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## **THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA**

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## EDITORIAL

### KAMMASSAKATĀ SAMMĀDIṬṬHI

(Right View of the fact that all beings have kammās only as their own property.)

The real history of men's development consists in the history of their beliefs. History, whether it be of the arts, or of the sciences, or of society, or of religion always implicates an account of men's beliefs and their growth. Men's activities are largely a reflection of their beliefs, and consequently, all superstitious customs and practices are the result of irrational state of mind issuing logically from wrong beliefs. It is therefore natural that right view should form the first equipment for the quest of truth. In all ages and races men have become uneasily aware of their primary ignorance of the real nature of the world they live in. Unknown forces having surrounded them, they always feared the apparently malevolent operation of these forces and wooed the benevolent, personifying them as gods, demons, or angels, and seeking to propitiate, appeal to, or master them for their own benefits.

The Dhammapada says:—

“When threatened by fear men go to a refuge, to hills, forests, dwellings of ascetics and tree-shrines.”

“This refuge is not secure indeed; nor is it the supreme refuge; nor having come to this refuge one is freed from suffering.”

“He who seeks refuge in the Buddha (Enlightened One), in the Dhamma (Law), in the Saṅgha (Order), and with the right understanding, sees the Four Noble Truths,”

“The suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to the cessation of suffering.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, in His First Sermon at Sarnath<sup>2</sup> the Omniscient Buddha declared: “These two extremes, Bhikkhus, are not to be practised by one who had gone forth from the world. What are the two? —That conjoined with passion and luxury, low, vulgar, common, ignoble and useless, and that conjoined with self-torture, painful, ignoble and unprofitable.

“There is a Middle Way, O Bhikkhus, avoiding these two extremes, discovered by the Tathāgata—a path which opens the eyes and bestows understanding, which leads to peace of mind, to the higher wisdom, to full enlightenment, to Nibbāna.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the Middle Path which gives Vision, which gives Knowledge, which causes Calm, Enlightenment and Nibbāna?

“Verily, it is the Noble Eightfold Path, that is to say: Right View, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, Right Concentration.

“This, Bhikkhus, is the Middle Path which gives Vision, which gives knowledge, which causes Calm, Enlightenment and Nibbāna.”

Right View is the first constituent of the Noble Eightfold Path and is able to overcome wrong views which veil men's mental eyes and prevent them from seeing things as they really are (*yathā bhūta*); but it should be noted that no one is able to traverse the Noble Path unless one is fully equipped with all the eight constituents of the Path.

During the lifetime of the Buddha, there prevailed sixty-two kinds of wrong views, eighteen being about the beginning of things, and forty-four being about the future.

<sup>1</sup> Dhammapada, verses 188, 189, 190, 191.

<sup>2</sup> Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahavagga, 8. Pañcavaggiyakattā, page 14, 6th Syn. Edn.

Of these, mention may be made of three kinds of Wrong Views, namely, (1) *Pubbekata-hetu-diṭṭhi*, (2) *Issaranimmāna-hetu-diṭṭhi*, and (3) *Ahetu-apaccaya-diṭṭhi*. In his “Samma-diṭṭhi Dīpanī”<sup>1</sup> (The Manual of Right Views), the Venerable Ledi Sayadaw explained these three wrong views as follows:—

I. ‘All bodily and mentally agreeable sensations, all bodily and mentally disagreeable sensations and all indifferent sensations enjoyed by beings in the present existence are caused and conditioned only by the volitional actions done by them in their past existences.’ This view is known as *Pubbekata-hetu-diṭṭhi*.

Those who hold the *Pubbekata-hetu* view maintain as follows:— ‘Conditioned solely by the volitional actions done by them in their past existences, people enjoy such things as agreeableness, disagreeableness, satisfactoriness and unsatisfactoriness of life. All these things are not created by anyone, nor are they caused by acts done diligently by people in the present existence.’

As this view disclaims the effects of the acts done by the people in the present existence, it is unreasonable and grossly mistaken. Hence it is called a wrong view.

Those who maintain this view hold that all pleasures and sufferings experienced by beings in the present life are conditioned and caused only by the volitional actions done by them in their past existences. They reject all present causes, such as energy and wisdom. As this *Pubbekata-hetu* view rejects all present causes, it is known as *Ekapakkhahīna-vāda* (the view which is defective in one aspect, i.e., present kamma).

In the Aṅguttara Nikāya, Tika-nipāta,<sup>2</sup> we have the Omniscient Buddha’s words:

“Monks, indeed, in the minds of those who confidently and solely rely on the volitional actions done by them in their past existences and hold this view, there cannot arise such mental factors as *chanda* (desire) and *vāyama* (effort), so as to differentiate what actions should be done and what actions should be refrained from.

“Monks, indeed, in the minds of those who cannot truly and firmly differentiate between what actions should be done and what actions should be avoided, and live without the application of mindfulness and self-restraint, there cannot arise righteous beliefs that are conducive to the cessation of defilements.”

II. ‘All bodily and mentally agreeable sensations, all bodily and mentally disagreeable sensations and all indifferent sensations enjoyed by beings in the present existence are created by a Supreme Brahma or God.’ This is known as *Issaranimmāna-hetu-diṭṭhi*.

Those who hold this view maintain that all pleasures and sufferings in the present life are created by a Brahmā or God. They reject all past and present kammās of beings. So this view is known as *Ubhaya-pakkha-hīna-vāda* (the view which is defective in both aspects, i.e., with reference to both past and present kammās of beings).

This *Issaranimmāna* view exists in the world on account of those *samaṇas* and *brāhmaṇas* who held the *Ekaccasassata-vāda*, (the view that some are permanent) held by those Brahmās who having fallen from the Brahma Planes are reborn in the planes of men and Devas, and are able to remember their last existence. This *Issaranimmāna-vāda* has been clearly expounded in the Brahmajāla Sutta.<sup>3</sup> Before the arising of the of the Omniscient Buddha, this wrong view was maintained by

Edn. Please see The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. III—No. 4, p. 36.

<sup>1</sup> For the English translation please see The Light of the Dhamma, Volume V, No. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, Tika-nipāta, 2. Dutiya Paṇṇāsaka, (7) 2. Mahā-vagga, 1. Tittihāyana Sutta, p. 174, 6th Synd.

<sup>3</sup> Please see The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. III—No. 2, and the Brahmajāla Sutta published by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council.

many brāhmaṇas. When the Buddha arose, He fully refuted all wrong views, and this wrong view of *Issaranimmāna-vāda* had no chance to thrive in India. Those who believe in the creation of a Supreme Being or God are called *Issaranimmāna-vādī*.

III. ‘All bodily and mentally agreeable sensations, all bodily and mentally disagreeable sensations and all indifferent sensations enjoyed by beings in the present life come into existence of their own accord and are not caused by any *kamma* — *Janaka-kamma* (Generative *kamma*) or *upatthambhaka-kamma* (Sustaining *kamma*).’ This is known as *Ahetu-apaccaya-diṭṭhi* (View of the ‘Uncausedness and Unconditionality’ of existence).

Those who hold the *Ahetu-apaccaya* view maintain that all pleasures and sufferings experienced by beings in this life come into existence of their own accord, and reject all causes whatsoever. As this view rejects all causes of existence, it is known as *Sabba-hīna-vāda* (the view which is defective in all aspects, *i.e.*, with reference to all kinds of causes whatsoever.)

Those who hold this *Ahetu-apaccaya* view maintain as follows :— ‘Everything in the world such as the corruptness or purity of beings comes into existence of itself and is neither conditioned nor caused by any *kamma*. The various physical and psychological phenomena of existence conventionally termed Ego, Personality, Man, Woman, Animal, etc., are a mere play of blind chance, and not the outcome of causes and conditions. They come into existence of their own accord without being created by a Creator, nor caused and conditioned by generative and sustaining *kamm*as. Such things as “riches”, “poverty”, “complacency”, “destruction”, “wickedness”, “cleverness”, etc., come into existence of their own accord and not due to any cause or condition whatsoever.’<sup>1</sup>

Of these three wrong views, the Supreme Buddha desiring to refute the *Issaranimmāna-vāda* and *Ahetu-apaccaya-vāda* declared: “*Kammasakā māṇava sattā, kammadāyadā, kammayonī, kammabhandhū, kammappaṭissaraṇā kammaṃ satte vibhajjati yadidaṃ hīna paṇīta bhāvāya.*”

All beings have *kamm*as only as their own property. All beings are the heirs of their own *kamm*as. *Kamma* alone is their origin. *Kamma* alone is the relative of all beings. *Kamma* alone is the real Refuge of beings.

Whatever wholesome and unwholesome actions are done by beings, bodily, verbally and mentally, such *kamma* distinguishes them from one another as high and low, good and bad, and they become the heirs of their own *kamm*as.

Now, in order to better understand the word “*Kammasakā*” we should first try and understand what *kamma* is. What is *kamma* then? In the *Paṭiccasamuppāda* (Dependent Origination), the Buddha declared: “*Bhava paccayā jāti*” (On account of volitional action, rebirth arises.) *Kamma* is the law of moral causation, and Rebirth is its consequence. *Kamma* and Rebirth are interrelated fundamental doctrines in Buddhism.

What is the cause of the inequality that exists among mankind? How do we account for this inequality in this ill-balanced world? Why should one be born with fine mental, moral and physical qualities, and another in absolute poverty and misery? Why should one be born as a millionaire and another a pauper? Why should one be a mental prodigy and another an idiot? Why should one be with saintly characteristics and another with criminal tendencies? Why should some be linguists, artists, mathematicians and musicians from their childhood? Why should others be stone blind, deaf and deformed? Why should some be blessed and others cursed from their birth?

