives, but these are not the real object of meditation. They represent, in fact, another form of attachment to be overcome. Its real object is liberation. By the development of Right Concentration it is possible to break through the walls of ignorance that encompass us with illusions—to crash through time and relativity as a jet propelled aircraft crashes through the sound barrier. Once beyond this, the disciple of the Buddha finds himself face to face with *Nibbāna*, the Ultimate Truth in which all artificially-created problems of ignorance and delusion have ceased to exist.

The Buddha was not only Lord of Wisdom. He was also the supreme Lord of Compassion. It was out of pity for suffering humanity that He sought and found the Truth. He taught His followers to develop a heart of loving-kindness that embraces without distinction all beings. This He called the godlike state of consciousness. There are four of these *Brāhma-vihāras*; they are *Mettā*, universal benevolence; *Karuṇā*, compassion, *Muditā*, sympathetic joy, and *Upekkhā*, equanimity and non-discrimination. They form, for Buddhists, the ideal of what should be our attitude towards our fellow men, and, indeed, to all living beings. One who attains them in this life is already living mentally in a heaven-world (*Rūpabrahmāloka*) the realm of the Formless

Beings whose nature is entirely of the spirit. In this way alone is it possible to realise the kingdom of heaven on earth. That kingdom is of the mind, and is entirely independent of external circumstances. Whosoever reaches it in this life will, if he does not go on to the final goal of all, *Nibbāna*, be reborn after death in the spiritual sphere corresponding to his attainment.

It is in the light of this view of the world that I now ask you to consider the answers I am going to give, as a Buddhist, to the problems confronting religion in this age of science.

Does man in a civilization pervaded by the ideas of science still require beliefs that inform him concerning his own highest goals?

The purpose of science has always been to examine the physical universe and discover the laws by which it operates. Its function in civilization has been to transform the life of man by the development of technical means of better living, the conquest of disease and in general the mastery of man’s physical environment. It is not primarily concerned with man’s purpose or goal; but in discharging its first function it has automatically laid bare certain principles that throw light on man’s own nature and his origin. In so doing it has caused a great disturbance in the accepted ideas of theistic religion. From the time when Galileo discovered that the earth is not the centre of the solar system up to Darwin’s first treatise on biological evolution, western religious ideas have been subjected to a series of shocks.

Nevertheless, religion, despite its conflict with reason and knowledge, has survived precisely because man does need a working hypothesis to account for his existence, his sense of moral values and his instinctive belief that there is a higher goal beyond mere comfortable living on this earth. In any case, most thinking people are now agreed that science, with all its wonders will never be able to create a heaven in this world. We have seen

how, when one disease is brought under control, another source of disease arises. Bacteria which have been mastered by science proceed to transform themselves, and in the course of a few generations produce a variant of their type which is immune to the old attack; and so science has to start all over again, seeking a fresh technique. I am not decrying the triumphs of science; but science as a source of knowledge seems to me superior to science as a palliative, since the benefits it has brought us have in many cases been outweighed by the dangers it has placed in our path. Disease, old age and death will always be with us; and this being so, human life will continue to be imperfect, darkened always by the shadows of grief and uncertainty.

Religion as it is understood in the West may have failed man, yet the need for religion still continues.

To what extent is it the function of traditional religions to interpret to man his own ultimate concerns in relation to the totality of powers, known and unknown, with which he must come to terms?

The only possible reply to this is that traditional religions can perform this function only to the extent permitted by man's present and future knowledge. It is a function that can no longer be performed through dogmas. Where traditional religion is able to assimilate new facts and hitherto unknown aspects of reality without sacrificing anything of its fundamental teachings it can continue to serve humanity as an interpreter of the "totality of powers, known and unknown" with which man must come to terms. But where dogma has been laid down once for all as an infallible divine revelation, this adjustment is not possible. When one teaching once held to be divinely-revealed truth is found to be false, the whole edifice is shaken. This has already happened, not once but a thousand times, and there are limits to the elasticity of faith. Where most educated people are concerned those limits have already been exceeded and faith in

"divine revelation" is as dead as the brontosaurus.

Buddhism, as I have already pointed out, is not a religion of "divine revelation" or of unsupported dogmas. It is the ultimate truth concerning life as discovered by one who approached the subject without any preconceived ideas, and who reached it in the only way possible, by delving into His own consciousness. Just as a scientist investigates the external world, so the Buddha investigated the internal world of the mind, or, if you like, the spirit. Everything that He taught thereafter was knowledge that is accessible to each and every one of us, if we will but follow His method of self-purification. On the intellectual side we find that there is no point at which science comes into conflict with Buddhism, nor is it ever likely to do so. The Teaching of the Buddha, therefore, can continue to perform the function indicated in this question and in the one that follows it, namely,

"To what extent can the traditional religions perform this function in a community which accepts the scientific interpretation of reality?"

What science interprets are natural phenomena, and science has reached the point of realising that, since all the information we have concerning these phenomena are received through our physical senses, and the picture of the external world they present is quite different from the picture presented by physics, it is extremely doubtful whether science by investigating the external world of appearances will ever be able to bring us nearer to ultimate reality. But so far as knowledge concerning the nature of these phenomena will take us we have to accept the overall picture, including such established scientific facts as that of biological evolution. Buddhism is, I believe, the only religion which has no difficulty in accepting the theory of evolution as taught by modern biology and genetics. In one of His great Sermons, the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, the Buddha describes how evolution and de-
volution take place in the course of a world-

cycle, and all that He said is fully in conformity with present-day knowledge. I will go even further, and tell you something that may surprise those who believe that religion is inseparable from the ideas of a Creator-God. Even if science should succeed in generating living organisms in a test-tube, or even in creating a sentient being equal to man, the truth of Buddhism is not in the least affected by it. The reason for this is that no matter how life may come into being, whether by any of the natural birth-processes or by artificial means, it is past *kamma* which supplies the life-continuum, and it can operate in this manner wherever the constituents necessary for a living organism come together. There cannot be any achievement of science, no matter how revolutionary that will ever contradict the Teachings of Buddhism.

To what extent can science itself contribute to this religious function?

In the light of what I have already said it will be clear that where science is able to confirm the teachings of religion, as it does in the case of Buddhism, it changes its role from that of a destroyer of faith to that of an ally and most valuable friend. But it is useless to expect science, which confines itself to facts, to adapt those facts to the requirements of myth and dogma. It will never do so. In the struggle between religion and science in the West it is always religion that has had to give way. Buddhism welcomes science as the promoter of knowledge. More than this, it looks confidently to modern science to bring about that change of outlook which is essential if man is to realise the higher spiritual truths. We claim for the Buddha that He was the only religious teacher to bring scientific methods of approach to the questions of ultimate truth.

What among the traditional religious beliefs remain effective?

This can only be answered from the viewpoint and experience of each of the representatives, speaking for his own creed. As regards Buddhism, all its doctrines remain valid, and therefore all remain effective.

Is there some way in which the incompatible and competing claims among different systems of religious belief can be reconciled or reduced to a commonly acceptable denominator so that a rational mind can accept them?

Various attempts have been made throughout history to reconcile different systems of religious belief, but none of them has been successful. To quote only one instance: Sikhism began as an effort to reconcile Hinduism and Islam. The modern attempts in this direction, such as Theosophy, have never attracted any large following because their efforts at reconciling the irreconcilable lead to a result that is even less acceptable to a rational mind than the original doctrines.

The reasons for this are perfectly clear: each theistic religion claims that its doctrines have been revealed by a "Supreme Being"—God. These "revelations" contain different accounts of "creation", different interpretations of the "Supreme Being's" nature and intentions, and different versions of man's position in relation to "God" and his destiny after death. Arising from these conflicting doctrines there are widely different systems of morality. Since none of the "divine revelations" can be altered in any fundamental way (except, presumably by a fresh "divine revelation") the dogmas will always remain an insuperable obstacle to religious unity. Even between the various Christian sects there are deeply-rooted antagonisms, although they all claim to take their inspiration from the same scriptures. Each theistic religion will always maintain that its own God is the only true deity, and will condemn the beliefs of all others. In the Semitic religions this is particularly marked; it began in Biblical times with the disputes between the followers of various tribal gods, and it has carried on to the present day. There is absolutely no hope of these religions ever combining. Where such religions are concerned, tolerance of the views

of others only comes when religious indifference sets in.

In Buddhism there are many reasons why tolerance of the religious views of others is enjoined as a necessary virtue. In the first place, Buddhism does not teach that any individual is eternally damned because he happens not to be a Buddhist. Followers of other religions may be reborn after death in heavenly states, if they have been virtuous during their lifetime. Suffering or happiness comes about as the result of actions (*Kamma*) not as the result of having blind faith in any particular creed. There is no “salvation by faith” in Buddhism. Furthermore, Buddhist *Mettā*, or Universal Benevolence, extends to all beings, whatsoever their creed, race or colour. Buddhism is not a “divine revelation” which claims absolute faith and unquestioning obedience; it is a system for discovering truth and reality for oneself, and therefore invites reasoned criticism and objective analysis. History bears witness that Buddhists have always been able to live peacefully side by side with those of other faiths, so long as those faiths do not produce fanatics with whom it is impossible to live. Buddhist tolerance has been carried so far that for many centuries past it has ceased even to be a proselytizing religion.

Or, is only one of them valid? If so, how can it be established in the minds of all men?

If each of us did not personally believe that his own religion is the only valid one, he would not go under the banner of that religion. He would call himself an agnostic, a rationalist or a materialist.

The only way in which the validity of any religious belief can be established is to put it to the test of realisation. First the question must be asked: are its doctrines compatible with reason and experience, and with the knowledge we have gained concerning the nature of the universe and of life? Secondly, does it offer us a way in which we, individually, can verify its claims in a manner which places it beyond all dispute?

Here I must ask you to take note of the fact that not once throughout history, has any one of the supposed “Creator-Gods” given man a revelation of so final and conclusive a character that all men would be forced to accept it. On the contrary, all that the “revelations” have done has been to cause further dispute, and too often religious persecution.

What I have already said provides the answer to the first of my questions, so far as Buddhism is concerned. Buddhist philosophy is fully in accordance with reason and experience; it agrees with the general picture of the universe given by science and it does not ask us to believe in anything outside the normal order of nature. To my second point the answer is that Buddhism does provide each of us with a means of verifying it for himself, through the practice of a scientific system of mental training and meditation which culminates in *Vipassanā*, or direct Insight.

Jesus of Nazareth said, “By their fruits shall ye know them”. We recognise the Arahats, or Purified Ones, of Buddhism by their spiritual and moral nature. If the whole of humanity were sufficiently developed intellectually and spiritually all men would acknowledge a truth so completely demonstrated. But as I have said before, human beings are on different levels, due to their past *kamma*, and it is not likely that all men at the same time will ever be able to recognise truth with the same clarity. When the Buddha first gained full Enlightenment He felt doubtful whether any human beings would be able to understand the truth He had discovered, so utterly different was it from any of the accepted ideas of His time. But almost immediately He realised that there were some few “whose eyes were but lightly covered” with the dust of Ignorance, and He determined to teach the Dhamma for their sake.

For our own age, however, there is one ray of hope. It comes from the fact that the majority tend, in the long run, to follow the leadership of the intellectuals. If a sufficient body of intelligent men can be convinced of

the reality of the spiritual truths, apart from all irrational dogmas and all sectarian associations, we might yet see a great religious revival and restoration of moral values in the world. It would be sufficient if each man would follow the religion of truth so far as he was able to comprehend it.

Or, is it impossible for man to be rational about religion?

Here, honesty compels me to be very blunt. Man can be rational about religion only when his religion is itself rational. If religion has up to now been associated with irrationality it is because the faith it demands is of a kind that can only be fed by unreason. To what else can “the willing suspension of disbelief” lead? The disgust felt by rationalists at the excesses of religious fanaticism is perfectly natural. So also is the reaction against irrational religion which has taken the form of scientific materialism. The sad fact, however, is that if the irrational elements are removed from most of the traditional religions there is very little left. This is the reason for the failure of religion in the western hemisphere.

