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*of the*  
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2504 B.E.

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## THE LIGHT OF THE DHAMMA

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# EDITORIAL

## MUDITĀ

### (Sympathetic Joy)

*Muditā* has been translated as “altruistic joy,” “gladness,” “sympathetic joy,” “sympathetic gladness” and “appreciation of the happiness of others.” It is the third of the four Sublime States (*brahma-vihāra*), namely, *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion), *muditā* (sympathetic joy) and *upekkhā* (equanimity). *Muditā* derives from the Pāli word “*modati*”, which means “rejoicing”, and it here signifies the act of congratulating others on their achievements or the appreciating of their happiness; that is to say, *muditā* means “to objectify those who succeed in life and rejoice at their success”.

The term “*brahma-vihāra*” may be rendered by excellent, lofty or sublime states of mind; or, alternately by living like *Brahmā* or noble being.

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

They are incompatible with a hateful state of mind, and in that they are akin to the state of mind of *Brahmās* who are

hateless ones, in beneficial contrast to many other conceptions of deities, in East and West, who by their own devotees, are said to show anger, wrath, jealousy and “righteous indignation.” He who assiduously develops these four sublime states, by conduct and meditation, is said to live like a *Brahmā* (*Brahma-samo*); and if they become the dominant influence in his mind, he will be reborn in the realms of *Brahmā*. Therefore, these states of mind are called *Brahmā*-like.

Our minds should become thoroughly saturated by them. They should become the inseparable companions of our days, and we should be mindful of them in all our common activities.

Turning back to *muditā*, it checks all the disagreeable feelings one may have towards anyone. Hatred, ill-will, envy and other such feelings find no place in the mind of a man whose has absorbed this particular sublime feeling. In the place of these immoderate feelings that tend to endanger human civilisation and culture and to frustrate all that would improve human society, there would arise patience, tolerance and benevolence. *Muditā* fights against all evil thoughts and safeguards the mind, expelling unwholesome mental factors there from.

A person who desires to practise this sublime state should first understand the disadvantages of hatred and its kindred feelings, such as ill-will. Many degrees of hatred arise in a weak worldling. A man tends to become irritated when he is dominated by aversion to an object. This is

“*dosa*” (hatred), one of the six *hetus* (root causes) enumerated in Abhidhamma, and this tendency is eradicated only when one becomes an *Anāgāmi* (Non-returner). When *dosa* co-operates with *moha* (delusion), *ahirika* (moral shame), *anottappa* (moral dread) and *uddhacca* (restlessness), the mind passes the first stage of irritation and proceeds to *kodha* (anger). If *kodha* is not immediately controlled it intensifies to *vera*, enmity, which in turn, ferments to *upānaha*, bitter enmity.

Visuddhimagga deals with this point in considerable length. One may think of the disadvantages of yielding to anger as follows. When one surrenders to hatred one is liable to fall victim to and one’s mind becomes obsessed with hate. When actuated by this dangerous mental factor one harms or even kills kith and kin, thereby becoming a curse to society. Through anger individuals turn against individuals, families against families, nations against nations; in consequence there occur strife, torture and other such catastrophes. The uncontrolled passion of anger has become a threat to peace and unity with wars which may spell the collapse of human culture and civilisation.

The Buddha declared “*Anatthajanano doso*”<sup>1</sup> (Anger is productive of misfortune). Man’s mind starts to soak with hatred and thereby the avowals of mutual benevolence are frustrated; in their place there arise selfish motives guided by greed and ill-will. Through ill-will people adopt a competitive and antagonistic attitude towards one another. This is true both on a personal and an international level. Man lowers his human level and, forgetting that he is a rational animal,

growls and bites, cringes and fawns, as the occasion appears to demand. Thus, in spite of his moral principles, he becomes unable to handle human relationships either for his own good or for the benefit of society in general.

Ill-will, anger and hatred springing up in a man’s heart are able to arouse wrath which may at once cause him to lose all that is beneficial to him. In short, there is no more dangerous mental factor than *dosa*. Thus it will be seen that *dosa* is the opposite of *muditā*.

It is common experience that when a person is successful in his enterprise, very few people are able to appreciate his achievement and rejoice at his success. On the contrary most of the people feel jealous of him and this jealousy develops into ill-will, anger and hatred. Below is an example:

Once a man opened a drapery shop. In a few months’ time, by a stroke of luck his trade prospered and he became rich. Very few friends of his could appreciate his achievement and rejoice at his success. Many of them felt jealous of him and entertained evil thoughts. One or two of them opened similar shops and thus became his rivals.

If we examine such slogans as “Down with capitalists”, we shall find that the working classes cannot appreciate the successful achievements of the capitalists. On the contrary, they entertain thoughts of ill-will, anger and hatred against the capitalists.

But in our daily life we have experienced the cases of *muditā* too. Congratulatory messages and letters, Birth Day greetings and the like are examples of *muditā*. When a youth succeeds in his career in any walk of life, his parents

<sup>1</sup> Khuddaka Nikāya, Itivuttaka, page 252, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

appreciate his happiness and rejoice at his success. Also, when a teacher finds that a greater percentage of his students pass in an examination, he rejoices at their success. These are the examples of *muditā*.

Developed in a man in its full sense, *muditā* would raise him to so high a social status that he would become a real blessing not only to himself and his relatives but also to all human society. In other words, such a person, with fully developed *muditā*, would invariably become one with the world since all geographical and physical differences would sink and the oneness of the world dawn on him.

Visuddhimagga says: “One who begins the development of *muditā* (sympathetic joy) should not start with the dear person, the neutral person, the hostile person, the opposite sex and the dead; a dear person cannot, as a matter of course, be the proximate cause of sympathetic joy merely in virtue of dearness, how much less the neutral and the hostile person. One of the opposite sex and one who is dead are also not the proper objects for it.

However, the very dear companion can be the proximate cause for it—one who in the commentaries is called a ‘boon companion’; for he is constantly joyous; he smiles first and speaks afterwards. So he should be the first to be pervaded with joy. Or on seeing or hearing about a dear person being happy, cheerful and glad, gladness can be aroused thus: ‘This being is indeed glad. How good, how excellent.’ For this is what is referred to in *Vibhaṅga*: ‘And how does a *bhikkhu* dwell pervading one direction with his heart endued with gladness? Just as he would be glad on

seeing a dear and beloved person, so he pervades all beings with gladness.’<sup>2</sup>

But if his boon companion or the dear person was happy in the past but is now unlucky and unfortunate, then gladness can still be aroused by remembering his past happiness and apprehending the glad aspect in this way: ‘In the past he has great wealth, and a great following and he was always glad.’ Or gladness can be aroused by apprehending the future glad aspect in him in this way: ‘In the future he will again enjoy similar success and will go about in gold palanquins, on the backs of elephants or on horseback, and so on.’

Having thus aroused gladness with respect to a dear person, he can then direct it successively towards a neutral one, and after that towards a hostile one.<sup>3</sup>

Majjhima Nikāya<sup>4</sup> says: “As to this, your reverence, a Bhikkhu abides having suffused the first direction<sup>5</sup> with a mind of sympathetic joy, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; just so above, below, across; he dwells having suffused the whole world, everywhere, in every way with a mind of sympathetic joy that is far reaching, widespread, immeasurable, without enmity, without malevolence.”

<sup>2</sup> Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga Pāḷi, Suttanta Bhāṅgāya, 13. Appamaññā-vibhaṅga, 3. Muditā, p. 287, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>3</sup> See Nāṇamoli’s Visuddhimagga, page 342.

<sup>4</sup> Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāḷi, Cūḷayamaka-vagga, 3. Mahāvedalla Sutta, p. 365, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Ed.

<sup>5</sup> The ten directions are the 8 cardinal points of compass, Zenith and Nadir.



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## MISCONCEPTION OF ‘SELF’ (SAKKĀYA-DIṬṬHI)

By Dr. D.H.P.R. Senanayake

Misconception of “Self” or Egoism, is one of the strong fetters that keeps us bound to *Samsāra*<sup>6</sup>. So strong is its spell that it is one of those that has to be shed earliest before one sets foot on the Aryan soil for the first time. A doctrine which distinguishes Religion (as opposed to Buddhism) from Buddhism, a dogma which enters into the very foundation of every Religious Theory, this deceitful illusion has had its origin from the very early times, with the birth of the idea of an Almighty God, when man accepted formulae based on faith—blind faith—in preference to reason to explain whatever was beyond his comprehension. Unfortunately enough, the fallacy of this illusion is to be self-realised and does not fall within the scope of the average human intelligence and therefore science, which the modern man looks up to, has not helped in such a quest, though science—not without its limitations—has lent no proof to it either.

This illusive dogma is the vestige of a primitive human belief, that there abides in every man or animal a diminutive of itself motivating all thought and action. Again, to explain all phenomena which surpassed his comprehension, he invented an Almighty God—who again was beyond his comprehension—a creator who was believed to install an indestructible soul into everyone—a soul which enters the body at birth and leaves it at death, its fate to be decided upon by its creator thereof. This belief in a “Self” is accepted and retained by every religion, only to be known by different names—Ātman, soul, microcosm, pneuma, psyche, etc. This

“Self” is said to form the basis of all life, hidden away, but undergoing no change inside a body, that is subject to change every moment of its existence. It is said to be the entity in us, which sees, hears, smells, tastes, feels, perceives all sensations, appreciates and transforms them into knowledge, motivating thought and action, it is supposed to be invisible and incomprehensible—truly enough, for true comprehension will only lead to the realisation of it being void.

Buddhism is the only teaching which is opposed to this Ego-Theory. At one extreme is the belief in an Ego outlasting death. This is that of the Eternalists. At the other extreme is a belief in a temporary Ego which gets annihilated at death. This is the belief of the Annihilationists or Materialists. Buddhism teaches us that there is neither an external nor a temporary Ego-Entity, and what we refer to as “I” or “Self” are merely conventional terms not referring to any real independent entity. Buddha in his discourse<sup>7</sup> to King Bimbisāra says, ‘He who knows the nature of his self and understands how his senses act, finds no room for the “I”, nor even any ground for its supposition. The world holds to the idea of “I” and from this arises false apprehension. Some say that the “I” endures after death; others say it perishes. Both have fallen into a grievous error. For, if the “I” be perishable the fruit people strive for will perish too, and then deliverance will be without merit. If as the others say, the “I” does not perish it must always be identical and unchanging. Then

<sup>6</sup> *Samsāra*: Round of rebirths.