<sup>1</sup> Please see The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. III—Nos. 3 and 4.

Taking the other way round, some are more gifted than others; some are stronger in body, mind and character. Their personal circumstances are unequal—some are single while others have large families to care for; some may be stricken by accident or ill-health. Men are also unequal in their tastes and temperament—some ask much more of life than others; some have wider interests or are more energetic and adventurous. In fact, the more civilization progresses and the more that is known about men, the more apparent do their inherent inequalities become.

What then is the cause of this inequality amongst men? Modern scientists including geneticists attribute this inequality to chemico-physical causes, heredity, environment and so forth. With regard to the more complicated and subtle mental, intellectual, and moral differences we require *Paññā* (Wisdom). The Buddha explained that this inequality is due not only to heredity, environment, “nature or nurture”, but also to *kamma*, the result of our past and present volitional actions. We ourselves are responsible for our own happiness and misery; we create our own heavens and hells and are the architects of our destiny.

What is *kamma*?

*Kamma* (action) is that by which men execute deeds, good or evil, meritorious or the opposite. What is it? It is volition (*cetanā*), moral or immoral. We are told in the Pāli texts: “By action, Bhikkhus, I mean volition. It is through having willed that a man does something in the form of deed, speech or thought.”<sup>1</sup>

Here volition (or conation) is the act of willing (voluntary, or conative action). In carrying something, good or bad, meritorious or the opposite, into effect, it deliberates and decides upon the steps to be taken, as the leader of all mental functions involved in so

doing. It provides the impetus towards the desired object.

During the lifetime of the Buddha, Subha, son of Brāhmaṇa Todeyya approached the Buddha and asked Him about this intricate problem of inequality as follows:

“What is the cause, what is the reason, O Lord, that we find amongst mankind (1) the short-lived (*appāyukā*) and the long-lived (*dīghāyukā*), (2) the healthy (*appābādā*) and the diseased (*bavhābādā*), (3) the ugly (*dubbaṇṇā*) and the beautiful (*vaṇṇavanto*), (4) having a small retinue (*appesakkhā*), and having a large retinue (*mahesakkhā*), (5) the poor (*appabhogā*) and the rich (*mahābhogā*), (6) the low-born (*nīcakulīnā*) and the high-born (*uccākulīnā*), (7) the ignorant (*duppaññā*) and the wise (*paññāvanto*)?”<sup>2</sup>

The Buddha gave the following brief and profound reply: “All beings have *kammas* only as their own property. All beings are the heirs of their own *kammas*. *Kamma* alone is their origin. *Kamma* alone is the relative of all beings. *Kamma* alone is the real Refuge of beings. Whatever wholesome and unwholesome actions are done by beings, bodily, verbally and mentally, such *kamma* distinguishes them from one another as high and low, good and bad, and they become the heirs of their own *kammas*.”

This Right View is called *Kammassakatā Sammādiṭṭhi*.

*Kamma* does not necessarily mean past action; it embraces both past and present volitional actions.

There exist three Great Spheres:

- (1) *Kammasādhanīya-ṭhāna* (Sphere in which *Kamma* operates),
- (2) *Vīriyasādhanīya-ṭhāna* (Sphere in which Energy operates), and

<sup>1</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, Chakka-nipāta, Mahāvagga, Nibbedhika Sutta, p, 359, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>2</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Cūlakammavibhaṅga Sutta, Uparipaṇṇāsa, page 243, 6th Syn. Edn.

- (3) Paññāsādhaniya-ṭhāna. (Sphere in which Wisdom operates).

Of these the Sphere in which *kamma* operates is subdivided into two parts, namely, (i) Sphere in which Past *kammas* operate, and (ii) Sphere in which Present *kammas* operate.

*Sphere in which Past kammas operate:*

The following resultant being caused and conditioned by *kammas* done by that being in its past existences are called *atīta-kamma-sādhaniya-ṭhāna*:—

- (1) Rebirth in the Happy Course of Existence or in the Woeful Course of Existence through the medium of the four kinds of Rebirths—Spontaneously-manifesting beings, Moisture-born beings, beings born from eggs, and beings born from a womb.
- (2) Rebirth in a noble family or in an ignoble family even in the Happy Course of Existence.
- (3) Presence or absence of any of the sense organs, such as eyes, ears, etc.
- (4) Endowment with Wisdom, or lack of Wisdom at the moment of conception.
- (5) Deformity or non-deformity.

The actions performed by beings in the present life cannot cause such effects. The beings reborn in the Happy Course of Existence by virtue of their past wholesome *kammas* cannot transform their bodies into those of the Woeful Course of Existence by dint of their present actions, such as Wisdom and Energy without the dissolution of their bodies of the Happy Course of Existence. The same principle holds good for the beings reborn in the Woeful Course of Existence. No man, Deva, Brahmā or God, by means of Present *kammas*, such as Wisdom and Energy, is able to restore the eye-sight of a being who is born blind on account of his past unwholesome *kammas*.

*Spheres in which Present kammas operate:*

All bodily, verbal and mental actions performed by beings in the present life for their happiness or misery are called *paccuppanna-kammas*.

Broadly speaking, there exist such activities as cultivation, cattle-breeding, sheep-farming, trade and commerce. There also exist branches of study, such as various types of arts, crafts, etc. These actions, crafts, arts and knowledges are called *paccuppanna-kammas* (Present *kammas*). Apart from these actions, there also exist countless number of evil actions, stupidity and negligence which cause the destruction of life and property; injury to health; defamation and libel; injury to morality; and hindrance to progress of knowledge. All these actions are Present *kammas*. So there really exist various kinds of actions, some of which are profitable and others disadvantageous in the present life.

*Sphere in which Energy and Wisdom operate::*

*Vīriya* (Energy) and *Paññā* (Wisdom) function to help the accomplishment of the two Present *kammas*. The greater the Energy and Wisdom, the greater will be the *kamma*. Energy and Wisdom of medium strength will be able to cause only Medium *kamma*. Energy and Wisdom of feeble strength will be able to cause only Minor *kamma*.

In the case of beings who are wandering in the round of rebirths, Past and Present *kammas* are the primary causes conditioning happiness and suffering. Other factors, such as time, locality, etc. are secondary. The Buddha, therefore, expounded Past and Present *kammas* and declared: “Only actions done by beings are their own property that always accompanies them, wherever they may wander in many a becoming or *kappa* (world-cycle). Beings are the heirs of their own *kammas*.”

Past and Present *kammas*, which cause pleasurable sensations enjoyed by beings cannot be performed without Energy and Wisdom. They exist only for the coming into existence of, or for the accomplishment of

those volitional actions. This statement is true. Because, if there are no actions to be energised, where will Energy function? And if there are no knowable things, what will Knowledge know then? It should therefore be

noted that where the Buddha expounded Energy and Wisdom, His exposition also included the two *kammās* caused by Energy and Wisdom.

## APPENDIX

### BUDDHA'S EXPLANATION OF INEQUALITY AMONGST MEN

(1) If a person kills living beings, is cruel, bloody-handed, intent on injuring and killing, is not kind to living beings, he will be reborn in the Four Lower Regions in the Woeful Course of Existence. Even if he is reborn in the world of men, his life will be short.

But if he gives up the killing of living beings, abstains from killing living beings, lays aside the stick, lays aside the sword, lives with moral shame and dread (to do evil deeds), sympathizes with all and wishes their welfare, he will on account of that good *kamma* be born in the heavenly abodes—in the Happy Course of Existence. Even if he is reborn in the world of men, his life will be long.

(2) If a person is in the habit of harming beings with his hand, or with a stone or with a stick or with a sword, he will on account of that bad *kamma* be reborn in the Four Lower Regions—in the Woeful Course of Existence. Even if he is reborn in the world of men, he will contract many diseases.

But if he abstains from the above acts, he will be reborn in the heavenly abodes..... will be healthy.

(3) If a person is wrathful, easily irritated, takes offence, and gets angry at trifling things and evinces anger, hatred and resentment therefore he will on account of that bad *kamma* will be reborn in the Four Lower Regions .....will be ugly.

But, if he abstains from the above acts, he will be reborn in heavenly abodes.....will be good-looking.

(4) If a person is jealous-minded; and is displeased, grumbling and envious when

others get offerings or are respected and honoured, he will on account of that bad *kamma* be reborn in the Four Lower Regions ..... will have a small retinue.

But if he abstains from the above acts, he will be reborn in the heavenly abodes.....will have a great retinue.

(5) If a person through stinginess is not a giver to *samaṇa* or *brāhmaṇa* of drink, food, clothing, vehicle, garlands, scents, unguents, bed, lodging and light, he will on account of that bad *kamma* be reborn in the Four Lower Regions.....he will be poor.

But, if he acts to the contrary, on account of his good *kamma* he will be reborn in the heavenly abodes.....he will be wealthy.

(6) If a person is rude and conceited and does not greet one who should be greeted, does not stand up for one who should be respected, does not give a seat to one who should be given a seat, does not make room for one for whom room should be made, does not respect, revere, reverence and honour one who should be respected, revered, revered and honoured, he will on account of that bad *kamma* be reborn in the Four Lower Regions.....will be of a low family.

But, if he acts to the contrary, on account of his good *kamma* he will be reborn in the heavenly abodes.....will be of a high family.

(7) If a person does not approach a *samaṇa* or *brāhmaṇa* and ask: 'Revered sir, what is *kusala*? What is *akusala*? What is blameable? What is not blameable? What should be practised? What should be abstained

from? What being performed by me will for long be for my disadvantage and misery? What being performed by me will, for long be for my welfare and happiness?', he will on account of that bad *kamma*, be reborn in the

Four Lower Regions.....will be deficient in wisdom.