WHAT MAY SCIENCE OFFER FOR RELIGIOUS BELIEF?

What do the psychological sciences offer for the cure of sick souls, and the social sciences for the cure of a sick society?

To what extent are the psychoanalyst and the social worker the heirs of the priest and preacher?

Why are the psycho-social sciences so ineffective in performing these religious tasks?

These three questions must be taken together, since they form three aspects of a single problem.

The psychological sciences have had a limited success in the treatment of sick minds, but they are still in the experimental stage. In many cases they fail to relieve the tensions and

inner conflicts that come through the lack of a spiritual anchorage in our turbulent and distracted society. There is now a tendency for medical science to fall back on drugs—“tranquillising tablets” and such like—for the relief of neuroses. Psychological science has not yet got down to the cause of man’s psychic unrest, and until the cause is found and removed there can be no permanent cure. The methods of psychological treatment are lengthy and laborious, and results can never be guaranteed. Further, they are beyond the reach of most income-groups. It is more than doubtful whether psychological science as it is practised in the West today will ever succeed in restoring man’s confidence and inner harmony as does a firmly-held religious conviction. It can never be a substitute for that deep inner awareness of spiritual values, and that sense of security in a dangerous world, ‘which religion gives.

The social sciences are concerned only with man’s environment and external conditions. They bring happiness only to the extent to which they are capable of improving these conditions, and within the limitations of the individual’s response to them. They do not touch the inner, subjective life of man. It is there that he needs comfort and assurance, a refuge from the ever-present threat in the *sturm und drang* of life. Accidents, disease, the failure of the faculties and finally old age and death are not to be prevented by the social sciences. They, too can never be a substitute for religion. Man, who is something more than an animal requiring only creature comforts, needs to be informed concerning his purpose and destiny, and the need is so strong in him that for centuries he has been ready to accept even the most improbable theories in the name of religion, rather than nothing at all. Science has made it more difficult for him to do so, but has not been able to provide a satisfactory replacement for the beliefs it has destroyed.

What do the medical and biological sciences have to offer? Can the new medicine men bring peace of mind and

loving spirit more effectively via the drugstore than the old rites did? Can we have personal salvation through surgery and pills?

These questions are all statements of the same problem in different terms. The “old rites” being no longer effective for modern man, he has had to have recourse to the drugstore, and possibly what it gives him is psychologically on a par with what his ancestors got from their religious rituals. Temporarily, one may be as effective as the other, but neither gets down to the basic cause of psychological unrest, which is desire. But whereas most of the traditional religions do at least urge man to curb his desire, our modern commercial civilisation increases it while giving the illusion of satisfying it. The individual from his earliest years is taught to be competitive and acquisitive, and these qualities are exalted to the status of virtues. But it is not everybody who can be successful in competition, or who can acquire more wealth than his neighbour, and when there is no other objective in life set before a man he suffers from a feeling of frustration and personal inadequacy if he is one of the failures. At the same time, the failures of necessity outnumber the successful. In a materialistic society, the man who has failed materially is the equivalent to the man who was damned under the old religious dispensation. What has science to offer him? Nothing but empty palliatives. It is from this that we get mental disorders, psycho-somatic sicknesses, neuroses, alcoholism and crime.

There is only one remedy—knowledge and understanding. By this I mean that man must understand the laws that govern his being. If circumstances seem to be against him, he should understand why they are against him, and why it is that his neighbour appears to be more favoured than himself. He can then endure the circumstances without being cast into despair, and he can work confidently to improve his prospects for the future. It is this rational understanding that Buddhism gives us

through the knowledge of *kamma* and rebirth. It is a source of strength and an incentive to moral endeavour. In every way it is far superior both to the priest and his rites, and to the new medicine man with his drugstore remedies. By showing man that he is truly master of his fate, and can transcend the errors of the past; it makes every day a day of spiritual regeneration and hope. The real and lasting psychological treatment is that which a man gives to himself, by self-understanding and self-mastery. This is the basis of Buddhist psychology, which is aimed at removing the causes of misery through the attainment of wisdom and insight.

For better crops is it more effective to take our gifts to the geneticist and the chemist than to the altar?

Most educated people today would place their reliance on the scientists. And in this particular field they would be right. Religion, as Buddhists understand it, has nothing whatever to do with good crops. If the fields have not been tended diligently and fertilized as they should be, no amount of supplication at the altar will produce better crops. And if the cultivators's past *kamma* is bad, no amount of science will prevent blight, unseasonable weather or sickness from ruining his work. In this, as in all else, cause and effect are the deciding factors, but it always takes more than one cause to produce a given result. To trust entirely in the altar, the scientist or one's own labour, or in a combination of all three might equally prove a mistake. I make this point expressly to impress upon you the fact that Buddhism gives answers that are different from those of the scientific materialist, the theistic religionist and the common sense “man-in-the-street” in equal degree. But any farmer, knowing from his own experience how often what appears to be sheer “chance” has ruined his crops, despite all his precautions, will be bound to agree that the Buddhist explanation fits the facts better than any other.

Can biological science do anything to prevent social disorder and injustice ?

Short of interfering with the natural biological processes to such an extent as to amount to a re-making of man,—that is, artificially creating a new type of humanity—there is surely not much that science can do about social disorder and injustice. Operations, on the brain might make law-abiding citizens out of criminals and potential criminals, but even if these doubtful techniques were to be brought to perfection there would still remain the problem of administering them. They would involve a heavy moral responsibility in interfering with an individual's personality and freewill. Such operations could only be carried out on a large scale in a totalitarian society where individual rights had ceased to exist.

The problem of injustice raises this question to its highest factor. Biological science could only prevent injustice by making all men equal and producing a general uniformity in human nature. This is already theoretically possible, in that certain techniques are being developed by which mass-produced thinking tends to iron out the differences in outlook between one person and another. It may become possible in the future to direct mass thinking to such an extent that human beings lose their individual identity and become like the units of an ant-community, controlled from a brain centre radiating thought-influences as required by the State. Injustice only exists where there is awareness of it, if it vanished as a human concept it would for all practical purposes cease to exist. But there is a wide gulf between what is theoretically possible and what is possible in practice. Man's attempts to interfere with the law of *kamma*, which is what in reality lies behind inequality and seeming injustice, have always failed. By democratic laws man may give equal opportunities, but no means has yet been discovered of making all men equal in intellect or character. The most fundamental injustices are those which are inherent in human nature itself. Why is one child born with a brilliant intellect while another is mentally deficient? The biologist may think he has the answer when he speaks of the

characteristics inherited through the genes, but he is only describing a process; he is not explaining why that process takes place. To say that the genes have combined in a certain way to produce a given result is not the same as explaining why they have so combined and not in any other way. Buddhism does not deny the process, but it points to *kamma* as the underlying cause. Science might try to impede the working of *kamma*, and perhaps succeed in diverting it up to a point, but the end-result for humanity would be disastrous.

It is not in man's nature to live in a state of ant-like uniformity because in such a condition he could never fulfil his highest potentialities. I have said that if man's sense of injustice were obliterated, injustice would cease. But a much better solution to the problem is for mankind to realise that there are two kinds of injustice: human injustice, which can be remedied, and natural injustice, which is only injustice in appearance. A visitor to a prison, knowing nothing of the offences for which the convicts had been sentenced, but seeing only their present wretched condition, would denounce it as a terrible injustice. So it is with persons who in this life are handicapped in some way, apparently for no fault of their own. The man who knows nothing of *kamma* is like the ignorant visitor to the prison; he sees only injustice in their present condition. But one who understands the law of cause and effect as it operates from birth to birth sees the workings of just moral principle. He knows that there is no unmerited suffering. At the same time he knows how this suffering can be avoided, by adhering to the moral law. This understanding can eliminate the crushing sense of injustice under which many people labour, far more effectively than anything that can be expected from biological science.

Do the physical sciences answer our prayers for greater comfort and safety amid the hazards of the earth? But, are not all the benefits brought by scientifically based engineering more than offset by the dangers coming out of the laboratories of the nuclear

and other scientists? And, what avail all the comforts if we are left depressed by the suggestion that the cosmos is indifferent to human value, and is a cosmos where our warm hopes are doomed to the ultimate cold of the death of our sun and all life? Can the physical sciences console or transform the hearts of men?

Every achievement of science, from the internal-combustion engine onwards, has brought in its train as many perils as it has provided comforts. Everything science has given us is a potential cause of injury or death. People are killed by automobiles and airplanes, they are electrocuted by labour-saving devices and death frequently comes to them via the surgeon's knife or the doctor's hypodermic syringe. These mishaps are called accidents, but there is also the misuse of scientific discoveries due to man's greed, hatred and ignorance or disregard of the moral laws. In every direction nature thwarts science either by natural hazard or else through man's own imperfect nature. Life must always be a balance of opposites; there is nothing that has not its evil as well as its beneficial aspect. It is useless to look to science to give man increased happiness, unless science is applied in full knowledge of the spiritual laws. Even if that were to come about, it would only be the intentional misuse of science that would be eliminated; the accidental mishaps would still remain. And they would still require explanation.

We must accept the fact that the cosmos is indifferent to human values. The physical universe gives no indication whatsoever of the existence of a beneficent deity or of a purpose. The Buddhist is not disturbed by this fact. The life-process is a blind, groping force of craving, which in itself has no purpose except the satisfaction of desire. This life-process, involving rebirth after rebirth, is called in Buddhism "*Samsāra*". It has no higher purpose than the satisfaction of craving for sentient existence in one form or another. This is a very important and fundamental point on which

Buddhism is in agreement with science and completely at variance with the theories of theistic religion. In Buddhism the only higher purpose in life is what man puts into it. This higher, spiritual purpose is the extinction of craving, which brings rebirth to an end. The goal of Buddhism is the supreme goal of *Nibbāna*, which lies outside the *Samsāric*, or cosmic order. There alone is absolute peace to be found. Within *samsāra* all is strife, an unremitting struggle for existence; that is the very essence of what we call living. The "pleasure-principle" or modern psychology and the "struggle for survival" known to biological evolution are both facts which have always been recognised by Buddhism. Yet at the same time moral order is inherent in the law of cause and effect. If a man is crushed by it, as in a blind, impersonal and indifferent machine, it is because he himself is blind to the moral law and misuses his freewill. The law of cause and effect is pitiless and inexorable. All the more reason, therefore, for man himself to cultivate pity, for he must put into *Samsāric* life the higher qualities, which it lacks. Whatsoever of divinity there is in life is of 'man's creation. By self-purification, eliminating the worldly instincts of lust, ill-will and delusion, man can make himself into a god. The higher planes of *Samsāra* are inhabited by such beings. *Visuddhi-devas*, or "gods by purification". The *Arahat* while alive on this earth is also a *Visuddhi-deva*, enjoying the bliss and unbroken peace that only come when all the worldly attachments are severed. The attainment of this state is the purpose which we ourselves can put into an otherwise purposeless round of existences. The cosmos does not impose any purpose on us; we are free to choose what our purpose shall be. We have the choice of two paths; either to go on being reborn for the satisfaction of sensual craving, with all the suffering that rebirth brings in its train, or to extinguish the fires of passion and gain the supreme and unchanging state of *Nibbāna*. Conditioned existence is impermanent, subject to suffering and devoid of self-reality. Therefore it is not real in the

absolute sense. The supreme reality lies outside and beyond *saṃsāra*. *Nibbāna* cannot be described, for the simple reason that there are no words or concepts that we can derive from our experience of life in the sphere of relativity to apply to it. It can be experienced, but it cannot be described. Nevertheless, the Buddha used certain terms to convey some idea of what *Nibbāna* means; He called it *Asankhata*, the Unconditioned; *Para*, the Other shore (beyond *saṃsāra*); *Ajarā*, the Ageless; *Amata*, the Deathless; *Dhuvā*, the Permanent, *Taṇa*, the Refuge, and *Lena*, the Shelter. But for that which has no qualities, since qualities mean relative values, there can be no exact description. It is sufficient to know that because there is this *saṃsāra*, which is impermanent, subject to suffering and void of reality, there must be that which is permanent, free from suffering and real in the ultimate sense. It is that Reality which we mean by *Nibbāna*. It is not, as some people have imagined, a negative concept. It is beyond both negative and positive, for negative and positive are opposite poles of a relativity-complex. Neither is absolute because each depends upon the other for its existence. The cosmos exists by virtue of such opposites; hence it must always have good and evil mixed, each of them being relative to the viewpoint of the illusory "Self". *Nibbāna*, being freedom from self-delusion, is also free from the opposites created by man's egocentric viewpoint.

