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2504 B.E.

July 1960 C.E.



THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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EDITORIAL

AKUSALA CITTA

(IMMORAL CONSCIOUSNESS)

*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇaṃ,
kusalassa upasampadā,
sacittapariyodapanaṃ,
etaṃ buddhāna sāsanaṃ.*¹

(Abstinance from all evil, fulfilment of all good, purification of one's mind, this is the teaching of the Buddhas.)

Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, rude speech, idle chatter, avarice, ill-will and wrong views are all akusala karmas (unwholesome volitional actions). By abstaining from these evils, one is able to attain *sīla visuddhi* (purification of virtue) and then practise oneself for other higher visuddhis. Hence the importance of understanding the types of immoral consciousness.

There are eight types of consciousness rooted in *lobha* (greed), two in *dosa* (hatred), and two in *moha* (delusion). Thus, there are altogether twelve types of immoral C onsciousness.²

Rooted in lobha:

When a man is pleased with his work, his consciousness is *called somanassa sahagata* or 'accompanied by delight.' And his consciousness is *upekkhā sahagata* if it is accompanied by indifference.

It is often thought right by some people to sacrifice animals at a certain place, or to gamble on a certain day, or to tell a lie, or to befool others on a certain occasion or to molest a man if he does not belong to his faith. Such wrong views are called *diṭṭhi*, which pretend to justify immorality, but have really *lobha* and *moha* at the root.

If the immoral consciousness is accompanied by such a *diṭṭhi* it is called *diṭṭhigatasampayutta*; and if it is not so accompanied it is called *diṭṭhigata-vippayutta*.

The consciousness of one who is swift in performing any moral or immoral act is called *asaṅkhārika* or that which is 'neither hesitating nor instigated by others.' *Sasaṅkhārika* consciousness on the other hand is that which is either preceded by some hesitation or instigated by some one else.

Taking these classifications together, we have the following eight types of immoral consciousness rooted in *lobha*:

1. 'Delighted, accompanied by a wrong view, unhesitated and uninstituted.
2. 'Delighted, accompanied by a wrong view, hesitated or instigated.
3. 'Delighted, unaccompanied by a wrong view, unhesitated and uninstituted.
4. 'Delighted, unaccompanied by a wrong view, hesitated or instigated.
5. 'Indifferent, accompanied by a wrong view, unhesitated and uninstituted.
6. 'Indifferent, accompanied by a wrong view, hesitated or instigated.
7. 'Indifferent, unaccompanied by a wrong view unhesitated and uninstituted.
8. 'Indifferent, unaccompanied by a wrong view, hesitated or instigated.

If an act is done unhesitatingly or without the instigation of any one else, it is of the first type. But if it is preceded by

some hesitation, or if it is done at the instigation of some one else, it is an example of the second type.

We know that it is bad to kill, to harm others, or to steal, or to lie, or to do any evil act. Nevertheless, we do indulge in them frequently and also derive delight therefrom. These kinds of consciousness are of the third and the fourth type.

The fifth, the sixth, the seventh and the eighth type are the same as above, if the act is done not with delight but with indifference.

Rooted in dosa:

If we are displeased with anything, or if we are dissatisfied with anything we begin to hate it. The sensation goes on intensifying, and a time comes when the idea of it would rouse an excitement in us—a sensation of deep antipathy. This state of mind is called *domanassa*.

Domanassa is accompanied by an urge to attack or annihilate the object of hate. This is called *paṭigha* or anger.

It is *asaṅkhārika* if, in this angry state of mind, a man commits a crime unhesitatingly, without being instigated by anyone else. It is *sasaṅkhārika*, if it is committed after some hesitation, or at the instigation of someone else.

Thus, the two types of consciousness rooted in *dosa* are:

1. 'Excited, accompanied by anger, unhesitated or uninstituted.'
2. 'Excited, accompanied by anger, hesitated or instigated.'

It should be noted that there can be no *somanassa* (delight) or *upekkhā* (indifference) in this agitated state of mind accompanied by antipathy. It cannot

also be associated with any right or wrong view, for it is so charged with fury that at the instant of its occurrence it is hard to consider what is right or what is wrong.

For example, an executioner executes a criminal, not because he has any personal grudge against him, but simply because he has been ordered to do it by his superior officer. Here, he has to create an excitement in him accompanied by antipathy, and invoke a rage to hang the man. His consciousness is, therefore, *sasaṅkhārika*, i.e. of the second type.

Rooted in moha:

The essential condition of all immoral consciousness is *moha* (delusion), because without it *lobha* and *dosa* cannot possibly arise. But, if there is only *moha*, it will make the consciousness thoroughly confused. This state of mind is called *momūha citta* (confused consciousness). It is difficult to understand a thing definitely in this state of consciousness. It is full of doubts. If the doubts are big it is called *vicikicchā-saṃpayutta* or a perplexed consciousness.

A *momūha citta* cannot also concentrate upon any object. It is restless. If the distraction is strong, it is called *uddhacca-saṃpayutta* or 'a restless consciousness.' There cannot be either *somanassa* or *domanassa* in this consciousness. It is essentially *upekkhā-sahagata* or 'accompanied by an ignorant indifference'.

Hence there are two types of consciousness rooted in *moha*, namely,

1. 'Accompanied by indifference, and is sceptical',
2. 'Accompanied by indifference, and is restless.'

Sceptical doubt or perplexity and restlessness arise in us due to ignorance. They are not created knowingly by us, either hesitatingly or unhesitatingly, for, knowledge, is quite opposed to them, like light to darkness. None else can instigate us to be perplexed or restless. Therefore, in these types of consciousness, the question of *asaṅkhārika* and *sasaṅkhārika* does not arise.

Thus, there are altogether twelve types of immoral consciousness.

We shall now describe the Dependent Origination of a single immoral consciousness by the *Abhidhamma* (Higher Doctrine) method.

What are *akusala* (unwholesome volitions)? When in contact with either a visible object, a sound, a smell, a taste, a touch or a mental object there arises an immoral consciousness accompanied by delight and a wrong view, and unhesitated or uninstigated, at that very consciousness moment,

1. Through Ignorance, *cetanā saṅkhāra* (volitional activities) arise;
2. Through *cetanā saṅkhāra*, *diṭṭhigata sampayutta citta* (consciousness accompanied by a wrong view) arises;
3. Through *diṭṭhigata sampayutta citta*, *nāmaṃ* (the constituent groups of sensation, perception and mental formations) arise;
4. Through *nāmaṃ*, *diṭṭhigata sampayutta citta* arises;
5. Through *diṭṭhigata sampayutta citta*, Contact arises;
6. Through Contact Sensation arises;
7. Through Sensation Craving arises;
8. Through Craving Clinging arises;

9. Through Clinging the four Mental Groups except Clinging arise;

10. Through the four Mental Groups³ except Clinging, *jāti* (in the form of *uppāda*— the genetic period of the consciousness moment) arises;

11. Through *jāti*, *jarāmaṇaṃ* (*thīti*—the static period of the consciousness moment and *bhaṅga*—the dissolution period of the consciousness moment) arise. Thus arises the unalloyed mass of suffering.

Thus we shall find that it is slightly different from the Dependent Origination described by Suttanta method.

Herein, in the case of *saṅkhārā* (Kammaformations), *cetanā* (volition) alone is taken. In the case of *viññānaṃ* (consciousness), the first type of immoral consciousness is taken. Instead of *nāma-rūpa*, only *nāma* is mentioned; in the case of *bhava* (becoming) the four Mental Groups excepting Clinging are taken; in the case of *jāti*, the ‘rising’ period of the consciousness moment is taken; and in the case of *jarāmaṇaṃ*, *thīti* (static period) and *bhaṅga* (dissolution period) of the consciousness moment are taken.

The same principle holds good for the first four types of immoral consciousness.

In the cases of the fifth, the sixth, the seventh and the eighth type of immoral consciousness, as these four consciousness are not associated with *diṭṭhi*, *adhimokkha* (the mental factor of Decision) is substituted for *upādāna*.

In the cases of the 9th and the 10th type, as these two consciousness are not associated with *taṇhā* (Craving), *paṭigha* (anger) is substituted for *taṇhā*. The remaining links are the same as the fifth type.

In the case of the 11th type, the Dependent Origination may be described thus:

1. Through Ignorance, *cetanā saṅkhāra* (volitional activities) arise;
2. Through *cetanā saṅkhāra*, *diṭṭhigata saṃpayutta citta* (consciousness accompanied by a wrong view) arises;
3. Through *diṭṭhigata saṃpayutta citta*, *nāmaṃ* (the constituent groups of sensation, perception and mental formations) arise;
4. Through *nāmaṃ*, *diṭṭhigata saṃpayutta citta* arises;
5. Through *diṭṭhigata saṃpayutta citta*, Contact arises;
6. Through Contact Sensation arises;
7. Through Sensation Craving arises;
8. Through Craving Clinging arises;
9. Through Clinging the four Mental Groups except Clinging arise;
10. Through the four Mental Groups except Clinging, *jāti* (in the form of *upāddana*— the genetic period of the consciousness moment) arises;
11. Through *jāti*, *jarāmaṇaṃ* (*thīti* — the static period of the consciousness moment and *bhaṅga* — the dissolution period of the consciousness moment) arise. Thus arises the unalloyed mass of suffering.

Here, as this consciousness is not associated with *diṭṭhi* and *adhimokkha*, *vicikicchā* is substituted for *taṇhā*, and it jumps up to *bhavo*, omitting the link ‘*upādāna*.’

In the case of the 12th type, as this consciousness is not associated with *taṇhā*, *uddhacca* (restlessness) is substituted for *taṇhā*. The rest are the

same as the two consciousness rooted in *dosa*.

Thus it will be seen that if any of these twelve immoral consciousness except *uddhacca saṃpayutta* (restlessness) arises in the life-continuum of a person, it will cause him to be reborn in the four Lower Worlds (*apāya lokas*).

If we desire to escape from this *saṃsāra* (round of rebirths), we shall have to get rid of *taṇhā* which gives rise to the first eight types of immoral consciousness. The *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*⁴ provides the method of contemplating on consciousness.

Cittānupassanā (Contemplation on Consciousness):

And how, Bhikkhus, does a Bhikkhu live contemplating consciousness in consciousness ?

Here, Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu knows the consciousness with lust, as with lust, the consciousness without lust, as without lust; the consciousness with hate, as with hate; the consciousness without hate, as without hate; the consciousness with ignorance, as with ignorance; the consciousness without ignorance, as without ignorance; the shrunk state of consciousness as the shrunk state; the distracted state of consciousness as the distracted state; the developed state of consciousness as the developed state; the undeveloped state of consciousness as the undeveloped state; the state of consciousness with some other mental state superior to it, as the state with something mentally higher; the state of consciousness with no other mental state superior to it, as the state with nothing mentally higher; the concentrated state of consciousness as the concentrated state;

the unconcentrated of consciousness as the unconcentrated state; the freed state of consciousness as the free state; and the unfreed state of consciousness as the unfreed.