But, if he acts otherwise, he will on account of his good *kamma*, be reborn in the heavenly abodes.....will have great wisdom.

(From the Uparipañña, Vibhaṅga Vagga. Cūlakammavibhaṅga Sutta, Chaṭṭha Sāṅgāyana Edition p. 243.)

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## BUDDHIST VIEW OF HEALTH AND LONG LIFE

By

*Myanaung U Tin*

In the Dhammapada the Buddha teaches us:

*“Ārogyaparamā lābhā;  
santuṭṭhī paramaṃ dhanam;  
vissāsaparamā ñāti;  
nibbānam paramaṃ sukham.”*

—Verse 204.

(Health is the highest gain; contentment is the greatest wealth ; kinsmen are the best in whom to trust; Nibbāna is the chiefest bliss.)<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that health is the highest gain, but what is most obvious is the easiest to overlook. Just as a person does not completely realise the worth of money while his purse is fat, so a person fails to understand fully the blessing of health while he is enjoying it. In both cases the value or utility is appreciated to the utmost only after its loss or diminution.

Once at Sāvatti, King Pasenadi of Kosala, after dining off a large quantity of curried rice, came to see the Buddha. The Exalted One, discerning the king's state of repletion and stertorous breathing, uttered this verse:

“To sons of men who ever mindful live,  
Measure observing in the food they take,  
All minished becomes the power of sense.  
Softly old age steals on, their days  
prolonged.”<sup>2</sup>

Thereupon, the king made a rule to eat not more than one nālika.<sup>3</sup> And on later occasion it came to pass that the king, his body in good condition, stroked his healthy limbs and fervently exclaimed: “Ah! surely for my salvation both in this life and hereafter hath

the Exalted One shown compassion unto me.” Then, the Buddha uttered the verse 204 referred to at the beginning.

In the Theragāthā, the Buddha spoke this verse<sup>4</sup> to Dāsaka in order to stir up agitation:

“Who waxes slothful and in diet gross.  
Given to sleep and rolling as he lies,  
Like a great hog with provender replete—  
This dolt comes back again, again, to birth.”

Hearing this, Dāsaka grew agitated and, developing Insight, not long after, realized Arahantship.

The Exalted One enjoins upon His disciples to beware of the dangers of heavy meals or gross feeding. Indigestion is the root-cause of many diseases, and disease is suffering. Overfeeding produces sloth and heedlessness. “Associate not with heedlessness, nor be addicted to the sense pleasures; for, a heedful one, practising meditation, attains immense happiness”, exhorts the Buddha.<sup>5</sup>

Food, clothing and shelter are the three primary essentials of human life, and of them, food is the perpetual source of worry and trouble to human beings not only because it is needed to sustain life, but also because it must be so prepared as to satisfy all palates. Gourmets and chefs are in great demand. Cookery books adorn the kitchen shelves. Hotels and restaurants are very popular. Among the cuisines of the world, Chinese and French appear to be favourites. More for the appeasement of his fastidious taste than for the satisfaction of his hunger or appetite, the modern man has abandoned his plain living

<sup>1</sup> Dhammapada by Ven. Nārada Thera.

<sup>2</sup> Commentary on Verse 204.—See the Buddhist Legends, translated by E. W. Burlingame, of the stories contained in the Dhammapada Commentary—Vols. 28, 29, 30, of the Harvard Oriental Series. Dhammapada Aṭṭhakathā, Part II, Page 315. 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>3</sup> A small measure of capacity.

<sup>4</sup> Psalms of the Brethren, Verse No. 17. XVII, P. T. S. Khuddaka-Nikāya, Thera-Gāthā, Ekaka-nipāta, Dutiya-vagga, 17, Dāsaka Thera Gāthā, P 223, 6th Syn, Edn.

<sup>5</sup> Dhammapada. verse 27. Please see the ‘Light of the Dhamma’, VOL. VI—No. 4.

with simple diet for high living with sumptuous food. In the merry-go-round of life, he gets enmeshed in sensuous delights, delights relating to eye, nose, mouth, body and mind sense-doors.

Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg writes of such a heedless life in his book “Living Religions of the World”<sup>1</sup>: “Man forgets (the basic reality) to such an extent that he runs around like a squirrel chasing its own tail..... When we turn over the brightly colored pages of *Life* or *The Saturday Evening Post* we see everybody in the advertisements riding in cars; cooing over washing machines; exulting in sanforized shirts. Everybody is happy; everybody smiles; and everyone is fifteen to thirty years old, healthy; ruddy-cheeked, having a swell time, and preserved from grief by Monuments of Eternity and air foam mattresses. Occasionally an old-timer, leaning on a stick, stands aside to watch the crowd, but only occasionally. The end of it all is carefully and decorously hidden. It is comfortable and snug. But it is not secure. A sound look is to convince us that the happy life so advertised is sheer, unadulterated boredom.”

Running after sensuous delights—places for entertainment galore—a person in this so-called civilized society leads indeed a fast life, which damages health, physical as well as mental.

The Buddha observes:

There is agreeable feeling, rooted in greed, at the moment of the enjoyment of sensuous delight; this monetary enjoyment, however, becomes the cause of unending misery.<sup>2</sup>

Poet Wordsworth mused in “Resolution and Independence”:

“Of joy as we have mounted in delight  
In our dejection do we sink as low.”

A few years ago I asked an old American Senator to tell me the secret of his health and long life. His reply was: ‘I am unmarried. I don’t smoke. I don’t drink. I lead a simple life.’ I was very much impressed by it. But a young Congressman butted in with a quip: “Is life worth living then?” The old man smiled, perhaps, meaning to say, “You’ll know the answer sooner or later.”

In the Buddhist sense, *āhāra* (nutriment) is not confined only to material food. The four kinds of nutriment<sup>3</sup> are (1) material food (*kabaḷikāra-āhāra*), (2) sensorial or mental impression (*phassa*), (3) mental volition (*mano-sañcetanā-āhāra*), and (4) consciousness (*viññāṇāhāra*).

(1) Material food feeds the eight-fold corporeality, having nutriment essence as its eighth factor (*i.e.*, solid, liquid, heat, motion, colour, odour, taste, and nutriment essence).

(2) Sensorial or mental impression is a condition for the three kinds of feeling (*i.e.*, agreeable, disagreeable, and indifferent).

(3) Mental volition (*kamma*) feeds rebirth.

(4) Consciousness feeds mind and corporeality in the moment of conception.

It may be pointed out that *āhāra* is one of the twenty-four relations (*paccaya*) in the Buddhist Philosophy of Relations—Paṭṭhāna (Abhidhamma). Material food is termed *kabaḷikāra-āhāra* or *rūpa-āhāra*, and the remaining three kinds of nutriment are called *arūpino āhāra* or *nāma āhāra*.

The so-called individual existence is in reality nothing but a mere process of mental and physical phenomena—*nāmarūpa*. There are four kinds of origination of corporeal phenomena, namely: through *kamma*, *citta* (consciousness), *utu* (temperature), and *āhāra* (nutriment). The dependent nature of mind and corporeality is stated in the Dīgha Nikāya 23:<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, U. S. A. (1956)—page 12.

<sup>2</sup> Saṃyutta-nikāya. Nidāna-vagga Saṃyutta, 2-Upādāna Sutta, p. 311, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>3</sup> Visuddhimagga, page 336, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>4</sup> Dīgha-Nikāya, Mahā-vagga, 10. Pāyāsi Sutta, page 269, 6th Synod Edition.

“Sound is not a thing that dwells inside the conch-shell and comes out from time to time, but due to both, the conch-shell and the man that blows it, sound comes to arise. Just so, due to the presence of vitality, heat and consciousness, thus body may execute the acts of going, standing, sitting and lying down, and the five sense-organs and the mind may perform their various functions.”

A detailed exposition of these four kinds of originations is given in the Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification).<sup>1</sup> For our purpose it will be enough to say that these four are determinants of health and life.

*Kamma* means action. It denotes wholesome and unwholesome volitions and their concomitant mental factors, causing rebirth and shaping the destiny of beings.

“Volition (*cetanā*), O monks, is what I call action, for through volition one is performing the action by body, speech or mind. There is *kamma*, O monks, that ripens in hell, *kamma* that ripens in the animal world, *kamma* that ripens in the world of men, *kamma* that ripens in the heavenly world. Three-fold, however, is the fruit of *kamma*: ripening in life time, ripening at next birth, ripening in successive births.”<sup>2</sup>

“Killing, stealing, improper sexual intercourse, lying, slandering, rude speech, foolish babble, practised, carried on, and frequently cultivated, leads to rebirth in hell, or amongst the animals or amongst the ghosts.”<sup>3</sup>

“He who kills and is cruel goes either to hell, or, if reborn as man, will be short-lived. He who torments others will be afflicted with disease. The angry one will be born ugly, the

envious one will be without influence, the stingy one will be poor, the conceited one will be of low descent, the indolent one will be without knowledge. In the contrary case, man will be born in heaven; or reborn as man, he will be long-lived, possessed of beauty, influence, noble descent and knowledge.”<sup>4</sup>

Wholesome *kamma* produces good results and unwholesome *kamma* bad results. Past *kamma* conditions our life and health but it must not be forgotten that present *kamma* plays an equally important role. The Buddha stresses that one who relies solely on the past *kamma* has a Wrong View, *pubbekatahetu-ditthi*,<sup>5</sup> and will be lacking in wholesome volitions and effort.

Corporeal phenomena also originate through consciousness or mind. It is, therefore, necessary to adopt a right attitude in all possible situations. In Pāḷi, such an attitude is defined as *yoniso manasikāra*, which means wise consideration. A person who can cultivate a mental attitude like this will not be violently shaken by the weal or woe of life.