The Buddhist is not dismayed by the prospect of the ultimate cold of the death of our sun. The Buddha taught that universes, or world-cycles, arise and pass away in endless succession, just as do the lives of individual men. Certainly our world must at some time come to an end. It has happened before, with previous worlds, and it will happen again. But so long as their *kamma* and *vipāka* life-continuum carries on, the beings now living in this world will continue to be reborn in other spheres and other universes. All these states of being are impermanent; only *Nibbāna* is unchanging. The physical sciences can never console or transform the hearts of men. Only

wisdom and understanding have this power; one who understands the nature of the universe and of life can face reality without fear. Knowing that all compounded things must pass away he views even the destruction of universes with equanimity. His kingdom is not of this world.

Is the net contribution of the several sciences to religion a negative one?

Should we frantically scratch among the old beliefs for some comfort and hope, and hold fast to them no matter how illogical and irrational in the light of the scientific system of belief that we prefer to hold for resolving our other problems?

Can we be irrational and survive?

Scientific knowledge has shown itself not only negative towards dogmatic and "revealed" religion, but positively hostile to it. If it were not so, these questions would not be asked. It is man's awareness that his old religious ideas have broken down under the impact of science that has brought about this heart-searching quest for truth on some different level.

In the case of Buddhism, however, all the modern scientific concepts have been present from the beginning. There is no principle of science, from biological evolution to the General Theory of Relativity, that runs counter to any teaching of Gotama Buddha. Einstein himself wrote that if there is any religion which is acceptable to the modern scientific mind it is Buddhism. Yet it is doubtful whether even Einstein quite realised the extent to which modern science confirms the teachings of Buddhism. Only one who has both studied and meditated upon every aspect of the Buddha - dhamma can fully appreciate the light that it throws upon the problems that science itself has raised. In fact, Buddhism continues where science leaves off; it carries scientific principles to higher planes of realisation. It shows that the laws of physics are the counterpart of spiritual laws, and that there is a common meeting-ground for both.

If physics says that the apparently solid universe is not in reality composed of solid substance at all, but is actually a flux of electronic energy, Buddhism said it first. If the scientific philosopher says that our senses deceive us in presenting this insubstantial series of nuclear events in the guise of solid, enduring matter, Buddhism anticipated him by saying the same thing and making it the basis of the Buddhist analysis of phenomena. If the psychologist, neurologist and biologist say that there is no indication of an immortal soul in man, they have made the discovery two thousand five hundred years after the Buddha. If science says that there is no ground for belief in a Creator-God, it is merely confirming an essential doctrine of Buddhism. But if the most advanced thinkers believe, as they now tend to do, that in some way mind, or mental activity, is the activating force behind the phenomena of life, they have hit upon one of the eternal verities which Buddhism has always proclaimed. For the Buddha said: *Mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā, mano seṭṭha, manomayā*—“Mind precedes all phenomena; mind predominates them and creates them.” It is man’s mental activity which creates them; and that act of creation is going on from moment to moment. *Kamma* is mental volition: the will-to-act followed by the action. If the mental volition is of an immoral order the resulting states of consciousness are fraught with suffering because of the reaction. But if the mental volition is of a moral type and the action is a good and beneficial one, the resulting states of consciousness are happy. In other words, good actions bring as their result good conditions and the pleasurable consciousness associated with such conditions.

Thus we create the world, making it good or bad for ourselves, by the process of *kamma* and *vipāka*. Truly life is exactly what we make it for ourselves. Therefore Buddhism tells us not to look to any external agency for salvation, but to rely entirely upon our own efforts. It is the science of the mind which teaches us how to harness the tremendous power of mind for our own benefit and that of

all beings. It is for this reason that Buddhism places such great importance on its profound system of psychology, the *Abhidhamma*. The word “*Abhidhamma*” means “the highest law”, and this system gives a minute analysis of all the states of consciousness; it is the complete path to self-understanding and self-mastery. *Abhidhamma* goes much further than modern Western psychology because it deals with basic principles of the mind and relates the mental processes to the universal system of moral values. It is precisely here that Western psychology fails, for the psycho-analyst of the West is not concerned with moral values; in fact, he doubts whether they have any existence outside man’s imagination. He is unable to give guidance in questions of right and wrong. But Buddhism explains the relationship between mental activity and the ethical laws, showing that morality is an integral part of the pattern of cause and effect which is set up by our mode of thinking and the actions produced by it.

Science is concerned with discovering the causes of phenomena. So also is Buddhism; but Buddhism goes further, in revealing how these causes can be moulded to produce better results. In placing mind at the centre of all phenomena, Buddhism is the opposite pole of materialism, yet its picture of the physical world corresponds exactly with that of modern science. This in itself is a remarkable fact which should claim the attention of all intelligent persons. That the Buddha was able, by direct insight, to fathom the nature of the universe, without any of the aids of modern science, two thousand five hundred years ago, is the proof of His Enlightenment. No other religious teacher in the world’s history has achieved this.

Where the physical sciences will never be able to console or transform the hearts of men, Buddhism does both. It satisfies the intellect and the heart in equal measure, and it gives hope founded upon a rational and verifiable faith. To the Buddhist there is no question of having to decide between faith and reason. For

us, followers of the Supreme Buddha, faith is reasonable, and reason confirms faith.

Or, is it possible to re-examine the human situation in the fuller light of the spectrum of knowledge, to establish a picture of man and his opportunities in the cosmos that is hopeful as well as honest?

This is precisely what Buddhism enables us to do. Accepting all the facts of science, even those most disturbing to man's complacency and egoism—seeing human life, just as science does, a mere fraction of the vast mass of phenomena cast up by the cosmos—it yet places the highest possible value on human life and human endeavour. It shows that man, despite his seeming insignificance in this tremendous cosmic process is really the master of it, if he can become the master of himself. Pascal saw that man is greater than the blind forces of nature because even though he is crushed by them he remains superior by virtue of his understanding of them. Again, Buddhism carries the truth further: it shows that by means of understanding man can also control his circumstances. He can cease to be crushed by them, and use their laws to raise himself. The Buddha said: 'Behold, O monks: within this fathom-long, body, equipped with sense-perception and mind, I declare unto you is the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the way to its cessation'. The mastery of the external world is not in the external world, but in ourselves.

Has there not been revealed to us, if we will but look at the newer truths or beliefs yielded by the sciences, that man finds himself, indeed, a creature created by the cosmos, and thus ordained by it, and so endowed by that creator with a mind which can in its finite way learn to appreciate the whole, and to enter creatively and consciously into the grand scheme of development in which the infinite cosmos is engaged?

Here is a wonderful mass of contradictions which Buddhism could never have produced.

Man, created by the cosmos, which is blind, impersonal and mindless, cannot have been endowed by that mindless cosmos with a mind. The cosmos being mindless, how could it give its creation a mind? And if the mind is finite, how can it ever appreciate the whole, and "enter creatively and consciously into the grand scheme of development" of a cosmos that is infinite? What, in any case, is that "grand scheme of development"? Where is there any evidence of a purpose in the cosmos beyond the blind, groping, force of craving which I have already mentioned? We have seen that science pictures a cosmos that is indifferent to man; what possibility, then, is there of his being able to co-operate with whatever scheme it may have? The reply of the scientist to this would be merely that the question is another example of man's petty conceit. Why should man suppose that his efforts one way or another are of any interest to the cosmos? Here, it is obvious, the word "cosmos" is being used simply as a substitute for "God". A cosmos with a purpose becomes the same as the theistic idea of "God". But whereas the theistic idea of a scheme evolved by "God" gives man individual hope—the hope of a personal immortality—the idea of a scheme being worked out by the blind, impersonal force which clearly cares nothing for the units of the human race holds out no such promise. Those who can derive hope from the contemplation of a remote futurity when the cosmos will have perfected humanity, but they themselves will have totally ceased to exist, may be satisfied with this concept, but it will never be a source of inspiration to better living for the majority. The individual ants composing an ant-army may be content to form a bridge across water for their fellows with their own drowned bodies, but human beings are not ants. The average human being desires that his own life should have a meaning and a goal, and not be just a stepping-stone towards a doubtful goal for his remote descendants. In any case, the ultimate perfection of humanity by biological processes is now more than doubtful. Science

has shown that evolution simply does not work that way; it produces retrogression as well as progress. Some species have entirely disappeared from the earth. Have we any guarantee from science that man will not vanish also—perhaps with the aid of science itself?

The answer to this question can only be an emphatic ‘No.’ This view of life will never fulfil human aspirations or give comfort and support to suffering mankind. But now we come to the final query.

What thrilling, and life-giving, and hopeful beliefs are possible from an honest contemplation of the new revelations of reality?

We can derive thrilling, life-giving and hopeful convictions from contemplating the “new revelations of reality” in the light of Buddhism. No other way is possible. There are no “new” truths, and there is certainly nothing in the new revelations of science that is not already in the Teaching of Gotama Buddha. By way of summing up I will repeat:

Buddhism does not depend upon any of the commonly-accepted religious dogmas which science has exploded, such as that of a Creator-god, an immortal soul, a supernatural scheme of salvation or a particular “revelation” made at one specific point of history and one special geographical location to a select person or group of persons. It does not maintain that man is a special creation marked off from the rest of living beings by having an unchanging, undying element that has been denied to others. It does not require any myths, such as that of “original sin”, to explain the presence of evil and suffering in the world.

These are the negative aspects of its agreement with science. The positive points of agreement are many. They include the view that all phenomena, including life, are a flux of energies; the correspondence between biological evolution and spiritual evolution; the truth that craving, or the “life-urge”, is the motivating factor behind the processes of

evolution; the fact that ours is not the only planet capable of producing and supporting life; the truth that mankind and the animals differ from one another only in a qualitative sense, as one species differs from another, not in essential kind; and the view that although the cosmos is itself mindless, the operative force behind it is an activity corresponding to mind.

The Buddhist explanation of the cosmos is, as I have indicated, that it is man’s own mental activity which creates the cosmos; every successive world-cycle is brought into being and supported by a combination of natural causes—the physical causes known to science—and the *kamma* of beings who have lived before. Buddhism, like science, is based on cause and effect.

Herein lies the greatest hope for mankind, Buddhism gives a positive and rational motive for moral endeavour and spiritual aspiration such as cannot be found in any other religious system. It asserts the supremacy of moral law without resorting to supernatural causes. It shows that there is no injustice in the causal law, yet at the same time gives us the knowledge that in extending compassion to those who are suffering the results of their past misdeeds we are advancing the higher spiritual laws. Even though we cannot undo the past *kamma* of ourselves or others, we can yet help to mitigate the suffering it may have brought, or provide some compensation for the handicap, such as blindness or deformity, which is its present result. In so doing we are making good *kamma* which will *produce beneficial results in the future. Thus Buddhism teaches the cardinal virtues of Mettā, Universal Benevolence, and Karuṇā, Compassion.* It is man himself who puts pity into a pitiless universe. And the highest effort and highest aspiration of all is that which is directed to the attainment of *Nibbāna*. Man need not despair of all worldly improvement, since such improvement is within his reach by obedience to the moral laws; yet even though earthly conditions were to be rendered hopeless by human greed, hatred and

ignorance, there is still a temporary refuge in the higher planes of existence, and a final, unchanging certainty in *Nibbāna*, the Eternal Peace, which however must be won.

