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2503 B.E.

October 1959 C.E.



THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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EDITORIAL

AVERT THE DANGER TO THE DHAMMA

When we closely examine the dialectical materialist system of thought, we find that it is analogous to the wrong views maintained by Pūraṇakassapa and Ajita Kesakambala, the two religious teachers who were the contemporaries of the Omniscient Buddha. 'Pūraṇakassapa's view is *akiriya-ditṭhi* (the view of the inefficacy of action), and Ajita Kesakambala's view is *natthika-ditṭhi* (nihilism). The following are the brief expositions of their views:

Pūraṇakassapa's view: "To him who acts, or causes another to act, to him who cuts and causes another to cut, to him who torments and causes another to torment, to him who harasses another or causes me to harass another, to him who frightens another or causes one to frighten another, to him who kills a living creature, who takes what is not given, who breaks into houses, who commits dacoity, or robbery, highway robbery or adultery, or who tells lies, to him there is no evil action. If with a wheel fitted with razor blades he should make all living creatures on earth one heap, one pile of flesh, there would be no evil action thence resulting, no increase of evil action. Were he to go along the south bank of the Ganges killing and causing to kill men, cutting and causing to cut men into pieces, oppressing and causing to oppress men, there would be no evil action thence resulting, no increase of unwholesome deed would ensue. Were he to go along the north bank of the Ganges giving alms, causing to give alms, offering sacrifices, and causing to offer sacrifices, there would be no merit thence resulting, no increase of merit. In liberality, in control of the senses, in abstinence from evil deeds, in speaking the truth there is neither merit nor increase of it.

Ajita Kesakambala's view: "There really does not exist almsgiving. There really does not exist offering on a big scale. There really does not exist offering on a small scale. There really do not exist wholesome and

unwholesome volitional actions as cause and their fruits as results. There really does not exist this world. There really do not exist the other worlds or planes. There is neither mother nor father, nor beings born without the instrumentality of parents (nor beings that would come into existence after death). There really do not exist in this world *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas* who have followed the Dhamma-path and possess tranquillity of mind, and having themselves seen through 'Higher Spiritual Power', this very world and the other worlds, expound their knowledge thereof to others. This being is nothing but the combination of the Four Great Essentials. On the dissolution of the body after death, the Element of Extension will go to the earth-group; the Element of Cohesion will go to the water-group; the Element of Kinetic Energy will go to the fire-group; the Element of Motion will go to the wind-group; and the Faculties move up to the sky. Four carriers (with the bier as the fifth) carry the corpse; the remains are seen up to the cemetery; the bones become pigeon-coloured; and his offerings end in ashes. Almsgiving has been prescribed by fools. Their words are empty, false and idle. Both the foolish and the wise, on the dissolution of the body after death are annihilated and destroyed; and nothing comes again into being."¹

Dialectical materialists reject religion on the ground that it is detrimental to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. The materialist outlook means that matter, external reality, is regarded as primary, and mind as secondary, as something that develops on the basis of matter. It follows from this that man's physical existence, and therefore the ways in which it is preserved, come before the ideas which man forms of his own life and methods of living. In other words, practice comes before theory. Man got himself a living long before he began to have ideas about it. But also

the ideas, when he developed them, were associated with his practice; that is to say, theory and practice ran together. And this was so not in the early stages, but at all stages. The practical ways in which men get their living are the basis of their ideas. Their political ideas rise from the same root; their political institutions are formed in the practice of preserving the system of production, and not at all on the basis of any abstract principles. The institutions and ideas of each age are a reflection of the practice in that age. They do not have an independent existence and history, developing, so to speak, from idea to idea, but they develop when the material mode of production changes. A new custom takes the place of the old custom, and gives rise to new ideas.

In the Anti-Duhring Engels stated: “We therefore reject every attempt to impose on us any oral dogma whatsoever as an eternal ultimate and for ever immutable moral law on the pretext that the moral world too has its permanent principles which transcend history and the differences between nations. We maintain on the contrary that all former moral theories are the product, in the last analysis, of the economic stage which society had reached at that particular epoch. And as society has hitherto moved in class antagonisms, morality was always a class morality; it has neither justified the domination and the interests of the ruling class, or, as soon as the oppressed class has become powerful enough, it has represented the revolt against this domination and the future interests of the oppressed. That in this process there has on the whole been progress in morality, as in all other branches of human knowledge, cannot be doubted. But we have not yet passed beyond class morality. A really human morality which transcends class antagonisms and their legacies in thought becomes possible only at a stage of society which has not only overcome class contradictions but has even forgotten them in practical life.”

On October 2nd., 1929, Lenin addressed to the 2nd. Congress of the Russian Young

Communist League as follows:— “Is there such a thing as Communist ethic? Is there such a thing as Communist morality? Of course there is. It is often made to appear that we have no ethic of our own; and very often the bourgeoisie accuse us Communists of repudiating all ethics. This is a method of throwing dust into the eyes of the workers and peasants.

“In what sense do we repudiate ethics and morality?”

“In the sense that it is preached by the bourgeoisie, who derived ethics from God’s commandments. Or instead of deriving ethics from the commandments of God, they derived them from idealist or semi-idealist phrases, which always amounted to something very similar to God’s commandments. We repudiate all morality derived from non-human and non-class concepts. We say that it is deception, a fraud in the interests of landlords and capitalists. We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. The class struggle is still continuing. We subordinate our Communist morality to this task. We say: morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is creating a new Communist society. We do not believe in an eternal morality.

“The Marxist ethic is strictly materialistic and naturalistic. Man is the product of Nature and is bound by Nature’s laws and it is in accordance with these laws and not with dreams and ideals, that society develops. The basis of the Marxist ethic is thus ‘the concrete human situation’ in which the conditions of productions are the determining factors. Hence, the Marxist ethic is simply the expression of the desire of the workers.”²

It is, therefore, evident that the Communists reject *dāna* (liberality), *sīla* (precepts), *bhāvanā* (mental contemplation), and they also do not believe in *kamma* and its resultant-effect. In accordance with their own ideology they are exercising the policy of “Might is

states. All other knowledge, such as our knowledge of the material universe, is inferred knowledge often the product of a long and complicated chain of inference.

This it does by showing that science deals with but a partial aspect of reality, and that there is no faintest reason for supposing that everything science ignores is less real than what it accepts.”

It is common knowledge that “science is a study of things, a study of what is and that religion is a study of ideals, a study of what should be.” Sir J. Arthur Thomson maintains that science is incomplete because it cannot answer the question ‘why’. Man needs more than material gain; he needs spiritual guidance and the Buddha was one of the greatest Spiritual Teachers of Mankind.

Telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, psycho kinesis (mind over matter)—all these have now been acknowledged by the scientists to belong to the class of E.S.P. (extrasensory-perception). But the Omniscient Buddha has taught us all these things more than 2500 years ago.

An Enemy Of Religion:

Lenin wrote, “The Marxist must be a materialist, that is, an enemy of religion. Religion is the opium of the people.”³

It is, therefore, highly expedient for all concerned including Buddhists to avert the danger now befalling on their respective religions or religious beliefs.

“*Na hi verena verāni
Sammantīdha kudācanam,
averena ca sammanti,
esa dharnrno sanantano*.”⁴

(Hatred never ceases by hatred in this world. Through loving-kindness it comes to an end. This is an ancient Law.)

We, as Buddhists, should have *mettā* (loving-kindness) and *karuṇā* (compassion) for all these Communists and help them in such a

way that they may be able to maintain right views by virtue of which they will be reborn in the Happy Course of Existence.

Bound For Hell:

As regards the Burma Communists, most of them were formerly Buddhists who took refuge in the Triple Gem and who believed in *kamma* and its resultant-effect. But, since they accepted the Marxist ethic, they have become *micchādīṭṭhis* (holders of wrong views). From the Buddhist point of view they are much to be pitied, because, as the holders of wrong views they are sure to be reborn in the Lower Worlds.

In the Paṭisainbhidā-magga, Mahā-vagga, Dīṭṭhikathā, Assādadīṭṭhi-niddesa (Sixth Synod Edition) page 134, it is stated: “Those who maintain wrong views will on their death be reborn either in the Animal World or Hell.”

The Dhammapada says:

“Those beings who feel shame in which they should not, and do not feel shame in which they should, holding wrong views, go to hell.”⁵

Those beings who see fear in which there is no fear, and see no fear in which there is fear, holding wrong views go to hell.⁶

Those beings who think it to be faulty which is free from fault and see no fault in what is faulty, holding wrong views go to hell.⁷

Those beings who know a fault as fault and what is free from fault as free from fault, holding right views go to heaven.⁸

Those who maintain wrong views were described by ancient writers on Buddhism as *vaṭṭa-khāṇuka* (stump of the cycle of Suffering) or *samsāsa-khāṇuka* (stump of the round of rebirths), because once they suffer in hell they would have the rarest opportunity to be reborn in the world of men. Although the number of Communists in this country is negligible, it is to be feared that a small spark may make a great fire. It is therefore time for

us to nip them in the bud so that their wrong views and ideologies may not spread all over the country.

Duties Of Parents, Relatives, Friends and Teachers:

“The duties of parents towards their son are:

1. Restrain him from vice.
2. Encourage him to do right and virtuous deeds.
3. Give him a good education.
4. Provide him with a young and suitable wife.
5. Hand over to him the share of the family wealth.”⁹

According to the above Declaration, it is incumbent on the parents to see that their children get good education and that they do not perform evil deeds. They should encourage them to study Buddhist literature, attend religious classes and visit monks occasionally. They should train their children in such a way that they do not adhere to wrong views and false ideologies, so that on their death they may be reborn in the Happy Course of Existence. Then only it can be said that the parents have fulfilled their duties towards their children.

*Dānañca dhamma cariyā ca,
ñātakānañ ca saṅgaho,
anavajjāni kammāni,
etaṃ maṅgalamuttamaṃ.*

Maṅgala Sutta.

(Practising charity, living in righteousness;
Supporting one’s relatives
And doing blameless deeds—
This is the greatest act of blessing.)

Again, in the *Siṅgālovāda Sutta*, the Buddha declared:

“The duties of men towards their friends and companions are:

1. Be generous to them.

2. Be courteous to them.
3. Help them.
4. Treat them as equals.
5. Do not keep any secret from them.

The duties of friends and companions towards a man are as follows:—

1. Protect him when he is off his guard.
2. Protect his property.
3. In danger protect him.
4. Do not forsake him in his troubles.
5. Show consideration for his family.”

Relatives and friends of the holders of wrong views should persuade them to visit monks and good and virtuous men, hear the discourses delivered by them and to observe the Five Precepts. They should explain to them that their parents are Buddhists and that they should discard the wrong views so that they may be reborn in the Happy Course of Existence.

“The duties of teachers towards their pupils are:

1. Train them in the way they have been well trained.
2. Make them hold fast what is good for them.
3. Instruct them in the lore of every art.
4. Speak well of them among their friends and companions.
5. Provide for their safety in every quarter.”¹⁰

The duties of the teachers are to mould the character of their pupils. They should give religious instructions to their pupils and explain to them the disadvantages of wrong doing and the advantages of good actions. They should teach them such things as the Five Precepts, Maṅgala Sutta, Siṅgālovāda Sutta and such other things that will help to build up their character. They should teach them not to associate with the fools and to associate with the wise.

“The duties of a monk towards laymen are:

1. Restrain them from evil.
2. Exhort them to do good.
3. Always wish them well with loving-kindness.
4. Preach to them the Dhamma.
5. Correct and purify them. Show and explain to them the Right Path.¹⁰

There are over 60,000 monks in the country and if each monk undertakes to train one *micchādiṭṭhi*, over 60,000 holders of wrong views might be converted into the holders of right views. They should teach them the Five Precepts and explain to them the disadvantages of violating the Five Precepts and also advantages of observing them. They should teach them the fundamentals of Buddhism and give them religious discourses. They should teach them *kamma* and its resultant-effect, the Five Constituent Groups of Existence, the six Bases, the eighteen psycho-physical elements and the Four Noble Truths. They should also preach to them such Suttas as *Brahma-jāla Sutta*, *Sāmaññaphala Sutta*, etc. and teach them *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*, the three characteristics of beings. If each of the Bhikkhus undertakes to propagate the Buddha Dhamma to the people in his neighbourhood, it is to be hoped that the danger to the Dhamma will be averted soon.

Function of the Government:

With a view to avert the danger to the Dhamma, the Government appointed two Enquiry Committees, namely, (1) The National Education in Buddhist Monasteries Enquiry Committee and (2) The Teaching of Buddhist Literature in the School Enquiry Committee. The reports of both the Enquiry Committees have come out.

In pursuance of the report of the first Enquiry Committee, many primary schools have been opened in monasteries; but many more are needed in the districts. It is hoped that they will be opened in the near future in consultation with the presiding monks of the monasteries.

With regard to the report of the Second Enquiry Committee, we are given to understand that a book on Buddhism suitable for the students studying in the Middle and High Schools has been prepared and that the same has been prescribed as a text-book by the Education Department. But the scheme has not been implemented as yet, and Union Buddha Sāsana Council has also requested the Government to take suitable measures in this respect.

In the Universities:

It is agreeable hearing that the Chancellor of the University of Rangoon appointed a Committee to enquire into the teaching of Buddhism in the University, and that the University authorities have accepted the report made by that Enquiry Committee. Now, we have seen that Buddhism is taught in the Rangoon and Mandalay University Colleges as optional subjects. Students in the Intermediate Colleges at Bassein, Moulmein, Sandoway, and Magwe will also have the opportunity to take Buddhism as an optional subject. At a time when the Buddha-Dhamma has been attacked by the materialists, it is ardently hoped that the University authorities will make Buddhism a compulsory subject, and that the number of University students taking this subject will increase gradually.

Conclusion:

We sincerely believe that if parents, relatives, friends and teachers of the holders of wrong views, the Bhikkhus of the country and the Government work in full co-operation, the present danger to the Dhamma will be soon averted.

1 Sāmaññaphala Sutta published by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council.

2 "The Theory and Practice of Communism" by R.N. Carew Hunt, pp. 78-79.

3 Lenin on Religion.

4 Dhammapada, 5.

- 5 Dhammapada, verse 316.
 6 Dhammapada, verse 317.
 7 Dhammapada, verse 318.
 8 Dhammapada, verse 319.

9 Suttanta Piṭaka, Pāthika-vagga,
 Siṅgālovāda Sutta, p. 146, 6th Synod Edition.

10 Suttanta Piṭaka, Pāthika-vagga,
 Siṅgālovāda Sutta, p. 146, 6th Synod Edition.

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BUDDHISM *VERSUS* MATERIALISM

(By Myanaung U Tin)

Nowadays one hears so much about materialism. This word ‘materialism’ is bandied about everywhere, in all parts of the world. What does it mean? It means the opinion or belief that nothing exists but matter and its movements and modifications, also, that consciousness and will are wholly due to material agency. Materialism, in short, asserts the supremacy of matter over mind, or even as denying the existence of mind, save as a derivative quality of matter. Materialism is opposed to Idealism.