*Yoniso manasikāra* is the foundation for gaining the seven factors of enlightenment (*bhojjhaṅga*),<sup>6</sup> namely : Attentiveness, Investigation of the Law (Dhamma), Energy, Rapture, Tranquillity, Concentration, and Equanimity. It may be recalled that the Buddha gave a short discourse on *Bhojjhaṅga* to His disciples Moggallāna and Kassapa when the latter were suffering from illness, and they regained their health forthwith as a result of wise consideration. When the Buddha Himself was ailing, Cunda obediently recited the same discourse, and the Buddha’s ailment passed off at once. Hence, the recitation of *Bhojjhaṅga Sutta* in time of sickness in these days.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Visuddhimagga translated by Bhikkhu Ñānamoli, page 372. Please see Visuddhimagga, page 336, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>2</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, Chakka-nipāta, Mahāvagga, Nibbedhika Sutta, p. 359, 6th Syn. Edn. Please see the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. IV-No. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, Aṭṭhaka Nipāta, Dāna-vagga, Duccarita-Vipāka Sutta, page 77, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>4</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, Aṭṭhaka Nipāta, Paṭhamapaṇṇāsaka, Uposathavagga, Saṃkhittūposatha Sutta, p. 79, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>5</sup> Please see The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. V-No. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Please see The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. VI-No. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Saṃyutta Nikāya, Bhojjhaṅga Saṃyutta, page 73, 6th Syn. Edn.

It may be added that *yoniso manasikāra* is the foundation for *sammādiṭṭhi* (Right Understanding), etc., for overcoming the five Hindrances (*Nīvaraṇa*) and for all the remaining wholesome things. “Not even one thing do I know, through which in such a degree the factors of enlightenment come to rise, and once arisen come to full development, as wise consideration.”, exclaimed the Buddha.<sup>1</sup>

In *utu* (temperature) too corporeality has its origination. Of the four elements—solid, liquid, heat and motion,—heat (*tejo*) is the driving force just as volition is the impelling power behind any action, be it by body, speech or mind. Heat gives rise to temperature. It has been stated above in connection with the dependent nature of mind and body that because of the presence of vitality, heat and consciousness, five sense-organs and mind perform their various functions. Heat is one of the three prime essentials. It must, however, be of right degree. The normal temperature of a human being is believed to be 98.4°F., hence, the necessity of maintaining that temperature.

Human devices for regulating the outside temperature range, on the one hand, from wood fuel fire to central heater to produce warmth, and, on the other, from fan to air-conditioner to produce coolness. For the regulation of body temperature human beings run the whole gamut from herbs to antibiotics. Clothing and shelter, two of the three primary needs, are concerned with the matter of protection against the effects of temperature because it plays a vital part in the origination and dissolution of things, both animate and inanimate.

Now comes the last factor—nutriment. That nutriment, in the Buddhist sense, is not confined only to material food has been stated earlier. As to material food, the Buddha gives a definite counsel that one should take such

food as will agree with him and, even so, it should not be taken overmuch. Dieticians and physicians exist in all ages and countries. But one must be able to know best what food one should take. In the words of Francis Bacon, a man’s own observation, what he finds good of and what he finds hurt of, is the best physic to preserve health. If one were not a child, in reality or in mental development, he should be able to find out from his personal experience which kind of food agrees with him and which does not, from the health viewpoint. For instance, some persons are allergic to eggs, some to meat and others to nuts, and so forth. Whether one’s system can or cannot easily digest a particular kind of food can also be verified from experience. Again, there is the question of diet one is accustomed or unaccustomed to. The change of climate must also be taken into consideration. The essence of material food gives sustenance to corporeality. That life-giving essence is called *ojā* in Pāli and Vitamin in the West. *Jīvita* (Pāli) and *Vita* (Latin) mean life. Vitamin tablets are widely used nowadays as accessory food factors or preventives of ailments.

All the above-mentioned points, nay more, are implied as much in the Buddha’s precepts as in His own example.

The Buddha’s advice for the promotion of longevity of life comprises five points.<sup>2</sup>

- (1) Do such things as are suitable to one;
- (2) Know the right measure in which suitable things should be done;
- (3) Eat digestible food;
- (4) Observe five moral precepts;
- (5) Keep good friends,

In the alternative,

- (1) Do such things as are suitable to one;
- (2) Know the right measure in which such suitable things should be done;
- (3) Eat digestible food;

<sup>1</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, Eka-nipāta, 8 Kalyāṇamitta-vagga, p. 12, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>2</sup> Aṅguttara Nikāya, Pañcaṅguttara, Gītāna-vagga, Duttiya-anāyussā Sutta, page 128, 6th Syn. Edn.

(4) Keep regular hours for eating, walking and sleeping;

(5) Lead a chaste life.

The Buddha practised daily what He preached to others. When it is said that the Buddha is perfect in Knowledge (*vijjā*) and Conduct (*carāṇa*), Conduct is of fifteen kinds, namely: (1) Morality, (2) Guarding the Sense-doors, (3) Moderation in eating, (4) Wakefulness, (5) Faith, (6) Mindfulness, (7) Moral Shame, (8) Moral Dread, (9) Great Learning, (10) Energy, (11) Wisdom, (12-15) Four Jhānas.

A sound mind in a sound body, says an adage. When a sound body functions well the mind associated with it also becomes sound. The body-mind compound in a healthy condition is certainly conducive to the promotion of mundane and supramundane welfare. Health is not the end: it is a means to an end.

In the “Living Religions of the World” (Page 239) Dr. Frederic Spiegelberg comments: “This sermon (Dhamma-cakkapavattana Sutta <sup>1</sup>) every Buddhist, and *perhaps, every educated person in the world* (italics are ours), should know by heart. In that sermon the Exalted One teaches us:

‘A life given to pleasures, devoted to pleasures and lust is degrading, sensual, vulgar, ignoble, and profitless.’ Life given to pleasures is one extreme, the other being ‘Life given to mortifications, which is painful, ignoble and profitless’. By avoiding these two extremes, the Tathāgata has gained the knowledge of the middle path which leads to Insight, which leads to Wisdom, which conduces to Calm, to Knowledge, to Supreme Enlightenment.’ This middle path is the Eightfold Noble Path. The Buddha’s final exhortation in His last sermon. Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta, <sup>2</sup> is “*Appamādena*

*sampādetha*”.—Work out your own salvation with earnestness. In this endeavour health is clearly a prime requisite. Health is the highest gain and, if properly taken advantage of, leads to happiness in this world, as also to the chiefest bliss of Nibbāna.

<sup>1</sup> Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga, 6. Pañcavaggiyakathā, page 14, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>2</sup> Dīgha Nikāya, Mahā-vagga, Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta, p. 61, 6th Syn. Edn.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PURITY IN THE BUDDHA-DHAMMA

By AMARASIRI WEERARATNE

We all realise that cleanliness is essential for good health. It is common knowledge that dirt and filth breed disease. Therefore we wear clean clothes and eat pure food, that is, food free from germs and bacteria. We also realise the value of what is called environmental sanitation. Hence we take care to live in an atmosphere that is free from bad odours coming from filthy drains and so forth.

Thus we see that for purposes of avoiding disease and the consequent suffering, it is necessary to seek cleanliness. This is with regard to external cleanliness. Yet do we pay sufficient attention to cleanliness of the mind and mental health? Do we take sufficient care and precautions to avoid the impurities that soil the mind and cause suffering and pain that follows a diseased mind?

The purification of the mind is the fundamental object of the Buddha's teachings. Hence it is said "*Sacittapariyodapanam etam buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*"<sup>1</sup>

(To purify the mind is the teaching of the Buddhas). When the celebrated commentator Buddhaghosa arrived at Mahā Vihāra, Ānurādhapura, in the 5th century C.E., and undertook to translate the Sinhala Commentaries into Pāli, the Elders at the Mahā Vihāra requested him to compile a treatise on the Buddha-Dhamma, so that he may prove his fitness for the task. Thereupon the Venerable Buddhaghosa compiled the well-known treatise called the "Visuddhi Magga" (the Path of Purity), which has since become a standard work on the Buddha-Dhamma. This title alone emphasizes the nature of the Buddha-Dhamma, viz. that it is a systematic course of purifying the mind.

Anyone who is familiar with even the elementary teachings of the Buddha realises that on account of the arising of greed, ill-will and ignorance the mind of man gets soiled and

becomes impure. According to the Buddha-Dhamma purity as well as impurity is the result of one's own volitional activities.

It is not the work of a Creator-God, nor has the Saviour anything to do with it. Man is not besmirched with the original sin of his ancestors. These beliefs constitute mere mythical superstition. As Vishnusharman the Sanskrit author remarks in his Hitopadesha, with the advance of years all faculties of man such as hearing, sight, etc., deteriorate. But there is one thing which does not deteriorate but grows with cumulative force, and that is *Taṇhā*—the thirst for the ratification of sensual desires.

Thus the thoughtful seeker after Truth finds himself a man fallen into a cess-pool of passions and defilements (*kilesas*). Hence he aspires to purify himself from the dirt and to cleanse himself. The Bodhisatta when he was the Ascetic Sumedha put this position succinctly thus:—

Just as a man fallen amongst filth beholding a  
brimming lake,  
If he seek not that lake, the fault is not in the  
lake,  
So there exists the Lake of Nibbāna, that  
washes the stains of sin.  
If a man seek not that Lake, the fault is not in  
the Lake of Nibbāna.