Thus he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness internally, or he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness externally, or he lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness internally and externally. He lives contemplating origination factors in consciousness, or he lives contemplating dissolution-factors in consciousness or he lives contemplating origination and dissolution-factors in consciousness. Or his mindfulness is established with the thought, ‘Consciousness’, to the extent necessary just for knowledge and mindfulness, and he lives independent, and clings to naught in the world. Thus, Bhikkhus, a Bhikkhu lives contemplating consciousness in consciousness.

In this respect the Venerable Mahasi Sayadaw, Aggamahāpañḍita stated: “There is another point to note. While a *yogī* is contemplating the body in the body, he will find that his mind flits from one object to another. When such fanciful thought arises, the *yogī* should make a mental note of this also, saying to himself, ‘going’, ‘thinking’, ‘knowing,’ etc., and contemplating the arising and vanishing of the same. This is called *Cittānupassanā* (contemplating consciousness in consciousness). The Buddha declared: ‘*Sarāgaṃ vā cittaṃ sarāgaṃ cittanti pajānāti*’ (understands the consciousness that is accompanied by lust, as consciousness with lust)”. The Commentator further points out that every consciousness must be contemplated as it arises.

In his “The Power of Mindfulness”, the Venerable Nyanaponika Mahāthera writes: “if anyone whose mind is not harmonized and controlled through methodical meditative training, should take a close look at his own every-day thoughts and activities, he will meet with a rather disconcerting sight. Apart from a few main channels of his purposeful thoughts and activities, he will everywhere be faced with a tangled mass of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, casual bodily movement, etc. showing a disorderliness and confusion which he would certainly not tolerate, e.g., in his living-room. Yet this is the state of affairs that he takes for granted within a considerable portion of his waking life and normal mental activity. Let us now look at the details of that rather untidy picture.

‘First we meet a vast number of casual sense impressions, sights, sounds, etc., that pass constantly through our mind. Most of them remain vague and fragmentary, and some are even based on faulty perceptions, misjudgements, etc. Carrying these inherent weaknesses they often form the untested basis for judgements and decisions on a higher level of consciousness. True, all these casual impressions need not and cannot be objects of focussed attention. A stone on our road that happens to meet our glance, will have a claim on our attention only if it obstructs our progress or is of interest to us for any other reason. Yet, if we neglect too much these casual impressions, we may stumble over many an actual, or figurative stone, and overlook many a gem lying on our road.

“Next there are those more significant and definite perceptions, thoughts,

feelings, volitions, etc., which have a closer connection with our purposeful life. Here too we shall find that a very high proportion of them is in a state of utter confusion.

“Such a look into long-neglected quarters of our mind will come as a wholesome shock to the observer. It will convince him of the urgent need for methodical mental culture extending not only to a thin surface-layer of the mind, but also to those vast twilight regions of consciousness to which we have paid now a brief visit. The observer will then become aware of the fact that a reliable standard of the inner strength and lucidity of consciousness in its totality cannot be derived from the relatively small Sector of the mind that stands in the intense light of purposful will and thought, nor can it be judged by a few maximal results of mental activity achieved in brief, intermittent periods. The decisive factor in determining the quality of individual consciousness is the circumstance whether that twilight region of everyday mind and the uncontrolled portion of every-day activity are in the process of increasing or decreasing.”⁵

It is the dark, untidy corners of the mind where our most dangerous enemies dwell. From there they attack us unawares, and much too often they succeed in defeating us. That twilight world peopled by frustrated desires and suppressed resentments, by vacillations and whims and many other shadowy figures, form a background from which upsurging passions—greed and lust, hatred and anger—may derive powerful support. Besides, the obscure and obscuring nature of that twilight region is the very element and mother soil of

the third and strongest of the Roots of Evil (*akusala-mūla*), i.e. Ignorance or Delusion.

We, who are encumbered with multifarious mundane affairs, may not have an opportunity to contemplate on consciousness according to *Satipaṭṭhāna* method. But while we are in a vacant or in pensive mood, we may pay Bare Attention to the consciousness that incessantly arise and vanish in our life-continua, and mentally note as follows:—

(1) When experiencing a pleasant feeling, we know, “We experience a pleasant feeling”, etc.;

(2) We know of a lustful (state of) mind is. ‘Mind is lustful,’ etc.;

(3) If (the hindrance of) sense desire is present in us, we know, ‘Sense desire is present in us,’ etc.;

(4) If the enlightenment factor Mindfulness is present in us, we know, ‘The enlightenment factor Mindfulness is present in us,’ etc.

Or, whenever any immoral consciousness rooted either in *lobha*, *dosa*, or *moha*, we may contemplate as follows:

‘The consciousness rooted in *lobha* has arisen in our body and vanished immediately. It is *anicca* (impermanent), because of its non-existence after having been. Rise and fall and change are the characteristics of impermanence, or mode alteration, in other words non-existence after having been’. We may contemplate in this manner for half an hour or an hour every day and gradually develop our mental faculties. This contemplation is known as *aniccānupassā* (Contemplation of impermanence). If the nature of *anicca* can be clearly realized, the realisation of

anatta (impersonality) follows as a matter of course.⁶ There had been instances where people attained *anāgāmi magga* (the Path of non-returner) or *arahatta magga* (the Path of Sainthood), by contemplating immoral consciousness and gradually developing his *vipassanā* (Insight) into the higher levels.

Here is an illustration. Long, long ago, there lived two friends in a certain village in the kingdom of Kāsi. One day they went to their fields together carrying drinking water with them. They kept their water bottles in suitable places and tilled their fields respectively. At that time, one of them had a desire to steal the other man's water and drink it. With this intention he wilfully stole the other man's water from the latter's water bottle and drank to his satisfaction. A few minutes later, he pondered thus:

'I have stolen my friend's water without his knowledge and consent. I have committed theft (*adinnādānaṃ*). After thus pondering, he continued to contemplate as follows:

'Consciousness accompanied by *lobha* (greed) which prompted me to steal my friend's water has arisen and vanished in my life-continuum immediately, and become *anicca*.' He continued to develop his *vipassanā* and finally attained Arahatsip and became a *pacceka-buddha* (Solitary Buddha). While he was thus meditating, the other friend came to him and told him to return to their village.

Then he replied: 'I do not desire to return home. I am now a *pacceka-buddha*'. His friend said: 'Friend, a *pacceka-buddha* is not like you. He must have robes on his body and a bowl in his hands'. Immediately he realised his situation and after rubbing his head thrice with his fingers, he transformed himself into a Solitary Buddha and proceeded 'towards Nandamūla cave in the Himalayas'⁷

Notes:

- 1) Dhammapada, verse 183.
- 2) Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha
- 3) The four Mental Groups are :—
 1. Sensation Group,
 2. Perception Group,
 3. Mental-formations Group,
 4. Consciousness Group.
- 4) Suttanta Piṭaka, Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi, 1. Mūlapariyāya-vagga, 10. *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, p. 76. 6th Synod Edition.
- 5) See the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 43.
- 6) Kuddaka Nikāya, Udāna Pāḷi, Meghiya-vagga, Meghiya Sutta, p. 120, 6th Syn. Edn.
- 7) Suttanta Piṭaka, Khuddaka Nikāya, Jātaka Pāḷi, II. Ekādasaka Nipāta, 459 Pāṇiya Jātaka, p. 234, 6th Syn. Edn. Khuddaka Nikāya, Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā, 11. Ekādasaka Nipāsa, 5. Pāṇiya Jātaka Vaṇṇanā, (459) p. 115, 6th Syn. Ed.

BUDDHISM AND CHRISTIANITY

By

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Among the five great religions to which nearly nine-tenths of present-day humanity belong, Buddhism and Christianity have been the most frequent subjects of comparison. And rightly so. Because, together with Islam, and unlike Hinduism and Chinese universalism, they are 'world religions', that is to say, forms of belief that have found followers not merely in a single though vast country, but also in wide regions of the entire world.

Buddhism and Christianity, however, differ from Islam in so far as, unlike the latter, they do not stress the natural aspects of world and man, but they wish to lead beyond them. A comparison between Buddhism and Christianity, however, proves so fruitful mainly because they represent, in the purest form, two great distinctive types of religion which arose East and West of the Indus valley. For two millenniums. these two religious systems have given the clearest expression of the metaphysical ideas prevalent in the Far East and in the Occident, respectively.

The similarity between these two religions extend, if I see it rightly, essentially over three spheres: (1) the life history of the founder, (2) ethics, and (3) church history.

1. The biographies of Buddha and Christ show many similar features. Both were born in a miraculous way. Soon after their birth, their future greatness is proclaimed by a sage (Asita, Simeon). Both astonish their teachers through the knowledge they possess, though still in their early childhood. Both are tempted by the devil before they

start upon their public career. Both walk over the water (Jātaka 190; ¹ Matth. 14. 26). Both feed 5000 persons respectively (Jātaka 78;² Mark 14, 16ff) by multiplying miraculously the food available. The death of both is accompanied by great natural phenomena. Also the parables ascribed to them show some similarities, as for instance the story of the sower (Saṃyutta 42, 7 ;³ Matth. 13, 3), of the prodigal son (lotus of the Good Law,' 'Chap. IV; Lk. 14), and the widow's mite (Kalpanamanditika; Mark 12).

From these parallels some writers have attempted to conclude that the Gospels have drawn from the Buddhist texts. But this contention goes much too far. If there is any dependence at all, of the stories in the Gospels on those of India, it could be only by oral tradition, through the migration to the West of certain themes which originated in India, and were taken over by the authors of the biblical scriptures. But that is in no way certain, because many of those similarities are not so striking as to exclude the possibility of their independent origin at different places.

2. Both Buddha and Jesus based their ethics on the 'Golden Rule'. Buddha told the Brahmins and householders of a certain village as follows: "A lay follower reflects thus: 'How can I inflict upon others what is unpleasant to me?' On account of that reflection, he does not do any evil to others, and he also does not cause others to do so" (Saṃyutta 55, 7). And Jesus says in the Sermon of the Mount: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do

to you, do so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matth. 7, 12; Lk. 6, 31)—this being, by the way, a teaching which, in negative formulation, was already known to the Jewish religion (Tob. 15, 4).

Also the principle “Love thy neighbours like unto yourself” (Lk. 10, 27) which, in connection with Lev. 19, 18, was raised by Jesus to a maxim of ethical doctrine, is likewise found in Buddhism where it was given a philosophical foundation mainly by the thinkers of Mahāyāna (Shāntideva, beginning of Shikṣāsamucca). As to the injunction that love should also be extended to the enemy there is also a parallel statement by the Buddha. According to the Majjhima Nikāya No. 21⁴ He said: “If, O monks, robbers or highwaymen with a double-handled saw cut your limbs and joints, whoso gave way to anger thereat, would not be following my advice. For thus ought you to train yourselves: ‘Undisturbed shall our mind remain, no evil words shall escape our lips; friendly and full of sympathy shall we remain, with heart full of love, free from any hidden malice. And that person shall we suffuse with loving thoughts; and from there on the whole world.’”