That is the message of hope I bring in the name of Buddhism to the delegates to this conference. The Supreme Buddha's Teaching is for all times and all men. It is capable of bringing peace, happiness and prosperity to our

troubled world. As the humble spokesman of millions of Buddhists I earnestly entreat that all men of understanding and goodwill here present will weigh in their hearts the things I have said and form their own judgement as to whether they are true, reasonable and good. The Buddha Himself did not ask more than that.

MAY ALL BEINGS BE HAPPY.

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THE FOUR SUBLIME STATES (BRAHMA VIHĀRA)

Nyanaponika Mahāthera

INTRODUCTION.

Four Sublime States of mind have been taught by the Buddha;
Love or Loving-kindness (*mettā*)
Compassion (*karunā*),
Sympathetic Joy (*muditā*),
Equanimity (*upekkhā*).

In Pāli, the language of the Buddhist scriptures, these four are known under the name of *Brahma-Vihāra*. This term may be rendered by: excellent, lofty or sublime states of mind; or, alternatively, by; *Brahma*-like, god-like or divine abodes.

They are said to be excellent, or sublime, because they are the right, ideal, way of conduct towards living beings (*sattesu sammā patipatti*). These four attitudes of mind provide in fact the answer to all situations arising from social contact. They are the great removers of tension, the great peacemakers in social conflict, the great healers of wounds suffered in the struggle of existence; levellers of social barriers, builders of harmonious communities, awakeners of slumbering magnanimity long forgotten, revivers of joy and hope long abandoned, promoters of human brotherhood against the forces of egotism.

They are incompatible with a hateful state of mind, and in that they are akin to *Brahma* who is conceived as the hateless one, in beneficial contrast to many other conceptions of deities, in East and West, who by their own devotees, are said to show anger, wrath, jealousy and "righteous indignation". He who assiduously develops these four sublime states, by conduct and meditation, is said to become an equal of *Brahma* (*Brahma-samo*); and if they become the dominant influence in his mind, he will be reborn in congenial worlds, the realms of *Brahma*. Therefore, these states of mind are called God-like, *Brahma*-like.

They are called Abodes (*vihāra*), because they should become mind's constant dwelling

places where our minds feel "at home"; they should not remain merely places of rare and short visits, soon forgotten. In other words, our minds should become thoroughly saturated by them. They should become the inseparable companions of our days, and we should be mindful of them in all our common activities as far as they have any concern with these four mental attitudes. As the *Mettā Sutta*, the Discourse of Loving-kindness, puts it:

‘When standing, walking, sitting, lying down,
Whenever he feels free of tiredness,
Let him establish well this mindfulness.
This, it is said, is the Divine Abode.’

Those four—Love, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity are also known as the boundless states (*appamañña*), because, in their perfection and their true nature, they should not be narrowed down by any limitation as to the range of beings towards which they are extended. They should be unexclusive and impartial, not bound by selective preferences or prejudices. A mind that has attained to that boundlessness of the *Brāhma-vihāras*, will not harbour any national, racial, religious or class-hatred.

But unless that boundless, unrestricted application of these four qualities is supported in a person by a strong innate tendency in that direction, it will certainly not be easy to bring it to perfection by a deliberate effort of will, and to avoid consistently any kind or degree of partiality. To achieve that, it will, in most cases, be necessary to use these four qualities not only as principles of conduct and objects of reflection, but to take them also as subjects of methodical meditation. That meditation is called *Brahma-vihāra-bhāvanā*, ‘the meditative development of the Sublime States’. Its practical aim is to achieve, with the help of these Sublime States, those high stages

of mental concentration called *jhāna* or 'meditative absorption'. The meditations on Love, Compassion and Sympathetic Joy may each produce the attainment of the first three Absorptions, while the meditation on Equanimity will lead to the fourth *jhāna* only, in which Equanimity is the most significant factor (*jhān-anga*).

Generally speaking, only persistent meditative practice will have the twofold crowning effect of firstly, making these four qualities' sink deeply into the heart so that, finally, they become spontaneous attitudes not easily overthrown; secondly, it will be meditation that brings out and secures their boundless nature, unfolds their all-embracing range. In fact, the detailed instructions given in the Buddhist scriptures for the practice of these four meditations are clearly intended to unfold gradually the boundlessness of the Sublime States. Systematically all barriers are broken down that restrict their application to certain individuals or places.

In the meditative exercises, the selection of persons to whom the thought of Love, etc., is directed, proceeds from the easier to the more difficult. For instance, when meditating on love, one starts with an aspiration for one's own well-being, using it as a point of reference for the gradual extension of Love: 'Just as I wish to be happy and free of suffering, so may that beingmay all beings be happy and free of suffering'. Then one extends the thought of Love to a person for whom one has a loving respect, as, for instance, a teacher; then to dearly beloved persons, to indifferent ones and finally to enemies (if any) or those disliked. One should not choose persons dead or of the other sex. After one has been able to cope with the hardest task, to direct one's thoughts of Love to persons disliked, one should now "break down the barriers" (*sīmā-sambheda*) between those four types of persons, and, without making any discrimination, extend one's Love to them equally. At that point of the practice one will have come to the higher stages of concentration; with the appearance of the mental reflex-image (*patibhāga-nimitta*)

access concentration (*upacāra-samādhi*) will have been reached, and further progress will lead to the full concentration (*appanā*) of the First Absorption, and so forth.

For spatial expansion, the practice starts with those in one's immediate environment (family, etc.) then extends to the neighbouring houses, to the whole street, the town, province, country, etc. Or, in 'pervasion of the directions' (*disā-pharana*), one's thought of Love is directed first to the east, then to the west, north, south, the intermediate directions, zenith and nadir.

The same principles of practice apply to the meditative development of Compassion, Sympathetic Joy and Equanimity, with due variations in the selection of persons. Details of the practice will be found in the literature given at the end of this introduction.

The ultimate aim of attaining these *Brahmavihāra Jhānas* is to produce a state of mind that can serve as the firm basis for the liberating insight (*vipassanā*) into the true nature of all phenomena, as being impermanent, liable to suffering and unsubstantial. A mind that has achieved meditative Absorption induced by the Sublime States, will be pure, tranquil, firm, collected and free of coarse selfishness, and will thus be well prepared for the final work of deliverance which can be completed only by insight.

After that brief glance to the ultimate goal, we shall now return to our particular considerations concerned with the significance of the Sublime States themselves.

The preceding remarks will have shown that there are two ways of developing the Sublime States: firstly by practical conduct and as appropriate direction of thought, and secondly by methodical meditation aiming at the Absorptions. Both will prove of help to each other.

As we have mentioned before, methodical meditative practice will help to make Love, Compassion, Joy and Equanimity become spontaneous responses to those situations of

life that call for them: it will help considerably in making the mind more firm and calm for withstanding the numerous irritations in life that make it so difficult to keep to these four qualities in thought, word and deed.

On the other hand, if one's practical conduct will be increasingly governed by these sublime states, the mind will harbour less resentment, tensions and irritability, the reverberations of which will often, if ever so subtly, intrude even into the hours of meditation, forming there the Hindrance of Restlessness (*uddhacca-nivarana*). The influence of every-day life and thought on the meditative mind is very strong indeed, and only if the gap between them is persistently narrowed down, will there be a chance for steady meditative progress and for achieving the highest aim of it.

Also, repeated reflection upon the Sublime States, the blessings bestowed by them and the dangers besetting the opposite qualities will help in a successful meditative development of the Sublime States. 'What a person considers and reflects upon for a long time, to that his mind will bend and incline. It is principally for such a use that the following pages are offered to the reader, with the hope that their repeated contemplation will give to mind and heart a decisive turn towards the sublime heights of the Divine Abodes, and prepare the road to the final liberation from lust, hatred and ignorance.

MAY ALL BEING BE HAPPY!

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THE BASIC PASSAGE ON THE FOUR SUBLIME STATES

(From the Discourses of the Buddha)

I

Here, O monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with Love, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with love, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from distress.

II

Here, O monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with Compassion, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with Compassion, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity, and free from distress.

III

Here, O monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with Sympathetic Joy, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below, and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with Sympathetic Joy, abundant grown great, measureless, free from enmity, and free from distress.

IV

Here, O monks, a disciple dwells pervading one direction with his heart filled with Equanimity, likewise the second, the third and the fourth direction; so above, below, and around; he dwells pervading the entire world everywhere and equally with his heart filled with Equanimity, abundant, grown great, measureless, free from enmity, and free from distress.

(Digha-Nikāya 13)

THE FOUR SUBLIME STATES

I

LOVE (*Mettā*)

Love, without desire to possess, knowing well that in the ultimate sense there is no possession and no possessor this is the highest Love.

Love, without speaking and thinking of “I”, knowing well that so-called “I” is a mere delusion.

Love, without selecting and excluding; knowing well that to do so means to create Love’s own contrasts: dislike, aversion, hatred.

Love, embracing all beings: small and great, far and near, be it on earth or in the air.

Love, embracing impartially all sentient beings, and not only those who are useful and amusing to us.

Love, embracing all beings, be they noble-minded or low-minded, good or evil. The noble and the good are embraced because Love is flowing to them spontaneously. The low and evil-minded are included because they are those who are most in need of Love. In many of them the seed of goodness may have died merely because warmth was lacking to its growth, because it perished from coldness in a loveless world.

Love, embracing all beings, knowing well that we are all fellow-wayfarers through this round of existence that we are all overcome by the same “Law of Suffering”.

Love, but not the sensuous fire that burns, scorches, and tortures; that inflicts more wounds than it cures—flaring up now, at the next moment being extinguished, leaving behind more coldness and loneliness than there was felt before.

Rather, Love that lies like a soft but firm hand on ailing beings, ever unchanged in its sympathy, without wavering, unconcerned with any response it meets. Love that is comforting coolness to those who burn with

the fire of suffering and passion; that is life-spreading warmth to those abandoned in the cold desert of loneliness; to those who are shivering in the frost of a loveless world; to those whose hearts have become as if empty and dry by the repeated calls for help, by deepest despair.

Love, that is a sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands and is ready to help.

Love, that is strength and gives strength, this is highest Love.

Love, which by the Enlightened One was named “The Liberation of the Heart”.

Love, which by the Enlightened One was named “The most sublime beauty”, this is highest Love.

And what is the highest manifestation of Love ?

To show to the world the Path leading to the end of Suffering, the Path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

II

COMPASSION (*Karunā*)

The world suffers. But most of men have their eyes and ears closed. They do not see the unbroken stream of tears flowing through life, they do not hear the cry of distress continually pervading the world. Their own little grief or joy bars their sight, deafens their ears. Bound by selfishness their hearts turn stiff and narrow. Being stiff and narrow, how should they be able to strive for any higher goal, to realize that only release from selfish craving will effect their own freedom from suffering?

It is Compassion that removes the heavy bar, opens the door to Freedom, makes the narrow heart as wide as the world. Compassion takes away from it the inert, weighing, paralysing heaviness, gives wings to those who cling to the lowlands of self.

Through Compassion the fact of suffering remains vividly present to our mind, even at times when personally we are free from it. It gives us rich experience of Suffering, thus strengthening us to meet it prepared, when it befalls us.

Compassion reconciles us to our own destiny by showing us the life of others, often much harder than ours.

Behold the endless caravan of beings, men and beasts, burdened with sorrow and pain. The burden of everyone of them, we also have carried it in bygone times during the unfathomable sequence of repeated births. Behold this, and open to Compassion your heart!

And this misery may well be our own destiny again! Whoso himself is without Compassion now, will one day cry for it. If sympathy with others is lacking, it will have to be acquired through a long and painful experience of one's own. Thus is the Great Law of Life. Knowing this keep guard over yourself!

Beings, sunk in ignorance, lost in delusion, hasten from one state of suffering to another, not knowing the real cause, not knowing the escape from it. This insight into the general Law of Suffering is the real foundation of our Compassion, not any isolated fact of suffering.