(Buddhavaṃsa 24)

In order to counteract the three chief evil mental states that defile the mind the Master advocates the cultivation of three mental states that are their very antithesis, viz. *dāna* (almsgiving), *sīla* (morality) and *bhāvanā* (mental contemplation). It is a gradual process extending for a long time in proportion to the state of defilement of one's mind.

It is by thought, word and deed that we defile ourselves. Mental defilements consist of covetousness, ill-will, and erroneous views. Verbal defilements comprise lying, harsh

<sup>1</sup> Dhammapada, verse 183.

language that hurts others' feelings, backbiting, and vain talk. Deeds which defile the mind are killing living beings, stealing, and sexual misconduct. Meticulously avoiding these, the earnest Buddhist must cultivate generosity in place of covetousness, good-will in place of ill-will and correct views in place of erroneous views. Avoiding lying he practises truthfulness, instead of harsh talk he cultivates gentleness in language, instead of back-biting he uses language to promote amity, and instead of profitless talk he cultivates talk that is in conformity with the Dhamma and the Vinaya. Avoiding killing, stealing and sexual impurity he abstains from these vices and puts good-will, generosity and chastity into practice.

Avoiding false views he endeavours to understand the Four Noble Truths, namely, the universality of suffering, its cause, cessation and the way leading to cessation. In this way he avoids defilements and cultivates clean traits of mind by careful selection. In this alone lies the salvation of mankind from sin, error, and consequent suffering. In the choice of food we avoid the unwholesome and select valuable items rich in vitamins. Similarly in the entertaining of thoughts too we have to be selective and cultivate the habits of entertaining wholesome thoughts, because

ultimately it is these that go to form our character—whether it be noble or ignoble.

Hence it is important to be grounded in Right Views (*Sammā-diṭṭhi*) and to entertain Right Thoughts (*Sammāsaṅkappa*). By this method one enters the Noble Eightfold Path which is the one and only path for the purification of beings and which leads them to the cessation of suffering. It ultimately leads to *Paññā* (Wisdom)—Wisdom derived from Vipassanā Meditation—and by which one realises that all things are impermanent, sorrow-fraught, and without any abiding entity or substance. It is this wisdom which purifies. Hence the saying of the Master, “*Paññāya parisujjati*” (Purified by means of Wisdom).

The Buddha's teachings comprise a Middle Way avoiding all extremes and absurdities. It is the rational and clear enunciation of the Noble Eightfold Path, consisting of Virtue (*Sīla*), Concentration (*Samādhi*) and Wisdom (*Paññā*). There are no divine mysteries nor blind faith here. The Buddha teaches liberation without a vicarious Saviour, and this liberation can be attained in this life itself through purification of the mind, by the exercise of our own faculties.

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**VIMUTTI RASA—The Taste of Liberation.***By U Ba Htu, B. J. S. (Retd.)*

Every religion has its ultimate goal in view before its adherents, but the goal is not the same in all the religions. The outlook on life by the great religions varies and each has its own system of reaching the ultimate goal. Of the three Great International Religions of the World, perhaps, Buddhism alone speaks about the fore-taste of liberation and the bliss of the Ultimate Goal while living in the present life. It is a sublime subject of absorbing interest to all Buddhists.

At this stage a few words may be said about Gotama Buddha, who after the attainment of Enlightenment, enjoyed the bliss of Nibbāna and thus out of personal experience preached what Nibbāna is.

**Gotama Buddha—The Immaculately Clean One:**

After attaining the Supreme Enlightenment, the Buddha boldly proclaimed that He was the greatest amongst all men, devas and brahmās incomparable in glory and unexcelled in wisdom. A devout Buddhist who has studied and practised the Dhamma closely, is fully convinced that the claim is perfectly true. For, the Omniscient Buddha had shed all traces of moral defilements and thereby become immaculately clean in thoughts, words and actions. Having thus purified His mind He remained ever serene, composed, clear, and imbued with the highest form of love and compassion for all living creatures. In an enthusiastic praise in honour of the Buddha an Indian scholar of Buddhism writes as follows:— “There was never an occasion when the Buddha flamed forth in anger, never an occasion when an unkind word escaped his lips.”<sup>1</sup> In short, throughout the canonical works of Buddhism, there is no record of a single act or word which mars the purity and sublimity of His mind. To the

Omniscient Buddha no horizon bounds the vision of world-life. It extends to innumerable World-Kappas through immeasurable distances of time. He sees a chain of lives for each individual being, past, present, and future, all transitory and unsatisfying. He sees a restless and substanceless procession of mind and body alone, moving and surging on the turbulent waters of the ocean of *Samsāra*. This untiring procession of mind and body begins from the past infinity and will continue into the future infinity. The combination of mind and body, which in general parlance is called a being is constantly subject to vicissitudes of birth, decay, disease, sorrow, and death. This is a lamentable picture of the worldlings travelling to and fro on the ocean of *Samsāra* as seen by the Omniscient Buddha. As against this sorrowful picture of life, He also sees and Himself enjoys the coolness, serenity, and bliss of Nibbāna, which in no way is associated with birth, decay, disease, sorrow, and death. Seeing these two incompatible states, there arose in the Omniscient Buddha a desire to extricate the drowning masses of beings from repeated births and deaths, and thereby preached the Noble Eightfold Path that unerringly leads the true follower to the immortal state and bliss of Nibbāna. Before dealing with the subject of Nibbāna it will be proper to note concisely what world conditions the human race is facing today, so that when the whole is read, the reader will be able to form a clear idea of Nibbāna against the background of mundane existence.

**The World of conflicts**

It must be frankly admitted that ours is a World of conflicts today. Rivalry and competition have grown enormously among individuals, classes, races, and nations with the result that strife, struggle, and agitation are the order of the day. One sees that the human mind is greatly agitated. It no longer concerns itself with its business alone, but takes

<sup>1</sup> Godama the Buddha by Dr. S. Radha Krishnam, Second Edition, p. 14.

cognizance of its environments, other people, and the World; nay it looks to other planets in a spirit of enterprise and conquest. In short, this spirit of conquest has wholly seized the human mind. No doubt, this spirit of conquest is rewarded by spectacular successes in the fields of science and production. Elated and encouraged, man is not content with the present day achievements, but optimistically looks into the future and strives on to bring new horizons under his control. No wonder that new dimensional factors have come into the life of modern man. The scientific creativeness and consequent achievements are to be welcomed, but certain undesirable results flow from them. These outstanding achievements increase rivalry, jealousy, and fear amongst the nations. It is generally believed that man has greatly progressed nowadays. To a superficial mind it is correct, but to a deep thinking one, it is apparent that progress is in the wrong direction and not in the right direction of the greatest good of the greatest number. The result of successes in the wrong direction means more strife and suffering for the human race. One sees there is grinding poverty and hunger in the midst of plenty and the modern man struggles on fruitlessly where there can be amity and peace without struggle. Everywhere man has become aggressive and assertive; nay he has become far too intoxicated and excited by his own achievements. On the whole, man in the present day context of struggle and tension is not happy, contented, and peaceful. It cannot be denied that greed, hatred, and I-ness (egoism) are the prime causes of the present day conflicts. With the ever-growing atomic weapons, peoples of the world feel as if they are sitting on an active volcano. This is a shameful picture of the world today. However, the situation is not altogether without hope, for there are still sane and sober elements in the upper stratum of society who are all out to bring about a change of attitude to life and to unlock the infinite possibilities of the atom for peaceful purposes. It is also to be hoped that the day is not far off when the

creativeness of man will not be dedicated to his death but consecrated to his life and well-being.

### **Interpretation of Nibbāna in the Past:**

There has been a great deal of misunderstanding and mis-statements about Nibbāna. In the past, many writers in English had a vague notion of Nibbāna. Some thought that it was a state of blissful repose that preceded annihilation; while others conjectured that it was a hushed and emotionless silence. In fact, it is the opposite of *Saṅkhāras* and as such it is transcendental the bliss of which is realizable by intuition, that is by sudden illuminations of consciousness. These illuminations of consciousness are accompanied at the first stage by the complete extinguishment of I-ness and sceptical doubt, and in the subsequent stages by a gradual extinguishment of the fires of greed and hate. Nibbāna is a sublime positive for which the thought of a worldling has no idea and for which language has no appropriate expression. Although it cannot be gauged by the usual measures of the corporeal world, yet it is the Real of all bliss enjoyable by the Ariya (Noble One) who had passed over the ocean of *Samṣāra* while living in this life and ever in the here after.

### **Nibbāna—The Real of all Realities.**

The Omniscient Buddha made his famous declaration about Nibbāna. There is an unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed. Were there not this unborn, unoriginated, uncreated, unformed, there would be no escape from the World of the born, the originated, the created, the formed.

*There are two categories of Paramattha Dhammas. (1) Saṅkhata Paramattha. (2) Asaṅkhata Paramattha. Mind and Matter are classed under the category of Saṅkhata Paramattha, while Nibbāna, the Real of all Realities takes the exalted title of Asaṅkhata Paramattha, the Highest Good. Although Saṅkhata and Asaṅkhata Paramatthas appear*

under the general term *Paramattha*, a distinct demarcation line may be drawn between the two for they possess diametrically opposite qualities or characteristics of their own. *Saṅkhata Paramattha*, that is Mind including mental tendencies and Matter, is associated with birth, decay, disease, and death while *Asaṅkhata Paramattha*, that is Nibbāna is absolutely free from them.

*Saṅkhata Paramattha* is compound, conditioned phenomenal; while *Asaṅkhata Paramattha* is uncompounded, unconditioned, and non-phenomenal. *Saṅkhata Paramattha* is associated with transitoriness and suffering, but *Asaṅkhata Paramattha* is associated with immortality and bliss.