A practical proof of the love of enemies was given, as the report goes, by the Buddhist sage Āriyadeva. After a philosophical disputation, a fanatical adversary attacked him in his cell with a sword, and Āriyadeva was fatally wounded. In spite of that, he is said to have helped his murderer to escape by disguising him with his own monk’s robe. Schopenhauer, and others after him, believed, in view of these ethical teachings, that the Gospels “must somehow be of Indian origin” (Parerga II, §179), and that Jesus was influenced by Buddhism with which he was said to have

become acquainted in Egypt. For such a supposition, however, there is not the slightest reason, since we encounter similar noble thoughts among Chinese and Greek sages, and, in fact, among the great minds of the whole world without having to assume an actual interdependence.

3. Also the historical development of both religions presents several parallels. Both, setting out from the countries of their origin, have spread over large parts of the world, but in their original homelands they have scarcely any followers left. The number of Christians in Palestine is very small today, and on the whole continent of India proper, these are at present not even half a million Buddhists.⁵ The Brahmanical counter-reformation starting about 800 A.C., and the onslaught of Islam beginning about 1000 A.C., have brought about the passing of already decadent Buddhism in its fatherland, while it counts millions of devotees in Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, China, Japan, Tibet, Mongolia, and so on. It is strange how little that fact of the disappearance of Buddhism from the land of the Ganges has been apprised by even many educated persons in the West. Some still believe that Buddhism is the dominant religion of India proper, though out of a population of 400 millions, about 95 millions belong to the Islam, and 270 millions are Hindus (that is devotees of Vishnu and Shiva) among whom the caste system prevails, with Brahmins constituting the hereditary priestly gentry.

It is also significant that today the overwhelming majority of the followers of Buddhism and Christianity belong to a race and linguistic group different from those of their founders. Buddha was an IndoAryan; but, with a few exceptions, most of his devotees are found today among yellow

racess. Jesus and the Apostles were Jews but the main contingent of Christians is made up of Europeans speaking Indo-Germanic languages. This shows, very strikingly that race, language and religion are entirely different spheres. There is perhaps a deep law underlying that fact. Nations of foreign blood accept a new religion with such a great sympathy and enthusiasm probably because it offers them something which they did not possess of their own, and which therefore supplements their own mental heritage in an important way. This holds true also in the case of Islam, since, among the nearly 300 million Mohammedans, those of the Prophet's race, the Samites, are in a minority compared with the Muslims of Turkish, Persian, Indian, Malayan and African extraction.

In the course of their historical development and their dissemination among foreign nations, Buddhism as well as Christianity have absorbed much that was alien to them at the start. One may even say that, after a religion has gone through a sufficiently long period of development and has been exposed to divers influences, more or less all phenomena will appear which the history of religion has ever produced. Buddhism, and Christianity, originally, had strict views on all matters of sex, but in both certain sects appeared again and again, which were given to moral laxity or even taught ritual sex enjoyment, as in Buddhism the Shakti cults of the 'Diamond Vehicle' (Vajra-yāna), or in Christianity certain gnostic schools, medieval sects and modern communities. Buddha and Christ reject extreme asceticism, but there arose numerous zealots who not only advocated painful self-mortification, but even castrated (as the Skpozis) or burned themselves. Pristine Buddhism taught self-

liberation through knowledge. Later, however, a school arose which considered man too weak to win salvation by himself, and instead, expected deliverance by the grace of Buddha Amitābha. These Amitābha schools have developed a theology which, to a certain extent, presents a parallel to the Protestant doctrine of salvation by faith. In Japan, the most influential of these schools, the Shin sect, has even broken with the principle of monastic celibacy, and thereby produced a sort of Buddhist clergy of the Protestant type. On the other hand, Tibetan Buddhism has created a kind of Ecclesiastical State with the Dalai Lama as its supreme head.

Buddhism and Christianity teach to transcend the world. And, in conformity with the idea of the supremacy of the spiritual life over the conventions of the world, in the monastic order or the church community all class distinctions had to cease. The Buddha taught: "As the rivers lose their names when they reach the ocean, just so members of all caste lose their designations once they have gone forth into home-lessness, following the teaching and the discipline of the Perfect One" (Aflg. 8, 19)⁶. And the Apostle Paul wrote (Gal. 3, 28) : "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

These postulates, however, did not change conditions prevailing in worldly life. Social reforms were entirely alien to the intentions of Buddhism and Christianity in these early days. In various countries and up to modern times, there were not only house slaves, and even temple slaves, but even in Christian countries, slavery was abolished only in the 19th century (Brazil 1888).

Finally, both religions have in common certain features of cult and forms of worship. I mention here only: monasticism, tonsure of the clergy, confession, the cult of images, relic worship, ringing of bells, use of rosary and incense, and the erection of towers. There has been much controversy about the question whether and to what extent, one may assume mutual influence with regard to these and several other similarities, but research has so far not come to an entirely satisfactory conclusion.

Though in many details there are great similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, one must not overlook the fact that in matters of doctrine, they show strong contrasts, and their conceptions of salvation belong to entirely different types of religious attitude. Buddhism, in its purest form, presents a religion based on the conception of an eternal and universal law, a conception found in various forms in India, China and Japan. Christianity, on the other hand, belongs, together with the teaching of Zoroaster, the Jewish religion and Islam, to those religions that profess to have a divine revelation which is manifested in history, and these religions have conquered for themselves all parts of the world west of India. The contrast between Buddhism and Christianity will become clear by objectively placing side by side their central doctrines. I shall base that comparison on what are still today, just as nearly 2000 years ago, the fundamental doctrinal tenets of both religions, and shall not consider here differences of detail or modern interpretations. Since I may assume an acquaintance with the teachings of Christianity, I shall begin each subsequent discussion of single points, with a very brief statement of the Christian doctrine

concerned, following it up with a somewhat more detailed treatment of the different teachings in Buddhism. I hope that, in that way, I shall be able to bring out clearly the differences between these two religions.

1. Christianity differs from all great world religions first of all in that it gives to the personality of its founder a central position in world history as well as in the doctrine of salvation. In Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Islam, Judaism, and still more so in religions having no personal founder but being products of historical growth, like Hinduism and Chinese universalism, in all of them it is a definite metaphysical and ethical doctrine promulgated by holy men, which is the very centre of their systems. For the Christian, however, it is faith in Jesus Christ that is the inner core of his religion. This evinces most clearly from the fact alone that the 22 scriptures of the New Testament contain only comparatively few sermons of Jesus concerned with doctrinal matters, while by far the greatest part of the Buddhist Canon is devoted to expositions of the Buddha's teachings. In the Scriptures of the New Testament, from the Gospel of St. Matthew up to the Revelation of St. John, the most important concern of the authors was to demonstrate that Christ was a supernatural figure unique in the entire history of the world. Christ's redemptory death on the cross, his resurrection, ascension, and his future advent, are therefore the core of the Christian doctrine of salvation.

Buddha's position in Buddhist doctrine bears in no way comparison with these features of Christianity. For the historical Gotama was not the incarnation of a God; he was a human being, purified through countless rebirths as animal, man or angel, until finally in his last embodiment, he attained by his own strength that liberating

knowledge which enabled him to enter Nibbāna. He was one who pointed out the way to deliverance, but did not, by himself, bestow salvation on others.⁷ Though also to him a miraculous birth has been attributed, yet it was not described as a virginal birth. The whole difference, however, of the Buddha's status from that of Christ is chiefly demonstrated by the fact that a Buddha is not an isolated historical phenomenon, but that many Enlightened Ones had appeared in the past, teaching the same doctrine; and that, in the future too, Buddhas will appear in the world who will expound to erring humanity the same principles of deliverance in a new form. The later Buddhism of the Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna) even teaches that many, if not all men carry within themselves the seed of Buddha-hood, so that after many rebirths they themselves will finally attain the highest truth and impart it to others.

2. But even the historical personalities of Jesus and the Buddha differ widely. Jesus grew up in a family of poor Jewish craftsmen. Devoting himself exclusively to religious questions, he was a successor of the Jewish prophets who enthusiastically proclaimed the divine inspirations bestowed upon them. As a noble friend of mankind, full of compassion for the poor, he preached gentleness and love for one's neighbour; but on the other hand, he attacked with a passionate zeal abuses, for instance when he showed up as hypocrites the Scribes and Pharisees, when he drove from the Temple the traders and money-lenders; and held out the prospect of eternal damnation to those who refused to believe in him (Mark 16, 16). With the conviction of being the expected Messiah he preached the early advent of the Heavenly Kingdom (Matth. 10, 23). With that promise he primarily turned to the 'poor in spirit' (Matth. 5, 3),

because not speculative reasoning, but pious and deep faith is the decisive factor: What is hidden to the clever and wise, has been revealed by God to the babes (Matth. 11, 25).

Gotama Buddha, however, stemmed from the princely house of the Sakyas that reigned on the southern slopes of the Himalayas. He lived in splendour and luxury up to his 29th year; then he left the palace and its womanfolk, and went forth into homelessness as a mendicant. After a six years' vain quest for insight spent with various Brahman ascetics, he won enlightenment at Uruvela. This transformed the Boddhisatta, i.e. an aspirant for enlightenment, into a Buddha, that is into one who has awakened to truth. From then onward, up to the eightieth year of his life, he proclaimed the path of deliverance found by him. He died at Kusināra about 480 B.C. Buddha was an aristocrat of high culture, with a very marked sense for beauty in nature and art, free from any resentment, and possessed of a deep knowledge of man's nature. He was a balanced personality, with a serene mind and winning manners, representing the type of a sage who with firm roots within, had arisen above the world. In the struggle with the systems of his spiritually dynamic time, he evolved out of his own thought a philosophical system that made high demands on the mental faculties of his listeners. As he himself said:

"My doctrine is for the wise and not for the unwise." The fact that his teaching had an appeal also for the uneducated, is explained by his great skill in summarizing in easily intelligible language the fundamental ideas of his philosophy.

So far we have found the following difference between Buddhism and Christianity:

Christianity, from its very start, was a movement of faith appealing to the masses: and only when it won over the upper classes, a Christian philosophy evolved. Buddhism, however, was, in its beginnings, a philosophical teaching of deliverance. Its adherents were mainly from the classes of noblemen and warriors, and of the wealthy middle- class, with a few Brahmins. Only when Buddhism reached wider circles it became a popular religion.