Here our Compassion will also include these who at the moment may be happy, but act with an evil and deluded mind. In their present deeds we shall foresee their future state of distress, and Compassion will arise.

The Compassion of the Wise does not render him a victim of suffering. His thoughts, words, and deeds are full of pity. But his heart does not waver, unchanged it remains, serene and firm. How else should he be able to help?

May such Compassion arise in our hearts! Compassion that is sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands, and is ready to help.

Compassion that is strength and gives strength: this is highest Compassion.

And what is the highest manifestation of Compassion?

To show to the world the Path leading to the End of Suffering, the Path pointed out, trodden, and realized to Perfection by him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

III

SYMPATHETIC JOY (*Muditā*)

Not only to Compassion, but also to joy with others open your heart!

Small, indeed, is the share of happiness and Joy allotted to beings! Whenever that little of happiness comes to beings, then you may rejoice with them that, at least, one ray of joy has pierced through the darkness of their life, and dispelled the grey and gloomy mist that enwraps their hearts.

Your life will gain in joy by sharing the happiness of others as if it were yours. Did you never observe how in moments of happiness men's features change and become bright with joy? Did you never notice how joy rouses men to noble aspirations and deeds, exceeding their normal capacity? Did not such experience fill your own heart with joyful bliss? It is in your power to increase such experience of Sympathetic Joy, by producing happiness in others, by bringing them joy and solace.

Let us teach real joy to men! Many have unlearned it. Life, though being full of woe, holds also sources of happiness and joy, unknown to most. Let us teach men to seek and to find real joy within themselves and to rejoice with the joy of others! Let us teach them to unfold their joy to ever sublimer heights!

Noble and sublime joy is not foreign to the Teaching of the Enlightened One. Wrongly the Buddha's Teaching is sometimes considered to be a doctrine diffusing melancholy. Far from it: the Dhamma leads from step to step to an ever purer and loftier happiness. Noble and

sublime joy is a helper on the Path to the Extinction of Suffering. Not he who is depressed by grief, but one possessed of joy may find that serene calmness leading to a contemplative state of mind. And only a mind serene and collected is able to gain the liberating Wisdom.

The more sublime and noble the joy of others is, the more justified will be our own Sympathetic Joy. A cause for our joy with others is their noble life securing them happiness here and in lives thereafter. A still nobler cause for our joy with others is their faith in the Dhamma, their understanding of the Dhamma, their following the Dhamma. Let us give them the help of the Dhamma. Let us strive to become more and more capable ourselves of rendering such help!

Sympathetic Joy, meaning a sublime nobility of heart and intellect which knows, understands, and is ready to help!

Sympathetic Joy that is strength and gives strength this is highest joy.

And what is the highest manifestation of Sympathetic Joy?

To show the world the Path leading to the End of Suffering, the Path pointed out, trodden, and realized to perfection by Him, the Exalted One, the Buddha.

IV

EQUANIMITY (*Upekkā*)

Equanimity is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, rooted in Insight.

Looking around us into the world and within us into our own heart, we see clearly how difficult it is to attain balance of mind and to maintain it.

Looking into life we notice its changeful nature continually moving between contrasts. We notice rise and fall, success and failure, loss and gain; we meet honour and blame and we feel how our heart responds to all that with happiness and sorrow, delight and despair, disappointment and satisfaction, hope and fear.

These waves of emotion carry us up, and fling us down; and no sooner do we find some rest, than we are in the power of a new wave again. How can we expect to get a footing on the crest of the waves? How shall we erect the building of our life in the midst of this ever restless ocean of existence, if not on the island of Equanimity?

A world where that little share of happiness allotted to beings is mostly secured after many disappointments, failures, and defeats; a world where only the courage to start anew, again and again, promises success; a world where scanty joy grows amidst sickness, separation, and death; a world where beings who were a short while ago connected with us by Sympathetic Joy, are at the next moment in want of our Compassion—such a world needs Equanimity.

But the kind of Equanimity required, has to be based on vigilant presence of mind, not on indifferent dullness. It has to be the result of deliberate and hard training, and not the occasional outcome of a passing mood. Equanimity would not deserve its name if it had to be produced by exertion again and again. In that way it is sure to be weakened and finally defeated by the vicissitudes of life. True Equanimity, however, should be able to meet all these severe tests and to regenerate its strength from sources within. But it will possess this power of resistance and self-renewal only if it is rooted in Insight.

What, now, is the nature of that Insight ?

It is the clear understanding of the origin of all these vicissitudes of life, and of the true nature of the so-called individual exposed to them.

We shall have to understand that the multitude of experiences called “life” results from our own actions, in thought, word and deed, performed in this life or in earlier existences. *Kamma* (action) is the womb from which they sprang (*kamma-yoni*). We are the inalienable “owners” of our deeds (*kamma-ssakā*) whether we like it or not.

But as soon as we have performed our deeds, most of our control over them is lost. They are going their own way through the world, and whether we like it or not, they will return to us as our due heritage (*kamma-dāyadā*). Nothing that happens to us comes from an “outer” hostile world foreign to us, but everything is the outcome of our own mind and deeds. This knowledge is the first basis of Equanimity because it frees us from any fear. In anything that befalls us we meet only ourselves. Therefore, why should we fear? If, anyhow, fear of uncertainty should arise in us, we know the refuge where such fear is allayed: our good deeds (*kamma-patisarana*). By taking this refuge, confidence will grow within us, confidence in the protecting power of our good deeds done in the past. Courage, moreover, will inspire us to perform further good deeds at this very moment, even if the hardships of our present life should tend to discourage us. For we know that doing noble and selfless deeds is the best defence against the hard blows of destiny; we know that it is never too late, always the right time for good actions. If that refuge in doing good and avoiding evil, becomes firmly established within us, one day we shall feel assured: ‘More and more ceases the misery and evil rooted in the past. And this present life I try to make it spotless and pure. What else than increase of the good can the future bring?’ And from that certainty will come to us serenity of mind, and the strength of patience and equanimity to bear with all adversities which the present may bring. Then our deeds will be our friends (*kamma-bandhu*). Likewise, all the various events of life, being the result of our deeds, they too will be our friends, even if they bring us sorrow and pain. Our deeds return to us in a guise that often makes them hardly recognizable. Sometimes the result of our actions will return to us by way of surprising reactions of others; sometimes as a thorough upheaval in our life, happening often against our expectation or contrary to our will. Such experiences point out to us consequences of our deeds we did not foresee; they render

visible half-conscious motives of our former actions which we tried to hide even to ourselves, covering them with other reasons. If we get used to seeing things from this angle, and if we learn to read the messages conveyed by our own experience, then suffering too will be our friend, a stern, but a truthful and well-meaning one, who teaches us and warns us. Suffering teaches us the most difficult subject: knowledge about ourselves; it warns us against abysses towards which we blindly are moving. By looking at suffering as our teacher and friend, we shall better succeed to endure it with equanimity. Consequently, the Teaching of *Kamma* (for it is this doctrine we have spoken of) will prove a powerful impulse to free us from *Kamma* itself, that is from those deeds which again and again throw us into the suffering of repeated births. Disgust will arise at our own craving, at our own delusion, as constantly creating such situations which try to break our strength, our resistance, our Equanimity.

The second Insight on which Equanimity should be based is the Buddha’s Teaching of Non-Self (*anattā*). This doctrine shows that in the ultimate sense deeds are neither performed by any Self or personality, nor do they in their results affect any Self or personality. Further it shows that if there is no Self, we cannot speak of “my own”. It is the delusion of a Self that creates suffering and hinders or disturbs equanimity. If this or that quality of ours is blamed, one thinks:

“I am blamed” and equanimity is shaken. If wealth is lost one thinks: ‘What is mine has gone’, and equanimity is shaken.

To establish Equanimity as an unshakable state of mind one has gradually to give up all possessive thoughts of “mine,” beginning with little things from which it is easy to detach oneself, up to possessions and aims to which our whole heart clings. Moreover, one has to give up step by step all “thoughts of Self”, beginning with a small section of one’s “personality”, with qualities of minor importance, with small weaknesses clearly

seen by oneself, up to those emotions and aversions which are regarded as the centre of one's "Self". Thus detachment should be practised.

To the degree we forsake thoughts of "Mine" or "Self" Equanimity will enter into our hearts. For how can it be that what we realise as something foreign and void of a Self shall cause us any agitation, be it of lust, of hatred or of grief? Thus the teaching of Non-self will be our guide on the Path to Deliverance, to the Equanimity of holiness.

Equanimity is the crown and culmination of the four Sublime States.

But this should not be understood to mean that Equanimity is the negation of Love, Compassion and Sympathetic Joy, or that it leaves them behind as inferior. Far from that. Equanimity includes and pervades them fully, just as perfect Equanimity is fully pervaded by these three.

How then, do these Four Sublime States pervade and suffuse each other?

Love unbounded guards Compassion against turning into partiality, prevents it from making discriminations by selecting and excluding, and thus protects it from falling into partiality or aversion from the excluded side.

Love imparts to Equanimity its selflessness, its boundless nature, and even its fervour. For fervour too, transformed and controlled, is part of perfect Equanimity, strengthening its power of keen penetration and wise restraint.

Compassion prevents Love and Sympathetic Joy from forgetting that, while both are enjoying or giving temporary and limited happiness, there still exist at that time most dreadful states of suffering in the world. It reminds them that their happiness co-exists with measureless misery, perhaps at the next door-step. It is a reminder to Love that there is more suffering in the world than it is able to mitigate; that, after the effect of such mitigation has vanished, sorrow and pain are sure to arise anew until suffering is uprooted

entirely at the attainment of *Nibbāna*. Compassion does not allow that Love and Sympathetic Joy shut themselves up against the wide world by confining themselves to a narrow sector of it. Compassion does not tolerate that Love and Sympathetic Joy turn into a state of self-satisfied complacency within a jealously guarded petty happiness. Compassion stirs and urges Love to widen its sphere; it stirs and urges Sympathetic Joy to search for fresh nourishment. Thus it helps both of them to grow into truly Boundless States (*appamaññā*).

Compassion guards Equanimity from falling into cold indifference, and keeps it from indolent or selfish isolation. Until Equanimity has reached perfection, Compassion urges it to enter again and again the battlefield of the world, in order to be able to stand the test, by hardening and strengthening itself.

Sympathetic Joy holds Compassion back from becoming entirely overwhelmed by the sight of the world's suffering, from being absorbed by it to the exclusion of everything else. Sympathetic Joy relieves the tension of mind, soothes the painful burning of the compassionate heart. It keeps Compassion away from melancholic brooding without purpose, from a futile sentimentality that merely weakens and consumes the strength of mind and heart. Sympathetic Joy develops compassion into active sympathy.

Sympathetic Joy gives to Equanimity the mild serenity that softens its stern appearance. It is the divine smile on the face of the Enlightened One, a smile that persists in spite of His deep knowledge of the world's suffering, a smile that gives solace and hope, fearlessness and confidence: "Wide open are the doors to Deliverance," thus it speaks.

Equanimity rooted in Insight, is to the other three Sublime States their guiding and restraining power, pointing out to them the direction they have to take, and seeing to it that this direction be followed. Equanimity guards Love and Compassion from being dissipated in vain quests, and from going astray in the

labyrinths of uncontrolled emotion. Equanimity, being a vigilant self-control for the sake of the final goal, does not allow that Sympathetic Joy contents itself with humble results, forgetting the real aims we have to strive for.

Equanimity which means 'even-mindedness', gives to Love an even, unchanging firmness and loyalty. It endows it with the great virtue of patience. Equanimity furnishes Compassion with an even, unwavering courage and fearlessness enabling it to face the awesome abyss of misery and despair by which boundless Compassion is confronted again and again. To the active side of Compassion, Equanimity is the calm and firm hand led by wisdom indispensable to those who want to practise the difficult art of helping others. And here again Equanimity means patience, the patient devotion to the work of Compassion.