It may be pointed out that all the thirty-one abodes of beings, that is four of suffering, one of human beings, six of gods, and twenty of Brahmās, come within the domain of *Saṅkhata Paramattha*. On the other hand, Nibbāna is singularly unique and is the only *Dhātu* (Element) known by the distinguished term *Asaṅkhata Paramattha*. In the world of *Saṅkhāras* (where conditions and compounds prevail) the dominating factors are greed, hate, jealousy and selfishness whereas in the realm of Nibbāna, peace, serenity and immortality only reign supreme. From the above comparison, it is amply clear that Buddhist Nibbāna is a positive Reality for which human language has no appropriate expression, but about which the enlightened mind of an Ariya (Holy One) has a clear notion.

### **Realization of Nibbāna:**

A man burdened with mental impurities cannot visualize Nibbāna and so it is essential that he should be cleansed of them in the first place. The Buddha prescribes Vipassanā as the means to achieve this end. The purpose of Vipassanā is to see life as it really is, in other words, the flux of life.

In fact, arising and ceasing of billions of cells or atoms and mental factors compose the flux of life and when this is seen on one's

own body, the devoted meditator is struck and amazed by the profound sense of its impermanence and instability. Yes, struck and amazed, because this is a penetrating discernment which he had never experienced in millions of lives in the past. As the meditator perseveres on, there soon comes a time when nothing in the Universe, either animate or inanimate, appears to be in the form of mass or stability. Everything moves on and changes. At this stage the ardent meditator is greatly touched by the profound sense of impermanence in himself and in all things around him. He now sees that the entire body, which he loves and values so much, is subject to relentless change—a change where billions and billions of cells all over the body and mental factors arise at one moment and cease at the next without interruption. Soon after this high stage of intellection, in place of mass, form or colour, there appear to the mind's eye of the *Yogi*, characteristics of hardness, cohesion, motion and heat and of the mind itself which are seen in a state of instability and change only.

The light is now about to dawn on him. Ah, if the whole Universe including himself is in the grip of this frightful instability and change, how could life be considered as anything but suffering; and how in this whirling, suffering life one could expect to find “*Atta*”—that “*Atta*” which is supposed ever to remain constant? In this ever whirling, changing, suffering and substance-less world of mind and matter the ardent devotee is convinced that there is no place for “*Atta*” anywhere.

### **The Ariyas (The Noble Ones):**

As the meditator reaches the upper stages of Vipassanā wisdom, *Gotrabhū Ñāna* whose mental object is Nibbāna itself comes at last. Now this is the first time the *Yogi* (devotee matured in meditation) has a glimpse of Nibbāna. The function of *Gotrabhū Ñāna* is to cut off the continuity of the state of worldling and initiate him into the select realm of Ariyas (Noble Ones). Continuous with *Gotrabhū*

*Ñāṇa* arise *Magga* and *Phala Ñāṇas*. The function of *Magga Ñāṇa* is to eradicate the two major defilements, i.e., wrong views and doubts. With them go other defilements that would normally send a being to one of the four abodes of suffering. What is still of more importance is, that all immoral acts, done in millions of lives in the past and in the present life, become void from the moment of realization. At this supreme moment of realization, the ecstasy of joy and lightness saturates the whole body. The chances of being born in the abodes of suffering are forever removed and thus the gates of suffering are closed so far as he is concerned. The *Yogi* now fully knows that he is simply incapable of infringing the five moral precepts and an unshakeable conviction of the truth of the three *Ratanas* grows in him which can never be destroyed. He will not change his conviction and the right view of the *Dhamma* even at the cost of his life. Purged of the major impurities and having experienced the ecstasy of joy at the moment of enlightenment, the *Yogi* dispels all worries about death, for he knows that the journey onwards is to higher abodes of happiness and bliss. In short he has attained a status of an *Ariya (Sotāpanna)* which in spite of any length of time, does not deteriorate. As he attains the three higher stages of purification, his poise and calmness become more marked. Finally as he reaches Arahantship, his joy and peace know no bounds. This state of contentment, joy and peace can be gathered from the exultant utterances of the Theras and Therīs who had attained Arahantship.

Here are a few of them:

- (1) Purged are the Āsavas (Fluxions) that drugg'd my heart.  
Calm and content I know Nibbāna's peace. <sup>1</sup>
- (2) Expunged is all the fever of desire.  
Cool am I now and calm—Nibbāna's peace. <sup>2</sup>
- (3) Keen with unfettered zeal, detached,  
Calm and serene I taste Nibbāna's peace. <sup>3</sup>

Surely, these are the joyful and buoyant utterances of Arahants who were living and a non-Buddhist may, perhaps, like to know what awaits them after death.

The four characteristics of Nibbāna are very illuminating on the point. Nibbāna has the characteristics of:

- (a) Being a state which is beyond unending rebirths (*Nissarāṇa*).
- (b) Freedom from *Kilesas (Paviveka)*.
- (c) The Beyond free from all becoming and conditionality (*Asañkhata*).
- (d) Immortality (*Amata*).

That is, Nibbāna possesses a unique stability not associated with arising and ceasing. From the above it is clear that Buddhist Nibbāna is the Real of all Realities. Wonderful, indeed, is the Buddha-Dhamma.

<sup>1</sup> Psalms of the Sisters, XXAIX, Vimalā. Khuddaka Nikāya, Therī-gāthā, Pañcaka-nipāta, 2. Vimalā Therī-gāthā, p. 388, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>2</sup> Psalms of the Sisters, XXVI, Abhaya's Mother. Khuddaka Nikāya, Therī-gāthā, Duka-nipāta, 8. Abhayamātu Therī-gāthā, p. 382, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>3</sup> Psalms of the Sisters, XLI, Sundarī Nanda. 4. Sundarīnanda Therī-gāthā, p. 388, 6th Syn. Edn.

## DISCIPLINE FOR THE LAYMAN

*By Soma Thera, Vijirārāma*

The Buddha's message consists of the Doctrine (*Dhamma*) and the Discipline (*Vinaya*). The Discipline has to do with conduct, virtue, morals, the ethical side of the message; the Doctrine with the rest. In the threefold division of the Path to the Cessation of Ill, the Discipline comes under the aggregate of virtue (*Sīla*); the Doctrine belongs to the aggregates of concentration (*Samādhi*) and of wisdom (*Paññā*). The Discipline or moral practice concerns the activity of speech and behaviour; the Doctrine is connected with the activities of the intellect and of the understanding. As mental clarity and penetration leading to the Cessation (*Nibbāna*) depend on the practice of virtue, which eliminates the restlessness and anxiety due to immoral action and speech, and provides a necessary element for right thought and understanding, the Discipline is an essential factor for the attainment of the Cessation of ill.

The salient feature of the Buddha's message is its freedom from exaggeration, immoderate thought, and extreme action, as declared by the Buddha himself in the Instruction of the Setting in Motion of the Law (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*)<sup>1</sup> where he says that his teaching is the Middle Way, *Majjhima Paṭipadā*, balanced and serene, free from addiction to sensual enjoyment and to fatiguing the body, and from the extravagant, absurd notions of eternalism and annihilationism. This freedom from extremes is the best test for distinguishing the genuine teaching of the Buddha from the spurious attributed to him. What is extreme, extravagant, irrational or exaggerated, wherever it may be found, cannot be the teaching of the Compassionate, Fully Enlightened One.

In the diffusion of the Dhamma in the world no coercive method or force of any kind

was used, The Dhamma spread itself quietly, unhurriedly, gently, with dignity, and by clean means. The message of the Buddha, wherever it went, pacified the hearts of men with its cooling waters of compassion and peace. The history of the propagation of the Dhamma is innocent of cruelty, persecution, and bloodshed. There is enough to warrant the statement that the first disciples of the Blessed One, who proclaimed his message, went from place to place bearing in their hearts the image of his gracious, kind, and noble personality, and mindful of these words of his to them: "Wander forth for the good of many, out of compassion for the world, for the profit, welfare, and happiness of divine and human beings. Make known the teaching, good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, endowed with meaning and proper verbal expression, and complete in everything. Proclaim the purified way of the excellent life."<sup>2</sup>

A follower of the Buddha cannot resort to violence to gain his ends. Not only is violence wrong in the Buddha's teaching but also anger, which is near to violence. For anyone who appreciates the moderate way of life, the life that is free from extremes, it is a sign of failure in right practice to fall into ill-will, anger, or indignation. Hate of every kind clouds the mind, hinders clear understanding, and deprives one of the power to reach sane decisions. Anger has an intoxicating quality. The man who is angry is in some respects like a drunken person. He is not sober. Seeing the danger and futility of anger for one in search of the truth the Buddha said: "Bhikkhus, if outsiders speak ill of me, speak ill of the *Dhamma*, the teaching, or of the *Sanḅha*, the Community of Bhikkhus, there should not be in you on that account discontent, ill-will, or malice. Should you on that account be angry and offended you would (spiritually) be in

<sup>1</sup> Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga, 5. Pañcavaggiyakathā, page 14, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>2</sup> Vinaya Piṭaka, 8. Mārakathā, p. 27, 6th Syn. Edn.

danger. Bhikkhus if, when others speak ill of me, the Teaching, or the Community, you feel angry and offended, would you be able to see the difference between the good and the bad speech of others? —No, Venerable Sir—. Bhikkhus, when outsiders speak ill of me, the Teaching, or the Community of Bhikkhus, the false should be explained by you as false thus: ‘This is a falsehood for this reason, this is an untruth for this reason. This is not in us, this does not exist in us.’ Bhikkhus, if outsiders speak in praise of me, the Teaching, or the Community of Bhikkhus, there should not be in you on that account joy, or pleasure, or elation. Should you on that account be joyful, pleased, and elated, you would thereby be (spiritually) in danger. When others speak in praise of me, the Teaching or the Community of Bhikkhus, the truth should be acknowledged by you as true thus: ‘This is true for this reason, this is a fact for this reason. This is in us, this exists in us.’<sup>1</sup>

The follower of the Buddha in upholding truth and rejecting untruth, according to his understanding, will not go beyond clearly stating what he believes to be true and not subscribing to and not supporting in any way what he has found to be untrue. He will not hate those who hold views different from his. He will always act free from resentment even under the most difficult circumstances. Adherence to the truth is a most important thing for the good life, and it will always keep the ways of reason free and clear and produce in a person the readiness to own his errors and to change a course of action that has been found to be wrong. This malleability of spirit, this humility, tractability, and freedom from pride, can be seen in all who have the open mind, which is most needed for the attainment of inner peace.