3. The teachings of all great religions are laid down in holy scriptures to which an authoritative character is ascribed surpassing all other literature. Christianity regards the Bible as the “Word of God”, as an infallible source of truth in which God, by inspiring the authors of these scriptures, revealed things that otherwise would have remained hidden to man. Contrary to Cristianity, Islam and Hinduism, atheistic Buddhism does not know of a revelation in that sense. Nevertheless it possesses a great number of holy texts in which the sayings of the Buddha are collected. That Canon comprises those insights which the Buddha is said to have won by his own strength through comprehending the true nature of reality. It is claimed that everyone who, in his mental development, reaches the same high stage of knowledge, will find confirmed by himself the truth of the Buddha’s statements. In fact, however, Buddhists ascribe to that Canon likewise a kind of revealing character, in so far as they appeal to the sayings of the ‘ominscient’ Buddha which, are regarded by them as final authority. The interpretation of the Buddha word, however, has led among the Buddhists to as many controversies as Bible exegesis among Christians.

We shall now proceed to describe the fundamental tenets of Christian and

Buddhist doctrines. In doing so, we shall have to limit ourselves to the general principles which, for two thousand years, have been common to all schools or denominations of these religions. I shall first speak about the different position taken by Christians and Buddhists towards the central questions of religion, that is God, world and soul, and later proceed to a treatment of their teachings on salvation.

4. The central tenet of Christian doctrine is the belief in an eternal, personal, omnipotent, omniscient and all-loving God. He has created the world from nothing, sustains it, and directs its destiny; he is law-giver, judge, the helper in distress and saviour of the creatures which he has brought into being. Angels serve him to carry out his will. As originally created by God, all of them were good angels. But a section of these turned disobedient, and breaking away from the heavenly hosts, formed an opposition to the other angels, a hierarchy which under its leader, the Satan, strives to entice man to evil. Though the devils’ power is greater than that of man, it is restricted by the power of God so that they cannot do anything without God’s consent, and at the end of the days they will be subjected to divine judgement.

The Buddhists, on their part, believe in a great number of deities (*devatā*: gods) which direct the various manifestations of nature and of human life. They also know of evil demons and of a kind of devil, *Māra*, who tries to turn the pious from the path of virtue. But all beings are impermanent though their life span may last millions of years. In the course of their rebirths they have come to their superhuman form of existence thanks to their own deeds; but when the productive power of their deeds is exhausted, they have to be reborn on earth

again, as humans. Though the world will always have a sun god or a thunder god, the occupant of these positions will change again and again, in the course of time. It is obvious that these gods with their restricted life span, range of action and power, cannot be compared with the Christian God since they cannot, be it singly or in their totality, create the world nor give it its moral laws. Hence they resemble only powerful superhuman kings whom the pious devotees may well, to a certain extent, solicit for gifts and favours, but who cannot exert any influence on world events in their totality.

Many Hindus assume that, above the numerous impermanent deities, exists an eternal, omniscient, all-loving and omnipotent God who creates, sustains, rules and destroys the world. But the Buddhists deny the existence of such a Lord of the Universe. Because, according to them, in the first place, no such original creator of the world can be proved to exist, because every cause must have another cause, and secondly, an omnipotent God will have to be also the creator of evil and this will conflict with his all-loving nature; or, alternately, if he is to be good and benevolent, he will have to be thought of without omnipotence and omniscience, since otherwise he could not have called into existence this imperfect world of suffering or he would have eliminated evil. Buddhism, therefore, is outspokenly atheistic, in that respect. The world is not governed by a personal God, but by an impersonal law that, with inexorable consistency, brings retribution for every morally good or evil deed. The idea that there are numerous deities of limited power can be found also in other religions; and the ancient Greeks, Romans and Germans believed that above the gods, there is Moira,

Anangke, Fatum or Destiny, which eventually rules everything. For the Chinese the highest principle is the 'Tao' which sustains the cosmic order and the harmony between heaven, earth and man. With the Indians, here appears already in Vedic times the idea that gods and men are subject to the moral world-order, the Rita (*rta*), and from about 800 B.C. this idea is linked with the doctrine of Karma, the doctrine of the after-effects of guilt and merit. According to that doctrine, every action carries in itself, seed-like, its own reward or punishment. After death, an individual in accordance with his good or evil deeds, is reincarnated in the body of either an animal, a man, a deity or a demon, in order to reap the fruits of his previous actions. This retribution occurs automatically, as a natural, regular occurrence, without requiring a divine judge who shares out reward and punishment.

As to the difference between Buddhism and Christianity, in the present context, we may say that the same functions which in Christian doctrine are related to the concept of a personal God, are in Buddhism divided among a number of different factors. The natural and moral order of the world and its periodical rise and fall are preserved by an impersonal and immanent cosmic law (Dhamma). The retribution for one's actions operates through the inherent efficacy of these deeds themselves. Helpers in need are the numerous, but transient deities, while the truths of deliverance are revealed by human beings evolved to the perfection of Buddha (Awakened Ones) who therefore are also made objects of a cult and of devotion. Saviour, however, is each man for himself, in so far as he has overcome the world through wisdom and self-control.

The homage paid to the Buddha, as it may be observed in Buddhist temples, has

a meaning quite different from the worship of God in Christian Churches. The Christian worships God in reverence due to the creator of the universe and the ruler of all its destinies; or he does so in order to be granted spiritual or material boons by God's grace. The Buddhist pays homage to the Buddha without expecting that he hears him or does something for him. Since the Buddha entered into Nibbāna, he can neither hear the prayers of the pious nor can he help them. If a Buddhist turns to the Buddha as if to a personality that actually confronts him, his act has a fictive character. The devotee expects from his act only spiritual edification and a good Kamma. This theory as advocated today by orthodox Buddhism, has, however, often been altered in practice and in the teachings of some of the Buddhist schools. But even those who think it possible that a Buddha may intervene in favour of a devotee, regard the Buddha only as a Saviour, a bringer of deliverance, and not as the creator and ruler of the universe.

5. According to Christian doctrine, God has created the world from nothing, and he rules it according to a definite plan. The stopping of the cosmic process comprises the end of the world, the universal resurrection of the dead, the Day of Judgement, the eternal damnation of the sinners and the eternal bliss of the pious in a heavenly Jerusalem descended to earth. Until the 18th century, it was believed that the entire world history comprised only 6000 years, though the time of the creation has been calculated differently. The Byzantines made their world era start on the 1st. of September 5509 B.C. while Luther dated the creation at the year 3960 B.C. Although the calculations about the beginning and the end of the world

process—mainly based on the statements about the generations between Adam and Christ (Matth. 1, 17 and Lk. 3, 21)—have been abandoned in recent times, yet for Christianity the view that the historical fact of creation and salvation constitutes a single and unrepeatable event, remains a guiding principle.

Buddhism, however, knows neither a first beginning nor a definite end of the world. Since every form of existence presupposes action in a preceding life, and since Kamma produced in one existence must find its retribution in a future one, Buddhism teaches a periodical cycle of cosmic rise and fall, evolution and dissolution. Since the number of living beings that produce Kamma, is infinitely vast, and the unexhausted Kamma of beings inhabiting a world which is in the process of dissolution, has to find realization in a newly arising world, worldly existence will never come to an end, however large the number of human beings may be that reach deliverance. There is another essential difference between the Christian and the Buddhist conception of the world. Buddhists have always assumed an infinite number of world systems situated next to each other in space each of which consisting of an earth, a heaven above and a hell below.

6. According to Christian views, man is composed of body and soul. While the body is formed of matter in the mother's womb, the soul is a special creation of God, from nothing. A soul is a simple, spiritual, immaterial substance. Maintained in eternal existence by God, the soul continues after the dissolution of the body at death, and receives from God the rewards of its deeds, either in heaven or hell. At the end of time, God causes a resurrection of all flesh and

unites again the souls with their former bodies. By the fact that thus the whole man, i.e. not only his soul but also his body, received reward or punishment, the bliss of the heavenly realm reward or the torment of eternal demnation is felt with still greater intensity. In Christianity, the significance of life, on earth and of the decisions made in it, has been enhanced to the utmost through the idea that it is man's conduct during that short life-span which determines the soul's destiny for all eternity.

Also many Indian systems are based upon that anthropological dualism. It is the conception of an infinitely large number of eternal and purely spiritual souls linked, since beginningless time, with bodies formed by particles of primordial matter. The souls are thought to change these bodies in the course of their existences, until they become free of them on attainment of deliverance. In contrast to all Indian teachings of deliverance, and most others, Buddhism denies the existence of eternal substances, essentially unchangeable. What appears to us as matter, actually comes into being only through the natural co-operation of a multitude of single factors like colours, sounds, odours, tactiles, spatial and temporal qualities, etc. Also what we call 'soul' is only a play of ever-changing sensations, perceptions and cognitive acts, combined into an entirety, yet being devoid of any underlying entity. It is only because some of these complex phenomena seem to have a relative stability, that men believe in the existence of matter or soul. But in truth, only Dhammas exist, i.e. 'factors of existence' that arise in functional dependence on each other, and cease again after a short time. This doctrine of the Dhammas is the characteristic teaching peculiar to Buddhism. It was developed by

the Buddha into a philosophy of becoming from an idea still noticeable in the Vedic texts ascribing positive subsistence to everything that exists including qualities, events, modal states, etc.

In that respect, Buddha is a precursor of Hume and Mach who likewise declared any substance to be a fiction. But for the Buddha the doctrine of the Dhammas combines with the acceptance of a moral law governing the efficacy of all actions. Just as nothing occurs without producing some effect in the physical world, so every morally good or evil act is the cause of definite effects. Though, when a being dies, a combination of factors is dissolved which had previously formed a personality, yet the deeds performed in the life now passed, become the cause of a new and separate being's birth. The newly born is different from the being that had died, but it takes over, as it were, the latter's inheritance. Thus the stream of the factors of existence is continued also after death, and one life form follows the other without break. Since any act can have only a retribution of limited duration, Buddhists do not know eternal bliss in heaven or eternal torments in hell, but believe that the inhabitants of heaven and hell are later reborn again on earth.

7. Christianity and Buddhism agree in their strong emphasis on the impermanency of things. In Christianity, the suffering, inherent in the world, is the outcome of sin, and sin is disobedience towards God's commandments. Because Adam had sinned, all his progeny is afflicted with Original Sin. Man is too weak to free himself from sin by his own strength. Therefore, God in his compassion became man in Christ, and died, as a vicarious redemptory sacrifice for all humanity. Through Christ's sacrificial death all men have become free

from the power of sin but that vicarious salvation from evil becomes reality only if man opens himself to divine grace through his faith in Christ.