<sup>7</sup> Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga Pāli, 1. Mahākhan-dhaka, 13. Bimbisārasamāgama-kathā, pp. 45-48, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

moral aims and salvation would be unnecessary, for there would be no use in attempting to change the unchangeable. But as there are marks of joy and sorrow everywhere, how can we speak of any constant being?”

The Buddhist concept is that the being is composed of five groups of phenomena—five *khandhas*—*Rūpa*<sup>8</sup>, *Vedanā*, *Viññāṇam*, *Saññā* and *Sankhāra*, each of which is a group of psychological processes. “*Rūpa* represents the totality of sensations and ideas pertaining to one’s body; *Vedanā* the momentary emotional states; *Viññāṇam* the thought; *Saññā* the conceptions and abstractions and *Sankhāra* the volitions”. This is the sum total of existence and Buddhism categorically rejects the existence of a soul, a transcendental subject outside consciousness—the doctrine of *Anattā*.

A good comprehension is made in the *Visuddhimagga*<sup>9</sup>, to illustrate the doctrine of *Anatta*. “Just as the word ‘chariot’,” says Buddhagosa “is but a mode of expression for axle, wheels, pole and other constituent parts, placed in a certain relation to each other, but when we come to examine the members, one by one we discover in the absolute sense, there is no chariot ... in exactly the same way, the words ‘living’ ‘entity’ and ‘I’ are but a mode of expression for the five attachment groups (*khandhas*), but when we come to examine the elements of being, one by one, we discover in the absolute sense there is no living being there to form the basis for such figments as ‘I am’ or ‘I’; in other words, that in the absolute sense

there is only Mind (*nāma*) and Matter (*rūpa*).”

It requires absolute wisdom (*paññā*) to reflect upon and to rid oneself of this illusion. *Avijjā*—ignorance—caused by a mind clogged with defilements further promotes the clinging to this illusion. Ignorance of the five groups of grasping of their true nature as transient, impermanent, unsatisfactory phenomena, arising at every moment in one stream, to disappear within an infinitesimal fraction of a second, and their conditioned nature. It is through correct mindfulness and concentration causing knowledge to arise dispelling the veil of ignorance, that one can gain a true insight into things as they really are.

A common fallacy among those who believe in a soul, is to consider one, more or all of the five *khandhas* as Ego or Self.

“All those ascetics and priests who again and again in manifold ways believe in an Ego (*Atta*), they all do so with regard to the five groups of existence, or to one of them.

“In this case an uninstructed average person regards material (*rūpa*) as self, or self as having material shape, or material shape as in self, or self as in material shape, he regards feeling (*vedanā*) as self ... he regards perception (*saññā*) as self ... he regards habitual tendencies (*sañkhāra*) as self ... he regards consciousness (*viññāṇam*) as self or self as having consciousness, or consciousness as in self, or self as in consciousness. Thus there comes to be wrong view as to own body [etc.].”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Rūpa* is a psycho-physical phenomenon. It is also conditioned by *kamma*, *utu* and *āhāra*.

<sup>9</sup> *Visuddhimagga* Book II, para 673, page 228, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>10</sup> *Samyutta Nikāya*, *Khandhavagga* *Samyutta Pāḷi*, 1. *Khandha* *Samyutta*, (8) 3-*Khajjanīyavagga*, 10. *Puṇṇamasutta* p. 83, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

For instance one says “I feel sad.” In its true sense this statement denotes nothing more than a mere state of consciousness—that the consciousness at that moment has registered a “*dukkha vedanā*”. This sensation was conditioned by some cause or causes, which soon pass away giving rise to an entirely new set of conditions, perhaps diametrically opposite to the earlier ones and hence causing the opposite sensation provoking the remark from the very same subject “I feel happy”. Here is one stream of continually changing conscious processes registering two different types of sensation at two different moments. Besides this mere state of mind there is no real entity as ‘I’ who has experienced these sensations. Here is an instance where consciousness is mistaken as ‘I’. The same misconception can arise with other *khandhas* too.

This confusion arises due to ignorance of the true nature of the *khandhas* and their Dependent Origination.

“But who, Venerable One is it that feels?”

“This question is not proper,” said the Exalted One, “I do not teach that there is one who feels. If however the question is put thus, ‘Conditioned through what does feeling arise?’ then the right answer will be: ‘Through sense-impression is feeling conditioned; through feeling, craving; through craving, clinging...’”<sup>11</sup>

But that which is called ‘mind’, consciousness, thinking, arises continuously, during day and night, as one thing; and as something different again it vanishes. Now here the learned and noble disciple considers thoroughly the

Dependent Origination: ‘If this is, then that becomes. Through the arising of this, that comes to arise; through the extinction of this, that becomes extinguished, namely: Through ignorance arise the *Kamma*-formations; through *Kamma*-formations consciousness (*Paṭisandhi Vinnāṇa*); through consciousness, corporeality and mind; ... through the extinction of ignorance the *Kamma*-formations become extinguished; through the extinction of *Kamma*-formations, consciousness ... etc.

The adherents to this belief in a soul accept it on mere faith and belief. No attempt is made to analyse and view it critically with intuitive wisdom as laid out in the Buddhist teaching. The blindness of these beliefs has been illustrated by the Buddha.<sup>12</sup>

‘Just as if a man should say, “How I long for, how I love the most beautiful woman in the land.”

‘And people should ask him: “Well! Good friend! this most beautiful woman in the land, whom you so love and long for, do you know whether that beautiful woman is a noble lady, or of priestly rank, or of the trader class, or of menial birth?”

‘And when so asked he should answer: “No.”

‘And people should ask him: “Well good friend! This most beautiful woman in the land, whom you so love and long for, do you know what her name is, or her family name, or whether she be tall or short, or of medium height, whether she be dark or brunette or golden in colour, or in what village or town or city she dwells?”

<sup>11</sup> Saṃyutta Nikāya, Nidānavagga-saṃyutta Pāli, 1. Nidāna Saṃyutta, 2. Āhāra-vagga, 2. Moliyaphagga Sutta, p. 254, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

<sup>12</sup> Majjhima Nikāya. Majjhimaṇṇāsa Pāli, 3. Paribbājaka-vagga, 10. Vekhanasa Sutta, p. 231, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.

And when so asked he should answer: “No.”

‘And people should say to him: “So then, good friend, whom you know not, neither have seen, do you love her?”

‘And when so asked, he should answer: “Yes”.

‘Now what think of you that? Would it not turn out that being so, that the talk of that man was witless talk?

‘Then just so, with the *Samaṇas* and *Brāhmaṇas*, who talk about the soul being perfectly happy and healthy after death ... For they acknowledge that they know no such state in this world now. They acknowledge that they cannot say their own souls have been happy here even half a day.

‘And they acknowledge that they know no way, no method of ensuring such a result. Now what think you of that. That being so, does not their talk, too, turn out to be without good ground.’

How does belief in a soul or “self” constitute such a strong fetter? It forms the basis of attachment. ‘The belief in a permanent self, must naturally produce attachment to it, and attachment to it must necessarily breed egotism and craving for pleasure here on earth and then beyond in heaven.’ Along with this craving for self and the subject gets bound to this worldliness in an inextricable manner—the very cause of uprising of the *pañcakkhandha*.

It is on the assumption of self that we speak of “I” and “mine”, “we” and “ours,” “you” and “yours”, etc. It is this Egoism which adds limitations to our good qualities like kindness and compassion. It is the basis of selfishness. Forgetful as we are of the doctrine of *Anattā*, our boast is

of our worldly achievements. Once the Lord, addressing a layman, said that fools boast of their wealth, and their children as their own—vainly enough, for in actuality ‘one’ does not even belong to ‘oneself’ (*Attāhi attano natthi*).<sup>13</sup>

Treading the path of purity the Buddha has disclosed, through correct mindfulness and concentration one gains that absolute wisdom with which one views the whole problem, when the true state of *Anattā* comes to be self-realised, striking the very rock-bottom of attachment—attachment to a non-existing self. With this goes the attachment to the rest of the worldly things. Doubt (*vicikicchā*) is overcome—another fetter, ritualism conquered yet another; and the pure one gets the first glimpse of *Nibbāna* and enters the Stream—*Sotāpatti*.

Hence even an attempt to understand the basic approach to Egolessness is a necessary endeavour for a Buddhist. This means a step taken towards less attachment and renunciation—maybe in a distant future birth, prelude to the uphill task towards the goal. For if one were to possess a ‘self’ *Nibbāna* will be impossible as expressed in the Buddha-word. “If there existed such an Ego, that is permanent, enduring and lasting and not subject to any change, then holy life leading to complete extinction of suffering will not be possible.”

<sup>13</sup> Khuddaka Nikāya Dhammapadaṭṭhakathā, 5. Bālavagga, 3. Ānandasetṭhi-vatthu, p. 298, 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn. Dhammapada, Verse 62.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THADINGYUT FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

*A talk by Myanaung U Tin broadcast from B.B.S. on 3rd. October 1960.*

Tomorrow is the Full Moon Day of Thadingyut or October. This day is of special significance to the Buddhists not because it is the last day of the Buddhist Lent, but because it highlights one of the most important events of the Buddha's life.

During the seventh rainy season after His Enlightenment the Buddha went to the Thāvatiṃsa Heaven to preach Abhidhamma to His mother and other *devas* or gods. His mother who died seven days after His birth had been reborn there as a *deva* by the name of Santussita. On the Full Moon day of Thadingyut, the Buddha descended to earth at the city of Sankassa, now known as Sankisha-Basantapur, Etah district, Uttar Pradesh, in North India.