“According to the Idealists, ideas and not things are the ultimate substance of things. The world we seem to know, the world of fact and event, is but a shadowing of a more real world of pure idea. The thing is nothing, save as a pale and unsubstantial reflection of the idea. Mind not merely shapes matter to its will, but makes it out of nothing save itself. Real things or rather the appearances that masquerade as real things, owe such half-reality as is conceded to them solely to being emanations of mind or spirit. Consciousness, which is the attribute of mind, is therefore regarded as prior to existence in space and time, which is the attribute of things. There are no things: they are only thoughts thinking them.”¹

Karl Marx denounces ‘Crude materialism,’ which dismisses mind out of the universe. According to Marx, “the things we see and feel and experience directly with our minds and senses are real, but they are not static, they are constantly changing, becoming, waxing and waning, passing into something other than themselves, but their mutations are their own, and not reflections of anything external to themselves.”²

Hegel was an idealist. “In Hegel’s universe, the evolution of the Idea is accomplished dialectically by a ceaseless succession of ideological conflicts. Every idea that embodies a partial truth meets in the world its opposite and ‘contradiction’ which is also the

embodiment of a partial truth. Between the two there follows a conflict, out of which at length a new and higher idea, embodying new and still partial truth, emerges—to generate in its turn a new opposite and a new conflict. This struggle of ideas is fought out again in the dialectical form of thesis, antithesis and synthesis; and each synthesis becomes, in the moment of its victory, a thesis in terms of which a fresh struggle is to be fought. This process must go on until finally the goal is reached in that complete and insuperable thesis which embodies in itself the whole truth and nothing but the truth.”³

Marx denied the Hegelian-Platonic notion of the primacy of ‘ideas’ and asserted the primacy of things over ideas about them.

“According to Marx, the Hegelian dialectic is the right method of apprehending reality; but as Feuerbach has already shown, it needs to be applied directly to the world of things, and used directly as a clue to the interpretation of ordinary human experience. Marx took over, and applied directly to the world of human affairs, all the Hegelian paraphernalia of conflict—of theses, antitheses and syntheses succeeding one another in a ceaseless ascent of mankind towards more developed forms of social and economic organisation.”⁴ Marx’s conception of materialism, therefore, comes to be defined as Dialectical Materialism as against ‘crude materialism.’

“The Primacy of Matter and the Reality of Change are the basic ideas of Communism, but they were not originated by Communist theorists such as Marx and Engels. They borrowed them and wove them into a whole, thus forming the basis for a new conception of the world. Although stressing the idea of the Reality of the Change, Marx and especially Engels, stated that the laws of the material world were unchangeable and independent of human beings.”⁵

There is a strong temptation to discuss here Marx's "Materialist Conception of History" with its class struggles in every age. It must however be resisted. Suffice it to say that, whether materialism is 'crude' or 'dialectical,' its object is acquisition of material gains with no thought whatsoever for the after-life.

In the Dhammapada ⁶, the first two verses of *Yamaka-vagga* run as follows:

"Mind foreruns (all evil) conditions, mind is chief, mind-made are they; if one speaks or acts with wicked mind, because of that, pain pursues him, even as the wheel follows the hoofs of the drought-ox.

"Mind foreruns (all good) conditions, mind is chief, mind-made are they; if one speaks or acts with pure mind, because of that, happiness follows him even as the shadow that never leaves.

Again, the Buddha said concisely but most explicitly, "*Cittena niyate loko*" which means that the universe with all its animate and inanimate things is the resultant of the mental forces of all living beings.

To the Buddhists the primary question however is not of mind versus matter. Existence does not consist of a primary substance, whether material or spiritual but of a number of elements, *dhammā*. The classification of these and the problems of their inter-relations form the primary question.

"In striving for Clear Insight, that is, for a "vision of things as they really are," analysis comes methodically first. It is the first task to remove, by analysis, the basis for all the numerous false notions of substantial unities, be it the unquestioned conviction of the average man to be an identical Ego, be it the theological belief in an individual soul, or the various concepts of materialistic or idealistic systems."⁷

"The analysis shows the smallest accessible psychic unit, a moment of consciousness, is as little indivisible (a-tomos), uniform and

undifferentiated as the material atom of modern physics. Like the physical atom, a moment of consciousness is a correlational system of its factors, functions, energies or aspects, or what other name we may give to the 'components' of that hypothetical psychic unit. These 'components' are called simply *dhammā*, 'states.'"⁸

The foregoing passages are enough to show up the fundamental differences between Buddhism and Marxism or Dialectical Materialism or Communism, and to say that they are not irreconcilable is rather naive, and misleading.

Nothing is new under the sky. This is a materialistic age; so had there been such definite periods of materialism in history. Materialism was preached in India by some of the contemporaries of the Buddha; in the pre-Socratic and the post-Aristotelian Greece; in the 18th Century France; and in the 19th Century Germany (1850-80). But at no time in history has it been so organised and widespread as in these days.

In the *Sāmaññaphala Sutta, Dīgha Nikāya* Part 1 ⁹, King Ajātasattu of Magadha made a mention to the Buddha of six doctrines, the teachers of which he had met. The best known of the six is Nigaṇṭha Nātaputta, known to the Jains as Mahāvira. The Jains known to Buddhists as Nigaṇṭhas, are mentioned frequently in the Scriptures, and one of their chief doctrines, *kiriya-vāda*, the doctrine of action is fairly discussed. The rest stand merely as the representatives of certain doctrines, Pūraṇa Kassapa of the denial of moral action, Ajita of materialism and a denial of survival of the individual (annihilation), and Pakudha of another kind of denial of moral action, Makkhali Gosāla of fatalism and a denial of moral responsibility for actions. Sañjaya is a mere caricature of shallow irresolution, because he refused to make a positive or negative statement on any of the points raised by the king.

Of the views of these six teachers, two may be singled out for treatment with some

emphasis: Ajita's materialism, and the denial of moral action by three of them. According to Ajita, "a man consists of the four elements, and when he dies and is cremated the elements return to their places. Both fools and sages with the dissolution of the body are cut off and destroyed, and after death they are not." This is, to the Buddhists, the doctrine of *ucchedavāda*. "cutting off," annihilation. It is interesting to note that the materialists of today hold a similar view that a man is produced by a mother and father and his life ends with his death. Such a view prevails among all the materialists, be they dialectical or otherwise.

The materialists say, "The end justifies the means" and from this dictum can be adduced that they deny moral action, or disclaim any moral responsibility for their actions.

The *Brahmajāla Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya, Part 1)* ¹⁰ contains the fullest account of theories supposed to have been held by other schools. The views fall into two classes, speculations about the past and about the future: (A) There are those who hold views about the beginnings of things in eighteen ways. (B) There are those who hold views about the future in forty-four ways. Of these sixty-two views only two types may be dealt with here—(1) There are those who hold in seven ways the annihilation of the individual. This is the annihilation doctrine of Ajita (as also of the modern materialists) but it is elaborated by stating that extinction may take place (i) with the death of the body according to the materialistic view, or (ii) with the death of a "divine self" in the world of sense, or (iii) in the world of form, or (iv to vii) in one of the stages of the formless world. (2) There are those who hold that *Nirvana* consists in the enjoyment of this life in five ways, either in the pleasures of sense or in one of the four *jhānas* or trances. The Buddha, in the very first sermon, teaches that 'being addicted to sensual pleasures' is one of the two extremes to be avoided by the monk or by one who seeks *Nibbāna*. As pointed out by those who believe in the bliss of the first *jhāna*, "sensual delights are transitory; they involve pain, their very nature is to fluctuate. And grief,

lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair arise out of their inconsistency and change." The bliss of the four *jhānas* is considerable, but it is certainly, to the Buddha and his followers, not *Nibbāna*.

The goal of the Buddhists is the *Nibbāna* whereas the goal of the materialists is the acquisition and enjoyment of material gains. Granted that certain of Marx's doctrines and methods of social analysis throw some "clear light by which to seek an understanding both of certain key factors in the development of human societies and of fundamental economic and political problems of today," ¹¹ Marx's dialectical materialism, not to speak of other types of materialism, fails to take account of the fact that complete happiness is not achievable, in the visible world of living beings. It is not in the satisfaction of wants or needs, but in the removal of the cause of suffering associated with the world of desires, that real happiness can be found. Material needs there are, of course, but in acquiring them the means are as important as the end. The enjoyment of bad or immoral means will defeat the end, for the problems will, instead of coming to any final solutions, multiply, as are being witnessed all over the world in this materialistic age.

In every period of history, there had been struggles between the 'haves' and 'have-nots.' between the privileged and the proscribed. On account of greed, ill-will and ignorance, wrongs are perpetrated by the strong upon the weak, by the rich upon the poor, by the powerful upon the powerless, but a wrong cannot be righted by a wrong, for two wrongs do not make one right. Hence, the struggles for power and material gains go on forever, one leading to the other. Because of these recurring struggles, "*Loka Nibbāna*" or paradise on earth, which the materialists look forward to with great hope, zeal and enthusiasm, is still Utopian. What the Buddhists aspire to reach is not "*Loka Nibbāna*," although it is admittedly a pleasant dream, but to realise supramundane, *lokuttara-Nibbāna*, which alone is genuine peace and bliss. One of the first two conditions

required of them is to get rid of the view of annihilation, *uccheda-ditṭhi*, which is inextricably bound up with the doctrines of the materialists.

A question may be posed whether materialism prevails only among peoples where Marxism or Communism hold sway and not in Capitalist countries. In fact, there was materialism at all times and in all climes. In respect of this age, it is clear that materialism is much more in evidence in the Communist countries than elsewhere. Nevertheless, as Prince Bernard of Netherlands said at the Congress of World Faiths held recently in U.S.A., “if materialism enters the Communist countries by the front door, it slips into the non-Communist countries by the back-door—through the windows and down the chimney too, it may be added.”

As a matter of fact, it must be recognised that Marxism was begotten of Industrial Revolution and Capitalism, and the Communist and Socialist movements are nothing more nor less than reactions to the feudal and capitalist exploitations just as the nationalist movements are counter-blows to the imperial aggressions.

Lenin wrote, “The Marxist must be a materialist, that is, an enemy of religion. Religion is the opium of the people.” Whatever may be said of the Marxists and Communists, they can hardly be accused of hypocrisy. They are the avowed materialists. What is remarkable is that materialism exists, often with equal intensity, among the people who give lip-service to religion, or among the people who ‘officially’ profess a religion, a World Faith at that, but fail miserably in the practical application in their daily lives of the religious principles their Masters or Prophets have taught them. A bitter pill can be sugar-coated but is none the less injurious, if it contains harmful ingredients. These pseudo-religionists are equally dangerous, if not more, to society. They may be likened to a cat that professes to be pious and to observe the precept of refraining from killing while living

amongst mice, and captures one, day by day in a most treacherous way.

Materialists are obsessed with material gains, and in their struggles for things dear to them they have brought human civilization to the brink of total destruction. Two World Wars have come in our life-time, and it appears that the third is not far off;

In the *Kalaha-vivāda Sutta*, Of Contentions, (Sutta Nipāta, Chapter IV, II)¹², the Buddha teaches:

“From dear things rise contentions and disputes,

Grief with laments and envy in their trains
Pride and conceit with slander’s tongue in
wake:

Contentions and disputes are envy-linked,
And slander’s tongues are born amid
disputes.”

“Desire’s the source of dear things in the
world

And all the greed that in the world
prevails:

From that is hoping’s and fulfilment’s
source,

Which bring man to the common lot
beyond.”

“‘Tis pleasant,’ tis unpleasant!’ says the
world;

From trust in such there riseth up desire:

Man sees in forms becoming and decay

And shapes his theories about the world.”

“Anger and falsehood and perplexity,

These things prevail when those twin
states exist.

Let doubter in the path of knowledge
train!

These things by the recluse are taught—
he knows.”

This is exactly what is happening in the world. Desire is the source of all the troubles and sufferings. Get rid of it or, at least suppress

it. That is the way to peace and bliss, here and hereafter.

This short but objective exposition of Buddhism *vis-à-vis* materialism will testify how necessary it is on the part of our religious leaders and mentors—monks and laymen alike—to know the basic features of the modern creeds so that they can successfully guide their followers and pupils along the Right Path.

Materialism may be compared to a banyan tree which gradually swallows up a pagoda: creeping up stealthily at first, closing in and gripping at later stages, and finally lording over it, brings about its extinction.

With the inroads of materialism, both of Capitalist and Communist brands, the traditional and proper regard for the Buddhist way of life has been declining, and if the youth in whose hands lies the future destiny of their country or world are getting away from it, they are not solely to blame. In fact, their teachers and mentors, as also their parents and teachers, must be prepared to make an honest claim to a share, a lion's share perhaps, if they fail in their bounden duty to train them in the path of knowledge, that is, the Middle Path between the Annihilation-belief and the Eternity-belief.

1, 2, 3, 4 These quotations are from "The Meaning of Marxism" by G.D.H. Cole.

5 "The New Class," An analysis of the Communist System by Milovan Djilas.

6 English Translation by Bhikkhu Nārada of Ceylon. Khuddaka-Nikāya Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā. 1. Yamaka-vagga, Cakkhupālatheravatthu, verse no. 1, P. 2 and Maṭṭhakundhalīvatthu, verse no. 2, P. 23 of 6th Synod Edition.

7, 8 Abhidhamma Studies'~ by Bhikkhu Nyanaponika.

9 Discussion of Sāmaññaphala and Brahmajāla Suttas in "The History of Buddhist Thought" by Edward J. Thomas.

10 Brahmajāla Sutta and Sāmaññaphala Sutta translated by the English Editorial Department, Union Buddha Sāsana Council, Burma.

11 "The Meaning of Marxism," by G.D.H. Cole.

12 E. M. Hare's translation of Sutta Nipāta, "Woven Cadences of Early Buddhists"—The Sacred Books of The Buddhists Vol. XV.

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BUDDHISM AND THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION

By K.N. Jayatilleke, M.A. (Cantab.)

It is an historical fact that the scientific revolution which took its rise in the seventeenth century in the west was largely responsible for upsetting the earlier religious conception of the universe. Not only did science controvert the specific dogmas of Western religion, but it seemed to have undermined the foundations as well as the fundamental concepts implicit in the religious outlook on things.

The new cosmology of Copernicus, Galileo, and their successors altered the geocentric picture of the universe although it was pronounced to be "contrary to the Holy Scriptures." The new biology (the theory of evolution) upset the doctrines of the special creations and the fall of man. And the new psychology seemed to show that man's mind like his physical body worked on a pattern of causal law and that however deep one plumbed into its depths there was not discoverable in it an unchanging soul which governed its activities entirely.