The idea of collective guilt and collective salvation is far from the Buddhist's way of thinking. According to Buddhism, everyone accumulates his own evil and everyone has to work out his own deliverance. The entire Christian conception of sin, as a matter of fact, is alien to a Buddhist. If man has to suffer in punishment for his misdeeds, it is not on account of his disobeying divine commandments, but because his actions are in conflict with the eternal cosmic law and therefore produce bad Kamma. In general, the suffering which is life for a Buddhist not stamped with the mark of sin, but carries only the character of impermanence and unsubstantiality. This inherent characteristic of existence is the cause of life ever ending in death, of life with its aimless and meaningless wandering through always new forms of being. It is that which basically constitutes life's suffering. And the cause of this woeful conflict is a thirst for sense enjoyment, an attachment to existence, a will to live, a passion that either craves for possession or wants to escape. All these propensities and impulses have their original source in ignorance (*avijjā*), that is in lack of insight into the true nature of reality. He who sees that neither in the internal nor in the external world anything can be found that abides; and that there is also no Ego as a point of rest within the general flux of phenomena; who is aware that there is no self either as the eternal witness or temporary owner of sense perceptions and volitions—such a one, through that very knowledge, is set free of selfishness, of hate, greed and delusion. By a gradual process of

purification, extending through aeons over many existences, he finally discards the illusion of self-affirmation (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*). Through mindful observation, keen reflection and meditative calm he eliminates all selfish propensities, and sees also his own personality as a mere bundle of Dhammas, i.e. processes of natural law that arise and vanish conditioned by functional relations. Dispassionate and without attachment, he pervades, as the Buddhist scriptures say, "the whole world with his heart filled with loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity" (*Digha No. 13*)⁸. Without clinging to life and without fear of death he waits for the hour when his bodily form breaks up and he reaches final deliverance from rebirth.

8. The definite and perpetual state of salvation which is the redeemed person's share according to Christian doctrine, is conceived as an eternal life in the heavenly kingdom. If, after the second advent of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the final Judgement, the final kingdom of God has been established, then, after the old world's destruction, on a new earth, the redeemed ones will live in an inseparable communion with God and Christ.

The Buddhist conception of Nibbāna presents the most radical contrast to Christian eschatology. The Christian hopes for infinite continuation of his entire personality, not only of his soul but also of his body resurrected from dust to a new life. The Buddhist, however, wishes to be extinguished completely, so that all mental and corporeal factors which form the individual, will disappear without a remainder. Nibbāna is the direct opposite of all that constitutes earthly existence. It is relative Naught in so far as it contains neither the consciousness nor any other factor that

occurs in this world of change or could possibly contribute to its formation. Not wrongly, therefore, has Nibbāna been compared to empty space in which there is no differentiations left, and which does not cling to anything. In strongest contrast to the world which is impermanent, without an abiding self-nature and subject to suffering, Nibbāna is highest bliss that is not felt, i.e. beyond the happiness of sensation (Aṅg. 9. 34, 1.3)⁹. In the conception of the final goal of deliverance there is expressed the ultimate and most decisive contrast between the Christian and the Buddhist abnegation of the world. The Christian renounces the world because it is imperfect through sin, and he hopes for a personal, active and eternal life beyond, in a world that, through God's power, has been freed from sin and purified to perfection. But the Buddhist thinks that an individual existence without becoming and cessation, and, hence, without suffering, is unthinkable. He believes, though, that in future, during the ever-recurring cyclical changes of good and bad epochs, also a happy age will dawn upon mankind again. But that happy epoch will be no less transient than earlier ones have been. Never will the cosmic process find its crowning consummation in a blessed finality. Hence there is no collective salvation, but only an individual deliverance. While the cosmic process following unalterable laws continues its course, only a saint who has become mature for Nibbāna, will extinguish like a flame without fuel, in the midst of an environment that, with fuel unexhausted, is still aburning.

9. The different attitude towards the world and its history tallies also with the dissimilar evaluation given to other religions by Christians and Buddhists

respectively. Christianity being convinced of the absolute superiority of its own faith, has always questioned the justification of other forms of faith. Buddhism, however, does not believe that man has to decide about it within a single life on earth. The Buddhist, therefore, regards all other religions as first steps to his own. Consequently, in the countries to which Buddhism spread, it did not fight against the original religions found there, but tried to suffuse them with its own spirit. Therefore, Buddhism has never claimed exclusive, absolute or totalitarian authority. In modern China, most Buddhists are simultaneously Confucians and Taoists, and in Japan, membership of a Buddhist sect does not exclude faith in the Shinto gods. This large-hearted tolerance of Buddhism is also illustrated in its history which is almost free from religious wars and persecution of heretics.

The fundamental doctrines of Buddhism and Christianity as outlined here and accepted as concrete facts by the majority of the faithful, have sometimes been interpreted by thinkers of both religions in a rationalistic or in a mystical sense, and these interpretations have modified the meaning of these doctrines considerably. In our present context, however, we cannot enter into a treatment of these transformations. By doing so, our comparative study would lack that firm ground required, which, for a historian's purpose, can be provided only by the authoritative and clearly outlined tenets of the respective teachings.

Though Buddhism and Christianity differ from each other in their respective views about world and self, about the meaning of life and man's ultimate destiny, yet they agree again in the ultimate

postulates of all religious life. For both religions proclaim man's responsibility for his actions and the freedom of moral choice; both teach retribution for all deeds, and believe in the perfectibility of the individual. "You may be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect" (Matth. 5, 48), says Jesus. And the Buddha summarizes the essence of his ethics in the words: "To shun all evil, to practise what is good, to cleanse one own heart: that is the teaching of the Enlightened Ones."¹⁰

Notes

1) Khuddaka Nikāya, Jātakāṭṭhakathā, Vol. III, 2 Duka-nipāta, 4. Asadisa.vagga, 10. Sīlānisamsamjātaka-vaṇṇanā (190). p. 101, 6th Syn. Edn.

2) Khuddaka Nikāya, Jātakāṭṭhakathā, Vol. 1, Ekaka-nipāta, 8. Varuna-vagga. 8. Illisa Jātaka-vaṇṇanā (78). p. 366; 6th Syn. Edn.

3) Samyutta Nikaya, KhetṭUpārṇa Sutta, p. 500, 6th Syn. Edn.

4) Suttanta Piṭaka, Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa, 3. Opamma-Vagga, 1. Kakacūpama Sutta, p. 173, 6th Syn. Edn.

Please also see the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. 1. No. 3 p. 1.

5) Since this essay was written, the number of Buddhists in India has increased to an estimated 10-15 millions, in 1959, mainly due to the mass movement among the scheduled classes initiated by the late Dr. B.R. Ambedkar —the Editor.

6) Aṅguttara Nikāya, Paṭhama Paṇṇāsaka Sutta. p. 38, 6th Syn. Edn.

7) Dhammapada, Verse 276. "You yourselves must strive. Buddhas but point out the way."

8) Suttanta Piṭaka, Silakkhandha-vagga, 13. Tevijja Sutta, P. 234. 6th Syn. Edn.

9) Aṅguttara Nikāya. Navaka-nipāta Pāli, 1. Paṭhama-paṇṇāsaka; 4. Mahā-vagga, 3. Nibbānasukha Sutta, p. 213, 6th Syn. Edn.

10) Dhammapada. verse 183.

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THE PROBLEMS OF BUDDHISM

By

The Ven. C. Nyanasatta Thera,
Kolatenna Hermitage, Bandarawela

If a visitor to a Buddhist country like Burma and Ceylon studies the life of the Buddhists residing there, he will find that their problems are almost identical with those of most other people in the world. Food, clothing, shelter, employment, education, orderly government, fulfilment of civic duties and participation in the political and cultural life of the country are their basic needs, and their problem is how one is best to adjust oneself to the changing conditions of the modern world or halt the change.

The Buddhist in the West is ever anxious to study the Dhamma better and practise it better, so that he may propagate it by example and precept, teach directly and indirectly by his life the Theory and Practice of Buddhism. His constant problem is how to obtain from the Buddhist East the right type of Buddhist Literature, and not merely some propaganda material or little popular tracts repeating the same theme again and again. The usual popular tracts that he gets are scientifically of little value to him when he attempts to compare the Dhamma with modern thought and win new friends for Buddhism by pointing out to them the superiority of the Buddha-Dhamma over all modern science and philosophy or other religions.

The Buddhist in Eastern Europe like Poland and Czechoslovakia, and in those parts of Asia where socialism is built, is anxious to teach the wisdom of the Buddha in such a manner that even those who are at present wholly bent on constructing a socialist society and state first, before paying any attention to things spiritual, may feel that Buddhism would greatly help them even in building up socialism, for Buddhism begins where socialism ends. And

of course, in the lands where the threat of communism makes all conservative Buddhists think how they could use the Dhamma to stem the tide of international revolutionary socialism, the Buddhists are bent on defending their position by quoting the Word of the Enlightened One about the inequality of men owing to Kamma.¹

What, then, are the real problems not of the Buddhists but of Buddhism, the problems which distinguish it from all other systems of thought? In order to discover the problems, we must abstract from the problems of individual Buddhists and Buddhist nations and find out what were the problems of Buddhism at the time of its origination more than 2,500 years ago. Now, what were the problems of Buddhism, the problems which the Buddha Himself and His first disciples and the early teachers of Buddhism set out to solve and which gave them the right of existence as distinct from other systems and communities following their own teachings?

The problems of the Buddha were indeed very clear and definite. When Prince Siddhattha became a homeless pilgrim, a wandering philosopher bent on the quest of the Path to Enlightenment about Ill and Liberation from Ill, the earliest Pāli Texts formulate his problems thus: “*What is the truth?*” or “*What is true?*” and he is said to have been at that time before his Enlightenment *one searching the truth and the highest good*; in the Pāli Texts he is called “*kimkusala-gavesī*”, which is paraphrased as “*kiṃsaccaṃ gavesī*”, and he speaks of himself in the Texts *as one searching the incomparable, matchless path to Peace, the deathless*, that is to say Nibbāna: *anuttaraṃ*

*santivarapadaṃ pariyesamāno, ajātaṃ, anuttaraṃ yogakkhemaṃ nibbānaṃ pariyesamano.*²

This truth or the true and the highest good and peace and bliss sought after by the Bodhisatta (the being bent on enlightenment), when found and realized was then called the Deathless, Amataṃ, that is to say, the element that is not subject to decay and death and rebirth. And when this deathless element was found and the highest good, the supreme peace and bliss had been finally realized and directly experienced in the morning of Enlightenment and experienced again and again at will in concentration, this condition was called Nibbāna. Hence the problem of the Buddha has been first the realization of what is ill and unworthy of searching, and what is that not subject to any change and ill, and hence ought to be attained. When this goal has been once reached, there was no more any problem left for the Buddha: His only task was to teach all intelligent beings how they can also attain, under the guidance of the Buddha the same deathless element, the highest good, the true and abiding bliss and peace.

The very first disciples of the Enlightened One knew well how to state briefly the problem of Buddhism. It was one of the first five disciples, Assaji, who told it to the wandering philosopher Upatissa, who later became known as Sariputta, the foremost among the Great Disciples of the Master. To Upatissa's question: "What is the Teaching of the Master?" Assaji's reply was:— "The Great Sage, the Buddha, teaches the cause of all conditioned things, as well as the extinction of those things."