According to Buddhist chronicle, the Buddha came down by a triple flight of stairs, the central one being overlaid with gems, and flanked by two others, the one finished in gold and the other in silver, all done by the *devas* themselves at the behest of Sakka, the lord of the Thāvatiṃsa Heaven.

The Buddha was accompanied by a multitude of *brahmās* and *devas*, all in their celestial robes but the resplendent glory of the Buddha, surpassing their radiance, lighted up the whole firmament. The whole earthbound procession was seen by the human beings, and what was more they also saw the heavenly abodes, six of the *deva-loka* and twenty of the *brahma-loka* which were made visible to them by the Buddha's spiritual powers (*Lokavivarāṇa pāṭihāriya*).

The Festival of Lights marks this important event, and the illuminations by a myriad of candles, oil lamps, electric and neon lights, lanterns as also balloons rising skywards, in all colours and shapes human beings can contrive, are in respectful memory of that marvelously brilliant night our ancestors witnessed 2543 years ago.

This important event forms a favourite motif in Buddhist art. Sankassa, because of this sacred association, comes to be an important place of pilgrimage. History has recorded that the famous Chinese pilgrims Fa-hien and Yuan Chwang visited this holy place and left interesting accounts of the important shrines, stupas and monasteries built there in the heyday of Buddhists.

In the presence of His mother and other *devas* the Buddha propounded Abhidhamma for the first time. So, the Festival of Lights has two-fold significance. The illuminations are not merely physical in nature: they denote the preaching of the Abhidhamma which gives intellectual and spiritual light to many a being, human and celestial, ever since that memorable visit of the Buddha to the Thāvatiṃsa Heaven.

The Buddhist Pāli Canon has three main divisions:

(1) Vinaya which deals with the discipline of the members—male as well as female—of the Buddha's Order; (2) Sutta which deals with the discourses of the Buddha; (3) Abhidhamma which deals with Ultimate Things.

According to the Theravāda tradition the Abhidhamma is the domain proper of the Buddhas (*Buddha-visaya*), and its initial conception in the Buddha Gotama's

mind took place in the fourth week of the seven. The Buddha dwelt in Abhidhamma thought during the entire week, as a result of which His body for the first time became radiant and shed six coloured rays, which are now represented by the authorised Buddhist banner.

What is meant by Abhidhamma? “Abhidhamma is a philosophy inasmuch as it deals with the most general causes and the principles which govern all things. It is also an ethical system because it enables one to realize the ultimate goal, Nibbāna. And because it deals with the working of the mind, with thought processes and mental factors, it is also a system of psychology. Abhidhamma is therefore generally translated as the Psycho-ethical-Philosophy of Buddhism. In the Abhidhamma Piṭaka all the basic doctrines of Buddhism are systematically elucidated from the philosophical, psychological, and physiological standpoint.”<sup>14</sup>

“Abhidhamma may also be regarded as a systematisation of the doctrine contained in, or implied in, the Sutta Piṭaka. It formulates these Sutta doctrines in strictly philosophical (*paramattha*) or truly realistic (*yathābhūta*) language; a language that employs as far as possible terms of a function or processual character, without any of the conventional (*vohāra*) and unrealistic concepts denoting a personality, an agent (as different from the act), a substance, etc.”<sup>15</sup>

In “Our Knowledge of External World” Bertrand Russell writes:

“A complete description of the existing world would require not only a

catalogue of the things, but also a mention of all their qualities and relations.”

It is interesting to note that the first book of the Abhidhamma, the Dhamma-saṅganī, contains a systematical “catalogue of things” together with their qualities, or better “functions” and the last book, the Paṭṭhāna, treats of the relations or the conditionality of these things.

In the West, psycho-analysis has proved to be of great interest not only to deep thinkers but also to average persons. Psycho-analysis is the system of psychology formulated by Freud, Jung and Adler, dividing the mind into conscious and unconscious elements, and investigating their interactions. Because of the strain and stress of the so-called modern civilised life an increasing number of people are afflicted with mental diseases, and more and more attention is being paid to the development of psychopathology and psychiatry: science of mental diseases and science for the treatment of mental diseases.

Last month I saw a funny picture by the title of “Oh Men, Oh Women”, at a cinema hall in Rangoon. A professional psychoanalyst who examines the working of the minds of his patients with an obvious display of professional skill, and then prescribes remedy, not without reasonable success, lands himself in a pitiable predicament when he became a victim of a wily and yet charming young woman with quite a past. The picture raises hearty laughs but it also provides food for thought.

In the Abhidhamma, careful students will meet with the most valuable contributions not only to the theoretical understanding but also to the practical realisation of the Buddhist doctrine.

<sup>14</sup> Buddhism in Theravāda Countries by Sayadaw U Thittila, (Chapter II, The Path of the Buddha).

<sup>15</sup> The Abhidhamma by Nyanaponika Mahāthera, (The Light of Buddha, Sept and Oct. 1960).

Although the highest Buddhist goal is Nibbāna or the attainment of the cessation of suffering or unsatisfactoriness associated with the ever-recurring lives in this mundane world, peace of mind is certainly the immediate concern of those caught in the “madding crowd’s ignoble strife”. The understanding and the practice of the Buddha Dhamma will surely give them peace of mind right here and now.

I would like to read out the instructive words of Venerable Nyanaponika: “We are convinced that the Abhidhamma, if suitably presented, could fructify also modern non-Buddhist thought, in philosophy as well as psychology. To state the parallels to modern western thought, or the historical precedence of the Buddhist versions, is not so much important in itself. It is of greater importance that the Buddhist way of presenting and solving the respective problems will show to modern independent thinkers new vistas and open new avenues of thought which, in turn, might stimulate again Buddhist philosophy of the East. We are convinced that from such a reciprocal process of philosophical communication there will arise a glorious vindication of those eternal and fundamental truths, simple and profound in one, which are proclaimed by the greatest genius of mankind, the Buddha.<sup>16</sup>

The Festival of Lights lasts three days: today, tomorrow, and the day after. On this festive occasion, children and pupils visit their parents, teachers and elders with gifts. Adults go to pagodas and monasteries to make offerings of lights and flowers. In the evenings young men and maidens wend their way to glades and gardens to gather flowers. Children are

taken round for sightseeing when lighting is in full progress, or earlier when the illuminations begin to mingle with the moonlight. This is indeed a joyous occasion noted for lights, flowers and smiles. It is a religious festivity, a social custom and a thanksgiving occasion all rolled into one.

May this bright, beautiful and blissful festival prevail for a long time to come!

May the Buddha Dhamma illumine our minds and give us peace of mind and peace in this world!

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<sup>16</sup> Preface to Abhidhamma Studies by Ven. Nyanaponika Mahāthera.



## DEVOTION IN BUDDHISM

By

*Bhikkhu Vanga Buddhārakkhita, (Bangalore, India)*

Religion and devotion are inseparable, and Buddhism is no exception to this rule. Theravāda or Buddhism based on the Pāli, the original Teachings of the Buddha (sometimes called Hinayāna), is alleged by some to be dry and intellectual, to have no devotion or higher emotional content in it. There may be some truth in this allegation when it concerns those people who only superficially profess adherence to the Teaching (Dhamma) or who limit themselves only to an intellectual study and appreciation of the Dhamma without applying its tenets to their everyday life. For the true follower of Theravāda, however, devotion is an indispensable aid on the way to Deliverance. For him even the word BUDDHA can produce the deepest emotional stirring and rapture.

Dhamma, said the Buddha, may be compared to a snake which if caught by the head is brought under control but if seized by the tail, carries death. Similarly, the Dhamma rightly understood and lived leads to the extinction of all suffering, but will cause harm if misunderstood and misapplied.<sup>17</sup> If we are to accept that Buddhism starves emotion and lays emphasis on reason alone then it would have been impossible for Buddhism to flourish for more than 2500 years as a *living religion* providing the spiritual and cultural requirements of millions. Countries like Burma, Thailand, Ceylon, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam cannot conceivably be supposed to have quenched

their spiritual thirst with mere dry abstractions. Further, emotion, as a distinct mental factor, cannot be just suppressed; it is bound to express itself. In point of fact, the balancing of these two mental faculties, emotion and reason, is considered in Buddhism most essential for a harmonious spiritual development. Harmony, moderation and gradual development are features that run through the entire system of Buddhism like a scarlet thread.

In the theistic conception of *bhakti* or faith, devotion is always accompanied by practices like prayers, rituals, vows, and an unquestioned obedience to a Creator God, his earthly incarnation or some deity. There is fear of being punished if the command of God is either questioned or not followed with submission. And wherever there is fear there will arise blind faith, dogmatism, superstition, ritualism, intolerance and such other evil consequences, because fear restricts mental growth, traps the mind and makes it insular. Prayers, rituals and vows lead men to ask and crave for worldly boons and pleasures while alive, and for happy states on earth or in heavenly worlds, after death. Love taking the form of an uncontrolled emotional devotion may and often does create selfish affection (*sineha*) and a physical relationship between the devotee and his or her lord which in many cases may turn carnal. Being associated with religion such indulgences may remain undetected and even become a holy practice which could be conducted unhindered. This would give one a free licence to roam in the wilderness of vague

<sup>17</sup> Majjhima Nikāya Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli, 3-Opammavagga, 2-Alagaddūpama Sutta, pp. 182, 6<sup>th</sup> Syd. Edn.

imaginations. One waits for the saving grace of the God in all activities and thereby loses self-confidence and becomes indolent and a slave to superstitions. Devotion should not be wholly emotional, for it may grow positively harmful in that the devotee may become fanatical or, having become too sensitive emotionally, get upset by little mishaps or gains.

Against such one-sided emphasis, the concept of devotion in Theravāda Buddhism is distinctly different. Devotion from this standpoint is *ñāṇasampayutta*; i.e. accompanied by knowledge, so that it presents, on both the philosophical and emotional level, a strong contrast to those religions which lay emphasis on emotion alone. The philosophical aspect calls into play two important mental faculties, viz., the rational and the volitional. The emotional aspect has, as it were, many facets, bringing together several mental factors, such as gratitude, reverence, love, faith or confidence, and joy. For as much as devotion is a culture of mind, it sets on foot a harmonious development of all the mental faculties bringing about integration and wholeness of character required for the attainment of Nibbāna. What part each of these different faculties plays in the act of devotion, will be discussed later.