But much more serious was the effect of the scientific outlook on the general religious attitude which involved a belief in a Personal God, in purpose and in the objectivity of moral values. Science made its discoveries and progressed quite comfortably on the assumption of universal causation without the necessity for teleological explanations or divine intervention. It dealt with an amoral universe indifferent to the aspirations of men. As among men, moral values like economic values were subjective since they were dependent on the needs and desires of men, and an ethical humanism was the best that could be hoped for. Even such an ethics need not be universal for, as anthropologists discovered, different societies seem to have followed different moral codes which suited them and ethical relativism was the scientific truth about the nature of moral values.

Of course there are those who still cling to the dogmas in the face of science or believe in them in a non-literal sense. But the position remains very much the same although people are no longer optimistic (after two world wars and in the throes of a third) about the ability of science to usher in a brave new world of peace and plenty. It has also been granted that mechanistic explanations of the universe need not necessarily rule out teleological ones. Science too has given up the crude materialism of the eighteenth century and scientists no longer attempt to explain the universe in machine models, while some scientists have denied that strict determinism holds in the sphere of the atom. But all this is still a far cry from religion.

What place would Buddhism occupy in such a context? Are its dogmas and attitudes no better or no worse than those of other religions? Some Western writers on religion seem to have assumed that this was so, but if one reads through the Buddhist texts, one begins to wonder whether the scientific revolution would have at all affected religion adversely if it had taken place in the context of Early Buddhism.

I say this because I find that Early Buddhism emphasizes the importance of the scientific outlook in dealing with the problems of morality and religion. Its specific 'dogmas' are said to be capable of verification. And its general account of the nature of man and the universe is one that accords with the findings of science rather than being at variance with them.

To take this last point first, we find for instance that the Early Buddhist conception of the cosmos is in essence similar to the modern conception of the universe. In the Pāli texts that have come down to us we are literally told that hundreds and thousands of suns and moons, earths, and higher worlds, constitute the minor world system, that a hundred

thousand times this is the middling world system, and a hundred thousand times the middling world system is the major world system. In modern terminology it would seem as if a minor world system (*cūḷanikā-loka-dhātu*) is a galaxy of which we observe about a hundred million through our best telescopes. The Buddhist conception of time is equally immense.

There is, of course, no theory of biological evolution as such mentioned in the Buddhist texts, but man and society as well as worlds are pictured as changing and evolving in accordance with causal laws.

Then in psychology we find Early Buddhism regarding man as a psycho-physical unit whose 'psyche' is not a changeless soul but a dynamic continuum composed of a conscious mind as well as an unconscious in which is stored the residua of emotionally charged memories going back to childhood as well as into past lives. Such a mind is said to be impelled to act under the influence of three types of desires—the desire for sense-gratification (*kāma-taṇhā*), the desire for self-preservation (*bhava-taṇhā*), and the desire for destruction (annihilation) (*vibhava-taṇhā*). Except for the belief in rebirth, this conception of the mind sounds very modern, and one cannot also fail to observe the parallel between the threefold desire of Buddhism and the Freudian conceptions of the eros, libido, and thanatos.

I have brought out these similarities not with the intention of showing that Buddhism teaches modern science but that the scientific revolution does not have the same adverse effect on Buddhism as it had on another religious tradition.

Now let us turn to the content of Buddhism as a theory about the nature and destiny of man. First of all it holds that the honest and impartial search for truth even in matters moral and religious is no bar to one's spiritual progress. On more than one occasion the Buddha has admonished honest seekers after the truth in the following words:

“You have raised a doubt in a situation in which you ought to suspend your judgment. Do not accept anything because it is rumoured so, because it is the traditional belief, because the majority hold to it, because it is found in the scriptures, because it is the product of metaphysical argument and speculation, or after a superficial investigation of facts, or because it conforms with one's inclinations, because it is authoritative or because of the prestige value of your teacher.”¹ Critical investigation and personal verification was to be the guide to true morality and religion. “If anyone were to speak ill of me, my doctrine and my order”, says the Buddha, “do not bear any ill-will towards him, be upset or perturbed at heart, for if you were to be so it will only cause you harm. If on the other hand anyone were to speak well of me, my doctrine and my order, do not be overjoyed, thrilled or elated at heart, for if so it will only be an obstacle in your way of forming a correct judgement as to whether the qualities praised in us are real and actually found in us”² A scientific outlook was thus considered necessary not only for discovering the truly moral and religious life but even for the continual self-examination which such a life demands.

The field of moral and religious phenomena is, again, not a realm of mystery but one in which the law of cause and effect holds. The principle of causal determination, namely, that A is the cause of B if “whenever an event A occurs, an event B occurs, and B does not occur unless A has occurred” is laid down by the Buddha in these very terms, and he further states that “he speaks only of causes and of things which arise from causes”. Thus all phenomena, including moral and spiritual experience (with the sole exception of Nibbāna which is not a conditioned phenomenon) are said to be conditioned by causal laws. Such laws are classified according to their sphere of operation as physical laws (*utuniyāma*), biological law (*bījaniyāma*), psychological laws (*cittaniyāma*), and moral and spiritual laws (*dhammaniyāma*).

Now there are three laws which are said to govern the life and destiny of the individual. They are the law of continuity which makes for the persistence of individuality (*bhava*), the law of moral retribution (*kamma*)—whereby morally good acts tend to result in pleasant consequences for the individual and morally evil acts in unpleasant consequences, and finally, the law of causal genesis (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) which is intended to explain the above laws.

The law of continuity, popularly known as rebirth, ensures the persistence of the dynamic unconscious of the individual with the death of the physical body. If this unconscious is not attained to higher worlds by the moral and spiritual development of the individual, it is said generally to persist in the spirit-sphere (*peta-visaya*) as a discarnate spirit, and subsequently gets reborn as a human being. Critics of Buddhism often suggest that this theory of rebirth is dogmatically accepted or taken for granted in Buddhism, but a careful study of the texts, would show that this is not the case.

Buddhism arose at a time when there was intense speculation on the problem of survival. There were also several schools of materialism all of which denied survival altogether and there were the sceptics who merely doubted the possibility of survival. Even experiments such as the weighing of the body immediately before and after death were performed in order to discover any evidence of survival. One of the materialist theories mentioned and dismissed by the Buddha was that consciousness was a by-product of the material elements being mixed up in certain proportions to form the organic body “in the same way in which the red colour is produced by suitable mixtures of betel, arecanut and lime” (none of which is red). Several such materialist theories as well as a number of one-life-after-death-theories, some of which held that the soul was conscious after death, others that it was unconscious (but existing), and yet others that it was super-conscious after death, are examined and disposed of by the Buddha. The

theory of rebirth is offered as one capable of being verified by developing the faculty of seeing our former births, a potentiality which is said to be within the reach of all of us.

Rebirth is therefore not a dogma to be accepted on faith but a hypothesis capable of being scientifically verified. The available evidence for rebirth today is roughly of two sorts. There is the spontaneous evidence of numerous people from both East and West who have claimed to remember their past lives, in some cases of which the memories have been confirmed by further investigation (e.g., The case of Shanti Devi, Illustrated Weekly of India, December 15, 1935; The case of Nellie Horster, Milwaukee Sentinel. September 25. 1892). There is also the more reliable and more abundant evidence of psychiatrists and psychologists who have discovered that under hypnotic trance the subjects' memories can be traced back not only to childhood but to prior earth lives as well, in some cases of which the facts have been verified (e.g. A. de Rochas. Les Vies Successives. Bibliotheque Charcomac, Paris; Ralph Shirley, The Problem of Rebirth, Rider & Co., London; Professor Theodore Flournoy, Des Indes à la plante Mars; Professor Charles E. Cory, “A Divided Self”: Article in journal of Abnormal Psychology Vol.XIV, 1919).

The law of moral retribution or *kamma* as taught in Buddhism has also been criticised on the grounds that it amounts to fatalism. This again is due to ignorance of the Buddhist teaching. Causation in Buddhism is carefully distinguished by the Buddha on the one hand from Strict Determinism, and on the other from Indeterminism, The Buddha argues that if everything was determined, then there would be no free will and no moral or spiritual life would be possible and we would be slaves of the past: and if on the other hand everything was indetermined (*adhicca-samuppanna*) or fortuitous, then again the moral and spiritual life would not be possible, for the cultivation of moral and spiritual values would not result in moral and spiritual growth. It is because the world is so constituted that everything is not

strictly determined or completely indetermined that the religious life is possible and desirable, according to the Buddha.

In order to explain rebirth and *kamma*, some of the Upanishadic thinkers who accepted these doctrines had recourse to the concept of *ātman* or a changeless soul. The individual continued to be the same because he had a permanent soul which was the agent of all the actions of the individual as well as the experiencer of their fruits. The Buddha was quick to see that such metaphysical entities explained nothing and that it was meaningless to assert or deny an unverifiable entity. He therefore rejected the concept of soul while maintaining the doctrine of the observable continuity of the individuality, and explained the above two laws of continuity and moral retribution in terms of all the verifiable phenomenal factors which determine the continued genesis and growth of the individual. This is too elaborate to be set out in detail. In brief, it describes how the individual is conditioned by his psychological past (going back to past lives which set the general tone of his character) and the genetic constitution of his body derived from his parents, and continues to act in and react with his environment accumulating the experiences of this life in his evolving consciousness (*saṃvattanika-viññāna*) which continues after the death of the body if the threefold desire in it be still active.

Personal and direct knowledge of the operation of these three laws constitutes the 'threefold knowledge' (*tissovijjā*) which the Buddha and his disciples claimed to have. The awareness of the fact that and the way in which one is being conditioned is said to result in one ceasing to be conditioned, a state which corresponds to the attainment of the unconditioned and supreme felicity of *Nibbāna*. This is salvation in Buddhism which is literally salvation from the bondage of finite conditioned existence.

Strictly, *Nibbāna* is said to be beyond description or conception, the reason given

being that it is a state so radically different from the type of existent things which we can conceive of that no meaningful description or definition of it can be given in conceptual terms. It is said that to say that one 'exists' in *Nibbāna* is wrong, for existence is a concept that applies to phenomenal things and has reference to space and time, for *Nibbāna* is "timeless, in that one cannot speak of it as being in the past, present or future," is not located in space and is not causally conditioned unlike all phenomenal things: but it is said to be equally wrong to say that one "does not exist" in *Nibbāna* since this implies a state of oblivion and annihilation. Nevertheless both positive as well as negative descriptions are given though they are not to be taken as exact definitions, as *Nibbāna* is "beyond the scope of logic."

Negatively it is the absence of all unhappiness, and all phenomenal existence is said to be infected with unhappiness; we are unhappy either because we experience mental or physical pain and have forebodings for the future, or because the pleasant experiences that we have are insecure and never lasting. This is to take a realistic view of life even in the face of the fact that as the Buddha says "human beings enjoy on the whole more pleasant experiences than unpleasant ones," and therefore it would not be correct to call it pessimism since it has nothing to do with wishful thinking. Positively *Nibbāna* is described as a state of "supreme felicity" (*paramaṃ sukhaṃ*).

The way of salvation is described as an eightfold path in which the first step is that of right understanding and living in accordance with the true philosophy of life, and as a result having right thoughts, right speech, right actions, right mode of living, right effort and right mindfulness, culminating in the growth of religious joy and the spiritual and intuitive awareness of right concentration. The full fruit of right contemplation, however, can be repeated by those giving up the active social life for the contemplative life. This meditative life is characterised by the stages of personal

mystical consciousness (*rūpa-jhāna*) and impersonal mystical consciousness (*arūpa-jhāna*) culminating in the attainment of *Nibbāna*. With the growth of his mind and spirit there are said to emerge certain faculties latent in him such as telepathy and clairvoyance and the ability to see his past lives. These cognitive faculties, as explained earlier, make it possible for the individual to realise the conditioned state in which he is, and thereby to attain the Unconditioned. Considering the requirements of the path, the Way to *Nibbāna* is therefore described as the culmination of a person's moral development (*sīla*), intuitional or spiritual development (*samādhi*) as well as his intellectual or cognitive development (*paññā*). The Buddha was once asked "whether he hoped to save one-third of the world, one half of the world or the whole world by offering this way of Salvation," to which he replied that he does not claim to save one-third of humanity, but that just as a skilful door-keeper guarding the only entrance to the palace knows that all those who seek the haven of this palace must enter by this door, even so all those in the past who were saved, who in the present are being saved and who in the future will be saved, have entered, are entering and all will enter by this door.

Such is the Teaching of Early Buddhism which is offered as a self-consistent scientific hypothesis touching the matters of religion and morality which each person can verify for himself. In fact, not being based on revelation, the fact that it has been verified by him and

hundreds of his disciples and is capable of being verified by every earnest seeker is put forward as the criterion of its truth by the Buddha. The empirical and pragmatic test of science is for the Buddha the test of true religion. The faith that he requires is the trust that is required to put to the test a certain philosophy of life by devoting one's entire being to living it every moment of one's life. And its worth is to be realised by its fruits thereof, by each person for himself. Like the scientists working in other fields, the Buddhas or the Perfect Ones have merely discovered these truths which are there for all time and have preached them for the good of the world. Each one has to seek and work out his own salvation; no one can save another and the Perfect Ones do merely point the way.³

It would be seen that such a religion is in accord with the temper and the findings of science so that Buddhism is not likely to be at variance with science so long as scientists confine themselves to their methodology and their respective fields without making a dogma of materialism.

1 Translation of (Kālāma-sutra). The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. II, No. 3. P. 1.

2 Dīghanikāya, Sīlakkhandhavagga Pāḷi, Brāhmajāla Sutta. P. 1, 6th. Synod Edition.

3 Dhammapada Commentary, 20 Maggavagga, 1. Pañcasatabhikkhuvatthu, Verse 276 Pg. 253, Sixth Synod Edition.

"Many a birth have I traversed in this round of lives and deaths, vainly seeking the builder of this house. Sorrowful is repeated birth. O house-builder, you are seen; never again shall you build the house. All your rafters are broken; your ridge-pole is shattered. My mind is gone to dissolution; I have attained the end of craving

Dhammapada, verses 153 & 154

THE WAY TO NIBBĀNA

Lecture by the Venerable Aggamahāpaṇḍita U Thittila
to the High Court Buddhist Association, Rangoon.

Part One

The title of our talk this afternoon is ‘The Way to Nibbāna—the way to the highest happiness.’

To sum up all the teachings of the Buddha, we have a stanza:—

To refrain from all evil

To do what is good,

To purify the mind

This is the teaching of all Buddhas.

—Dhammapada 183.¹

It is a very short stanza; yet it covers all the teachings of the Buddha. It embodies three stages on the Highway to Highest Happiness—Nibbāna. I think most of you know that stanza in Pāli and therefore I need not repeat it. There are three stages of developing ourselves towards this Highest Happiness. The order of development of ourselves in accordance with the Noble Eightfold Path (*Aṭṭha Maggāṅga-Majjhima Paṭipadā*) is classified into three groups, namely, *Sīla* (Morality), *Samādhi* (Concentration) and *Paññā* (Wisdom). The first two steps of the Noble Eightfold Path, Right Understanding, i.e., understanding of the nature of self, and the nature of the Universe, and Right Thought are grouped under *Paññā*, Wisdom; the next three, Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are grouped under *Sīla*, Morality. Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration are grouped under *Samādhi* (Concentration).