In these and other ways Equanimity may be said to be the crown and culmination of the other three Sublime States. The first three of them, if unconnected with Equanimity and the insight inherent in it, may be liable to dwindle away due to the lack of a stabilising factor. Isolated virtues, if unsupported by other qualities which give them either firmness or pliancy (as the case may be) often deteriorate or fall into certain defects characteristic of them. For instance, Loving-kindness without energy and insight, may easily decline to a mere sentimental goodness of weak and unreliable nature. Moreover such isolated virtues may often carry man in a direction contrary to his original aims in life and contrary to the welfare of others too. It is the firm and balanced character of a person that knits isolated virtues into an organic and harmonious whole within which the single qualities will bring out their very best, avoiding, with the help of the other virtues, the pitfalls of their respective weaknesses. And this is the very function of equanimity which it performs with an ideal interrelation of the four Sublime States.

Equanimity is a perfect, unshakable balance of mind, rooted in Insight.

But its perfection and its unshakable nature are not lifeless rigidity, they are not like the inert gravity of matter. Equanimity is not dullness, heartlessness and frigidity. Its perfection is not due to emotional 'emptiness', but to a 'fullness' of understanding, to its being complete in itself. Its unshakable nature is not the immovability of a dead, cold stone, but the manifestation of highest inner strength.

In which way, now, is Equanimity perfect and unshakable?

Whatever stagnates is here dissolved, removed is what is damming up, destroyed what obstructs, vanished are the whirls of emotion and the meanderings of intellect. Unhindered goes the calm and majestic stream of consciousness, pure and radiant. Watchful Mindfulness (*sati*) has harmonized the warmth of Faith (*saddha*) with the penetrative keenness of Wisdom (*paññā*); it has balanced Strength of Will (*virīya*) with Calmness of Mind (*samādhi*) and these five inner faculties (*indriya*) have grown into inner forces (*bala*) which cannot be lost again. They cannot be lost because they do not lose themselves any more in the labyrinths of the world (*samsāra*), in the endless diffuseness of life (*papañca*) These inner forces emanate from the mind and act upon the world but being guarded by mindfulness, they nowhere bind themselves, and unchanged they return. Love, Compassion and Sympathetic Joy continue to emanate from the mind and act upon the world; but being guarded by Equanimity, they cling nowhere, and unweakened and unsullied they return.

Thus within the saint nothing is lessened by giving, and he does not become poorer by bestowing upon others the riches of his heart and mind. The saint is like the clear well-cut crystal which, being without any stains, fully absorbs all the rays of light and sends them out again, intensified by its concentrative power. Unable are the rays to stain the crystal by their various colours. They cannot pierce its hardness, nor disturb its harmonious structure.

Unchanged remains the crystal in its genuine purity and strength. 'Just as all the streams of the world enter the great ocean, and all the waters of the sky rain into it, but no increase or decrease of the great ocean is to be seen' even so is the nature of holy Equanimity.

Holy Equanimity, or as we may likewise express it the Saint endowed with holy Equanimity, is the inner centre of the world. But this inner centre should be well distinguished from the numberless apparent centres of limited spheres, that is their so-called 'personalities', governing laws, and so on. All of these are only apparent centres, because they cease to be, centres whenever their spheres, obeying the laws of impermanence, undergo a total change of their

structure and consequently the centre of their gravity, material or mental, will shift. But the inner centre of the saint's Equanimity is unshakable, because it is immutable. It is immutable because it clings nowhere.

'For the conditioned motion exists, but for the unconditioned there is no motion.

Where no motion is, there is stillness. Where stillness is, there is no craving. Where no craving is, there is neither arising nor passing away. Where neither arising is nor passing away, there is neither this world nor a world beyond, nor a state between. This, verily, is the End of Suffering.'

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RANGOON BURMA

WHAT BUDDHISM MEANS TO A BUDDHIST

Lecture by Venerable Aggamahāpaṇḍita U Thittila to the High Court

Buddhist Association Rangoon.

The title of my talk this afternoon is “What Buddhism means to a Buddhist”. To a Buddhist, Buddhism is not a religion in the sense in which that word is commonly understood; but to him or to her Buddhism is a practical method of life—to show how to live rightly thereby, happily and peacefully in spite of the unrest that is prevailing in the world.

Buddhism, we say, is not a religion because it is not a system of faith and worship. The word ‘religion’ originally means a system of faith and worship but Buddhism is a way of life, and it is also a way of understanding the conditions of life so that a Buddhist may be able to live in harmony with other people and also in harmony with the laws of righteousness.

Buddhism is founded on reason. Therefore it is a scientific explanation of the natural laws of life and not a set of dogmas laid down authoritatively. There are no dogmas in Buddhism. You know what a dogma means. A dogma is a rigid system laid down by authorities as representing the Truth. It is so to speak, an arrogant declaration of one’s own opinion. In Buddhism there are no such dogmas; but there are laid down a set of facts and principles for us to live by—for us to follow.

Buddhism declares the laws of righteousness, the Universal law, the laws of cause and effect (*Dhamma Niyāma*) proclaiming that Man is the master of his own destiny. He can mould his own life according to his ideas as a Buddhist. Buddhism removes that fear of death which haunts every untrained mind. Buddhism is the right way of life which is neither optimistic nor pessimistic.

Many people in the West think that Buddhism is pessimistic. On the contrary, the Buddhist way of life is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. Many people in the world,

especially the unthinking, carefree sort, would like to have an optimistic view of life. Whenever such a man becomes depressed he is advised to be optimistic, but according to the Buddhist view this is not correct. Optimism being an overestimated view of the condition of life does not take the right view; nor is the pessimist’s view which underestimates the actual condition of life, the right view.

The right view of life is the Middle Way (*Majjhima-paṭipadā*) between these two extremes. Both these two extremes are futile for anyone to follow. So to a Buddhist, Buddhism means the right way of life—a method by which a man can live happily, peacefully and with security for the present and security in the hereafter. In Great Britain people talk of future security but the security they speak of is very temporary. The Buddhist way of security is permanent, eternal and lasting.

The lives of men, and in fact the whole universe of living beings, are governed by unchanging, eternal laws, such as the Laws of Cause and Effect, the laws of the mind or the laws of Psychology (*Citta-niyāma*). So the whole universe is governed by these eternal laws and not by any imaginary God.

For instance, sin, according to Buddhism, is not like the Original Sin mentioned in Christianity. Sin, Buddhism says, is a direct consequence of man’s ignorance of these laws of righteousness, these laws of justice. As you know, sin begets sorrow. These are ancient or eternal laws of life.

To anyone who believes that the world is not governed by the laws of righteousness but by a changing, continually changing, God, it seems one must try to persuade a Supreme God to make it better. It means that one does not believe that God’s Will is always just, for God has wrath which has to be deprecated,

compassion to be aroused and partiality to be won. But to the Buddhist the laws of nature, the laws of righteousness which govern the universe, are always the same, the same for one and all. Therefore, a man's duty is not to break these rules of nature—the laws of justice—not to try to change these laws by means of any prayer and by guarding against them but to know, to understand these eternal, unchanging laws and live in harmony with these laws.

Right through the Teachings of the Buddha stress is laid on such attributes as self-reliance, self-confidence, resolution, energy, work, effort. Buddhism makes a man or woman stand on his or her own feet and be master or mistress of Fate. Mindfulness is also emphasised greatly by the Buddha. For instance, in the *Dhammapada** it is said: "You yourself must make an effort; the Buddhas are only teachers. The thoughtful who enter the Way are freed from the bondage of sin." Again, in the same book "Mindfulness is the path of immortality, sloth the path of death. Those who are strenuous do not die; those who are slothful are as if dead already."**

* Magga Vagga 276.

** Appamāda Vagga 21.

By Deathlessness, the Buddha means *Nibbāna*. All other conditions, all other lives are full of death—continual, unending death.

Also the Buddha said, it is in many scriptures either directly or indirectly, that it was through His ceaseless efforts and unshaking perseverance that he attained Buddhahood, the highest state of perfection, that is, Supreme Enlightenment. Yet, the Buddha does not take a monopoly of his Buddhahood; instead the Buddha encouraged His followers to be as high as possible in the spiritual field, or if they try hard enough, even as high as Himself. That is the chief characteristic of Buddhism. The Buddha is like a good father who looks after his son well and likes him to be his equal or even to be his better, if the son can; that is the beauty of

Buddhism. And the Buddha shows the way to attain self-enlightenment. He again and again reminded his followers that they will have to rely on themselves, rely on their own efforts and that there is no one anywhere either in heaven or on earth to help them, to save them from the results of their own misdeeds. You will remember also the saying of the Buddha: 'Evil deeds are done only by yourself, not by your parents, friends, relatives or advisers. So you yourself will have to reap the painful results of these misdeeds.' So we are responsible for our own evil deeds. There is no one to save us from the results of these evil deeds.

Understanding that there is no one, no God, no big ceremony that can save us, that can give us spiritual salvation, the true Buddhist feels compelled to rely on himself and on his own efforts, and therefore he has confidence in his power and sense of responsibility. The tendency to rely on any God or any imaginary power outside oneself weakens one's own confidence and affects one's own sense of responsibility. The tendency to trust his own power strengthens his own confidence and sense of responsibility. Moral and mental progress is only possible where there is freedom of thought, without dogmas, without authorities. Where the dogmas come and fetter the mind there can be no spiritual progress; and reliance, trust in any outside authority, leads to spiritual stagnation.

I have lived many years among Christians. Some of my Christian friends, in a joking way perhaps, say their prayers like this: 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul.'

Now, in any faith freedom of thought is important. In one of the six qualities of the *Buddha Dhamma* these words, as you all know, are mentioned "*Ehi Passiko*" 'Come and see for yourself'. The Buddha asked us not to believe in a blind way what is said by Him. Of all religions Buddhism makes most demands on mental activity—mindfulness, earnestness, strenuousness etc. When the Buddha gave his famous exhortation to the Kalama Princes in

the *Kālāma Sutta* He said: ‘Don’t accept (views) from hearsay, from what you have been told, because it is mentioned in the scriptures, by reason of logic, in consideration of the reasoning (being plausible), by tolerating the views based on speculation, because of its appearance of possibility and because “Our monk is venerable”. When you Kālāmas realise by yourselves that these qualities are good, faultless, praised by the wise and that they lead to good and happiness when practised and observed, then Kālāmas, you should abide in them after acquiring them.’

So the Buddha urged us not to believe what is said merely on authority. Also not to believe in anything because it is the traditional custom....but at the same time it is better not to denounce such traditions very easily. You must try to experiment with it, examine it thoroughly and after such examination, if it is reasonable and conducive to your happiness and the happiness and welfare of others, then take it, live up to it. This could be said to be a very grand and one of the bravest and boldest declarations ever made by any religious teacher.

To understand the causes and the conditions of life, one of the doctrines taught by the Buddha is the doctrine of *Kamma*.—It is always good to talk a little about the doctrine of *Kamma* because it helps us to understand Buddhism more and at the same time to understand our daily life better. *Kamma* is a *Pāli* word meaning “action”. Literally it means “good and bad actions”. It covers all actions, be they mental, verbal or physical; in other words, thought, words and deeds. In its ultimate sense *Kamma* means volition—mental volition. In the *Anguttara Nikāya* mental volition is defined. Having mental volition one acts by the mind, by words and by actions.

The doctrine of *Kamma* is not fatalism nor is it a doctrine of predetermination. *Kamma* is one of the 24 causes mentioned by the Buddha in the *Paṭṭhāna* which govern the whole

universe. *Kamma* is one of the 12 causes which constitute the Wheel of life and death taught by the Buddha in the *Vibhanga*. *Kamma* is also one of the four causes mentioned in the *Abhidhamma* and also in the *Suttas*. *Kamma* is not of the past only; the past merely influences the present but does not fully dominate it because *Kamma* is not only the past but also the present. The past forms only a background against which the present life works for the moment. The past combined with the present influences the future which is to come. Only the present moment exists and can be said to be within management, and the responsibility of using this present moment lies with each individual either for good or for evil. Every action produces its effect. It is the action or the cause that comes first and then the effect. Therefore we speak of *Kamma* as the Universal Law of Cause and Effect.