³ The *conditioned things* are the elements of the Five Aggregates of experience and grasping, the Five Khandhas, our life and the world of our experience, or as it is so beautifully stated in the Sutta quoted above: wife and children, elephants and horses, gold and silver

and similar things that are not lasting and yet are sought after by the ignorant worldling instead of the deathless element which ought to be the object of our search and research. The cause of the conditioned things is craving based on delusion. This is why the Buddha and His early disciples always briefly stated that the problem of Buddhism is *Suffering* and *Extinction of Suffering*. *Suffering* means: The world of our experience and object of grasping; *extinction of suffering* means : the attainment of Nibbāna.

Now to define the problem of Buddhism as distinct and quite different from the statement of the problems of all other systems of thought, it is well to say that *the Truth* or *the True* discovered by the Buddha is frequently stated in *the Four Pure Truths*. The problems of Buddhism appear most clearly in these Four Pure Truths, and nowhere else are they stated in this same lucid manner as in Early Buddhism: All elements of conditioned existence, *the Five Aggregates* of experience and grasping, that is to say bodily form and all physical or material phenomena; feeling, perception, volition, mental formations and consciousness in the temporary manifestations as living beings, are impermanent, unsatisfactory, not-Self, hence causes of suffering. It is due to craving that the formation of new aggregates as new beings comes into existence; extinction of craving leads to enlightenment and direct knowledge of these things, which, in the highest form, means the attainment and knowledge of Nibbāna; and the Pure Path of Purity of Morals, Mental Culture and direct knowledge or intuitive penetration of truth is the Method or Course for the Attainment of the Deathless, the highest good, matchless peace and bliss, that is to say, Nibbāna.

All conditionally-arisen phenomena of existence and experience being impermanent,

are unsatisfactory, hence not-self, no self-contained essences but momentarily arising and conditioned processes. The process of repeated origination and conformation of the phenomena called the *Five Groups* or *Five Aggregates* is conditioned or caused by craving for sense-experience, continued existence or annihilation after death.

The extinction of craving, which comes about by the acquisition of *direct knowledge* about the true nature of the *things* means liberation from all Ill. The method leading to the self-realisation of liberation is the Pure Eightfold Path of Right Understanding, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration of the purified mind that leads to the direct perception of truth and to the liberation from all craving and suffering. The real problem of Buddhism may be reduced to this: *How to bring about the extinction of craving and delusion, how to apply these truths in our daily life, how to tread the path to enlightenment about the deathless element called Nibbāna?*

The Teachings of Nibbāna as well as all the other teachings of the Perfect One are based on the axiomatic truth, a direct knowledge and experience of the Perfect One and His true disciples of that time, and Conviction of the advanced student of Buddhism, that our present life is but a link in the chain of a cycle of rebirth caused or conditioned by delusion and craving. *Enlightenment* in Buddhism means the direct knowledge and intuitive comprehension of this truth. If we once accept the fact of past lives, it is quite logical to accept a life after one's death so long as delusion and grasping last. It is yet an axiomatic truth of Buddhism that grasping or craving is a real force, and this force is not dissipated at death, but is then at its height and becomes a link between this and the next life: according to

the nature of this force, often called *Kamma*, our next birth takes place on levels and under conditions corresponding to our past craving, longing and actions, speech or thoughts. It is yet another axiomatic truth of Buddhism that out actions, speech and thoughts, as free voluntary acts, mould this force called *Kamma*, and rebirth is the final resultant of the accumulated sum of our actions. Direct knowledge and immediate perception of truth leads to the extinction of all delusion about life, hence new *Kamma* is no more created, and the result of past *Kamma* wears out with the last body and mind of the perfected one in his final existence in this world or another world.

The Buddha is a historical personage, who during this earthly life was called the Self-Enlightened One, the Compassionate Teacher of all intelligent beings. The Buddha attained his wisdom or *Enlightenment* after six years of research and experimenting with all the methods then known and practised in India. As a prince he had the highest education of that time, and during his six years of research he learnt all that was known about life in this world and in other worlds known to the experts in *yoga*. But the highest self-realization of Enlightenment was attained by the All-Enlightened One only after his having given up the traditional methods of austerities and by following the Middle Path of Contemplation and Direct Perception of Truth by the Purified Mind.

1) Majjhima Nikāya, Uparipannaṇāsa., Cūlakammavibhaṅga Sutta, p 243, 6th Syn. Edn.

2) Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapannaṇāsa, Opamma-vagga, 8 Pāsārāsī Sutta, p. 221, 6th Synod Edition.

3) Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahā-vagga, Mahākhandhaka, 14. Sāriputto-moggallāna-pabbajjā-kathā, P. 50, 6th Synod Edition.

THE ICE IS BEGINNING TO THAW

By

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

[A talk on the Vesakh Full moon (9-5-60 C. E.)]

For some years now the world has indulged in excessive assertion of *I-ness*. Achievements and successes are proclaimed with enthusiasm and pride at all levels—personal, collective, and national, with the result that every part of the world is filled with praises and acclamations.

As time rolls on, excessive individualism or egoism grows more and more, giving rise thereby to rivalry and competition. This situation of rivalry and competition involves all spheres of human activities and soon develops into an ideological warfare based primarily on national pride and prestige. And as each year passes it gathers more force and momentum.

Media of information and communication

Nowadays the media of information through the press, telephone, radio, television are perfect, and nothing remains to be desired. The method of communication too has vastly improved. Jet plane—the newcomer has halved the flying time of the present decade. What is predicted in the coming decade is that flying speed will mount up to 1800 miles per hour. With plans for occupying the neighbouring planets at a not distant future, the human imagination has become much more luxuriant and prospects of achievements are hailed with justifiable exuberance.

At this rate of human progress it is not possible to call a halt to human enterprise. It will be readily conceded by every one that modern man has good reasons to be proud of his achievements. In a small world

like ours where both camps are armed with the latest scientific weapons of enormous destructibility, the people everywhere, at one time, anticipated and feared that the conflict and consequent conflagration was at hand and that it would probably put an end to life altogether.

Competition and rivalry:

Competition among nations may be healthy; nay it may even be friendly if it is pursued to bring about the favourable conditions of health, better understanding or better social relations. Where motives behind competition are pride and prestige, then it naturally becomes rivalry with its attendant hostilities. The recent trends clearly show that rivalry is rampant in the world today. This unhealthy race for leadership and supremacy in arms has been going on for some time and it is quite plain that the motive behind it is personal pride and national prestige, and they in turn are the outcome of *I-ness* or egoism. If this race continues at this terrific speed a head-on collision is inevitable with the consequent colossal destruction to all. This problem before the world has become a vicious circle of evils.

Bertrand Russell, the eminent British philosopher, recently points out that, the spread of nuclear weapons to more nations makes unintended war more likely and if the present policies continue such a war would be almost certain sooner or later. He goes on to say: "It is the massed passions of hate and fear and pride which are the enemies of East and West alike. The enemies are in our own hearts and it is in

our own hearts that victory must be sought.” These are surely wise and timely words from a wise and noble man. The question that now confronts the human race is: ‘How to bring about a change of hearts in man?’

Knowledge and Wisdom:

It would be admitted by most people that although the present age far surpasses the previous ages in knowledge, there has been no corresponding increase in wisdom. If one were to examine what constitutes wisdom it would raise a lot of controversies. However, it may be stated that wisdom generally flows from a wide range of knowledge but that does not necessarily mean that knowledge by itself is wisdom. Scientific and technological know-hows of the present day constitute knowledge in their own spheres, but the achievements of science and technology can in no way be said to characterise the wisdom of our age. Pursuit of knowledge for its own sake has made the atom capable of destroying the human race. Knowledge may thus be harmful without the comprehensive vision which specialists do not necessarily possess.

What we do find, nowadays as a result of increased knowledge among the nations of this tiny earth of ours is “insecurity, suspicion, fear, restlessness and strife.”

This question may now be posed: “Can peace and happiness be built on these foundations?” The answer, of course, is an emphatic ‘No.’ With every increase of scientific and technological knowledge and skill, wisdom becomes a necessity. As knowledge continues to grow this world needs more and more wisdom commensurable with the increase of knowledge so that in the end wisdom may triumph over the forces of evil and direct the affairs of this Earth in the right direction. To give a short definition of what wisdom

is would not be an easy thing. Any definition of wisdom would lack in comprehensiveness—The comprehensiveness which covers both mundane and supramundane wisdom. We are told that the world is round and that it revolves on its own axis. Naturally there ought to have no East or West in a world that is round and revolving. Yet in this tiny World of ours, problems of East and West often crop up and they resist solutions with the result that people are constantly entangled in bickenings and bitter resentment.

It is somewhat strange that at a time when the peoples of the World have reached an unprecedented level of knowledge, they are unable to solve their problems amicably among themselves. On the slightest hitch, the iron fist is invariably drawn out accompanied by a threat of disaster or total annihilation in case of continued disagreement. This inflames the other fellow and he in turn comes out with towering threats of retaliation and revenge. It is amply clear that so far no satisfactory basis has been found on which to build up mutual understanding and perpetual agreement.

The Buddhist way of thinking:

The Enlightened Buddha teaches that man has his past, and out of the past, the present becomes and from the present the future will be made. As the past of one individual reaches back to infinity so the future of the individual lengthens into infinity as well. Both behind and before, man is hemmed in by immense stretches of time. One may probably like to ask what is the motivating factor for this long and tedious journey? The Buddhist answer is “Kamma,” that is, one’s own actions. For his actions good and bad, a man is accountable to himself in his future existences. There is no escape from the

consequences of his actions. This is the inexorable decree of the Cosmic Law. It favours none and frowns on no one.

The individual span of life, say one hundred years, is lamentably short against the background of eternal time. In these circumstances a string of questions that suggests itself to a thoughtful person is: "How are we to use the heritage of the past and present store of knowledge? (I) Should it be used to kill one another to satisfy our national pride and prestige? (II) Should it be used to satisfy our earthly sense desires? (III) If it is so used, would it be justified under any system of faith? Of course, answers to such questions would come to individual persons according to their own intellectual and cultural levels.

A devout Buddhist, in conformity with the teaching of the Buddha will answer the major questions in the negative. It must however be admitted that it looks easier said than done. Here also the Buddha-Dhainma provides the necessary background to enable us to arrive at the above conclusions. According to Buddhist Philosophy man in the last analysis is made up of mind and corporeality only and nothing else. That being so, in the absolute sense, there are no Armenians, Americans, British, Burmese, Chinese, Chileans, Danes, in short running according to alphabetical order up to the Zulus of Africa. These are merely conventional names used for the sake of convenience only. Wherever they may be, either in the East, West, North or South, all beings are made up of mind and corporeality and nothing more. These two factors, therefore, point to the fundamental sameness in all beings. Men everywhere possess the six sense organs through which they respond to external environments. They share the same feelings and emotions

of love, hate, anger, fear, faith, hope, joy, grief, etc.