You may ask, as it has frequently been asked—Why three stages?—why not one stage only as a basis? The reason is we have three stages of defilements—*Kilesas*, (impurities) such as Lobha, Dosa and Moha, etc. Each of the 10 *Kilesas* (defilements) has three stages. For instance, greed or anger has three stages.

The first stage, the root, is called in Pāli as *Anusaya*. At this stage the defilements such as craving, anger, etc. are lying latent in each of us. They do not become manifest up to the level of thoughts, feelings and emotions, yet they lie latent in each of us. We can prove it. The fact that we can be made excited and angry shows that we have certain tendencies like anger, hatred— though for ordinary purposes we may be called ‘good’ people. We are good only when other people are good; otherwise we can be made angry and emotional. This proves that we have certain tendencies.

If one’s actions are according to the law of Morality, then that is Right Action. When your action not only is harmless but also helpful— of great service to you as well as to others then you can say your action is right. There are many things which we think to be good but they are only good to us, good only from our own standpoint.

In order to do right your mind must be free from selfishness, ill-will, hatred, jealousy, etc. When your mind is pure you can see and know things as they really are. Take for instance, the case of a pot which is filled with water. It is filled in three stages—the bottom, the middle and the topmost parts. *Anusaya* is the first or the root stage where the evil tendencies are lying latent. The fact that you can provoke a person into anger clearly shows that there is anger or the root of anger lying latent within him. This first stage is very quiet—so quiet that we seem to be sacrosanct.

Even at the second stage—*Pariyuṭṭhāna*, we are still in the realm of thoughts, feelings. The English saying ‘Silence is Golden’ is not always right. We may say that mere silence is sometimes far more dangerous than a big noise.

Then in the final stage they become fierce, dreadful, uncontrollable—both in words as well as in actions. (*Vīṭikkama*). That is the top part of our defilements. So *Anusaya*, *Pariyuṭṭhāna* and *Vīṭikkama*—these are the three stages of defilements.

Buddhism teaches a method of how to control, how to overcome these evil tendencies lying latent in us. To exercise this control we need three stages of training towards development—*Sīla*, *Samādhi*, and *Paññā*—Morality, Concentration, Insight.

First comes *Sīla*, Morality, the observance of precepts. Only the observance of precepts would enable one to overcome the last stage—the outward, visible stage of defilements and not the other two stages. It is like cutting a tree by the branches at the top. Morality can only control your words and actions, not your mind. It can only make us good ladies and gentlemen in the worldly wise sense and nor make us righteous people. Therefore, don't you say sometimes when you are in the process of observing the Eight Precepts "When I am out of this observance, you will know what I am". It is necessary for us to have three stages and the first is Morality to dispel the outward or visible stage of defilements that is in us.

But as there remain two stages undispeled by morality, the defilements, that we have got rid of, will grow up again and that very soon. Therefore, we need the second stage of training—*Samādhi* (Concentration or meditation) in order to enable us to dispel the second stage of defilements left undispeled by the practice of *Sīla*—Morality. Concentration is mind-control and mental culture. It is like cutting a tree by the trunk but as there remains the first or root stage undispeled the defilements will rise up again. But Concentration can clear away the defilements for a considerable time so that they will not rise again so soon. Clearing away of defilements by Morality—*Sīla* is called *Tadaṅga Pahāna* in *Pāḷi* (temporary suppression of defilements). Just like the temporary cutting away of the topmost

branches of a tree. Putting away of defilements by means of *Samādhi* (concentration) is called *Vikkhambhana Pahāna*. Concentration represents a more powerful and a higher mental culture. So it is far more effective than *Sīla*.

Coming to the third stage of development, *Paññā* (Wisdom):—

By means of developing one's insight, Wisdom, one is able to dispel the first stage—the *Anusaya* stage. It is like cutting a tree by the root so that it will never grow again. If defilements are cut by means of Wisdom such defilements will never rise again. This is called *Samuccheda Pahāna*.

As these three stages are interdependent and interrelated, *Sīla*, *Samādhi* and *Paññā* should be practised at the same time and not separately. Only to put them in order in the Dhamma we put down three stages separately but in practice we must practise them simultaneously. While trying to practise Concentration it is easier for you to live rightly and understand things rightly. In the same way, practice of right understanding or insight enables one to live rightly and concentrate rightly. This applies not only during periods of meditation but in one's daily life as well.

We should be rational beings. We should react to surroundings, circumstances and events of daily life reasonably and not instinctively or emotionally.

What we need in this world is to be rational—to try to exercise our reasoning powers but it is rather bad for the world that in most cases human beings judge according to their emotions or instincts.

"The standard of mental development is very low because the method of public education is wrong, the method of upbringing of the children is also wrong. I can prove how wrong it is. Even the nursery rhymes taught to the infants portrayed stories full of cruelty and killings without an atom of Love in them. Again, a group of moralists in the West went round the educational institutions in order to

test the psychology of the children studying there. A child was asked to make a sentence comprising the words ‘Mother’, ‘Baby’ and a ‘Cat’. The child answered, ‘The cat scratches the baby and the baby cries. Mummy gets angry and beats the cat’. The same question was asked in every school in the whole province and there was only one child who gave the following answer and was given a prize as it contained some love and affection that should exist between the different beings on earth. “The cat plays with the baby. Mummy is so pleased with the cat that she gives some milk to the cat to drink”.

I myself witnessed a woman who bought a cane from a seller and gave it to her little boy to play. The boy instead beat her with it. Many parents do not train their children to be good, tame and docile, but encourage them to be cruel, quarrelsome and aggressive by giving them toy revolvers, toy swords and air rifles. So the method of training the children in the present, scientific world is very wrong. In cinemas the most pictures shown are all wrong—they encourage shooting and the telling of lies.

What then is the Buddha’s method? First, Morality. These rules of Morality are firstly explained in the *Pañca-sīla*: Not, to kill, not to steal, not to have sexual misconduct, not to tell lies and not to take any intoxicating liquors and drugs. In Burma most people think that it is all well if you observe these five precepts only negatively. To merely abstain from killing is not good enough; so we should emphasize the positive aspect of the principle of non-killing—to have compassion on all beings including animals.

In the Discourse on *Mettā* we said *Adosa* to be negative aspect of it, but having *Adosa* is not all. In the practice of *Mettā* you have pity, compassion and loving-kindness towards all beings in the whole universe. So also, in the case of practising the Five Precepts. Non-killing is understood by many as not taking life, but this term ‘not to kill’ is broad enough to include all the kind and loving acts.

The second precept—taking what is not given to you freely. The standard of mental development in the present world—even of adults—seems to be much lower than an intelligent child of 12. It seems that the modern man, because of his physical body, cannot be styled as an animal, but by actions many people nowadays behave worse than animals. The positive aspect of this second precept of *Pañca-sīla* is not only to refrain from stealing but to offer material help. Then we do not need to have a big police force or courts to try criminal cases or a Bureau of Special Investigation.

Then comes ‘sexual misconduct.’

Then the next precept ‘*Musāvāda*’—to abstain from telling lies is very difficult to observe. Not to tell lies is the negative aspect. The positive aspect is not only to tell the truth but to use such words as are soothing, kindly and comforting to the people who hear them. As for telling lies, if the majority of our race do not tell lies, even these law courts might not be necessary.

As for the last of the five precepts—not to take intoxicating liquors and drugs—this has almost become an everyday habit taken at every meal in the civilized society.

Really no drinking of any liquor is necessary to keep one healthy mentally, morally and spiritually. Once in England my audience argued that since I have not taken any liquor in my life, since I am complete teetotaler, I cannot know the benefits derived from drinking. Drinking makes you lose control of your mind at least temporarily and those who drink to excess can be said to become quite mad. Taking liquor is against the law of nature and also the precept laid down by the Buddha. Drink causes distraction, dullness of mind. When done to excess you can become a stark lunatic. According to Buddhism, drink is the cause of all misery, all troubles. By taking drinks you become emotional and it is easy for any drunkard to tell lies or to commit murder, etc.

To conclude, I would like to ask the audience and the Sayadaws as well as the *Upāsakas* and *Upāsikas* to emphasize the positive aspects of these five precepts, the *Pañca-Sīla*. I would like to mention also that the Buddha's way of life is a system of cultivating ourselves—our higher consciousness. It is a way of a good, righteous and happy life. The Buddha says that when a good act is performed for several times there is a definite tendency to repeat this act. So in time it becomes a habit. Men are creatures of habit. By habit they become slaves of drink, slaves of gambling, slaves of lust and scores of other vices. Also I would like to quote a Japanese proverb "Man takes drink first, then the drink takes a drink and finally drink takes the man."

Any physical action, if repeated for sometime becomes a habit. In the same way, any thought which is allowed to rise up again and again gives rise to a definite tendency to reproduce that type of thought and therefore becomes a habit. The Buddha's method is to use the reproductive power of the mind as well as the body for the development of ourselves. By cultivating good habits of mind and body we develop ourselves fully. It is called *Pāramī* in *Pāli*, meaning fulfilment. In other words, to make counter habits whenever you have a tendency to be angry, then you can develop mental states of loving-kindness and compassion so that these mental states will be repeated again and again. And in the end they will become habits so much so that you will never entertain thoughts of hatred, anger, jealousy and the like. These evil tendencies will disappear before the tendencies of loving-kindness, even as the darkness of the night fades away before the dawn of the rising sun. This is the method given by the Buddha. It is a practical system of changing and developing our inner selves.

Part Two

It is a continuation of our discussion on the three stages of mental development. They are: *Sīla* (conduct), *Samādhi* (concentration) and

Paññā (wisdom). We dealt with the first stage at the last lecture. This time I am going to deal briefly with concentration (*Samādhi*) which is meditation and also wisdom. These are rather serious, because when we come to practise concentration, we usually find that it is a dull process. Meditation is not to be talked about, but to do, to practise. You are not willing to do things normally. To talk about things is very easy. To organize things is very easy. Some people think it needs a genius to organize; but to do is far more difficult than even to organize.

This afternoon I am going to read from the book that I have written on the subject of concentration and how to go about meditation.

CONCENTRATION (*SAMĀDHI*)

The spiritual man, having been equipped with Morality and mastery of the senses, is inclined to develop higher and more lasting happiness (i.e. than worldly happiness) by concentration (*samādhi*) control and culture of the mind, the second stage on the path to Nibbāna.

Concentration is mental culture without which we cannot attain Wisdom. By concentration we can acquire happiness—a happiness which is much higher than ordinary worldly happiness. Worldly happiness is dependent. It needs the support and co-operation of a partner. Higher mental happiness does not require any external help or any partner. "This happiness can be attained through *Jhānas*." *Jhāna* (Skr. dhyna) is derived from the root *Jhe*, to think closely of an object or to burn adverse things, *nivarana*, hindrances to spiritual progress. *Jhāna* has been translated as trance, absorption or ecstasy, but it is a special ultra-mundane experience.

In Burma we do not talk about *Jhāna*. We talk very much about *Vipassanā*. *Samaṭha* (meditation, calm) for *Jhāna* is not thought much of in Burma because the Burmans think that it is not the highest but only the second stage to Nibbāna. That is one reason. Another

reason is that those who are interested in *Vipassanā* meditation think that it is a short cut to Nibbāna. In some cases, it is thought that it is a matter of days or a few weeks' practice that one can attain Nibbāna. They like to go to Nibbāna straightaway without waiting for a long time. They have three days' courses, seven days' courses for it. To attain *Jhāna* you have to prove it by performing a miracle—walk on water, sit on water, raise the dead. But to attain Nibbāna in the stage of *Sotāpanna* needs no proof. That is still another reason why people are interested in *Vipassanā*.

The Buddha himself was highly qualified in the *Jhānas*. I would like to talk something about these *Jhānas*. Some people suggest that if we are going to spread Buddhism effectively throughout the world, we must do something different from what we have done now. By *Jhāna* you are able to fly up in the sky. You can appear and disappear in the air. So, some people say that Buddhism can be spread far quicker than otherwise if we can prove Buddhism through the *Jhānas*. Any way, these *Jhānas* are a part of the Buddha's teaching. *Jhāna* means to think, to concentrate on the object to overcome Hindrances. *Jhāna* also means to burn the adverse things, *nivaraṇa*, Hindrances to spiritual progress. From this same derivative we have “Jhar-pa-na” in the case of death, decay (funeral). *Jhāna* has been translated as trance, absorption or ecstasy, but it is a kind of spiritual experience, ultra-mundane experience.

The spiritual man selects one of the forty objects enumerated in the Visuddhi-magga. The object which he selects should appeal most to his temperament. such as emotion, anger and so on. Those forty objects are divided into six groups, according to the types of temperament of the people. So if you are going to practise concentration, meditation, for the attainment of *Jhāna* you will have to choose one of the objects suitable for your temperament.

The method is fully explained in the Visuddhi-magga. This object is called

Parikammanimitta, preliminary object. He concentrates on this object for some time, maybe some days, weeks, months, some years, until he is able to visualise the object without any difficulty. When he is able to visualise the object without looking at it, he is to continue concentration on this visualised object, *Uggahanimitta*, until he develops it into conceptualised object, *Paṭibhāganimitta*. At this stage the experienced spiritual man is said to be in possession of proximate concentration, *Upacāra-samādhi*, and to overcome temporarily the five Hindrances (*nivaraṇa*), namely, sensual desire, hatred, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubts.

To illustrate what we have said. If you are going to take our *Pathavī-kasiṇa* (device of earth) as your object, you get hold of a circle made of clay which is called *Kasiṇa*. In English it is translated as a hypnotic circle which is not very correct. So you get a circle of clay about one span and four fingers. You can make it as smooth as possible and paint it with the colour of the dawn. This circle is placed before you about two and a half cubits away. Some people do this practice even in the West at present. In India it was done long ago and therefore it is very common. The people in the West try to practise it just to see if it works. By this practice some have acquired a very strong power of concentration. So you prepare that circle, place it in front of you at a convenient distance so that you can look at it at your ease. While looking at it you must keep your head, neck, and back erect. The purpose is to keep your mind with the circle. Ordinarily, without concentration you do not know where your mind is. Any way you try to concentrate on it, on this physical object, *Parikammanimitta*. As explained in the book, it may take day after day, month after month, year after year, until you are able to visualise it without the physical object.