As the Buddha’s teaching is one that inculcates the idea that every man is responsible for his deeds and for what he is, no

one can blame another for his own unhappiness, misery, feeling of insecurity, or anxiety. Every man is the heir of his own deeds, his deeds are his possession, his relatives, and his refuge. Due to his own deeds a man continues in *Samsāra*. All good depends on nobility of character, and it may be justly said that the Buddha’s teaching, which tells us to seek security and freedom in ourselves, in our own minds, purified by virtue, is the best of all conceptions of human liberty based on a realistic view of life.

The Buddha sees not only suffering but also the transcending of suffering. He teaches us to avoid what produces unhappiness and to do what produces happiness. He says that the evil-doer suffers here and hereafter and that the doer of good rejoices now and afterwards.<sup>2</sup> The transcending first of evil by mundane good and the transcending of both evil and good later through attainment of the ultramundane constitute the path to freedom proclaimed by the Buddha.

This path is a gradual one free from harsh and violent methods as it must be, since it is a teaching of moderate principles suited for practice by all intelligent beings. In the *Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta*,<sup>3</sup> the Blessed One says that just as a horse-trainer having got a good thoroughbred first accustoms him to the bit and then trains him in what further training he must get step by step, so the Master leads the tameable human being who comes to him, by stages along the way of purity.

Unlike the paths of some other teachers, who believe that happiness has to be reached by suffering, the Blessed One’s path is a turning away from what is unhappy to what is not. When according to the Buddha’s instruction a person sees the world’s ill he is not depressed by it because the Buddha also shows him the happiness possible of

<sup>1</sup> Please see the Brahmajāla Sutta, published by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council. Please see the Light of the Dhamma, vol. III-No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Dhammapada, Verse 18. Please see the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. V-No. 2, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Uparipañña, 7. Gaṇaka Moggallāna Sutta, p. 52, 6th Syn. Edn.

attainment here and now, and so he gains confidence in the Master's teaching. Such a person through such confidence gains joy, calm, gladness, concentration and the vision of things as they really are. Then turning away from the happiness connected with the temporary to that which is unconnected with mundane perception, he reaches dispassion, freedom, and the knowledge of the supreme bliss of the Cessation of Ill. After that he lives untouched by the world as the lotus, which, having risen above its native pond, stands untouched by the water in which it has grown.

The Buddhist Laymen's Code of Discipline contained in the *Singālovāda Sutta*<sup>1</sup> is concerned chiefly with the cultivation of virtues necessary for preparing the mind of the householder for the Cessation of Ill, Nibbāna. This Sutta teaches the layman the art of establishing himself in the fundamental qualities implied in the term Discipline as it is understood in the Buddha's message. These qualities cannot be developed by one who is without self-control, propriety of conduct, modesty, mildness, manners, and freedom from crooked behaviour, which form the basis of a noble character and which are closely connected with all teachings of virtue in the Buddha-Sāsana. Instructions given by the Buddha for the welfare of laymen in particular are found in other Suttas too. Among these are the *Parābhava Sutta*,<sup>2</sup> *Mahāmaṅgala Sutta*,<sup>3</sup> *Dhammika Sutta*,<sup>4</sup> and *Vyagghapajjha Sutta*,<sup>5</sup> which set forth teachings related to the basic principles of Buddhist ethics for the layman explicit and implicit in the *Singālovāda Sutta*.

The carrying out of the moral principles taught by the Buddha needs on the part of the practiser the friendly mind, and so the

Buddha's Path of Virtue, which leads to Concentration and Wisdom, may be called the way of friendly feeling, *Mettāyana Magga*, since one who practises virtue (*Sīla*) bestows on all living beings freedom from fear, hatred, injury, and distress. As the feeling of amity impels the understanding Buddhist to be virtuous, kindness becomes the dominant note of the Buddhist way of life.

The practice of the *Singālovāda Sutta*, the Laymen's Code of Discipline, will strengthen the solidarity of a community by maintaining the right relation between its members. According to the Code, parents have to guide their children, see to their education, and take care of them, and children have to honour their parents and keep up the good family traditions; teachers should train and instruct their pupils properly and be duly respected by the pupils in return for their kindness; a man should be courteous, and true to his wife, be unstinting in providing her needs, and be ready to hand her authority in the home in return for faithfulness and the proper performance of her household duties; friends should be generous, courteous, kindly, benevolent, helpful, and constant to one another; masters should assign to servants tasks according to their strength, feed and pay them, look after them in their illness, share luxuries with them, and give them holidays; and servants should rise before and retire after the masters, be content, do their work well, and appreciate the virtues of their employers; laymen should minister to monks by deeds, words, and thoughts of loving-kindness, by welcoming them gladly and supplying their requisites, and the monks should restrain the laymen from evil, encourage them to do good, have a kindly heart towards them, and teach them well.

Such a teaching has the well-being of all members of a society as its end, and is the diligent practice of friendly action, which is the mark of the truly social being. It is obvious that those who practise the Buddhist Laymen's Code of Ethics will be happy fulfilling the duties that make for orderliness, peace, material prosperity and spiritual development.

<sup>1</sup> Suttanta Piṭaka, Pāthika-vagga, Singālovāda, Sutta, page 146, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>2</sup> Khuddaka-nikāya, Suttanipāta, Uruga-vagga, p. 295, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>3</sup> Khuddaka-nikāya, Suttanipāta, p. 318. 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>4</sup> Khuddaka-nikāya, Suttanipāta, Cūla-vagga p. 335, 6th Syn. Edn.

<sup>5</sup> Aṅguttara-nikāya, Aṭṭhaka-nipāta, Gotamī-vagga, p. 107, 6th Syn. Edn.

The virtuous man who follows the way of the good householder will be gentle, possessed of intelligence, humble, docile, energetic, free from indolence, unshaken in adversity, modest of demeanour, wise, impartial to all, one who wants to have friends, bountiful, free from avarice, a leader, a guide, and an instructor. Such a man is clearly one who can be called a modern citizen. He is driven to action by the Law of Righteousness, which inspires right exertion for the overcoming of ill. It is not possible for one who sees the world with friendly eyes not to exert himself for the good of others. The lives of the Buddha and his Noble Disciples, and of his well-known lay followers like Dhammāsoka bear witness to this fact. It was from the time that Dhammāsoka began to tread the way of friendly feeling after turning away from the cruel way of the sword that the teaching of diligence (*appamāda*), which he had heard from the Arahant Sāmaṇera Nigrodha began to take effect in him through his progress in right exertion or endeavour, which is one of the principal things in the Dhamma, and is the characteristic of the diligent. The opposite of diligence is negligence, sloth, indolence, which leads to death and not to immortality, according to the first verse<sup>1</sup> of the portion of Dhamma which Asoka heard from the young saint. The verse runs thus: Diligence is the way to the deathlessness; negligence is the way to death. The diligent do not die. The negligent are as if they were dead.

In one who is endeavouring to do good with heart endowed with friendly feeling, the barriers of greed, hate, and delusion, which keep men from helping one another, disappear and the will to progress towards the lofty, the true, and the good, becomes fully active. The importance of the Buddha's teaching for the world's happiness and well-being lies largely in its power to awaken men to a sense of the reality of life and to make them energetic in the service of others. The house-holder's life

when properly lived is one dedicated to the good of all living beings, and it is properly lived when a person is established in confidence in regard to truth, is pure of conduct, and is mindful of his own and others' welfare.

A community or society becomes great only when good men arise in it. And good men arise when they practise great virtues. But how can great virtues be practised when the great path trodden by the noblest of beings is forgotten, and men walk along paths that lead to hate and destruction? It is when there are persons with outstanding qualities of conduct and intellect that a community becomes free from the plague of fanaticism and the insecurity of extremist action as well as from the heartless exploitation, oppression and suppression of the weak by the strong. To protect a community from the possibility of being overwhelmed by these evils there is only one way. That is the harmless, non-violent way praised by the wise, and proved to be good by centuries of experience of mankind. That way is where through the development of men of character, intellect, intuition, and vision, the foolishness, and pettiness that are perpetrated by the untamed are cancelled and obliterated, and the influence of the perpetrators nullified. That way is closed where intelligence is at a discount, dullness is enthroned, and the wise who are the living signposts to that way are neglected.