The object of devotion in Buddhism is what is known as the “Triple Gem” (*Ratanattaya*) or the “Threefold Refuge” (*Saraṇattaya*), comprising the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Saṅgha; that is, the Enlightened One, his doctrine and the Order of his noble disciples, i.e., the *ariyas* or saints. The *Ratanas* are so called because nothing can be more precious and worthy of bestowing incomparable and, unalloyed peace and happiness than these; hence they are also the highest refuge, the peerless source of security and protection.

The practice of devotion consists in reflecting or meditating (*anussati*) on the qualities or attributes of that Triple Gem. These qualities are embodied in the most simple yet profound formula known as *Ratanattaya Vandana Gātha*—the Hymn of Homage to the Triple Gem, familiar to all Buddhists from the time they learn to speak, which they recite on all occasions of worship.

*Itipi so Bhagavā, Arahaṃ, Sammāsambuddho, vijjā-caraṇasampanno, sugato, lokavidū, anuttaro, purisa dammasārathi, sattādevamanus-sānaṃ, Buddho, Bhagavā'ti.*

Thus, indeed, is that Blessed One, he is the Holy One, fully enlightened, endowed with vision and conduct, sublime, the knower of worlds, the incomparable leader of men to be tamed, the teacher of gods and men, enlightened and blessed.

*Svākhāto Bhagavatā dhammo, sandiṭṭhiko, Akāliko, ehipassiko, opaneyyiko, paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhi'ti.*

Well-expounded is the Dhamma (teaching) by the Blessed One, verifiable here and now, with immediate fruit, inviting all to test for themselves leading to Nibbāna, to be comprehended by the wise, each for himself.

*Suppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-sangho, ujuppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-sangho, ñāyappaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-sangho, sāmīcippaṭipanno bhagavato sāvaka-sangho; yadidaṃ cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭhapurisa-puggalā, esa bhagavata sāvaka-sangho, āhuneyyo, pāhuneyyo, dakkhiṇeyyo añjalikaraṇīyo anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassā'ti.*

Of perfect conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples, of wise conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples, of dutiful conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples, of reverential conduct is the Order of the Lord's Disciples; that is to say, the Four Pairs of men,<sup>18</sup> the Eight Persons. This Order of the Lord's Disciples is worthy of offerings, worthy of hospitality, worthy of gifts, worthy of reverential salutation, as an incomparable field of merit to the world. —Space does not permit to go here into the details of the practice of devotional meditations. Briefly, it is meditating on the true significance of these attributes—nine of the Buddha, Six of the Dhamma, ten of the Saṅgha—and accomplish an inner transformation by implanting them, as it were, within.

*Buddha* is venerated and followed as the Great Teacher, the spiritual Master. The term Buddha is an honorific expression implying the attainment of Supreme Enlightenment; that is to say, it is not a personal name but an indication. It is also an attribute of a perfect and holy guide who, by virtue of having discovered a truth unaided and through long and painful struggle, guides, points out and makes known to beings, out of great compassion, the nature of reality otherwise called the Four Noble Truths—*Cattāri ariya saccāni*. These are embodied in this succinct and profound saying of the Master: “Sorrow I point out and sorrow's end”.

Hence, to the Buddhists the Buddha is not a God or an incarnation of a God (*Avatāra*), nor is He an ever-abiding universal principle; and the Buddha has no

commandments to give which need be accepted with unquestioning obedience. Prayers to him, or rituals and vows, and blind faith in him have no meaning whatsoever.

*Dhamma* here constitutes the transcendental truths of Nibbāna as well as the Eightfold Path leading to Nibbāna as discovered and proclaimed by the Buddha. Here reflection (*anussati*) is meditation on the Dhamma's transcendental qualities. That is to say, meditation on that perfect state of Deliverance which is freed from greed, hate and delusion—the source of all *saṃsāric* turmoil—and is a condition of Peace and Bliss that terminates death and rebirth for all times. It is also meditation on that perfect path which leads to this perfect goal, namely, on Right Understanding, Right Thinking, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

*Saṅgha* is the Order or Community of Noble Disciples (*Ariyas*) established in the Goal or on the Path that leads to the Goal; thus forming the ‘living example’ to those still striving.

Briefly, Buddha is the Wayfinder, the Supreme Teacher, the Unmatched Guide. Dhamma is incomparable Way, the Perfect Teaching; the Saṅgha refers to those who dedicating themselves to the full realisation of the Dhamma, and earnestly striving have entered upon the Paths of Sanctitude.

In the course of the actual practice of devotion these three, however, embody and culminate in one idea, one Truth. Hence it is said:

*Dhammakāyo yato Sathā, Dhammo  
sathā tato mato;*

<sup>18</sup> The Four Pairs and Eight Persons refer to the four stages of Sainthood endowed with the eightfold Supramundane Knowledge of Path (*Magga*) and Fruition (*Phala*).

*Dhamme thito so sangho ca satthu  
sankham nigacchati;*

Since the teacher is the Truth-embodiment,

So is the Truth the very Teacher,

And the Noble Order being established  
on the Truth,

Also goes by the name of the Teacher.

Thus the act of devotion is directed to one single object which forms the Guide as well as the Goal, independent of, and unmixed with the notion of any personality or incarnation, a God or Paramatman, but purely as an aspiration for an ideal of absolute perfection and purity, attainable through self-control, discipline and mental development.

Devotional acts with such background and based on the realisation of these great attributes, set going mental dispositions favourable to the attainment of similar qualities in one's own mind, be it even to a small degree. At first, they appear as a rather unimportant contribution to the attainment of the lofty goal, but the cumulative effect of a series of such devotional acts later grows and transforms itself until it becomes of the same stuff—*evam-dhammā*—as these great attributes, *i.e.*, of the very truth. Further, this form of devotion with mental faculties well-balanced, maintains itself as a habitual frame of mind and not as an isolated act spasmodically indulged in, thus ensuring a steady progress. When devotion reaches a very high point the distinction of subject, *i.e.*, the self-notion, disappears and what is realised is the very 'stuff', nature or substance of the Triple Gem. Hence devotion is directed towards an ever present reality and not merely towards a dead teacher or empty abstractions.

As mentioned earlier, a devotional act calls into play many forces and faculties of the mind. The most important of these is Faith (*Saddhā*) in the Triple Gem, which, in Buddhism, means conviction and confidence born of knowledge. Faith is associated with other factors such as gratitude, love, joy and deep reverence, forming as a whole, what may be called here, the emotional aspect. Inasmuch as this *Saddhā* or conviction born of knowledge, contains no element of selfish affection (*sineha*) nor personal relationship and blind faith, it differs essentially from the theistic concept of faith and devotion. The basis of *Saddhā* is wise understanding of the true significance of the Triple Gem as closely related to the problem of suffering and the deliverance from it. At least it must be accompanied by a deep conviction in the 'Law of *Kamma*' as a factor that sustains and perpetuates this endless course of birth and death, and the suffering associated with life.

Since *Saddhā* is the one indispensable factor that governs all spiritual growth it is called the Seed (*bīja*) from which is born the 'tree of wisdom' that bears the 'fruit of deliverance'. There are five mental powers (*bala*), also called spiritual faculties (*indriya*) namely, *Saddhā*—Faith; *Vīriya*—Energy; *Sati*—Mindfulness; *Samādhi*—concentration; *Paññā*—Intuitive insight or Wisdom. Of these the primary factor is *Saddhā* which if properly cultivated, conditions the development of the rest. In its highest, *i.e.*, supramundane sense, *Saddhā* is *Aveccappasāda*,<sup>19</sup> unshakable faith in the Triple Gem—achievable through the attainment of the Noble Path (*Ariya Magga*). And only in this sense is it true 'self-surrender' which is the culmination of devotion. Self-surrender, in

<sup>19</sup> This is the same as *adhigama-saddhā*.

the Buddhist sense, is not a spiritual unification with some other entity or merging with some universal principle nor the sacrifice of one's will at the feet of some one else, a God, deity or teacher. But it is the entire abandonment, down to the last vestige of all 'self-notion', of 'personality belief' (belief in an immortal self)—*Sakkāyadiṭṭhi*. When accomplished this brings to pass the overcoming of at least two other mental fetters (*saṃyojana*), namely, Sceptical Doubt (*vicikicchā*) and Clinging-to-rites-and-rituals (*Sīlabbata-parāmāsa*). Lastly, since *Saddhā* rouses other concomitant factors, such as assurance, joy, gratitude and reverence, one will realise the tremendous significance of the Triple Gem as the true Refuge from the toils and tumults of *samsāra*. A deliberate and conscious cultivation of this one factor, therefore, means the development of the entire emotional aspect which forms the source of all mental energy.

This brings us to the philosophical side with its two faculties, the rational and the volitional. The function of the rational faculty is to investigate and probe into the nature of existence in order to understand, at least intellectually, its reality in the true perspective. It is the dispassionate and objective study and scrutiny of things. When one removes the lid of 'self' or 'egocentric consciousness' from the jar of life and lays it bare for objective analysis and observation, only then does true understanding spring up in the mind. It must be agreed that understanding is manifold and of various kinds, so that one particular object may also be explained in quite the opposite way, perhaps reasonably too! Hence, what is intended here is understanding in terms of the Noble Truths according to which existence is regarded not as something permanent, pleasurable

and endowed with a self or ego but as an impersonal process, arising and passing away dependent on conditions; that is to say, as impermanent, subject to suffering and unsubstantial (*anicca, dukkha, anattā*).