The Buddha advised us not to take anything too seriously. You must not strain your mental faculty. You must consider yourself as if you are at play, enjoying it with a cheerful mind just as some young people enjoy witnessing a

cinema show. At the same time the Buddha advised us not to keep our minds in a very light spirit. You do it for the sake of helping other people to add your happiness to the happiness of others. Taken in this spirit, even the sweeping of the floor can become interesting. So also in meditation you must think of it as if you are at play so that it becomes interesting, because it is a good thing to do, a necessary thing to do. Unless we clear our minds like this we can never practise the first stages of the Dhamma, leave alone attaining Nibbāna, the highest goal in Buddhism.

So you concentrate on this physical object until you can visualise it without the object. This visualisation in *Pāli* is called *Uggahanimitta*. It is the exact replica of the object seen. When you come to this stage you do not require the physical object. Then continue your concentration on the visualised object. The difference between the first object and the second object is the first being physical and the other mental. But it is exactly the same. You carry on concentrating until this object becomes bright, shining like a star. The difference between the second and the third stages is that in the second you see the object with certain defects, but in the third stage there is no defect whatsoever. It is like a shining star. It is called *Paṭibhāganimitta*, conceptualised object. At this stage the experienced spiritual man is said to be in possession of proximate concentration, *Upacāra-samādhi*, and to overcome temporarily the five Hindrances (*nivarana*), namely, sensual desires, hatred, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubts.

His concentration gradually becomes so enhanced that he is about to attain *Jhāna*. At this stage he is said to be in possession of *Appanā Samādhi*. He eventually attains the five stages of *Jhāna* step by step, and it is when he reaches the fifth stage of *Jhāna* that he can easily develop the five supernormal powers (Abhiññā— Celestial Eye (*Dibbacakkhu*), Celestial Ear (*Dibbasota*), reminiscence of past births (*Pubbe-*

nivāsānussati-Ñāṇa), reading thoughts of others (*Paracitta-vijāñāṇa*) and various psychic powers (Iddhividha). By these powers you can see things which the naked eye is not capable of seeing—no matter how far the objects are. There is no barrier which can prevent you from seeing them. You can see through mountains. You can see long long distances without any obstructions in between. Even today there are Yogis in India who possess these supernormal powers. This *Jhāna* practice is not necessarily confined to Buddhism. Hindus also practise it. In Buddhism the practice of the *Jhāna* is a great help toward the attainment of Nibbāna. Those who have reached such high level of experience as Jhānas have their minds highly refined and it is easier for them to attain the *lokuttara* stages of development, yet they are not entirely free from all evil tendencies—the reason is that concentration, as has been stated above, can overcome only the second stage of defilement temporarily. As there remains the first stage untouched, undispelled, the passions which have been inhibited by concentration would arise again.

The five supernormal powers (*Abhiññā*) are sometimes called occult or hidden or secret power in English. In Buddhism they cannot be called occult powers because these powers are for every one to possess, if they practise hard enough.

Morality makes a man gentle in his words and deeds, concentration controls the mind, makes him calm, serene and steady. Wisdom or Insight (*Paññā*), the third and final stage, enables him to overcome all the defilements completely. As a tree which is destroyed by the root will never grow, even so the defilements which are annihilated by Wisdom (*Paññā*) will never rise again.

The spiritual man who has reached the third stage to the path to *Nibbāna* tries to understand the real nature of his self and that of the things of the world in general. With his highly purified mind he begins to realise that there is no ego-principle or persistent identity of a

“self” in either internal or external phenomena. He perceives that both mind and matter which constitute his personality are in a state of constant flux, and that all conditioned things are impermanent (*Anicca*), subject to suffering (*Dukkha*), and void of self-existence (*Anattā*). To him then comes the knowledge that every form of worldly pleasure is only a prelude to pain, and that everything that is in a state of flux cannot be the source of real, permanent happiness.

The aspirant then concentrates on the three characteristics of existence, namely, transiency (*Anicca*), suffering (*Dukkha*), and void of ego or self-existence (*Anattā*). Having neither attachment nor aversion for any worldly things, he intensely keeps on developing insight into both internal and external phenomena until he eliminates three Fetters, namely, Self-illusion (*Sakkāya-diṭṭhi*), Doubts (*Vicikicchā*), and Clinging to vain rites and rituals (*Sīlabbataparāmāsa*.) It is only when he destroys completely these three fetters that he realises *Nibbāna*, his ultimate goal, for the first time in his existence. At this stage he is called a *Sotāpanna*, one who has entered the stream, the Path that leads to *Nibbāna*. The Buddha has described this stage as follows:—

More than any earthly power,
More than all the joys of heaven;
More than rule over all the world,
Is the entrance to the Stream. ²

Symbolically one who has reached the first Aryan stage is said to have entered the stream because just as the water of a river never comes backwards towards its source, but flows steadily and inevitably towards the ocean, so,

rapidly and with certainty, the aspirant will attain his final enlightenment. As he, however, has not eradicated the remaining seven fetters, he may be reborn seven times at the most.

When the aspirant develops deeper insight and weakens two more fetters, namely, Sensual Craving (*Kāma rāga*) and Ill-will (*Paṭigha*) he becomes a *Sakadāgāmi*. Once-returner. He is so called because he is reborn in the world of desires (*Kāma loka*) only once if he does not obtain final release in this present life.

The third stage is that of *Anāgāmi*, Non-returner, who completely discards the above two fetters. He will not be reborn in this world or any of the realms of sense-pleasure, but he, if he does not attain his final enlightenment in this life, will be at death reborn in one of the higher, suitable planes, and from thence pass into *Nibbāna*.

The fourth stage is that of *Arahat*, perfected saint, who completely annihilates the remaining five fetters, namely, Craving for existence in the world of form (*Rūpa-rāga*), Craving for existence in the immaterial world (*Arūpa-rāga*), Pride and Conceit (*Māna*), Restlessness (*Uddhacca*) and Ignorance (*Avijjā*). He then realises that rebirth is exhausted, the Holy life is fulfilled and what was to be done has been done. This is the highest, holiest peace. The *Arahat* stands on heights more than celestial realising the unutterable bliss of *Nibbāna*.

1 Khuddaka Nikāya Dhammapad-
aṭṭhakathā 14 Buddhavagga, 4-
Ānandatherapañhā vatthu; verse 183, P. 153,
6th Synod Edition.

2 Dhammapada, Verse 178.

“Just as a stick, brethren, thrown up into the air, falls now on the butt-end, now on its side, now on its tip, even so do beings, cloaked in ignorance, tied by craving, running on, wandering, go now from this world to the other world, now from the other world to this.”

MAṄGALĀ

(FROM SUPERSTITION TO KNOWLEDGE)

By U Sein Nyo Tun, Late of the Indian Civil Service.

Maṅgalā in Pāli means auspicious, prosperous, lucky, festive. *Maṅgalāṃ* means good omen, auspices, festivity. *Maṅgalāṃ karoti* means to perform an auspicious ceremony such as sprinkling with grains of rice, etc., or to get married. *Maṅgalāṃ vadati* means to bestow blessings. *Nāma karaṇa maṅgalā* means the ceremony of giving a name. *Āhāra paribhoga maṅgalā* means the ceremony of taking solid food. *Kaṇṇa vijjhana maṅgalā* means the ceremony of piercing the ears. (See Pāli Text Society's Pāli-English Dictionary by Rhys Davids and Stede).

In Burma, the word *maṅgalā* is so commonly and widely used that it has become a Burmese word. To Burmans, it needs neither explanation nor translation, and wherever it is used it conveys the meaning of luck, auspice, ceremonial, as in its Pāli usage.

All these meanings give the positive aspect, that is, the aspect of inducing or creating luck, prosperity, fulfilment of wishes, etc. There is however, a negative aspect to them, that is, the aspect of the prevention of or the protection from dangers, ill-luck, and misfortunes. In none of the meanings given above is this aspect mentioned, but nevertheless it is present in all of them. Thus, in the performance of a marriage ceremony, for example, there is not only the cherished hope that the marriage would be successful and prosperous, but also the hope that the couple would not be separated through the vicissitudes of life, or through the untimely death of one of the partners, or through the machinations of persons of ill-will or authority, or through other misfortunes.

There is in men the world over an ingrained desire to avoid evils and misfortunes on the one hand, and to acquire happiness and prosperity on the other. The two are

inseparable, but of them the former appears to be more deep seated, for there seems to be less evidence among mankind of a desire for the moon than a desire to avoid sudden misfortunes and death. This characteristic is more pronounced in primitive communities than in modern human groups, because primitive men are less equipped to counter the many natural enemies and dangers that surround them than are modern men. The necessity to avoid an imminent misfortune or to dispel one that is already in the course of visitation is pressing, and by comparison is more urgent than the necessity to increase happiness and prosperity.

Thus have men turned to all manners of protection and refuges, to trees and mountains, to taboos and totems, to kismets and amulets, to signs and omens, to ceremonials and rituals, and to astrology and occult practices. They have turned to these refuges because they did not understand the elemental forces (oft-times also man-made forces) that surrounded them, and the intensity of the anxiety that they felt led them to turn for succour to all species of accidental and coincidental agencies that appeared to aid them in the appeasement of their troubled minds. Fear, in human nature, has never been a factor contributing towards logical reason, and in this instance has led to what are known today as superstitious practices.

With the development of knowledge, and the consequent increase in understanding by men of the forces of nature to which they are willy-nilly subject, together with an increased ability to control those forces towards the creation of better security of life as also of better amenities, the dependence on these superstitious beliefs and practices has waned.

But in spite of the phenomenal strides that modern knowledge has made especially within the last half century, these superstitions beliefs have not been entirely eradicated from the mental structure of modern men, and this is true of them even in such recognised highly developed and advanced countries as Great Britain and the United States.

Thus do we still hear of thirteen being an unlucky number, of Friday the thirteenth being especially unlucky for sailors and airmen, of the misfortunes attendant on walking under a ladder, or of spilling salt at table, or of breaking a mirror. We have further evidences in the popularity of gypsies as soothsayers, in fortune-telling booths still appearing as regular and popular features at fairs and amusement parks, and in fortune-telling, crystal gazing, and palmistry advertisements in the more popular magazines. We have evidences too in the common practice of keeping mascots by sailors on board ships, and by soldiers in regiments.

An enumeration of these vestiges of superstition among modern educated communities is bound to be considerable. Superstition is not dead even in the most highly developed of human communities of the present day, and this is in spite of the ridicule showered on it by informed public opinion, and in spite of legislative measures against fortune-telling and the other allied practices.

It is possible that these remnants of superstition (if remnants they be) are the continuation of racial habits, for habits once formed either in individuals or in human groups are not easily and quickly eradicated. It is also possible that they are a recrudescence induced by man-made forms of insecurity such as wide-spread unemployment, economic dislocations, world wars, and those modern forms of organized and regimental tyranny known as Fascism, Totalitarianism, Dictatorship, and Communism, not excluding many other similar but nondescript variations and gradations. Against these elephantine bogeys the individual feels helpless. But then,

it cannot be ignored that modern knowledge, despite its unprecedented advancement, is incomplete and does not provide an answer to many of the innumerable questions that arise in an individual. There are still large and important gaps in modern knowledge which remain unexplored, and in regard to which, little serious and systematic attempt is as yet being made to explore. Such are fields, for example, of the reaches of the mind beyond the phenomenal place, of direct non-phenomenal relations between mind and mind, and of the direct influence of the mind over physical and material phenomena.

For men to be able to provide answers to all the questions that confront individuals, they need to seek knowledge beyond the phenomenal world. But modern science, on which is based modern knowledge, is predominantly materialistic in its outlook and severely limited in its methods. Its achievements excite the wonder and admiration of the world, but so does the simple lantern slide in a simple community, and the quality of the spectacular is no reliable guide by which to judge its ability to solve all the problems that confront men as individuals. Scientific circles themselves are beginning to realise the limitations of science, and are admitting that science neither has the ability nor intends to probe into the ultimate reality of things, meaning thereby that other means would have to be found to supplement existing knowledge and close the gaps that it has left unfilled. What remains is for the non-scientific world at large—that is, for those men and women not immediately and intimately engaged in scientific research—to realise this fact. Science needs to be supplemented by further knowledge of a non-scientific nature, and the vacuum left by science with regard to the ends and aims of life needs to be filled by this further knowledge, and in this an important aspect comprises the need for correcting and controlling the mental reactions that science and its achievements have produced in men of the present day.

But if science has not succeeded in dispelling the unreasoning fears of men created by an ignorance of the conditions of life under which they live, the complete method of how to banish the superstitious beliefs that have afflicted men of all ages and of all climes was given by the Buddha two thousand, five hundred years ago in answer to a specific question put to him by a deva acting as the mouth-piece and agent of both men and gods. That reply is embodied in what is now known as the *Maṅgalā Sutta*. If civilised men today are still as rabidly superstitious as their primitive brethren differing from them only in the matter of degree, it is because they have failed to apply to their thoughts and actions the method that the Buddha revealed. Those who have applied that method have transcended superstition and ignorance, and gone the way of all Arahats—the way to unalloyed tranquillity and bliss—Nibbāna.

The India of the Buddhas day was a hub of mental activity. There were many thinkers, philosophers, and other learned men engaged in probing the secrets and the purposes of life. On the other hand, there also existed much ignorance and superstition among the common people leading to many misdirected rituals and ceremonials. It is inevitable that the thinkers and teachers applied themselves to these practices, and discussions arose as to their rightness and propriety. It is stated in the introduction to the *Maṅgalā Sutta* that these discussions led to controversies, and three groups arose each supporting, a certain group of signs or omens as auspicious. Apparently, the discussions were not the outcome of ultimate knowledge, but were of a speculative nature which could not lead to any finality about the truth.

The *Diṭṭha Maṅgalika* group took the stand that from evidence and experience objects of sight constituted the best auspices. The *Suta Maṅgalika* group put forth the opinion that sounds were the most auspicious. The *Muta Maṅgalika* group placed their weight behind *muta* signs which covers taste, smell, and touch.

In time, the controversy between the three groups became heated and contagious. It spread to all men, and even *devas* and *brahmās* began to take sides. At length, *Sakka*, the King of the *Tāvātimsa deva loka*, deputed a *deva* to approach the Buddha and pose to him the question as to what constitutes *maṅgalā*. It is in answer to this question that the Buddha propounded the *Maṅgalā Sutta*.

Here, it may be observed, that there are several variations in the English translations of the word *maṅgalā* in the *Maṅgalā Sutta*. The most common rendering is blessing. It has also been translated as beatitude, happiness, and good luck. It seems likely, however, that when the *deva* put his question to the Buddha, *maṅgalā* was used within the meaning of the usage current at the time. It is apparent that this current usage was associated with superstition.

The Buddha's reply was characteristic of Him and His teachings. He did not pause to refute the erroneous nature of the current beliefs, but his reply as to what constituted *maṅgalā* gave a totally different interpretation to the then existing concepts. Whereas men in those days looked to external signs and symbols for protection from evils and promotion of prosperity, the Buddha indicated in unmistakable terms that one's own welfare was entirely dependent on oneself that is, on one's own deeds and thoughts. He indicated that the present deserts of a man or a being is dependent both on his present as well as his past deeds—deeds that he performed not only in this life but in his past *samsāra*—but that as far as the future is concerned he pointed out the great importance that present acts played in the formulation of one's own welfare.