The danger of such a state of affairs lies in the increase of fear and anxiety in the world, which can only be dispelled by the stability of love and wisdom taught by all the great teachers of humanity, through the practice of the golden rule, the starting point of the cultivation of the liberation of the heart through love taught by the Blessed One long before the rule was propagated in the West. This ancient teaching of regarding all equally, impartially and without distinction, is the essence of the four excellent dwellings, the Brahmavihāras, and the quicker they become generally active in a community the nearer will that community be to the abolishing of the

<sup>1</sup> Dhammapada, Verse 21. Please also see the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. VI, No. 1.

grounds for discord in it, and for ensuring the safety of everyone composing the community. It is only with the widening of the mind through the spirit of universality which the Brahmavihāras instil that true freedom can hope to gain a foothold in this world. And it is because the Buddha saw in these practices the most potent antidote for the narrowness of the undeveloped minds of men that He gave the practices an important place in His teaching. Non-violence which is the beginning and the end of the path of Noble Living cannot be practised without the thought of universal kindness and mercy.

Further, in a community where the Buddhist ethics for the layman are practised there cannot be any kind of regimentation. The members of the community will learn to live in a way that does not hurt anybody. In such a community the way of friendly feeling will encourage men to make the life of the entire group happy. As such a way of life is for the wise, intelligent, and not for the foolish, as it is for the contented and not for the discontented, and as it is for the energetic and not for the indolent, all who follow it genuinely will turn their minds to the attainment of knowledge, contentment, and right effort, the basis of blameless happy living. Thus the standards in such a community will be the highest humanly possible, and by the very loftiness of the standards the dullness and boredom of uniformity will vanish and the unity of the group will be strengthened by the diversity of achievements and accomplishments of the members, according to their capacities, tendencies, and temperaments.

The message of the Buddha can lead to a clear view of life and a practical way for the achievement of individual and social good, since it is a teaching dependent on reality. In such a teaching the intelligent can have trust; it can give them the necessary impetus for reaching the highest goal attainable in the world. The Buddha's message shows the path to complete freedom (*vimutti*) from the shackles of superstition, wrong understanding, discontent and conflict.

The Buddha proved that the idea of God was not necessary for practising the good life or for explaining the reason of suffering or for overcoming it.

The Dhamma, as it has been indicated above, is a teaching of right exertion. It is the active man of indomitable energy who blessed the world both with material wealth and wisdom. It is impossible to come to know the Dhamma closely and not be impelled to go forth to reach the highest. The Buddha's teaching when it is admitted wholeheartedly into any mind brings about radical changes for good in the character of the individual who entertains it. The message of the Buddha can make the cruel compassionate, the lazy active, and the selfish selfless, through its immeasurable wisdom, which can transmute what is base into something noble and precious.

When the message of the Buddha permeates a society men can no longer be servile; they have to be free and governed by love and sympathy and the voluntary restraints of righteousness. With the message of the Blessed One ruling the lives of men there will come into being the fully reasonable code of conduct in which the compassionate outlook, the essence of a cultivated mental life, becomes predominant. This teaching will train men to be careful about their actions and impart serenity and calm to the human mass. The kinship of blood, or race, or language is feeble in comparison with the kinship of noble ideas in acting which spread wide the spirit of a genuine culture. The kinship of noble ideas springs from the pure consciousness of a man and transcends the bounds of family and nation. Great and pure ideas by their wisdom and sublimity unite people who have not seen one another in a way nothing else can. That is the power of goodness; and in entering the ocean of the Dhamma people resort to a wealth of great ideas that are incomparable for their potency and usefulness in producing a happy world within and without.

## NOTES AND NEWS

### AN APPEAL

The results of the Abhidhamma and Visuddhimagga Examinations conducted recently by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council will be published in March 1960, and a Prize Distribution Ceremony will be held in May 1960. The cost of the ordinary prizes for these examinations will be borne by the Union Buddha Sāsana Council; but donors are required for the special prizes to be given to the deserving candidates. An appeal is, therefore, made to the philanthropic and the generous to kindly donate towards the cost of these special prizes. Any intending donor may communicate with *Thiripyanchi* U Sein Maung, Chief Executive Officer, Union Buddha Sāsana Council, Kabā Aye, Rangoon, mentioning his name and full address, the name of the special prize he intends to donate for, and the number of years for which he intends to donate.

The following is the revised schedule of giving the ordinary and special prizes for the aforesaid examinations:

#### Abhidhamma Examinations (Ordinary):

Ordinary prizes for Lower Standard, Middle Standard and Higher Standard:— Every successful candidate obtains a certificate and in addition a money prize of K. 5. The instructors receive a money prize of K. 3 for each successful candidate.

#### Special Prizes

1. A candidate who passes in all the three parts in the same year and stands first in the examination is awarded K. 200 and a Gold Medal worth K. 150.
2. A candidate who passes in all the three parts in the same year and stands second in the examination is awarded K. 100 and a Silver Medal with gold centre worth K. 75.
3. A candidate who passes in all the three parts in the same year and stands third in the

examination is awarded K. 50 and a Silver Medal worth K. 25.

(Note. There is no age limit for the award of these special prizes.)

#### Special Prizes, Standard by Standard.—

1. Lower Standard: First prize, K. 75; Second prize, K. 50; and Third Prize, K. 25.
2. Middle Standard: First prize, K. 75; Second prize, K. 50; and Third prize, K. 25.
3. Higher Standard: First prize, K. 75; Second prize, K. 50; and Third prize, K. 25.

#### Abhidhamma (Honours) Examinations Ordinary prize

Every candidate who succeeds in all the three standards in one year is awarded a money prize of K. 50. If he does not succeed in all the three Standards at one time, he is only awarded the certificate for the examination he passes. As regards the instructor he obtains a money prize of K. 10 for each successful candidate.

#### Special prize:

A candidate who passes in all the three parts in one year and stands first in the examination is awarded K. 300 and a Gold Medal worth K. 200.

(There is no age limit for this Special prize also.)

#### Visuddhimagga Examination Ordinary prize

Every candidate who succeeds in this examination is awarded a money prize of K. 50. The instructors receive a money prize of K. 10 for each successful candidate.

#### Special prize

A candidate who passes in the Visuddhimagga Examination and who stands first in it is awarded a Gold Medal worth K. 300 in addition to a money prize of K. 50 as an Ordinary prize.

## THE AṬṬHAKATHĀ SANGĀYANĀ FOURTH SESSION OPENS

On the 18th November 1959, His Holiness Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita, Abhi Dhaja Mahā Raṭṭha Guru Masoeyein Sayadaw, representative Mahātheras from Thailand, Ceylon and Cambodia; Sangīti-kāraka Bhikkhus; Thado Thin Thudhamma Sir U Thwin, President of the Union Buddha Sāsana Council; Thado Thin Thudhamma, Agga Maha Thray Sithu, Dr. U Thein Maung, Vice-President of the Union Buddha Sāsana Council; the Hon'ble Maha Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon Aung, Acting Minister for Religious Affairs; members of the Diplomatic Corps; members of the Union Buddha Sāsana Council; members of the General Council of Buddhist Women's (Catering) Associations; and many Buddhist nuns and lay devotees gathered to celebrate the Opening Ceremony of the Fourth and Final Session of the Aṭṭhakathā Sangāyanā (Great Recital on the Commentaries) at the Mahā Pasāṇa Guhā (the Great Sacred Cave) near the Kabā Aye Pagoda, Yegu.

At 1 p.m. drums and gongs were beaten, when Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita Nāgavamsa, Honorary Secretary of the Saṅgha Supreme Council announced both in Pāli and Burmese that it was an opportune time to commence the proceedings of the Fourth Session of the Great Recital on the Commentaries. Then the Hon'ble Thado Maha Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon Aung lighted the candles and incense. After that, the Mahāthera who is the most senior among the monks present there, proposed His Holiness the Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita, Abhi Dhaja Mahā Raṭṭha Guru Masoeyein Sayadaw as the Aṭṭhakathā

Sangāyanā Mahanāyaka (the Presiding Mahāthera of the Great Recital on the Commentaries). The Saṅgha then signified their assent by uttering *Sādhu* thrice, followed by the striking of gongs and blowing of conchs. After giving the Five Precepts to the audience, the Presiding Mahāthera gave his Presidential Address. After that U Chan Htoon Aung read an Address of Veneration on behalf of the President of the Union of Burma. It was followed by the announcement of the Panel of Deputy Chairmen by the Honorary Secretary of the Saṅgha Supreme Council; the addresses were delivered by Mahātheras of various Buddhist countries; and also an address of veneration by Thado Thin Thudhamma Sir U Thwin was read by Thado Thin Thudhamma, Agga Maha Thray Sithu Dr. U Thein Maung.

Then, the Presiding Mahāthera appointed Ven. Agga Mahāpaṇḍita Sobhana (Mahāsi Sayadaw) and Ven. Tipiṭakadhara Dhammabhaṇḍāgarika Bhadanta Vicittasāra as the Pucchaka (Questioner) and Visajjana (Replier) respectively with regard to the Commentaries. The Questioner and the Replier assumed their respective seats and carried out their duties as usual. After they finished a certain portion, the Saṅgha recited the Commentary on Therā Gāthā (Psalms of the Brethren) from the beginning of the Book. At the end of the recitation, all present uttered *Sādhu* thrice and the Ceremony came to a conclusion.

This Session will last for about 80 days, and 17 books of the Aṭṭhakathās will be recited.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### PRACTISING THE DHAMMAPADA

By

*Samanera Jivaka, M.A., M.B., B.Ch.*

Published by Maha Bodhi Society' of India,  
Sarnath, Varanasi.

Price.-Re 1.50 Np.

Interesting as well as instructive, this book is valuable to those who desire to practise the Dhamma as taught by the Buddha in the Dhammapada. It is not the translation of the Dhammapada, nor is it a commentary on it. The author selected 20 verses from the Dhammapada and wrote an essay on each verse. The verses are not arranged in serial order, and it seems that they are arranged by the author according to his convenience.

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The author ended the book with an essay on Verse 174, which says: "The world is blind; a few can see it. A few go to heaven like a bird freed from the net."

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