It is a proven fact that the basic instinct in all beings is the search for happiness and pleasure, and security or safety against death, disease and danger, although it is quite obvious that death is more certain than life. If life were not impermanent then there would be no need to crave for security and protection; likewise, the search for happiness and pleasure is another proof of the intrinsic suffering in life. The same is true of the self-delusion; for, if there were such a thing as an abiding self then it would mean that we would be free from the clutches of death and from all misery. 'Self' as an independent entity unaffected by all empirical fetters and limitations presupposes 'ownership' and the status of being the 'master' and 'possessor' of this life. Nobody ever wishes to suffer or to die. If there were an eternal or divine self then it would prevent all forms of suffering, death, etc. But that does not happen. Further where is the need for such a freed, happy and permanent self to strive for freedom, happiness and security? Hence where is the need for religion which aims at these attainments? The reality, however, is that there is only a self-delusion which is the root of all suffering and the cause of all limitations. Conditioned by this delusion, known to Buddhists as *Avijjā*, beings engage themselves in this mad rush of activities driven all the time by manifold cravings. Actions must produce reactions and these acts of craving that we always and almost helplessly perform cannot escape from producing results, namely, the continuity of this stream of life, this cycle of births and deaths. But this inherent unsatis-

factoriness in *samsāric* existence need not create undue anxiety, frustration or pessimism; in fact, it should be the greatest incentive to hope, assurance and optimism. For the opposite of suffering too must exist. If only these actions are free from craving—the root cause of suffering—there is no reason why lasting happiness and peace could not be achieved. This, a deathless state of supramundane happiness called *NIBBĀNA*, is the goal of Buddhism.

With this background, it may be noticed, the rational faculty is not limited to a barren intellectualism; it arouses the volition to transform knowledge into a living truth; besides, causing a definite enrichment of the emotional faculty. Such understanding may arise as a result of study and hearing of the Dhamma (*sutamaya ñāṇa*), or through deep thinking and observation of things as they really are (*cintāmayā ñāṇa*) or again through meditation (*bhāvanāmayā ñāṇa*). While *Saddhā* should have firm roots in right understanding, also true understanding, on its part, should not be devoid of Faith or Confidence in order to avoid the futility and dryness of remaining merely theoretical. The same is true in the case of will or determination. It must likewise be based on *Saddhā* in order to maintain its firmness and vigour by which theory is translated into practice.

This brings us to the function of the volitional faculty as purposive will, resoluteness or determination. It is the drive, the propulsive agency that transforms knowledge into action. It functions on the basis of understanding as

a factor that harnesses mental energy for one-pointed application, for singleness of aim. It frees intellect from dryness and prevents emotion from indulgence and over-activity, that is, from undue dissipation of mental energy, thereby mobilizing purpose and concentrated effort.

Although this faculty has been mentioned last, it is not less important than the other two. After all, it is volition that invests every action, whether in body, speech or mind, with the potentiality of producing results. And devotion as an act leading to deliverance must necessarily have a powerful volition. In fact, all these three faculties are mutually complimentary in the realisation of the common goal, *Nibbāna*.

It may not be inappropriate if the simile of the construction of a building is used to illustrate the functions of these faculties; for devotion is also a constructive activity after all. Understanding is like the plan and estimates; Will is the actual execution of construction according to the plan; and *Saddhā* is like the building materials needed for the construction.

Without a proper plan a construction may prove positively dangerous and the exclusion of the other two would mean no construction whatsoever. Thus the task of building a spiritual structure is accomplished in Buddhist devotion with the mutual co-operation and assistance of all the various faculties of the mind.

# Eastern Thought, Western Thinker

By

Francis Story

Western writers on Asia often provide an interesting study in reactions. Particularly so when they are concerned with Asian religious thought and attempt the hazardous task of comparing Eastern and Western standards and ethical attitudes. One of the most successful in recent times was Marco Pallas, who negotiated the precipices of Tibetan Buddhist thought as skillfully as he did those of the Himalayas. His sympathetic and intelligent study of Buddhism, coming as it does in the midst of a record of perilous adventure, in *Peaks and Lamas*, is a gem of philosophical insight thrown up casually, as it were, by a thrust of the mountaineer's axe. Few have surpassed him, and none in his particular genre.

Miss Ethel Mannin in her latest autobiography, *Brief Voices*, has much to say of her experiences in the realms of Asian thought and action. She has visited India, Burma and, more recently, Japan. In India her interest was primarily social and political, but by the time she made her Burma excursion, of which the travel book, *Land of the Crested Lion*, and a charming novel, *The Living Lotus*, are the products, she had also become deeply interested in Buddhist doctrines. She had read much, and wanted to examine Buddhism as a living creed, particularly in its aspect of human relations and everyday ethics. She visited Burma in 1954 as a guest of the Union of Burma Buddha Sāsana Council.

*Brief Voices* gives us some of the afterthoughts of her study. For the most part they are favourable, and presented

with skill and sympathy. Miss Mannin is always a readable author, whether one agrees with her views on any particular subject or not, and she carries the reader away with her so persuasively that he is easily led into accepting her logic and viewpoint as the only possible ones. To the unsuspecting she may prove a literary Lilith. In *Land of the Crested Lion* she gave a picture of Burma which, she says in *Brief Voices*, was modified by her desire not to appear ungrateful to those who had made her visit possible; but she now gives us her undiluted opinions on many subjects which struck her forcibly, and produced an equally forceful reaction.

One of these was the prevalence of meat eating in a Buddhist country. She devotes ten pages to her thoughts on vegetarianism, which, formerly an idea she had inclined towards without fully adopting it, she says was made final for her by her reaction against what she found in Burma, "the humbug of supporting the slaughtering of animals for food, by eating the meat provided thereby, and making a virtue of not doing the dirty work oneself—because of the Buddhist precept not to kill—and despising those who do it for one." She finds it "difficult to believe that such sophistry is what the Buddha meant when he gave his injunction not to kill."

Elsewhere she has the fairness to present what she was told was the Buddhist position: namely that in Buddhism it is the act of killing which is feared and avoided because Buddhism lays the force of *Kamma*, good or bad, on

intention, and does not extend moral responsibility to any act that is performed without this good or bad mental impulse of volition (*Cetanā*), still less to any acts of others which, like the slaughter of animals, are bound to take place and will always be carried out, whether we approve of them or not, by people who for themselves see no harm in killing animals and are not forbidden to do it by their own religion. It was this point that Marco Pallas saw quite clearly, making only the comment that it “differs profoundly” from the Western viewpoint. Which of course it does.

But Miss Mannin makes it emphatically clear that she does not accept this. To her, the act of eating meat is equivalent to killing, and one who takes the Buddhist precept not to inflict death yet eats meat is a “humbug”. There is nothing original in her view. It is the common Western one, and was even exemplified to the writer by a European Buddhist monk, himself a vegetarian, who asked: “How can one make the wish that all beings may be happy, *except the being I am crunching between my teeth?*” A picturesque way of putting it, but false from the Buddhist point of view because the wish is for sentient, i.e., living, beings, not for lifeless bodies. The animal whose flesh is being crunched has already been reborn elsewhere—it is hoped in happier circumstances, having expiated some of the bad *Kamma* which caused its rebirth and sufferings in animal form.

This attitude appears to Miss Mannin as sophistry. But Buddhism is realistic; it deals with situations as they are, not as they ought to be or as imagination pictures them. In this respect the acceptance of rebirth as an ontological fact constitutes a radical difference between the Buddhist and the Western way of looking at life. Whether we like it or not, the stark fact is

that there is not sufficient room on this planet for all animals and all men. The law of life—that life which is regarded by Buddhism as a mechanical process put into operation and sustained by the mental force of craving, accompanied by the unwholesome factors of greed, hatred and delusion—is from beginning to end a struggle for survival. The view is essentially the same as that held by modern evolutionism, except that the Dhamma also shows a moral principle at work. Pacifism, nonviolence, is seen in Buddhism as a creed which can be followed only by the individual for himself, and which he adopts when he becomes disgusted (*nibbindati*) with the natural law of self preservation and wishes to make an end of the wearisome round of rebirths. He then puts away all those acts of aggression which are necessary for survival in the world and becomes a monk. It was for this purpose that the Buddha instituted the Saṅgha.

The logical and consistent follower of Buddhist nonviolence then accepts whatever food is offered to him, as did the Buddha, whether it be flesh or not. But he will avoid producing in himself the self-regarding, unwholesome (*akusala*) mental impulse to killing; nor will he take meat from an animal that he knows or suspects to have been killed specifically for him.<sup>20</sup> He does not urge others to produce the impulse to kill in themselves, and he cannot by any stretch of ethical reasoning be responsible for an act which has taken place irrevocably, performed by someone else in the usual course of the day’s work, and of which he knew nothing at the time. If he were so responsible there would be

<sup>20</sup> Vinaya Piṭaka, Mahāvagga Pāli, 6 Bhesaccakkhandhaka, 178 Sīsebāpati Vatthu, p. 328 *et. seq.* 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Edn.



no release from the tangle of moral issues in which we are all involved. Ethical responsibility has to end with intention, or at most with reasonably foreseeable consequences. Moral responsibility, moreover, cannot be either vicarious or retrospective.

Nevertheless, it is understandable that one who has not gone into the moral question in all its complexity, as Miss Mannin apparently has not, should fail to see the logic of this, and should attribute it to the morality of convenience. To her, it is repulsive that any human being should do “the dirty work of killing”. Certainly this seems on the surface a reasonable view; but the Buddhist does not ask anyone to kill for him. On the contrary he advises against it, and if no animals were to be slaughtered for the market—to furnish meat, leather, glue and other products of the slaughterhouse—he would cheerfully live on whatever else was obtainable, or in the last resort starve rather than kill or consent to killing.

But the unavoidable truth is that so long as this world with its natural laws endures, there will always be people who do not accept the creed of nonviolence, or who interpret it differently, as for instance applying it only to human relations, as do some Christians, Muslims and the majority of Hindus. Consequently there will always be flesh sold on the open markets; there will always be people who choose to do “the dirty work of killing,” which to them is not immoral and not even repugnant. The Buddhist, although he may purchase this meat and consume it, does not condone the killing, since the animal is already slaughtered and more animals will be, whether he continues to eat flesh or not. He cannot put a stop to it by himself giving up meat; neither would he be justified in interfering with work which is

considered both legitimate and necessary by others. Buddhist tolerance allows each man to follow his own religious principles, until such time as he himself feels the need to change. The Buddhist must be concerned ultimately with his own mental state; he cannot control anyone else’s. He does not “despise” the butchers, as Miss Mannin accuses; he merely considers them to be deluded, and trusts that in some future birth, if not in the present one, they will come to understand the harm of killing.