The *Maṅgalā Sutta* is an epitome of all the Buddha's teachings. Nowhere else in the *Tipiṭaka* is there such a condensation which completely represents all the aspects and stages of the *Buddha Dhamma*.

It is a comprehensive guide both for the *lokiya* (worldly) and the *lokuttara* (transcending the worldly). It applies to

everybody without distinction—to Kings, statesmen, politicians, businessmen, administrators, clerks, workmen, non-workers, to the old, the middle-aged, and the young.

This comprehensiveness of the *Maṅgalā Sutta* is as it should be. The illogical, unreasonable, and superstitious beliefs characteristic of men of all climes and all ages not excluding our highly developed scientific age—leading to erroneous, and oft-times harmful acts, are the outcome of incomplete knowledge either of the present or of the past and future. If unreason and superstition are to be subdued right down to their latent tendencies, a complete exposition of knowledge, or how it may be acquired becomes essential. The Buddha's inimitable genius lies in the fact that He provided this exposition in thirty-eight succinct and clear-cut courses of action, easily grasped by all alike—the unlearned as well as the highly intellectual.

In order that knowledge may be comprehensive, it must cover both the *lokiya* and the *lokuttara*. Thus, two aspects of *maṅgalā* emerge, namely:

1. *Lokiya maṅgalā*, and
2. *Lokuttara maṅgalā*

The *lokiya maṅgalā* comprises the superstitious practices, together with the semi-superstitious and all other acts based on purely worldly knowledge—knowledge which go by the names of the arts and the sciences. From a purely worldly point of view, the actions based on the experimental and the more logical branches of knowledge may appear to be in a class far removed from the superstitious acts, but inasmuch as the basis of both is incomplete knowledge, the two are of the same class from the *lokuttara* point of view, especially when in *samsāra* it is possible for a highly erudite personage in one existence to become an ignoramus in another.

From the Buddhist point of view, a more significant distinction, within *lokiya maṅgalā* than the differentiation between superstition

and science seems to be to divide *lokiya maṅgalā* into:

a. Those aiming at securing results within a life-time.

b. Those aiming at securing results in *samsāra*. Many Buddhists addicted to what are known as *kotūhala maṅgalā*, which includes such acts as choosing an auspicious date, or time, or direction, fall within the former. They may appease their consciences outwardly by saying that the acts they do in the pursuit of these *kotūhala maṅgalā* are *kusala kammās*, but then they should apply serious thought to the fact that the habitual application of one's mind to immediate aims shortens the outlook, and induces one away not only from the more long-term aims of *samsāra* but also from *Nibbāna* itself, and *Nibbāna* has never been attained by anyone who has not specifically aimed at it.

From the Buddha's point of view, the only true *maṅgalā* is the *lokuttara maṅgalā*, for there is no true happiness in this or any of the other worlds. The Buddha did not entirely reject *lokiya maṅgalā*, but it must be used as a basis for the acquisition of the ultimate truth—the comprehensive knowledge. But the acquisition of this comprehensive knowledge is no easy task, and the Buddha can but show the way. Widespread ignorance of the truths of life not only persists, but is actually becoming more general. The appearance of *Ariyas* is becoming more rare, while the great calamity of modern times—global war—is an ever present threat. While the great intellectuals of human kind remain content at the halfway house of the peak of worldly knowledge, the rest of mankind prefer to tread the easier path of satisfying their sensual inclinations. In this atmosphere, it seems that it cannot be very long before the Buddha's way to comprehensive knowledge is shelved to disappear ultimately until a new Buddha appears in the world many aeons hence. Let those who have ears, therefore, repose trust and summon the effort to enter the gates of wisdom before it is too late.

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As to this what think you, brethren? Which is greater, this little sand lifted on my finger-nail, or this great earth? This lord, is greater, even this great earth. A trifle is the little sand lifted by the Exalted One on to his finger-nail. It cannot form a fraction when compared with the great earth—this little sand lifted by the Exalted One on to his finger-nail.

Even so, brethren, are the beings that are reborn among humans few in number as against the greater number that are reborn in the four Lower Worlds.

—*Samyutta Nikāya*, XX. 5.

NOT BY FAITH ALONE

“The Arahāt who has destroyed the fluxions, lived the life, done what was to be done, set down the burden, won self-weal, shattered life’s fetter and is freed by Perfect Knowledge, has applied himself to six things: to dispassion, detachment, harmlessness, destroying craving, destroying grasping and to non-delusion.

Perhaps some venerable person may think: “Could it be that this venerable man has applied himself to dispassion relying on mere faith alone?” Let him not think so. The fluxion-freed who has lived the life, done what was to be done, who sees naught in himself to be done, naught to be added to what has been done, by the fact of being passionless, has applied himself to dispassion by destroying passion; by the fact of being without hatred, has applied himself to dispassion by destroying hatred; by the fact of being without delusion, has applied himself to dispassion by destroying delusion.”

Āṅguttara Nikāya.

Book of the Sixes.

OMNISCIENCE OF THE BUDDHA

By Venerable Nārada Mahāthera.

“*Buddho Sabbaññutañāno*”

(The Buddha is the All-knowing One).

Omniscience is one of the chief attributes of the Buddha. It is the six kinds of super-knowledge that are peculiar only to the Buddha.

At the foot of the Bodhi-tree the Buddha realised things as they truly are and gained Enlightenment. Along with this intuitive wisdom, He obtained the key to the understanding of everything that should be known. This knowledge He acquired by His own effort in a countless series of rebirths.

He has taught us only an infinitesimal part of what He knew. His mission was to teach that which is essential for our emancipation. On one occasion, as the Buddha was passing through a forest He took a handful of leaves and declared that what He had taught was comparable to the leaves in his hand and what He had not taught was comparable to the remaining leaves in the forest. The vastness of His unrevealed knowledge which is irrelevant to His noble ideal could easily be gauged.

In a certain discourse the Buddha has denied the kind of omniscience attributed to Nigaṅṭha Nātaputta, the leader of the Jains. The omniscience of this spiritual teacher was similar to “the so-called omniscience” of the Christian God-Creator in that they could see everything at all times. The Buddha possessed no such power. He was able to see only one thing at a particular time. When, for instance a dark room is lit everything becomes visible; but you see only the desired object. In the same way with His lamp of omniscience He illuminates the whole world, but He sees only that particular thing which He wishes to see.

The Pāḷi term (*Sabba*) embraces all the three worlds, namely, *Sattaloka*, the world of beings, *Saṅkhāraloka*, the world of formations, and *Okāsaloka*, the world of space. The

Buddha is called *Sabbaññū* because He has understood all these three worlds relating to the past, the present, and the future.

According to the *Paṭisambhidāmagga* commentary the Buddha’s omniscience pertains to the following five fields of knowledge which include everything mundane and supramundane, namely, 1. *Saṅkhāra* (formations), 2. *Vikāra* (change; alteration), 3. *Lakkhaṇa* (characteristics), 4. *Nibbāna*, and 5. *Paññatti* (concepts and ideas).

1. *Saṅkhāra* —(*Sam—kara*, to do). Everything that is conditioned or everything that has risen from a cause belongs to this group.

Everything cosmic is conditioned by a cause or causes. There are only two things that are unconditioned. They are space which in itself is nothingness and *Nibbāna* which is a supramundane state.

The so-called being is composed of mind and matter which are conditioned by causes. Amongst these causes are *Kamma*, consciousness (*Citta*), heat (*Utu*), and food (*Āhāra*). It may be mentioned that Buddhists do not attribute everything to *Kamma*. It is only one of the chief causes.

There are 71 divisions of mind and matter which comprise *Saṅkhāra*. They are:—

MATTER.—

The Four Chief Elements:

1. *Pathavī* —the element of extension.
2. *Āpo* —the element of cohesion.
3. *Tejo* —the element of heat.
4. *Vāyo* —the element of motion.

These four elements are forces, and are fundamental units of matter. They are

interrelated and inseparable, but their composition varies. One element may preponderate over the other. For instance, in earth, the element of extension predominates; in water, cohesion; in fire, heat; in air, motion.

These four elements are known as the Great Essentials (*Mahābhūta Rūpa*).

The five kinds of Sensitive Material Qualities (*Pasāda Rūpa*):

5. eye (*cakkhu*)—Here it does not mean the naked eye, but the faculty of sight. 6. ear (*sota*), 7. nose (*ghāna*), 8. tongue (*jivhā*), and 9. body (*kāya*).

The five kinds of Sense-fields (*Āyatana*).

10. visible form (*rūpa*)—this includes both shape and colour. 11. sound (*saddā*), 12. odour (*gandha*), 13. flavour (*rasa*), 14. masculinity (*pumbhāva*), 15. femininity (*itthibhāva*), 16. heart-base (*hadayavatthu*), 17. vitality (*jivitindriya*), and 18. edible food (*āhāra*).

Hadayavatthu is the seat of consciousness. Whether it is the heart or the brain is a controversial point. The Buddha has neither rejected nor accepted the Cardiac theory. According to the commentaries it is the heart.

Vitality is produced by *Kamma*. Such vitality is found only in animate beings including animals. In trees also there exists a certain kind of life, but it is not that kind of vitality common to men and animals, because no *kamma* is accumulated by plants. The kind of life found in plants may be caused by *Utu*, temperature or heat. Life in plants and beings are thus differentiated. By edible food is meant the nutritive essence.

The eighteen divisions of matter are termed *Nipphanna rūpa*—those that are produced by *Kamma* and other three sources.

19. Consciousness (*Citta*). Although there are 89 types of consciousness all are treated as one reality in the sense that all possess awareness as their chief characteristic.

20-71. The fifty-two mental properties (*Cetasika*) are treated separately as they possess distinct characteristics.

To sum up, 18 (Divisions of matter) + 1 (Consciousness) + 52 (Mental properties) = 71.

Earth, rocks, seas, rivers, trees, etc., are included in *Saṅkhāra* as they are conditioned by heat, etc., though not by *Kamma*.

The second field of knowledge is *Vikāra*. It is a kind of peculiar distinct condition of the aforesaid eighteen divisions of matter.

Although they are not realities (*Vatthu dhamma*) but, being a form of change about these realities, they are treated as *Paramattha*—ultimate things.

There are five kinds of *Vikāra rūpas*, namely,

1. *Lahutā*, levity, 2. *Mudutā*, pliancy, 3. *Kammaññatā*, adaptability, 4. *Kāyaviññatti*, bodily communication, 5. *Vacīviññatti*, verbal communication.

Lahutā is the lightness of matter caused by joy, healthy climatic conditions, nutritive food, etc. It is the lightness in body which a healthy person experiences in contradistinction to the heaviness of body experienced by an invalid.

Mudutā is the softness or pliancy of matter caused by suitable climatic conditions, food, wholesome thoughts, etc. It is opposed to coarseness and hardness. It is on account of this softness prevalent in matter that one is able to move with ease.

Kammaññatā is the adaptability of matter caused by suitable food, healthy climatic conditions, wholesome thoughts, etc. On account of this material quality one's body quickly responds to actions.

These three are not *Vatthudhammas* (realities), but merely subtle differentiations of matter, which are interrelated and inseparable.

Kāyaviññatti—bodily communication. This results from the element of motion caused by

the mind. All bodily elements are included in this.

Vacīviññatti—verbal communication. This results from the element of extension caused by the mind. Speech is included in this.

In conventional terms *Kāyaviññatti* and *Vacīviññatti* are called deeds and speech. When one wishes to communicate one's idea to another that verbal action is termed *Vacīviññatti*. When one does so by deed then that bodily action is termed *Kāyaviññatti*.

All these five *Vikāras* are not absolute realities, but manifestations of the aforesaid eighteen conditional material forms.

Lakkhaṇa which means salient features, is the third field of knowledge.

This constitutes birth or arising, decay and death which are common to all conditioned things whether animate or inanimate.

Every form of life and each unit of consciousness consist of three phases, namely, birth (*jāti*), decay (*jarā*), and death (*maraṇa*). The time duration between the arising and passing away of consciousness which may almost be the billionth part of a second, is the decay of consciousness. Matter lasts only for seventeen thought-moments. The time duration between the first and the seventeenth thoughts' moment is the decay of *rūpa*.

According to the *Abhidhammattha Saṅgaha* there are four characteristics, namely, *upacaya* (arising), *santati* (continuity), *jaratā* (decay) and *aniccatā* (impermanence). The first arising is the *upacaya* and the subsequent arising is *santati*. It is on account of this reason that in some philosophical treatises only 27 species of *rūpa* are enumerated.

With these four salient characteristics (*lakkhaṇa*) and five *Vikāras* there are nine *anipphanna rūpas*, that is matter not caused by *Kamma*. Of the *anipphanna rūpas* the remaining *rūpa* known as *ākāsa*, space, is included in the *Paññatti* which is the fifth *maṇḍala*. *Ākāsa* is a *nicca-paññatti*, a permanent concept, because in itself it is

nothingness. By *ākāsa* is here meant the intervening space. In other words, it is the intra-atomic space in which electrons move about.

Of the 28 forms of *rūpas*, 18 are included in *Saṅkhāras*, 5 in the *Vikāras*, 4 in *Lakkhaṇa*, and one in *Paññatti*. Consciousness, feelings (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volitional activities (*saṅkhārā*) are included in *Saṅkhāra maṇḍala*. The solitary Dhamma *Nibbāna*, though belonging to the *Nāma* group, is treated as a separate *maṇḍala* which is the fourth field of knowledge.

Nibbāna, literally, means departure from craving or in other words extinction of passion.

Nibbāna is a *nāma* because it causes the mind to bend towards it. Consciousness is a *nāma* because it bends towards the objects.

Nibbāna is a supramundane reality which is conceived by the mind. In the Rohitassa Sutta the Buddha says: "In this one-fathom body with mind and perception do I declare the world, the arising of the world, the destruction of the world, and the path leading to the destruction of the world.

Here the world means suffering. The destruction of the world means *Nibbāna*.

There are two *dharmas* that are permanent and are uncaused. They are space and *Nibbāna*. Space is *not*, *Nibbāna* is. The former is not a reality, the latter is the absolute reality. *Nibbāna* is to be intuited and is not produced. Hence, it is neither a cause nor an effect.

Paññatti is the fifth field of knowledge. It, literally, means that which makes known or that which is made known. *Paññatti* should not be confounded with *Viññatti* which is a reality and a *rūpa*.

There are two kinds of *paññatti*, namely, *Nāma-paññatti* and *Attha-paññatti*. *Nāma-paññatti* is merely the name or term such as chair, table, rock, mind, matter, etc. *Attha-paññatti* is the object denoted by the term. Languages come within the range of *Nāma-paññatti*.