Let me give you a very common example which has been given many times. For example, throwing a stone is action, which is a cause. This stone strikes a glass window and breaks the pane. The throwing of a stone is action, a cause, but the stone strikes the window pane and breaks it; that is the effect. The act of throwing a stone at the window is the cause of the breaking of the window and the broken window is the effect. This effect in its turn becomes a cause for further trouble, or effect; for instance, the wasting of money to replace the broken glass. Because you have to replace the window pane and waste your money, the effect on your mind will be disappointment. Then you become irritable. When you are irritable your anger can easily be aroused. Your anger is the result (or effect) but it also becomes a cause again; because of your anger you may say or do something unpleasant; and this something said or done in an unpleasant manner may hurt something or someone and so on.

In Christian terminology: because you throw a stone and break the window and you have to pay money to buy a new window pane, the whole series of causes and effects leading to the final result is regarded by them as a

punishment of God. In Buddhism there is no room for God who would come and punish you. So, to continue with my example, when you get angry you may say something unpleasant to somebody who may reply by saying something equally unpleasant to you. After that, if you are not careful, this may lead the two of you to a furious quarrel. For two persons this may lead to a fight. Between two nations this sort of thing may lead to a war. All this shows us clearly the existence of the laws of Cause and Effect.

If properly understood, the doctrine of *Kamma* teaches us to be careful with our thoughts, words and actions in daily life so that, as time goes on, it makes us better human beings willing to perform better and nobler actions towards all and live more harmoniously with our fellow human beings. This is just one example.

There is a common question asked by people in other countries: ‘Sometimes we try to do good thinking the effect will be good but in some cases the result or the effect turned out to be just the opposite. The effect is bad. In our locality a cunning, grasping man is called a ‘shrewd’ person; the more shrewd, the more wicked, the more greedy he is, the more is he praised as a successful hero in society. Again, among the dogs, the strongest and the fiercest dog gets the best bone. And where is the working of your laws of Cause and Effect? Where ‘is the justice of this doctrine of *Kamma*?’

Well, as for that not only in Australia, for the questioner was an Australian, but in other parts of the world as well, cunning, greedy people are generally praised as if they are the conquering heroes in society. So, you too may ask, ‘When shall we get good results for the good that we have done or are trying to do? The good we have done seems to be very slow

in bearing fruit’. Then, there was another man who told me that while he was engaged in saying his prayers aloud, to God, somebody—his neighbour—came and told him that he was making a lot of noise over it. So he said to me ‘I was trying to perform a good act in good faith but the immediate effect is bad, very bad. So your law of *Kamma* does not work out well for us.’

I said to him; ‘Though you may be worshipping God for a good purpose at that moment, in order to know why the man came and insulted you, you will have to think over what you did or said to him either that morning or the day before or some time in the past. Then, you may be able to find some cause why he came to insult you. People are apt to forget what they did to other people, so when the result comes they think it comes suddenly or that they are taken by surprise. It is not always sudden or that they are caught by surprise. It may be that you do not remember what you have done and the cause may be entirely misunderstood.

Therefore whatever comes to us is always just and must be accepted in the right spirit. If something very pleasant happens to us we should not be proud of it. It just shows that our good *Kamma* has come back to us bearing good fruit. If anything unpleasant occurs to us we should not be angry, depressed or disappointed but we should keep calm realising that our bad *Kamma* has come back to us to remind us of our past mistakes. Whenever something comes to upset us let us try to be good, and let us never be worried, excited or angry. Let us make a firm resolve within ourselves to live rightly by trying to understand the working of these Laws of Cause and Effect—called the Law of *Kamma* in Buddhism.

HE ALSO TAUGHT THE GODS.

U Ohn Ghine.

When the Buddha taught men here in this world 2500 years ago, His teaching was learned by rote and so perpetuated, since, after His passing away, groups of *Bhānakas* or 'Reciting monks' who had learned the Teachings, the portions entrusted to them as groups, as living, continuing groups; as a willed and planned effort and not by mere hearsay, preserved the Great Teaching as close, to pristine purity as anything can be preserved.

Today we still have that Teaching, both by virtue of the 'living books', those bhikkhus who still learn and repeat the Doctrine, and from the careful writing on palm-leaves initiated in Ceylon more than two thousand years ago and which has now become the steady output of modern printing presses throughout the Buddhist countries.

To maintain the purity of the Teaching, to iron out small differences lest they should grow to great differences, we have had through the centuries six great synods or councils which have collated and checked the texts and by chanting together (*Sangāyanā*) and, latterly, printing authorised versions, we have ensured that the actual word of the Buddha is perpetuated for those who want the actual word of the Buddha.

This is, and can be, the only authoritative teaching, since it has been a planned and willed effort that was at once selective, in that dedicated and able *bhikkhus* gave their lives to it, and widespread, in that it has been undertaken through the centuries in all lands where the *Buddhadhamma* found a really firm footing.

This, then, is a way by which has been preserved the Great Teaching, a teaching that by its very repetitions has ensured a better memory and a more sure perpetuation.

And the Buddha, it must be remembered, also taught the Gods. In his teaching of the

Gods, the Buddha showed them the truth, and taught the highest God, the being who so erroneously regarded Himself as: 'The Almighty, the Creator, the Ancient of Days, the Father of all that are and all that are to be, the All-wise, the All-powerful.' The Buddha showed him that even the highest Gods are under the influence of error and delusion and that they, too, must die; that even the most powerful God is subject to Impermanence, Suffering and absence of any permanent, uncompounded, unconditioned, unchanging entity.

The archangels who formed the retinue of the mighty God, his 'sons', had, as have all beings, one by one to pass away from there and to manifest elsewhere, according to their previous *Kamma* or deeds, and they too, may bring, in cases where they are born as men and women in this world, a memory and influence from the Teaching heard in the heaven-world only yesterday, there, though it was 2500 years ago to us.

There are those who though born and brought up in non-Buddhist lands and non-Buddhist families, have never been able to accept the non-Buddhist teachings they have been presented with since early infancy, but have felt that those teachings though having a deal of good, a deal of morality and, indeed, a deal of truth, yet do not embody the whole truth.

When such people have come in contact with the Buddhist teachings they often at once recognise it and feel: 'This I know well, this is not new to me, this is the real truth,' though it may be heard then for the first time in this life. The reaction is quite different from that of others who have but the faintest memory or no memory, in some cases no experience in the past, of the Buddha's teaching. That does not mean that the latter do not make progress on the Path and do not follow it to the end. As a teaching of reason and a teaching leading to

full truth, the *Buddhadhamma* attracts and inspires reasoning beings who will give themselves to the study and practice for awhile.

For a reasoning man needs but look around with real thought and with a deep compassion to see that change is inherent in all compounded things and that there is too much cruelty in the world for the world to have been ‘created’ by a loving father. Nevertheless it is easy for the unthinking man, or the unthinking God, to believe that ‘All’s right with the world’ and that the God and his angels are forever and unchanging. Indeed, for long, that was the blind belief of almost all. It was the Buddha and his disciples who taught the Gods that they are impermanent and changing and that morality, a true morality of altruistic loving-kindness, can give better rebirths and bring one, man or God, to the beginning of the realisation that there is a way of wisdom that leads from the whirlpool of existence where one is continually being reborn as God or as demon, or as animal or as man.

As men and gods die and are reborn as men, they bring, some of them faint memories of the Teaching and this is one way, often not fully taken into account, by which the Teaching has spread from place to place and from age to age in the past twenty-five centuries.

This factor, however, is not one on which we can rely too much for our knowledge of the Teaching, since just as some men imperfectly grasp the teaching and imperfectly remember the teaching, so do some Gods. Reflected by the minds of men and Gods the teaching may be presented in a distorted form, but nevertheless these half-memories of the ‘heaven-world’ have through the ages, inspired some men, particularly at and from the time of the Buddha’s Teaching, to noble thoughts and noble deeds. There was no really unselfish morality in this present world-cycle before the arising of the Buddha. That since His day it has manifested in various centuries and in various lands, some of them not consciously aware of the *Buddhadhamma*, can be attributed to the fact that He also taught the gods.

‘Monks, whatsoever in the whole world, with the world of *Māras*, *Brahmās*, together with the host of recluses and Brahmins, of *devas* and mankind, is seen, heard, sensed, cognized, attained, searched into, pondered over by the mind,—all that is fully comprehended by a *Tathāgata*. That is why he is called “*Tathāgata*”. Moreover, whatever a *Tathāgata* utters, speaks and proclaims between the night of his enlightenment and the night on which he passes utterly away,—all that is just so and not otherwise. Therefore is he called “*Tathāgata*”

Monks, as a *Tathāgata* speaks, so he does: as he does, so he speaks. That is why he is called “*Tathāgata*”.

Monks, in the whole world, with the world of *Devas*, of *Māras*, of *Brahmās* together with the host of recluses and Brahmins, of *devas* and mankind, a *Tathāgata* is conqueror, unconquered, all-seeing, omnipotent. Therefore is he called “*Tathāgata*”.

BOOK REVIEW

IGNORANT ATTACK.

Scientific Socialism: Role of Advanced Ideas in Development of Asia. Translated from the Russian. International Publishing House. No address, no price marked.

This is a booklet of 31 pp. paper cover, distributed gratis, and somewhat surreptitiously, to some of the Delegates to the World Fellowship of Buddhists Biennial Conference at Bangkok late last year. Rather 'doctrinaire' in its presentation, the booklet seems, like most Communist literature these days, to be 'whipping a dead horse', while the riders, if 'we may pursue the historic analogy a little further, having changed horses, are galloping out of sight some miles ahead.

If those doctrinaire writers were to stop their vain task and catch up with the world, the world could say to them like Moliere's famous character: 'Nous avons change tout cela'. For the world has changed and the 'bourgeois capitalism' of Marx has borrowed many of the features of Communism and in all countries, even the most retrograde, there are springing forth elements of the 'Welfare State,' while the so-called 'communist countries' are as slowly and as surely borrowing some of the features of the old 'bourgeois capitalist imperialism' and even some of their devout followers, excepting the most fanatic and blinded are beginning to admit it, since they have found on testing in the economic workshop that 'communist idealism' is not as pragmatic a possibility as appeared at first sight.

Then in more than one 'communist' country, the revolution has been betrayed and the horse of outmoded religio-idealism having died, the riders have mounted the horse of capitalist expansionism having put the ideas of the Great Lenin in the coffin wherein lies his dead body.

However this is not the place for economic or political polemics and it is only the booklet's ignorant attack on Buddhism that calls forth this review.

The Buddha enunciated more than twenty-five centuries ago the great Law of Anicca, of Change. To be sure there have been many others who have seen that 'Change is inherent in all compounded things' but it is only a Buddha, a completely enlightened Man who can go to the end and first infer and then find, yes find, and show the way that all may find, the changeless beyond change.

Before the materialist, either of the extreme right or the extreme left, should say 'pooh-pooh' and put aside these pages as 'metaphysical' he should pause just one moment to reflect that there is a method involved where he (you if you are he) can find and realise the truth of this himself. No dogma, either of the right or of the left, is required, blind belief and at the same time blind disbelief must be set aside in the finding, that always is a prerequisite for the finding of truth.

Now, having cleared the ground, let us look at the work itself.

ATTACK ON BUDDHISM.

As usual it begins with a belabouring of those dead 'philosophers' 'prior to Marx and Engels', philosophers who thrived in that short period in Europe as dying feudalism made way for rising capitalism: philosophers who are today read only for curiosity; just as tomorrow, to-day's philosophers will be merely objects of curiosity to space-age man.

From there the booklet goes on to attack the equally-outmoded nineteenth-century religion of Europe.