Miss Mannin points out that there are some Buddhists who interpret the situation differently and are vegetarians, and this is true, but they are Buddhist vegetarians just as some Christians are vegetarians and teetotalitarians, although we know from Biblical references that Christ himself was neither a vegetarian nor a total abstainer.

Those who are against meat eating for the reasons Miss Mannin adduces must be prepared to go the whole way and refrain from buying leather goods of any kind and to do without all the by-products of the slaughterhouse, which are too numerous to mention. They must find some synthetic substitute, for instance, for the glue that is used in the binding of their books. And they certainly cannot wear hats decorated with feathers from birds that have died a cruel and lingering death in traps, or even from hens slaughtered in the poultry farm. The last cannot by any stretch of imagination be classed as necessary adjuncts to living, whereas the need for meat can be urged in certain cases on dietetic grounds. Whatever Miss Mannin may believe, there are many people suffering from diseases which call for animal protein in their diet, or who cannot absorb enough nourishment without flesh in some form. Much of the terrible malnutrition in parts of Asia is due to

insufficiency of animal proteins. Burma, Thailand and Vietnam are significantly free from this scourge, at least by comparison with other countries where meat is not eaten by the majority of the people.

In this connection it is noteworthy that the Vegetarian Society of Wilmslow, Cheshire, the oldest vegetarian association in England, admits to its associate membership “*All who agree in principle, but for personal reasons cannot practise vegetarianism,*”—an attitude that is at once tolerant and realistic, and in sharp contrast to Miss Mannin’s sweeping condemnations.

The Buddha realised the difficulties inherent in choice of food and accordingly emphasized that the question of what is eaten or not eaten has no bearing on mental purification. If it had, millions of people who live in conditions where meat eating is unavoidable would be debarred from salvation through no fault of their own. Miss Mannin quotes the *Jīvaka-sutta* (*Gahapati-vagga* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*),<sup>21</sup> and suggests that it contains an “apparent inconsistency” in this regard; but in fact there is no inconsistency, and she does not prove one. Another scripture, which if she knows she has ignored, is the *Āmagandha-sutta* of the *Cūlavagga*,<sup>22</sup> the refrain of which is, “This (mental and moral self-discipline) is the avoidance of impurity, and not the abstaining from flesh.”

Again the Buddha’s position is made clear in His rejection of the more stringent monastic rules proposed by Devadatta, one

of which was a vegetarian diet. Then the Buddha upheld the custom among the Bhikkhus of taking whatever food was offered to them. There are many other proofs in the *Sutta* and *Vinaya* texts that the Enlightened One Himself ate meat. In *Vin. (Mahāvagga VII)*<sup>23</sup> ten kinds of meat are forbidden to the Bhikkhus: the flesh of human beings, of elephants, of horses, of dogs, of serpents, of lions, of tigers, of panthers, of bears and hyenas. Such a rule would hardly have been necessary if all meat had been prohibited. (Cf. also *Vin. Mahāvagga VI. 25,2 et seq.*, *Ibid. 32,3*, *Vin. Pāṭidesaniya 1.* and several other passages in the same section defining food for Bhikkhus). Yet Miss Mannin writes that in Burma she “faced all the issues and saw the whole thing with a light on the road to Damascus clarity,” and that it was “thanks to the Enlightened One” that she vowed in Burma that she would not eat meat again.

This would be highly commendable if she were content to state the fact, give her reasons briefly, and leave others to follow her virtuous example or not, as they thought best, but she is not. She must call all those who do not agree with her “humbugs.” And although she writes that she has no desire to convert others to vegetarianism her long and detailed attack on Buddhist meat-eaters strongly suggests the contrary. One hesitates to name the only other possible motive.

The position of one who attempts to show the Buddhist attitude to this question is a difficult one and perilous. It can easily be made to appear that he approves the slaughterhouse. This is far from being the case. Every true Buddhist would rejoice if

<sup>21</sup> *Majjhima-ṇāsa Pāli*, p. 31, 6th. Syn. Edn, the Light of the Dhamma, IV—2, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> See the Light of the Dhamma, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> *Vinaya Piṭaka. Mahāvagga Pāli*, 6. *Bhesajjakkhandhaka*, 168 *Manussamaṃsapaṭik-khepa-kathā* p. 310 *et seq.* 6<sup>th</sup> Syn. Ed.

they were all closed down, since it would indicate that many more people had accepted the truth of the Dhamma. Convenience, and even health, ignored, he would gladly subsist on a diet of rice, roots and twigs, as people in some parts of Asia already do. But at the same time he would still have the knowledge that life involves suffering and that somehow, somewhere, killing was taking place, bad *Kamma* being engendered on the one side and the results of bad *Kamma* endured and its evil expiated on the other. No one, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, can alter the grim, ineluctable fact of the law of survival. He can alter only his own interior world.

Miss Mannin's own position is curiously ambiguous. She has foresworn meat-eating and has never eaten veal, "wanting, always, to be able to look a calf in its beautiful eyes without a feeling of treachery and guilt," but up to the time of writing she still continued to eat fowls and fish and to exterminate pests in her garden, although these things, she feels, are "on the way out" for her.

They must be, if she is to claim the logic and consistency in humanitarianism which she denies to others. And she must also be prepared to live on amicable terms, as many Buddhists do out of respect for the Dhamma, with rats, cockroaches and cobras. In Wimbledon or Connemara (from which it is said the good St. Patrick drove away all the snakes!) this may not call for any great self-denial, but it would be interesting to see how she would manage in a Burmese or Ceylonese village, with the jungle on her doorstep. If she is to be free from what she calls "humberging sentimentality" she must discard the morality of convenience entirely, seeing it for what it is, the familiar Western idea of man's right to judge what creatures should be allowed to

live—the old anthropocentric viewpoint, further confused by a selective partiality in which a sentimental favour is shown to certain animals because of their beautiful eyes whilst others not so appealing are condemned to death along with those that are adverse or unnecessary to man. The trouble with Miss Mannin is that she appears to be unable to distinguish between the selfishness which causes people to drown unwanted kittens and the sentimentality of not eating veal because of the calf's "beautiful eyes" One cannot erect a working, or even theoretically rational, philosophy of life on such lines as these.

Albert Schweitzer, with his principle of Reverence for Life, she rightly shows to be confused when he tries to square it with the obvious truth that "man is faced by the dilemma ..... of being able to preserve his own life and life generally only at the cost of other life." But Reverence for Life is a vague and meaningless phrase; meaningless, in any context of Buddhist thought which recognises only individual beings. There is no Buddhist term for "life" in the abstract meaning the aggregate of living creatures, and Compassion replaces "Reverence". Like human beings all these inferior creatures are born into the world as the result of craving and unwholesome states of mind generated in the past. It is obviously nonsense to speak of having "reverence" for bacteria and their carriers, which Schweitzer as a doctor is perpetually combating. The dilemma he speaks of is one that can be solved only in the Buddhist way. One can be a pacifist only if one is prepared to perish.

Apart from the dubiousness of her position, which causes her to write with all the conviction and emphasis of a total vegetarian without actually being one,

Miss Mannin shows some other rather strange features of judgment, which can best be explained in her own words. She describes how she formerly had phases of “aversion to meat eating,” but these alternated with other phases, in one of which she ate bullocks in the form of steaks, in a fit of impatience with the sort of people I satirized in *Rolling in the Dew*.” At that time, apparently, she convinced herself that there was no harm in meat-eating, and was presumably quite certain that she was right. Now she is convinced that she was wrong—but on what grounds, one wonders, does she suppose that her latest ideas on the subject have any greater validity? No wonder she comments: “How strange are ourselves of yesterday—strangers, and strangers one finds curiously repellent at that.” Maybe a time will come when she will look back in a more mellow and benign spirit on her present attitude towards those who do not share her views—and perhaps find the stranger “curiously repellent.” There is always hope.

Dealing with vivisection she is on firmer ground. Yet it is a weakness to suggest, as she does, that there is any need for the argument that its scientific value is questionable. It must be granted that many diseases are now curable which could not have been traced to their source and made amenable to treatment without experiments on animals. The scientific evidence cannot be denied. But this is merely the short-term view. Vivisection is ethically wrong *despite* the fact that man has benefited from it. The suffering it causes is far greater and more protracted than the quick dispatch of the slaughterhouse. And from the Buddhist standpoint the bad *Kamma* it entails far outweighs any immediate advantages we may procure by it. Science may succeed for a time in benefiting

humanity at the expense of animals, but for every disease which is thus brought under control another appears—for which further inhuman experiments must be carried out. The mutation of viruses will always see to this. Meanwhile, the science that gives us these brief alleviations of suffering at the cost of so much suffering to animals also gives us the power—if not the will—to destroy ourselves. So *Kamma* works through cause and effect, in an ever-revolving circle.

Miss Mannin shows scant respect for the intelligence of millions of Buddhists when she writes: “The idea of an animal, devoid of all moral sense, a creature purely of instinct, working out its *karma* is too ludicrous for serious contemplation.” Yet this is precisely what the Buddha taught. If the Buddhist world-view did not take into its scope all forms of life it would be defective and incomplete. There is no excuse, philosophically or scientifically, for the conventional Western anthropocentric view which maintains a sharp division between human and animal. Buddhism holds that an animal is born as the result of the bad *Kamma* of some one who has lived and thought on a bestial level. The fact that it is a creature purely of instinct, without any moral sense, is irrelevant; a congenital idiot is in the same case. Neither the animal nor the imbecile is morally responsible, and if this fact placed the animal outside the law of *Kamma* it would do the same for the mentally defective human being. In reality both of them are no more than passively suffering the consequences of past bad *Kamma*. The moral law of cause and effect is purely mechanical; it operates whether we are aware of it or not. It is not designed to “teach” us anything, any more than are the other mechanical laws of the universe. When the creature without moral sense

dies it is reborn in some other condition by the force of residual *Kamma*, which may be good, from one of the previous existences. All beings have an indefinite stock of such *Kamma* which has not yet come to fruition. As a morally responsible being again it once more has the power to generate good or had *Kamma*.