The first four *Maṇḍalas* embrace all *Paramatthas* — Ultimate realities — their divisions, and their characteristics. In the fifth *maṇḍala* all terms and implied objects are treated. Therefore everything mundane and supramundane is included in the five kinds of *Ñeyyamāṇḍalas*—fields of knowledge. As the Buddha understood all these in every respect He is called *Sabbāññū*—Omniscient. There is nothing that is imperceptible to Him. Says the Venerable Sāriputta:—

Na tassa adiṭṭham' idhatthi kiñci

Atho aviññatam' ajanitabbaṃ'

(There is nothing in this world that He has not seen, known and understood.)

Omniscience, it should be understood, is mundane (*lokiya*). It is with the functional sentient consciousness accompanied by knowledge that the Buddha perceived whatever He wishes to see (*Somanassasahagata Ñāṇa sampayutta-kiriya citta*). The Buddha wisdom found in this type of mundane consciousness is called Omniscience.

Samantacakkhu—All-round-eye—is another term for Omniscience.

As He meets with no obstacles in exercising this knowledge it is also called *Anāvaraṇa-ñāṇa*—Unobstructed knowledge.

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THE ESSENCE OF THE TEACHING

(By *Nyanasatta Thera*)

1. What is religion ?

The hundreds of definitions of this subject agree in this respect— “A religion is a body of moral and philosophical teachings, together with the understanding of those teachings, the faith in the truth of them, and the practice of the accepted doctrine, i.e. the living in accordance with the professed creed.”

Religion primarily originates from the desire to see life in its connection with the past and the future. Religion, answers the questions about the purpose and aim of life. H. G. Wells said, “Religion is the central part of our education which determines our conduct.”

The Buddhist religion is the system called the Buddha’s Teaching, the understanding of and faith in the truth of His Doctrine, and the observance and practice of this accepted Norm: that is to say, the putting into practice in everyday life of what we know and believe as the Truth, the Doctrine of the Buddha. When thus understood, religion becomes the Path to a happy life in this world as well as in the next life; and at the same time religion is the Path that leads to deliverance from all sorrow, a way conducting to the realization of Enlightenment and Nibbāna—the Highest Good of the Buddhists.

2. What is Buddhism?

Buddhism is the Teaching of the Buddha. The Buddha lived in the sixth century B.C. He expounded His Norm in North India. The Word of the Buddha has been handed down in the *Pāli* language, the tongue used in North India in the Buddha’s time. The form of Buddhism which has been preserved for 2500 years in the *Pāli* is known and practised in Ceylon, Burma, Siam and other countries. It is called Theravāda, the Teaching that the immediate disciples of the the Buddha received from their Master. This Theravāda is admitted by all scholars to be the authentic Word of the Buddha.

Another form of Buddhism, the Mahāyāna the “Great Vehicle,” is a modified form of the original teaching to make it more acceptable to a greater number of both the erudite and the simple members of the Indian society several centuries after the Buddha, and to the non-Indian peoples of Asia who were not fully satisfied with the pure Theravāda, who yearned for higher knowledge without being able to follow the arduous Path to self-realization.

Buddhism was not long confined to Asia alone: from the earliest times Buddhism was carried also to the West. The remains, of a Buddhist culture have been discovered as far away as Mexico and other American countries. Buddhist missionaries went to Syria, Egypt, Macedon, and other western countries some 300 years B.C.

At present the Buddhist Scriptures are studied in Europe, America and all other countries. The Word of the Buddha is accepted as their religion by thousands of Europeans and Americans; and disciples of the Buddha of all races, both laymen and monks, can be found all over the world. Buddhist publications in English are now eagerly read and appreciated in more than fifty countries of the five continents of the globe; and when we find supporters or funds to finance Buddhist publications in the international language Esperanto, we shall be able, through the services of the Universal Esperanto Association (U.E.A.) and the Buddhist League of Esperantists (B.L.E.), to send our Esperanto publications to practically every country of the world, where they may be easily translated into the national languages and thus reach countries now inaccessible to English Books on Buddhism.

3. Is Buddhism a Religion?

Some writers on Buddhism especially Christian authors, object to Buddhism being called a religion. Their aim is to prove that

some 400 millions of human beings who profess to be Buddhists or accept Buddhism have in reality no religion and hence should be converted into Christianity. These scholars and missionaries, who have never studied any system other than their own, argue that a religion is the system of faith and worship, or the belief in an Almighty Creator- God, a superhuman controlling power entitled to worship and obedience, together with the belief in a soul, in eternal heaven and hell, in Grace and many things more. This definition is too narrow and one-sided, and is far from being universal or even general.

Our conception of religion as given above is universal: all religious systems may be included in our definition; but on the contrary, Buddhism, the faith of more than 400 millions does not fall within their concept of religion.

Buddhism perfectly explains life in its causal connection with the past and the future. Buddhism makes for progress: it points out the path to a happy life now, and also in the next world. Buddhism is the path that leads to the realization of deliverance from all suffering. Buddhism teaches us that the highest and noblest purpose of life is the realization of Enlightenment and Nibbāna.

Buddhism includes moral responsibility. It says that the effect of an evil course of life is an increase of suffering in this world and in future lives; whereas the result of a noble life is happiness and Progress on the Path to Perfection. But Buddhism does not support the view that there is a personal God who rewards, pardons, or punishes; Buddhism teaches the law of cause and effect in the moral sphere, *Kamma*. *Kamma* means that we reap what we have sown, and that our future depends on our present conduct.

Buddhism teaches the Dependent Origination of our individual existence; but it repudiates the belief in a God-Creator. Buddhism speaks of the continuity of existence, rebirth, but without the transmigration of an immortal soul: it explains

life as a causally connected and conditioned process of existence, a becoming.

Buddhism does not deny that there are heavenly worlds where beings reap the fruit of their noble life in the past; and the Buddhist Scriptures tell us of spheres of misery, states of woe, where beings suffer for their evil deeds. But though apparently eternal, both heavens and hells are impermanent states: beings there will eventually be reborn in human form again.

Finally, the Buddha solemnly declared that there is a lasting freedom from all sorrow, a condition of the highest purity and everlasting happiness, Nibbāna. But Nibbāna is not a return to God or re-union with the One. If it were this, then a repeated separation from the One would be expected. Nibbāna is a condition which must be attained in order to experience and adequately explain its Supramundane state.

Thus we have seen that Buddhism has all the necessary requisites of a religion. A person, however, who does not like a religion without worship may find in Buddhism alone the most perfect ideal to be loved, worshipped and followed—the Buddha as the symbol of Realization of perfect Enlightenment and Nibbāna, the supreme guide of all beings.

4. The Essence of the Teaching:

The quintessence of the Buddha's Doctrine is the Four Noble Truths: (a) Suffering, (b) its Cause, (c) its Cessation, and (d) the Path.

(a) All conditioned existence, especially human life, is unsatisfactory. Life is a conditioned process initiated by conception, followed by birth, pain, sorrow, grief, lamentation, disappointment, despair, union with objects which we hate, separation from what we love, old age, disease and death, which is followed by a new rebirth.

(b) The conception of a new life and with it all the manifold suffering is conditioned—or caused—by Craving. The Craving for a new life and for the objects of the world is nourished by ignorance or Delusion about the

true nature of the world and life. This Delusion makes man crave for eternal life in heaven, or for a rebirth as a powerful King or a great personage. Instead of learning all about the real nature of things, we always crave for new objects, which when attained, will not satisfy us. Meanwhile one individual existence ceases and the Craving links one life with another. By this craving-force that seeks its own affinity the two cells become united, and a new life germinates in a mother's womb. It is like the last spark of a fire which kindles new fuel.

(c) By attaining true insight, the real nature of life and the world of Delusion and Craving is understood, and therewith all suffering ceases.

(d) The Path that leads to the self-realization of the end of craving is moral life, culture of mind by the practice of mindfulness and insight.

Concentration of mind and mindfulness lead to the acquisition of insight into the real nature of things. When we see them as Impermanent, Unsatisfactory, and Void of an abiding self, all Delusion and with it all Craving cease. Then Deliverance from all

sorrow is attained and Enlightenment with the serene condition of Nibbāna is achieved. The individual who has realised this Perfection lives his span of life free from all selfish desires. He devotes himself to the service of others: he is a guide of his fellows who strive for what he has already attained. When such a Holy one dies, there is no more rebirth for him, because the life-linking craving has ceased. After the death of such a Saint there comes a perpetual state of Supramundane bliss. Both the state experienced by the Saint from self-realization to passing-away, and the condition that enters at his demise, are called Nibbāna. Nibbāna is freedom from Craving and Delusion. Positively it can be called Enlightenment, and a serenity unperturbed by any external contingency. What enters at the passing-away of the Buddha and of the true Saints is the basic element of supramundane bliss and peace which abides, and which is called the supreme good, the blissful lasting peace of Nibbāna. The realization of this condition, either here and now or in the future, is the object of all the striving of every genuine Buddhist.

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THE ROLE OF BUDDHISM UNDER THE SHADOW OF A THERMO-NUCLEAR WAR

Broadcast Talk from “Myanma Athan”, the Burma Broadcasting Service.

By U Sein Nyo Tun (I. C. S. Retd.)

“Namo Tassa Bhagavato Arahato Sammā-sambuddhassa.”

The world today lives under the shadow of a thermo-nuclear war—a war that threatens to destroy the majority of civilized mankind, and plunge those that remain into miseries never before experienced within historical memory.

How the ordinary man in the street in the Communist countries is reacting to this situation is not known with certainty outside of these countries. It is possible that he faces the prospect of a cataclysmic war with equanimity, secure in the thought that Communism would emerge victorious.

In the case of the non-communist countries, ordinary men and women do not appear to be unduly awed or perturbed by the prospect of an imminent atomic war. This is not to say that they are not impressed by the descriptions and prognostications in the daily press, magazines, books, and on the radio and platform, regarding the repercussions of a modern world war irrespective of its ultimate result, but the impression does not appear to be deep enough as to create a concerted surge towards the avoidance and prevention of war, and the maintenance of a stable peace. These ordinary men and women seem to be more susceptible to mental disturbances caused by hitches in the week to week changes of programmes at their local cinemas than by the prospects of worldwide upsets through the use of inter-continental missiles and hydrogen bombs. The philosophy of these men and women the world over in their day to day lives is to live for the present with little or no thought of the morrow.

Eminent philosophers, scientists, and other thinkers, on their part, have displayed great concern over recent developments in world affairs which appear to aggravate the risks of the outbreak of a total war together with its

concomitant of the unrestricted use of nuclear weapons. But opinion between them and men more concerned with practical affairs is sharply divided.

In Britain, for instance, there has been a highly vocal campaign, led by such personalities as Bertrand Russell and J. B. Priestly, for the abolition of nuclear warfare. On the other hand, the “Economist” has denounced this campaign as “the greatest confusion”. This influential journal thinks that the size of the bomb itself would preclude its use except as a last resort arising from a military miscalculation. “What is needed, therefore” it continues, “is not a pronouncement about abolishing the bomb (which, at least in war, would be impossible to enforce), but a policy to minimize the chance of such miscalculation.”

As far as men steeped in practical affairs and more immediately related with the destiny of the world are concerned, their attitude is significantly illustrated in the following incident. This is how the April 1958 issue of “Worldview”, a monthly journal of the Church Peace Union of New York, reports it:

“Many Americans must now be aware that during the past few months one of the most curious Correspondences in world history has been carried on through the pages of the “New Statesman”, the British Socialist Weekly review. First, Lord Bertrand Russell wrote an open letter to President Eisenhower and Mr. Khrushchev.

In the name of humanity he pleaded with both the leaders to re-examine their positions and make a last great effort to halt an arms race that threatens mankind with extinction.

“To everyone’s surprise, Mr. Khrushchev promptly replied to Lord Russell. His letter was a long one, but, in brief, it said: ‘Dear Lord Russell, you’re perfectly right, and the peace-loving Soviet Union would like nothing better than to stop the arms race. Just look at our record. But what can we do about the Americans? Just look at *their* record.’

“Several weeks later—and even more to everyone’s surprise—Mr. John Foster Dulles (‘at the request of President Eisenhower’) replied too. His letter was not nearly so long as Mr. Khrushchev’s but, in effect, it said: ‘Dear Lord Russell, you’re perfectly right, and the peace-loving United States would like nothing better than to stop the arms race. Just look at our record. But what can we do about the Russians? Just look at *their* record.’

“Now the exchange has apparently ended, with a final, exasperated word from Lord Russell. Both the replies, he notes, were ‘extraordinarily similar in tone..... both, in words, acknowledge that a nuclear war would defeat the purpose of both parties equally, but neither draws the moral that the acerbity of their disagreements must be lessened since this acerbity increases the likelihood of a nuclear war’.”

One can detect in these acts (as also in other acts) of present day leaders of mankind a certain restriction in outlook—a limitation of view—arising out of a pre-occupation with current or present events. Thus whether it be the man in the street, or the thinker, or the man of action, they are all overwhelmingly engrossed in affairs of the present leading to a forgetfulness of the future—the future that comprises not only this life but also beyond it.

When the majority of men are thus absorbed and obsessed with the present and become forgetful of the future, there inevitably appears a weakening in their moral conduct. The foundations of morality conducive of a well-ordered peaceful society are laid in the future rather than in the present, and the firmness and stability of those foundations depend on the degree of the ability of men to

look far into the future. The further they can see into the future the firmer become the foundations of morality, while the more does their view become restricted, the less certain and the less predictable becomes their moral behaviour. It is on account of this deterioration in the moral foundations of the leaders, as in the masses whom they lead, that the world today lives with so much uncertainty about the eventuality of a war the consequences of which transcend human imagination. The future of mankind thus rests on a re-imposition of the controls that morality exercises over the social behaviour of men (including their political behaviour).

In this task of reconstructing morality’s influence over men, the Buddha-Dhamma (or Buddhism) can join hands with the other great moral movements of the world. As has been indicated above, the successful performance of this task will depend on how far these great moral movements can induce the majority of men to look to the future—especially the distant future—and discard the limitations that confine their view to matters of the present. From the Buddhist point of view, this long-term outlook can be achieved by the cultivation of an emotional detachment from the world, and things worldly, even while retaining an intense interest in them.

In certain aspects, this detachment manifests itself in self-sacrifice and altruism. But whether these manifestations appear or not in recognisable forms, detachment from the worldly is a contributory factor to the strengthening of the controls of morality over men. If *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*—greed, desire or ambition, hatred or anger, and nescience—are the banes that beset humankind today, the virulence of the affliction is abated by a lessening of the attachments that bind men to the world and its appurtenances, whether modern or ancient.

Modern men are reasonable creatures. With the advance in the facilities of education, they are becoming more and more reasonable. It is therefore a paradox to find them living under a

gigantic threat produced by socially suicidal proclivities, which in their turn are the outcome of unreason. It behoves modern men, therefore, to ask themselves: whence does this unreason emanate? How does unreason manage to become so important a factor within an atmosphere of so much education, so much knowledge, and so much logic?