It is true that there are differences and distinctions among men, among races. But it is generally the accepted opinion of all leading minds that differences among men are due to varying degrees of environments and mental developments. It may be noted that these differences endure at the longest for this lifetime only.

These differences among men are superficial and not fundamental. These differences are temporal and not everlasting. These differences are caused and not created by any one. A true Buddhist regards all beings including the lower animals as fellow-travellers in this long and tedious stretch of *samsāra*. This attitude to life, coupled with the spreading of loving thoughts, begets a magnanimity of heart and soon the devotee finds that he dwells in the congenial atmosphere of "Live and let live." He daily sends out thoughts of love as follows: Inasmuch as I desire to be well and happy, may all beings be well and happy also. Inasmuch as I desire to be free from worry and enmity may all beings be free from worry and enmity also.

Since the beginning of this century the world has witnessed much of the pride and hate campaign that has culminated in two destructive wars due to excessive assertion of *I-ness* or egoism. The recent trends however show that the chapter on pride and hate campaign in the history of the world is being written with a semicolon at the end of the sentence. It appears that the ice on all fronts is beginning to thaw. The mutual goodwill visits of top leaders have proved to be the harbinger of peace to come. It remains to be seen whether from these auspicious omens, lasting peace and universal goodwill will follow or not. We

are inclined to hold that for such a consummation, wisdom should be exercised by the top leaders of the world at the present juncture. Wisdom has been defined as the right use of knowledge for attaining the best ends. This definition needs some amplification according to Buddhist ideas. So the amplified rendition reads: Wisdom is the right use of knowledge for attaining the best ends in both mundane and ultra-mundane spheres. Although this definition falls short of the Buddhist definition of Wisdom (*Paññā*) it suffices as a workable hypothesis in our present day world context.¹

If only the Leaders of the World would think according to the Buddhist Way of thinking that

(1) Against the background and foreground of eternity of time, this short span of life is just a twinkling of the eye—fleeting and ephemeral;

(2) Every action, good or bad, has its reactions in the future; and

(3) The main purpose of individual life on earth is for spiritual growth and

perfection only; then the people everywhere should see the return of peace and happiness in the world again. Thus a new attitude to life on the part of the top leaders would enable them to put an end to the pride and hate campaign and the peace-loving people of the world will look up to them fervently and expectantly to close the chapter on the above campaign this time with a full stop. With such a change of mental outlook the leaders of the world would not only enhance their personal reputation and national prestige but they will surely be remembered by history as those who bring peace and happiness on this distracted world and their names will be preserved in the hearts of men ever afterwards in loving memory and gratitude.

Peace to all beings!

¹ According to Abhidhamma (Higher Doctrine), *Paññā* means “to penetratingly understand the mental and physical phenomena through the media of *anicca*, *dukkha* and *anattā*, and thus gain the knowledge of the four Noble Truths.”

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SOME THOUGHTS ON KAMMA

By

U Sein Nyo Tun, i.c.s. (Retd.)

Kamma is one of the imponderables. It is incomprehensible, unthinkable and impenetrable in its entirety. Thus, in the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Buddha said:

Cattārimāni bhikkhave acinteyyāni na cintetabbāni.

*Yāni cintento ummādaṁsa vīghātassa bhāgī assa.*¹

Translated it means:

O Bhikkhus! There are four imponderables over which you should not ponder. To ponder over them is futile, and may lead to madness.

These four imponderables are enumerated as follows:

1. *Buddha visaya*—the sphere of the Buddha;
2. *Jhāna visaya*—the sphere of the Jhānas;
3. *Kamma vipāka*—the resultants of Kamma;
4. *Loka visaya*— the sphere of the worlds.

This means that the actions and interactions of the innumerable *kammas* of a person, as also their inter-factions with the other forces of nature called *niyāma dhammas* are so diverse and so infinite that no intellect—except that of a Buddha—can cover the entire domain of *kamma*, and understand completely all the incidents and manifestations of *kamma* resultants. It also means that in the large majority of cases it is an extremely difficult task to trace the direct connection between a particular *kamma* and its resultant.

But *kamma* is a basic concept of the Buddha's teachings. It is the very foundation of the Buddha-Dhamma. It is on

kamma that the whole superstructure of *duccaritas* (evil conduct) and the *sucaritas* (good conduct), of *dānā* (almsgiving), *sīla* (moral conduct), and *bhāvanā* (mental concentration), is built. Without a proper understanding of the workings of *kamma*, no proper grasp of the Buddha-Dhamma can be acquired. If *kamma* cannot be investigated in all its details, yet a sufficient knowledge of its general laws is necessary, and throughout the Pāli Scriptures, there are evidences that the Buddha took pains to ensure such a knowledge, so as to serve as a guide to right action, and to the avoidance of grave errors that may unwittingly cast one into the unimaginable lengths of misery of the *apāya lokas* (the Four Lower Worlds).

The basic nature of *kamma* was brought out by the Buddha in several places in the Pāli Canon. Thus in the Dīgha Nikāya, the Majjhima Nikāya, and the Aṅguttara Nikāya, the Buddha said:

“All beings have *kamma* as their personal property. Kamma is their *heritage*. *Kamma* is their origin, *Kamma* is their kith and kin. *Kamma* is their refuge. Whatever the deeds they do, good or evil, of such they will be the heirs.”²

There is no personal property of beings, properly so called, apart from *kamma*. In this world, a person owns all manner of properties, such as lands, houses, clothes, gold, silver, jewellery, radio sets, refrigerators motor cars, money, etc. He employs them in the satisfaction of his many desires, but his use and enjoyment of them is limited to this life and this life alone, however much he may wish to take them along with him beyond the grave. Whether he wills it or not, he has perforce

to leave them behind in this world, for other persons to use and enjoy, when he dies. Thus, these properties, in actual fact, are not in his permanent possessions, but are (so to say) temporarily leased to him for a lifetime.

Oftimes, this lease does not even last a whole lifetime. There are many forms of insecurity on this earth, many dangers, and many enemies, which threaten to deprive a man of his worldly possessions. There are many human enemies, such as thieves, robbers and kings (or governments); natural enemies such as floods, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes; and there are others, such as fires, wars, insurrections, famines, and pestilences. In our modern age, new forms such as unemployment, speculation and inflation have appeared. The number of persons who have suddenly lost their properties through one or other of these causes even during our lifetime are beyond computation. In *saṃsāra* they are not unique events. But, in spite of these evidences, we still harbour a stability and security—of permanency and complacency—it appears that we are living in a fool's paradise of our own creation—a creation made possible by our inability to see the realities of life in the long and torturous journey of *saṃsāra* (round of rebirths).

The only forms of property that a man can take away with him to the next life—and to the series of lives that are to follow until he attains *Nibbāna*—are his *kammās*, the fruits of his deeds. These fruits are not subject to any of the forms of insecurity that men know of and over which they have no control. The natural law of *kamma niyāma*³ ensures that a man becomes heir to his own deeds. Thus, of all his worldly possessions, only *kamma* can be truly said to be his permanent property, available for

his use not only in this life but also throughout the *saṃsāra*. If he is wise and farseeing, therefore, he will lose no time in converting his temporary possessions into the permanent and stable possession of good *kamma*, before death overtakes him and it becomes too late to use the rare opportunity that is offered him as a human being in this life.

But if *kamma* is a basic concept in the Buddha-Dhamma, yet there are many among Buddhists who harbour serious misconceptions about its place and functions in the shaping of the destinies of men. Thus, the late the Most Venerable the Ledi Sayadaw, a profoundly learned and prolific writer of the later years of the last century and the beginning of the present, whose many works are looked upon as standard expositions of the Buddha-Dhamma by Burman Buddhists today, states, in his *Rūpa Dīpanī (Manual of Material Qualities)*:

“Some people firmly hold the view that *kamma* is the main factor in regulating the destinies of men. Thus, they hold that the day and hour of death, the place of death and the manner of death of a person is pre-ordained by his past *kamma* from the moment of his conception in his mother's womb. They hold that it is wrong, when people talk of death taking place through eating unsuitable food, or through going to uncongenial places, or through leading an unharmonious life. They hold that *ñāṇa* (knowledge) and *virīya* (effort) but follow the promptings of past *kamma*.”

These people ignore the part played by the other forces of nature such as *bīja niyāma* (the natural law relating to germination), *utu niyāma* (the natural law relating to climatic conditions, or changes of temperature), *citta niyāma* (the natural law relating to processes of thought), and

dhamma niyāma (other natural laws).⁴ They ignore the very important role that present *kamma*, as distinguished from past *kamma*, plays in the creation of future destiny especially of human beings.

In the Milinda Pañhā, eight causes of *vedanā* (feelings or sensations) are given. In the Saṃyutta Nikāya and the Aṅguttara Nikāya, these same eight causes are given as cause of death. They are:

1. Vātasamuthānaṃ—hurt, ailment, or death caused by the upset of the wind element;
2. Pittasamuthānaṃ—hurt, ailment, or death caused by the upset of the bile;
3. Semhasamuthānaṃ—hurt, ailment, or death caused by the upset of the phlegm;
4. Sannipātikaṃ—hurt, ailment or death caused by a combination of the three causes above;
5. Utuvipariṇāmajaṃ—hurt, ailment, or death caused by the upset of climatic conditions or conditions of temperature;
6. Visamapariṇārajaṃ—hurt, ailment, or death caused by one's own disagreeable acts;
7. Opakkamaṃ—hurt, ailment, or death caused by the specifically directed acts of oneself or of others;
8. Kamavipākajaṃ—hurt, ailment, or death caused by *upapilaka* (suppressive) and *upacchedaka* (destructive) *kamma*.

Of these eight causes, *opakkama* may be due either to past or present *kamma*. Thus, the Milinda Pañhā. says :⁵

“*Kammavipākaja* is wholly due to past *kamma*.”

The remaining six causes are all due to present *kamma*.

The observation made by the Venerable Nāgasena with respect to these eight causes is:

“*Kammavipākaja* is few. The rest are many. But unwise persons attribute *vedanā*

to only *kammavipākaja*. Thus they hold views that distort the truth..”⁶

Also in the Saṃyutta Nikāya, the Buddha said:

“In this world, *vedanā* arises from eight causes, viz. *vātasamuthāna*, *pittasamuthāna*, etc. I have myself experienced them. Wise men also attribute *vedanā* to these eight causes. Even so, some people attribute the cause of *vedanā* only to past *kamma*. These people distort my intellect. They also distort the truth as known in the world. I therefore say that their belief is wrong.”