Unfortunately Miss Mannin does not tell us why she finds the idea "ludicrous." In Buddhist doctrine it is not a "soul-entity" that is reincarnated in human or animal form, but simply the current of causality generated by desire—the will to live, or the "palin-genesis" of Schopenhauer. This process gives rise to one being after another, "the same yet not the same," according to the type of *Kamma* that has been produced. Thus every form of life is the tangible result of biological processes plus a particular type of *Kamma*-impulse. As we think and act, so we become, in an ever-changing flux.

There has been much criticism of Buddhist ideas and customs in the past, sometimes from people who wrote with a religious bias against them, often from people whose opportunities of learning the true facts were limited. Miss Mannin had no religious prejudice and she was given the best opportunity of studying the doctrines at first hand in Burma. It is all the more to be regretted therefore, that she has seen fit to mar her book with these

sweeping judgments expressed in such provocative terms. Her repeating the tasteless joke, hoary before ever Norman Lewis set foot on the Golden Earth, about the Buddhist who is afraid to step on a cockroach for fear of killing his grandfather, does nothing to improve the tone. From Miss Mannin, who dislikes facetiousness, one expects something better.

My purpose here has not been to review *Brief Voices* but only to comment on the author's judgments on Buddhism and Buddhists. The book is a survey of her life from 1939 to 1958 and touches on many subjects connected with the events of that period. It is only fair to add that Miss Mannin's judgments are not all of the same kind as those I have dealt with; she shows sympathy for burglars and Nazi internees who "had the courage" to go on giving the Hitler salute during the war—but there is little in praise of the liberality of the nation that allowed them to do so. It is a pity that these sympathies are almost always counterbalanced by violent antipathies towards something else; apparently she cannot even like cats without feeling it necessary to hate dogs. On the whole, Miss Mannin shows her best side as a writer in straight reporting and fiction.

## RATIONALITY, CONSISTENCY AND UNIVERSALITY IN BUDDHISM

*(Gist of talk by U Ba Htu, B.J.S. (Retd.) before the Buddha Dhamma  
Study Group at Yogi U Tin's Garden, Rangoon)*

Man is a rational animal. Now, with the growth and spread of knowledge he often reasons out the problems that confront him in his daily life. Modern man no longer represents the blank, staring, gaping, nodding individual of the previous centuries. His reasoning processes are guided by the quality of intellect he has acquired and cultivated. Modern man is, therefore, apt to reject all things that are founded on faith, fiction and tradition. This fact is a commendable feature of our times. This is what it should be, for reasoning faculties are the only things that distinguish men from the lower animals.

Furthermore, man has acquired the courage to express his convictions in clear terms. In all matters both mundane and spiritual he looks for rationality and consistency, but to his dismay he often finds these two qualities missing in both the above two features. He knows and thus consoles himself that the human world has become frightfully complex and therefore rationality and consistency cannot be taken as the usual criteria in deciding all human affairs. It must be admitted by all thinking persons that man has reached a deplorable stage of depravity; he cannot speak the truth in both private and public life. He often lies and lies deliberately under cover of the word "diplomacy." To an observer, it is apparent that man's activities and decisions are motivated often by the exigency of environment rather than by the sound principles of rationality and consistency.

On the other hand, man's higher intelligence insists that in religion or

spiritual matters there must be well established criteria in deciding whether or not a religion is true. In looking for safe criteria for decision in supramundane matters he finds no other commendable standards than Rationality, and Consistency. In applying these two criteria to his religion the Western mind finds to his dismay and utter exasperation that both are lacking in his faith. It is small wonder that as a result of such investigations, responsible critics have voiced grave misgivings against their own faith.

In this connection the bold denunciation by Sir John Huxley<sup>24</sup> at the convocation in Chicago celebrating the centennial of Darwinism, to say the least, is sensational. To our mind the Western investigators and critics in pursuing their works of research have no other purpose than to arrive at truth. And in this spirit of response and co-operation it is the duty of Asian Buddhist countries to point out to those students of Western countries that in the Teaching of the Buddha, the fundamental principles are well laid on the everlasting foundations of Rationality, Consistency, and Universality.

### **Rationality:**

It is often said by foreign writers that the Teaching of the Buddha is most rational. It is rational in the sense that its fundamental doctrines are in accord with human intellect and reason. To make this point clear it may be pointed out that in the

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<sup>24</sup> An eminent British Biologist and writer. See Newsweek, dated December 7 / 1959, page 40.

Buddha Dhamma there is no such thing as vicarious redemption or salvation. This principle of “salvation by proxy” is nowhere accepted by the Courts of Law in the administration of justice throughout the whole world. No judge would ever accept the surrender of life by an old mother to save the life of her only son condemned for a cruel murder. Another instance is that if men issued from the same source (the Creator) why should there be differences in status and dissimilarities in appearance? To conscientious and deeply thinking modern men all these differences and dissimilarities are simply staggering. Modern man openly refuses to accept the word “inscrutable”. The more he ponders over the riddle of life, the more the query mark “why” assumes larger dimensions. It remains unanswered. In these circumstances there is little wonder that the West is now turning to the East in matters of religion and to Burma particularly so far as Buddhism is concerned.

### **The Buddhist Explanation of the World:**

After millions and millions of years of gradual process the World, nay the Universe—the Cosmos evolved as a result of the operation of the unchanging Universal Laws of Nature known in Pāli as *Niyāma-dhammas*. If there be any Creator, it is they who create the Universes—and these Universes are innumerable. In their own right the unchanging Universal Laws reign supreme from eternity to eternity. To the intelligent mind the Buddhist explanation of the Universe is acceptable and satisfactory.

Equally satisfactory is the Buddhist Law of Cause and Effect in explaining differences and dissimilarities amongst men. The one point that can never be over-emphasised is that the fundamental principles of Buddhism are founded on the

unchanging Universal Laws of Nature. And as Universal Laws of Nature they endure for all times. Again for Laws to endure for all times they must have been established on Everlasting Truth. Therefore, in the last analysis the fundamental doctrines of Buddhism are synonymous with the unchanging Universal Laws of Nature or Universal Truth. It may be seen that it was Gotama Buddha—the Omniscient One who discovered and proclaimed the Four Eternal Noble Truths, soon after attaining Enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree at Banaras. The Enlightened Buddha in his absorbing compassion for all beings proclaimed the essence of Truth 2500 years ago thus shedding light in the East and now it devolves upon all devout Buddhists to continue to uphold this glorious and soothing Light of Truth in this miserably darkened World of ours for no other reason than the return of amity, peace and concord among nations.

### **Appreciation by Foreign Writers:**

Here are a few specimens of appreciation by foreign writers—their unstinted praise of the Exalted Buddha and His Teaching. They are: We now come to the career of one who must be ranked among the greatest Leaders of thought the World has seen, the Indian Prince generally known as Gotama or the Buddha.<sup>25</sup> And it can only be claimed for him (Gotama Buddha) that he was the greatest and wisest and best of that long line of illustrious reformers who have endeavoured through the centuries to infuse new strength and new truth into the religious life of India.<sup>26</sup> We found in

<sup>25</sup> Sir Charles Eliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*.

<sup>26</sup> Prof. T. W. Rhys Davids. *Buddhism, being a sketch of the Life and Teaching of Gotama, the Buddha*.

Gotama Buddha a powerful combination: spiritual profundity and moral strength of the highest order and a discrete intellectual reserve. His true greatness stands out clearer and brighter as the ages pass and even the sceptically minded are turning to him with a more real appreciation, a deeper reverence and a truer worship.<sup>27</sup> One of the most rational of the World's great religions; many Western thinkers consider it (Buddhism) as one of the noblest edifice of thought ever created by the human spirit.<sup>28</sup> This unique body of teaching provides for all men the finest and most practical moral philosophy yet known to human history.<sup>29</sup> Buddhism is the grandest manifestation of freedom ever proclaimed.

### Consistency:

It was pointed out by the late Venerable Ledi Sayadaw that the main purpose of the appearance of the Buddha in this World was to preach the doctrine of *Anattā*. At the time the Buddha appeared, there was a widespread belief among the vast majority of the population, in the existence of ego, self, soul or *ātman*. To show that "belief" was a mere misconception the Buddha analyses the entire contents of the Universe to find out the ultimate units of Mind, Matter and Nibbāna. In so doing He classifies the whole Universe, firstly, into five *Khandhas* (aggregates); secondly, into twelve *Āyatanas* (sense organs and sense objects); thirdly, into eighteen *Dhātus* (psycho-physical elements); and fourthly, into four *Saccas* (Truths). This is the greatest practical analysis the World has ever seen, the subject of this stupendous analysis being the entire Universe itself.

Nothing either animate or inanimate is left out from the purview of this analysis. An enquiring mind would probably ask "What instrument or weapon was used to perform this gigantic task?" The Buddha on attaining enlightenment projects His Omniscient mind into the past, present and future and that Omniscient mind penetrates the conventional aggregates or forms and perceives the pure *Paramatha Dhammas*<sup>30</sup> in their ultimate units. Hence, the Buddha declares that there are four ultimate units in Matter, fifty-three in Mind and one only in Nibbāna that is *Asankhata Dhātu*.<sup>31</sup> It is now for every one to ponder if there was any Sage, Deva, Brahmā or any one else before or after the Buddha, who has made such an astounding declaration as regards the contents of the Universe in their ultimate units. The above classifications of the contents of the Universe into *Khandhas*, *Āyatana*, *Dhātus* and *Saccas* are superbly perfect. For that reason the Teaching of the Buddha was known even in ancient times as "*Vibhaṅga Vāda*," that is, the analytic system. It may, therefore, be extolled without exaggeration that the Buddha is the greatest analyst the World has ever known.