If we are to accept the unbounded wisdom enshrined in the teachings of Gotama, the Buddha, the root cause of this unreason is *taṇhā*, which has been translated as craving but which includes all the various forms and manifestations of worldly desires, both tangible and intangible. And the way in which *taṇhā* can be kept under check and control so as to ensure the preservation of reason at all times is succinctly and practically expressed in the direction *appamādena sampādetha* (Work out your own salvation with mindfulness.)

But the re-imposition of morality's influence is essentially a long-term project. The weakening process of morality's authority has been gathering momentum within the last two or three hundred years, and the ground that has been lost within these centuries cannot be retrieved in a short period. In the meantime, the threat of mankind's near extinction exists with dangerous propinquity, which, if it becomes a reality, will destroy and render futile whatever efforts that may be put forth in the cause of the long-term project. Neither is sufficient by itself in the context of present day events.

The weakness of the short-term project lies in its inability to dispel the atmosphere of uncertainty. But whatever be the degree of this uncertainty, not to try would amount to defeatism—a resignation to the world being plunged into a Dark Age darker than any of the Dark Ages that recorded history yet knows. What is important in this attempt is to keep in

view the aim of creating a suitable atmosphere for the effective operation of principles of morality that are based not only on present welfare but also on welfare in the long distant future. In this context, the necessity that assumes primary importance is the prevention of war, and not merely the obviation of the use of nuclear weapons should war become an ultimate eventuality. War today, as in days gone by, represents a breakdown of human reason, and when such a failure occurs it would be unreasonable to expect any of the belligerents to exercise some sanity by restraining themselves in the use of the most lethal of weapons.

In the higher stages of attainment, the emphasis of the Buddha Dhamma is more personal than social. Not only is the attempt an individual concern, but the realization of these attainments enables one to transcend social disruptions and dislocations. In these days of a re-awakening within the Buddha Sāsana, there are a good many who have it in their power to achieve these attainments, provided they decide and do put forth the necessary effort. If by this effort they reach these attainments, then, from the personal point of view there is nothing much that they need worry about their own future. But inasmuch as *mettā*, or boundless loving-kindness, forms a necessary ingredient of these attainments, it would still be within their sphere to attempt the prevention of the outbreak of a total war, just as the All Enlightened Buddha did in the case of the internecine strife between King Ajātasattu and King Pasenadi, of Kosala as is mentioned in the Sagāthā Vagga of the Sattiyutta Nikāya.¹

“*Sabbe Sattā Averā Hontu*”

May all beings be peaceful

¹ Sagāthā Vagga, Saṃyutta Nikāya, p. 84, 6th Synod Edition.

NOTES AND NEWS

GREAT RECITAL ON THE COMMENTARIES

The Pāli Canon embodies the Word of the Buddha and the *Aṭṭhakathās* are commentaries to it. The Pāli Canon is difficult both in its meaning and context. It is not easy to comprehend it with ordinary intelligence. Therefore the *Aṭṭhakathā* is a very important instrument for understanding the Buddha's Word. The Pāli Canon may be compared to a lock and the Commentaries to a key. It is exegetical literature on the texts..

Since the *Aṭṭhakathās* are very important to the understanding and appreciation of the Buddha's Word, there have been traditions where they were scrutinised and recited at the Great Recitals of ancient times.

For this reason the Government of the Union of Burma gladly accepted the proposal of the Supreme Sangha Council that at the conclusion of the Pāli Text Sangāyanā the Great Recital on the Commentaries should be held.

The First Session of the *Aṭṭhakathā Sangāyanā* took place from 26-12-56 and came to a conclusion on 29-1-57. Some 250 learned *bhikkhus* from four other Theravādin countries and the Union of Burma participated. In this Session 14 books of the *Vinaya Piṭaka Aṭṭhakathā*, one book on the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* and one book on the *Dīgha Nikāya (Sīlakkhandha)*—altogether 6 volumes, were recited.

The Second Session commenced on 11-11-57 and terminated on 23-1-58, lasting 62 days. Like the previous session some 250 learned *bhikkhus* from the 5 Theravādin countries participated. In this Session 13 books of the *Aṭṭhakathā* were recited.

The Third Session commenced on 30-11-58 and terminated on 10-2-59, lasting 61 days. Some 300 learned *bhikkhus* from the 5 Theravādin countries participated. In this

session 15 books of the *Aṭṭhakathā* were recited.

The Fourth Session will commence on the 18th November 1959 and it is anticipated that the Session will last for about two months. In this session 16 books of the remaining *Aṭṭhakathās* will be recited.

Tipiṭakadhara (Pāli Text Reciter) Selection Examination.

With the main object of producing outstanding *bhikkhus* who will be able to carry the Text by heart, the *Tipiṭaka-dhara* Selection Examinations have been conducted in the month of December annually at Hermitage Road, Kokine, Rangoon, under the auspices of the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Association since 1948 C.E.

The Five Nikāyas which comprise the entire *Tipiṭaka* are divided into 9 parts for the purpose of the examination as follows:—

1. Five Books of *Vinaya*.
2. Three Books of *Dīgha-Nikāya*.
3. The first Five Books of *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.
4. The last Two Books of *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.
5. Three Books of *Majjhima Nikāya*.
6. Five Books of *Samyutta Nikāya*.
7. Five Books of *Ānguttara Nikāya*.
8. The first Five Books of *Khuddaka Nikāya (Suttanta)*.
9. The remaining Four Books of *Khuddaka Nikāya (Suttanta)*.

A candidate is required to learn any one part of the above nine and is required to sit for a written examination. One who passes in any one of these parts is given the title of 'dhara' relating to any part he sits for. Besides he is given a monthly stipend and various other articles offered by devout donors.

Since 1951 the entire responsibility of conducting the Pāli-reciter Selection Examination has been taken over by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council, but the annual Examination is conducted through the Buddha Sāsana Nuggaha Association. The examination is by far the hardest examination and of the highest standard in the world. The candidates are required to learn the Text by heart and to be able to expound thoroughly every passage contained therein. On account of its extraordinary difficulty, very few candidates have appeared for it and very few passed the same. The only bhikkhu who was able to recite the whole of the Tipiṭaka and obtained over 90% in the written examinations of those parts is Venerable Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgārika Vicittasārābhivaṃsa who acted as the *Visajjaka* (Reciter) in the Chaṭṭha Sangāyanā Proceedings with the consent of the *Saṅgīti-kāraka Mahātheras*.

The next Tipiṭakadhara Selection Examination will commence on the 27th December 1959 and will last for 32 days. 55 Bhikkhu candidates have enrolled for this examination.

Abhidhamma Examinations

With a view to diffusing the knowledge of the essentials of the *Abhidhamma* (Higher Doctrine) among the people of the Union of Burma, the Union Buddha Sāsana Council has decided to hold *Abhidhamma* Examinations at various examination centres of the Union.

SYLLABUS:

Elementary Standard:—(Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha) “A resume of all the essential doctrines of the *Abhidhamma*.”

Chapters I, II and III—Types of Consciousness, Psychic Factors and Miscellaneous.

Middle Standard:—Same book—Chapters IV, V and VI—Course of Cognition, Consciousness that does not come in the Course of Cognition and Material Qualities.

Higher Standard:—Same book—Chapters VII, VIII and IX—Abhidhamma Terms, The Philosophy of Relations and Objects of Meditation.

The medium of examination is Burmese.

In all these standards, questions are set on the descriptions, analysis and elucidation of causally-conditioned arising-and-passing physical and mental phenomena. No *viva voce* examination is held.

Application forms are obtainable from the *Abhidhamma* Examination Supervising Committees, the Regional Representatives of the Union Buddha Sāsana Council and Heads of *Abhidhamma* Schools in the Union. Applications are to be duly filled in, signed by candidates and sent through the respective *Abhidhamma* Examination Supervising Committees, to the Office of the Executive Officer, Union Buddha Sāsana Council.

Every application has to be accompanied by the following certificates:—

1. That the applicant is a lay-devotee or nun who has never previously passed in a *Pathamange* Examination held by the Government or a similar examinations; or
2. That the applicant is a lay-devotee or nun who is sitting for one of the standards, in which he or she has never previously passed.

The certificate has, in the case of pupils attending *Abhidhamma* Classes, to be attested by the *Abhidhamma* Teachers, or in the case of private candidates by the Regional Representatives.

Every successful candidate obtains a certificate and in addition, a money prize as prescribed by the rules of the Council.

The next *Abhidhamma* Examinations will be held at Rangoon and the various Examination centres of the Union of Burma on the 13th waxing of Nadaw 2503 B. E. (12-12-59 C.E.) and the two following days.

Abhidhamma (Honours) Examinations

For those who have already passed the three standards of these examinations, a higher examination, the “*Abhidhammattha-Vibhāvanī-Tīkā* Examination”, has been held along with ordinary *Abhidhamma* Examinations since 1955. The “*Abhidhammattha-Vibhāvanī-Tīkā*” translated into Burmese and printed by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council, is the prescribed textbook.

The Examination is sub-divided into three standards—Lower Standard, Middle Standard and Higher Standard. A candidate is allowed to sit for one or all the three standards in a year.

The *Abhidhamma* (Honours) Examinations will be held for the fifth time at Rangoon and other Examination centres of the Union simultaneously with the ordinary *Abhidhamma* Examinations which have been fixed for 12-12-59 and the two following days.

Every successful candidate obtains a certificate and in addition, a money prize as prescribed by the rules of the Council.

Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification) Examination

The Visuddhi-magga Examination will be held for the third time at Rangoon and the various Examination centres of the Union simultaneously with the *Abhidhamma* (Ordinary and Honours, Examinations on the 12th, 13th and 14th December 1959).

The prescribed text:—Burmese translation to the *Visuddhimagga* Part III, published by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council, pages 229 to 603.

There will be no grades in this Examination. Six papers will be set in all and two papers will be examined every day.

Time table:—

- (a) First day.—First paper: Purification of Doubt.
- (b) Second Paper: Purification by Overcoming Doubt.

(c) Second day.—First paper: Purification by Knowledge and Vision of What Is and What Is Not Path.

(d) Second paper: Purification by Knowledge and Vision of the Way.

(e) Third day.—First paper: Purification by Knowledge and Vision.

(f) Second paper: *Paññābhābhavanānisa-ṃsaniddesa* (The Benefits in developing Understanding and general). (Herein, “general” means miscellaneous questions on the “Practice of the Dhamma”.)

Every successful candidate obtains a certificate and in addition, special prizes as prescribed by the rules of the Council.

NEWS FROM ENGLAND

The Story of Thought waves

(A brief introduction to the work being done at the Delawarr Laboratories, Oxford.)

Interesting experiments are being carried out at the Delawarr Laboratories, Oxford, showing how thought waves can affect a photographic emulsion. It is possible that a new means of communication can be developed.

By the skilled use of thought-energy most forms of life can be affected in some way or other even at great distances. Human beings, animals, plants and soils can be stimulated and beneficial effects observed. In view of the far reaching implications of this a Mind and Matter Trust has been formed for the purpose of furthering the study what is termed “The Physics of the Primary State of Matter”. This embraces the study of thought wave effects.

It has been found that many academically trained persons are resistant to the evidence already obtained. Approximately 30 per cent of humanity, for reasons unknown, are either to accept the evidence or are so directly antagonistic that they supply negative thought waves which counteract the positive results.

Irrefutable evidence is available, however, that thought waves can be photographed.

Experiments on blessing the soil and plant have been carried out at these Laboratories and elsewhere that clearly show the effect obtained on plant growth. The evidence is being collated and will be presented to an eminent scientist in due course. It is clear that such

evidence of the power of Mind over Matter is at variance with the current atomic theory.

—From Religious Digest, July-September, 1959.

(We hope that if the experiments meet with success, they will be highly conducive to the solution of the theory of “Kammic Energy and Rebirth”.- Ed.)

BOOK REVIEWS

BUDDHA’S WORDS OF WISDOM, compiled by G.F. Allen—10s. 6d. nett. George Allen and Murin, Ltd., London.

Mr. Allen is well known among the Buddhists both in Ceylon and Burma, and has added to the increasing number of Buddhist compendiums in English, a very comprehensive handbook of quotations from the Pāli Canon. Mr. Allen has lived in monasteries in Burma, and in Ceylon as a Buddhist monk, and as such is thoroughly acquainted with the Theravāda Buddhism professed by the people in those countries. He has selected 365 maxims from the Dhammapada and many other Suttas, and arranged them for each day of the year. The maxims are short and can be easily memorised. Some of the maxims may well serve as food for thought. This bedside book will prove useful not only to the followers of the Buddha, but also to the non-Buddhists.

DHAMMAPADA—A Practical Guide to Right Living—Translated by Venerable Bhikkhu Buddharakkhita, and published by Maha Bodhi Society, Bangalore. No price mentioned.

The author, Venerable Bhikkhu Buddharakkhita has delivered a course of about one hundred lectures on the Dhammapada at the Maha Bodhi Meditation Centre, Bangalore, and the present translation was the outcome of those lectures. There exist many translations of the Dhammapada, but the venerable Buddharakkhita took great pain in selecting the most appropriate English rendering. The book contains valuable notes, but it is a pity that the original Pāli was not given side by side along with the translation for the use of those who wish to make a deeper study and read the verses in their original richness.

It ought to prove an indispensable book to all those who are interested in Buddhist literature.

“Consider, Brahman”, said the Exalted One, “Where the river Ganges has its source and where it reaches the sea. The sand that lies between, that is not easy to count—so many grains of sand, so many hundreds, so many thousands, so many hundred thousand grains of sand. More than that are the aeons that have passed and gone by. Them it is not easy to count:—so many aeons, so many hundreds, so many thousands, so many hundred thousands of aeons.”

—*Samyutta-nikāya*, XV, 2-8.

* * *

Brethren, there are these three sensations, born of *phassa* (contact), rooted in contact, related to contact, conditioned by contact. What three? Agreeable sensation, Disagreeable sensation and Indifferent sensation.

Owing to contact there is to be experienced as agreeable, brethren, arises agreeable sensation. By the ceasing of that contact to be experienced as agreeable, that agreeable sensation—arises owing to that appropriate contact to be experienced as agreeable,—ceases, is quenched.

Owing to contact that is to be experienced as disagreeable, brethren, arises disagreeable sensation. By the ceasing of that contact to be experienced as disagreeable, that disagreeable sensation arisen owing to appropriate contact, to be experienced as disagreeable, ceases and is quenched.

So also as regards contact to be experienced as Indifferent...

Just as, brethren, from the putting together and rubbing together of two sticks warmth is born, heat is produced: as from the changing and parting of those two sticks the warmth so born ceases and is quenched,—just so, brethren, these three sensations born of contact, rooted in contact, related to contact, conditioned by contact, owing to appropriate contact so born,—these feelings so born come to cease.”

Samyutta Nikāya, XXXVI, 1, 1.10.