The Most Venerable the Ledi Sayadaw says in the “Rūpa Dīpanī,” that forms of *opakkama* that are not due to past *kamma*, but are the results or *kamma* in the present existence, are acts of self-immolation, suicide, fights and quarrels, war, etc. These are acts arising out of *dosa* (anger), *māna* (conceit), *soka* (grief), *lobha* (greed), etc.

In these cases, certain *vedanās* arise out of these acts. These *vedanās* are the results of past *kamma*, but their arising was made possible by present acts (or present *kamma*) through the creation of conditions suitable for their appearance, or inducing their appearance. If present *kamma* had not created the suitable conditions, the *vedanās* concerned would not have arisen, or in other words, the past *kammās* concerned could not have produced resultants.

The learned Sayadaw gives the simile of flies and bad smells. Flies do not cause bad smells. It is because bad smells exist that flies appear. In the same way, it is only when favourable circumstances are created by present *kamma* that past *kamma* produces resultants. The creation of the favourable circumstances can be prevented by *ñāṇa* and *vīriya*, or knowledge and effort. In this world, cases of hurt and death falling under *opakkama* occasioned by present

kamma predominate. Cases of hurt and death caused purely by past *kamma* (without present *kamma* providing a contributory cause) are very rare.

The difference between *visamaparihāra* and *opakkama* lies in the fact that, in the case of *opakkama* the acts are specific, while in the case of *visamaparihāra* hurt or death may result although hurt or death may not be intended, or although the intention may have been to seek pleasure. In modern usage, many events are described as accidents or misadventures. ‘Accidents’ may be either *opakkama* or *visamaparihāra*, but ‘misadventures’ are *visamaparihāra*.

In a consideration of these eight causes, the important point to observe is that where the forces of past *kusala kamma* on the one hand and those of *utu*, *vāta*, etc. on the other, balance each other *ñāṇa* and *vīriya* become effective, and through their employment the *kusala kamma* can be induced to produce resultants. Here, the functions of *ñāṇa* and *vīriya* constitute present *kamma*.

When the forces of past *kusala kamma* are stronger than *utu*, *vāta*, etc. then the *kusala kamma* is bound to produce resultants even though *ñāṇa* and *vīriya* are not invoked. But with the assistance of *ñāṇa* and *vīriya*, the strength of the past *kusala kamma* will be further reinforced and the incidence of the resultant will be commensurably greater.

It is only in the case where the forces of *utu*, *vāta*, etc. are stronger than the past *kusala kamma* which is in the course of producing a resultant that the effect of the latter will be cut short, but even so, *ñāṇa* and *vīriya* can soften the incidence of the former, while they can prevent the entry of wrong views and wrong acts which can lead to extreme disadvantages in the future.

In the Dhammapada, the story is related of the son of Mahādhana, the millionaire. It is told by the Buddha that this young man had sufficient *pāramī* (perfection, or past *kusala kammās* of great strength) to enable him to become an Arahant during his lifetime. He, however, spent his time in excesses of drinking, gambling, and the company of women, with the result that he not only lost all his inherited riches before his death but was doomed to be cast into the *apāya* regions when he died. He did not employ his *ñāṇa* and *vīriya* towards his betterment. This story emphatically illustrates the great importance of *ñāṇa* and *vīriya* (which are present *kammās*) in the future of an individual. It is a story that reiterates the paramount importance of continual vigilance and continual effort in the performance of *kusala kammās*. That is why the Buddha admonished his disciples everyday. “Be accomplished in the three Sikkhās⁷ with attentiveness.” Appamādena saṃpādettha.

Notes:

- 1) Vol 1. p. 392, 6th Syn Edn.
- 2) Majjhima Nikāya, Uparipaṇṇāsa, Cūlakammavibhaṅga Sutta p. 243, 6th Syn. Edn. See the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. VII, No. 1, p. 4.
- 3) The Moral Order. Please see the Niyāma-Dpanī. The Light of the Dhamma, Vol. IV, No. 1. p. 1.
- 4) For the detailed explanation of the five-fold *niyāma* see the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 1 *et seq.*
- 5) p. 137, Milinda - Pañhā, 6th Syn. Edn.
- 6) Saṃyutta Nikāya, Vol. II, 428.
- 7) 1. Morality, 2. Concentration. 3. Wisdom. See the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. VII, No. 1, p. 10. Dīgha Nikāya, Mahāvagga, Mahā-parinibbāna Sutta, p. 61, 6th Syn. Edn.

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PĀḲITEXT SOCIETY

NOTES AND NEWS

BUDDHA DAY CELEBRATIONS AT RANGOON

Buddha Day Celebrations were held at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda on the 9th May 1960, the full moon of Kason or Visākh. Among those present were the leading Mahātheras of Rangoon, H.E. the President U Win Maung, U Ba Saw, Minister for Religious Affairs, Thado Thin Thudhamma, Agga Mahā Thray Sithu, Dr. U Them Maung, Justice U San Maung, Parliamentary Secretary U Than Sein, Deputy Secretary U Ba Swe, the Trustees of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda and many thousands of devotees.

At 5-40 a.m., H.E. the President U Win Maung, accompanied by the officials of the President's Household, arrived at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda and was received by the members of the Kason Nyaung Ye Thun Pwe Daw Committee and the Trustees of the Pagoda. After paying homage to the Buddha the President proceeded to the foot of the Sacred Bo Tree on the south-eastern side of the Pagoda platform.

At 6-10 a.m., H.E. the President U Win Maung declared the commencement of the "ceremony of pouring water on the Sacred Bo Tree." After the recitation of Gāthās by Wunnakyawhtin U Ba Swe, H.E. the President recited the stanza—"Mahābodhi dume nātho" and inaugurated the ceremony.

The presiding Mahāthera administered the precepts to the audience. U Ba Saw, Minister for Religious Affairs then recited the stanza beginning with "*Uddhisīyaṃ jinaṃ buddhaṃ*." This was followed by an address delivered by Thado Thin Thudhamma, Agga Maha Thray Sithu, Dr. U Them Maung on the significance of "pouring water on the Sacred Bo Tree."

After Dr. U Them Maung's address, the President of the Union and the distinguished guests were conducted to the Sacred Bo Tree at the foot of which they poured water of

libation. The ceremony came to a close at 7 a.m. with the acclamation of "*Sādhū*" thrice.

Later, the Buddha Day Celebration was held for the tenth time at the Buddha Jayanti Dhammayon on the western slope of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. Among those present were 2500 Bhikkhus headed by His Holiness the Most Venerable Abhidhaja Mahārāṭṭha Guru Masoeyein Sayadaw, H.E. President U Win Maung, Thado Maha Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon, U Tha Win, Secy. of the W.F.B. (Burma Branch), many leading devotees and representatives from various Buddhist organisations of Rangoon.

U Tha Win acted as the Master of the Ceremony and when he announced that the time for commencement of the ceremony had arrived, Thado Maha Thray Sithu U Chan Htoon, President of the Central Committee for the Celebration of the Buddha Day, requested H.E. the President U Win Maung to open the ceremony. His Excellency proceeded towards the flag mast and recited "*Cīraṃ tiṭṭhatu saddhammo*" thrice and unfurled the flag. He then paid his attention to the aura of six different colours emanated from a figure of the Buddha, and recited "*Buddhaṃ pūjemi, dhammaṃ pūjemi, sanghaṃ pūjemi*" and the gathering repeated His Excellency's words.

His Holiness the Most Venerable Abhidhaja Mahārāṭṭha Guru Masoeyein Sayadaw gave the Nine Precepts to the audience, and the Mahātheras and Theras then recited Maṅgala Sutta and Mettā Sutta.

A *minute silence* was observed during which all present sent forth thoughts of loving-kindness and peace to all beings. The President U Win Maung then offered a bowl containing morning meal, and then poured water of libation and shared merits with all sentient beings.

Meals were also offered to the Bhikkhus and the ceremony terminated at about 10a.m.

OBITUARY

THE VEN. SOMA THERA

The Ven. Soma Mahāthera was born of a Roman Catholic family on the 23rd. December 1898 C.E. He had his education at St. Benedict's College at Colombo. As a boy even, he had an unquenchable thirst for knowledge. His fearless search for Truth led him to profess Buddhism at the early age of twenty. He came to Burma and was ordained as a Bhikkhu in 1936 after renouncing the Roman Catholic faith. It was after this that he turned to missionary work.

He visited a number of foreign countries to propagate Buddhism. Among the countries he visited were India, China, Hong Kong, Singapore, United Kingdom and Germany. He was at one time resident at the London Vihāra where he lectured on Buddhism.

In 1957 he was in West Germany in connection with the propagation of Buddhism in that country. When he was there he won the praise and acclaim

of the professors and lecturers there for his masterly exposition of the Buddha Dhamma.

He spent most of his time at the Island Hermitage, Dodanduwa, at Colombo where he translated the Buddha Dhamma from Pāli into English. He earned the admiration of the learned Buddhists and was even respected as an authority on Satipaṭṭhāna (Way of Mindfulness). As a prolific writer and a convincing speaker, he spread the teaching of the Buddha and attracted men to him chiefly through his great learning.

He was a regular contributor to various Buddhist journals including the Light of the Dhamma.

He died at the Vajirarama temple of Colombo on 23rd. February 1960, following an attack of coronary thrombosis.

Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā (All compounded things are impermanent).

THE VEN. ÑĀṆAMOLI THERA

We deeply regret to have to hear the unexpected death on 8th March 1960 of the Ven. Ñāṇamoli Thera—an Oxford man, with a deep understanding of and love for the classics.

In World War II he saw active service in the British Army rising to the rank of Captain. He was in London during the "Blitz" serving in Anti-Aircraft Battery.

He was a quiet man and seldom spoke of his War experiences. But from the little he said one could see that they made a deep and lasting impression on him, driving home the truths of Anicca (impermanence) and Dukkha (suffering) as mere book learning could never do.

Coming to Ceylon in his early forties, his birth date being 25th June 1905 he renounced the lay life and was ordained as a Bhikkhu. A keen and brilliant student, he applied himself to the study of the Buddha Dhamma and of Pāli. His monumental book, "The Path of Purification," an English translation of the *Visuddhimagga*,

published in 1956, bears eloquent testimony to his scholarship.

He was of a calm and understanding nature. He spoke quietly, in gentle, cultured tones. His words were pearls of wisdom, and through them ran a silver thread of humour. Speaking of Life, he once said that at times it reminded him of a joke, in rather bad taste. One feels that he met death too in the same spirit. He had faced it often enough, in its most violent form, during the War, and it held no terrors for him.

And surely death has seldom come to a man more unexpectedly, or inappropriately. Ven. Ñāṇamoli Thera was in his early fifties, strong and apparently in the best of health, at the height of his mental powers. Anybody who saw him would have confidently predicted that he had many more years of useful and rewarding life ahead of him. And yet death came, like an assassin, bringing to a sudden end his life and his work.

Sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā (All compounded things are impermanent).