A careful and ardent student of the Buddha Dhamma will find that two fundamental principles of Buddhism pervade the entire range of classifications. They are; The Law of Cause and Effect, and the Law of Relations. To make this point clear, let us take the classification under the heading "*Khandha*". There are five groups under the general category—*Khandha*. 1. *Rūpakkhanda* (the material group), 2. *Vedanakkhandha* (the sensation group), 3. *Saññākkhandha* (the perception

<sup>27</sup> Sir Radhakrishnan, Gotama the Buddha.

<sup>28</sup> Life Magazine dated 16-5-55

<sup>29</sup> Christmas Humphreys, Maha Bodhi Journal, May 1951

<sup>30</sup> Ultimate truths.

<sup>31</sup> The Uncreated; the Unoriginated; the Beyond of all becoming and conditionality.



group). 4. *Saṅkhārakkandha* (the volition or action group), 5. *Viññāṇakandha* (the cognition group). Having obtained the five *Khandhas* in the past, worldlings preformed good and bad deeds actuated solely by *avijjā* (delusion) and *taṇhā* (craving), thus furnishing sure causes for the formation of the new five *Khandhas* in the present. Again in the present, worldlings with the five *Khandhas* in possession similarly do good and bad actions thus building up new causes for appearance of new *Khandhas* in the future. Here, the operation of the Universal Law of Cause and Effect is apparent. Having created causes by oneself no one else can stop appropriate resultants from following those causes. This is how rebirth takes place from one existence to another. Thus the Buddha shows the unmistakable links between the past, present and future and how these three stages of time are related to one another according to *Paṭṭhāna Desanā*.<sup>32</sup> The Buddha carries out the above analysis on a stupendous scale with no other reason than (as pointed out by the late Venerable Ledi Sayadaw) to show that there is nothing in the Universe past, present, and future that endures from existence to existence which can be called *Attā*, ego, soul or self.

### Universality:

According to the Buddha Dhamma there have been innumerable Universes in the past and equally numerous are the Universes that are existing at present, and there will be incalculable Universes in the future too. It will be interesting to know what things actually roll on or subsist in these Universes. Two factors only subsist, that is Mind and Matter. They subsist just momentarily for they are always in a state

of flux, each arising at one moment to cease at the next. It is the cardinal point of Buddhism that there is no fixed or unchanging entity in the Universe past, present, or future. Nibbāna is the only “*Dhātu*,” that is, element in the strictest sense of the word that endures unchanged from eternity to eternity. Like Gotama Buddha, many Omniscient Buddhas have appeared in the past and attained Nibbāna and all these Buddhas preached the same Law—the same *Dhamma*. Thus it is evident that the Buddha Dhamma stands for all Worlds—for all Universes—for all times, past, present, and future.

### Modern Knowledge of Elements:

It may be stated that modern scientific knowledge of elements is still limited and has not reached or found out the ultimate units of matter. The stage so far arrived at by science is electron, proton and neutron, but it has not said whether each one of them is simple or compound. If compound, what is it made of? Nor has it told the World whether they are caused, and if caused, what are the causes? So far, science has found out over one hundred elements. From the Buddhist point of view there are only four elements in the Cosmos. They constitute the ultimate units of matter—the building blocks of the Cosmos. By the Universal criterion one of the elements of modern science, say, gold may yet be further reduced to show that in its last analysis, it consists of four ultimate units of hardness (*pathavī*), cohesion (*āpo*), heat (*tejo*) and mobility (*vāyo*). From the short survey of matter it is amply clear that modern science has not reached the state of analysis which the Omniscient Buddha preached 2500 years ago. In the realm of mind, modern science has just made a beginning with Psychology. The Teaching of the Buddha points out that there are 89 kinds of consciousness and 52

<sup>32</sup> Discourse on the Philosophy of Relations.

kinds of concomitants of consciousness. From this short investigation it is amply clear that modern psychology is still many lengths behind Buddhist Psychology preached and practised 2500 years ago. Here, the remarks made by two prominent writers of the West may be quoted: “Western science today is rapidly approaching the conception of mind—only; and a remarkable feature of the recent change in the basis of physics is that the very terminology of its new discoveries might be paralleled in the Buddhist Scriptures compiled 2500 years ago. Truly Buddhism has nothing to fear from Western Science and in the World of mind, including that Cinderella of mental science, psychology, the West has more to learn from Buddhism than as yet it knows.”<sup>33</sup>

Writes Dr. Graham Howe<sup>34</sup> “In the course of their work many psychologists have found as the pioneer work of C. G. Jung has shown, that we are all near Buddhists on our hidden side .... To read a little Buddhism is to realize that the Buddhists know two thousand five hundred years ago far more about our modern problems of psychology than they have yet been given credit for. They studied these problems long ago and found their answers too. We are now rediscovering the ancient Wisdom of the East.” These and other similar remarks by Western scholars definitely indicate what position Buddhism holds among the International Religions of the World today.

### **Ourselves:**

We Buddhists should not remain content with the results of investigations and research of the Buddha Dhamma by

the Scholars of the West alone, helpful though as they are. Since we have been Buddhists through many generations, it is only fit and proper that we should dedicate ourselves to the study of the profound aspect of Buddhism, which are not easy to translate and thus through our own efforts put up before the World the essence of Buddhism in their correct translations in the light of the Commentaries recently recited at the Great Recital of the Commentaries<sup>35</sup> held at the Mahā Pāsāṇa Guhā Kabā Aye, Rangoon.

Thus we will be fulfilling our obligations to the West—nay to the whole World in elucidating the profound aspects of the Dhamma in conformity to the spirit and core of Buddhism and thereby contributing to the return of amity, peace and concord to this World.

May there be peace and happiness to all beings!

## **RECENT APPRECIATION**

### **U.S.A.:**

Please send me any material that you think will help to spread the “Dhamma” here. My class is very serious and very interested; but we need all the advice and help we can get from Burma, where the Buddha Sāsana flourishes. I use the “Light of the Dhamma” articles for my class lessons and am very happy to receive it.

<sup>33</sup> Christmas Humphrey’s Buddhism p. 222.

<sup>34</sup> Christmas Humphrey’s Buddhism p. 230.

<sup>35</sup> Aṭṭhakathā Saṅgayanā where 53 volumes of Aṭṭhakathās (Commentaries) were recited.

# Notes and News

## THE TĪKĀ SANGĀYANĀ FIRST SESSION OPENS

On the 5th November 1960, His Holiness Venerable Aggamahāpaṇḍita, Abhidhaja Mahā Raṭṭhaguru Masoeyein Sayadaw, representative Mahātheras from Thailand, Ceylon and Cambodia, Sangṭi-karāka Bhikkhus, His Excellency Agga Maha Thiri Thudhamma U Win Maung, President of the Union of Burma, Prime Minister U Nu Thado Thiri Thudhamma, Agga Maha Thray Sithu Dr. U Thein Maung, President, Union Buddha Sāsana Council, Hon'ble U Ba Saw, Minister for Religious Affairs, members of the Diplomatic Corps, members of the Union Buddha Sāsana Council, members of the General Council of Buddhist Women's (Catering) Associations, and many Buddhist nuns and lay devotees gathered to celebrate the Opening Ceremony of the First Session of the Tīkā Sangāyanā (The Great Recital on the Sub-commentaries) at the Mahā Pāsāṇa Guhā (the Sacred Cave) near the Kabā Aye Pagoda, Yegu, Rangoon.

At 1:30 p.m. drums and gongs were beaten when Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita Nāgavaṃsa, Honorary Secretary of the Saṅgha Supreme Council announced both in Pāḷi and Burmese that it was an opportune time to commence the proceedings of the First Session of the Great Recital on the Sub-commentaries. Then His Excellency the President of the Union of Burma lighted the candles and incense. After that Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita Aungmye-thaya-thuhtaytaik Sayadaw of Yezagyō who is the most senior among the monks present there, proposed His Holiness the Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita, Abhidhaja Mahā Raṭṭhaguru Masoeyein Sayadaw as the Tīkā Sangāyanā

Mahānāyaka (the Presiding Mahāthera of the Great Recital on the Sub-commentaries). The Saṅgha then signified their assent by uttering Sādhu thrice, followed by the striking of gongs and blowing of conchs. After administering the Five Precepts to the audience, the Presiding Mahāthera gave his Presidential address. After that His Excellency the President of the Union of Burma, Prime Minister U Nu and the Hon'ble U Ba Saw, Minister for Religious Affairs respectively gave Addresses of Veneration. It was followed by the announcement of the following Panel of Deputy Chairmen by the Honorary Secretary of the Saṅgha Supreme Council.

1. Ven. Aungmyethaya Sayadaw of Yezagyō.
2. Ven. Myothitlankyaung Sayadaw of Taikkyi.
3. Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita Sakumaw Sayadaw of Sagaing.
4. Ven. Sāsana-sobhinikārāma Sayadaw of Pyuntaza.
5. Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita Padamya Sayadaw of Mandalay.
6. Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita Bahan Veluvum Sayadaw of Rangoon.
7. Ven. Zibyugon-kyauṅ Sayadaw, Aggamahāpaṇḍita, of Dabein.
8. Ven. Tawkyauṅ Sayadaw of Mergui.
9. Ven. Pwinhlatheingon Sayadaw of Prome.
10. Ven. Icchāsaya Sayadaw of Sagaing.

11. Ven. Aletawya Sayadaw of Rangoon.

12. Ven. Myolai Sayadaw of Ma-u-bin.

After that an Address of Veneration was delivered by Thado Thiri Thudhamma, Agga Maha Thray Sithu Dr. U Thein Maung, President of the Union Buddha Sāsana Council.

Then, the Presiding Mahātherā appointed Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita Sobhana (Mahāsi Sayadaw) and Ven. Aggamahāpaṇḍita Bhadanta Paṇḍita as the

Pucchaka (Questioner) and Visajjana (Replier) respectively with regard to the Sub-commentaries. The Questioner and the Replier assumed their respective seats and carried out their duties as usual. They then recited Sāratthā Dīpanī Tikā up to page 17. After a recess for 15 minutes the Saṅgha continued to recite the Sāratthā Dīpanī Tikā, and after half an hour, all present uttered Sādhu thrice and the Ceremony came to a conclusion.

The Session will last for about 60 days, and 11 books of the Tikās will be recited.

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