There was some reason for Marx and Engels to attack that curious perversion of Christianity; there is very little reason for their slavish followers to keep up the attack, and certainly none at all for the latter's attack on Buddhism.

The ideas of the author are not 'advanced' at all but most certainly very retrograde. They are worse, they are ignorant. They are worse than that, even, they are lazy. For there is some hope for the ignorant who will take a little trouble to check as to whether he really has knowledge or no, but none for the lazy who can only parrot what he has heard and read.

To assert laziness is to make a very serious assertion, and should be backed by proof. Here is the proof. The author attacks Buddhism without having any idea as to what Buddhism is, and it is clear that he (he quotes several 'authorities') and his predecessors base all their assumptions on the following syllogism: (a) Religion has enslaved or helped to enslave the masses. (b) Buddhism is a religion. (c) Therefore Buddhism has helped to enslave the masses.

Now while it is true that some theist faiths had in the past in certain areas, been used to uphold feudalism, that is not invariably true even of all theist faiths in all periods. An unbiased study of history shows that in some cases the reverse has been the case, and where these faiths have been used to uphold tyranny it has usually been in a perversion of the teachings of their founders. It is also true that fire has been used to burn 'heretics' and to lay waste cities, but to eschew all use of fire on that account and to dogmatically assert that fire is 'wrong' would be just as foolish as the assertion that all 'religion' is 'wrong', even from the materialist aspect. All sweeping generalisations are unscientific and to condemn all 'religion', all that goes by the name of 'religion' is a type of lazy thought.

Further, if our terms are to be defined and if we are to use the old definition of 'religion' as stating or implying a 'belief in supernatural powers and their influence on mankind', then

Buddhism is certainly not a religion. Therefore, and a little energy in investigation and thought on the part of the author would have proved that even to his satisfaction, what is true of some theist faiths is not true of the non-theist teaching of Buddhism.

But the author seems to be most unscientific and ignorant in several ways and to have only the fanatic religionist's devotion to his own particular 'bible' and faith to uphold him. Take, for instance, his assertion on Page 8. 'Scientists also must realise that their primary duty is to prove the truth of Marxist Dialectical Materialism, and must resist ideological deviationism in the interpretation of scientific discoveries.' If this means anything it means that the scientist's 'primary duty' is to be unscientifically biased in favour of 'Marxist Dialectical Materialism'.

On the contrary the role of the scientist is not to prove the truth of something asserted to be true, whether that 'truth' is stated in the Bibles of the theists or of the Marxists. The role of the scientist is akin to the role of the Buddhist, to find truth, though the heavens fall. No pains must be shirked, no scrap of evidence neglected whether it tends to prove the truth of Marxism or the reverse. The scientist deals with facts as observed in the light of his knowledge, with theories and hypotheses that must be tested, to use the Buddha's words: 'as gold is tested in the fire'. It was the Buddha who first gave the scientific method, so long ago: 'What, being present, is this absent; what, being absent, is this present?' It was the Buddha who, in the world of ideas, when asked: 'What should we believe?' replied: 'Do not accept views from hearsay, from what you have been told, because it is written or repeated in teachings, by reason merely of logic, in consideration of the reasoning being plausible, by accepting views based on speculation, because it has the appearance of being true, because of the veneration for a leader or teacher.'

‘..... SAID JESTING PILATE.’

In all ages men have said: ‘What is truth?’ and whether they spoke jestingly or with an agonising desire to know, many have either turned away and said truth was impossible to find or else accepted what was ‘plausible’, added faith and so salved their consciences.

The sermon from which the quotation above was taken: ‘The sermon to the people of Kalama using the dialectic method which was used first by the Buddha, goes on to teach what is to be believed and what is ‘right’. The Buddha contrasts Greed and its opposite, Altruism, Hatred and its opposite Loving-kindness and Ignorance and its opposite, Knowledge or Wisdom. These, He said, are the springs of action, and He pointed out that motivated by the first of the pairs man harms himself and others and motivated by their opposites he helps himself and others.

Only if undeterred by the inquisition, or its modern counterpart, of extreme theists or by the threat and the torture of totalitarian materialists who substitute the word ‘deviationism’ for the old theist word ‘heresy’, can mankind battle forward to the light of truth.

The author has read some of the Western literature on Buddhism which takes at face value the assertion of non-Buddhists (even anti-Buddhists) that they and their practices are ‘Buddhist’.

The great and central Teaching of the Buddha is the doctrine of *Anattā*, the absence of any permanent, unchanging entity, or ‘Soul’; and the very last words of the Buddha were: ‘*Appamādena sampādettha*—work out your own emancipation with diligence’; and ‘*Viriya*’ or ‘Energy’ is insisted on all through the Teachings, yet it is precisely the opposite that is imputed to Buddhism by the author. In one respect only is he correct in all his indictment. He says, ‘Buddhism preaches love....dulling of the edge of hatred towards enemies.’ Yes, that is true. Buddhism does teach exactly this.

The author quotes, perhaps another case of propagandists influenced by their own propaganda, ‘The Short Philosophical Dictionary, edited by M. Rosental and P. Yudin (4th. Edition. State Publishing House of Political Literature, Moscow 1955): ‘The reactionary ideology of Buddhism has always been utilised by the exploiters for the suppression in the masses of any protest against poverty and the absence of rights and for the dulling of their hatred towards class enemies.’; ‘The Struggle of the Church against the People’ by F. Oleschuk, leading anti-religious worker of the Soviet Union: ‘As all religion, Buddhism is fundamentally hostile to the interests of the toilers...’; ‘The Large Soviet Encyclopaedia:’; ‘The overwhelming majority of the adherents of Buddhism in the Soviet Union have rid themselves of religious belief...’ and others and sums up that: ‘the five rules supposed to have been laid down by the Buddha...make Buddhism an unrealistic and impracticable cult’. The orientation of the author and his refusal to study his subject apart from the ‘official’ text-books of his country, make his criticism ignorant and one-sided. Nevertheless where he seems to have some truth on his side is where he attacks certain superstitions and accretions that are nowhere found to be countenanced by the Pali Canon. There have crept in, even in some of the real Buddhist communities, some few of the superstitions that are rightly attacked by the author but wrongly attributed to Buddhism. His book is a lesson to us that we must not be ‘tolerant’ of these to the point where such ‘tolerance’ can give the idea that we align ourselves with those who hold these superstitions, and give the idea also that we accept the superstitions and un-Buddhist practices even where they seem least harmful. Materialists and theists from all sides have wrongly attacked us on these which are nothing to do with the word of the Buddha. We should make it clear while we have ‘tolerance’ and loving-kindness to those who hold such superstitions; these things are not the Teaching of the Buddha.

Buddhism is 'above politics' and we can not enter into the rights and wrongs of political ideologies or, as Buddhists, take sides therein. However, lest from any side of the world, tyranny should flourish without a word of refutation, we should point out that the Buddha showed quite clearly that it is the men and the ideas that can mould circumstances and not the circumstances that mould men and ideas, although there is interaction between the two.

It may here be interesting, and not so much of a diversion as might at first appear, to study the word 'dialectic'. The first use of the word was for the method of eliciting truth by asking questions, which really showed truth to the man who answered rather than told truth to him. It was the Buddha who first used this method, and how effectively. Socrates took it up and used it a hundred years later. Hegel gave it rather a different twist and his pupil, Karl Marx changed it slightly again.

The Hegelian dialectic took the history of the world as a history of ideas. When an idea is accepted as truth the opposite idea arises and the ideas fight and bring about a newer and higher idea and the same process then takes place again with a fresh idea that arises. Marx's variation was to substitute economic classes for the ideas.

We are not greatly concerned with 'philosophers', either before, during or after Karl Marx, as they remind of Omar Khayyam: they have 'great argument about it and about' but 'evermore come out by the same door as in they went.' But Hegel did see, though not perfectly clearly, when he postulated the 'clash of ideas'. There is such a clash in the world at present with protagonists for and against on both sides of the geographical and even ideological lines. The clash is between ant-heap regimentation with all subservient to the rule of the colony and, on the other hand, the idea of the right of the individual to be individual, within the limits of justice to others. As Buddhists we should say more, with willed radiation of Loving-kindness to all, Compassion for all, Altruistic joy in the

attainments of all others and a wish for Equanimity for all.

To those who will not try it but merely sneer, of course this is 'obscurantist', for those who will test it simply, quietly and scientifically, it works.

The materialist's dilemma is that he is never all materialist, otherwise he would, within the confines of the mode of living of his time and place, merely concentrate on getting money, power, glory for himself, whether in the name of religion or materialism, in a purely cynical fashion. Indeed there are some such and they sometimes make the best preachers of their particular 'ideology'. In several sermons the Buddha showed the fallacy of the position of the pure materialists as well as the fallacy of the position of the pure theists. It is mind that comes first. He said: '*Mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā manoseṭṭhā manomayā...* Mind precedes all things; they are mind-made.'

If the materialists or the theists ask for a resolution of the puzzle, there is an answer, but it is an answer that cannot be given by any outside authority, it is an answer that a man must work out for himself. The Buddha said: 'You yourself must make the effort, even Buddhas merely point out the way.' And He did point out the way and gave the method, which is available freely to all who wish it. For those who are too lazy, too careless or too deluded to make the effort there is an Italian proverb: 'Ogni debolo ha sempre il suo tiranno.' 'Every weakling gets always his own tyrant.' If people become weak through too easy living, as has happened so often in history, or through too little scope for individual thought in an oppressive State, as has happened so often in history; be sure that people so weakened will find anew their tyrants.

Only in fairy tales is there a 'happy ever after' in this world. Ant-heap colonies split into rulers and ruled and again the dialectic starts. But that all religions (and all fairy tales) seek and feel the existence of a possibility of a state of 'happy ever after' is no proof of the

non-existence of that state of being but rather the proof of 'something else', since a preponderance of even hearsay evidence constitutes proof enough for a *prima facie* case. It is only that men, theists and materialists alike, see and feel this 'something else' dimly and orient it to this world.

That 'something else', *Nibbāna* can be proved, but it can be proved for you by only

one person and in only one way. You are that person and going is the way.

May the author of the little booklet under review find happiness: may the 'edge of his hatred be blunted' and may he find thereby love for all beings and real Peace.

A BUDDHIST STUDY IN YUGOSLAVIA

Indian Philosophy by Cedomil Veljacic (Zagreb, 1958) is the first book in the Croatian language in Yugoslavia on Indian cultural history. It contains a chapter on the Teaching of the Buddha and further makes mention of the later Buddhist 'schools,' in a summary chapter in which the problems of logic in the Nyaya School and Buddhism are stressed.

The general orientation of the book has been influenced by scholars like S. Radhakrishnan and S.N. Dasgupta, although for the Buddhist views H. von Glasenapp, Th. Stcherbatsky and O. Roseberg, from the European side, have been the basis. In his own treatment the author has paid particular attention to the comparative interpretation of the noetic structures of the *rūpa-and-arūpa-jhāna* in the light of Husserl's method of phenomenological reduction and of his theory on the "stream of consciousness".

Both in the historical essay and in the selected texts, Buddhism being considered as the main factor of the cultural unity of Asia

and because of the author's prevalent interest in Pāli studies as expressed in the introduction, it remains the central point of orientation. His treatment is based on the *Abhidhamma* literature and the *Visuddhi-Magga* where his interest is centred on noetic problems. Thus his interpretation differs from the conceptions of most West-European writers since Deussen. He has stressed the essential difference from Vedanta metaphysics and considered the Buddha's basic teaching from a view-point of philosophical criticism, and not agnosticism.

C.Veljacic, who had graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy in Zagreb, later studied Pāli and Sanskrit in Bonn, West Germany, where he served in the diplomatic service as Cultural Attaché of the Yugoslav Embassy. The book is the first part of his *Philosophy of Oriental Peoples* and Vol. XI of a general history of Philosophy published under the title *Philosophic Chrestomathy*, in a series the redaction of which has been entrusted to the Faculty of the University of Zagreb.